

**Faculty of Business and Law
Curtin Graduate School of Business**

Maternity transitions in management

Cherie Anne Wabeke

This thesis is presented for the Degree of
Doctorate of Business Administration
of
Curtin University.

October 2020

Declaration

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgement has been made.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

The research presented and reported in this thesis was conducted in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) — updated March 2014. The proposed research study received human research ethics approval from the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (EC00262), Approval Number #HR01/2013.

Signature: CWabeke

Date: 25 October 2020

Abstract

This study looks at how the transition experience between pregnancy, maternity leave and return to work shapes women's careers in management. Under the umbrella of qualitative methodology, the research epistemology is informed through a phenomenological inquiry and uses interpretivism as a way of understanding how women interpret their life-world experiences.

The qualitative study allows for the stories of 17 women and 4 HR/line managers experiencing workforce transitions. The findings from this research provide a base for understanding transition themes for individuals and organisations. The research identifies how women, who are mothers, build and manage their professional identity and achieve career goals, or maintain their management aspirations throughout the transition. These findings are explained through the resulting framework, the Mosaic Model.

The Mosaic Model shows how the mosaic is built through the regulatory, sector organisations and individuals layers. It provides a backdrop to the careful arrangement, positioning and presentation of the transition identity during the experience. It highlights how women manage their extra pieces and how they fit these within a structured organisational context.

Furthermore, it contributes to the existing body of work relating to women in management and organisational practice. In doing so, the study identifies the need for new work patterns that reflect flexibilisation for women, workforce transition training for organisations and coaching for managers and women, as a vehicle to explore expectations and design fit-for-purpose roles.

The Mosaic Model provides a framework for discussion that may help springboard new working styles in the contemporary workplace that promote fusion, rather than separation, between motherhood and management identities.

Acknowledgement

It is with an immense amount of pride and relief that I write my acknowledgements. The journey has spanned eight long years of part-time study, motherhood and full-time work. I would not be here if it were not for my tribe supporting me.

To my supervisors, past and present — Professors Linley Lord, Margaret Nowak and Therese Jefferson — you have been a tremendous support academically and emotionally throughout the ups and downs of this journey. I thank you for your patience, guidance, critical input, endless rewrites and for being wonderful sounding boards. I would not have reached this point if it were not for you. Thank you also to Sandra Dexter for copyediting and proofreading my thesis according to the Australian Standards for Editing Practice.

To my executives and colleagues who invested and supported me through what seemed like an endless journey. Thank you for recognising the importance of this research to the sector and to women. I appreciate the words of encouragement from colleagues, who became my close friends during this journey.

To my wonderful family — my parents Hazla and John and sister Carla — you have supported my learning journey for the longest time, your belief in me and encouragement has been unwavering. To my husband, Tony, who “got out of my hair” and just let me focus on study weekend after weekend, thank you for putting up with me and giving me the encouragement and support I needed to keep going when I needed it the most. To Shyma (dec.), Koda (dec.) and Nyah — you are a (p)awesome bunch of study companions! You lay beside me giving me the love and warmth I needed, even pawing at me reminding me to take a study break. Lastly, to my beautiful daughter Ariana, this is for you. This journey began shortly after you were born. You have grown up in my maternity transition to be a strong, passionate and articulate young lady. We shared this learning journey together. I thank you for helping me discover what it means to be a mother and a manager.

Finally, to the 22 women who contributed, thank you for volunteering your time and experience. Your voices, insights and powerful words echoed constantly throughout this journey as inspiration and a reminder of how relevant and important this work is. I am deeply grateful and hope I have given justice to your experience and provided an avenue for change for all those women who choose motherhood and management.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	II
ABSTRACT	IV
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	V
TABLE OF CONTENTS	VI
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. MOTIVATION FOR THIS STUDY	1
1.2. BACKGROUND TO MATERNITY TRANSITIONS	2
1.3. MATERNITY TRANSITION DEFINED	4
1.4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH	7
1.5. RESEARCH QUESTION AND OBJECTIVES	8
1.6. OUTLINE OF THE THESIS	9
2. CONTEXT FOR THE STUDY	10
2.1. OVERVIEW	10
2.1.1. Women and work in Australia.....	11
2.1.1.1. Social impact of parental leave on workforce participation.....	15
2.1.2. Women and work in Western Australia	17
2.1.2.1. WA Labor Party focus on women’s equality	17
2.1.2.2. Women’s participation in the WA public sector	19
2.1.2.3. Gender pay gap in the public sector	20
2.1.3. The enabling environment for women’s rights.....	21
2.1.3.1. Industrial relations system in Western Australia	23
2.1.3.2. Public Service Award 1992 (WA): Parental Leave Provisions.....	24
2.1.3.3. Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA)	25
2.1.4. Economic implications of motherhood.....	26
2.1.4.1. Maternal calling in the prime professional years	27
2.1.4.2. Pregnancy discrimination	28
2.1.5. Chapter summary.....	30
3. LITERATURE REVIEW	31
3.1. INTRODUCTION.....	31
3.1.1. Approach to a critical review of the literature	31
3.2. GENDERED WORKPLACES	33
3.2.1. Doing gender, doing work	33
3.2.2. Gendered organisations	36
3.2.2.1. Body talk.....	39
3.2.2.2. How managerial jobs are defined in gendered workplaces	41

3.2.3.	Section summary – gendered workplaces	42
3.3.	POLICY.....	42
3.3.1.	Policy design	43
3.3.2.	Section summary – policy	48
3.4.	PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY	48
3.4.1.	Developing a professional identity.....	48
3.4.2.	Identity and career behaviour.....	49
3.4.3.	Section summary – professional identity.....	50
3.5.	CAREERS AND MOTHERHOOD	51
3.5.1.	Balancing life’s commitments	51
3.5.2.	Employment patterns	53
3.5.3.	Approaches to manage career mobility.....	55
3.5.4.	Section summary – careers and motherhood	58
3.6.	CAREER THEORY AND CAREER MODELS FOR WOMEN	58
3.6.1.	Career theory	59
3.6.1.1.	Career construction theory	59
3.6.1.2.	Women’s careers.....	60
3.6.1.3.	Career success.....	62
3.6.2.	Career models.....	64
3.6.2.1.	Boundaryless career.....	64
3.6.2.2.	Protean career.....	66
3.6.2.3.	Portfolio careers	68
3.6.2.4.	Kaleidoscope career.....	69
3.6.3.	Section summary – career theory and career models for women.....	70
3.7.	CHAPTER SUMMARY	70
4.	THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	72
4.1.	INTRODUCTION.....	72
4.1.1.	Research Question.....	72
4.1.2.	Nature of the research paradigm.....	73
4.2.	OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH APPROACH	75
4.2.1.	Philosophy (becoming).....	76
4.2.2.	Ontological (constructivist)	77
4.2.3.	Sociology (phenomenology).....	78
4.2.4.	Epistemology (interpretivism).....	79
4.2.5.	Methodology (qualitative)	80
4.2.6.	Method (Phenomenology)	82
4.3.	RESEARCH DESIGN	82

4.3.1.	Sampling strategy.....	83
4.3.2.	Identifying participants with lived experiences: Sample	84
4.3.2.1.	Participant recruitment for data collection	85
4.3.2.2.	Criteria for selection.....	86
4.3.2.3.	Participant demographic.....	87
4.3.3.	Data collection approach: Semi-structured interviews	91
4.3.3.1.	Pilot interviews.....	92
4.3.3.2.	Interview process.....	95
4.3.3.3.	Post-interview field notes.....	97
4.3.3.4.	Transcription.....	98
4.4.	DATA ANALYSIS.....	100
4.4.1.	The coding process	102
4.4.1.1.	Summarise meaning (Open coding).....	104
4.4.1.2.	Categorising or grouping meanings (Axial coding).....	105
4.4.1.3.	Structuring, giving order to meaning (Selective coding).....	106
4.5.	QUALITY IN QUALITATIVE INQUIRY	107
4.5.1.	Rigour in qualitative research.....	107
4.5.2.	Ethical considerations	109
4.5.3.	Bracketing	111
4.6.	CONCLUSION.....	113
5.	THE STORY OF MATERNITY TRANSITIONS IN MANAGEMENT	114
5.1.	INTRODUCTION.....	114
5.1.1.	Presentation of the findings.....	115
5.1.2.	Demographic profile	116
5.2.	PRE-PREGNANCY, ENTERING STAGE 1.....	117
5.2.1.	For women, planning for when you have a baby.....	118
5.2.1.1.	Planning for the future	118
5.2.1.2.	Until you tell people	119
5.2.1.3.	Doing something with my year off	121
5.2.1.4.	Planning how or when to return to work	122
5.3.	PREGNANCY, STAGE 1	123
5.3.1.	For women, surviving a working pregnancy	124
5.3.1.1.	Being aware of your rights.....	124
5.3.1.2.	Feeling engaged and valued	126
5.3.1.3.	Getting what you need is restrictive.....	127
5.3.2.	For organisations, managing workplace pregnancy.....	128
5.3.2.1.	Changes women go through whilst pregnant	128

5.3.2.2.	Health and wellbeing in the workplace	129
5.4.	BEING ON MATERNITY LEAVE, STAGE 2	131
5.4.1.	For women, taking maternity leave	131
5.4.1.1.	A year's maternity leave	131
5.4.1.2.	It would be great to stay in touch.....	134
5.4.1.3.	Going from an adult world to a baby.....	136
5.4.1.4.	They reorganised and my job didn't exist.....	137
5.4.1.5.	The catalyst for returning.....	139
5.4.1.6.	Notice of return: Transactional transitions.....	140
5.4.2.	For organisations, paid maternity leave	141
5.4.2.1.	Budgeting for paid maternity leave.....	141
5.4.2.2.	Position left vacant	142
5.4.2.3.	Paying women to have babies, this is crazy.....	144
5.5.	RETURN TO WORK (STAGE 3).....	145
5.5.1.	For women, negotiating a return	146
5.5.1.1.	That was a harder transition	146
5.5.1.2.	Managing expectations upfront	146
5.5.1.3.	Reigniting career aspirations	148
5.5.1.4.	I had to park my ambition	150
5.5.1.5.	Adjustments to care.....	152
5.5.1.6.	People in the background supporting you	153
5.5.1.7.	I need somewhere to breastfeed	154
5.5.1.8.	Leaving for an emergency or when your child is sick.....	155
5.5.1.9.	You need to work past the guilt	156
5.5.1.10.	Being pregnant again so quickly.....	158
5.5.2.	For women, being back at work	159
5.5.2.1.	Personal changes that shift your focus.....	159
5.5.2.2.	I don't have time to faff about	160
5.5.2.3.	How women treat each other.....	162
5.5.2.4.	Putting things in a joking context.....	163
5.5.3.	For organisations, reintegrating women back at work.....	165
5.5.3.1.	You can't manage if you are not full time	165
5.5.3.2.	Seeing you as a valuable person	167
5.5.3.3.	No more flexible working arrangements.....	168
5.6.	THE FULL TRANSITION EXPERIENCE.....	170
5.6.1.	For women, mothers as managers.....	171
5.6.1.1.	Learning new management styles.....	171

5.6.1.2.	Two roles, working full-time and being a mum	171
5.6.1.3.	The flexibility women are looking for	174
5.6.1.4.	I can't believe I did that to mums	177
5.6.2.	For organisations, motherhood and management	178
5.6.2.1.	Perceptions about women's role and women.....	178
5.6.2.2.	Changing the old way of thinking.....	180
5.6.2.3.	Addressing people as individuals, not as blanket policy.....	181
5.6.2.4.	Policies, procedures and practices.....	186
5.6.3.	What do working mothers need to be career successful.....	189
5.7.	CONCLUSION.....	192
6.	A CONTESTED SPACE FOR MATERNITY TRANSITIONS IN MANAGEMENT	194
6.1.	INTRODUCTION.....	194
6.2.	MOSAIC MODEL	195
6.2.1.	Mosaic overview.....	195
6.2.1.1.	The outer layer – the regulatory system	199
6.2.1.2.	The middle layer – the sector organisations.....	200
6.2.1.3.	The inner layer – individuals.....	201
6.2.2.	Mosaic identity transitions	203
6.2.2.1.	Phase I: The ideal worker.....	204
6.2.2.2.	Phase II: The ideal mother	208
6.2.2.3.	Phase III: The ideal working mother	210
6.3.	THE REGULATORY BOUNDARIES OF THE MOSAIC.....	212
6.3.1.	Standards for maternity leave	213
6.3.2.	Standards for equality	214
6.4.	THE ORGANISATION, A MOSAIC SPACE OR A SET PATTERN?	217
6.4.1.	Work and role value	218
6.4.1.1.	Fading professional value.....	219
6.4.1.2.	Normalising the standard ways of work.....	222
6.4.1.3.	Situational, flexible availability	223
6.4.2.	Culture and organisational context.....	226
6.4.2.1.	Mosaic conflicts of maternal bodies.....	227
6.4.2.2.	Mosaic needs binding organisational loyalty	229
6.4.2.3.	Enabling and sustaining capital to professional identity	230
6.4.2.4.	In hiatus, a break away from work or management.....	231
6.4.2.5.	Under the veneer of office talk.....	233
6.5.	THE INDIVIDUAL, PIECES TO FIT IN THE MOSAIC.....	235

6.5.1.	Adjusting and balancing the mosaic pieces to organisational practice	235
6.5.1.1.	Mosaic positioning, career and professional standing.....	235
6.5.1.2.	Trust and conflict as a mosaic attribute.....	239
6.5.1.3.	Navigating the mosaic with mentors and coaching	241
6.5.2.	Adjusting and balancing the mosaic Identity	243
6.5.2.1.	Separating worlds, defining boundaries	243
6.5.2.2.	Identity struggles, sacrifice and trade-off.....	245
6.5.2.3.	The pressure to be perfect	246
6.6.	CHAPTER SUMMARY	247
7.	CONCLUSION	249
7.1.	INTRODUCTION.....	249
7.2.	THE SOCIAL REALITY: CONTRIBUTIONS TO KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE	251
7.2.1.	Findings.....	252
7.2.1.1.	Transition experience – women to mothers to managers (Objective 1)	252
7.2.1.2.	Professional identity and career through transition (Objectives 2 and 4)	253
7.2.1.3.	Managers’ role in transition (Objective 3).....	253
7.2.1.4.	Factors influencing transition for working mothers (Objective 5).....	254
7.2.2.	Contributions	256
7.2.2.1.	Mosaic Model and mosaic thinking.....	257
7.2.2.2.	Women in management	258
7.2.2.3.	Organisational practice.....	260
7.2.3.	Implications	261
7.2.3.1.	Women	262
7.2.3.2.	Managers and workplaces.....	264
7.2.4.	Limitations and future research	265
7.3.	REFLECTIONS, LIVING MY THESIS	268
8.	APPENDICES	270
8.1.	LETTER OF INVITATION.....	270
8.2.	PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (WOMEN).....	271
8.3.	PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (HR/LINE MANAGERS).....	275
8.4.	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (WOMEN).....	279
8.5.	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (HR/LINE MANAGERS).....	281
8.6.	CONSENT FORM.....	283
8.7.	NON DISCLOSURE/CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT FOR TRANSCRIPTION SERVICES	284
8.8.	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS – WOMEN	285

8.9.	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS – HR/LINE MANAGERS.....	287
8.10.	PILOT PHASE, DEVELOPING PHENOMENOLOGICAL THEME CATEGORY LISTING (OPEN CODING)	289
8.11.	MAIN STUDY, EXTRACT OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL THEME CATEGORY LISTING (SELECTIVE CODING).....	291
9.	LIST OF REFERENCES.....	293
	LIST OF LEGISLATION.....	335

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1-1 THE THREE PHASES OF A MATERNITY TRANSITION.....	4
FIGURE 1-2 STRUCTURE AND THE MATERIAL.....	9
FIGURE 3-1 HEAT MAP.....	32
FIGURE 4-1: PARTICIPANT DISCUSSION GUIDE.....	93
FIGURE 4-2: INTERPRETED MEANING.....	99
FIGURE 5-1: TRANSITION CYCLE.....	114
FIGURE 5-2: PRE-PREGNANCY, ENTERING STAGE 1.....	118
FIGURE 5-3: BEING ON MATERNITY LEAVE, STAGE 2.....	131
FIGURE 5-4: RETURN TO WORK, STAGE 3.....	145
FIGURE 5-5: THE FULL TRANSITION.....	170
FIGURE 6-1: THE MOSAIC MODEL.....	198
FIGURE 6-2: MOSAIC IDENTITY TRANSITIONS.....	204
FIGURE 6-3: PHASE I, THE IDEAL WORKER.....	205
FIGURE 6-4: PHASE II, THE IDEAL MOTHER.....	208
FIGURE 6-5: PHASE III, THE IDEAL WORKING MOTHER.....	210

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 2-1 TIMELINE OF SOCIAL POLICY DEVELOPMENTS FOR WOMEN.....	13
TABLE 2-2 PERCENTAGE REPRESENTATION FOR WOMEN IN THE WA PUBLIC SECTOR 2009–2018.....	19
TABLE 2-3 COMPARISON OF PERFORMANCE ACROSS JURISDICTIONS (2018).....	19
TABLE 2-4 GENDER PAY GAP BETWEEN 2017 AND 2018.....	20
TABLE 4-1: SUMMARY OF RESEARCH APPROACH.....	76
TABLE 4-2: INTERPRETIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS (IPA).....	101
TABLE 4-3: ANALYTICAL APPROACH TO CODING.....	103
TABLE 4-4: ACTIONS TAKEN TO ACHIEVE ADEQUACY.....	108
TABLE 5-1: PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE.....	116
TABLE 5-2: PARTICIPANT PSEUDONYM.....	117

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Motivation for this study

My motivation for this study originated in two parts: firstly, around my professional experiences in equity and diversity in the Western Australian public sector; and secondly, my experience as an employee who transitioned in and out of the workforce during pregnancy, maternity leave and return to work.

In 2007, I worked for the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity (OEEO) within the Office of the Public Sector Standards Commissioner. The OEEO was responsible for administering Part IX of the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* (WA) (the Act), which required all public sector agencies to develop and implement an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Management Plan. My role was to assess these plans against the requirements of the Act and work with public sector agencies to improve their diversity profile in line with the state government's Equity and Diversity Plan. It was during this time that I developed an interest in the diversity profile for women in management and leadership.

In 2008, I fell pregnant and, through my work, I gained a heightened awareness of the employment issues facing women, who are mothers, as they moved into senior management. I was determined that my maternity leave would not impact my employment, by appearing as a gap on my CV or as inactive service in my superannuation, so I put a plan in place. My plan included continued contributions to my superannuation while on maternity leave, and utilising accrued long service leave together with annual leave and some purchased leave (rather than unpaid parental leave) to undertake the Masters of Business Leadership (MBL). My daughter was six months old when I started my MBL, which I completed in 2010. This was my way of managing the transitions. When I undertook the literature review for this

research, I became aware that my approach to study during maternity leave was a somewhat unique and unusual technique for managing the transitions.

I returned to work in 2011, securing a management role shortly after; at the same time my proposal for a Doctorate of Business Administration was accepted. I chose to return to work full time (another aspect I learned through literature was uncommon) and continued to balance work, family and study. It was important to me that, to progress the issues around maternity transitions, I needed to be a present and visible leader to champion other women in the leadership space. I also wanted to be a role model to my daughter (and other women) demonstrating that leadership and motherhood were possible.

My experiences as a mother in management have been varied. I have at various times challenged stereotypical thinking about what management looks like and the traditional structure of work. Being passionate about this, I have brought this into my management style, being willing to live outside the box and do things that support other working mothers while achieving business deliverables.

1.2. Background to maternity transitions

Women's workforce participation continues to receive scrutiny; while general participation levels have increased, the participation for women in senior management tells a different story. Navigating a leadership pathway following maternity leave (a workforce transition), requires women to negotiate workforce re-entry and maintaining career progression. Women who choose to embrace both motherhood and management accept a path fraught with personal, professional and social challenges (Eagly and Carli 2007, 382).

The *Generation F: Attract, Engage, Retain* report detailed the need for simplified employee engagement strategies to enable improved workforce participation and outlined the implications workforce participation has on

employee attraction and retention (Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency 2008). Workforce participation is complex. Some of the key factors influencing women's participation decisions have been identified as: family responsibilities, inflexible work arrangements, career interruptions, absent organisational support, limited opportunities for personal and professional growth, and incompatible corporate culture (Cullen 1990). These factors are known as the push or pull mechanisms that contribute to women's decisions (Cabrera 2007) to self-select in or out of the workforce (Shapiro, Ingois and Blake-Beard 2009). However, there is little in the existing literature that focuses on women's personal and professional transitions through pregnancy, maternity leave and returning to work. Of the limited literature available that does consider maternity transitions, research in an Australian context was specifically related to health professionals (Nowak, Naudé and Thomas 2012, 2013) and did not extend to the broader public sector or specifically consider the relationship of maternity transitions in the managerial context.

The bulk of literature on women's workforce participation focuses on the critical role that flexible work arrangements play in attracting, engaging and retaining women in the workforce. This study recognises flexibility as a valid contribution to achieving greater workforce participation. However, the focus of this research is set within a leadership context and explores how women navigate maternity transitions in management. It considers what is perceived to contribute to women's experience during the transition, the organisation's role in the transition experience and what enables women's position in management. In doing so, the study has identified limited research in or specific to the impact of maternity leave on women pursuing management careers. There is even less literature discussing the underlying themes surfacing through the lived experiences of these women as they choose to progress their careers through motherhood. This study aims to contribute to filling the gap by exploring life-world or lived experiences of women transitioning in and out of the workforce as they choose to fulfil the role of mother and manager. The study seeks to understand the three phases

(woman > mother > manager) and the critical interventions they identify as allowing them to maintain their careers.

1.3. **Maternity transition defined**

For the purposes of this study, a maternity transition is defined as a three-phase process that considers the transition experience as a “period of time” occurring before maternity leave (both the period of time before pregnancy and the pregnancy), during maternity leave (while away from work) and after maternity leave (the return to work), and reflects the transition out of and return to the workplace. Each phase of the transition is unique and shapes the overall transition experience. It is important to note that the before maternity leave phase includes both pre-pregnancy and pregnancy as this reflects a silent period where pregnancy is unknown to the workplace. The three phases each involve some planning and adjustment in relation to the overall maternity transition experience. This is shown in the conceptual illustration displayed in Figure 1-1.

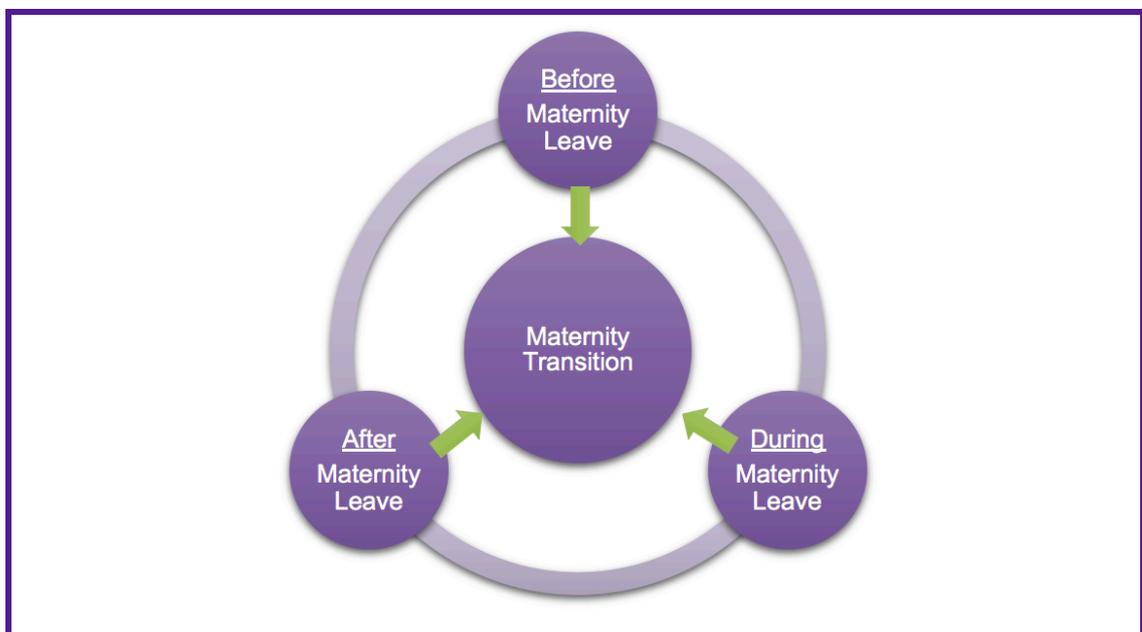


Figure 1-1 The three phases of a maternity transition

When considering the context of a maternity transition, various terms are referenced throughout the study. These are defined within the context of the study as:

Career: refers to how “People at all levels want to have careers that are meaningful to them, match their needs, address their wants, and enable them to pursue and meet their goals” (Kaye, Williams and Cowart 2018, 1). In the context of this study, career implies more than workforce participation and focuses on “having a career in management”. It reflects the personal investment of a woman in achieving her career goals and establishing a professional identity that is built on specific skills, knowledge and abilities.

Employment: refers to the act of holding a “job”, by participating in or engaging in routine paid employment. It does not refer to the unpaid role associated with women’s carer or family responsibilities.

HR/Line managers: refers to employees in an organisation who have responsibility for managing staff or providing human resources advice to managers who manage staff. They will have had experience managing women who have taken maternity leave and transitioned in the workforce from a manager, to mother, to manager.

Momentum (career): refers to “a continuous process of upward mobility within the organisation” (Cannings and Montmarquette 1991, 213). In a leadership context, it implies there is a steady rise in seniority and through management tiers, in contrast to careers that stop or stall at a certain tier or senior level (Cannings and Montmarquette 1991). Drive, passion, desire and capability would be expected for career momentum.

Maternity leave: refers to the period of time a female employee takes, either paid or unpaid, from work following birth or adoption (note: adoption is beyond the scope of this study). Maternity leave reflects the reproductive nature of women who experience pregnancy and associated leave.

Mother: is defined in biological terms as the woman who conceives, carries, gives birth to and raises her biological child. The adoptive mother may have the same and/or different experiences, but this is beyond the scope of this research. For this study it was important that the mother had the

full transition experience (pregnancy > maternity > return); therefore, adoptive mothers were not included.

Parental leave: As societal family structures changed, the term parental leave was introduced to reflect gender-neutral access to paid or unpaid leave for same sex parents, fathers and mothers following the birth or adoption (although adoption is beyond the scope of this study). This is the formal workplace term capturing maternity leave, parental/primary carers leave and father/partner/secondary carers leave (Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2018). Women refer to maternity leave and parental leave interchangeably with regards to paid or unpaid time off work.

Progression (career): refers to a sequential process of moving forward by elevating to the next step in a succession pattern. It implies a sequenced growth that builds on the stage that precedes it. Within a leadership context it refers to seniority and progress into senior management roles (Cullen and Christopher 2007b).

Women in management (in the WA public sector): refers to women in management roles. In the Western Australian public sector this encompasses the top three tiers: the senior executive service (level 9 and above), senior (L8) and middle (L7) management. The management tiers link to decision-making responsibility (Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment 2011, 16).

Workforce/maternity transition: Takes into consideration, the period of maternity leave accessed and focuses on the transition experience as a “period of time” occurring before, during and after maternity leave. It refers to the movement in and out of the workforce during this time.

Working mother: refers to female employees in an organisation, who have a child or children, are responsible for managing staff and have had a workforce transition experience, moving from manager, to mother, to manager.

1.4. Significance of the research

Women's absence in management is discussed in social theory with the main focus being the barriers faced (Cullen 1990; Cullen and Christopher 2007b; Evans et al. 2014; Ibarra, Ely and Kolb 2013; McBride 2011). With the trend towards self-crafted careers (Grady and McCarthy 2008) or self-advocacy (Shapiro, Ingois and Blake-Beard 2009), more research is required to understand the motivation and rationale behind decisions affecting maternity transitions. Research to date indicates there is a need for greater emphasis on achieving balance between work and life (Guillaume and Pochic 2009; James 2014; Ezzedeen and Ritchey 2009; Todd and Binns 2013; Wadsworth and Facer 2016) without promulgating gender disparity in management. For this to be successful in the contemporary environment, organisations need to change their cultures to move beyond the traditional notion of flexibility and positively influence transition in a way that facilitates continued career progression.

Research portrays the path to management for women as fraught with challenges (Hewlett and Buck Luce 2005), influenced by ideals and choices between motherhood and leadership. This research analyses women's experiences, and suggests measures that can improve social practices and structures, which promote mothers as leaders by facilitating their reintegration after transitional periods. The Mosaic Model (explained in further detail in Chapter 6) is proposed as a new career model to help women and organisations identify the changes needed to improve the participation rates for women at senior levels. The objective in applying this model is to break down the self-perpetuating cycle of transition. Shifting thinking away from "fixing" women to one of co-navigation and joint-(ad)venture to management.

1.5. Research question and objectives

The question motivating this study is:

“How do women navigate maternity transitions in management?”

The research will document the transition experience of motherhood and management in the Western Australian public sector, and is guided by the following objectives:

To understand:

- 1) the transition experience for women managers who become mothers
- 2) how women define themselves professionally during workforce transitions
- 3) what organisations (human resources managers and/or line managers) do during maternity workforce transitions
- 4) how women, who are mothers, manage their professional identity during transition and achieve career goals or aspirations in management

And to identify:

- 5) the enablers and/or barriers impacting on transition and career progression for working mothers.

This research will separate the diverse workforce transition experiences of women from the role of the organisation, to determine what factors contribute to or detract from women’s capacity to undertake decision-making roles in the organisation. The study explores the individual stories of women in management and focuses on what occurs during a maternity transition for women and organisations. It considers the potential changes in thinking that may occur for women during the transition, how organisations view and respond to these transitions and how this may influence women’s position within the management context.

1.6. Outline of the thesis

The thesis is presented in seven chapters. Figure 1-2 Structure and the material, provides a conceptual illustration of the thesis.

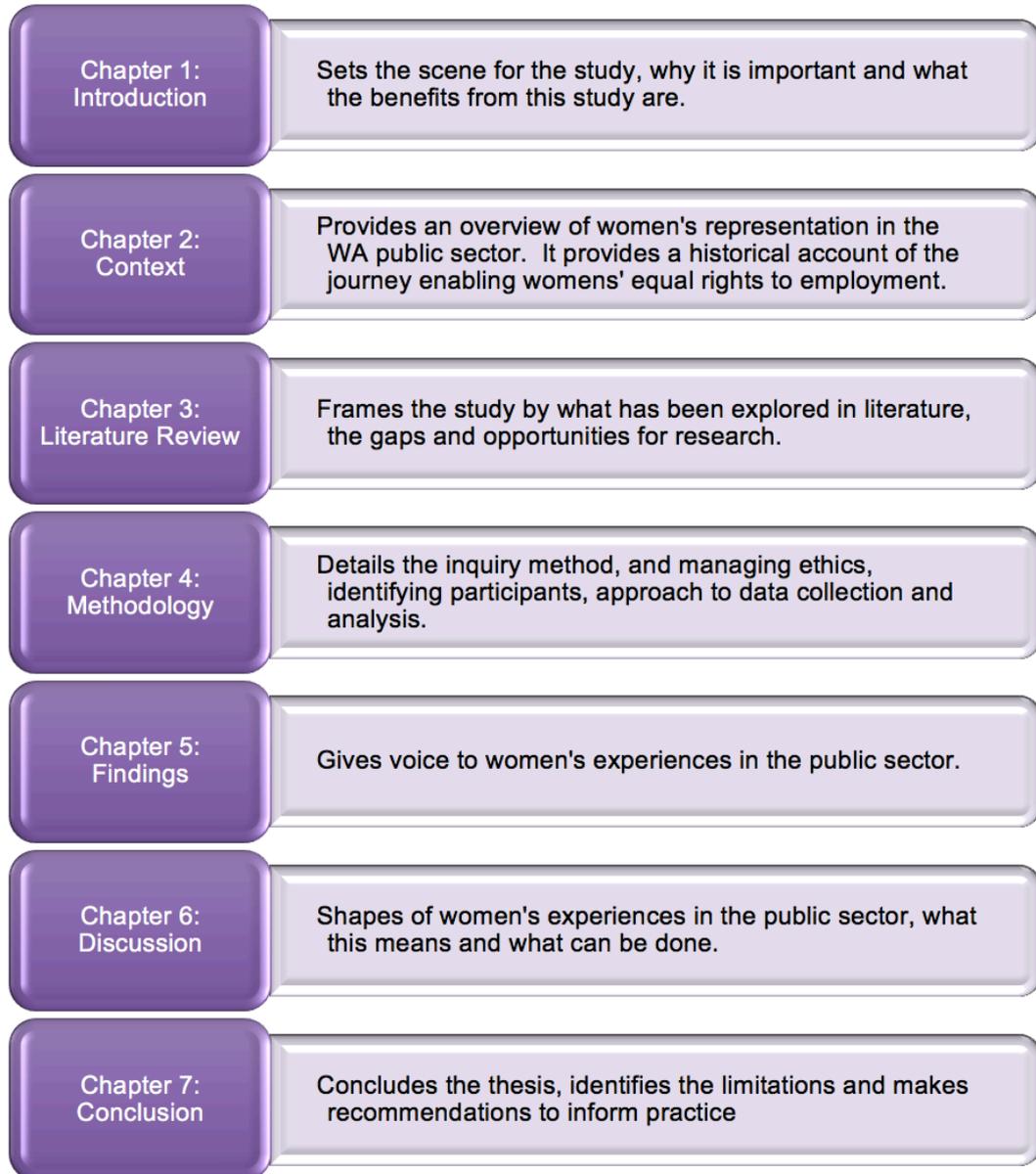


Figure 1-2 Structure and the material

2. CONTEXT FOR THE STUDY

2.1. Overview

The focus of this research is on women in the public sector with a particular focus on women in leadership roles in the Western Australian public sector.

Understanding the structural demographic or “profile” of a workforce is a critical management tool. Workforce demographics are widely reported through a state government agency’s annual reports, and aggregated data for the public sector is reported more broadly by the Public Sector Commission. Napoli, Whiteley, and Johansen (2005, 117) assert information on workforce trends provides a basis for understanding and establishing the cultural health of an organisation’s structures, systems and process. A key aspect, particularly in relation to this thesis, is understanding workforce composition by gender and management level. This chapter looks at women in the workforce and women in management in terms of their participation and representation at management levels (Millward 2006; Ranson 2012; Buzzanell and Liu 2007). There is a focus on women in the public sector in line with the objectives of this thesis.

This chapter provides an overview on women and work. It starts by looking at the national context, to set the scene for what occurs in Australia, before providing background on Western Australia. The chapter then provides an overview of the enabling environment in the public sector and how this is shaped to enable women’s economic contributions around their maternal and motherhood years. The data presented acknowledges the difficulties of transition through management levels and notes it can be a difficult journey even without maternity transitions.

2.1.1. Women and work in Australia

This section provides an overview of women's increased participation in the workforce, with a particular focus on women in senior roles from 2006 to 2020. Change has been slow, some describing it as glacial (Grant Thornton International Ltd 2020).

Women have long battled for social and institutional rights to equality; from access to universities, the right to vote, permanent employment, equal pay, and equal employment opportunity in the workplace (Australian Human Rights Commission 2014b; United Nations 2014). Legislative changes have assisted in reducing the gap; however, there is still much to achieve. Of particular relevance for this research is women's participation in the paid workforce.

As at February 2020, women represented 47.4% of the total workforce in the Australian labour market, i.e. people who work who are female. This is made up of 25.8% of the full-time workforce and 21.6% of the part-time workforce (Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2020b). At the leadership level, in 2020, only 30.7% of company directors in the ASX 200 were women (Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2020b). The total participation rate of working age Australian women who work is 61.4%, compared to 70.9% of men (Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2020b). While women have firmly claimed their place in the Australian workforce, they are still not proportionally represented in full-time employment or at decision-making levels of organisations. The Workplace Gender Equality Agency scorecards show that women are highly concentrated in health/social care, education and training, and retail industries. Occupational segregation was noted to be most prevalent in community and personal services, and in clerical and administration roles (Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2019a).

Low representation of women in management continues to be an ongoing issue globally. Reports such as the World Economic Forum's *Global Gender Gap Report* and *Women in Business: Building a Blueprint for Action* illustrate

the magnitude of the global issue (Ahmed 2019; Grant Thornton International Ltd 2019; World Economic Forum 2011). Publishing global gender gap rankings makes women's low representation visible (World Economic Forum 2011). Increasing the visibility of global gender gap illustrates the need to shift mindsets to one of realisation to face the challenge ahead (World Economic Forum 2011).

Australia is ranked 44th in the *Global Gender Gap Report 2020*, dropping from 15th in 2006 (World Economic Forum 2019). The drop in Australia's ranking suggests a need for research into why this has occurred, the barriers women face in the workforce, and an examination into why women's underrepresentation continues. The 2020 Report shows that — in countries where data is available — women hold 36% of managerial positions (World Economic Forum 2019). A key finding of the report projects — at the current rate of growth and change — it will take almost 100 years to achieve global gender parity across the 107 benchmarked countries since 2006. This is far greater in the East Asia and Pacific region (where Australia is grouped), with gender parity not expected for another 163 years.

Reframing diversity from the “right thing to do”, to being “the best thing for business” (Grant Thornton International Ltd 2019) requires a commitment and visionary outlook, and investing in and utilising “the whole talent pool” (World Economic Forum 2019). International regions who have pushed past the 30% of women in managerial positions — considered a tipping point (Ahmed 2019) — have achieved success with concerted effort using targeted initiatives to jump-start a shift in results (Grant Thornton International Ltd 2019). A new narrative is necessary to accelerate change, with governments needing to create a more active policy setting that develops, integrates, supports and diversifies the whole talent pool (World Economic Forum 2019).

Specific policy interventions, which support diversification, are considered below. Table 2-1 provides a timeline of key social policy developments for women in relation to work in Australia, starting at a federal level in 1908. Developments in Western Australia are indicated with (**). In particular, it

focuses on the Equal Opportunity Act, and pregnancy and parental leave policies.

Table 2-1 Timeline of social policy developments for women

Year	Development
1908	The first minimum living wage for workers was set, allowing a man to support a family of five, and the female wage was set as a percentage of the male wage.
1939	An increased number of women began entering the workforce in place of men during WWII.
1943	WWII women's lobby groups fought for women's working rights. The Women's Employment Board was established, and women's basic wage was increased from two-thirds to three-quarters of the male basic wage.
1948	The Universal Declaration of Human Rights included the principle of equal pay for equal work.
1966	The marriage bar in Commonwealth Public Service was lifted, which had prevented women from continued employment once married.
1969	The case was made to the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission (ACAC) and women were granted equal pay for equal work. The ruling acknowledged that where men continued to be the "breadwinner" they were entitled to higher wages.
1972	ACAC ruled in favour of equal pay for work of equal value, introducing the same minimum wage for men and women.
1973	<i>Maternity Leave Act 1973</i> introduced 12 weeks paid maternity leave for Commonwealth public sector employees.
1974	ACAC removed the "breadwinner" component in acknowledgement of women's increased role in providing for their families.
1979	52 weeks of unpaid maternity leave introduced for female employees in all federal awards.
1984	The <i>Sex Discrimination Act 1984</i> was proclaimed as Australia's commitment to human rights.

	**The <i>Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA)</i> was proclaimed as Western Australia's commitment to human rights.
1986	<i>Affirmative Action (Equal Employment Opportunity for Women) Act 1986</i> was introduced.
1990	Australia ratified the International Labour Organization's 1981 Geneva Convention 156 for family responsibility, endorsing equality for men and women's employment.
	The Commonwealth established a Work and Family Unit in the Department of Industrial Relations, placing an industrial focus on balance.
	Industrial Relations Commission ruling that 51 weeks of unpaid parental leave after the birth/adoption is available to either parent.
1992	**Western Australia expanded the <i>Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA)</i> to include family responsibilities and family status.
1993	The <i>Industrial Relations Reform Act 1993</i> was introduced establishing family responsibilities as grounds for discrimination, and enterprise bargaining as the vehicle for wage setting and leave determination.
1994	Special Family Leave Test Case established the first minimum entitlement to carer's leave for men and women.
1996	Introduction of the <i>Workplace Relations Act 1996</i> reflecting requirements on employers to provide men and women equal pay for work of equal value.
1999	The <i>Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999</i> replaced the <i>Affirmative Action Act 1986</i> .
2006	**The Western Australian public sector introduced 10 weeks paid parental leave from 1 July 2006, and scheduled to increase to 12 weeks in 2007 and 14 weeks in 2008.
2009	<i>Fair Work Act 2009</i> was proclaimed, replacing the Australian Industrial Relations Commission. **All states except Western Australia handed over industrial powers to the Commonwealth.
	Australia's Productivity Commission launched an inquiry into Paid Parental Leave.

	Unpaid parental leave was extended from 12 to 24 months.
2010	<i>Paid Parental Leave Act 2010</i> introduced.
	Australia's National Employment Standards included provisions enabling the right to request a change in working arrangements and an additional 12 months unpaid parental leave.
	**Grounds for breastfeeding or bottle-feeding discrimination was introduced to the <i>Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA)</i> .
2011	Grounds for family responsibility discrimination was introduced, protecting men and women.
	Federal Paid Parental Leave scheme implemented, introduced 18 weeks of Parental Leave Pay and the ability to transfer some or all of the primary caregiver's unused leave to an eligible partner.
2012	<i>Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012</i> was passed, reflecting a name change for the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency.
	The <i>Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012</i> replaced the <i>Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999</i> .
2013	The Dad and Partner Pay scheme was introduced providing a 2-week payment equal to the national minimum wage for eligible working fathers and partners.
2013	Commonwealth Paid Parental Leave scheme review conducted.

Source: Developed from Australian Institute of Family Studies (2013), Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (1998), Department of Consumer and Employment Protection (2007a; 2007b), Equal Opportunity Commission (2020), Fair Work Ombudsman (n.d.), National Museum of Australia (n.d.), *Public Service Award 1992 (WA)*, Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2018; 2019c), and Colley (2018).

2.1.1.1. **Social impact of parental leave on workforce participation**

Parental leave is particularly relevant to workforce participation as it is linked to the reproductive and maternal aspects of giving birth. An understanding of the social impact of the policy is important to the study. Australia is among the lowest (one of two countries) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries in relation to parental leave entitlements, including duration, pay and flexibility (Crabb 2019). Australia's

legislated national parental leave provision of 18 weeks of paid leave is relatively low in comparison to Sweden's 60 weeks, and the OECD average of 54.1 weeks (Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2018).

Parental leave policies have an important social, economic, and political impact. The *Supporting Working Parents: Pregnancy and Return to Work National Review Report* (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2014c) and *Towards gender balanced parental leave, Australian and international trends – Insights* (Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2018) emphasise the prominence of parental leave policies in supporting working parents by providing job security and promoting the health and wellbeing of mothers and infants. The Insights Paper focused on the contribution of these policies to maternal health and wellbeing by enabling bonding, recovery time, and optimal breastfeeding for infant health (Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2018).

In Australia in 2019, women represented 71.5% of parental leave accessed (Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2019b). Non-leave-based support — such as breastfeeding facilities, referrals services, on-site or subsidised childcare, and return to work bonuses — are on the rise (Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2020b). In 2018, Workplace Gender Equality Agency research also highlighted the relationship and importance of parental leave policies to the division of work between women and men, and to achieving work-family balance as levers for reducing the impact of career interruptions on women (Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2018).

Overall, the Workplace Gender Equality Agency concluded a general increase in women's workforce participation has resulted from the legislated requirement for organisations to implement parental leave policy and flexible work practices (Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 2018).

2.1.2. Women and work in Western Australia

The Women's Report Card (2019) indicates that Western Australian families are more traditional than Australian families in relation to the division of labour, with 28.8% of men and 23.0% women believing in gendered family structures where the male is the breadwinner and females provide domestic care (Cassells et al. 2019).

Similar to global trends, Western Australian women are highly concentrated in health, education, and retail industries with lower concentrations in construction, mining and transport.

There have been some gains in leadership roles. By 2019, 31% of the Western Australian parliament's elected Legislative Council members were women and on government boards, 48% of board members were women (Cassells et al. 2019). Representation of women in Senior Executive Service roles in the Western Australian public sector are almost equal, with 49.1% of tier three management and 44% in tier two being women. However, Western Australia remains the lowest for the representation of women in tier one roles (meaning, head of agency positions) at only 30.7% compared to other states in Australia.

Western Australia has been noted to have the most significant gender pay gap which was 22.1% in February 2020. This is much higher than the national figure of 13.9%. This gap is attributed to the higher concentration of mining and construction industries in WA, where the pay is relatively higher than the national average and the representation of women is relatively low (Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2020a).

2.1.2.1. WA Labor Party focus on women's equality

In March 2017, the Western Australian (WA) Labor Party was elected to Parliament for the first time in eight years. The Labor Party State Platform (WA Labor 2017) for community and social policy focused on women's equality, choice and participation, making this change in government

significant to this study. A key aspect was the importance of achieving equal gender representation and women's right to participate in decision-making across all levels of government. The WA Labor Party noted the social and economic disadvantage of women's unpaid carer roles, calling for strong and affirmative action in gender equality by:

- a) Proactively pursue equal gender representation across all levels of Government, including in the executive and on Government boards;
- b) Actively oppose the inaction of governments who do not establish significant affirmative action measures and/or have under-representation of women in Parliament; and
- c) Proactively pursue equal pay for women for work of equal or comparable value.
- d) All women of any age group should have equitable access to life opportunities and support services specific to their age and gender needs, in both their personal and professional lives.

(WA Labor 2017, 25)

The machinery of government reforms that followed the March 2017 election, saw the announcement of a Service Priority Review and a number of independent reviews. The number of state government departments reduced from 41 to 25, and the Senior Executive Service (SES) reduced by 20% (McGowan 2017). In the Western Australian public sector, the SES refers to positions classified at level 9 or above that attract management or policy responsibility for an agency. It was stated that efforts to renew the SES would include the identification, development and promotion of talented women as outlined as part of the WA Labor Platform (WA Labor 2017).

The Independent Review of the Public Sector Commission indicated that the Public Sector Leadership Council was involved in analysing trends associated with women in leadership, and that a sector-wide diversification strategy was key to implementing the change (Public Sector Commission 2019)

2.1.2.2. Women’s participation in the WA public sector

In the Western Australian (WA) public sector 72.8% of employees are women (Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment 2019).

However, the representation of women in leadership in the WA public sector has been low, and despite current government policy shows little sign of change. Available statistics for the duration of this study on women in the WA public sector and in the SES are shown in the following two tables.

Table 2-2 provides a comparison of women’s overall representation in the public sector to those in senior executive roles. Table 2-3 provides a comparison of women in senior executive roles to other Australian jurisdictions.

Table 2-2 Percentage representation for women in the WA public sector 2009–2018

	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Women’s overall representation	67.3	67.5	67.9	68.3	71.6	71.9	72.2	72.3	72.7	72.4
Women in senior executive roles	25.1	26.7	26.4	27.6	29.2	30.1	31.7	32.9	34.2	33.3

Source: Reproduced from Cox, Thompson, and Wabeke (2019).

Table 2-3 Comparison of performance across jurisdictions (2018)

Performance	WA	NSW	NT	QLD	TAS	VIC	SA	APS
Women – SES	33.3%	38.7%	53.5%	45.3%	36.2%	44.7%	49%	44.8%
Women overall	72.4%	65.1%	63.9%	69.5%	71.0%	67.4%	69%	59.0%

Source: Developed from Cox, Thompson, and Wabeke (2019); Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment (2019).

Table 2-3 shows women’s representation in the WA public sector in 2018 is the highest in Australia at 72.4%, but their representation at SES level was then the lowest at 33.3%. As of February 2019, following the 20% reduction

of the SES, there were 45 fewer women, and 102 fewer men in the SES. At this time there were 98 female and 168 male SES officers employed. Thus, the overall representation of women in the SES increased to 35.6%, higher than the representation of women in the SES before the machinery of government changes (Cox et al. 2019).

Yaish and Stier (2009) argue that the high participation rates observed for women in the public sector may be attributed to the attractive flexible work practices offered. They argue that it may also be responsible for further widening the gap by positioning women’s job authority, status and responsibility lower than that of male peers, making women’s path to management laden with greater challenges.

2.1.2.3. Gender pay gap in the public sector

The gender pay gap in the Western Australian public sector is determined by the difference between the median salary of men as compared to women in the sector. Following the Labor Party election in March 2017, data showed the median salary of men in public sector employment remained higher than that of women; however, the difference decreased over the subsequent 12 months. Table 2-4 is a breakdown of the change in gender pay levels between 2017 and 2018 (Cox, Thompson and Wabeke 2019).

Table 2-4 Gender pay gap between 2017 and 2018

Median salary (contracts)	December 2017	December 2018	Change (\$)
All employees	\$85,175	\$85,175	nil
Female	\$81,820	\$83,516	+\$1,696
Male	\$94,614	\$94,538	-\$76
Gender pay gap	\$12,794	\$11,022	-\$1,772

Source: Reproduced from Cox, Thompson, and Wabeke (2019).

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2018) identified that the gender pay gap is widest when women are balancing work and family responsibility. Workforce participation statistics for Australia and Western Australia demonstrate that despite government policy, women remain underrepresented at senior levels and overall, earn less than their male counterparts.

While women comprise 72.8% of the public sector workforce, 37% are less than 40 years old (Public Sector Commission 2018/19), and are therefore considered to be within prime childrearing age and relevant to a potential maternity transition. Women are more highly represented across levels 1–6, with a noteworthy drop in distribution between level 6 (20.1%) to level 7 (5.8%) (Public Sector Commission 2018/19). This suggests motherhood may be having an impact on women’s presence in management.

2.1.3. The enabling environment for women’s rights

Women’s rights have long been at the core of a global commitment of the United Nations international conventions. The phrase “women’s rights are human rights” (United Nations 2014, 12) was the rally cry of the Vienna Convention in 1993, and “the future we want” (United Nations 2014, 16) at the 2012 sustainable development convention in Brazil. But this was not always the case and human rights did not expressly cover the fundamental freedoms of women. Activists have ensured passage for women with gender-specific dimensions being added in the human rights framework (United Nations 2014).

The key to women’s rights — in the United Nations (UN) formulation — is economic participation and leadership, where special measures are considered necessary by the UN to provide women with an equal foundation. The Human Rights Framework provides the platform for the whole legislative system to create an enabling environment to achieve equality for women; an enabling environment that addresses gender equality is one of empowerment, where women can choose to develop personally and

professional without limitation. Breaking down social norms such as gender stereotypes, roles and prejudices are essential to achieving new realities for women (United Nations 2014).

At the Australian Commonwealth government level, the enabling environment began almost 40 years ago with the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*. This was Australia's commitment to human rights and ensuring equality between men and women (Australian Human Rights Commission 2012). At the Commonwealth level, the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*, *Fair Work Act 2009*, and work health and safety laws make it unlawful to discriminate on the basis of pregnancy, potential pregnancy, breastfeeding and family responsibilities. Discrimination on these grounds means an employee receives less favourable treatment to an employee without parenting (potential or otherwise) responsibility (Australian Human Rights Commission 2014c). In addition, there is state-based equal opportunity and other legislation, explained in more detail below, designed to ensure non-discriminatory environments in employment.

The regulatory space is influenced by a number of public and private parties, of which government is one, and demonstrates a complex symbiotic relationship between government, people and organisations (Freiberg 2017). These relationships are polycentric meaning "they are marked by fragmentation, complexity and interdependency between actors, in which state and non-state actors are both regulators and regulated, and their boundaries are marked by the issues or problems which they are concerned with, rather than necessarily by a common solution" (Freiberg 2017, 100). The statutory legal system originates from multiple sources including international, common, customary, indigenous, local and religious law. Together this forms the basis for regulation, in some form or another, whereby market redress is required (Freiberg 2017).

2.1.3.1. **Industrial relations system in Western Australia**

Government regulatory tools provide broader regulatory power and flexibility to deliver services consistent with government legislation (Freiberg 2017). The industrial relations system for the Western Australian public sector is managed by the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety. It is the regulatory authority responsible for industrial oversight to the public and private sectors in Western Australia. Public sector workplaces are covered by employment laws such as acts and regulations, awards and agreements which detail employment conditions (Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety 2019). These instruments outline the operating environment for the public sector (Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety 2019) and are specific forms of intervention to effect change (Mintrom 2012).

Acts and regulations provide the basis for the enabling and administering of other key legislation impacting on public authorities. The *Public Sector Management Act 1994* is the enabling legislation through which public sector authorities are established. Authorities established under law must also observe other key legislation — such as the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* (WA) — in the performance of its functions (Department of Treasury 2018). Awards and agreements — such as the *Public Service Award 1992* (WA) — outline the minimum standards of employment, detailing conditions of employment or entitlements to parental leave (Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety 2019).

The Western Australian public sector comprises government departments, Senior Executive Services (SES) organisations, non-SES organisations, and ministerial offices. In 2012, when this study commenced, the Public Sector Commission reported there were 37 government departments, 40 SES organisations and 29 non-SES organisations (Public Sector Commission 2011/12). Over the years there has been some fluctuation in the composition and size of the public sector. In 2018/19, following the machinery of government changes, it was reported there were 25 government departments, 43 SES organisations, 52 non-SES organisations and 17

ministerial offices (Public Sector Commission 2018/19). These changes had some impact on the representation of women in management as discussed in Section 2.1.2.2.

2.1.3.2. **Public Service Award 1992 (WA): Parental Leave Provisions**

The Public Service Award 1992 (WA) sits beneath the *Public Sector Management Act 1992 (WA)* and outlines the provisions and entitlements afforded to public sector employees.

Section 28 of the Award details the particulars of parental leave provisions as they relate to entitlements, access, transfer to safe job, notice and variation to leave, communication during leave, and return to work. Section 9 details “part-time employment” and section 20 the “hours” of work related to prescribed hours of duty and other working arrangements such as flexitime. An overview of the particulars available to mothers in the public sector are as follows:

- up to 52 weeks unpaid leave, and up to 14 weeks paid leave, with the paid and unpaid leave able to be shared between partners. Leave may be extended, unpaid, by up to two years.
- four weeks’ notice is required prior to taking paid or unpaid leave and when returning to work.
- being transferred to a safe job where illness or risk arises, either pregnancy or work related, and right to return to the prior substantive role when returning to work.
- if any major change or significant event in the workplace is likely to impact on the woman’s role, the employer will make information available and provide an opportunity for discussion.
- returning to the same role or a role equivalent in pay, conditions and status as the substantive role.
- may return on a part-time or job-share basis to the substantive role or to a different role at the same level with the option of reverting to full-time employment in their substantive role.

- may adopt flexible start and finish times as long as the four-week pay period totals 150 hours (a multiple of the 37.5 hours per week).

Public Service Award 1992 (WA),

Paid parental leave entitlements under the Award started at 8 weeks in 2006 and increased by 2 weeks each year, to be 14 weeks of paid parental leave by 2008 (*Public Service Award 1992 (WA)*).

2.1.3.3. **Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA)**

The *Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA)* is a state administered Act reflecting Western Australia's commitment to international human rights. The objectives of the Act are to "promote equality of opportunity for all persons and to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of sex, pregnancy, race, religious or political conviction, or involving sexual harassment" (*Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA)*; Equal Opportunity Commission 2020).

The Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment is a statutory appointment under Part IX of the Act. Section 145 of the Act requires all authorities to prepare and implement equal employment opportunity management plans to address the objects of the Act. Management plans are focused on developing activities and programs to identify and eliminate potential discrimination or employment barriers that may be experienced by diversity groups. One of the diversity groups the Director focuses and reports on is women, including in the senior executive service. The Director monitors authorities' activities and programs to ensure women are supported throughout their pregnancy, maternity leave and return to work — enabling women to manage their family responsibilities, a key aspect to overcome employment barriers for women (*Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA)*).

At the time this study commenced in 2012, the Director reported that 100% of public sector authorities were compliant in preparing and implementing management plans, with 26.3% of positions in management tiers held by women (Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment 2011). In 2018/19 only 12% of public sector authorities were compliant; however, it

was promising to see women represented 36% of positions in management tiers. The decline in compliance in relation to women's representation in management was not explained or attributed to any specific activity or program undertaken by the Director or public sector authorities (Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment 2019).

2.1.4. Economic implications of motherhood

The economic value of women in the workplace is increased productivity and innovation (Australian Human Rights Commission 2014c; KPMG 2018; Kitchen and Wardell-Johnson 2018; Cassells and Duncan 2018). Economic modelling has shown that halving the gender pay gap and increasing women's participation could result in a \$60 billion rise in gross domestic product (GDP) by 2038 and an uplift in living standards (KPMG 2018). However, what is concerning are the continuing disincentives that impact on levels of women's economic participation (KPMG 2018).

The GDP potential sees women as the "hidden value" in improved capitalist outcomes, and higher profit margins (Broderick 2010; Haslam and Ryan 2008; Pomeroy 2007). The promise of greater returns for community stakeholders marks a shift whereby governments are placing more effort into workforce planning as a way of reducing the costs associated with attraction, engagement and retention of female employees (Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency 2008).

The economic implications of motherhood are well established, particularly in relation to career breaks and part-time work (Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2019c; Livermore, Rodgers and Siminski 2011). In the workplace, the penalty of career breaks or interruptions to participation by women are linked with shorter tenure, depreciated skills, reduced experience, lower mobility, lower pay/status roles, and less leadership opportunity (Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2019c). The impact of breaks or interruptions for women operate like negative compounding interest to their financial standing. Livermore, Rodgers and Siminski (2011) argue that it accumulates with each

break, 5% for the first child and 9% for two plus (Livermore, Rodgers and Siminski 2011). This is further impacted with a wage penalty, 7% the first year and 12% the second year back at work following a break (Livermore, Rodgers and Siminski 2011).

The effects of the motherhood penalty are also based on the potential of motherhood. The *She's Price(d)less* report discussed a German experiment that showed women receive lower pay on the anticipation of motherhood necessitating the need for a maternity break (Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2019c). In the workplace, the part-time penalty has been identified, and impacts on perceptions surrounding productivity and willingness to accept the financial and professional trade-off for reduced hours (Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2019c).

For women's economic outlook to improve greater work-life balance, reduced childcare costs, shared parental responsibilities, overcoming economic disincentives and behavioural change are required (Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2019c). Cassells and Duncan (2018) argue there is significant value in changing the economic outlook for women by reconstructing childcare to include on-site employer provided childcare. Retaining skilled workers who are also mothers reduces business costs resulting from turnover, recruitment and training of new employees. Retaining part-time women, by implementing policies and providing financial supports such as childcare, translates to an increase in women's participation rate (Cassells and Duncan 2018).

2.1.4.1. **Maternal calling in the prime professional years**

On average Australian women are 29 years when they have their first child, an age at which it is considered they are also in their prime professionally (Australian Human Rights Commission 1999). In the Western Australian public sector there are just under 10,000 women between the prime childrearing ages of 25–29 years (Public Sector Commission 2018/19). This age for childrearing is being impacted by workplace pressures and lack of

support, with more women reconsidering the timing of motherhood (Myers 2017; Sevón 2005; Australian Human Rights Commission 1999). Women believe the passage to motherhood will impact their career, beginning with maternity leave (54%), followed with sacrificing their career after the birth (29%) (Australian Human Rights Commission 1999).

While in the early 1990s women were having their first child in their 20s, this has changed over time (Australian Institute of Family Studies 2020). The *Australia's mothers and babies 2018—in brief* report shows that women are having children later in life, with the median age in 2018 being 31 years and 23–24% of all mothers being over 35 (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2020). This has increased 25 percentage points from 1991 to 2016, with 48% of women in their 30s having their first child (Australian Institute of Family Studies 2020).

Small changes pave the way for motherhood and leadership. Australian Senator Larissa Waters and New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern both made history by bringing their babies into parliament and the United Nations General Assembly respectively, challenging the norms for motherhood and leadership (Crabb 2019; Roy 2018). Around the world similar acts are also occurring in Spain and Iceland, with United States and the United Kingdom yet to support breastfeeding in parliament (Erickson 2017). Along with the breastfeeding policy, the New Zealand parliament passed policy to allow childcare costs to be covered for ministers travelling on official business, although this is yet to be drawn upon (Roy 2018).

2.1.4.2. **Pregnancy discrimination**

Policy changes are a result of better understanding of the discrimination women experience around pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding. In Australia, pregnancy discrimination relates to one's rights or privileges that result in an employee receiving less favourable treatment to another, i.e. one without parenting responsibility is discriminated on the grounds of pregnancy, parental leave and return to work (Australian Human Rights Commission

2014c). In Western Australia, discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy, family responsibility or breastfeeding is covered in the Equal Opportunity Act and is discussed in 2.1.3.3.

The *Supporting Working Parents* report notes discrimination occurring at all three stages: pregnancy (27%), parental leave (32%) and return to work (36%). Discrimination is identified as being either direct or indirect, and ranging from behavioural discrimination to dismissal (Australian Human Rights Commission 2014a). One in five (18%) women experience dismissal, redundancy or job loss (Australian Human Rights Commission 2014a). The subtle and indirect behavioural discrimination observed through dismissal is noted as the most difficult to prove. It has been suggested that there is a reluctance by the legal system to question an employer's decision and right to manage their business (Jennings-Edquist 2018; Heron and Charlesworth 2016). This highlights how the legislative foundations and policy environment preventing discrimination have not had the desired effect of eliminating discrimination (Australian Human Rights Commission 2014c; Kitchen and Wardell-Johnson 2018).

Pregnancy discrimination has been shown by the Australian Human Rights Commission to be highly prevalent in the workplace (Australian Human Rights Commission 2014c). In 1999–2000, the Australian Human Rights Commission attributed 18% of complaints received to alleged pregnancy discrimination (Australian Human Rights Commission 1999). Furthermore, headline data in the 2014 national review on discrimination related to pregnancy, parental leave and return to work showed that one in two (49%) mothers reported experiencing discrimination in the workplace (Australian Human Rights Commission 2014a).

For the 27% of mothers found to experience discrimination during pregnancy, it directly affected their pay or conditions, health and safety, performance or progression, and they experienced negative attitudes or comments. When they returned to work, discrimination related to flexible work and pay or conditions, and ongoing discrimination by way of ongoing negative attitudes

or comments (Australian Human Rights Commission 2014a). Heron and Charlesworth (2016) note that in the European region there are tax incentives to retain mothers and strong laws imposed on employers to prevent new mothers from being dismissed for at least one year after they return to work.

The Australian Human Rights Commission (2014b) suggested that addressing discrimination in the Australian system may require similar intervention. Doing so will have considerable impact on the economic outlook with increased business productivity and innovation coming from feeding and growing women's talent pools (knowledge and skills), reducing turnover, and improving organisational reputations (Australian Human Rights Commission 2014c).

2.1.5. Chapter summary

This chapter has provided an overview of women's participation in work at a national level in comparison to the state of Western Australia and the public sector. It provides detail on the legislative and regulatory framework for women's participation. It has given context relating to women's rights in relation to the maternal role of mothering. It details the level of proven discrimination experienced by women through pregnancy, parental leave and return to work — this, reflecting the three phases of the maternity transition illustrated in Figure 1-1.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter the context for women at work in terms of their participation, representation in senior management and role as a working mother in the Western Australian public sector was discussed.

This chapter builds on the context by reviewing existing literature and presenting concepts, arguments and gaps in the current body of knowledge for women navigating maternity transitions in management. In doing so it identifies the importance of this research's contribution to mothers as managers in the public sector.

The approach taken to this review is outlined and demonstrated in relation to the objectives of the study. The heat map (Figure 3-1) shows the overlapping nature of the themes discussed.

3.1.1. Approach to a critical review of the literature

This section presents the research approach to the review of the literature associated with how women in managerial roles navigate maternity transitions. The key themes central to this research that guided the literature review are gendered workplaces, equal opportunity policy, "the manager" and how managerial jobs are defined, professional identity, careers and motherhood, career theory particularly in relation to women's careers, and new career models for women. The literature review focuses on key problems that have influenced the research to date and presents an analysis of this, showing where it is linked and where there are identified gaps. Figure 3-1 Heat map shows the relationship of themes discussed within the chapter to the research objectives and observable gaps in literature (indicated with a dotted line).

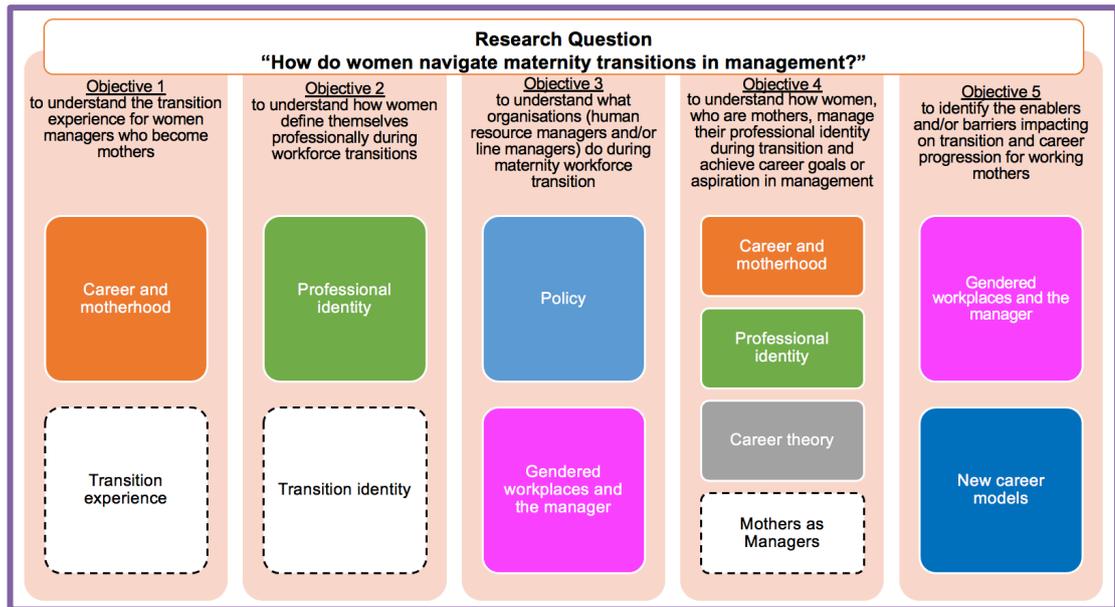


Figure 3-1 Heat map

The scope of the literature analysis has been set to critically review key contributions focusing on women’s transitional experiences published in English and primarily relevant to organisational contexts in Australia, United Kingdom, and the United States that has been published in academic journals predominately in the past ten years. This literature is seen as having had significant influence on policy and procedural changes in the Australian context and there are similarities between the public sector in the UK and in Australia that are useful in the context of this research. Seminal literature, where relevant, has also been included.

“Transition” as a search term produces few returns, identifying a pocket of women’s management literature that can be further explored. Alternative search terms such as “women”, “motherhood”, “management”, “pregnancy”, “leadership”, “working mothers”, “professional identity”, “psychological contract”, and “gendered culture”/ “organisational culture” revealed few studies on transitional experiences. Previous studies relevant to this area have focused specifically on workplace flexibility, a related but different issue. Literature mapping, as shown in Figure 3-1, highlights an existing gap in what is known and understood about maternity transition at an individual level as women transition through pregnancy to maternity returning to the

workplace within the organisational context. This study addresses this gap in literature by focusing on women's transition through motherhood and management.

The review of literature draws on credible sources published in professional journals and government reports. In doing so, the chapter introduces the problem, analyses past research and identifies gaps linked to my research. The chapter is structured according to the heat map illustrated in Figure 3-1.

3.2. Gendered workplaces

The way a workplace is constructed is a central theme of the third and fifth research objectives: to understand what organisations and/or managers do during a workforce transition; and to identify the enablers and/or barriers for working women. West and Zimmerman (1987) play a key role in framing the discussion of how doing gender results in behaviours associated with being male or female and a manager. They demonstrate how doing gender is responsible for setting gendered culture in the workplace. They describe these behaviours as linked to particular organisational roles and expectations, which shaped expectations that to be a manager is to be male (West and Zimmerman 1987; Young and Hurlic 2007).

This section explores enactment of gender-related behaviour and its impact on individuals choosing behaviour that reasserts difference in gendered workplaces. This is often done with little awareness of the gendered nature of the structures that are in place.

3.2.1. Doing gender, doing work

The social structure of the workplace is heavily framed around the "ideal worker" mindset (Wynn 2017), placing value on full-time labour market participation (Guerrina 2002). The picture perfect "ideal worker" being the employee who prioritises work above all else and never takes time off (Wynn 2017). The ideal worker is more likely to be seen as male and becoming a

father is not seen as impacting on his ability to continue as the ideal worker (Lott and Klenner 2018; Correll 2017).

Organisational culture is established in the rules and behaviours that provide an outline of expectations of how men and women “should” enact norms attributed to their gender in the workplace (Wynn 2017). These “should” statements construct “the way of work” around masculine behaviours associated with what success and advancement and the ideal worker looks like (Guerrina 2002; Wynn 2017).

The convergence of women’s employment and caregiving roles today place women — particularly women who are seeking or in managerial careers and also mothers — in conflict with expectations to fit the ideal worker model (Zhou 2017). Traditional social structures for family and work are perpetuated, with women’s economic contributions regarded as supplementary or secondary in the male as breadwinner model, placing greater economic value on the man as the primary provider for the family (Guerrina 2002). Women seeking to build managerial careers are expected to conform to existing work structures by adopting full-time hours thus receiving recognition as career-committed employees (Freundlich 1997). Despite changes in the legal framework for the labour market and broad policies regarding greater flexibility, there appears to be little change in the culture of the market which continues to place higher value on the ideal employee. Motherhood, as a result is perceived as the point in time for decreased productivity, hireability, or promotional value. These issues largely persist, indicating an expectation that women will inevitably have children, become mothers and this will impact on their opportunities.(Wynn 2017).

Guerrina (2002) argues that the traditional work structure continues to be framed around the construction of gender and division of labour, where the man is the primary provider or breadwinner and the woman is the caregiver for the family. The breadwinner model (Guerrina 2002) is built on the assumption that men are good (better) workers because they are more

committed and able to manage the demands of work (Wynn 2017). Men's worker value is measured by them not taking time off for family, the ability to work long hours or travel, and job security (Myers 2017).

Human capital (Becker 1975, in Tharenou, 1999), social expectation (Landau and Arthur 1992, in Tharenou, 1999), wife as a resource (Kanter 1977, in Tharenou, 1999; Pfeffer and Ross 1982) and distributive justice (Pfeffer and Ross 1982, in Tharenou, 1999) theories demonstrate West and Zimmerman (1987) doing gender in practice. While human capital is considered to be gender blind, focusing on investments in training and experience when blended with social expectations and culture; the result is a focus on men being more stable and reliable workers, the primary breadwinner, having supportive wives (Crabb 2015) or being able to financially support their wife and children (Tharenou 1999).

Such theories help explain gendered work value and potential in the workplace, confirming the tension experienced by post-traditional women wanting to advance and maintain management roles whilst also meeting actual and socially expected caregiver responsibilities (Tharenou 1999; Schwartz 1989). Tharenou (1999) reflects on the impact of family structures on careers in modern day dual income families where both mother and father are employed (Tharenou 1999; Schneer and Reitman 1993) and more stereotypical roles, as described above, by referring to women seeking to maintain their careers as post-traditionalists. This highlights a new way of work is needed to support work family structures in the modern work environment, one that Zhou found requires a greater influence than the internalisation of traditional attitudes toward motherhood and employment to overcome and trigger a shift in gendered attitudes (Zhou 2017). With mothers' increasing need and desire to work, women are becoming less traditional and more adaptive in their approach to employment and motherhood (Zhou 2017; Radcliffe and Cassell 2013).

As post-traditional women move away from being the primary caregiver in the home and providing supplementary financial support to the family, they

are challenging gendered workplace behaviours, including who could and should be a manager. Women's employment gives women the opportunity to have an independent identity outside of their marriage or relationships and home (Myers 2017). However, post-traditional women in management continue to be seen as, and are expected to be, ideal workers which can result in less control over their work schedule. As a result, they feel the pinch of work family conflict and its impact on their promotability (Myers 2017).

Gendered workplaces are creating work family spillover with time, strain and behaviour based tensions (Michel, Pichler and Newness 2014). While a range of literature focuses on the tensions experienced as a result of work family conflict (Chung 2018; Evans et al. 2014; Garcia 2007; Nowak, Naudé and Thomas 2013; Stevens 2013; Symmetra 2014; Teasdale 2013) for women in management, Radcliffe and Cassell (2013) draw on adaptive strategies used by women to navigate the work family spillover. By focusing on the decision-making framework where tension occurred, Radcliffe and Cassell (2013) were able to determine how and when decisions are made and where major decisions create a chain of (or limit) follow-on conflicts (Radcliffe and Cassell, 2013). This approach provides some insight into the enactment of gender-related behaviour by individuals within a social system. However, it overlooks the impact on individuals of these choices and where these reinforce gender difference in the workplace.

3.2.2. Gendered organisations

Feminist theory is central to understand women's roles as mothers, the division of labour in the home, and power in the workplace. Some of this is associated with how women and their bodies have been objectified in relation to childbearing.

Organisational challenge in feminist and gender theory centres around intersectionality and the politics of recognition. Intersectionality is associated with multiple disadvantage that can span across different social categories such as race, sexuality, age, disability or class (Acker 1990; O'Hagan 2014).

Gender intersectionality reflects a point where one or more of the social categories intersect with each other, and for women, create a shift in power and disadvantage. Politics of recognition occurs when an individual is denied or overlooked causing an identity conflict, the lack of recognition suppressing freedom in identity expression. Women are thus sidelined and/or stigmatised (Harding, Ford and Fotaki 2013). O'Hagan (2014) also asserts political discourse promotes, regulates and sustains women's relationship with power. Gender intersectionality and socio-political realities position women with lower organisational value to men (Harding, Ford and Fotaki 2013) and show that the organisational landscape is not and does not observe gender neutral conventions (Acker 1990).

Gender and feminist theory together have a key role in explaining how strategy, structure and culture around work exists. Gender theory focuses on what is understood to be inherently masculine or feminine, such as stereotypical displays that characterise what it means to be a girl or woman. Feminist theorists explain gender inequality in relation to women's rights and interests, such as women's rights to work, education and vote. Used together they explain the social context for masculine or feminine behaviours attributed to roles within the organisation and the inequality that results when constructed on masculine behaviours and imagery regarding career success. It results in everything an organisation does and is; its hierarchies, jobs and bodies presenting a deeply entrenched segregation of gender through masculinity (Acker 1990). A feminist organisation promotes feminist ideology, i.e. the rights and interests of women are considered and acted upon in everything the organisation does and is. These organisations reflect "the identity of the participants and of the organisation as a whole" (D'enbeau and Buzzanell 2013, 1449).

Feminism, gender and organisational theory has attracted considerable interest over time; more recently discussion has expanded to include diversity given the increase focus on diversity in organisations (Harding, Ford and Fotaki 2013). The shift in focus acknowledges diversity as a force for

changing the dynamics of power and difference within organisations (Page, Oldfield and Urstad 2008). The relationship between diversity and intersectionality is key to how a feminist approach plays out in gendered organisations (Acker 1990; O'Hagan 2014).

Harding, Ford, and Fotaki (2013) and Valentine (2007) argue that the intersection of multiple categories of inequality can intersect or interlock with multiple categories of inequality in organisations. Valentine (2007) argues that separating the difference between what is inside or outside of a singular category of inequality is impossible. The intersection of difference is a complex process of mutual adaptation, each category of inequality dynamically interacting with and changing the other, yet remaining distinct but changed (Walby, Armstrong and Strid 2012). Thus, intersectionality is a highly evolved and interactive process, as opposed to simply an interesting point of difference between two categories of inequality.

Power and difference is linked to assumptions around gender role and the division of labour privately and publicly (Guerrina 2002). Women in power positions are considered the tipping point to undoing gendered organisations and achieving gender equity (Stainback, Kleiner and Skaggs 2016).

Research conducted by the European Union has shown that even with the best policy frameworks in place to promote and protect women's rights, a fundamental weakness remains in the principle of equality in affording mothers the opportunity to be employed before, during, after and between transitions (Guerrina 2002).

Other research by the European Commission has shown inconsistency in the application and interpretation of regulatory frameworks, with a lack of alignment to service and mainstreaming of policy within the organisational context. The challenge for organisations is to embrace a change agenda that not only integrates a comprehensive diversity agenda but is set as the organisational norm (Page, Oldfield and Urstad 2008). Transformational organisations gain the advantage of the power triad of strategy, structure and

culture. They are able to reflect and sustain strong corporate social responsibility that works toward retaining and developing skilled, educated women (Linden 2012). Strategy can also have the reverse effect by reflecting an oppressive rhetoric or ideology through false imagery (Miller and Metcalfe 1998).

The challenge that is seen for feminist organisations is to find middle ground between respecting political vision and respecting difference (Miller and Metcalfe 1998). The area for focus is in overcoming what is often positioned as gender neutrality in policy to promote a rhetoric that not only redefines a more equal division of labour to foster greater participation in caregiving by fathers, but also sets new employment social structures and standards of work (worker) (Guerrina 2002). Chung (2018) found that the focus on gender neutrality in policy for gendered organisations was linked to cost of the majority demographic accessing the policy. This means that the underrepresented gender often had greater access to flexibility. Thus, for women in female dominated workplaces, the result can be lower wages without any benefit of additional flexibility. For men in male dominated workplaces, it can mean that there is limited access to flexibility, thus further embedding male as ideal worker norms.

3.2.2.1. **Body talk**

Gatrell (2013) builds on body work theory (Shilling and Mellor 2014) introducing the concept of “maternal body work”. The concept reflects the role of the mother in caring for others and body conformity within workplace norms (Shilling and Mellor 2014; Wainwright, Marandet and Rizvi 2011; Wolkowitz 2002). Through this research, Gatrell exposed the disconnect occurring between women’s private world of reproduction and the business world of productivity. In doing so, Gatrell demonstrates the confronting nature of a maternal body to “change shape and produce fluids” (Gatrell 2013, 263). Workplaces (managers and co-workers) struggle with the intersection of private and business worlds, the spillover revealing how unprepared or unwilling workplaces are in responding to the needs of

maternal bodies that may include morning sickness, emotions (tears), breastfeeding, and exhaustion.

Women's adaptive strategies to separate or minimise the tension between worlds can be largely associated with masking the maternal body (Gatrell 2011, 2013; Shilling and Mellor 2014) and also influences choices on timing in relation to motherhood (Sevón 2005). The intersection between private and business worlds was less observable in workplaces where a greater degree of value was placed on women's skills (Gatrell 2011, 2013) and which demonstrated a need for proactive workplace strategies, such as expanding support and advice services to women (Chubb 2008; Gatrell 2013; Roberts 2009).

The existing tensions between private and business worlds associated with maternal bodies (Gatrell 2013; Wolkowitz 2002) can also be linked to intensive mothering ideologies and motherhood ambivalence (Spector and Cinamon 2017; Myers 2017; Sevón 2005). Myers (2017) research supported the position that women's decisions toward motherhood are influenced by employment, relationships and caregiving. The dynamic of this emphasises the degree of "body work" expected of women to maintain social and labour market norms (Wolkowitz 2002). Support, perceived or actual, is a vital characteristic bridging both private and business worlds and influencing decisions around motherhood. The anticipation of lack of support creates an uncertainty on mothering expectations, sacrifice around careers and relationships, and loss of identity (Myers 2017). Thus, concealment or postponement of maternal bodies are considered adaptive strategies to women managing expectations between worlds where the imagined intensive mothering or career ideologies could be realised (Myers 2017).

Referred to as the "black box" (Liston-Smith and Chapman 2009, 57), mothers represent enormous untapped leadership potential. Motherhood is identified by Liston-Smith and Chapman as a period of enlightenment, accelerating learning in a way that unlocks hidden skills and capability. They note that maternity coaching is presenting as an emerging support that

employers are enacting to assist women identify and integrate leadership potential of motherhood and employment (Liston-Smith and Chapman 2009).

3.2.2.2. **How managerial jobs are defined in gendered workplaces**

Managers are responsible for implementing policy setting in the workplace. Thus, organisational managers have a direct influence on the transition and career progression for working mothers. Exploring the social construction of “the manager” in gendered workplaces addresses the third and fifth research objectives which are: to understand what organisations and/or managers do during a workforce transition; and to identify the enablers and/or barriers for working mothers.

The path to and in management for women is shown by Cabrera (2007), Cahusac and Kanji (2014), Cullen and Christopher (2007a), Evans et al.(2014), Haslam and Ryan (2008) Kossek, Su and Wu (2017) McIntosh et al.(2012) and Ryan and Haslam (2005) as having more challenges than for their male peers. One of the most recognised challenges — that is particularly relevant for this research — are career breaks or interruptions such as maternity leave (Cullen and Christopher 2007a; Eagly and Carli 2007), where the union of motherhood and management exposes gendered practice.

Women’s experiences in management have been compared to a labyrinth: a journey not as one of unattainable absolutes, but one marked with subversion or subtleties requiring more thought and management to navigate (Eagly and Carli 2007). Women’s journeys through the labyrinth have some well recognised metaphoric markers giving meaning to the challenges faced. Metaphors such as the concrete wall, glass ceiling, glass cliff or precipice, tiara syndrome, glass treehouse, or queen bee (Cullen 1990; Eiser and Morahan 2006; Jacobs 2007; Laff 2007; Ryan and Haslam 2005; Wilson 2001; Mavin 2008; Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency 2012) reflect the gendered structures of workplaces.

The rules and behaviours of managers, such as time, are gendered. O'Hagan (2014) argues that how time is ordered and managed is framed in employment structures with masculine cultures, and thereby represents the conditions or characteristics of the ideal worker. Women suffer by trying to conform to ideal worker norms and by being frowned upon for behaving outside of worker and social norms (O'Hagan 2014).

The ideal worker characteristics of a manager pose significant challenges for working mothers career progression in management (Millward 2006; Buzzanell and Liu 2007). The working mother identity highlights the holistic nature of the transition experience as a key contributor to career limitation (Millward 2006) and exposes the emphasis on gendered behaviours in the workplace associated with motherhood.

3.2.3. Section summary – gendered workplaces

The gendered workplace looked at literature related to the third and fifth research objective. It focused on two key areas: doing gender, doing work, and gendered organisations. These are seen as the main factors that contribute to how a workplace is constructed through gender-related behaviour and the impact to women's careers. Research into gender theory explains the masculine and feminine stereotypical behaviours that characterise gender at work, particularly in relation to the maternal body.

3.3. Policy

The third objective of the research question is to understand what organisations do during a workforce transition. For this research the focus is on the transition from working woman to working woman who is also a mother. This section explores policy literature to see how organisations are guided and how they use policy to support their employees. There is little practical evidence in the area of employee transition specifically related to policy for potential and new mothers moving in and out of the workforce.

3.3.1. Policy design

Labour market issues surrounding the inequality of women's paid employment and unpaid work are at the foreground of discussion on women and work (Guerrina 2002; Wynn 2017; Zhou 2017). Research by Kaine and Boersma (2018) in Australia addressed the intersection of women, work and industrial relations in media, parliamentary debate and academic literature. It highlighted that policy change around division of labour and paid employment for women was occurring at a significantly slower pace than research itself. They saw this as demonstrating how deeply rooted ideologies of women and work are in the Australian labour market (Kaine and Boersma 2018).

Unpacking the history of Affirmative Action and its role in Australian public policy is key to understanding the impact of legislative policy on women in the workplace. North-Samardzic (2009) quotes an early definition of Affirmative Action used in 1984 from the working party established to develop Affirmative Action legislation and conduct a pilot study. It was defined as:

A systematic means, determined by the employer in consultation with senior management, employees and unions, of achieving equal employment opportunity (EEO) for women. Affirmative Action is compatible with appointment and promotion on the basis of the principle of merit, skills and qualifications. It does not mean women will be given preference over better qualified men. It does mean men may expect to face stiffer competition for jobs. This is not discrimination. (North-Samardzic 2009, 60)

This led to the establishment of the *Affirmative Action Act 1986*. This was followed by a regulatory review of the Affirmative Action (AA) Act in 1998, the Act being replaced by the *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999* (EOWW). A further review of the EOWW Act and the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA) was undertaken in 2009 (North-Samardzic 2009). This resulted in the establishment in 2012 of

the Workplace Gender Equality Agency created to administer the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*.

Under constant attention since 1984, North-Samardzic (2009) determined Australia's Affirmative Action and regulatory frameworks have had limited impact due to the devolution in accountability and reporting. Providing organisations with the right to seek waivers or reduced reporting is considered to weaken any real commitment to policy action in workplaces and casts doubt over best practice outcomes reported by organisations. Policy research into the (D)evolution of Australia's EEO Regulatory Framework by North-Samardzic (2009) exposed the limited value regulatory frameworks have in organisations when managerial discretion has a greater practical influence on policy than the social justice outcomes the policy is intended to deliver. To deliver real change in workplace policy, organisations need to demonstrate accountability through visibility of genuine applied policy (North-Samardzic 2009).

Baird (2004) explained policy implementation as a design flaw occurring between one of three domains associated with the policy orientation: welfare, bargaining and business. In relation to maternity leave, the welfare orientation domain focuses on the traditional breadwinner model where women are assumed to be financially dependent on their husband, or the government. An example of this is the baby bonus that was paid to women in Australia encouraging them to stay home and raise a family (Baird 2004). In this situation the government is the primary agent promoting the maternal discourse. In the bargaining orientation domain, maternity leave is presented as working women's industrial right, bargained for by unions and regulated by industrial tribunals (Baird 2004). And finally, in the business orientation domain, maternity leave is positioned as a good business decision creating competitive and strategic advantage through diversity (Baird 2004).

Baird's research called for a new policy domain focused on equity orientation that overtly acknowledges women's multiple roles, which would be more successful in achieving outcomes for women. In order for policy to be

effective for women, policy orientation must centre around social feminism and equity where difference is recognised, placing the needs of working women at the forefront. Baird's (2004) analysis highlighted the absence of reproductive difference as the core issue in policy development and the fundamental change needed to legitimise both productivity and reproductive contributions of working women today (Baird 2004).

An insight paper on Australian and international trends in parental leave, identified Australia as lagging behind international policy trends (Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2018). Iceland, Sweden, Portugal and Norway are leading the way with the highest percentage of men using publicly administered parental leave (Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2018). Success may be attributed to Western Europe's campaign in the "politicisation of parenthood", where the Scandinavian experience in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden is one of significant reform in gender equality and work-family policy design (Ellingsæter and Leira 2006). Western Europe turned the issue into a social policy challenge and sought a wide range of policy solutions. Some of these include daddy quotas, investment in early childhood, cash for care grant schemes, targets for childcare or state sponsored services, working time and caring strategies (Ellingsæter and Leira 2006). Germany also adopted similar policy solutions by introducing "Familienarbeitszeit" providing both parents with support via wage replacements to reduce full-time employment to 80% (Müller, Neumann and Wrohlich 2015). Efforts across Europe indicate an extensive investment in support mechanisms for the family were required to change the nature of work and family (Ellingsæter and Leira 2006).

Looking at the pre and post birth experiences of Australian parents accessing parental leave policies, Whitehouse et al. (2007) show that there is a varied approach to leave patterns. While Whitehouse et al. (2007) research could provide valuable insight into the practical side of policy by understanding the policy impact on work and family (Whitehouse et al. 2007), further analysis is required to explain leave decisions in the lead-up to parental leave and on the return to work. Other research has confirmed leave patterns may be

closely associated to perceived or actual employer support for breastfeeding, flexibility, and schedule control (Chung 2018; Spitzmueller et al. 2016; Turner and Norwood 2013; Wadsworth and Facer 2016; Teasdale 2013). Turner and Norwood (2013) specifically describe breastfeeding support as something etched in the cultural discourse of what is defined by social norms around public/private, feminine/masculine and personal/professional body behaviour (Turner and Norwood 2013).

While access to schedule control by varying start and end times around family commitments may be perceived to influence leave patterns, Chung (2018) suggested access could more likely be influenced by the dominant workplace gender and the cost of normalised flexible work culture. Empirical evidence from 27 European countries confirmed that access to schedule control was typically lower for women in female dominated roles/sector, and for men in male dominated roles/sectors but not women. It was assumed that women working in male-dominated roles/sectors were more likely to have access to schedule control gifted by exception, that is less women in a male dominated sector meant lower costs, as compared to the higher costs associated with more women in a female dominated sector. This result demonstrates that schedule control is driven by the majority demographic of the workforce and the perceived higher costs to managing the workforce.

Chung and van der Horst (2017) argue that for women to achieve balance they need the ability to control where and when they work. The research showed that women returning to work who were supported by flexible work arrangements were more likely to maintain their former working hours (Chung and van der Horst 2017). This finding demonstrated that flexible work was not only about balance but an effective mechanism for enhanced work capacity around family scheduling (Chung and van der Horst 2017).

Wadsworth and Facer (2016), focus on the impact of mandatory programs such as compressed schedules and employees' perceptions and how this impact's on work family balance. While they noted there was an increased level of satisfaction with compressed work schedules among men and

women, both finding them beneficial, they noted no observable difference in women's level of work family balance (Wadsworth and Facer 2016). Kelliher and Anderson (2010) discuss work intensification and how employees responded to the intensification, noting that employees do extend a greater level of effort for the opportunity to control their schedule (Kelliher and Anderson 2010).

The story, however, is very different in Australia. Cooper and Baird (2015) discuss the implicit meaning in the right to request flexible working arrangements being in the asking, not in the consent (Cooper and Baird 2015). While the right to request support is fundamental and is embedded in Australian policy design, they note policy enactment is at managerial discretion and tends to fail without practical guidance to managers and employees' alike (Cooper and Baird 2015). Co-workers also play a significant role in policy enactment in the negotiation and reallocation of duties (Teasdale 2013). These arguments define the basis for "discretion" as set out in both understanding and compassion (support) and fairness and resentment (bitterness) (Cooper and Baird 2015; Teasdale 2013). This represents a failing of the spirit of policy to protect pregnant employees and those returning after maternity leave when discretion prevails, and women have little choice but to accept these unwritten rules of engagement (Gatrell 2011).

Gatrell (2011) and Guerrina (2002) argue that there is limited trust regarding organisational policy enactment due to managerial "discretion" options. This potentially forces pregnant women to adopt strategies of concealment suggesting a failing of policy frameworks to fundamentally recognise pregnancy as a condition that differentiates men and women. Instead it helps promote pregnancy as a taboo topic in the workplace. Gatrell (2011) notes that women hide their pregnancy in order to maintain an ideal worker image by presenting as a healthy, reliable and productive employee even as their body size increases and they may feel poorly.

Support and flexibility in policy enactment has a long way to go before worker norms in employment genuinely reflect actual flexibility (Guerrina 2002). Despite the gender neutral language of longstanding legislation and policy they continue to be seen as targeting women rather than signalling a change in organisational attitudes and practices (Gatrell 2011; Guerrina 2002). Guerrina (2002) argues there is a danger that if transformational change isn't enacted the current policy environment will continue to pigeonhole women's issues around care and further promote masculine worker norms.

3.3.2. Section summary – policy

The policy section looked at literature related to the third research objective, focusing on policy research to understand implementation in the organisational context. It addresses key factors regarding regulatory policy approaches to support women's economic participation and career progression. The emerging literature suggests that despite action taken to establish a strong policy environment to support women, there are ongoing flaws in implementation.

3.4. Professional identity

The second and fourth research objectives are to understand: how women define themselves professionally; and how women, who are mothers, manage their professional identity during transition and achieve career goals or aspirations in management. It focuses on two main themes associated with developing a professional identity: identity and career behaviour.

3.4.1. Developing a professional identity

Professional identity is key in understanding the second objective of this study. The concept of professional identity is defined as a collection of attributes, beliefs, values, motives, and experiences people chose to enact for others to see within the professional setting (Ibarra 1999; Schein 1978),

and includes being innovative, strong, knowledgeable, trustworthy and flexible.

Schein (1978); Singh, Vinnicombe and James' (2006) research indicates that a professional identity is something that begins early in an individual's career and builds over time (Schein 1978; Singh, Vinnicombe and Kim 2006). Being something that occurs through experience and what is observed from role models (Hennekam 2016), individuals play with constructing possible selves (Ibarra 1999; Markus and Nurius 1986). Ibarra and Petriglieri (2010, 11) call this identity play, where an identity develops and is trialled in the space between reality and possibility. Ibarra and Petriglieri's (2010) research confirmed that individuals identity play was especially strong during work role transitions, Hennekam (2016) describing this as a key transition point of women's new professional identity when integrating their future maternal identity (while pregnant) into their current professional identity.

3.4.2. Identity and career behaviour

Identity and career behaviour are key to understanding the fourth objective of this study. Research into the career behaviours of women's choices has explored their decisions to leave or stay identifying the push and pull factors (Kossek, Su and Wu 2017), how they leave and re-enter the workforce, seeing it as a situation of on-ramps and off-ramps (Hewlett and Buck Luce 2005), or whether they opt in or opt out of their career (Auster 2018; Cabrera 2007; Lovejoy and Stone 2012; Mainiero and Sullivan 2005; Wilhoit 2014). The reasons for career behaviours in relation to identity conflict have received less attention. Research by Rothausen et al. (2017) showed there was a relationship between the decision to stay or leave an organisation and perceived threat to the core elements of an individual's professional identity (purpose, trajectory, relatedness, expression, acceptance, and differentiation) and their wellbeing (work/career, social/family, financial and other) (Spector and Cinamon 2017; Rothausen et al. 2017). In the case of women choosing to leave the workplace, Hamilton Volpe and Marcinkus Murphy (2011) found married women leaving were exposed to a shift in

identity priorities, rather than a work-life conflict (Bataille 2015; Hamilton Volpe and Marcinkus Murphy 2011). This finding created some question around the career behaviours of women and the influencing factors pushing or pulling them to make choices about opting in/out and the on/off-ramps available.

One of the challenges observed with women's professional identity was exposure to gendered cultures. Gendered cultures promoting masculine leadership identities were observed as creating an impossible professional identity hurdle for women to clear, known as an "impossible-self" (Ibarra and Petriglieri 2016; Meister, Sinclair and Jehn 2015). While an "impossible-self" was a significant challenge for women's professional identities in male dominated organisations, it was also noted as being most likely to occur during key transition points such as pregnancy, relationship status change or taking on a leadership role (Meister, Sinclair and Jehn 2015; Bataille 2015).

During a transition point such as pregnancy, women's professional identity may appear as both stable (unwavering, enduring) and malleable (iterative, punctuated), in how the woman sees herself and/or her career path (Bataille 2015). Kyriakidou (2012), stated that women's redefined professional identity around a transition point was a complex social and relational interchange where their professional identity was shaped by the environment (the way society views them) and the environment shapes their professional identity. Ladge and Greenberg (2015) argue the organisation is the influential factor in maternal/professional identity transition, being responsible for shaping (adjusting) women's career attitudes and behaviours.

3.4.3. Section summary – professional identity

The professional identity section looked at literature related to women's professional identity in response to the second and fourth research objectives. Two main themes were explored: developing a professional identity; and identity and career behaviour. The research suggests that professional identity is constructed through observable role models and

identity play. It poses that women's career decisions are influenced in response to their professional identity within a gendered workplace culture.

In exploring this literature, it was apparent that little attention has been focused on transition identities. Understanding how women define themselves professionally during transitions will address this gap in the literature.

3.5. Careers and motherhood

The first and fourth objective of the research are to understand: the experience for women managers who become mothers; and how women, who are mothers, manage their professional identity during transition and achieve their career goals or aspirations in management. Themes in literature centre around balancing life commitments, employment patterns and approaches to managing career mobility. This section explores the implications of motherhood on women's careers.

3.5.1. Balancing life's commitments

There is significant organisational gain in having embedded strategies to manage work-life balance (Wadsworth and Facer 2016, 382). Work-life balance is associated with organisations having greater competitive advantage by way of revenue, diversity, productivity, turnover (James 2014) and is considered key to managing workforce supply (Todd and Binns 2013).

Work-life balance is largely a western term (James 2014) used to describe the psychological experience that comes through operationalising work and life (Higgins, Duxbury and Johnson 2000). Work-life balance can be defined as "the degree to which an individual is able to simultaneously balance the temporal, emotional, and behavioral demands of both paid work and family responsibilities" (Hill et al. 2001, 49) to "a satisfactory resolution of the multiple demands of work and family domains" (Higgins, Duxbury and Johnson 2000, 19). Higgins, Duxbury, and Johnson (2000) note a

satisfactory resolution is determined by one's perceived ability to manage both time and conflict.

Gatrell and Cooper (2016) focused on how working parents, both mothers and fathers, manage time and conflict across work and family domains. The decision to look at both parents provided context to maternal and paternal difference. Where Higgins, Duxbury, and Johnson (2000) notes a satisfactory resolution as being based on perceived ability to manage time and conflict, Gatrell and Cooper (2016) link the potential of perceived ability to manage time and conflict as closely related to entitlement. Their study found fathers exhibit a lack of entitlement toward receiving family support and mothers exhibit a lack of entitlement to career. Gatrell and Cooper (2016) assert this lack of entitlement is key to gendered assumptions that then sets gendered organisational culture. In contrast Grady and McCarthy (2008) suggest it's not so much a lack of entitlement for the working mother, but instead it is that they are at the mid-point of their career, a time where the idea of "self" is more profound and they are redefining the meaning of work, family and their lives. Grady and McCarthy (2008) explain this time as where children become a working mother's ultimate priority, and while career is still important the focus shifts to having a stimulating and enriching career rather than upward mobility. O'Neil, Hopkins, and Bilimoria (2008) however refer to this as the paradox of women's careers, where the organisational reality is driving the separation of work and family because women do want to succeed in both aspects. They described women's careers as a bigger broader relationship with life and found that irrespective of the age/stage, succeeding personally and professionally was important to women (O'Neil, Hopkins and Bilimoria 2008).

James (2014) and Todd and Binns (2013) identified that more research is required to move beyond mainstream approaches toward universal ideas, experiences and knowledge on balance. Todd and Binns (2013) attributed the problem with the organisational reality as being associated with managers' role in positioning organisational policy as a HR responsibility rather than exercising their power in employee engagement. This was

explained as critical to the disconnect between the workforce economics and social issues by elevating organisational interests. Further more, James (2014) and Todd and Binns (2013) identified the need for greater leadership support to enable responsive policy at the practical level, opportunity in developing enhanced learning capacities and mobility of skills/knowledge between organisations with the exchange of work-life balance strategies, such as consideration for job design, workload or project deadlines. Todd and Binns (2013) noted this was particularly important for the public sector as there was evidence to indicate the sector operates in a highly individualised or localised way.

3.5.2. Employment patterns

The literature on employment patterns adopted by women mainly focuses on decisions about opting in or out of the workplace and what this might look like for working mothers. Options centered around establishing alternative careers (Lovejoy and Stone 2012), the influence of men's careers on women's careers (Halrynjo 2009), women's desire to have meaning (Grady and McCarthy 2008) and control over their work (Kelliher and Anderson 2010) thus opt out, and support programs to help women following a career break.

Heikkinen (2014), Ranson (2012) and (Halrynjo 2009) each explored the role of men; as managers, in fathering, and in their careers to determine the direct impact on women's ability to work. Drawing on European socio-culture known for its progressive gender roles Heikkinen (2014) and Ranson (2012) provide insights which are explained further below.

Heikkinen's (2014) review in the Scandaninavian region of Finland identified that the European socio-culture still reflected strong practices of traditional breadwinner work models, with three of the four major female spousal typologies depicting the wife's role as to enhance the man's managerial career. Only one spouse typology, referred to as balance-seeking, reflected the man to be interested in establishing balance between his family and work

life, thereby providing the opportunity for the wife to also have a career. This finding was also supported in Halrynjo's (2009) empirical study of 102 European men where he examined the division of labour/care in relation to paid work. Halrynjo (2009) found the emergence of new forms of masculinity associated with work and care, proposing four types of work and care options; patchwork, care, career, care and career. While Halrynjo's (2009) study noted a shift for men toward patchwork type careers, meaning more men were taking on roles with less security such as short-term career contracts, part-time and non-gendered work, this was not considered enough to shift the norms associated with the career and care. This could be associated with gender and worker typologies discussed by Ranson (2012). Ranson (2012) notes the "father" role as characterised by work, what the father *does* to support his family and the role of "mother" to be in conflict with work outside the home. The term "working mother" reflecting the challenge of the "mother" to balance work and family and the absence of a contrasting descriptor for the role of the "working father" (Ranson 2012).

Opting out career behaviours (Auster 2018; Cabrera 2007; Lovejoy and Stone 2012; Mainiero and Sullivan 2005; Wilhoit 2014) is a key issue noted in research examining women's employment patterns. Exploring alternative careers over returning to a previous employer after a maternity break is viewed by Lovejoy and Stone (2012) as women opting out of management and by Biese and Choroszewicz (2019) as women looking for alternative and sustainable ways of work. This path was considered to be influenced by women's organisational experience and which careers were perceived to effectively support the combination of motherhood and work (Lovejoy and Stone 2012) over women's changing situations and needs (Biese and Choroszewicz 2019). Wilhoit (2014) also noted the significance of organisational experience in women's decision to opt out as shaping choices of women without children. Lovejoy and Stone (2012, 19) referred to this as the "drift to domesticity", whereby women choose careers etched in traditionalism that mirror family values. It also reflects Ranson's (2012) term the "working mother", by seeking careers that balance work and family needs. Wilhoit (2014) linked this need to women's desire to have meaning

and schedule control in their work: this was also supported by Chung (2018), Spitzmueller et al. (2016), Turner and Norwood (2013), Wadsworth and Facer (2016), Teasdale (2013), and Grady and McCarthy (2008).

Recognising women's path to establish alternative careers, Lovejoy & Stone (2012) assert a growing need for career break support programs to help women explore emerging interests, assess skills and build confidence.

To maintain an ongoing interest and association with the current workplace "opt in" programs are considered essential, and mentors and role models are identified as key factors to support women's careers (Durbin and Tomlinson 2014; Hennekam 2016; Sealy and Singh 2006). Durbin and Tomlinson (2014) identified that mentoring/role model needs for women who are part-time managers need to shift during different career stages, beginning with male champions early-career when full-time and shifting to female champions mid-career when part-time as family-work becomes the focal point (Durbin and Tomlinson 2014). It was also considered to be gendered with male champions providing career development advice and female champions providing psychological support, thus reflecting what is seen as the shift in women's priorities from career to family. Both Durbin and Tomlinson (2014) and Sealy and Singh (2006) suggested women would benefit from both champion style and mid-career support. While Durbin and Tomlinson (2014) describe champions as driven by career stage, Heikkinen (2014) goes further by saying champions not only set or model certain behaviours but they also paint possible levels of attainment. Heikkinen (2014) indicates it can be particularly difficult for women in male-dominated workplaces to access or visualise possible futures for working mothers, particularly when Sealy and Singh (2006) note that organisational strategies available to women transfer the responsibility to women to manage their career.

3.5.3. Approaches to manage career mobility

The changing dynamics of careers can help to explain career paths and momentum for working women.

The cumulative effects of “motherhood” are associated with career break/s, working hours, and school age children (McIntosh et al. 2012). McIntosh et al.(2012) note women with career breaks beyond two years suffer the greatest impact, their career lacking in both meaning and opportunity and this is further compounded with each additional child/break. Nowak, Naudé and Thomas (2012) isolate the issue of career break/s to the way work is organised, socio-cultural attitudes and practices, and call for new service design to enable part-time work. Organising work around a full-time service delivery model was identified as discriminatory by preventing part-time women access to training, development and senior roles (Nowak, Naudé and Thomas 2012). This finding is consistent with the Benschop et al. (2013) study that found “ambition as a resource” to be an influential factor in inequality.

Benschop et al.(2013) focused on a traditional career trajectory of individual development, task mastery, and upward mobility to explore Dutch norms of cultural and organisational ambitions. The traditional career trajectory of moving up in an organisation has changed over time and the modern career now reflects a mobility that optimises the skills and experiences of employees (Kaye, Williams and Cowart 2018). Kaye, Williams, and Cowart (2018) describe career mobility as having a versatility and rich mix of experience that offer the individual a variety of paths or patterns.

While ambition was considered a valuable organisational tool for managers to identify characteristics of commitment, willingness and initiative, Benschop et al.(2013) found when individuals were asked to identify ambition it was typically attributed to full-time men. Both Benschop et al.(2013) and Nowak, Naudé and Thomas (2012) attributed women’s lack of access to training, development and senior roles to the assumption by others that women lack ambition because they work reduced hours.

Furthermore, Nowak, Naudé and Thomas’ (2012) findings are consistent with Guillaume and Pochic’s (2009) observations around the social and cultural

institutions in organisations, and Benschop et al's (2013) observations of masculinity and ambition. Guillaume and Pochic (2009) found organisational norms reflecting masculine career structures and framing success in terms of formal specifications, spousal sacrifice, and image of managers. These factors create time and mobility constraints for women (Guillaume and Pochic 2009).

Guillaume and Pochic (2009) and Ezzedeen and Ritchey (2009) both discuss the strategies adopted by women to manage and shape their careers around these organisational norms. Guillaume and Pochic (2009) focus on how women confront forced geographical mobility and extensive availability norms to achieve work-life balance, whereas Ezzedeen and Ritchey (2009) focus on women embracing beliefs about their life roles to consider what's appropriate for their future.

The career management model of Guillaume and Pochic (2009) presents options women adopt to manage (im)mobility and availability. Mobility ranges from acceptance of forced mobility to following their husband knowing it will disrupt their career. Availability ranges from having no restrictions on time, such as being on call, to work-life balance by accepting project manager roles.

Ezzedeen and Ritchey (2009) identified the adaptive strategies women use to have both a career and a family. The model is framed around various elements that inform choices to help decide how the working mother might experience success. Ezzedeen and Ritchey's (2009) inductive model is used to make decisions, and shifted the debate away from "having it all" by looking at what women value. The authors suggested "women must embrace certain beliefs about their life roles and revisit what society considers appropriate" (Ezzedeen and Ritchey 2009, 405). The model directs women to consider value systems, personal and professional social supports they may encounter, and plan adaptive strategies. This is a unique approach focused on women reconciling their future in the kind of partner they need to support their career and family aspirations (Ezzedeen and Ritchey 2009). Families

are central to women's lives, and so are careers. Women make career choices based on "fit" with their life (O'Neil, Hopkins and Bilimoria 2008; Mainiero and Sullivan 2005; O'Neil and Bilimoria 2005).

Understanding working relationships between women adds further context to women's career development. O'Neil, Brooks and Hopkins (2018) identified differing levels of expectation between junior and senior women. Junior women were found to have higher expectations of assistance from senior women and believe they are investing in their own careers more than senior women expect of them (O'Neil, Brooks and Hopkins 2018).

3.5.4. Section summary – careers and motherhood

The careers and motherhood section looked at literature related to the first and fourth research objective. Much of the literature looks at work-life balance as the strategic advantage in greater retention of workforce talent and increased productivity. The research poses this as a paradox in women's careers, with the organisational reality at odds with women achieving balance. The literature focused on women's decision to opt out to achieve balance seeing this as reflecting a lack of ambition rather than inflexible workplaces. It reflects the choices women adopt to manage (im)mobility and availability to manage their career progression.

Exploring this literature, highlighted the absence of literature focused on the transition experience associated with the first objective to understand how career and motherhood was impacted when women managers became mothers.

3.6. Career theory and career models for women

The fourth and fifth objectives of the research question are to: understand how working mothers achieve their career goals or aspirations in management; and to identify the enablers and/or barriers for working mothers. There are two main themes in literature relevant to understanding

women's careers that are discussed in this section, career theory and models that target women's careers.

3.6.1. Career theory

Career theory focuses specifically on the fourth research objective. Themes in the literature address career construction, women's careers, and what it means to be career successful.

3.6.1.1. Career construction theory

Career construction theory (Bland and Roberts-Pittman 2013; Rudolph, Zacher and Hirschi 2019) is an important construct to understand what, why and how (Del Corso and Rehfuss 2011) individuals manage their work-self in their work roles across their career. Self-management reflects a series of choices (Bland and Roberts-Pittman 2013) in the individual's career and their adaptability to a range of demands, transitions and trauma (Rudolph, Zacher and Hirschi 2019). Career construction is a rich dynamic, process of (de)(re)construction of significant life events and subjective working experiences. The narrative explains what motivates, how and why work is integrated into lives (Rudolph, Zacher and Hirschi 2019). The subjectivity and difference in the characteristics, willingness and ability to act is highly important (Rudolph, Zacher and Hirschi 2019) as is what motivates (Del Corso and Rehfuss 2011). A narrative of career builds to describe how individuals exert some control using a set of psychosocial resources to self-manage work-related demands, transitions and traumas over time (Rudolph, Zacher and Hirschi 2019).

The difference in how women's careers are constructed is particularly relevant, with Hewlett (2002) acknowledging that maternity transitions set women apart from men and little has been considered in terms of difference. Burke (2007) and Peila-Shuster (2017) both talk about women's career construction as being different from men's. Peila-Shuster (2017) describes women's careers as being linked to their identity and developed through their

lifespan shaped by thoughts feelings, beliefs and behaviours. Burke (2007) emphasises the difference of women's careers, to men's, is in relationships focused on connectedness and close interpersonal relationships, for women career construction complements their lives.

Peila-Shuster (2017) notes gendered workplaces as providing challenges for women's career construction, thus women's careers drawing on adaptability and resiliency dimensions and calls for greater advocacy to support the challenges faced. One such measure discussed by Peila-Shuster (2017) was Savickas (2013), career counselling as being a process that helps women explore the construction, reconstruction, co-construction of their career. This is particularly relevant to the work-related challenges, barriers and tensions women experiences over time (Rudolph, Zacher and Hirschi 2019) previously discussed.

3.6.1.2. **Women's careers**

Women's career theory builds on career construction theory, reflecting gender-specific patterns in career. The patterns outlined show women as having an active role in the architecture for their careers and not relying on organisational contributions. These factors become more apparent as career models are discussed (O'Neil, Hopkins and Bilimoria 2008).

The way women's careers are conceptualised provides context for the career models discussed in the following section. Understanding women's careers and their career development is outlined in the four patterns identified by O'Neil, Hopkins, and Bilimoria (2008, 727): "women's careers are embedded in women's larger-life contexts, families and careers are central to women's lives, women's career paths reflect a wide range and variety of patterns, and human and social capital are critical factors for women's careers". The career development patterns point out the difference between women's careers to the traditional masculine career rhetoric as being not just what one does but who one is while doing it (O'Neil, Hopkins and Bilimoria 2008, 737).

The authors focus on the nature of relationships to these patterns in how they contribute to the construction of women's careers arguing for future research is to expand the definition of career success to capture the unique experiences of women (O'Neil, Hopkins and Bilimoria 2008).

Walsh, Fleming, and Enz (2016) discuss the relationship between the organisation and the professional as a work-exchange model. It is suggested that the work-exchange model supports women's career development because women know what the organisational intent is for their career. The exchange builds from organisations investing in future leadership through career planning, role modelling, providing autonomy, control and support. Thus, women are more likely to experience increased career satisfaction, lower work-role conflict, reciprocating with increased commitment and performance. The main themes in O'Neil, Hopkins, and Bilimoria (2008) show that women's lives and careers are intricately entwined, for women satisfaction or success at work is closely related to their life choices. This can be linked to the findings by Walsh, Fleming, and Enz (2016) noting work-exchange does not occur with complete consistency, and directly influences satisfaction or success at work. The inconsistency of work-exchange has been attributed to the organisational view that tenure was never long term because only the individual had control over their career (Walsh, Fleming and Enz 2016).

O'Neil, Hopkins, and Bilimoria (2008) focused on women's career development, noting that organisations place expectations on employees to establish greater distance between their work and their lives. However, job related human and social capital is essential to women's career development. This is evidenced by Choi (2019) who found that a solid network of contacts and supportive mentors or managers increase visibility and lead to promotion. In fact, the most notable finding was that women have greater social capital advantage than men through the borrowing power of their mentor's social capital. However, as O'Neil, Hopkins, and Bilimoria (2008) note, where women lack opportunities for human and social capital

development, it will suppress their ability to be recognised and rewarded for their contributions.

3.6.1.3. **Career success**

Dries (2011) asserts career success has been an abstract symbol through history, with culture and ideology affecting both individuals and organisations. This is demonstrated through the different views of what defines career success.

O'Neil, Hopkins, and Bilimoria (2008) focus on career success as being recognised and rewarded. Powell and Mainiero (1992, 221) see career success as having four dimensions: "emphasis on career versus relationships with others, success in career, success in relationships with others, and time" and recognises that the experience in career and in relationships can be positive, negative or a mixture of both. Frear et al. (2018, 402) discuss that gender difference in career success is informed by unequal attributes and unequal effects. Arthur, Khapova, and Wilderom (2005, 179) see career success as the outcome of one's experience; stating that success is both subjective, referring to what is personally desirable, and objective referring to a social construction of what reflects prosperity.

Dries (2011) draws on the traditional notion of career success to demonstrate how careers have changed, and provides a modern understanding of what it is to be career successful in general. Career success has been etched in hierarchical organisational structures favouring a vertical trajectory of increasing seniority measured by income and status (Dries 2011). As the economy changed, so did the nature of work creating an unstable and uncertain market and redefined how an individual viewed work (Dries 2011). While vertical careers are no longer considered by an individual to reflect their breadth of experience and goals, the same is not true for the organisation (Dries 2011). Arthur, Khapova, and Wilderom (2005) agree the organisational construct is fixed in the vertical trajectory based on attainment and it lags behind an individual view of career success. While there has

been some change regarding what career success means over time, it is still largely a masculine concept and there has been little change to adequately address women's career patterns (Burke and Mattis 2005; Peila-Shuster 2017).

Powell and Mainiero (1992) focus on career success as a cross-current of time; the final and most complex dimension when conceptualising women's careers. The time continuum emphasises the richness of women's career focus as well as their relationship focus as part of a greater journey. It acknowledges the personal, organisational and societal factors as critical elements that sway women's attention and emphasis from one to the other or both. Powell and Mainiero's (1992) model was a shift from a male career model by presenting a time continuum that was more reflective of women's career journeys.

Frear et al. (2018) refers to gender differences in career by way of unequal attributes and unequal effects. Unequal attributes serve as a precursor to success and refer to attributes, such as wage disparity or managerial attainment, that influence career and lead to different outcomes. Unequal effects are moderated by gender and refer to when men and women are rewarded differently despite the same effort and performance. Both were considered to explain gender success outcomes; however, while unequal effects were less understood they were still considered more appropriate to managerial contexts (Frear et al. 2018).

Finally, Arthur, Khapova, and Wilderom (2005) refer to success as being both subjective and objective. Subjectivity in career is based on an evaluation of elements important to the individual in comparison to the tangible objective elements that define success. Subjective and objective career success can be visualised differently from the inside to outside view depending on the motivating factors (Arthur, Khapova and Wilderom 2005). The duality and interdependence of subjective and objective assessment supports Dries (2011) reasoning for a shift from career success being defined by the organisation to the individual. Similarly, there is also an interdependence

between the two and demonstrates the ongoing nature of reflecting on experience to determine what success is, and draws on Powell and Mainiero's (1992) time dimension as part of what is visualised as successful in the different stages of one's life.

A modern construct for career success as "the experience of achieving goals that are personally meaningful to the individual, rather than those set by parents, peers, an organization, or society" (Dries 2011, 364) reflects the future of work where an individual's goals or experiences transcend a single role or employer (Dries 2011). Rudolph, Zacher, and Hirschi (2019, 3) articulate career success slightly differently referring to it as part of career development, being "a continuous process of adaptation that results from the successful integration of personal needs with social expectations". Thus, whilst there appears agreement that career success can be defined at the individual level, there is less agreement on the role of others' expectations on how career success is defined.

3.6.2. Career models

This section draws on career theory as it relates to women and explains relevant career models adopted by women to meet their idea of success. This focuses on the fifth research objective. While there are a number of different career models discussed, in theory the boundaryless career, protean career, portfolio career and kaleidoscope careers are considered to be most central to women.

3.6.2.1. Boundaryless career

An important point covered by Dries (2011) regarding career success was that an individual's goals or experiences transcend a single role or employer. This point reflects the foundation of what Pringle and Mallon (2003), Arthur, Khapova, and Wilderom (2005), Rodrigues and Guest (2010) and Briscoe, Hall, and Frautschy Demuth (2006) refer to as the boundaryless career. The boundaryless career is a term used to reflect individual goals (Arthur,

Khapova and Wilderom 2005), mobility between employers (Arthur, Khapova and Wilderom 2005), and a liberating freedom from being under the organisation's control (Rodrigues and Guest 2010).

Briscoe, Hall, and Frautschy Demuth (2006, 31) describe individuals who have boundaryless careers as having a mindset that “navigates the changing work landscape by enacting a career characterized by different levels of physical and psychological movement”. These are individuals who are comfortable to initiate and foster new and lasting work-related relationships beyond the organisational boundaries (Briscoe, Hall and Frautschy Demuth 2006). Arthur, Khapova, and Wilderom (2005) add that these individuals utilise a range of “meta-competencies” to support their mobility between employers. Guan et al. (2019) conducted an evidence-based literature review of career success for 39 empirical papers published between 1994 and 2018. It was observed that across the review, interorganisational mobility was considered to be a variable factor in career success. In 14 of these papers there was a relationship found which indicated that women benefited more from voluntary mobility over involuntary mobility. While in 9 of the papers, infrequent exposure to mobility assisted women in achieving objective career success. This was attributed to divorcée family status and fewer children, and suggested trade-offs for women (Guan et al. 2019).

In a boundaryless career, an individual is perceived to have higher levels of career success (Arthur, Khapova and Wilderom 2005) that derive from a constant validation of marketability, nourished from external networks, and accessibility to periods of unpaid work for family (Pringle and Mallon 2003).

There are however issues or challenges with the concept of a boundaryless career (Pringle and Mallon 2003; Rodrigues and Guest 2010). The main issue is the term “boundaryless”. Rodrigues and Guest (2010) assert there is a lack of identification and discussion around what the boundaries are and how individuals perceive them. Pringle and Mallon (2003) assert the difficulty is in validating freedoms, arguing that boundaries are highly complex particularly with the intersections between community, family, organisation,

projects, and tasks. The other major issue raised by Pringle and Mallon (2003) is that the term reflects some kind of restriction to negotiate, thus portraying an inequity in career.

In Pringle and Mallon's (2003) New Zealand study, they noted the relationship between intersectionality and boundaryless careers as an important element being overlooked in career conjecture. This oversight is limiting to the discussion, and deeper insight is called for by Pringle and Mallon (2003) into culturally diverse backgrounds and women's careers, noting Martins, Eddleston, and Veiga's (2002) observation that women often access periods of unpaid work for family. In Pringle and Mallon (2003), the freedom women exercised with interorganisational mobility can be linked to career construction theory, motivated by a bad experience resulting in a psychological trauma (Rudolph, Zacher and Hirschi 2019).

3.6.2.2. **Protean career**

While the protean career is adopted by both men and women, it is the characteristics of self-directedness and values congruence that Cabrera (2009) focuses on as being most relevant to women's careers. The synergies to women's careers Cabrera (2009) discusses are in the subjective nature of happiness, connected to one's personal values as a significant motivator. Women are in control of designing their career, by building what satisfies and fulfils their personal needs and idea of success (Cabrera 2009).

The self-directedness Cabrera (2009) discusses is central to women's careers as it reflects a freedom from organisational control (Rodrigues and Guest 2010; Cabrera 2009), is values driven, involves continuous learning (Briscoe, Hall and Frautschy Demuth 2006), and identity change (Hall 1996). The term itself reflects the adoption of a protean attitude (Rodrigues and Guest 2010) where individuals demonstrate a willingness to change shape as is necessary; work is a path to their heart because individuals are fulfilled by doing what they love (Hall 1996). Erkovan (2017) describes these

individuals as self-motivated to explore their needs and values, and search for work that mirrors this.

Briscoe, Hall, and Frautschy Demuth (2006) explain being self-directed as the point of difference to other career models. The individual takes control over their learning and career, in contrast to the organisation having control and providing development opportunities. Through this process, it is argued that the individual experiences far greater psychological success on an emotional and spiritual level because their work is goal oriented, values based, and life enriching (Hall 1996). Hall (1996) notes this is a shift from the traditional psychological contracts where the employee puts all their faith and trust in the organisation with the hope of being rewarded; instead they take the reins and a healthier relationship of power exists between the two. The protean career is considered to shift focus to the task from the person performing the task, and provides for greater diversity (Hall 1996). However, there is limited research into the relationship between intersectionality and protean careers to confirm this.

The exploration of 29 managers careers by Wolf (2019) is relevant as it explains the “protean identities” adopted by women. The findings of the study make an important contribution to the iterative cycle involved in a protean identity construction and how careers are shaped over time (Wolf 2019). The four core themes of a protean identity and the specific narratives presented by Wolf (2019) are used to explain the reasoning and to rationalise each step of the experience. The cycle begins with discovering a conflict in expectations and draws on questioning and disenchanting narratives. It then moves to exploring one’s own values and capabilities where an individual begins soul-searching, rebelling and pushing growth. At the commitment to one’s own path, an individual begins to sacrifice, trust, and reframe. Finally, defending one’s own path involves validating, insuring and distancing (Wolf 2019). This cycle is pertinent to women managers as they experience corporate pressures and begin looking for a career that brings them happiness based on their values and personal fulfilment based on their idea of success.

3.6.2.3. **Portfolio careers**

The portfolio career model reflects a self-management style of employment that swaps working full-time for one employer for the independence of a client-based portfolio that attracts a fee for service, usually as a result of a change of circumstance (Mallon 1998). A portfolio career is typically associated with those in corporate roles and those approaching retirement (Mallon 1999), where transitioning (Fenwick 2006) to this style of employment is perceived to offer a greater degree of flexibility (Fenwick 2006) than a traditional career (Platman 2004). While the portfolio career is attractive to individuals free to work as much or little as they wish (Platman 2004), it also carries some perceived bias towards individuals' reasons for choosing independence, such as being "pushed" aside (Fenwick 2006).

Individuals are pulled towards portfolio careers (Fenwick 2006) with the promise of greater flexibility; adopting a range of self-management behaviours depending on their career stage (Mallon 1998). Behaviours are focused on ensuring ongoing career viability, such as building human and social capital, promoting achievements, profiling respected roles, and influence on decision-making (Mallon 1998).

While portfolio careers represent a smaller field of research, there is some interest in how portfolio professionals contract their services to a range of employers. Fenwick (2004, 229) describes a point of difference in what makes these professionals attractive is an ability "to be innovative, mobilizing others' activities around the innovation, and anchoring or integrating the innovation within existing systems". Fenwick (2004) argues innovation is a key aspect of portfolio workers' unique work arrangements where there is expectation to contribute new knowledge and ideas, and their success to do so is symbolic to their reputational survival. These individuals create benefit without the status or title that is affiliated with an organisation (Fenwick 2004).

Of particular relevance to women's careers are the skills observed in a Canadian study of 31 women by Fenwick (2008). The findings suggest that this style of work attracts some gender demands that women with portfolio careers must learn to negotiate. These are "being noticed while avoiding notice, nailing contracts without nailing the contractor, performing a woman in control while hiding the chaos, shape-shifting while branding one's shape, and providing knowledge in market of impressions" (Fenwick 2008, 11). The study demonstrated the necessity for women to display the art of contradiction.

3.6.2.4. **Kaleidoscope career**

The kaleidoscope career model was developed by Mainiero and Sullivan (2005, 111), who draw on the kaleidoscope metaphor to describe how women "shift the pattern of their careers by rotating different aspects of their lives to arrange their roles and relationships in new ways". It is highly relational focusing on each action taken and the effect of the action, and refers to "kaleidoscope thinking" that is adopted when responding to changing conditions (Mainiero and Sullivan 2005). Cabrera (2009) refers to the main characteristics of the kaleidoscope model as authenticity, balance, and challenge. Mainiero and Gibson (2018) note the fluidity of each of these characteristics to move in and out of focus depending on the priority of the career transition.

While the career model is associated with both men and women based on prioritising needs at different career stages (Mainiero and Gibson 2018; Mainiero and Sullivan 2005), it is more typical for women to adopt a kaleidoscope career pattern (Cabrera 2009), and is relevant to working mothers (Grant-Vallone and Ensher 2011) because it fulfils the value of balance in their life (Cabrera 2009). Mainiero and Gibson (2018) assert the model draws on a social cognitive career theory, where there is a cognitive reasoning process for each action taken. While the model is relevant to all career stages, Cabrera's (2007) study focused specifically on mothers, stating 35% of the 497 women respondents indicated they stopped working

following childbirth to care for their child, and 62% had adopted alternative career patterns. Further to this Grant-Vallone and Ensher's (2011) empirical study of 23 women confirmed working mothers were involved in kaleidoscope career patterns.

For women, adopting a “kaleidoscope” career approach is one way to manage and integrate the various aspects of life and work, by self-crafting careers to match the current landscape (Grady and McCarthy 2008; Mainiero and Sullivan 2005). This marks the shift away from traditional linear career structures (Hewlett and Buck Luce 2005) to relational ones that consider and assess the impact of women's decisions, adding depth and complexity to the context of the transition experience. It reflects Gilligan's “care” model showing (Jorgensen 2006), for women, emotion is a sway agent in decisive action and can critically influence choice. Underpinning the action are the characteristics motivating decisions by being true to oneself (authenticity), synergies between home and work (balance), and being fulfilled and stimulated (challenge) (Cabrera 2009).

3.6.3. Section summary – career theory and career models for women

The career theory and career models for women section looked at literature related to the fourth and fifth research objectives. There are four main career models discussed that reflect women's careers. While each had defining characteristics, there were some synergies. These included the importance of values, being able to shape a career that suited their needs, and that linear models do not reflect the reality of women's careers, especially if they have children.

3.7. Chapter summary

The chapter has provided a critical review of key academic literature associated with how women in managerial roles navigate maternity transitions. Key areas covered were gendered workplaces, policy, identity,

careers and motherhood, career theory, and career models that are relevant for women.

The review demonstrated the need for more information on transition experiences, transition identities and mothers as managers to better understand the first, second and fourth research objectives.

The next chapter addresses the research methodology and design for data collection and analysis to address these gaps in current literature.

4. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introduction

The fourth chapter outlines the theoretical perspectives of the research into maternity transitions in management. The chapter provides a detailed discussion of the research design including participant recruitment, interview processes and reflective praxis of data collection. Finally, the chapter concludes with discussion on how rigour was maintained for the qualitative study.

The chapter explains the research process, including the phenomenological approach taken to capture the lived experience of participants. Insight into my role as the researcher and the relationship to the collection of data between the researcher and participants are discussed.

4.1.1. Research Question

The question motivating this study is:

“How do women navigate maternity transitions in management?”

To address this question, the research documents the transition experience of motherhood and management in the Western Australian public sector, and is guided by the following objectives:

To understand:

- 1) the transition experience for women managers who become mothers
- 2) how women define themselves professionally during workforce transitions

- 3) what organisations (human resources managers and/or line managers) do during maternity workforce transitions
- 4) how women, who are mothers, manage their professional identity during transition and achieve career goals or aspirations in management

And to identify:

- 5) the enablers and/or barriers impacting on transition and career progression for working mothers.

4.1.2. Nature of the research paradigm

“Nonsense!” shouted the fourth man. Stretching his arms around one of the legs, he concluded that “this wondrous beast is like a tree.” The fifth man hung on to the elephant’s ear and cried out, “Even the blindest can tell — this marvel of an elephant is very like a fan.” And the sixth man, grabbing the tail, assured his friends that the elephant is much more like a rope.

(Woensdregt 2007, 1)

Woensdregt uses John Godfrey Saxe’s fable, *The six blind men and the elephant*, to illustrate that finding the truth encompasses many views. What he describes is the perception of each individual, each being right and wrong at the same time. Right for the part they identify and yet wrong when they try to explain the whole as a result of their limited view of the part (Woensdregt 2007). The same could be said for the research process. Each participant representing only a part of the whole, able to clearly identify their part, yet it requires all the stories to understand the experience as a whole.

Woensdregt goes on to discuss that the researcher’s role, is to listen to the conversation, and through the conversation develop a closer understanding of the whole. With each shared experience, the researcher’s perspective changes — to become wider, broader, deeper and closer to a more complete understanding of the whole. The researcher pieces together the parts of what others have shared and creates meaning from their limited

perspectives, to interpret the whole. The researcher creates verstehen (Orr 1979).

Wilhelm Dilthey's "verstehen" is a specialised concept that is simply translated to "understanding". The German word remains in theory today to indicate a specialised concept that defines the functions of language, and how a thought, idea, sensation or emotion is expressed. Essentially, verstehen is a higher order process in the spiritual sense where a researcher creates a paradigm for "coming to know" or understanding. For the purposes of this study, verstehen is established through Geisteswissenschaften rather than Naturwissenschaften. Geisteswissenschaften research are human studies that seek understanding, whereas Naturwissenschaften is a natural science whereby the result is proven and explained by fact (Orr 1979).

"Coming to know" or understanding is where meaning becomes comprehensible (Orr 1979) and defines the relationship between the part and the whole, identified in the Saxe fable. Orr (1979) cites Rickman's categories of meaning and highlights their relationship to the subjectivity and emotions of the lived experience. Through retelling, the researcher receives a privileged window into the lived experience, enabling them to define meaning. Meaning can be defined through value, purpose, part and whole, inner and outer, formation, development, and finally, power. Each category of meaning demonstrates the connectivity of the lived experience.

Rickman's partial listing for the categories of meaning as cited by Orr (1979) are shown below. They demonstrate the humanistic side of Geisteswissenschaften and the opportunity a researcher has to understand personal motives, beliefs, desires of the individual's lived experience.

- Value - something is meaningful insofar as it is valued, that is appreciated, loved, hated, resented, by a person.
- Purpose - something is meaningful insofar as it forms a person's goal or serves as a means to that goal.

- Part and Whole - something is meaningful insofar as it is part of a pattern or a link in a chain. A whole, in turn, is meaningful in terms of the meaning of the parts.
- Inner and Outer - something is meaningful insofar as it is the outer expression of some inner process, a thought, a feeling, or an act of will.
- Formation - something is meaningful insofar as it embodies a shape, pattern or configuration.
- Development - a course of events is meaningful insofar as the successive changes are cumulatively influenced by the previous ones.
- Power - a situation is meaningful insofar as we affect it by one's decisions and actions, or insofar as we are affected by forces outside us. In the studies of man [*sic*] this category is the equivalent of the category of causability, but the latter is, psychologically speaking a derivation from, or abstraction of, the category of power.

(Orr 1979, 19–20)

The link between the experience and the way it is expressed is not clear until after it has happened. Applied to this study, the single or individual experiences of participants do not represent the reality of the whole, until after the “whole” has been shared. The study relies on multiple connections and multiple individual experiences to determine patterns and ultimately “meaning” to the research question. Therefore, Dilthey’s epistemology is the foundation for understanding the lived experience for the whole life-world reality of maternity transitions in management. (Orr 1979).

4.2. Overview of research approach

Having established the research question and objectives, a decision was made on the research approach to address them. The approach taken is summarised in Table 4-1 and discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Table 4-1: Summary of research approach

Philosophy	Becoming (4.2.1)	Multiple realities, an unfolding story of transition (evolving, moving)
Ontology	Constructivist (4.2.2)	Highly dynamic, realities constructed unique to the transition (intersubjective)
Sociology	Phenomenological (4.2.3)	Understanding the “lived” experience of the transition
Epistemology	Interpretivism (4.2.4)	Interested in the way the subject interprets their life-world experience
Methodology	Qualitative (4.2.5)	Allowing the stories for workforce transitions to be told
Method	Phenomenology (4.2.6)	The “lived” experience of the maternity transition

4.2.1. Philosophy (becoming)

Knowledge is a socially constructed reality that exists between a knower (subject), the known (object), and the act of knowing (cognition). The act of “knowing” comes through the interaction between the knower and the known that involves the researcher considering aspects of life and the thoughts of those who experienced it. Theory suggests that the space between the thought and the reality is the social truth — a truth that is situational, subjective, relative and emergent (Kitchlew, Shahzad and Bajwa 2015).

The act of knowing comes from making sense of the social truth, and is a two-part process involving the participant and the researcher. Making sense or meaning of a social reality is a lengthy process looking at participants’ interactions within a reality. To interpret the dynamic nature of reality, researchers need to immerse in the participant’s reality (Kitchlew, Shahzad and Bajwa 2015). Through dialogue, the participant shares making sense of their life-world, and the researcher’s role is to make meaning from the participant’s sense-making. This two-part act is often referred to as a double

hermeneutic or dual interpretation process (Pietkiewicz and Smith 2014), where the information flows between the reality and the social reality to give meaning (Kitchlew, Shahzad and Bajwa 2015).

The chapter explores the act of knowing and how inquiry is converted into knowledge. It recognises the relationship of the individual's life-world; their beliefs, interests and opinions, and how this shapes reality. The philosophical paradigm explores the social construction of reality, and how it is comprised of multiple perspectives to form a collective view of that reality. This research paradigm focuses on the role of interpretation built on the principle that knowledge is something that comes from experience and together the participant and researcher can make meaning (Kitchlew, Shahzad and Bajwa 2015).

“Knowledge is not isolated from that which the individual considers reality to be” (du Toit 2003, 1), and the participant presents an understanding of the world as they have experienced it. The researcher acknowledges that organisations represent communities or realities where knowledge is constructed, and participants can share their knowledge of those realities to define the reality collectively (Ridgeway 2006). This research draws on the multiple realities of participants within organisations of the public sector (du Toit 2003) to develop an understanding of the lived experience of women managers who become mothers.

4.2.2. Ontological (constructivist)

The social constructivist approach to research considers the social truth to be embedded within reality and the product of relational exchange between people. A constructivist view suggests that a participant's knowledge about their “self” becomes more visible in direct contrast to others. Vehicles such as recount provide a mechanism for participants to compare and contrast their “self” to the reality. Participants find consciousness emerges through

reflexivity, allowing them to construct meaning. The constructivist approach to research ensures a broad range of views are used to interpret meaning and can be built upon over time. The research approach allowed participants to reflect upon past experience to create the ideal future (du Toit 2003).

Embedded within the construction of the social truth of reality is what is “real” and the predefined existing norms within which society and culture operates (Robbins, Chatterjee and Canda 1999). In many cases the existing norms or rules of society “become established and the hard fact that, once established, institutionalized rules become taken for granted, legitimate and hard to change” (Hirsch and Boal 2000, 1). Recognising that the existing norms are passed down through society, the researcher becomes interested in the space where those existing norms are internalised through socialisation and the meaning they make within the experience (Robbins, Chatterjee and Canda 1999). The recount provides the participant with an opportunity to challenge or explore the legitimised and hard-to-change existing norms (Hirsch and Boal 2000; Robbins, Chatterjee and Canda 1999).

This research will reflect the ontological position of the public sector for maternity transitions in management. This method of inquiry ultimately describing participants lived experiences in subcultures within the broader cultures (Ridgeway 2006).

4.2.3. Sociology (phenomenology)

Phenomenology is a rigorous and highly descriptive exploration into a participant’s inner world. The exploration is subjective, idiographic, iterative in nature, and double dose in interpretation. What makes it more complex is that an interpretive phenomenology approach focuses on what it is like to walk in another’s shoes and then attempts to bring coherent meaning to this

by translating it to a social cognition (Pietkiewicz and Smith 2014; Biggerstaff and Thompson 2008).

Phenomenology is a sociology that traces back social action to the subjective sense (meaning) to determine the phenomena occurring in the social-cultural world — a life-world analysis of the lived experience. It looks closely at the solid life-world structures that define the social-cultural world actors live in. It is an interrelational dynamic of the solid foundations of knowledge, the type of knowledge that exists, and the relevance to how it is enacted to the actor's life-world. Phenomenology research therefore is the study of empirical social sciences defined by the life-world and focuses on understanding social sciences realities existing within the life-world (Eberle 2012). It is important to note the bigger picture difference in phenomenology as a study of empirical data and phenomenology as a method of data interpretation (see discussion in 4.2.6) (Eberle 2013).

4.2.4. Epistemology (interpretivism)

Interpretivism accepts that there are multiple realities and attests that a “deeper understanding of phenomenon is only possible through understanding the interpretations of that phenomenon from those experiencing it” (Shah and Corley 2006). This research is interested in women managers' experience during maternity transitions, and follows interpretivist and constructivist phenomenological methodological inquiry. Using interpretivism gives greater acknowledgement to the socially situated nature of women's experience.

Everyone has a story to be told, who we are and what we believe is a social construct built on storytelling. For researchers, storytelling becomes a powerful qualitative tool giving voice to personal experiences by stimulating a reflective dialogue (Ready 2002). Using theoretical constructs such as interviews to define and shape the story being told, an interactive exchange

of sharing is created between individuals. It facilitates a dynamic landscape or window into the values, beliefs, processes, systems and structures (Adamson et al. 2006) giving meaning and understanding to the experience within a shared frame of reference (Snowden 1999).

The reflexive work of storytelling, assists research methodology by focusing on the highly complex nature of interpretation and conceptualisation of social constructions (Alvesson, Hardy and Harley 2008). By applying the principle of Moustaka's research and removing the "self" experience to the actual experience, facilitates a more cohesive process in focusing on the idea or themes arising from the experience (Sela-Smith 2002). The reflexive style aids epistemological practices that accentuate how knowledge and meaning are derived through an intellectual critique (Alvesson, Hardy and Harley 2008; Barge 2004), and the knowledge coming from reflective practice strongly enforcing epistemic views (Schupbach 2010).

4.2.5. Methodology (qualitative)

"Qualitative data analysis is the classification and interpretation of linguistic (or visual) material to make statements about implicit and explicit dimensions and structures of meaning-making in the material of what is represented in it. Meaning-making can refer to subjective or social meanings." (Flick 2013, 5). In qualitative data analysis, the focus is on moving data to meaning (Flick 2013) by using a variety of methods for uncovering practices and assumptions (Bryman 2008). It aims to compare, look for explanation in difference or commonality, and develop a theory for the phenomena occurring (Flick 2013). In doing so it is important to establish a methodology for reliability and validity in data analysis (Bryman 2008).

In the qualitative process, the researcher is most interested in how participants make sense of the world they experience and move between an emic (inside) and etic (outside) perspective of sense-making. They are most

interested in the quality of this experience and meaning attributed to it. Researchers are privileged to the emic view by what is shared by the participant, their thoughts and feelings on how they have made sense of their world. The etic perspective distances the researcher a little allowing them to view the data from participants from the external or outside view and develop higher-level insight into the meaning of the sample's experience. (Pietkiewicz and Smith 2014).

A frequently used method to build richness in qualitative inquiry is to solicit trusted data for life-world experiences from interviews (Soklaridis 2009). The richness of the data comes when a more rounded sensory experience is provided to data collected (Caulley 2008). Interviews are not just about what people have to say, they also include behavioural and emotional observations that add visual, tactile and aural dimensions to the story about the experience (Soklaridis 2009; Caulley 2008). Qualitative analysis of interview data is about drawing out and making meaning out of what has been studied.

The highly descriptive nature of a qualitative study allows participants to speak freely and openly for themselves, and allows the researcher the opportunity to explore the uniqueness of single experiences before reaching any conclusions. This process is referred to as idiographic and iterative in the exploration of many single experiences. What is unique about a phenomenological inquiry is the prominence of interpretation. The role of interpretation features strongly for the participant and the researcher. Interpretation first occurs for the participant through reflective narrative; the participant is making meaning of their experience in their world. Interpretation then reoccurs with the researcher, who is responsible for making sense of the participant's sense-making. This approach, as noted in 4.2.1, is referred to as double hermeneutic or dual interpretation process (Pietkiewicz and Smith 2014).

4.2.6. Method (Phenomenology)

Methods focus on the craft or practice of research itself and cover the instruments to elicit the data and tools for analysing data (Bryman 2008). The method of this study is phenomenology, which focuses on the interpretation of the lived experience of the maternity transition. The phenomenological approach has drawn on the subjective experience of the researcher in a reflexive way to augment data collection. Through this process the researcher forms a picture of data collected through fieldwork (interviews) and by observing participation (body language) to analyse the actors experiences phenomenologically. The phenomenological analysis is based on the approach that the genuine experiences are broken down through the transcription and interpretation process and therefore relies, to a certain extent, on the researcher's personal experience as a co-participant. The phenomenological analysis is methodologically controlled through bracketing (Eberle 2013). Dörfler and Stierand (2018, 1) draw on Giorgi and Finlay's interpretations of bracketing by applying a transpersonal reflexivity approach and looking at data openly. Meaning "it, is not about getting rid of subjective components and removing pre-understandings but raising awareness of them and explicitly incorporating them". Dörfler and Stierand (2018) describe the transpersonal reflexivity as a researcher's advantage, as conscious awareness of what is happening outside of personal belief systems (Dörfler and Stierand 2020). Bracketing is explained further in Section 4.5.3.

4.3. Research design

The following section covers the sampling strategy for the study, the sample, and the approach to data collection. Further detail is provided on the sample to describe the recruitment process, the criteria for selection and the participant demographics. The data collection approach was semi-structured interviews. Learnings from the pilot interview process and modifications made to the main study, the interview process, the use of post-interview field notes and the transcription process are discussed.

4.3.1. Sampling strategy

It is important in qualitative research that the sample can be justified with thoughtful and robust decisions about the choices made (Raply 2013). In qualitative studies, samples usually target a specific group, situation or location because of rich data they offer (Raply 2013). This requires the researcher to have some knowledge of the sampling field and/or the phenomena occurring (Raply 2013). Thus, the researcher is able to determine how representative the sample is in line within the phenomena (Raply 2013). This study used a purposeful sampling approach to explore the particular experiences of maternity transitions and the context in which this occurred in the public sector. The sampling was strategically based on accepting participants who met a pre-determined criterion (Raply 2013). Purposeful sampling relies on the researcher's knowledge of the social phenomena and the population to determine adequate distribution in sampling. The researcher was able to sample women's experience and HR/line manager experience in the same data set by looking at connection (Raply 2013).

One part of the total sample was defined to ensure that participants had taken a period of maternity leave and returned to a managerial role. To provide additional insights regarding organisational context and policies, a smaller number of interviews were conducted with human resource and line managers responsible for implementing leave policies and processes. This sampling strategy meant that the size of the sample could not be predefined. This is consistent with the inductive nature of the research method.

The key research question in this project is exploratory and the inductive nature of the research meant that categories of key experiences were identified during the data analysis process. Using this approach to data collection meant that data analysis commenced when the first data were collected (in this study in the form of interview transcripts). The analysis then

informed further data collection. The key approach in this method is that an iterative process occurs between data collection and analysis and emergent themes, which guided the selection of further participants to ensure data saturation. Saturation is seen to be achieved when new insights are no longer emerging from the data analysis (Goulding 2009).

In line with the methodological approach, emergent themes were not defined prior to initial data collection. Thus, the initial criteria for sample selection were set at a broad level. In this study, the initial selection criteria were that interview participants would be women in the Western Australian public sector, employed at staff classification level 7 or above who have decision-making roles within the organisation, and have accessed parental leave in the previous 2 years. After analysis of initial interview transcripts, possible emergent themes were identified. The main objective guiding data collection was to ensure rich data relevant to key emergent themes. “Rich data” means that data categories demonstrate diverse experiences with the aim of achieving saturation (Onwuegbuzie, Leech and Collins 2010).

4.3.2. Identifying participants with lived experiences: Sample

This research is focused on giving voice to women’s stories. The research question is deeply entrenched in women’s workplace issues, and storytelling facilitates the sharing of these personal experiences. The theory of grounding aspects of the research to storytelling and reflexive practices is particularly common in feminist research. It is seen as removing masculine overtones; giving greater potential for full disclosure of women’s lived experiences (Plummer and Young 2010).

The Western Australian public sector (hereafter referred to as “the sector”) is the state’s largest employer; as at June 2012 when the data collection commenced, there were 156 892 public sector employees across 125 public sector entities (Public Sector Commission 2011/12).

The Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment publishes an Annual Report containing data on the representation of women in management in the public sector. This data informed the researcher's choice of organisations fitting into high, medium and lower participation rates. Participants were recruited progressively through discussions with workforce planning and diversity consultants. Agencies' personnel data management systems assisted in identifying women in the organisation who had accessed parental leave in the past two years. It was anticipated that the researcher would be able to successfully recruit participants from professional contacts within the sector. This background knowledge and understanding adds value to the research by assisting with establishing and building trusted relationships with participants.

4.3.2.1. **Participant recruitment for data collection**

All research interests were disclosed to the researcher's employing authority prior to commencing the study. Following formal ethical approval from the University, permission was sought from the researcher's (my) employing authority to contact specific internal networks for participant recruitment. The researcher's employing authority felt — in an effort to elevate the study, show support and encourage stakeholder buy-in — a personal invitation should be sent from the Deputy Commissioner to the sector. Unfortunately, one impact of this approach was that it distanced the researcher, by adding an additional contact layer for participant recruitment. As a result, participation responses were limited.

The second approach to participant recruitment was far more favourable. The researcher subscribed to a HR practitioner e-network maintained by the employing organisation. Theory has confirmed that a potential power issue can exist relative to social status (Qu and Dumay 2011). Being very conscious of this, there was a strong focus on separating my role as researcher from my role as employee. To ensure interests remained

separated and my role as a research student was clear, I subscribed using my student email. As the researcher, I posted an invitation on the HR practitioner e-network. Interested parties were invited to contact me directly through my student email account. The e-network is moderated by the organisation and all posts require approval prior to distribution to the e-network. The e-network invitation attracted further participants for the study.

In the letter of invitation (see Appendix 8.1), HR practitioners were asked to circulate or enquire within their organisation if there were interested participants from the following two categories:

- human resources managers and/or line managers who had been involved with women's maternity transitions and would like to participate from an organisational perspective, and/or
- women who were level 7 and above and had returned to work following a maternity transition who may be interested in participating from an individual/personal perspective.

The research method was considered in developing the participant information sheet (see Appendices 8.2 and 8.3) and consent form (see Appendix 8.6). This information sheet was attached to the letter of invitation, and a consent form was sent to an applicant once they responded to the invitation.

4.3.2.2. **Criteria for selection**

In the initial research proposal, the criteria defining the selection of participants was that they returned to work following a maternity transition within the past two years, i.e. returning between 2010–2012. Subsequent to sending out the invitation for participation in 2012, it was determined some respondents fell outside this scope. As women's representation in management had remained fairly stable at around 26% and was not subject to any major changes for more than five years, it was decided to extend the

criteria and included these women in the study. Therefore, the criteria for inclusion in the project was extended to include women who returned to work following a maternity transition in the past five years, i.e. returning between 2007–2012. Expanding the criteria proved worthwhile as it increased the participant pool and their spread across a range of organisations within the sector.

As participants responded, by phone or email, they were asked to clarify their role/level for each maternity transition they had experienced within the timeframe for this research. Clarity in the role/level for each maternity transition experience assisted in determining consistency with the criteria of the study. All information was recorded in a participant registry, including the basis for inclusion or exclusion based on the criteria of the study. All participants, in the order of contact, were assigned an alphabetic alias to ensure their confidentiality. As many appointments were held in workplaces, private calendar bookings were sent from the researcher's work email address to the participant's nominated contact email address.

4.3.2.3. **Participant demographic**

The participants and HR/line managers who participated in this study were all voluntary contributors who responded via the HR practitioner e-network post, a leadership program network or through word-of-mouth.

A total of 21 participants shared their lived experiences. In keeping with the defined criteria for participant recruitment:

- Seventeen participants were in management positions at either level 7 or above and had a maternity transition in the past five years; 6 participants had one transition experience, 9 participants had two transition experiences, and 2 participants had three transition experiences. In this discussion, these participants are described by the term "participants". An additional 3 participants expressed an

interest however withdrew prior to interview; no further contact occurred.

As discussed in sampling strategy above, due to the researcher's knowledge of the sampling field and/or the phenomena occurring, the researcher was able to determine how representative the sample was in line within the phenomena (Raply 2013). Thus, the sample was considered representative based on the stability of women in senior management at 26% since 2013, and a median age for the sector of approximately 45 years. Therefore, those considered in childrearing age range would likely be limited to less than 5%. Data saturation relating to women managers' transition experience was reached.

- Four HR/line managers had managed a female employee through a maternity transition in the past five years. These participants are distinguished throughout this discussion as "HR/line manager".

HR/Line managers were an intense data set within a data set (Raply 2013). Re-exploring the data of 17 women managers together with the 4 HR/line managers, provided the researcher with an understanding of the phenomena occurring for HR/line managers. Despite multiple invitations for HR/line managers to participate, only four women responded and were included in the study. Whilst no male HR/line managers contributed, their influence to the maternity transition experience was explored through the women's stories.

The 21 participants reflected a broad range of experiences of maternity transition in the public sector working in 15 different public sector agencies. This broad representation reflected experiences from the different types of public sector agencies, as defined by the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*: 13 departments (section 35), two SES organisations (Schedule 2), one Schedule 1 entity, and one non-SES entity. A broader categorisation of

industry (eg central agency, policy agency, infrastructure, social development etc), occupational groupings (engineering, finance role) or gender representation (male-dominated, female dominated, mixed) has not been provided to maintain confidentiality.'

Marital status was not specifically part of the criteria for the selection of participants contributing to the study, nor a focus of the interviews. However, throughout many interviews some reference to marital status was shared. Marital status varied across the participants and the sample included married, re-partnered, separated single mothers, and same sex couples. Similarly, it was not within scope for participants to directly reflect on their households and the division of labour in relation to gendered assumptions toward work and identity. Where this information was volunteered it has been included.

Given the low representation of women in management, organisations were not disclosed in this research as this information could potentially identify women participants. While there were two organisations where there were both women and HR/Line manager participants, there was no direct working or reporting relationship (overlap) between the HR/line managers and the women participants who shared their experiences. Therefore, specific inferences about agencies support in managing transitions could not be determined. The indirect reporting relationship is also illustrated and note in Table 5.2.

It was noted that, of the HR/line managers, all contributors were female and had experienced a maternity transition themselves. The personal maternity transition experiences of HR/line managers were outside the scope of the study criteria, occurring prior to 2007. However, it is interesting to note that those who had experienced a maternity transition were willing to participate in this project. This is shown in the following chapter, Table 5-2. Despite the

broad invitation to HR/line managers, no men chose to participate in this study.

Professional relationships are built with HR practitioners across the public sector, therefore as a researcher it was highly likely the research and workplace practitioner would intersect. Participants were invited via the HR practitioner e-network to ensure strong rigour in the open invitation and opportunity, which was extended across the public sector. Only two participants were known to the researcher on a professional basis. Both self-nominated for the study. Perceived conflicts of interests were managed within the procedures detailed in ethics approval, in section 4.5.2.

Interview participants were speaking about their own experience, which may or may not have occurred in their current agency, and were not formally requested as part of the study to seek permission from their employers to contribute. The public sector allows participants to move between roles across the sector under the same employment conditions. Therefore, the scope of the study did not set a condition that participants must still be in the same agency or position they were in at the time of their transition. Agency permission was implicit in their preparedness to post the invitation to contribute to the study on internal email networks. Once an employee had responded to the researcher, the option to contribute was private and confidential, managed by direct contact with the researcher, with no further involvement of the agency.

In keeping with the ethics requirements, potential participants were provided with an information sheet indicating that the information they provided would be confidential and only reported in aggregate form and that they were free to withdraw consent at any time, without prejudice.

4.3.3. Data collection approach: Semi-structured interviews

The research method for this project relied on creating an environment for sharing experiences, and this may have been constrained if a highly structured format was used. The semi-structured interview format allowed for the lived experience of the participants to be shared through conversation.

The semi-structured format enabled researcher judgement to be exercised regarding the questions or themes explored within the context of the conversation (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2015). This style is congruent with interactive or interpretivist epistemology, promoting joint ownership between participant and interviewer (Gudmundsdottir 1996). The exploratory and explanatory nature of this research aimed to find out what had happened for women who had returned to managerial roles and to determine the relationships within the collective experience. The questions used to guide the interview are shown in Appendices 8.4 and 8.5.

The active exchange that occurred between the researcher and participants in this research fits well within the semi-structured domain, as meaning is jointly-constructed within the conversation as it progresses (Bryman and Cassell 2006). This approach is highly reflective and invites the freedoms that come with a constructivist methodology. Using a phenomenological enquiry approach enabled participants to openly self-author through the invitation to share their story (e.g. “tell me about your experience of being pregnant” or “tell me about your experience of returning to work”), opening the door to personal experiences in an organisational context and encouraging depth and clarity in meaning. This approach produced a rich reflexive account offering multiple paradoxes for synthesis (Jackson 2009; Baxter Magolda and King 2007). The self-authorship is congruent with a hermeneutic style whereby the researcher interprets or “makes sense” of how the individual “makes sense” of the experience. It therefore focused on

extracting or deriving meaning that may not be apparent or distinguishable to the interviewee.

4.3.3.1. **Pilot interviews**

Interviews for first three participants responding to the invitation were conducted as a pilot. Following the pilot interviews, the questions and interview approach were reviewed to ensure that the “lived experience” was coming through in their stories. The questions did not change; however, my approach did.

I found I was initially a little uncertain about how much I could or should interject and ask additional questions under a semi-structured format and probably was managing the interviews in a very structured way. This was reflected in the initial responses from participants. One participant seemed to struggle with forming responses. For others it seemed they were telling me what they thought I wanted to hear by asking if the answer provided was what I was looking for. While I was careful to respond in saying that there were no right or wrong answers; on reflection, this did not validate or affirm the participants’ response, nor was it providing them with any guidance on the ideas that could be explored further.

I realised my role, as a researcher, was to ask questions that explore ideas/themes according to the purpose, structure and research agenda (Clarke 2006). This was different to the participant’s role to guide the discussion based on their experience (Adams 2010). Therefore, to assist participants with their reflective thinking, guidance material was developed and displayed in subsequent interviews (see Figure 4-1: Participant discussion guide). The guide provided visual prompts around central ideas to be explored.

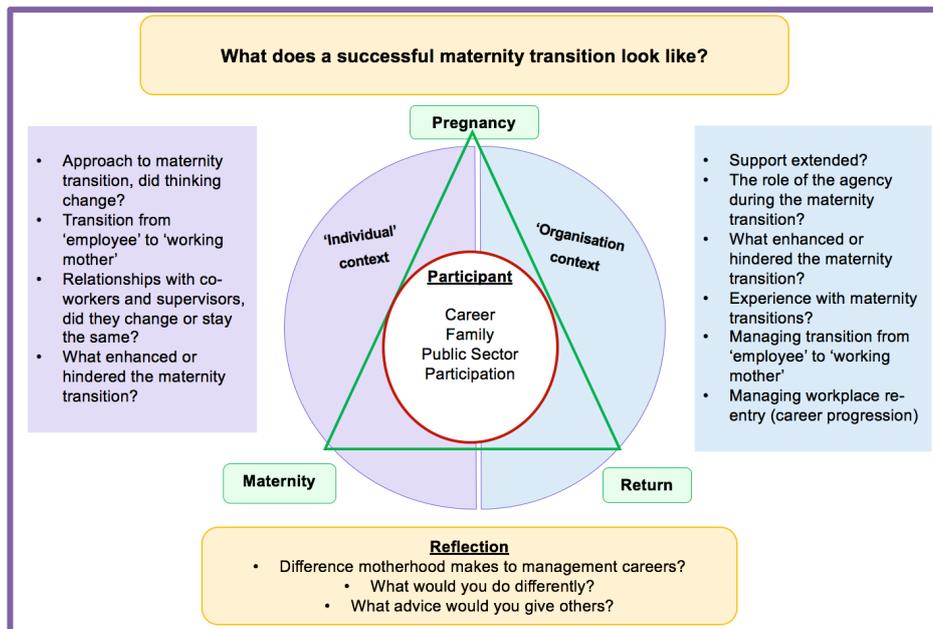


Figure 4-1: Participant discussion guide

The conversational style interview, rather than a more formal question and answer structure, assisted in developing the flow of the discussion and the ideas and issues raised were easier to explore. It also assisted in making the participants feel more at ease with the process, and allowed the story of their experience to be less “pleasing” to the researcher in nature, as they stopped asking questions like “Is that right?” or “Is that what you are looking for?”.

Feminist theory suggests that women often undersell some of the difficulties experienced by validating or normalising conflict, so it is important for the researcher to look at what is said as much as what is not said in relation to their experiences (Westmarland 2001). This was apparent during the pilot interviews where there was on occasion some very sensitive information shared. This sensitivity was a strong reminder of the value ethical clearance plays in research for participant and researcher. My initial approach to the formulation of questions had been from an etic view of what a researcher would like to know. Reflecting on the pilot interviews, I could see the importance of the emic view, and understood the review committee’s advice

and direction that a particular line of questioning may be distressing to the participant.

Another participant shared information of their experience that made them feel uncomfortable afterward, significantly editing and removing content in the transcript provided. This highlighted the value of field notes to capture, in general terms, the open and frank conversation, but not the detail of the discussion.

In the pilot interview phase, an unfortunate incident occurred where the researcher's phone rang during the recording. It disrupted the flow of the conversation and there was loss of information. To avoid the same situation from occurring, the iPhone was set to the "do not disturb" function in the main study. An additional device (iPhone or iPad) was also used, serving as a backup to manage any potential loss of data.

The pilot interviews process was discussed with my supervisors, to work through some of the joys and challenges of qualitative interviewing. The process helped identify opportunities for making interviews more relaxed, reflexive journaling, and identification of early emerging commonalities in the stories shared. The discussion of commonalities in story also helped to ensure that as a researcher with a membership of the researched that I bracketed assumptions regarding other women's experiences of transition. It was a worthwhile and cathartic process for the participants where their re-lived memory forms part of the collective lived experience and makes meaning.

As the questions were not changed for the main study the information collected from the three pilot interviews and field notes were included in the analysis for the main study.

4.3.3.2. Interview process

The interview is a personal encounter establishing a space for the authentic experiences to be revealed (Qu and Dumay 2011). This is achieved through establishing a rapport of trust with participants (Qu and Dumay 2011). There is already a natural power imbalance in the researcher/participant relationship (Qu and Dumay 2011). This can create an issue with sharing or “gifting” information in a way that waters down the realities of the life-world (Qu and Dumay 2011). Ensuring the participant feels comfortable and informed provides a sound platform for building trust and reciprocity (Clarke 2006).

This study took a localist perspective by focusing on the social construction of situated accounts learnt through semi-structured interviews (Qu and Dumay 2011). In the localist perspective, there is a strong relationship between the social phenomena and the actors understanding of the phenomena, thus the “interview is an empirical phenomenon that needs to be examined because the narratives produced are “situated accounts” of the phenomenon” (Qu and Dumay 2011, 242). The interview is more than a vehicle for transferring knowledge, it is a complex and dynamic social encounter of reportable knowledge (Qu and Dumay 2011).

Interviews were conducted in a private and suitable location where the participant was most comfortable, and which was suitable for a recording. As a majority of participants were back in the workforce either full time or part time, this ended up for most being their work environment. Booking a suitable room was suggested as being the participant’s responsibility; this way if they wished to remove themselves from the workplace they could do so. The choice of location also contributed to addressing ethics committee concerns regarding potential power relationships. Extending the invitation to the participant to select the location was a demonstration that participants were actively in control of the process, including being the decision-maker regarding important parts of the data collection process (Clarke 2006). Participants who chose to leave their workplace and meet in the researcher’s

workplace were offered refreshment and tissues were available if required. The extension of hospitality can help manage a participant's anxiety towards their contribution (Clarke 2006).

As discussed earlier, the guide (see Figure 4-1: Participant discussion guide) developed and used with participants in the main study, also served to provide participants with connection and understanding of the researcher's interest. At the heart of the diagram was the participant; their career, family, history working in the public sector and reason for participation in the study. As the researcher, I shared a brief account of my story. Sharing some of my story was an important aspect in addressing ethics committee concerns regarding potential power relationships. The process of researchers sharing personal information can assist in creating non-hierarchical relationships between researchers and participants (Clarke 2006). By doing so, I noted the shift in the trust relationship to one built on reciprocity.

Understanding the motivation for participant involvement in the study was a vital piece of information and assisted in determining the approach to the interview. As described above, participants in the main study were invited to give a brief window into what and how their experiences were shaped. This assisted in giving greater context and meaning to the shared life-world experience presented as fact (Clarke 2006). It also gave insight into the emotional impact of the experience in the way the story was told, and established a personal connection with the researcher.

As participants told their unique story, they looked to the researcher to affirm they have understood the question or have answered appropriately (Adams 2010). As the researcher, I used simple gestures such as nodding, yes, right or uh-huh, as these are natural conversational response mechanisms (Adams 2010). I was very conscious that the information being shared needed to be driven by the participant and not by researcher response to what was shared. Therefore, remaining interested but neutral to participant's

personal decisions that may have been in conflict with or in direct contrast to my personal experience or values, ensured their story was shared openly without researcher judgement. However, some participants' stories were extremely emotive, and Adams (2010) discusses the importance of the researcher exercising emotional and professional control in these situations so participants can share their stories freely. He suggested utilising techniques such as "pinching" oneself to control any personal emotion. I found this technique to be very effective in these situations.

At the conclusion of the interview, participants were advised that standard ethical protocols were in place should they wish to speak to someone following the interview. They were also reminded they could withdraw and change/remove any information from the transcript of their interview.

4.3.3.3. **Post-interview field notes**

Reflexive practice in qualitative interviewing is essential to manage and overcome any issues and challenges in the research (Clarke 2006).

Reflexive practice is even more meaningful in the early stages of the research, where giving pause to the interview process and considering how all aspects contribute to making meaning of life-world experiences helps enrich the data gathering process.

The researcher is a captive audience and may be privileged to more than the participant would ordinarily be comfortable with sharing. While the interview gives a cathartic space to talk about and process maternity transition experiences (Adams 2010), it does not necessarily mean participants would like all aspects included or recorded as part of the study (Clarke 2006). As previously discussed, this was learnt in the pilot interviews when a participant significantly edited and removed content from their transcript. Therefore, wrap-around notes were maintained on the participant registry of interview location, maternity transition experiences, and supplementary field notes of any standout discussions. Supplementary field notes included information on

observed commonalities or differences with other participants (Adams 2010), or where discussion continued following the end of the interview and further insights were shared. Field notes were kept only where relevant.

4.3.3.4. **Transcription**

All interviews were recorded, transcribed and provided to the participant as a record of their interview.

The device utilised for recordings was either an iPhone or iPad. Each device contained the “PocketDictate” app suitable for data transfer of the recording for digital transcription. As previously indicated, two devices were used to serve as a backup against any potential data loss.

Transcribing the interview in a timely fashion reduces the risk of inferences and bias creeping in, thus increasing the integrity of data (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2015). Field notes supported the transcription process by providing additional context and meaning to the discussion. Recording assisted in this process, allowing the researcher to concentrate more on the presence of non-verbal behavioural signals within the conversation (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2015).

Participants were provided with a copy of the transcript of their interview and any identifiable information was removed. This afforded them the opportunity to confirm that the essence of the discussion had been accurately captured and represented. At this point, they were provided an opportunity to make any alterations to better reflect the intended meaning of their experiences. Transcription codes linked to participant information were maintained on a master record by the researcher. A soft copy of this file was password protected and a hard copy of this information kept within a locked cabinet. Access is restricted to the researcher, project supervisors and the thesis chairperson.

Transcribing became the first step within the process of meaning-making and followed a linear cognitive process. Transcripts were then revisited, in line with an interpretive phenomenological analysis approach (discussed in Section 4.4), as themes emerged. Understanding and interpretation do not occur in isolation. Gudmundsdottir (1996) cited Heidegger's fore-having, foresight and fore-conception as a way of demonstrating that analysis and meaning-making is not constant. Each participant brings their own implicit and explicit knowledge base. Meaning-making is born from the researcher's interpretation of the interview using classification systems immersed with language (Mason 2007). The cognitive process occurring through analytical interpretation demonstrates just how embedded meaning-making is within philosophy, and highlights the controversy (Westmarland 2001; Thomas and Magilvy 2011) surrounding qualitative research when the interpretation of data is so influential. Figure 4-2 shows the researcher and respondent role in interpreting meaning.

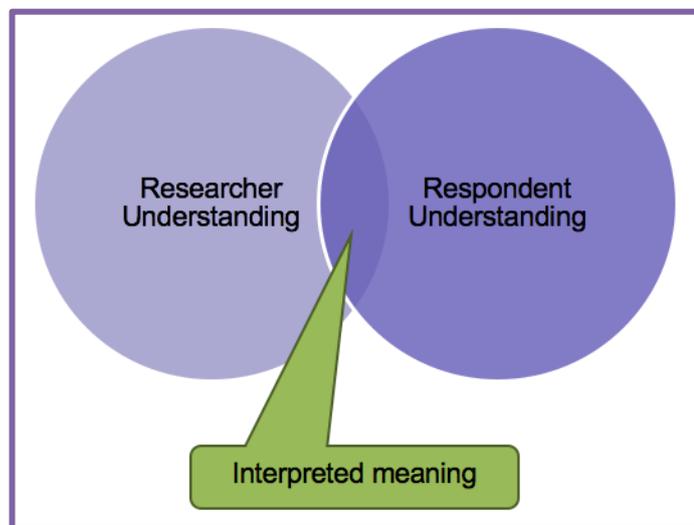


Figure 4-2: Interpreted meaning

Source: Figure based on Mason (2007).

There are benefits from some elements of the naturalist approach which assist in opening doors to emic views (Oliver, Serovich and Mason 2005). As the researcher, and in line with the naturalist approach, I incorporated

relevant elements like tone, pause, gesture and emotion in my transcript as descriptors to highlight and give context to what was being said.

I opted to transcribe all interviews myself except for the last three interviews. Given time constraints these interviews were outsourced to a transcriber who signed a confidentiality agreement (see Appendix 8.7). The decision to self-transcribe was to embed myself in the lived experience and start to “feel” the participants’ experience and understand the meaning they were making from their story. This enabled me to look carefully at each part of their story to make meaning in the whole. Self-transcription enabled early linkages of what was being said, and the interrelationship between individual experiences. The mental meaning was a formative process which enabled conceptual ideas in analysis to begin to unfold prior to N*Vivo coding. I found the process of self-transcription enriching as I developed a greater and more intimate connection of the shared experience. I found that during the analysis the strength of the spoken word echoed in the lived experience of each participant and my memory of their expression, their emotion and their interview. This really helped in determining the coding process.

4.4. Data analysis

The following section covers the coding process of the data analysis. It explains the summarising of meaning through open coding, categorising or grouping meaning through axial coding and structuring or giving order to meaning through selective coding.

The primary data for this study was the interview transcripts with women who had returned from maternity leave and with HR/line managers who had managed maternity transitions. The transcripts formed the textual records of the semi-structured, in-depth individual interviews that were undertaken (Currie and Spyridonidis 2016).

Qualitative analysis of interview data is an iterative process separating shapes (concepts) from the main body of work (transcript data), repeating the process with what is remaining until there is nothing left (Kaufmann 2011). Interview transcripts were coded, identifying potential categories/themes. Using a constant comparative method, recurring themes, similarities and differences were identified (Moghaddam 2006; Goulding 2009). The results from this analysis are presented in the next chapter with exemplars to show the development of the emergent model that conceptualises the findings.

An interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach was used to analyse the data. This is an iterative process of analysis revisiting emergent themes by constant compare and contrast techniques. The table below sets out the four stages described by Biggerstaff and Thompson (2008) and the dual interpretation process as described by Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014) that guided data analysis.

Table 4-2: Interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA)

Iteration	Sense-making	Process description
1. First encounter	Participant and researcher	This is the first encounter with the data where the researcher meets with the participant to hear their story. Samples for an IPA are usually smaller than other types of research and generally collected in a relaxed natural setting through semi-structured interviews. To enable the reflective nature of this approach, participants can be guided with a prompt sheet identifying the key ideas the researcher wishes to explore. The participant becomes the pilot in this setting, leading the conversation as they make sense of their experience. This is quite a dynamic process, reflected in the transcription through speech, pauses etc. and highlights the individual journey and how they make sense of their experience. Through the transcription process the researcher is making sense of the participant's sense-making.

2. Preliminary themes identified	Researcher	This is the where the researcher starts their second iteration of sense-making by analysing the transcript with the recording and identifying any themes outside the prompt sheet. Depending on the type of study, other pieces of data can also be utilised such as diaries, letters, and/or questionnaires. This part of the process is highly iterative and requires repeat reads making any notes on observations, reflections or thoughts in the data collection space between the text and the recording.
3. Grouping themes as "clusters"	Researcher	This process involves grouping themes as clusters of ideas. In doing so, relationships in and between themes begin to emerge.
4. High order theme structure	Researcher	Builds on the clustering of ideas, bringing the ideas into a hierarchical or higher order structure. Through this process quotes are identified giving the most meaning to the sense-making.

Source: Table developed from Biggerstaff and Thompson (2008) and Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014).

By applying aspects of grounded research to the analysis, empirical data was collected and shaped, creating new meaning. This method of analysis looked broadly at the social and theoretical issues that informed the findings of this research by considering conditional and consequential relationships to theory (Moghaddam 2006).

The interviews served as the main source data collected to meet the five research objectives of the study.

4.4.1. The coding process

This study was exploratory in nature focusing primarily on identifying relationships within the lived-experience data. Due to the nature of the eclectic experiences of the participants, for the purposes of this study the focus was on adding to theory by addressing a workplace issue out of the data (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2015). The data analysis followed a

process of initial paper coding to summarise or condense meanings, categorise or group those meanings and finally structure to give order to the meanings emerging through the interview data (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2015). The coding process was iterative in nature, as discussed in Table 4-2, it reflects the how emerging themes are developed through a series of compare and contrast techniques. It focused on the salient points in the narrative by segmenting them into summaries, sentences or words that offered meaning to the lived experience and attaching labels (Skjott Linneberg and Korsgaard 2019). Due to the nature of data analysis for this study, N*Vivo provided the capacity to manage data from the interviews.

This approach aligns to aspects of ground theory which focus on open coding, axial coding, and selective coding where the focus is about building theory from the categories participants use in making meaning (Moghaddam 2006). The grounded theory coding style can be thought of as a pyramid, that synthesises and breaks down the meaning as the coding progresses; firstly through open coding, then axial coding and finally via selective coding (Moghaddam 2006).

The analytical approach to the coding process therefore, occurred in three stages: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. This process made meaning of the part into the whole. Appendices 8.9 and 8.11 provide an example of the phenomenological coding stages in the pilot phase (open coding) and main study (selective coding) respectively. Table 4-3 summarises the analytical approach to coding for each stage.

Table 4-3: Analytical approach to coding

Stage 1: Open coding (outside of N*Vivo)	Stage 2: Axial coding (inside N*Vivo)	Stage 3: Selective coding (inside N*Vivo)
Pilot interviews (x3).	Main study interviews. Reflective field notes.	Ongoing refinement of emerging themes during writing of findings

Self-transcription of pilot and main study.	Coded to stage 1 linear structure.	chapter, i.e. merged or reshaped coding through discussion.
Basic coding of pilot with highlighter and scissors.	Identified overlap with organisational or systemic discussions.	
Grouped themes to form a “linear structure” for stage 2.	Grouping by commonality of lived experience.	
Defined individual, organisational and systemic discussions.		

Source: Table produced to reflect discussion in sections 4.4.1.1–4.4.1.3 from (Moghaddam 2006; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2015; Kennedy 2009).

4.4.1.1. **Summarise meaning (Open coding)**

This phase of the process, in application to this study, involved reading through the transcribed interviews in their entirety to get a general understanding of the discussion that occurred in relation to the attributes identified for the participants. This enabled me to form a mental construct of the discussion before coding. The open coding is an unfocused type of coding where portions or “chunks” of the transcript are placed in abstract or general concept groups in the first instance. The purpose of approaching coding in this way is that it allows for an understanding of the data to be developed over time by applying further filters. The idea is that the researcher continually asks questions about the meaning behind what is said and refines their understanding (Moghaddam 2006).

The chunking or segmenting data (Skjott Linneberg and Korsgaard 2019) phase was undertaken following the pilot interviews phase, and three high-level structures were identified: individual, organisation and system. By continuing to ask questions about the meaning, the ideas in discussions were identified. This was a highly tactile approach to clustering data (Belotto 2018) with cut-up pieces of post-it notes that could be moved and ordered.

Moving to a computer-based approach, the number of ideas were broken down by five levels (see Appendix 8.9) to provide further structure to the analysis. In this early phase, no label was assigned to the idea.

4.4.1.2. **Categorising or grouping meanings (Axial coding)**

The second phase of coding was the stage where the transcripts were synthesised into shorter and more concise accounts of data or units of meaning. Axial coding refers to understanding the attributes that make and give meaning to the concepts. It looks at the interrelational dynamics occurring across attributes within a concept and between concepts. This is where, out of a collage of concepts, a model starts to emerge explaining social phenomenon (Moghaddam 2006; Kennedy 2009). Once relationships have been established, it works at continued recognition and development of category relationships (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2015).

The themes identified were synthesised into shorter and more concise accounts using N*Vivo software. Thus, the five original themes were redefined to the transition experience by way of providing greater clarity between attributes within a concept and between the concepts. This process generated an overwhelming amount of data and nodes (Skjott Linneberg and Korsgaard 2019), which by anchoring emerging themes back to my research question and objectives, I was able to refine the findings (Belotto 2018; Skjott Linneberg and Korsgaard 2019).

Through this process a picture started to emerge that explained the social phenomenon occurring through the lived experience of maternity transitions. In this phase, 11 common themes and a miscellaneous category began to emerge. These were: pregnancy in the workplace, maternity leave, return to work, part-time practices in the workplace, full-time practices in the workplace, relationships with co-workers, career and family, management, language and culture, employee ideal versus working mother ideal, and

successful transitions. A miscellaneous category was used for data that did not fit into one of these themes.

4.4.1.3. **Structuring, giving order to meaning (Selective coding)**

This stage moved from identifying relationships between categories and their subcategories to understanding and developing principal category theories (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2015). This stage of coding looked at conditional and consequential relationships which existed between categories and how they are developed into theory building (Moghaddam 2006). The theory emerging is one that bridges between research and practice, whereby phenomena become understood within the social context in which they occur (Kennedy 2009).

Once relationships had been established in the axial coding phase, work continued to develop category relationships within and between concepts with a greater focus on understanding. Coding was refined once again, back to six themes of practice in maternity transitions: pregnancy in the workplace, maternity leave, return to work, motherhood and management, successful transitions, and miscellaneous. In redefining the coding structure, meaning was distilled down nine levels. Furthermore, the relationships were explored for each of these themes across the three high-level structures to determine the impact of each layer in the system of maternity transitions. An example of the cross-comparison for pregnancy in the workplace shown across the three high-level structures can be seen in Appendix 8.11. This phase continued well into the construction of the findings (Chapter 5), where codes were ascribed from the data itself and reflected the lived experience of the women in their words (Skjott Linneberg and Korsgaard 2019).

4.5. Quality in qualitative inquiry

The following section covers quality in qualitative inquiry. It provides detail on the approach taken to rigour, ethical considerations and bracketing in this research.

Quality in research is critical. In this study, the interviewer, transcriber and researcher are the same person. Cypress (2017, 254) describes the researcher in a phenomenological study as “the sole instrument of the study and the primary mode of collecting the information”. This emphasises the point of establishing strong processes and strategies of attaining rigour in qualitative inquiry (Cypress 2017). Achieving quality is associated with rigour (Cypress 2017) and rigour is achieved in methodology that can withstand challenge (Wainwright and Russell 2010). Rigour ensures that consistent analytical thought moves logically through the research and builds strong cognitive understanding of social constructs (Wainwright and Russell 2010).

Therefore, quality in qualitative inquiry is rigour and can be achieved by being precise, careful and accurate (Cypress 2017). The approach taken to rigour is explained in the next section.

4.5.1. Rigour in qualitative research

For the basis of this research, I drew on Hall and Stevens’ (1991) standards of rigour as these are better suited to a feminist research approach. Feminist inquiry accepts that “there is no universal women’s experience, because women’s lives have never been shaped exclusively by gender”, and that women’s lived experience are pluralistic (Hall and Stevens 1991, 17).

Therefore, the focus shifts to adequacy as means of measurement (Hall and Stevens 1991). Adequacy means research is “grounded, cogent, justifiable, relevant and meaningful” (Hall and Stevens 1991, 20). Table 4-4 summarises the actions taken to achieve adequacy in this research.

Table 4-4: Actions taken to achieve adequacy

Standard	Condition	Action taken in research
Reflexivity	Bracketing (see 4.5.3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distancing with an awareness of researcher feelings and attitudes. • Making clear my interest and experience in the research to the participant before proceeding with the interview. • Reflective questioning when transcribing interviews. • Reflexivity at each step, checking my values, assumptions, motivators in relation to research decisions for literature review, data collection, sampling, analysis, and discussion.
Credibility	Transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews recorded, participant validation of transcribed script. • Presentation of ideas in progress at academic and industry workshops. • Conversations with women to check ideas are recognisable, understood and endorsed representations.
Rapport	Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed methodology on establishing interview setting (4.3). • Semi-structured interview with questions designed to encourage women to speak freely and openly. • Participant consent forms, opportunity to withdraw, redact/correct information.
Coherence	Giving voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring interpretations are linked to research question and objectives. • Ensuring interpretations are faithful to women's stories. • Using participant words in text to give voice to women's stories.

Standard	Condition	Action taken in research
Complexity	Triangulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad participant criterion to ensure a range of women contributing for complexity of experience. • Examination of key organisational documents to gain further context.
Consensus	Comparison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical readers and discussions. • Phenomenological testing. • Supervisor checking of process and findings.
Relevance	Significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significance of the research in addressing women's interest (1.4). • Contributions and implications of the research findings to others (7.2.).
Honesty and Humility	Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sheets provided to all participants. • Ethics approval. • Transcripts reflect emotion of participants. • Semi-structured interview reflects an exchange and dialogue to access women's experience respectfully.
Naming	Phenomenology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active voices of women's accounts (Chapter 5).
Relationality	Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborating with supervisors and other doctoral students involved with feminist research.

Source: Table produced from Hall and Stevens (1991).

4.5.2. Ethical considerations

Sharing one's personal experiences is a highly sensitive situation and should not occur without thorough planning and preparation or without consideration

of the ethical obligations of confidentiality. Ethical issues can easily emerge in conversations (Etherington 2007), and was accounted for in the research planning. Sound interview protocols were established and supported through informed consent which placed appropriate social parameters (Jacobson, Gewurtz and Haydon 2007) around what is or isn't acceptable, such as confidentiality, right to information/withdrawal, and coding within the research constructs. Due to the sensitive nature of the research, ethical considerations took into account values of human worth and dignity (Etherington 2007, 601).

One of the main ethical concerns with this study was being an "insider" which places more emphasis on issues associated with role conflict. The "insider" status is attributed to a sense of belonging to a group (Toy-Cronin 2018), in this case shared characteristics of being a public sector employee and having experienced my own maternity transition. As the researcher however I also took on the "outsider" status. Toy-Cronin (2018, 456) notes fundamental ethical issues arising for "consent, managing pre-existing ongoing relationships, use of insider knowledge, maintaining confidentiality and the possibility of duty to disclose confidential research data".

These issues were embedded in the rigour of the inquiry commencing from the ethics review, through data collection and analysis, and finally in the presentation of thesis. The researcher's interests were disclosed to both participants and researcher's employer, only referring to participants in pseudonym, maintaining standard public sector conflict of interest procedures for any personal contact, professional relationship or knowledge shared through the study. Reflexive journalling was a key tool (Toy-Cronin 2018; Finefter-Rosenbluh 2017) to activate and anchor perspective, and to find balance in presenting different lived experiences (Finefter-Rosenbluh 2017).

Any potential or perceived power between the researcher and participants was managed by:

- sending the invitation to participate in this study from the researcher's Curtin student-email address
- providing a comprehensive information sheet with details about the nature and purposes of the research project
- providing clear information that participation in the study was voluntary, and participants could withdraw at any time without prejudice
- the provision of transcripts post-interview to each participant for their review and edit if they wish to do so
- strict confidentiality provisions

Retention and disposal of research information follows the prescribed guidelines of the University. Data will be retained following thesis publication as required by the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (Australian Research Council 2007).

4.5.3. Bracketing

Bracketing is a strategy in research to manage bias; a process in phenomenological inquiry where researcher subjectivity and judgement is suspended (Cypress 2017). Accomplishing bracketing in phenomenological inquiry is essential to see the pure and absolute phenomena that is occurring (Cypress 2017). Through bracketing the researcher's views, beliefs and assumptions are suspended to enable the researcher to walk in the participant's shoes (Biggerstaff and Thompson, 2008). Bracketing is an important issue in qualitative research which can be perceived as permitting greater interpretative licence; this issue is managed through strong reflexive praxis (Biggerstaff and Thompson 2008; Corbin Dwyer and Buckle 2009).

An awareness of language (Westmarland 2001), how we think or what has guided our thinking and reasoning patterns, is an important aspect of bracketing. As individuals and researchers, it is important that we have a self-awareness of our own views and know how to listen to what is being shared without allowing our personal views to influence or guide the nature of the discussion. Understanding our own epistemic lens, the way we view and make judgements of the world and environment we live in is a valuable tool in bracketing and being able to identify the participant's social constructs (Westmarland 2001).

In phenomenological inquiry, having an awareness of what can happen with interpretive epistemology and how invested the researcher can become, is the researcher's biggest strength. Knowing how to bracket is the qualitative researcher's best tool, especially when the researcher "hears" a story being told that ignites a memory which is attached to the meaning of what is heard (Gudmundsdottir 1996). During the iterative process of looking for meaning, it is essential the researcher suspend any personal assumptions or judgements (i.e. bracket, Biggerstaff and Thompson, 2008) regarding how participants are making sense of their world.

As a researcher who worked in the public sector with a personal maternity transition experience, I was very conscious of the need to bracket and separate my own thoughts and experiences from the stories developing through the interviews. I often found that there were different elements touched upon by participants that I either identified with myself or had knowledge of from my literature review. As the researcher I personally acknowledged that there were going to be instances of similarity and difference. I ensured that the participant guided the interview, allowing them to tell their story in ways that suited them. Personal points of interest were discussed with supervisors only. This provided the opportunity to reflect on my views, beliefs and assumptions in relation to the research and to then bracket them so they did not impact on the data analysis process.

4.6. Conclusion

This chapter has detailed the approach to the research regarding maternity transitions in management and strategies used by the researcher to ensure rigour in the study. It addressed the research question and how data was obtained and analysed to achieve the objectives. The theoretical perspectives discussed in this chapter provided the foundation for the enquiry, and the steps taken to implement the research design and data analysis were discussed.

The next chapter presents the findings of the applied methodology for the research.

5. THE STORY OF MATERNITY TRANSITIONS IN MANAGEMENT

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the shared story of maternity transitions in management, its stages and the changes that occur with the new identity when motherhood and management intersect.

A maternity transition is made up of three stages: pregnancy (stage 1) > maternity leave (stage 2) > return to work (stage 3). For some women this may reflect one complete transition cycle, for others this may include multiple transition cycles. While moving through the three stages may be a linear process, starting with pregnancy, each stage is interconnected and adds to the overall “transition experience”. Figure 5-1 illustrates the full transition cycle as it is experienced, beginning with a woman manager and ending with a working mother as a manager.

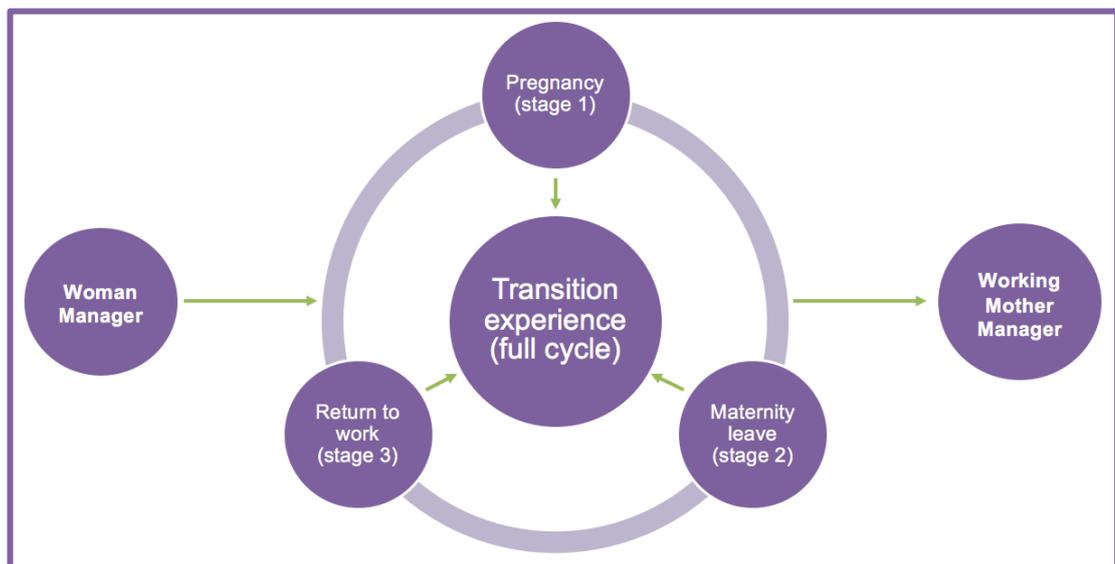


Figure 5-1: Transition Cycle

5.1.1. Presentation of the findings

The chapter presents analysis of the findings supported by direct quotes from participant interviews to illustrate the heart of the journey, the transition experience, for women and HR/line managers.

How the findings are presented:

- ellipsis points (three dots) “ ... ” indicates running text has been edited for readability and flow or linked to a corresponding idea by the same participant
- square brackets [xxx], indicates replacement text for identifying characteristics, such as [organisation], [child], [manager] etc or a word has been added by the researcher for clarity.
- buffer or padding text, such as um, ah, so, yeah, but, like, and conversational text such as “you know”, “I think” have been deleted unless required for readability
- repeated words, such as xx, xx, xx, have been deleted to reflect only the single word, unless they emphasise a point
- asterisk *xxx*, indicates emotions or actions in quotes
- direct quotes are presented as a block quote in smaller font and attributed to the relevant participants and their respective experience with their pseudonym followed by the label that categorises their experience, for example *Dennyse, Working Mother* for the “woman” and *Ivvy, HR/Line Manager* for the “organisation”

The chapter is organised as follows. Firstly, an overview of the participant demographic profile is shown in Table 5-1. Participant pseudonym is included in Table 5-2. The findings follow the journey through the stages of the transition cycle as experienced by women managers. Each stage of the journey is reflected as follows:

- Pre-pregnancy, entering stage 1
- Pregnancy, stage 1
- **Error! Reference source not found.**
- **Error! Reference source not found.**
- **Error! Reference source not found.**

The literature review identified gaps in the literature that were addressed through the research questions for this research. Key gaps as shown in Figure 3.1 related to the transition experience, transition identity and mothers as managers. The findings chapter address these research gaps through the focus on the transition experience for women managers who become mothers. This is shown in Figure 5.2 below. The findings represent the shared story of the participants' personal observations and reflections on the transition experience and on their career, and the reflections of those with organisational responsibility to manage career transitions.

5.1.2. Demographic profile

There are two types of participant contributing to this study: women managers who as mothers have experienced maternity transitions, and "HR/line managers" who have experienced managing maternity transitions within an organisational policy framework. The women were invited to share their individual/personal perspective of the maternity transition experience, and the HR/Line Manager their organisational perspective managing a maternity transition. Organisational insights were also gained from the women's stories. All the HR/line managers were female.

These two perspectives offer reflective insight into the distinct and separate worlds, noting where there is alignment or misalignment in maternity transitions.

Table 5-1: Participant demographic profile

Number of participants		Number of maternity transition experiences between 2007–2012		Number of public sector agencies by category type	
Women	17	One transition	6	A: Department (section 35)	17
HR/Line managers	4	Two transitions	9	B: SES organisation (Schedule 2)	2
		Three transitions	2	C: Schedule 1 Entity	1
		D: Non-SES entity			1
Total	21		17		21

Table 5-2: Participant pseudonym

Women managers who have experienced maternity transitions		HR/Line managers who have experienced managing maternity transitions	
Participant	Pseudonym	Participant	Pseudonym
P01-W	Alice ^(a)	P04-O	Allison
P02-W	Barbara	P06-O	Francine
P03-W	Caroline	P09-O	Ivvy ^(b)
P04-W	Dennyse	P10-O	Jannette ^(a)
P05-W	Elisabeth		
P06-W	Felicity ^(b)		
P08-W	Heather		
P09-W	Isobelle		
P10-W	Johanna		
P11-W	Kelly		
P13-W	Mary		
P15-W	Olive ^(a)		
P17-W	Quinn		
P18-W	Renee ^(b)		
P19-W	Samantha		
P22-W	Victoria ^(b)		
P23-W	Wendy		

(a) (b) Notes the same organisation for woman and HR/Line Manager participants only, there were no reporting relationships between participants.

5.2. Pre-pregnancy, entering stage 1

When describing pregnancy in the workplace, the story started with planning. Planning included the timing of the pregnancy, planning the announcement, planning the maternity break, planning a return to work. Planning was seen as central to making informed decisions as to how, at that stage, they believed they could or would manage their transition journey. It tells a story about how much planning women put into having a child, what it will mean for their career and how they want to manage that.

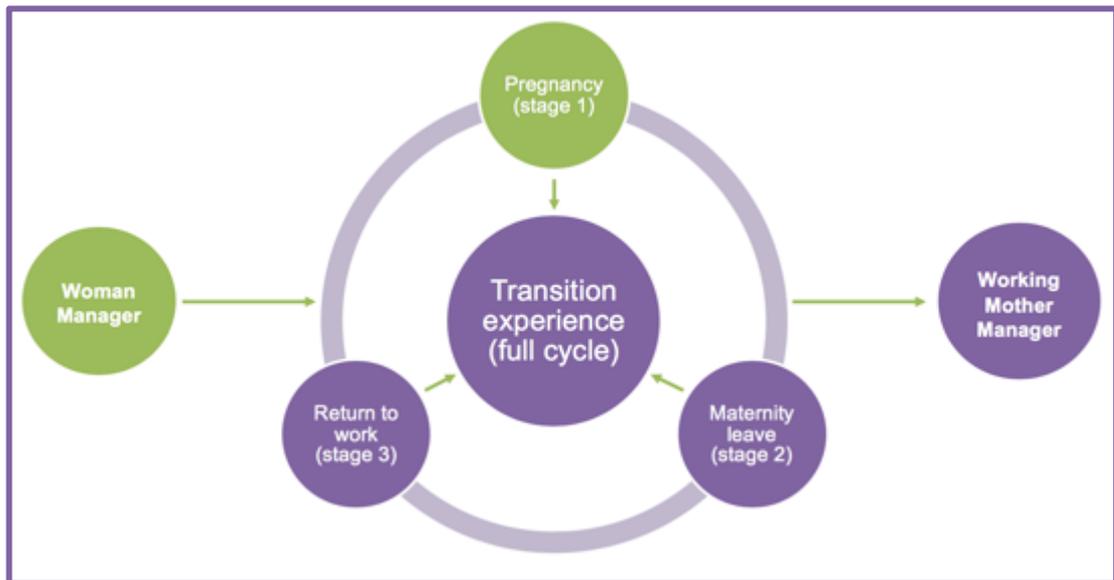


Figure 5-2: Pre-pregnancy, entering stage 1

5.2.1. For women, planning for when you have a baby

5.2.1.1. Planning for the future

Planning commenced often long before pregnancy. The initial focus was around when to have their first child with participants structuring and organising their professional commitments around their planning for a family. Decisions around timing from their perspective were essential, as it was seen as enabling them to manage their professional standing now and into the future, their partner's professional requirements, and the impact on their home life. Participants indicated working in the public sector was a big draw card for them with respect to planning for motherhood whilst maintaining their careers. It was seen by many as providing a good policy framework for parental leave and flexibility that would help them to combine motherhood and their careers, particularly when their partners were potentially in more rigid environments.

I thought I will go to government just for a little while just while I have kids because I was looking for flexible work practice and thought that I would be able to work more flexibly in the government sector compared to the corporate sector.

Dennyse, Working Mother

I don't think most people realise how forward planning you are when you are having a baby because you are not just thinking about what is happening today, tomorrow, next week or next month because ... you are thinking ... well into the future because this is a major disruption to your life and how you thought things are going to be.

Victoria, Working Mother

Participants saw it was necessary to plan for tomorrow by getting ahead with their career while they could. Women described it as thinking about what you want for your life and getting your career to somewhere you are comfortable for it to sit — for a while.

Get as high as you can in your career before you have kids, because it will stop. I don't know how long it will stop, but it will stop, so you have to drive yourself to get as far and as high as you can before you have kids ... Really understand your value system, get yourself as efficient as you can around time management, know your management style.

Caroline, Working Mother

5.2.1.2. **Until you tell people**

A great deal of consideration goes into when to go public with announcing a pregnancy. Participants spoke of experiencing a private turmoil and oscillating between excitement and worry. Their decision to tell or not to tell is hedged in a “gut feel” for their workplace. Participants indicated they were very aware of the potential for things to change once they announced their pregnancy. For some that potential appeared realised.

As soon as I was pregnant, I was told that if I had plans to come back that I would have to take a lower level position, which I was mortified about.

Dennyse, Working Mother

The advice from one of the HR/line managers illustrates that the concern women were feeling, and that some had experienced, about announcing their pregnancy was justified.

Don't confide until you can confide and that sounds terrible, a bit secretive, you have no obligation to tell anyone about anything unless you want to ... you have no obligation to tell anybody what your plans are after your parental leave until you absolutely have to ... so make sure you are confident about what you want to do until you tell people.

Francine, HR/Line Manager

Participants wanted to feel in control of the way they professionally portrayed themselves and were hesitant about disclosing information early. They preferred withholding knowledge of their pregnancy and presenting as an ideal worker when navigating employment conditions to retain a little bit of power, "knowing" that once their pregnancy is revealed things change.

I didn't want him to know that I was pregnant because it wasn't three months yet ... I felt that was my decision [when to tell] ... he, I know, got quite stropy about why I wasn't physically in the office and my boss had to keep saying ... she is working, she is working from home, it is a personal issue and I am not authorised to tell you.

Quinn, Working Mother

I got pregnant and then my world changed. To be honest my experience from then changed dramatically from the *emotional composure* ... dream job.

Dennyse, Working Mother

A few participants did have positive experiences after announcing their pregnancy, citing supportive and accommodating managers. They felt safe, encouraged to work to their capacity and were supported with flexible work arrangements to manage their presence in the workplace.

Being able to sleep in the afternoon was just awesome and then I could ... [work] whatever hours I needed to in the evening to make up, so that was really, really good. And because my boss supported it everyone else had no choice.

Felicity, Working Mother

She was an incredible source of support, anything I needed in terms of being able to be as capable as I could possibly be and being as flexible as she could be to support me to balance the pregnancy and my work.

Alice, Working Mother

For these few, there was a long-standing relationship or existing social capital with their manager that resulted in a positive experience. These women experienced a workplace camaraderie where their female peers respected the difficulties of coming to work with morning sickness and made allowances.

5.2.1.3. **Doing something with my year off**

The notion of what to do while on maternity leave and the importance of doing “something” with that time was discussed. Time out of the workplace for mothering was perceived as offering no tangible or transferable value to the workplace, and some of the women adopted approaches to manage or improve their human capital. As one participant noted:

The first one wasn't the same as the second because the first I had applied to do my Masters ... I knew I was pregnant ... I wanted to do something ... whilst I have my year off.

Wendy, Working Mother

For participants this was about maintaining their professional knowledge, skills and abilities.

Things that were happening here on a legislative base, so you are keeping abreast of those things and the organisation wants you to keep abreast of what is happening, so you are not totally detached from work.

Renee, Working Mother

Thus, there appeared to be a pressure that the women felt regarding the need to ensure that skills and knowledge were retained or improved whilst on maternity leave.

5.2.1.4. **Planning how or when to return to work**

Forward planning became more focused when participants started factoring in how they would return to work and what this might ideally look like to them. The ideal notion of return to work was highly important in how participants constructed their transition. The planning made it appear easier to come back. Some participants initiated early conversations around a return with reduced hours. This imposed particular challenges based on perceived expectation of what was required of senior management.

Having access to a car bay ... was just essential because how am I going to get my child to childcare and get into work ... the cars that the level 8s have in [department] are pool cars and they are only available to full-time staff not to part-time staff so that means I will have to bring my own car making the job less attractive ... but then you need to supply me with a car park.

Victoria, Working Mother

I then spent six months of my pregnancy extremely stressed because I didn't want to put my child into day care five days a week. I also financially need to work and suddenly found myself in a very difficult situation because I didn't have options and didn't know what to do *emotional composure*.

Dennyse, Working Mother

One woman described becoming pregnant as reducing the potential of career mobility due to limiting negotiation power with new employers. It also meant that women's careers plateaued with their current employer. They

perceive they will encounter bias when applying for promotion with a new employer, and having to negotiate maternity leave and return to work options at the time of recruitment. As a result, career mobility diminished and organisational commitment increased, as pregnancy was about going on maternity leave and coming back to the same employer. They knew the environment and were more comfortable negotiating changes where there is existing human and social capital established rather than dealing with the unknown of moving elsewhere in the sector. Staying with the same employer where there is established bargaining power in capital could also be a form of career entrapment and having a stabilising effect on the workforce. This produced the perception that management and career progression are an evolution of time spent in an organisation rather than talent.

This is not a job of a lifetime for me, this is a job that leads to something else ... I will give you my heart and soul for two years and then after that I won't make a commitment longer than that. The good thing for him is that he gets the commitment for longer than two years because it will be more difficult for me to transition into another role while I am doing the pregnant, having the baby and the return to work kind of arrangement.

Victoria, Working Mother

Women were visually stepping through the full transition cycle in their mind; how they were going to return to work, in what capacity, and if that was achievable.

5.3. Pregnancy, stage 1

After all the planning women put into having a child, actually being pregnant in the workplace is the next part of the story. Women who were pregnant in the workplace spoke about the need to be informed. This included negotiating organisational support during pregnancy through to maternity leave, looking after their health and wellbeing in the workplace, and ensuring they continued to feel valued and engaged with meaningful work until they commenced maternity leave.

5.3.1. For women, surviving a working pregnancy

5.3.1.1. Being aware of your rights

There was a strong emphasis from the participants on how important it was to be informed and understand their rights. Knowing their rights before making any announcements, before negotiating conditions of employment, before seeking to do or share anything was considered essential to the planning. This was guided by a sense of what the workplace vibe was towards family and work balance. They found information was not always easy to find or were left to work it out on their own without support.

If you are aware ... of what your rights are ... there is more flexibility, if you are not aware, I don't know whether you get the information volunteered to you.

Johanna, Working Mother

Definitely know your rights ... and be very open, so don't hold things back, because other people just make assumptions about what you want or how you want to work.

Felicity, Working Mother

Participants indicated the significance of knowing and understanding these rights and of management's awareness of them. This highlights an unbalanced power relationship between women and management in negotiation of conditions. Women seek information on their rights to attempt to maintain some control, knowing the employer is also very aware of those rights.

People know they have a lot of rights under the award and it offers a good peace of mind for mothers returning to the workforce ... people generally are pretty aware of their rights ... and so is management.

Olive, Working Mother

Financial security was also an important aspect of being informed. The women described the need for organisations to explain options and potential impacts of their maternity leave to their tax, superannuation, mortgage, leave credits, and income caps for family payments. Participants expressed a need to be guided through some of the financial implications of government incentives or schemes earlier to reduce unnecessary frustration later.

There was whole heap of problems ... some leave had to be paid out because I accrued leave during the time, that wasn't communicated to me, it had tax implications, implications for family payments, and just no consideration whatsoever ... taking leave without pay affects their superannuation, you have options: you can pay it, it is as if you never went on parental leave ... I had to fight tooth and nail to get what I wanted.

Alice, Working Mother

Knowing and understanding rights was one of the tensions in ensuring being treated fairly, yet participants felt paralysed and completely vulnerable to act because they worried about professional reputation. They did not want to be seen as causing trouble or not being able to manage because they were having a child. Participants carried a heavy burden of navigating the challenges associated with determining conditions alone.

I had no choice. I wanted to take it further, but I knew that I would never work in government again ... you don't want to be the squeaky wheel ... the CEO of [organisation] is a very influential person ... you are not going to bag out the CEO of a department.

Dennyse, Working Mother

Not every woman is full of confidence and able to negotiate ... where they might find information on their own ... who to approach ... not wanting to approach their male boss because they are not quite sure of their attitudes.

Francine, HR/Line Manager

As such, participants are willing to walk away from confrontation, concerned about the impact to their reputation and career. However, the injustice in

treatment suffered by the women can easily become airborne leaving a stain or a blemish on the image or reputation of the organisation and their leadership.

Stories get around, women have very strong networks, particularly women who are parents in the workplace and if there has been one transgression via a manager you can bet your bottom dollar that most of the women surrounding that particular person who's been unfairly treated will know exactly all about it.

Francine, HR/Line Manager

5.3.1.2. **Feeling engaged and valued**

Women indicated how important it was for them to be present, valued and engaged until their maternity leave commenced. The sense of being fully engaged and valued for their contributions was linked closely to seeing projects through and then being at ease to go on maternity leave.

[It] was probably quite important to me that I wasn't marginalised or put to the side, sidelined, knowing that one, I was pregnant and two, that I would be leaving for a period of time. Right up until that last week I felt I was engaged and fully valued for what I was contributing... I was able to go off on leave and be happy for that time, I felt like I had tied up all my loose ends.

Barbara, Working Mother

Others felt confronted, as though their interest and level of engagement in the workplace was being questioned, because they were pregnant. They indicated they were being framed as present but not invested in their careers and automatically discounted for opportunities at a strategic level to develop, grow or network through activities such as conferences or interstate travel. They associated this with a sense of being shelved, based on an assumption of what they would want in the future, without actually being asked.

People start having those conversations with you about, well such and such is going on long service leave I would really love you to move over and take

over that director position, and they just stop having those conversations because they make assumptions that you are not going to be around to do that.

Victoria, Working Mother

You're sort of not given an opportunity ... to do things like travel ... you are not even asked the question, would you like to do this ... being asked the question around your availability for other sorts of things is really important, rather than people making assumptions.

Johanna, Working Mother

There was a sense of frustration when management stopped investing in them, assuming them to be less valuable because they were pregnant and transitioning out of the workplace for a period of time. Women described wanting to feel safe and secure in employment before their maternity leave. For one participant, the tensions of navigating her transition compromised her family values and employment security, forcing her to leave the organisation she was in for another organisation (outside her field) that reflected her values.

I fought for what I thought was right ... I still won out in the end but won in terms of I was employed, my child was happy, and I was able to pay my mortgage ... what I did lose is my career in terms of my passion and what I am really interested in, and what I trained for.

Dennyse, Working Mother

Participants were describing the intrinsic relationship between their visibility and their value that was evolving with their pregnancy. There was a sense of becoming less visible as an asset to the organisation due to their approaching maternity break.

5.3.1.3. **Getting what you need is restrictive**

Participants found there was some tension centred around maternity leave provisions and using personal leave provisions, particularly for the period

immediately after the birth where they are deemed medically unfit/unable to work. This tension was pointed out as a change occurring between transition stages. However, it shows how pivotal interpretation and application of provisions can be to women's experience.

During my first pregnancy the award was read ... during the second pregnancy with the new manager, he wouldn't have a bar of it ... no you're wrong ... they were wrong when they offered it to you that way.

Caroline, Working Mother

My son was [a] difficult birth and was an emergency caesarean and because I was taking maternity leave, my husband couldn't take his carer's leave to care for me, and our daughter ... that was quite restrictive.

Barbara, Working Mother

Participants questioned the highly regulated environment, describing feeling let down or restricted by such provisions.

If one of us had worked in the public service and one had worked in the private sector then one of us would have been able to take parental leave from the private sector and one from the public sector and because we both worked in the public sector only one of us could take it. So that was sort of a disadvantage.

Victoria, Working Mother

5.3.2. For organisations, managing workplace pregnancy

5.3.2.1. Changes women go through whilst pregnant

Organisations were observed by participants as giving advice to both women and managers focused on entitlements and award conditions. HR/Line managers described how the changes women go through — physically and emotionally — whilst pregnant in the workplace need to be considered.

What a lot of people are interested in is: I am going on leave what does that mean, how long can I take off ... what pay am I entitled to, how does the Commonwealth maternity leave scheme fit in ... informally we then sort of talk about ... your pregnancy from an ergonomic perspective.

Allison, HR/Line Manager

Changes that women go through whilst pregnant in the workplace are significant and a real challenge both from a managers' point of view and from an employee perspective ... your body is changing, you don't feel well, sooner or later you are going to be leaving work and doing something completely different ... the transition of your role to someone else ... that puts pressure on and anxiety ... finishing off tasks and projects ... trying to give enough time and thought to this very important stage in your life while still balancing your full-time high level management position, [it] is very tricky whilst pregnant in the workplace.

Francine, HR/Line Manager

HR/Line managers felt trust was central to organisational support of women during their pregnancy. They used trust to describe the work relationship between employee and employer, linking trust to performance issues.

You have to make allowances for people perhaps not feeling well as they have morning sickness ... general fatigue ... productivity levels ... you need to make allowances for that as a manager ... if you don't have performance issues with the person, you can manage that quite well.

Ivvy, HR/Line Manager

5.3.2.2. **Health and wellbeing in the workplace**

For participants who experienced straightforward healthy pregnancies, it was simple to continue as normal. Participants' experiences indicated ergonomic needs for changing bodies and working arrangements for morning sickness are less obvious to organisations, perhaps because organisations see pregnancy in the workplace as short-lived in nature. For some women being able to work in a safe environment became increasingly challenging.

I was situated in a spot that was incredibly hot ... I couldn't open the blinds because I couldn't reach them because of my stomach. I had to in the end, have an occupational health and safety assessment before they would change the minimum ... They sat me next to someone, who had unfortunately been exposed to the swine flu ... I went and saw my manager and said 'Look I need to be moved away.' [He] refused, flatly refused to do anything about it.

Alice, Working Mother

For participants, the desire to be fitting into the ideal employee mould and not creating tensions were considered so great that in one example it took a colleague to point out to management they were putting a participant's pregnancy at risk with unrealistic work expectations. This indicates standard conditions are presumed suitable for women during pregnancy and women felt uncomfortable to ask for any form of accommodation.

I was working very long hours ... I was doing my own job and team, and half of someone else's job and their team as well ... the other manager that was sharing this other job actually went to the director and said ... 'you have to do something because [name] can't afford to lose her baby, because she is in her 40s and this might be her only chance ... we don't want to be responsible for her losing her baby.'

Kelly, Working Mother

Difficult pregnancies are hard enough without being further compounded by office politics. One woman felt caught in the middle of senior management and taken advantage of when work demands should be winding down to enable transition to maternity leave, but instead was exposed high stress.

The last three months before I went on maternity leave had been really stressful, really stressful, partly because I was tired. I was quite sick the first pregnancy. I had preeclampsia and my blood pressure was through the roof anyway. I was massively swollen and having the stress on top of that was

really quite something ... people saw me as a bit of a pawn ... it was just [a] really difficult personal relationship to manage.

Heather, Working Mother

These collective experiences demonstrate how little women want to speak up about difficulties in the workplace, wishing to be perceived as a normal employee. It shows a real vulnerability during pregnancy and reluctance to challenge workplace norms. As a result, they suffer in organisational silence or neglect.

5.4. Being on maternity leave, stage 2

The maternity leave story is the “break” in employment where women’s focus is on adapting to a new identity, staying connected and managing the return to work.

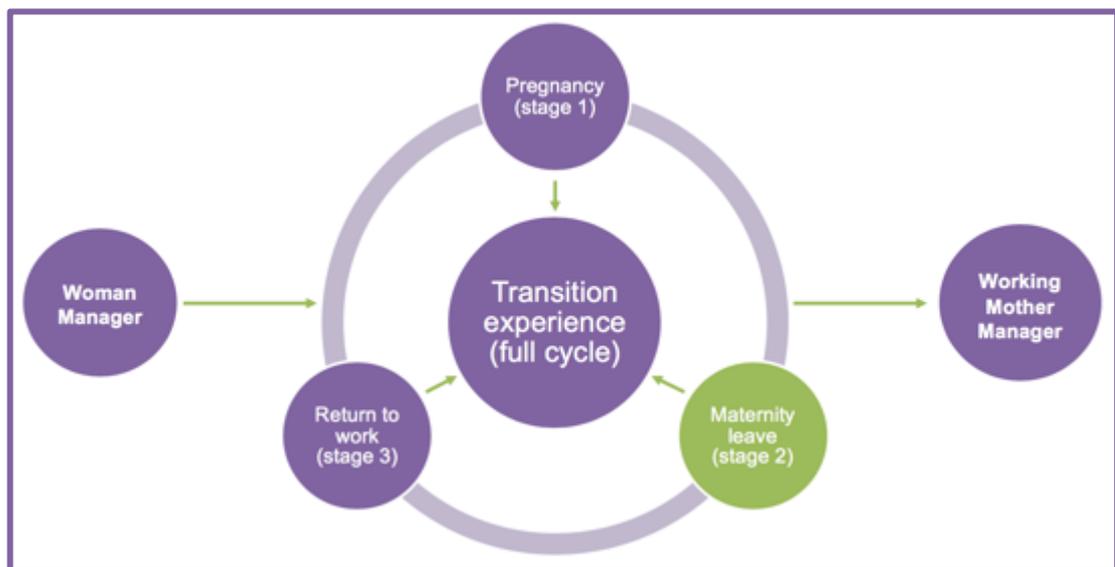


Figure 5-3: Being on maternity leave, stage 2

5.4.1. For women, taking maternity leave

5.4.1.1. A year’s maternity leave

In many cases a maternity break was the first prolonged period of leave participants had experienced in their career. While the length of time for a

maternity break is undefined, the organisational view considered 12 months the standard.

Most people look for a year's maternity leave, so that is paid and unpaid obviously.

Ivvy, HR/Line Manager

The study showed that participants are taking less than the expected length of leave. A shorter leave period may be attributed to job security, fear of being forgotten, a strong sense of duty to the organisation, social contact, and the mental stimulation that the work environment brings. Earlier returns demonstrate that women have underlying fears and don't feel secure transitioning from the workforce, even though there is a strong policy framework to support periods of leave before and after the birth of a child.

I said six weeks ... thinking I could just pump this baby out and just get back straight into work.

Elisabeth, Working Mother

Went on maternity leave for seven months.

Olive, Working Mother

While some initiated their maternity transition with shorter timeframe in mind, they requested to extend it after the realisation of how special that time was.

Realising that I wanted to cherish the time, so therefore I took a much longer period of time.

Alice, Working Mother

Initially decided to take 12 months off ... and then I kept extending.

Quinn, Working Mother

Participants who had experienced more than one transition knew what to expect and were less inclined to request shorter maternity leave breaks or

extend the offer to maintain involvement on corporate projects while on leave. They reflected that based on their previous experience, they now had more realistic expectations and regulated their behaviour accordingly.

I was nearly putting my hand up saying I am happy to review that while I am on maternity leave, just send it to me and I'll have a look ... I thought no, don't do that ... having already done maternity leave once and knowing what to expect makes it much easier.

Victoria, Working Mother

For some there was organisational pressure to return as soon as possible, as Isobelle explains:

My work asked me would I take the 12 weeks on the full pay rather than the 24 on part pay because they wanted me to be able to return to work as soon as I felt able to.

Isobelle, Working Mother

It also showed that maternity leave was constructed with various leave types. Much of the maternity break that participants took was paid leave with the standard government provision, partnered with other forms of leave such as long service or annual leave. This approach enabled participants to take the maximum time out of the workforce with some degree of financial security.

I went on maternity leave and then my first lot of long service leave, and that took me on eight months on paid leave.

Barbara, Working Mother

The length of time taken for a maternity break attracts some organisational interest, participants indicating what a woman will do about their career is subject to speculation. Organisational views of women's career decisions create uncertainty regarding the timing of return to work which is a greater challenge to manage.

She is not going to come back, the first baby, she thinks she is going to come back, they don't need the money.

Victoria, Working Mother

She is on maternity leave, she won't be back, and to try to dismiss that myth in an environment where the woman often herself isn't quite sure where she is going [career wise] is really, really difficult

Ivvy, HR/Line Manager

One of the HR/line managers reflected her own view on what she thought was appropriate behaviour around maternity breaks for working mothers stating:

I have worked with somebody, and I still respect her and everything, I can't believe you have put your child from age of six months into childcare.

Allison, HR/ Line Manager

5.4.1.2. **It would be great to stay in touch**

Maintaining contact with the workplace was a key area raised by participants. They reported that such contact was often limited to fragments of information. Participants who reflected on the limited interaction asserted how a maternity break was viewed with finality, despite the discussions that had occurred on their planned return, and how surreal having no contact felt.

It was that shock to the system ... you sort of leave work and that was pretty much it.

Mary, Working Mother

Minimal, minimal contact, really it was down to group certificates being sent ... it wasn't anything great.

Johanna, Working Mother

Participants' connectivity to the workplace was linked to managing their career and not being forgotten. They demonstrated a heightened awareness

that long-term absences could create professional disadvantage. In order for participants to maintain a connection and keep abreast of organisational issues they checked emails (externally) and monitored media for activity in their field or discipline.

When I went on leave, I didn't want to be forgotten.

Caroline, Working Mother

Would be great to keep in touch and know what is going on because you have no access to the intranet so and you end up reading stuff in the paper.

Samantha, Working Mother

Maintaining a window into the workplace was not discussed as an immediate reaction to the workplace separation, more something that evolved after the participant established their life at home with an infant. One participant described it as becoming aware of the absence of social contact and mental stimulation that the work environment brings.

Being my first prolonged leave period since I started work, a lot of that was just missing, the social contact ... and the mental stimulation which I wasn't getting at the time.

Mary, Working Mother

High levels of contact with the workplace were uncommon. For the few participants for whom contact with the workplace occurred, it included changes in management, visits in the hospital, discussing work matters, job opportunities, and requests to return to work early.

They remain in contact the whole time ... when I left, they said I should just keep it [a laptop] at home to check my emails if I wanted to but I decided that wasn't really appropriate.

Renee, Working Mother

The majority of participants were driving the contact, arranging to meet regularly with their manager during their maternity leave and more specifically closer to their return.

Before I went on leave, I sat down with my boss and said 'OK give me eight weeks or so and I will come in and chat with you. I will come in every four weeks or so just to chat.'

Caroline, Working Mother

5.4.1.3. **Going from an adult world to a baby**

Participants discussed not knowing what to expect, being unable to predict how a baby would change their life. The maternity break was described as a shock to the system and quite a transition with participants moving from highly structured work environment connected with peers to a new and unknown role of looking after a baby. Participants referred to themselves as naïve in their initial view, thinking they could transition from a professional environment, have a baby and return straight back to work.

I just had no idea how this little baby was going to affect my life.

Elisabeth, Working Mother

To go from that very adult world and looking after a baby and a toddler is quite a transition.

Alice, Working Mother

With no experience, first-time mothers approached maternity breaks as a management decision, thinking they could manage their baby the same as their work life. Their experience was like an awakening that their two worlds, motherhood and management, operated in direct contrast.

Don't try and manage your baby the same way you manage work ... you realise very quickly that they ... don't respond in the same way that people respond.

Victoria, Working Mother

5.4.1.4. **They reorganised and my job didn't exist**

Participants whose role was left vacant and work left undone whilst they were on leave discussed experiences of organisational restructures where, on return, positions no longer existed. The decision not to backfill symbolised their skills and resources were not considered critical to the business, and the position then deemed no longer required, thus legitimising a redundancy.

They had re-organised the department and I was told while on maternity that my job didn't exist.

Elisabeth, Working Mother

"While I was on maternity leave we had some budgetary restraints and it was decided that, well it wasn't decided that my job should be cut as such, it was that my skills and resources could be folded back into the general policy work area.

Felicity, Working Mother

One woman shared the organisational conversation reflecting a lack of value towards maternity support when conducting organisational restructures:

I cannot believe that HR have invested resources in maternity transition support when we are sacking people.

Victoria, Working Mother

Becoming aware of restructures while on maternity breaks was described by participants as an afterthought of managers and/or human resources. Participants noted their decreased visibility in the workplace impacting on the information provided to them. Participants spoke as though this treatment was normal. This experience brings to the foreground how quickly participants cease to be seen and considered in the workplace whilst they are on maternity leave and discussions occur about matters that will clearly affect their future employment.

It wasn't a case of communication breakdown, it was more a case of out of mind out of sight or out of sight out of mind.

Felicity, Working Mother

Participants experiencing re-organisation felt they were required to accept the situation as it was presented to them when structurally their positions were abolished. In these cases, organisations were not forthcoming with a solution until pressed by the participant about what this meant for them. Participants felt they were advised where they could apply for other roles within the new structure as a matter of convenience rather than it being openly disclosed or managed up front. Participants viewed the organisation's approach of managing their displacement by extending an invitation to apply for another position as a way of resolving a potential organisational conflict.

I kept saying well what happens to my job? They said 'you can apply for any one of these', and I said 'but there is more people, then how does it work?' They didn't have the answers ... it was handled badly there was not the reassurances in place to say that I actually had a job to come back to so ... that was hard.

Elisabeth, Working Mother

In the instance where the organisation had been in contact and explained the change, the participant was able to reconcile with the decision and even able to accept it.

I went from being under this position now into the [unit] which was flagged with me would happen and I was happy for that because it then freed up my substantive position to backfill me full-time for somebody and give some certainty to the [branch].

Barbara, Working Mother

For other participants, communication came across as very mechanical and transactional by nature, void of any emotional connection. With more women

exploring their rights prior to leave, they know the organisation is obligated to keep them informed, particularly where there are significant changes.

He [the executive director] didn't want to meet while I was on leave, even though I knew we were going on a full restructure and that my position was going to change dramatically ... that was frustrating.

Caroline, Working Mother

5.4.1.5. **The catalyst for returning**

Participants indicated the timing of their return was important, guided by when it felt right for themselves and their child. While the participant's decision was dependent on individual circumstances, it also reflected women's desire to add work to motherhood, and/or the workplace wanting them to be actively involved again. This included returning earlier than planned and commencing new roles.

I had gotten to that point where I was starting to feel intellectually [deprived] ... I was starting to find myself looking at world bank websites ... reading The Economist and starting to feel like, oh that sounds like a great policy idea, I wish I had been involved in that.

Quinn, Working Mother

The approach to apply for the job got me back into the workforce when I hadn't necessarily planned to. I hadn't really thought well I am ready to go back yet, but it was just a catalyst or spring board.

Kelly, Working Mother

For some, it was organisational or financial pressure that led to their return to work.

Once that 12 weeks was up, I started to get phone calls about can I come back even for just one day, could I just do the odd day here and there ... eventually I came back when my son was about 16 weeks.

Isobelle, Working Mother

It financially it makes sense for me to work, but even without that I would still choose to work.

Barbara, Working Mother

5.4.1.6. **Notice of return: Transactional transitions**

For participants, navigating the conclusion of their maternity leave becomes very transactional. Organisational discussions were focused on a standard notice period and the need to plan for someone's return to work. Women participants found that they were usually the ones initiating the discussion.

I met with the director and the manager a week or two before I was coming back, just about projects and things.

Mary, Working Mother

The notice period was considered important by managers to manage the transiency and availability of their workforce, especially where roles change.

Don't leave it until four weeks, it could be a bit hard if someone says oh and by the way I am coming back in four weeks and I would like to work two days.

Allison, HR/Line Manager

The role had fundamentally changed in that time that the lady was on maternity leave so ensuring that you have that conversation with the person when they come back ... you say, look things have changed, it is not of your doing ... the environment has changed, so whilst you were doing X, you now might be doing Y.

Ivvy, HR/Line Manager

5.4.2. For organisations, paid maternity leave

5.4.2.1. Budgeting for paid maternity leave

For organisations, the paid maternity period can be financially difficult particularly in times of increased fiscal restraint. Organisations noted they are required to fund both the 14 weeks paid maternity leave and the backfill arrangements, thereby drawing a double salary against the role. This was of particular relevance for the organisation as there was the need to manage staffing and salary caps within imposed guidelines. Depending on the size of the organisation, this could be complex if multiple women were on paid maternity at the same time. This created challenges for managers who were held accountable for budget, staffing and productivity outcomes.

With budgetary constraints you have to consider is this role really critical, could we be without this role for a period of time, in that case you may decide to not backfill straightaway.

Ivvy, HR/Line Manager

I have no doubt that my director will question me when I want to backfill those positions particularly during that 14 week period of the double pay ... if I have to run those positions vacant I am not sure how I will manage.

Francine, HR/Line Manager

This led into explanation about agency financial planning and preparedness to be able to respond to unplanned leave (maternity) in comparison to planned leave (long service) accruals. Participants described the budgeting process as a balancing act to manage overall expenditure.

[xxx] is due her long service leave in three years' time, let's make sure we are accounting for that. Our finance team here actually do sort of do the, how many maternity leaves do you think we might possibly get in a year?

Allison, HR/Line Manager

Another financial impact to the organisation is when women take a second maternity leave immediately following the first. Back-to-back maternity

bookings were thought to be pushing the boundaries, i.e. there was an unspoken rule that women should not plan their maternity leave breaks in this way. While this was mentioned by only one woman, it was expressed with deep resentment and viewed as rorting the system.

Having to take a second round of maternity leave people find really, really difficult and there is a lot of negative conversations about that kind of circumstance.

Victoria, Working Mother

5.4.2.2. **Position left vacant**

The HR/line managers discussed their experience managing a transient workforce for maternity, backfill and return to work. What they observed from an organisational context was the ability to respond and accommodate requests of a traditional nature.

They have had 12 months off, that is fine, because that is just like having long service leave in some ways and it is easy to replace someone for 12 months.

Allison, HR/Line Manager

Women's commitment to the workplace was linked to not wanting to let the team down, guilt about work being reallocated to peers, and a replacement who was a good fit and would honour the direction of work. Women also reported feeling guilty about taking too much time off if there was no backfill. Backfill arrangements put in place prior to maternity leave gave women a sense of value and certainty, by acknowledging their work was important and should be continued while they are on leave.

We were organised, and we advertised my position and it was going to be over six months and someone was going to be in before I left.

Samantha, Working Mother

For participants who are lucky enough to be involved in the process of selecting their backfill, they indicated how important for a management position that the person replacing them shared a similar work ethic. Their replacement was seen as an important advocate in keeping their work (value) alive. Having time to overlap, transfer knowledge, demonstrate how things fit together was considered highly valuable.

Making sure that the person that replaces you while you are on maternity leave actually shares cultural values of what is going on here and is not going to do anything to bugger that up while you are away because that can be really undermining.

Victoria, Working Mother

Participants discussed that roles were being left vacant during a maternity break. While there are some attempts to backfill positions prior to maternity breaks to allow for knowledge transfer, this was not common practice across the participant group. Both actual and perceived recruitment challenges for the necessary skills for the organisation were acknowledged as one reason for leaving positions vacant.

We tried to recruit someone to replace me before I went on maternity leave so there was a bit of overlap, so we could try and download my brain to someone new, but the recruitment process wasn't successful.

Felicity, Working Mother

Someone who has the appropriate skills, knowledge, ability without having to employ someone and train them.

Francine, HR/Line Manager

Approaching backfill in partnership was in the minority. One manager shared strategising with the participant to find the best business solution to cover their leave. With the number of elements needing to be considered, the backfill process was compared to a jigsaw puzzle requiring shuffling people around and filling gaps.

She and I sat down and talked about who or how we might appropriately or best cover her leave, if there was anyone within the team that could step up and how we might manage that...we discussed the composition of the team and what the roles of the individuals might be in order to cover her leave more strategically...She also spent some time talking to the staff within her team to determine whether or not there was some interest in stepping up into her role.

Jannette, HR/Line Manager

The HR/line managers went on to discuss a submarket for maternity backfill placements in organisations. There was an unwritten practice, with existing or temporary staff planning their employment around speculated maternity leave breaks.

She is going on a secondment to cover someone's maternity leave and she said 'I will be back, because in the next couple of years I will be able to do some maternity leave covers.'

Allison, HR/ Line Manager

5.4.2.3. **Paying women to have babies, this is crazy**

The public sector maternity leave provisions offer women 14 weeks paid leave. One participant described the maternity leave benefits offered to state government employees as:

Maternity leave tells women they are valued, and that they can take that part-time, gives them a serious chunk of time off ... from the recipient and individual rights view, [it's] very good.

Barbara, Working Mother

Receiving paid maternity leave was not without some animosity from senior male colleagues whose remarks implied maternity leave provisions were a waste of money.

He would say those kinds of things like, oh now we know why you accepted the job then ... because you get paid parental leave ... I can't believe this paying people to go have babies, this is crazy.

Victoria, Working Mother

You've got enough [paid maternity leave] anyway, who are you to ask for any more of your entitlements.

Caroline, Working Mother

This made the women who were already in management roles question their perceived value as an employee and what such attitudes would mean for their ongoing career.

5.5. Return to work (stage 3)

Returning to work is the final stage of a transition cycle. The return to work begins with negotiating the timing of the return, managing expectations, and the guilt associated with being part of two worlds. It provides insight into the organisational supports and leadership tone towards mothers in management. Return to work tells a pragmatic story of the juggle and stigmas faced by the women in this research.

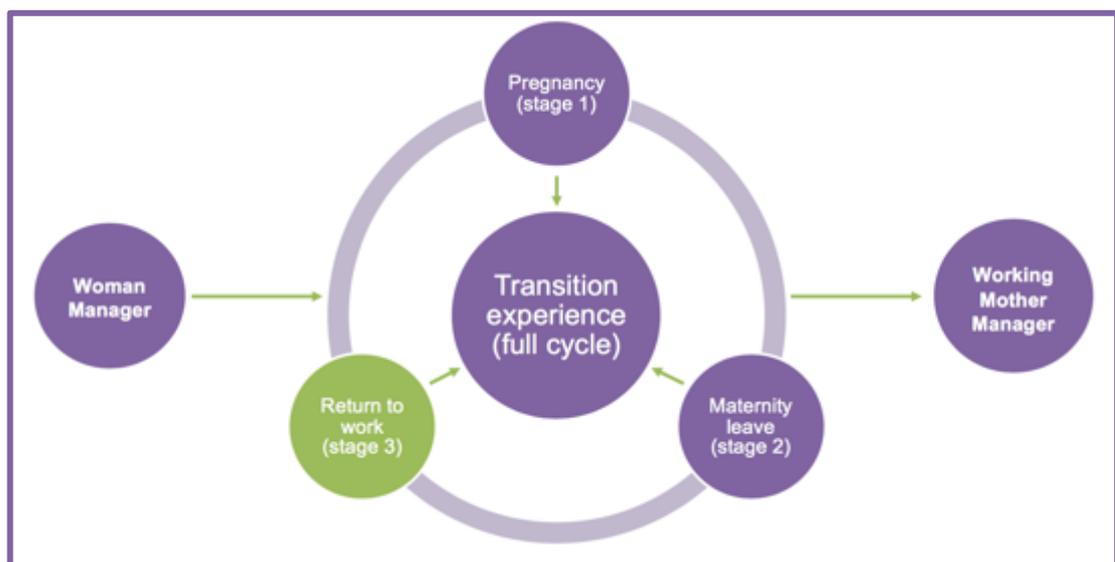


Figure 5-4: Return to work, stage 3

5.5.1. For women, negotiating a return

5.5.1.1. That was a harder transition

Across the participant group there were a number of experiences where return negotiations were unsuccessful, resulting in some participants losing their leadership role. They expressed how the diminished responsibilities made them feel like they had lost their job authority and responsibility, their passion, and their career by being placed in roles that were unfulfilling, unsatisfying, and demotivating. The loss participants were describing could be attributed to both a loss of professional value and a loss of professional identities associated with these roles.

I was at a more executive level ... reporting into exec, managing a team, I was dealing at a different level, now I have come back and I don't have the same. I was shifted down on the levels...staff that I used to manage are almost, well they are sitting at the same level as me level-wise not pay-wise ... I have gone from boss to peer and that was a harder transition.

Elisabeth, Working Mother

People witnessed that, they saw me [a person] who loved my job and was doing a good job, suddenly had a child and was gone and everyone knew why because they knew I didn't want to leave.

Dennyse, Working Mother

This means women's careers are faced with the challenge of stopping and restarting again, sometimes in a new organisation, area of expertise or both. It has a demoralising effect on women themselves and also affects women's management credibility with peers or colleagues.

5.5.1.2. Managing expectations upfront

Participants indicated the importance of clarity in managing expectations for how a modified return to work appeared to the broader workplace. This involved proactively discussing with management how they were planning to manage expectations, communicating return intentions internally and

externally, and openly displaying their modified work arrangements on work materials, such as email signature blocks. Women felt these actions not only raised the profile of their modified status, it also emphasised stronger boundaries, and contributed to broadly managing workplace patterns and behaviours.

Everyone is well aware of my working hours, I had to make it very clear as well, it is about managing those expectations up front.

Elisabeth, Working Mother

We had the agreement about how flexible our work arrangements are going to be, it needs to be communicated to the others that [name] has been hired on this position.

Dennyse, Working Mother

Participants contextualised why managing expectations was so essential and that by describing what their boundaries for balance were, they felt they were making it easier for themselves and their colleagues. In their view, striking a balance was core to maintaining a healthy relationship with their work and their family, and therefore hopefully avoiding resentment towards their time being gobbled up on the wrong priority.

Boundaries were described as the personal limitations; the no-go zones around what women rated highly to achieve balance. Clearly defined parameters on the hours they could spend physically in the workplace demonstrated self-reflection of the way they constructed their identity professionally prior to children, and how they planned to construct their identity going forward. Redefining themselves professionally exposed personal tolerances or acceptability and involved scaling down expectations based on the value or importance of the limitations they set.

Knowing your own limitations, knowing what is OK and what is not.

Alice, Working Mother

I have got a lady here who goes home at 3.30pm every afternoon, that is her threshold, walks out the door. She will then go on at 9.00pm at night and do two hours' worth of work ... she said to me 'that is my point, I have to hold that line' ... I have another one who has said to me 'doctor appointments and school assemblies I will not miss', that is her non-negotiable points ... she will come in on Saturday mornings if she can if she needs to do the work.

Barbara, Working Mother

Expectation management was also related to the expectations of staff; participants noting management of staff and projects also had its challenges. They described the way the workplace continued to function on the days they were not there, and how this impacted on deliverables or supervision. Participants shared the difficulties of maintaining boundaries and the impact on other colleagues in management when these were not observed. Participants clarified it was an organisational problem, illustrating managers and staff were acting outside of the agreed structure, subconsciously sabotaging agreed expectations.

'The two days you are not here, I am signing some things and doing some things that should be for you.' And I said, 'Did you tell the staff to come back tomorrow when I am in and I can sign it?' He said 'Oh I guess not.' So, I said 'Is it really an issue or is it that you're not managing it?'

Dennyse, Working Mother

What happens is that people think — oh [name] is working from home or it's not a work day for [name] today, it's not quite right but we don't want to bother her, let's try and fix it ourselves — despite the fact that I say please ring me, I don't mind if you ring me.

Isabelle, Working Mother

5.5.1.3. **Reigniting career aspirations**

Participants recognised that returning to work was challenging for women, describing it as an important process of easing women back into the workplace.

You don't have to deliver day one, you need to take a bit of time to actually reorientate and get your head around what is going on and come up to speed politically and environmentally.

Jannette, HR/Line Manager

For participants, return to work included changes to work capacity, adjusting expectations, and re-familiarisation with facilities, people, systems or strategic direction. Women felt the change to the momentum of their career, and this was observed as more difficult to kick-start when they experienced a lack of buy-in from the workplace.

It probably would have been useful to have more of a discussion on career aspirations in the new part-time working sense ... something like a career goal session because your self-talk can sometimes be, I can't do that.

Olive, Working Mother

I've just lost traction and now it just seems really hard, like too hard and I am not getting performance management, I'm not getting professional development, I'm not going to any meetings, I am not doing anything diverse and productive work, I am not introduced to anybody, my phone doesn't ring.

Kelly, Working Mother

One manager in particular highlighted the need to engage with women to gain a better understanding of the direction or path they envisage.

It is always a two-way street, but certainly the organisation can be very clear in its statement around the value proposition that the person presents to the agency and are given clear direction on the role and function that you have within the organisation.

Ivvy, HR/Line Manager

Participants indicated a reliance on standard performance management processes to manage individual needs as part of reintegration to the workplace. The participant conversation indicated difficulty to provide

training with budget constraints, leaving participants feeling outdated in their skills and knowledge.

You are not competitive ... your experiences are stale ... they just get a bit rusty.

Kelly, Working Mother

You have all the experience in the world, you've got the qual etc. etc., unfortunately all that acting and everything you did was two years ago ... if I had not had that currency [acting] at the management position, sitting in management ... I would never have been able to jump back into management so soon.

Alice, Working Mother

For some, it was about the organisation looking for opportunities to connect with women, and demonstrating willingness to understand or explore a working mother's professional expectations, as well as utilising existing professional development structures effectively as a reintegration tool.

Talking with people about what their professional expectations are, talking with a mother, what they want, what is their plan and talk some options and link that in with their professional development.

Kelly, Working Mother

Build it into your performance management structure.

Barbara, Working Mother

5.5.1.4. **I had to park my ambition**

Participants discussed coming to the realisation that becoming a working mother meant for many choosing what to focus on. For some participants, it was about having to put their career ambition on hold; for others, it was about the organisation putting them on hold or an imposed expectation of resuming their careers, regardless of having had a child.

I've made the decision to sit at level and any acting opportunities at the higher levels I have been told need to be at full time, so that will limit me in some respects.

Mary, Working Mother

I always say that I have had to park my ambition, or dull it, because it doesn't go ... because I have another priority and that is equally matched within the organisation that there is an expectation that that sort of happens.

Elisabeth, Working Mother

Participants reflected on the impact to their career, talking about how it slowed or completely stagnated, displaying an acceptance of the sacrifice. Participant conversation focused on organisational systems, structures and leadership as limiting their opportunities for career acceleration and not supportive of an alternative paradigm for working mothers.

In the scheme of life, maternity can be considered a short period of time; however, the overall effect on career is significant. Women expressed feeling a change altering their standing, position, and level of responsibility within the organisation that men don't. The shift links back to women being held back, needing to get runs on the board to be noticed and valued again.

I was looking at one the guys here. His wife is pregnant so he won't be gone for a year, he is not going to go to the back of the line, because he is still physically going to be here for that whole year that she might be taking off.

Renee, Working Mother

Some women also expressed lack of confidence in organisational systems, structures and leadership which shape their desire to confront these barriers. They indicated this results in them being less inclined to consider trying to progress their careers when working flexibly.

When I went back, I went with an attitude of sort of just going back, thinking that I can't really aim too high because I am only there two days a week and

family is a priority ... I suppose my ambition dropped would be the main difference.

Olive, Working Mother

While I've moved into different jobs, my career has gone nowhere. Part of that is my own choice, I've got 3 kids, managing staff, delivering. Part of it is that the structure and systems do not encourage women with other commitments to seek higher positions within the organisations.

Caroline, Working Mother

5.5.1.5. **Adjustments to care**

Transitioning children into care can be fraught with worry and children's illnesses. Participants noted that the new mothers they socialised with during maternity leave discussed integration issues, food strikes and an endless cycle of illness, adding to the stress that returning mothers feel. Participants said that the needs of their child were very important in the decision-making, discussing factoring in how old the child was, whether they could or should be left with family or transitioning them into organised care, or the other parent taking leave to pave the way for adding work back into the mix.

The timing was quite good, I felt like [child] was sort of getting a bit older and was fine with Grandma.

Olive, Working Mother

I have a full-time husband at home, so I don't have to worry about if day care is any good or if she was upset when she was dropped off at kindy or anything like that.

Alice, Working Mother

The other aspect was "a small person" who had an opinion about where they were going, who they were going with, or how long they might be there. This played on participants' heart strings making it harder to be at work.

Now as he is getting older he doesn't like being away from his dad ... he has an opinion and sometimes he is forced to do things that he doesn't want to do because I have to do it for my work and he is quite vocal about that.

Isobelle, Working Mother

Mary's experience illustrates how difficult the transition back to work can be when a child doesn't settle into the new care arrangements:

She had a fairly rough adjustment to childcare, she was one of those children that went on a hunger strike for two months and wouldn't take milk from anyone and wouldn't eat anything for the entire two days she was at childcare, so that was a bit rough ... I had done some transition with her and she finally started eating at childcare when I had been at work for about two weeks.

Mary, Working Mother

5.5.1.6. **People in the background supporting you**

Participants indicated the value of knowing there is an acceptable substitute to themselves to achieve dual capacity in career and parenting. Solid reliable supports were considered househusbands, flexible drop-off/pick-up of day care in the city or trusted family — something or someone that enabled women to be present without sacrifice.

You couldn't do the things that you do unless you had people in the background supporting you with your family. Because if you are going to be at work or going to be doing those things that need to be done someone has to be doing your other work at home. So, there has to be a balance, a more supportive family.

Renee, Working Mother

Even with the supports to be present at work, one woman notes the division of labour at home as still highly her responsibility:

We have had to change both parts of our lives to accommodate that I work, I say work, I have a husband that works as well but definitely the bulk of it has fallen to the female shoulders ... I have to remind him that I work four days a week and run the household, so it is a tough gig *laughs*. It is a really tough gig.

Elisabeth, Working Mother

Participants emphasised the value of support systems in being able to manage some of the tensions of their dual roles by reducing the emotional tug or sacrifice of having to choose one over the other. However, they were very aware that their choice to be at work does impact on those in their lives providing support.

There is a tension always between being able to achieve what you want to achieve at work ... knowing that sometimes, by doing that, it means that you are inconveniencing someone else.

Isabelle, Working Mother

If I had to use childcare or anything like that, I would not be able to make the same decisions.

Alice, Working Mother

5.5.1.7. **I need somewhere to breastfeed**

Some participants required special arrangements to enable them to continue breastfeeding when they returned to work. These participants were made to feel like an inconvenience in requesting breastfeeding support, affecting their basic human dignity. The lack of organisational support challenged women in their desire to continue breastfeeding, health advice for nursing infants, and their desire to work.

Things like an expressing room, it was just, no we don't have one, and then I find out there is a sick bay I can use.

Olive, Working Mother

I needed somewhere to breastfeed, so they provided me somewhere to breastfeed, then I need to store the milk in the fridge. 'Oh no you can't store the milk in the fridge', and I said 'Well why can't I store the milk in the fridge? It will be in a sealed container and it is breast milk not poison.' 'Oh well there is health and hygiene issues and other people might be offended' ... I had to really fight for them to get a specialised bar fridge for me to express in this room and then be able to put the milk into. It's very basic, I can only imagine how less assertive women go and they probably stop breastfeeding and that is the real impact on the child.

Victoria, Working Mother

Some workplaces did provide facilities to make it easier for women to return to work.

We have a family room in this building for example where someone can come up and express. It is a very private space and we have a fridge there, so we have a lot of considerations like that for people that are returning to the workplace with a small child.

Francine, HR/Line Manager

5.5.1.8. **Leaving for an emergency or when your child is sick**

One of the first challenges participants face is their child's exposure to other children in care, new environments, and new germs. The cycle of illness is very difficult, women describing the disruption an impact to everyone involved, and feeling like they were taking more time off to care for their sick child than they were working. Participants felt exposed to the perceptions of being part-time and not viewed as a devoted manager.

We usually look at calendars and decide who can more easily take days off sort of thing and often it is me just because of the meeting aspect. That said, he has covered the last couple of times the kids were sick and he took the day off because I had had the previous couple of days off, so we balance it around, but it can be an issue.

Mary, Working Mother

She was sick a lot when she started day care, so we would try and do things like I would stay to mid-morning and [husband] would come home and I would go in in the afternoon.

Samantha, Working Mother

One woman raised the judgement felt when having to leave for a sick child as an impact, when working part-time already has it pressures.

If you have to leave for an emergency or if your child is sick there is ... discrimination in terms of biases which are expectations in the workplace which are forced on you, nothing is said, nothing is written down, but it is there.

Felicity, Working Mother

5.5.1.9. **You need to work past the guilt**

Participants discussed guilt at length. When reflecting on the guilt they felt, it exposed the tension between being in the workplace versus being at home with their child, and the challenge that comes from managing these competing tensions. Participants shared how they worked through these tensions and what made it easier for them to manage the guilt they experienced being part of two worlds.

You need to work past guilt you might feel from using [childcare], from not being with your children and for me personally know my children are in an environment where they are happy and content.

Barbara, Working Mother

The working women I know in senior management carry a lot of guilt, so I am not sure that is very healthy ... they are always balancing everything and some of the comments I get is that they are not really meeting everyone's expectations.

Felicity, Working Mother

For women, the burden of guilt means they feel they are not doing anything to full capacity — they are not the perfect worker, the perfect mother, the perfect anything by spreading themselves across interests.

You are doing everything at 80% at best ... I was only giving 80% to the job, and 80% to my family and to live in that average, it just didn't sit well with me ... I want to do the best that I can. I guess it was at that point and women would hate me for saying this, I honestly think you can't have it all because it comes at a cost.

Elisabeth, Working Mother

You are not being the perfect mother and the perfect public servant and the perfect partner and you are not being perfect at anything and that, well that is actually OK and pretty normal really, so no one is perfect even though women who are dropping their kids off at school and look fantastic and have been baking cookies last night and are going off to Pilates, they are not perfect either.

Victoria, Working Mother

Elisabeth shared the hard-hitting reality of not being seen as perfect, when it was clear the guilt of being in the office away from her child was evident:

My general manager at the time pulled me aside and said 'You are not coping'. Not because I wasn't delivering in the work, more because I was very teary *laughs* in the office when it got to 6 o'clock and I knew she was still at day care.

Elisabeth, Working Mother

It is interesting to note that the general manager appears more concerned about emotion being displayed in the workplace than how the work can be done more effectively so it doesn't require people to be there after hours.

As one of the HR/line managers noted, sometimes it's the women putting expectations on themselves that results in guilt.

She was also putting a whole bunch of responsibility and expectations on herself. I said 'I don't actually have that expectation ... You can't control everything, and you can't be expected to be on top of absolutely everything.'

Jannette, HR/Line Manager

Participants felt that some of this pressure and guilt could be managed by accepting that sometimes things just happen. There will be a crisis where home and family life collide with work that is unavoidable, and that is alright. It was described as removing the pressure and guilt for women upfront by creating an approachable environment, accommodating to hiccups, rather than looking for the slightest blip as an opportunity to place blame on the working mother for not being there.

Really, I don't worry about my kids, I don't, I can't, you have to have an attitude I'm going to do this and I'm not going to beat myself up over this.

Caroline, Working Mother

5.5.1.10. **Being pregnant again so quickly**

Some participants returned to work knowing they were pregnant again, describing feeling conflicted in accepting projects with deliverables beyond their available time commitment, and challenged in balancing a toddler, part-time work and a pregnancy. A return of this nature was expressed with self-consciousness of being pregnant again so quickly, and guilt in harbouring a secret, it often being too early in the pregnancy to share their news. Participants discussed the reservation they felt in being unable to fully engage in and own the projects they were involved with, knowing the difficulties pregnancy previously placed on their work when they would be on maternity leave again.

The return to work the first time was a bit strange because I knew I was pregnant. I was probably ... six to eight weeks and we didn't tell work until 12 so it was kind of a bit strange at first because I would be given long-term projects and I was sort of looking at them going, I'm only here for six months, and not being able to tell anyone that.

Mary, Working Mother

When I did come back, I didn't realise the timing and I was pregnant again ... I hadn't expected it to happen that quickly. I worked from April until December, and then had a maternity leave.

Heather, Working Mother

5.5.2. For women, being back at work

5.5.2.1. Personal changes that shift your focus

As a mother, participants noted it was about having new priorities, something else that demands their attention.

Those personal changes that happen to you which shift your focus, your objectives, your priorities, the person to me that, the person I left being a pregnant working lady is definitely different to the person coming back because the priority shifted.

Elisabeth, Working Mother

It's not like you have a completely new role in that you are still an employee, but being a working mother in that environment your priorities have shifted ... and just required a bit of learning and reorganising how you approached work.

Heather, Working Mother

Participants viewed career and family conflict to be more of an issue for mid-level management, indicating this is where women's career momentum is most impacted. The reflection highlights the incompatibility of family to the workplace at mid-level management. They were saying, what they observed to be the expectations placed on senior management are enough to draw women away from their career aspirations.

The glass ceiling is around the [level] 4 to 8 in the middle ... our agency has success at higher level management, it is the middle management area that seems to be the problem.

Francine, HR/Line Manager

You see, in our agency, more broadly very few people at senior management level that have kids in an age group where you require more hand holding.

Ivvy, HR/Line Manager

It was a process of reshaping or being reshaped by their managers and others in the organisation. The women were in a process of developing their professional self as a “working mother”, a role of significant tension. Participants realised their capacity has changed, and they have to make choices about how they are going to combine the dual roles.

Don't reflect too much about whether you are doing a good job or bad job just get in there and try and do it ... lots of people try and give you lots of advice on how to manage things better and you just need to work it out for yourself, because what works for some people is not going to work for other people.

Isobelle, Working Mother

Others were also being ascribed an identity, not always one they agreed with. Victoria shared her executive's comments on her future capacity:

He just sort of made comments about that my capacity to make a contribution or to maintain my role within the organisation would be limited or different after I came back from maternity.

Victoria, Working Mother

5.5.2.2. **I don't have time to faff about**

Participants who were working part-time felt the burden of being seen as a part-time manager, having to always be on top of projects, available for staff, or able to work longer. For many, the new family commitments were making it more difficult to work as they would have previously done. They described being much more focused whilst they were in the office, because options that

were previously available to them for managing their workload were no longer an option. This included adapting how they interacted with their staff and used their time.

When you don't have kids there is a certain sense of relaxed attitude ... you always think if need be I can work an extra couple of hours or come in on Saturday or whatever, but when you have children you have to be ... more structured because you simply don't have that capacity to hang around until 8.00pm at night on a nightly basis.

Quinn, Working Mother

I don't have as much time for faffing about, I am a lot more direct in what I do. I don't know if that's so much or part of it is being a mother but part of it's just not having enough [time]. I am only here two days a week I have to get what I can done.

Heather, Working Mother

As a result of their limited time, participants found they experienced a loss of exposure to people, networks and ideas; described as resulting in diminished opportunities to increase their skills. One participant described the effect on the business as an "internal culture that is not fed, has no nourishment".

I don't get any quiet time at work to do that because I am managing. And then before work is getting kids [ready], before kids go [to] sleep its homework, feeding, playing, it's kids, there is no time for networking.

Caroline, Working Mother

In an operational role I am so busy getting the work done and getting her [child] attended to and getting the house attended to and getting the new baby attended to ... even if we had the money I wouldn't have the time to kind of go, oh well I am going off for a 1.5 hour lunch, even though it would probably do me personally a world of good and the agency the world of good.

Victoria, Working Mother

For some, it meant the lines between family and work blurred as they sought to stay on top of the various demands.

Where I take it home and I spend so much time at home doing extra stuff and not getting paid for it.

Wendy, Working Mother

I use the time even putting them to sleep now and they will go what were you doing up at 3 o'clock in the morning and I'll say oh teething, nightmares. When you are sleep deprived, I tried to use that time *laughs* to do something constructive.

Elisabeth, Working Mother

5.5.2.3. **How women treat each other**

Participants noted a difference in relationships with other women before they had children and had been considered on the fast track to management in contrast to when they became a working mother. While the shift to becoming a working mother increased bonds through shared experience, it also increased the competition between women without children and working mothers.

Sometimes older women perceive me as being ... a bit of a tall poppy kind of thing and as being different in some way and not having that camaraderie, and once I got pregnant everyone wanted to be my best friend.

Victoria, Working Mother

There was very much a feeling that I had joined a new club and people made enquiries about my daughter ... then there was another group of people who were the mothers of 20 somethings and knowing that I had chosen to go back to work and my husband was going to be a househusband were quite critical. They didn't say it in so many words but there was this strong

undertone that you are being selfish or you're perhaps not prioritising, you're too ambitious, without even considering my own perhaps financial, social position.

Alice, Working Mother

Participants didn't just see their relationships as women bonding through shared experience, they considered workplace relationships as dimensional. Bonding with other working mothers was only one type of relationship in the workplace, they also had relationships with supervisors, subordinates and peers without children. This shows degrees of depth and substance to workplace relationships.

You [are] going from talking to co-workers about what you did on the weekend to filling them with horror stories about children and you always get a different relationship between parents than you do with non-parents just because you have certain aspects in common that you can relate to.

Mary, Working Mother

I still am working with mostly the same people I have always worked with and I don't think [things changed], probably if anything relationships have strengthened because a lot of them already have kids and we have something else in common now.

Quinn, Working Mother

5.5.2.4. **Putting things in a joking context**

Participants described a common language towards women in organisations that devalued their role as women — as managers and as mothers — and the value of paid work over unpaid work. They described being subject to snide comments, digs and derogatory remarks all guised as humour. What participants described as common practice towards mothers, would in any other circumstance, be considered inappropriate.

There is little jokes now that, oh you are off for your long weekend. I don't think they quite get that with other activities and washing and playgroup and

everything else that you try and accommodate to compensate for the three days you don't see the kids.

Barbara, Working Mother

There have been comments made about that I am aware of from time to time like, oh here comes the part-time manager, winds everyone up and then off she goes, that kind of stuff. People will use it as ammunition, use the fact that I don't work ... 9.00–6.00 or 7.00–5.00 ... as the way of being able to undermine or critique.

Victoria, Working Mother

Participants indicated the jokes were often from employees who were “just like that” and regularly made inappropriate comments. However, the jokes were considered hurtful and unnecessary in the workplace.

Those people who make a slightly inappropriate [comment], it's not too bad, it is OK and if you know them well then it is alright.

Kelly, Working Mother

He would put things in a joking context, but they were quite cutting really ... when you say it now, well it doesn't sound like a joke at all. The way that he said it, he sort of said it in jest, but he actually meant something cutting.

Victoria, Working Mother

Recounts were presented as normalised acceptable behaviours, setting an accepted tone and culture in the workplace that it was OK to speak to working mothers this way. This made it difficult for the women to respond, as it then positioned them as not having a sense of humour or being too sensitive. Thus, humour and snide comments contributed to a sense of powerlessness for a number of participants. One participant challenged such comments because she was concerned about the tone it set as acceptable workplace behaviour.

This kind of sledging of people ... while I was pregnant I actually had to say to him ... you just have to back off because you are saying these kinds of

things in front of the team, in front of me, you are saying it as a joke, in actual fact, it's not a joke and it's actually offensive and other people in the team, particularly younger women what are they meant to expect.

Victoria, Working Mother

The collective view presented by participants was that negative language towards women was institutionalised and feeding a culture of gendered expectations. The language towards women indicated an organisational reality unwilling to accept the working mother, despite a regulatory framework to support women's economic participation. Thus, the women experienced the gap between a supportive policy framework and lived practices.

He is basically behind the scenes showing that his value judgement is, I don't want to give work to people who won't work five days, 40 hours a week. Guess who is not going to work 40 hours a week, most women.

Victoria, Working Mother

There is still residual attitudes, old fashioned ideas about women's role in the workplace in the first place, perhaps in some professions and careers is a bit more than others.

Francine, HR/Line Manager

5.5.3. For organisations, reintegrating women back at work

5.5.3.1. You can't manage if you are not full time

The organisational discussion explored the management assumption that to be a manager one must be in the office full time and in conflict with family commitments. The discussion illustrated the expectation that a management career would or should be prioritised over parenting.

It seems that there is a perception that you can't manage at a high level if you can't be in the office five days a week and that you can't be available if and when required.

Jannette, HR/Line Manager

In my current position I couldn't possibly progress further than where I am working part-time and it's basically, it is not stated anywhere, there is no policy but if you want to be a level 8 or above in this [agency] you have to be full time, and people who have gone for promotions at level 8, who were previously part time, were told ... you now have to be full time.

Felicity, Working Mother

Women indicated they sensed being watched and the need to be prepared to confront expectations that the agreed arrangements are not working effectively. One participant raised the issue of their manager doubling back on them asking for their modified work arrangements to be revisited because in their view it wasn't working.

Remember I took this position based on the fact that you are allowing me to do three days in the office and two days at home. I said 'You can't tell me two years later you are renegeing on that.'

Dennyse, Working Mother

Commentary indicated that organisations place greater emphasis on the physical presence in the workplace than outcomes, making it difficult to access supports designed to provide flexibility.

Working from home is viewed with great suspicion ... from my own experience some just because. I work from home, but the time I work from home my son isn't there. I put my son in childcare, or he is in school, and that is when I work and I share that cynicism.

Isabelle, Working Mother

Lack of support from managers stymies genuine flexibility. Trust and accessibility appear to be the major issue.

The Executive Director has trust issues with people working from home ... apparently everyone who works from home is skiving or watching daytime TV or going for coffee or shopping.

Felicity, Working Mother

We are very big on work-life balance and supporting individual choices, it is just then the individual returning the favour and doing the work in a timely manner and to a standard and being accessible.

Barbara, Working Mother

5.5.3.2. **Seeing you as a valuable person**

Participants indicated managers and organisations are doing little to encourage and promote opportunities to engage with a part-time workforce.

They are not actively looking at how can we assist women with children or carer responsibilities with children through their career via the flexibilities that we have.

Kelly, Working Mother

Accepting work from home, job share, or remote work from interstate or country locations for senior roles was attributed to some organisations as being more accommodating than others or the employee possessing pre-existing capital. These participants recognised how fortunate they were to be in a supportive environment and indicated feeling lucky and grateful these flexibilities were extended to them, knowing it was not the norm. It also signalled these women were valuable employees having established strong social capital bonds with decision-makers.

I returned to work on a two-and-a-half-day basis working remotely ... it was a credit to the organisation that they allowed that, and they supported me in doing that.

Barbara, Working Mother

It depends on how much capital you have built up in what people perceive as being your value within an organisation.

Victoria, Working Mother

5.5.3.3. **No more flexible working arrangements**

In the organisational context, part-time was viewed as a privilege rather than a right and something to be earned, not an entitlement. Thus, women found they had to prove themselves worthy of the modified work conditions, as though part-time was a gift. Women valued their part-time status and protected it by going above and beyond.

Worked my butt off to prove I could still do it all, you do.

Elisabeth, Working Mother

Are trying to prove themselves and they will often deliver 110% of what they can ... to justify ... they might view it as a privilege rather than a right to be able to work part-time.

Jannette, HR/Line Manager

This highlighted that part-time women have a lot to offer, noted as putting in more time and effort. Some of the participants viewed part-time employees as a bonus, a resource not to be lost due to lack of flexibility.

There probably are instances where you get four days' worth of work out of them in three days.

Samantha, Working Mother

It is quite obvious to me who is delivering at what level without actually having to be their direct line manager ... I mean we genuinely do get value for money out of our part-timers. We get to retain all of that experience and knowledge and the passion.

Jannette, HR/Line Manager

However, this was unique, with robust discussion from participants on the need to rein in flexibilities or being aware that their organisation was seeking to do so. Across the participant groups' experience, flexibilities were believed to reduce productivity and it was considered burdensome to manage additional staff.

We have now been told no more flexible working arrangements. It is too hard to run the business ... it has got very difficult for meetings to be arranged with part-timers all over the place ... I have been told not to play with my hours.

Elisabeth, Working Mother

Here is a couple of women who have been working part-time for quite some time and they both work Monday, Tuesday and don't work Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and he [the Manager] has asked me three or four times to tackle that issue and try and get them to share weeks so that they can share a desk.

Victoria, Working Mother

The concept of "situational flexibility" was introduced by one participant, described as adapting requirements to meet business demand. The focus was towards organisational benefit and not discussed from the employee perspective.

I have possibly reined in the flexibility when there is the business need to do so ... this is a really important meeting and can only occur on that Wednesday, are you able to attend and these are the dis-benefits of you not being there ... it's just situational ... depends on the requirements on the day.

Jannette, HR/Line Manager

While participants were discussing flexibility in terms of access and availability, they also indicated in the current environment the full degree of technology was not being utilised to make this possible. Participants

expressed how important technologies are in ensuring the same service is provided by a part-time employee as a full-time employee. This suggests that staff working part-time seek to minimise the impact on the organisation of not fitting the ideal worker model.

We are in a different world, we have got a lot of mobile phones so if someone is in that role where they do need to be fairly contactable [they are].

Allison, HR/Line Manager

5.6. The full transition experience

This section explores the story where motherhood intersects with management. It focuses on the new identity, the fluidity between identities, the ideal worker and what needs to change. The section concludes with advice to future mothers in management.

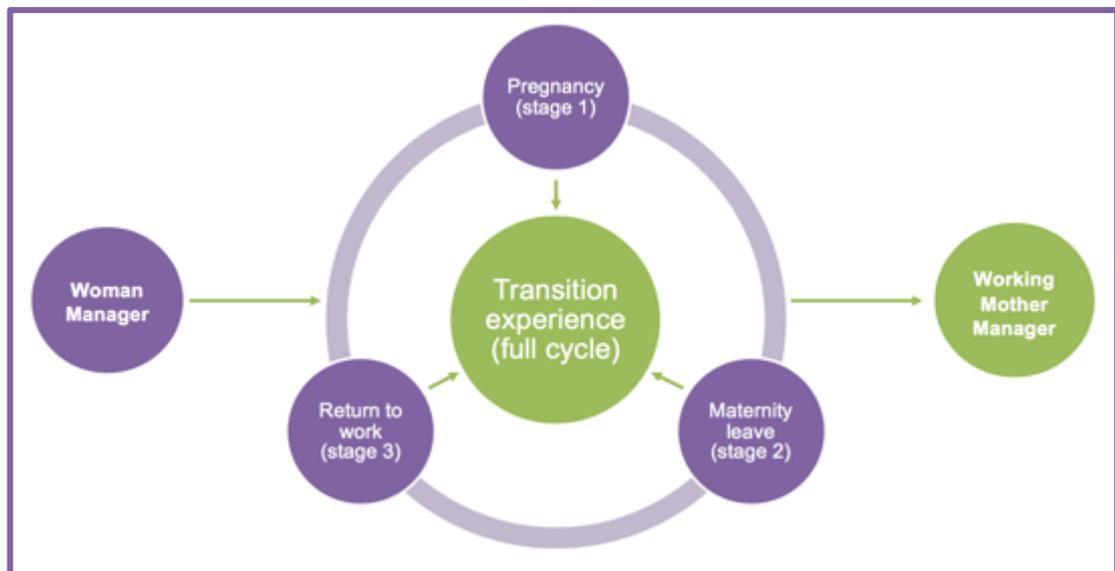


Figure 5-5: The full transition

5.6.1. For women, mothers as managers

5.6.1.1. Learning new management styles

Women discussed what they bring to the workplace from their motherhood experience. They indicated motherhood made them a more rounded manager with more developed people/project management skills: clear/decisive and confident decision-making, effective prioritisation and time management, trust in the specialist skills of their teams and in delegating responsibilities to others, listening to others and to their intuition, clarity in line of sight about what needs to be delivered/achieved, a more even keel, and not focusing on the small things.

Having two kids at home and doing a job that requires a lot of input, you just learn [new] management styles, you learn to delegate better, you learn time practices.

Barbara, Working Mother

Participants reflected on the increased self-confidence and decisiveness since returning to work. They found their decisions were quick, clear, and confident and more in tune with what others needed.

Before going on maternity leave, I might just sit quietly in a meeting and be fuming on the inside, now I just say what I think.

Mary, Working Mother

I am probably more relaxed, allowing people to be themselves and to do the work in the way that they are most comfortable but I still expect them to deliver ... and if they are not [performing] I am more relaxed now saying that or making it clear that I expect more.

Quinn, Working Mother

5.6.1.2. Two roles, working full-time and being a mum

Identity and how women were viewed in the workplace was really diverse. The range of identities was something women reflected on, describing how

they clearly separated their professional identity from their personal identity. Participants indicated returning to work as a “working mother” is a defining moment, where they are choosing how to construct the dual identities and workloads associated with career and parenting.

You do feel like a different person when you come back ... you do think differently.

Wendy, Working Mother

I am constantly torn ... be really clear that it does become two roles and that you are not going to be able to do both roles whether it is working full-time and being a mum to what you might necessarily think is 100% or what other women do and you have to make your peace with that, and you've got to find that right balance for yourself.

Barbara, Working Mother

It is the beginning of the tension between being a mother and being a working mother, and often referred to as a juggling act. When discussing the juggling act, participants were navigating how best to choose what was important to them.

There is always a lot of balls in the air, you just need to be conscious about what the balls are and which one you are letting drop when ... for me if I make that conscious decision about what ball I'm dropping which week, I don't feel so guilty about it because I have chosen that ball.

Barbara, Working Mother

When describing what balance looks like participants felt some control over the situation; however, the difficulty was knowing what to focus on. They didn't see themselves as stopping one or the other, because both were for a lifetime. Participants described career and parenting as long-term projects on a life continuum, with the different roles moving in and out of focus depending on the priority at the time.

Both your career and your parenting are very, very long-term projects and anything can happen in 10 years.

Victoria, Working Mother

When you are in your 30s it seems like it goes on forever the baby period and the time that you are with them. It is the blink of an eye in the big scheme of things, but you don't appreciate that when you are immersed in it.

Elisabeth, Working Mother

To assist in the juggling act between the dual roles, participants talked about strategies they use to separate the two worlds.

Making sure there was no slippage of work encroaching past the front door. I've done things like waiting until she goes to sleep and do a bit more work after she has gone to sleep ... I try my best not to do any work when she is awake and when she wants some time.

Alice, Working Mother

Participants spoke as though sharing their day with the partner was almost an extension of their professional self in the home. However, they were very clear to separate their professional and personal identities with their children. This was emphasised by one woman who adopted a defining moment, where the professional identity was turned off and the motherhood identity turned on.

What I do now is have a moment of pause in the driveway in the car and make sure all of that [work] is set aside before I go in and then pick my little girl up and then we play.

Alice, Working Mother

Single mothers did note it was harder coming home and moving between the two identities when there wasn't someone else to share the load with.

The last 12 months being a single mum, everything in my life really fell apart and I got to the point that I thought, what I am going to have [to] leave, or I am going to have to take a different position.

Dennyse, Working Mother

Participants felt moving between identities was about compartmentalising as much as it was about giving themselves fully to the environment they were in. They talked about the challenge of having the headspace to process their responsibilities when mentally fatigued. There was also the emotional strain when delayed at the end of the day, and the building anxiety of managing the tension of having to be elsewhere.

The headspace to want to deal with all the crap that comes from a management position ... dealing with people all the time and all the HR stuff.

Heather, Working Mother

Acknowledging the multiple identities they have to their employer, to their family, to others and to themselves were important, but often difficult when women were experiencing the most tension.

5.6.1.3. **The flexibility women are looking for**

Participants were looking for a flexibility that allows them to be present for their family and having a management career.

I want my priorities to be my child and I want my career to be able to be flexible enough to be able to allow me to be there as much as I possibly can.

Victoria, Working Mother

Participants were working in a fragmented way with shorter blocks of time around family commitments. It required women to be self-driven and focused. Fragmented work practice was observed to be more an informal arrangement between manager and employee and not a formally approved organisational practice. The lack of formalisation highlights the value of

social capital within relationships to facilitate and design individualised work patterns. It also demonstrated that for a broad range of women, this was not possible and there was a greater need for organisational training and education on policy application.

The flexibility I was looking for was I wouldn't be at a desk Monday, Thursday and Friday all day. I initially did my hours around my husband's work roster, it might be 10.00–11.00pm one night and he [the manager] did struggle with that, so we quite quickly put in place tools to manage that, there was Monday morning teleconferences, there were weekly task lists.

Barbara, Working Mother

When I came back the support really was a conscious decision to try and understand my needs for part-time work.

Wendy, Working Mother

The opportunity to job share was fairly unique across the participant group. It was spoken about by women as making jobs more tenable, particularly in management. Job share was presented as an alternative providing organisations with more scope to achieve deliverables with a flexible workforce. Participants discussed the importance of finding the right balance in both ways: meaningful project work and people. Selecting two candidates who complement one another skill-wise was considered beneficial to the organisation. The main difficulty participants observed with job share was in establishing strong communication practices between individuals and with management. Job share was acknowledged as a management challenge, with the onus of establishing arrangements on women.

I am job sharing with another colleague at the moment ... we negotiated between the two of us a three/two split which has been working quite well, because it gives us both something to work for in the job share.

Barbara, Working Mother

Agreeing to that [role] being a job-share position if the woman wants to return on a part-time basis that's a challenge for management ... quite often

they will be given a bit of a rough time and on occasion asked even to try and set that up themselves.

Francine, HR/Line Manager

In pushing to achieve a flexibility that was highly individualised, participants found their relationships with supervisors were affected. Women felt the harder they pushed for mutually agreeable working conditions, the harder it was for the relationship to recover. These memories were raw and stood out mostly because women's requests seeking support and empathy were challenged, based on the prevailing organisational norms regarding management as a full-time role.

There are a couple of relationships that won't go back because they think that I've pushed too hard.

Wendy, Working Mother

Participants explored trialling arrangements, indicating it to be an effective way to manage expectations in feasibility and viability beyond the trial period. Trials were considered as a benefit for everyone involved, providing time to see how the new arrangements worked. However, not all managers were willing to even trial a different arrangement.

Commit yourself for six months and review and if it is not going to work you need to have all your reasons why it has not worked.

Allison, HR/Line Manager

He didn't even see that this was an opportunity to upskill someone of his own team ... they only saw that ... this is a full-time box, so if you don't fit in the box, then you can't have the job.

Kelly, Working Mother

As a result of the social capital required to bargain for flexibilities, participants looked for or stayed with organisations that appeared to provide better synergies with their espoused career and family goals. Women are acutely

aware that to have a child means having a period of time out of the workplace and this, for most, alters their career trajectory. Therefore, they look for organisations or roles they believe will reflect the values they subscribe to.

Organisations that are going to have people around 5.30 or 6.00pm that is not going to be an organisation that I'm going to work in. I look for organisation that given my work-life balance I am going to just look like everyone else.

Caroline, Working Mother

I have gotten back to being in a very strong management role but now unfortunately because of the way the job has evolved I am probably going to have to get a different job that is more compatible with my work life. I won't be staying here because of the lack of work-life balance.

Alice, Working Mother

5.6.1.4. **I can't believe I did that to mums**

As noted earlier, participants felt part of the reintegration to the workplace was managing communication with a workforce that is respectful and aware of modified working conditions. Part of being respectful was knowing that things continued to happen in the workplace when part-time staff are not there, and catching up on and being included in communications is key.

I used to hold meetings pre-babies at 8.00am ... I can't believe I did that to the mums that were working, because it is such a difficult time when you've got kid drop-offs ... I am very aware and attuned to it now when the meetings are held and 3 o'clock pick-ups, those that are part-timers, need to leave the office.

Elisabeth, Working Mother

People that start transitioning back into the workplace often feel as though ... communications go on a daily basis but if you are only there a couple of days a week ... you sometimes miss those communications, so be mindful of the

fact that people, and particularly your part-timers or return to work, are fully apprised of any sort of communication.

Ivvy, HR/Line Manager

However, even when difficulties are noted there is a reluctance to suggest a change.

We do have 9.00am meetings on Thursdays which I have noticed that all the mums are always late for, and I have thought about suggesting changing that time. I just haven't brought it up really because you have a lot of people in it, you have the director and I know he is busy.

Olive, Working Mother

5.6.2. For organisations, motherhood and management

5.6.2.1. Perceptions about women's role and women

What came through strongly from participants was the old-fashioned attitudes and ideas about women's roles and women.

I've come across that most senior men, senior positions are held by men of that age, so you are first dealing with a generational issue of their own perceptions about women's roles and women and just what they saw ... with their wives.

Dennyse, Working Mother

Participants spoke a lot about the perception of leadership in the public sector. The conversation indicated a very strong focus on the ideal leader being a full-time individual who was dedicated and committed to the role in every way, including to the cost of their family. The messaging to participants was an ideal or extreme worker model, where commitment at this level is to the job, not the family.

I don't know if there would be any senior executive who would work part-time ... I doubt it and I doubt if anyone would ask or expect that.

Allison, HR/Line Manager

It is still very much a one path, you have to kind of fit into the full-time model where you are on call and you don't have any complications.

Kelly, Working Mother

Due to these entrenched attitudes about what the ideal worker/leader looks like, participants shared what they do to portray this image in the workplace and how difficult it is. This ranged from purposefully presenting as an ideal employee (without children), dressing professionally, speaking with authority and confidence, and arranging for alternative paid care when children were sick.

When I am at work, I don't think people think of me as a mother. They know that I am a mother. I don't have pictures up of my children at my workstation, that would just crush me, I can't manage that ... I just look like a normal employee and I have been very conscious to ensure that.

Caroline, Working Mother

While participants were purposefully re-constructing their ideal worker identity after having a child, this did have its hitches.

Someone was *motioning to her back*. There is nothing that undermines your position more, than vomit down the back of your shirt.

Elisabeth, Working Mother

Organisations were largely described as having a culture where they were not concerned about family plans or needs. Instead, organisations were portraying the strict formal legislative structure, one where family responsibility must fit within it.

I don't think my boss would ever say anything, he sometimes probably thinks [it] ... I can't criticise you in any way, you get everything done but where are you when ... there is the clock on clock-off, it's a factory mentality in some ways rather than a performance mentality.

Victoria, Working Mother

True contemporary approaches in the workplace are stifled by traditionalism and management's perception built on previous experience.

Sometimes their decisions are based on what has or hasn't worked in the past ... if they have had a bad experience with one employee well it taints the situation for others, and that being a bit more open to different sorts of things might be worthwhile.

Johanna, Working Mother

5.6.2.2. **Changing the old way of thinking**

Participants were calling for a shift towards a shared partnership between the working mother and the organisation, asking for a mutual appreciation of the difficulty around the transition. This would require both working mother and the organisation to sit at the table and neither to be defined or influenced by perceptions.

That old way of thinking has changed with different generations and culturally or societally ... you need a supportive network, women to not limit themselves but also the organisation to assist by being aware that this transition actually does have an impact and there is a role they can play, a big role they can play to assist that career to continue moving.

Kelly, Working Mother

Participants see opportunity in how roles or positions are designed or defined in the future to fit capacity and expertise. They want to enable a dynamic new way of thinking to manage workforces that develops innovative and out-of-the-box arrangements. Lateral thinking to manage workforce transitions was considered favourable in managing women's re-entry successfully.

To listen to women and accept they can still make fairly significant contribution even though they have a baby and that might mean for them they don't want to be in the workforce in the traditional sense of the word.

Isobelle, Working Mother

I replaced a full-time person with 0.7 [full-time equivalent] and there was no consideration of what are we going to let drop or what are we not going to expect out of [name]. It was just, you're there doing the job, do it to the best of your ability to 0.7 [full-time equivalent], which means that you try to ... do the whole job ... we don't recalibrate the roles to the person's employment status ... we don't re-engineer their job description.

Barbara, Working Mother

5.6.2.3. **Addressing people as individuals, not as blanket policy**

Participants reinforced the importance of understanding career stress points for women to better assist individuals with balancing career and family issues from a policy position. Although the policy setting was described as "tight", personal experience was an influence in the way they are constructed and implemented at agency level.

The key point is that everyone is different, and organisations need to address people as individuals not as a blanket policy.

Dennyse, Working Mother

Participants were open to sharing personal judgement towards women in the workplace or having felt judgement on them. Across the participant group, there was acknowledgement that bias, unconscious and conscious, is

common workplace behaviour. The participants attributed this to a strong masculine culture.

Men don't have that whole expectation that in society and in social groups they should stay home and be supported to stay home as well.

Barbara, Working Mother

In a lot of organisations there is no real acknowledgement of that most of the business practices, management practices, communication styles, decision-making processes are very male-oriented.

Francine, HR/Line Manager

Participants discussed gender representation in the public sector, noting the absence of women at senior levels. They described a bias beginning at pregnancy in the inability to reflect the ideal employee (or ideal manager) and assumptions made between falling pregnant and the potential impact on the workplace. The participants reflected not only the image of the sector, but also an awareness of conscious and unconscious biases existing.

Although managers don't always say it, I suspect every time they hear of someone who's going to be going on maternity leave, thinking what am I going to do when that valued member of my management team wants to come back part-time.

Francine, HR/Line Manager

It happens probably more often than it doesn't, that I walk into a meeting and I am the only woman at the table. There are just not women in senior management and of those women in senior management there are very few that have children and so this issue isn't on their radar.

Caroline, Working Mother

Participants described seeing the legislative framework as a tool for equality providing both parents with the capacity to work within modified arrangements, yet acknowledged the reality is flawed. It showed that writing a policy with equality outcomes in mind was very different to fostering equity

outcomes in practice. When they talked about the legislative framework, there was a lack of confidence and trust that it could provide the equity that was intended. This was evident in the advice to act in secrecy and not reveal personal information, knowing there is a bias in the operating approach regardless of the legislative framework.

Whilst we do have the policies and procedures available to everybody perhaps, they are too nervous to tell anyone or ask the questions ... don't trust until you can trust, sounds awful doesn't it.

Francine, HR/Line Manager

When you look at legislation really every single working mother and father should be able to come back, work whatever they want, and we should be able to accommodate that ... The reality isn't quite like that.

Allison, HR/Line Manager

Where the story shifts slightly is with participants who drew on personal experience in how they apply the legislative framework. These participants demonstrated an appreciation for the difficulties women face and described the importance of pushing back to expose some of the challenges in the operating environment. The commentary showed managers with personal experiences show empathy in their management style that organisations benefit from.

Organisationally, that will still require me to probably push the barrier a little bit to some extent ... not open support if you like to encourage people to work part-time or to work from home, so the fact that I am willing to manage someone to do that would make a difference.

Jannette, HR/Line Manager

This led to participants discussing how managers and organisations could create a proactive culture that supports and encourages women. It was felt for organisations to achieve this, a greater emphasis needs to be placed on

developing an internal culture that really did value and support women's contributions, whether full-time or part-time.

There are organisations that need to do a lot generally to improve their stats in relation to women in management roles and then on top of that there are things that need to be done for women at that point in their career ... until we get more women ... they just don't get it, they don't get it *laughs*.

Samantha, Working Mother

First call they could educate the managers, especially those engineering non-people type managers and educate them on what kind of options there are for a more flexible workforce.

Wendy, Working Mother

Women were asking to be seen as an individual rather than through a reflection of a manager's previous experience. This would require organisations to interact more with their workforce — managers and working mothers exploring mechanisms that can better support both.

It's not just about the organisation, it has to be about the employee as well and it is a partnership and it is about being supportive to each other ... so the employer accommodating or being supportive ... still giving opportunities to the person.

Renee, Working Mother

It's about actually supporting flexibility and not only supporting it, but actually putting it out there. As not just, this is the policy yes you can do that, but actually saying to working mums 'How can we make this easier for you, how can we make this work?' Because it is a two-way street, it is a relationship between employer and employee, how can we make this work so that we use your skills and knowledge.

Felicity, Working Mother

There was a lot of commentary from participants discussing a "one size fits all" type approach to women and to any modified work conditions that may

have been put in place to support working mothers. It was emphasised that each situation is unique, thus challenging the approach of treating everyone the same. As described above, participants asserted a lacked objectivity, with managers or organisations unable to separate a single experience from a collective experience, making it very difficult to adopt a standardised approach to navigating unique situations. Participants felt it was common for generational beliefs of stay-at-home wives who cared for the children to impact on modified conditions.

Every child is different, every position is different, and every manager is different, so you need to be flexible.

Mary, Working Mother

The maternity transition is a very individual journey for each and every woman, I don't think you can have a one-size-fits-all approach to managing this.

Ivvy, HR/Line Manager

The reverse of the one-size-fits-all approach discussed by participants was around fairness, where other employees in the workplace felt the modified conditions were limited to or abused by women. Participant discussion raised issues regarding perceptions of advantages women were seen as getting because they had flexible work arrangements or that they were taking more time off than they should and others weren't able to do this.

My two managers that don't have kids are kind of a bit resentful that I get flexible work practices and they don't. I said to one of the managers ... 'if you need time out, I am completely supportive of that, but you have never asked me.' We [now] have arrangements where on a Wednesday he takes his time in lieu and leaves at 2.00pm.

Dennyse, Working Mother

One woman spoke of being reprimanded for not fitting the norm by having to leave to collect her child before a meeting was finished:

I had to leave a few meetings, actually get up and walk out of the meeting at 5.30pm, and I was pulled up on it. That it was unprofessional, it was inappropriate to do that because I had to go and pick up a daughter.

Elisabeth, Working Mother

5.6.2.4. **Policies, procedures and practices**

Participants talked a lot about the flexibilities that exist to support women in the workplace and how varied the approach was. The degree of support experienced by women was in the hands of the manager and not necessarily reflective of the tone of the organisation or the legislative frameworks that may exist. Organisations were viewed as passive in the way that they engaged or interacted with their workforce. Women were not feeling that they were able to approach the organisation nor trusting of the validity of the advice provided, since often the managers' belief system or rule book prevailed over genuine policy. For one woman it meant that, despite co-workers' interest, she was reluctant to take her daughter into the workplace.

People made enquiries about my daughter even though I never took her in to that workplace, not once ... I took her in on the day I left, on my very last day, because it never felt like a workplace that was conducive to that.

Alice, Working Mother

However, as has been discussed, part-time work, negotiating a return was seen as presenting many more challenges. Managers noted there was no clear process for managing the policies, procedures and practices. This meant participants felt a level of gratitude and obliged to accept return to work conditions, even when what was offered was less than optimal.

The biggest challenges for us in this organisation and I haven't nailed it yet, is policies and procedures around part-time, job-share positions, it is very tricky ... in having a smooth process for management and indeed employees being able to return to the work part-time.

Francine, HR/Line Manager

They were under an obligation to keep me at that same salary level, but they did need to offer me a position, and so I did feel a bit grateful in a way, sourly grateful.

Elisabeth, Working Mother

Participants described the current policy framework in public sector agencies as “lip service” indicating the desire for more than just policy talk. They were asking to see policy in practice, they wanted substance with real results that were visible. Participants were looking for a change, they were asking to put more wind in the sails by truly backing strategies. What they were looking for was a system with conviction. Unfortunately, participants were all too aware of the lived practice in organisations contravening the intent of good policy. They wanted to see action.

They [the sector] give it lip service, they know that if they don't talk about it [women in leadership] they will be considered chauvinistic, all they do is talk about it, and talk about it that much *symbolises with fingers very small amount*.

Caroline, Working Mother

It is that whole thing of actually moving one from lip service, from being around family-friendly practices, to some actual more concrete examples in how it works for different people.

Johanna, Working Mother

One manager indicated there needs to be more accountability for things to happen:

Where we fail is that we do have a lot of talkfests around this sort of thing in the public sector and it is very difficult to follow through with strategies that actually hold up, hold water ... hold public sector agencies accountable to show what agencies have done in this area, how they have supported their women in management.

Francine, HR/Line Manager

What women were describing was an organisational mindset focused on the policy framework and lacking the sophistication to adapt from the standard way of work. As one of the managers explained, in organisations where women returned full time that there was little impact or accommodation required to an individual's role, duties, capacity and/or deliverables.

If you want to come back full time we love you, we love to have you back full time, no change ... only occasionally do you need to have that flexibility to go to a school assembly ... your private family life is not impacting on us, we haven't had to try and work out how to cover you, our clients are still happy.

Allison, HR/Line Manager

In Section 5.3.1 participants talked about being drawn to the public sector for the policy support for women. However, they wanted to see true commitment from the top down to the policy framework, they wanted to see flexibilities as lived practice in their management structures.

There is that fair amount of flexibility that is available, but it still always seems to come back to the agreement of managers, of people further up the tree, whether they think it is going to work or not work.

Johanna, Working Mother

A lot of agencies talk about how we offer flexible workplace and we offer this and we offer that and we offer this ... the reality is, particularly when you are in a management role ... the ability to take advantage of those flexible options is quite limited.

Isobelle, Working Mother

When participants see flexibilities successfully implemented elsewhere yet are unable to nail similar policy, procedure and practice in their own organisation, they start to question the intent behind policy framework to progress women. Participants observed a different reality to that which the

policy setting describes. They were disappointed in being unable to advance their careers due a lack of flexibility practised in management.

We have a whole women in leadership thing and you are not going to promote women in high level [sector] positions unless you start offering [role] as part-time or with other flexible work arrangements, so there is a lot of talk and not much action.

Kelly, Working Mother

When you look at legislation, really every single working mother and father should be able to come back, work whatever they want, and we should be able to accommodate that ... The reality isn't quite like that.

Allison, HR/Line Manager

5.6.3. What do working mothers need to be career successful

Participants indicated the time for change to transition women into management, as being now.

We've got an ageing workforce ... women also wanting to transition back into management where we have senior managers who want to reduce their time ... it seems to me the timing is perfect for women to transition back into management level.

Francine, HR/Line Manager

A big percentage who have been here 30 years plus and are male and are two steps away from retirement and they have a less strong voice and now they are grandfathers, so they perhaps see things slightly different than maybe the view they have held in the past.

Alice, Working Mother

Participants spoke about the need for actual strategies that shift the focus to a culture that questions perception/s and seeks alternative solutions. What women were articulating as they were unpacking their experiences was a type of enquiry that challenged and questioned the way things were done.

The focus was a means of exploration to find transformational or innovative alternatives to do things differently.

A Quentin Bryce quote about women can have it all, they just can't have it all at once. I don't necessarily think that is right. Look at the acting industry or software, entrepreneurs and those kinds of things, they just find ways that you can have your babies at work, you can work from home, you can do those things, you still have the authority and you are still able to progress to chairmanship.

Victoria, Working Mother

Commentary amongst participants was divided whether an intervention was required or not.

I am often in two minds of making a focus too much on women in the workplace. On the one hand there is an issue that needs to be addressed ... on the other hand if you over-focus on particular gender or particular issues that affects a gender you almost create another problem.

Quinn, Working Mother

Bringing in quotas on gender and things along those lines would demonstrate the seriousness in promoting women etc. We don't see that anywhere in the government sector. I don't like that idea, you should be promoted on merit. There is certainly something going on when merit continually promotes men and not women, so maybe there is a need for quotas in terms of gender balance.

Jannette, HR/Line Manager

It was clear however, that for working mothers to be career successful, strategies would require strong committed leadership and education. Most importantly, it was noted that women play a powerful role in changing the workplace dialogue around the challenges they face.

Somebody needs to champion it through the Office of the Director General or in HR ... having little support networks for women going through the transition process ... where they can share their experiences.

Ivvy, HR/Line Manager

It is quite a privileged situation to be in and you have to accept that you are an educator for everyone else around you ... to make sure people are aware and that they are more aware of some of the issues and the challenges, because if they don't know then they are not going to be thinking or have an awareness around that.

Samantha, Working Mother

For one manager, facilitating women's career success around maternity transitions might need mentoring to occur:

To enhance the momentum there might be a little bit of mentoring.

Jannette, HR/Line Manager

For some participants, supporting the maternity experience meant developing a pregnancy toolkit. This was viewed as having value for the workforce by guiding women, who may not know and have no way of knowing — particularly when they are a first-time mother — the types of questions to ask, who to ask or when to ask.

It would be really nice just to have something that when someone puts in for parental leave there is a toolkit that a line manager can give and say ... these are the flexibilities, this is some supporting information about modifying the workplace or whatever.

Kelly, Working Mother

A little area of resources that ladies transitioning back can tap into.

Ivvy, HR/Line Manager

For most participants, the most significant enabler was to overcome childcare issues. Women felt the traditional childcare provision lacked flexibility in the

way that it was structured around the standard work day. These women felt that looking at the way childcare was constructed, workplace-based care, and tax incentives would signal how committed government was to returning women to work.

Why can't we salary sacrifice childcare when it is relevant to the workplace?
... if you could salary sacrifice some of that at least so that you are not taxed on it, it may be an attractive proposition.

Ivvy, HR/Line Manager

Maybe they have a crèche at work *laughs*, wouldn't that be good ... a crèche at work that actually, that really values, that understands and accepts that you have a valuable contribution to make and that you can continue to be as productive as somebody who isn't transitioning from maternity leave.

Jannette, HR/Line Manager

Finally, Victoria's sentiments around what it means to be career successful was around challenging the way organisations default to merit and use merit to mirror the norm.

What it means to be career successful and it is not necessarily outcome based, they are about looking the part which is merit created in the eye of the beholder.

Victoria, Working Mother

5.7. Conclusion

This chapter has presented an overview of the demographic profile of participants. The conceptual journey of the participants was explored as the woman manager enters the transition cycle and moves through each stage, exiting as a working mother in management. Participants, both women and managers, shared their observations for each stage of the journey.

Participants described how important planning was in the early stages before they were ready to announce being pregnant in the workplace. The story

shows how much planning goes into making sure their “house was in order” before embarking on the life/career altering course, and having a baby, knowing there is no going back. Participants shared how they navigated pregnancy once the “cat is out of the bag” and the workplace knows one of their female managers will be combining family and work life. The conversations reflect an early exposure to or awareness of what the future may hold with the introduction of a family, and the “teasing out” of organisational support and ongoing contributions.

During maternity breaks participants explored the beginnings of the shift in their identity and how to maintain a connection to their workplace. Faced with the reality of returning to work, participants detailed how they prepared for the change of blending work and family. The actual return to work sparked a range of emotional experiences associated with being part of two worlds. Participants shared the guilt and how they navigate the traditional work structures. This reflects their first “taste” of things to come for the working mother and the way things in the workplace work.

Having worked through the whole cycle, participants provided observations on the intersection of their dual roles, motherhood and management. They explored fluidity between identities in contrast to the construction of “work” and “management”. They challenged the traditional norms and discussed what they needed. Through their experience, they provided some wisdom for those who may follow in their footsteps with future careers in management.

Taking forward the experiences of participants, in each stage and the full transition, the next chapter discusses the themes identified in this chapter and introduces the Mosaic Model to explain the challenges women face maintaining their managerial careers in relation to their changing identities and how organisations could respond to these challenges.

6. A CONTESTED SPACE FOR MATERNITY TRANSITIONS IN MANAGEMENT

6.1. Introduction

Chapter 5 presented the findings of how participants conceptualised motherhood and management in the three phases of a maternity transition; before (planning for and while pregnant), during (on maternity leave), and after (returning to work). Chapter 6, the discussion, pieces together participants' stories and seeks to build meaning using the phenomenological approach discussed in Chapter 4.

The Mosaic Model describing the contested space women find themselves in is introduced. It provides the basis for the overall structure of the chapter — from the outer to inner layer. The Model is explained by discussion of the outer regulatory system layer, then the middle sector organisations layer, and finally the inner individuals layer. It reflects that women are operating within fairly rigid boundaries that are set at a regulatory layer and often reinforced at an organisational level.

The chapter answers the “so-what” in relation to the study findings, presenting the implications of the managers who are mothers' stories and how this relates to the literature. In doing so the objectives of the study are answered. These were:

To understand:

- 1) the transition experience for women managers who become mothers
- 2) how women define themselves professionally during workforce transitions
- 3) what organisations (human resources managers and/or line managers) do during maternity workforce transitions

- 4) how women, who are mothers, manage their professional identity during transition and achieve career goals or aspirations in management

And to identify:

- 5) the enablers and/or barriers impacting on transition and career progression for working mothers.

The chapter concludes with an argument for different practice. This research provides little evidence to support that current practices build strong and enduring relationships between women managers who are mothers and line and function managers in the workplace, beyond those which exist with individual supportive managers. It reflects the participants' perspective of the maternity transition experience: for women managers who became mothers in management, and HR/line managers managing women managers who became mothers in management.

6.2. Mosaic Model

This section provides the explanatory framework for exploring research objectives 1 to 4 as shown above.

6.2.1. Mosaic overview

Drawing on the 20th century artwork expression of Raymond Isidore, a mosaic uses broken pieces of pottery to make a "whole". A mosaic is both a product and a process. The process of the mosaic brings together the pieces to celebrate a whole; the product is the pieces that on their own would not represent anything. The artistic reflection of the "whole" highlights the role and importance of the "pieces" in reflecting something bigger.

Robertson and Hetherington (2016) believe the mosaic can also be used to describe any form of construction that concurrently draws on the part and the whole to create meaning. Robertson and Hetherington (2016) describe the process as more than first looking at the whole pattern. By focusing on and

recognising each single piece, its relationship within and to the surrounding pieces, visualisation takes in both the whole and the part. The final visualisation of the mosaic reflects the wholeness and fragmentation at once (Robertson and Hetherington 2016).

In this study, the mosaic construct is used to reflect the part and the whole of women's transition experiences within the organisational setting which sits within a larger regulatory system. As a construct, the mosaic can demonstrate a dynamic and evolving process as pieces are added or shapes are changed to create new and evolving patterns, representing a fluidity and responsiveness to the pieces surrounding it. However, it can also be seen as having rigid boundaries between the layers that can make new patterns more difficult or at times impossible to achieve.

The mosaic product and process therefore reflect the understood pattern of stereotypical norms relating to women. The Mosaic Model allows focus on women's experiences as single pieces as well as their relationship to other pieces, to be able to see the whole transition experience. The mosaic reflects both the wholeness and the fragmentation of maternity transition. The wholeness and fragmentation are visualised through the disruption to the mosaic's pattern when women managers have children and the resulting need to add more pieces to the mosaic, or at least change the shape of some of the existing pieces. With little or no room for new pieces to be added, particularly when faced with a lack of organisational support, the rigid structure of the mosaic's boundaries are seen.

Gottlieb (2012, 979) proposes a concept of mosaic leadership as a multifaceted, dynamic, composite process that simultaneously draws on the parts to make the whole, or metaphorically as "constructed with skill and perseverance from fragments of different shapes, sizes and shades". For this to be effective, Gottlieb (2012, 981) argues the power of contemporary leadership lies in a manager's skill at being able to adjust the balance of charisma and bureaucracy elements within an organisation. The key skill, however, is an intuitive awareness of each in isolation — its influence on a

whole, and how or where to apply what element in what quantity. This frames the mosaic construct as a leadership attribute. Applied within this study, the Mosaic Model demonstrates that at the inner layer the leadership attribute is demonstrated in how women construct their maternity transition whilst in management with skill and perseverance. The Mosaic Model illustrates women's ability to adjust and balance elements in response to changing conditions to find new patterns, including those that will fit within existing constraints. It recognises that a woman's managerial career moves in and out of different organisational and cultural contexts with the expectation they are purposefully and knowingly adapting to these conditions (Gottlieb 2012).

The Mosaic Model can be thought of as a complex ecosystem, depicting the uniqueness of each transition experience, and the impact and constraint of the outer layers on women's choices. The Mosaic Model is used to describe the contested space, a process of choices, the bargaining that occurs to fit the pieces between the individual and the workplace, and the contract that forms that and defines the way in which both operate. Both workplace and individual have design needs for the mosaic to provide outcomes to meet their objectives. The woman manager needs to reshape or add pieces to meet her needs, given her changing objectives. The workplace, however, is under pressure to change objectives in any rapid way and seeks to fit her changed pattern into their unchanging mosaic pattern. Thus, a tension is exposed between the woman manager and workplace.

Presented in Figure 6-1, the Mosaic Model provides an illustrative view of the transition experience for how women managers, who are mothers, build and manage the changes to their professional identity to achieve career goals or maintain their aspirations in management. It shows how the mosaic is built through the composite layers: the regulatory system, sector organisations and individuals. The transition experience is shaped by both their own unique circumstances and the interaction within their workplace, which is a constantly changing space. The workplace tries to ensure the individuals

layer accepts the responsibility to make change, while the sector organisations layer does not change.

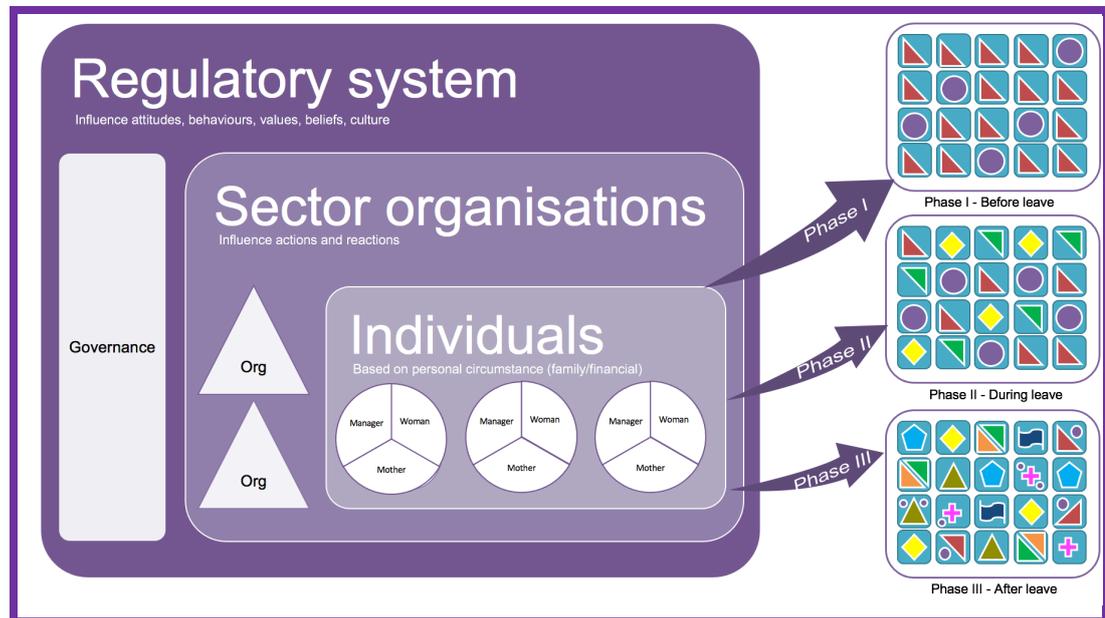


Figure 6-1: The Mosaic Model

Each layer is part of the story. It is not as the static illustration might suggest, “neat” nor is there necessarily a “good fit” between the pieces, particularly when some pieces need to change shape or size to fit a new norm. It is a dynamic process. The woman’s needs change much more than those of the organisation. The organisational ideal is where all the pieces fit together neatly. However, as women’s identity changes in the transition from manager to working mother who is a manager, her pattern becomes more complex and doesn’t fit together as neatly. The Mosaic Model reflects the layers and the pieces contributing to women’s workplace transitions.

The transition process as illustrated by the Mosaic Model, illustrates a mindset adopted by women in response to the need to fit new pieces to meet the existing requirements of an ideal worker. It is constrained by organisational and regulatory requirements where there is little to no flexibility. Options for flexibility remain relationship dependent rather than structurally embedded at the organisational level. Such relationships are fragile and subject to change and thus can be a source of anxiety rather than

surety regarding how the pieces fit together to form a new pattern. The rigid boundary settings impact on the women's ability to bring together the additional pieces of their lives in a way that works for them in the ideal worker environment.

The Mosaic Model shows a transition process for women that begins with a pattern that is understood, the pieces fit together to look like an ideal worker. The organisation has its expectations in how work should be done, and this reflects the desired pattern for working in the public sector. This is set by the regulatory layer which sets the laws that must be followed to work in the sector.

As the transition progresses, for most women, this means fitting pieces within these hard boundaries with the belief they will have access to flexibility. Instead, as the transition process unfolds over time, many women found as their circumstances changed the organisation did not respond with flexibility to support the transition. The Mosaic Model puts a microscope over the inner most element of that process. It highlights how women respond to trying to fit pieces in when there is a sea of organisational and regulatory constraint. The model explains the style of thinking process adopted by women in a transition to address dilemma and develop patterns for alternative scenarios (Keidel 1997).

The three layers of the Mosaic Model are described below.

6.2.1.1. **The outer layer – the regulatory system**

At a high level, the ecosystem is defined by the regulatory system; the rules within which it can function. It creates an expected set of regulatory behaviours designed to establish a desired culture that flows through the ecosystem. It sets the boundaries within which the sector organisations and individuals layers operate. This layer is stable and slow to change.

The Mosaic Model segments as illustrated in Figure 6.1 are pieces of the overall mosaic. That is, it reflects the outer regulatory environment which provides the external boundary and the broad requirements in which the organisations must respond. The middle organisational environment describes what happens within the organisation and the parameters in which it can occur, by translating the regulatory environment into practice. The inner environment reflects the individual and is where the woman experiences the transition. The Mosaic Model reflects the transition process as the change that occurs, for women, over a period of time.

6.2.1.2. **The middle layer – the sector organisations**

The sector organisations' layer adopts the procedural parameters set by the regulatory layer and sets the tone for the discrete organisation, ensuring that the minimum standards at the high level are observed. This layer, although constructed from the minimum standards, is open to practical application and is representative of the behaviours and expectations of those involved in setting and implementing the procedural parameters locally. Within this layer, it is recognised consistency in application of the procedural parameters can be varied. This can and does impact both positively and negatively on the actions/reactions of those who experience it. Whilst there is room for the shapes to change at an organisational level, they remain bounded by the regulatory requirements and the overall desire for a consistent or standard approach across the sector. Thus, it is unlikely that new pieces will be added but rather there can be changes in the pattern of the existing pieces. Thus, change to or within the sector organisations layer can reset the mosaic pattern. This can change the dynamic of the transition experience.

The sector organisation layer is illustrated with a triangle. There are two triangles to show a plus one principle to the outer regulatory layer, meaning there are multiple organisations in the sector and there could be multiple organisations shaping a woman's experiences. This is beginnings of the mosaic, where sector organisations (the triangle) conform to the boundaries of the rectangle and shape themselves to fit accordingly.

6.2.1.3. **The inner layer – individuals**

The individuals layer is at the heart of the transition experience and is directly influenced by the outer two layers. This layer shows how the experience is built from the inside out, and how each piece “fits” together. Any change within the individuals or the sector organisations layer — for example, personal circumstances or a change in manager — can reset the mosaic into a different pattern or result in the pieces no longer fitting neatly together.

Figure 6.1 relates to the women’s transition experiences within the boundaries of the organisation and the regulatory environment. Changes to both the individuals and organisations layers impact the most significantly, reconstructing the entire mosaic, as all relationships and their resulting actions and reactions within the ecosystem, are new. The sector organisations and the regulatory system layers may look different for the woman manager, mother and working mother, compared with her male manager counterparts.

Each phase contains small icons, referred to as pieces. These can be seen as a representation of women’s experiences in the employment relationship that make it difficult, if not impossible, to fit into the ideal worker framework or model. For example, dealing with morning sickness or illness during pregnancy; maintaining connection during maternity leave; accessing high quality childcare and desired flexible work option on return to work. As a result, women have more pieces to now fit into their part of the mosaic. However, the organisational boundary remains firm making it difficult and at times impossible to fit the additional pieces into a framework designed for an ideal worker.

For women to fit these new pieces into their organisational lives, flexibility is required on the part of the employer. This includes pieces such as managing professional development which can no longer be outside business hours, the need for work schedules that align with available childcare and managing

work within these constraints, or the need for meetings to be held within the agreed work time frame.

For each phase the number of pieces increase and change indicating increasing complexity. This complexity may result in lack of fit within the existing organisational structures or boundaries for women managers maintaining their careers after maternity leave. Phase 1 pieces are associated with planning and being pregnant at work. To fit pieces into the ideal worker framework the women use strategies such as appointments outside the workday to minimise the effect on the workplace or seeking clarity of information related to entitlements to work in an unstructured way around issues such as morning sickness. The pieces at this stage are fairly ordered and similar indicating a relative ease of fit for most at this stage within organisational structures.

Phase 2 pieces are associated with being away from work, remaining connected, change in intellectual stimulus, organisational design and budgeting, and when to return. For women there were a number of additional pieces that were added. These were associated with a new identity role and the changes that can occur in the workplace during their absence. These new pieces need to be fitted into existing organisational patterns and expectations when transitioning from maternity leave to a managerial role.

Phase 3 pieces represent the most complex and dynamic pattern with the addition of further pieces. These pieces reflect all that was associated with negotiating a return, what being back at work actually meant, and the integration process of trying to fit within existing structures or challenging rigid boundaries to achieve greater flexibility. To fit into the ideal worker model the women need to fit, or at least to attempt to fit the additional pieces relating to their new motherhood identity into their manager identity. This can include how to maintain their career trajectory including when working part time but often with expectations of fulltime deliverables, restrictions relating to childcare availability, breastfeeding young children, caring for sick children

as well as meeting expectations their own and the organisations about being the ideal worker and the ideal mother.

All together the pieces (icons) demonstrate the changing landscape of family structure, changing nature of work, and the changing identity for women. Pieces include aspects of the employment relationship and needs outside of the ideal worker model. These are the new pieces added into the mosaic that weren't there before for women or for the organisation. In the prior pattern there was a level of stability around meeting the ideal worker expectations. Working mothers as managers experience greater rigidity in the employment relationship and the ability to move added pieces is highly constrained. The pieces are a pictorial representation of the range of things women have to address. Individually, they reflect a catalogue of experiences within the overall mosaic, the experience being unique to each woman. The small pieces can and do change for each woman and from one phase to the next but are still required to fit within rigid organisational and regulatory boundaries. The changes to the pieces signify a disruption to the woman's existing or perceived plan for her part of the mosaic and shows how the shape needs to be adjusted as more pieces are added to fit within the prevailing organisational patterns.

6.2.2. Mosaic identity transitions

Transition identities were characterised by the phase of the woman's life: pre-children where the focus was on being the ideal worker, the maternity transition where the focus was on being the ideal mother, and final phase where all three identities converge into the working mother who is in a management role.

Figure 6-2 illustrates the focus of each phase, showing where identities are mixed or shaped between each of the transition points. The linear process shown demonstrates once a woman transitions to the working mother identity there is no going back or retrofitting to the ideal worker model. It reflects the

women's perspective on how they experience these changes within the confines of an organisational setting.

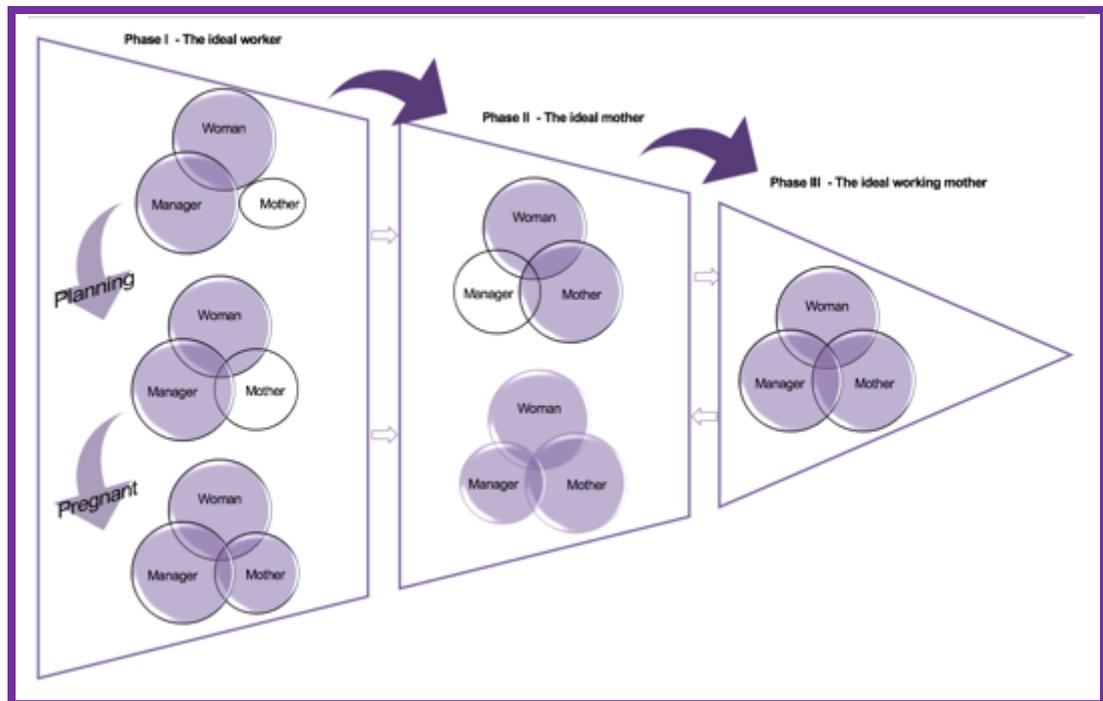


Figure 6-2: Mosaic identity transitions

The complexity of mosaic identity transitions associated with ascribed constructions of the ideal worker, the ideal mother, and the ideal worker mother are shown. The ideal worker and ideal mother are ideals ascribed to women, often by others. Women also internalise beliefs about what it is to be an ideal mother and ideal working mother, and this can be at odds with expectations held by others about ideal workers and ideal working mothers.

Tracking the identity transitions through the phases provides the basis for exploring research objective 2: to understand how women defined themselves professionally through a workforce transition.

6.2.2.1. Phase I: The ideal worker

Figure 6-3 illustrates the first phase where women are potentially seen as or consider themselves an ideal worker. This phase is before the woman goes on leave. It reflects the three stages of identity shift that occur.

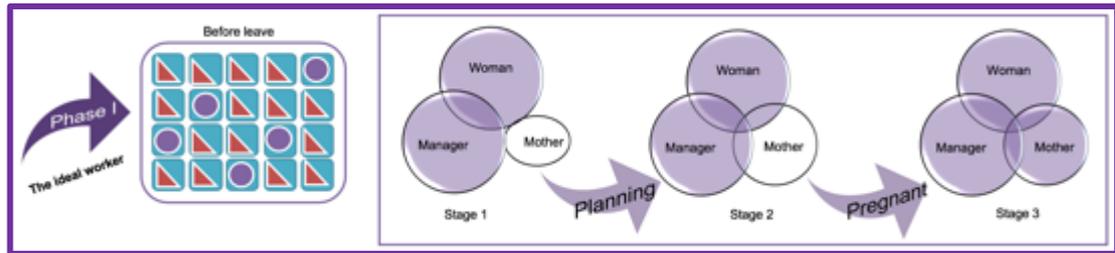


Figure 6-3: Phase I, the ideal worker

The ideal worker discussed in Chapter 3 reflects key characteristics such as:

- Being full time
- Always available
- Never takes time off
- Career is the primary focus
- Ultimate devotion to the organisation

(Reid 2015; Bierema 2016; Wynn 2017; Guerrina 2002)

Together the characteristics portray an image of the ideal worker or manager. Such characteristics are more easily ascribed to male managers than female managers (Correll 2017).

The ideal worker image is supported by the daddy or breadwinner bonus (Shah 2014; Kmec 2011; Bear and Glick 2017; Hodges and Budig 2010), as opposed to the motherhood penalty (Curtin University 2020) for women. The ideal worker can be described as an individual's ability to exhibit valuable pro-work behaviours and conditions (Kmec 2011). These behaviours and conditions are apparent in an individual's experience and education; job security, support and interest; family demand for time and effort; and household responsibility needs for income (Kmec 2011).

The ideal worker phase of the mosaic acknowledges motherhood as "always there". While motherhood may not be on the woman's immediate radar, motherhood is often on their manager's radar. Managers perceive women to be on the crest of motherhood. Thus, motherhood can be seen as emerging primarily as a workplace construct from managers. Gloor et al. (2018)

describe the presence of motherhood as being derived from policy. They argue the policy setting provides a platform for assumption. Knowing maternity leave is available, managers draw the conclusion that all women will therefore one day withdraw from the workplace to have children. The findings of this study are consistent with Gloor et al. (2018) where managers' behaviours toward women's careers can be described as pre-loaded, with this occurring long before motherhood is a reality, creating the seed of doubt and inconvenience about women and their future careers.

Stage 1 shows motherhood as an identity that doesn't yet overlap or feature with being a woman and a manager. The potential of becoming, impacts because others think about it in relation to opportunities that women might be offered or that women are thinking and planning for motherhood.

For women in this research, the focus on motherhood is not dominant at this stage. Women generally consider themselves on equal footing to men, able to fully engage with the expectations and requirements of the ideal worker. The women described themselves as appearing and acting like an ideal worker, dedicated to their career, doing whatever it takes to get the job done, working long hours, taking work home, travelling and attending networking and skills forums. During this time, women are exhibiting characteristics described in literature by Bierema (2016), Guerrina (2002), Reid (2015) and (Wynn 2017) about what it means to be an ideal worker.

Despite this a motherhood shadow falls, suggesting that irrespective of the characteristic's women portray or what women do, they are rarely seen by others as the ideal worker because of the potential of motherhood. Thus, when they become mothers, it fulfils a stereotypical view that only men can be ideal workers and that there is only one model to achieve this.

This is because motherhood is primed with expectation, in a way that fatherhood is not (Crabb 2019). Motherhood is seen as mandated and that all women will be mothers (Burman 1993). Fatherhood is conceptualised around being a good father (Kmec 2011) by supporting his family. The

distinction is significant to the ideal worker construct as women will never be seen as the ideal worker (Burman 1993) because of the threat of motherhood, whereas for men, fatherhood is seen as a bonus to the individual and the organisation (Cain Miller 2014; Bear and Glick 2017). Economic power is awarded to fathers for their career devotion, incentivising their “good father” role in the family structure (Kmec 2011; Crabb 2019). However, the potential and reality of the mothering is the major factor for suppressing women’s economic position (Burman 1993).

Stage 2 reflects where women do start to think about and plan for motherhood, the mother identity shifts and begins to overlap with the woman and manager identity. The focus on planning their future career around family becomes a priority. The mother identity is still small as it is not the primary focus, and women managers still associate with and identify as the ideal worker.

It reflects research by Perrewé et al. (2019) that note the inherent stereotypes associated with the new mother identity are such that they can have a negative effect. Perrewé et al. (2019) argue that the conflict arises not out of women’s identity shift itself, as they remain dedicated to work, but out of the stigmas within the workplace that question such dedication which can result in them become self-fulfilling.

Stage 3 is when the woman is pregnant and the impending mother identity becomes a reality for both the woman and the organisation. The management identity is still the main work identity for the woman, but the motherhood identity becomes stronger the more visible the pregnancy becomes. At this point, women begin to notice some of the potential tensions with the reality of the impending motherhood identity. Women begin to question the feasibility of the ideal worker model imposed by the workplace and become more aware of the organisational expectations regarding working mothers, including those in managerial roles.

Toward the end of the pregnancy the identity begins to shift in focus, from phase I where there is a focus a professional management career to phase II where there is an investment in family.

6.2.2.2. Phase II: The ideal mother

Figure 6-4 illustrates phase II which reflects the ideal mother, a period when the mother is out of the workplace and being a manager is not the primary focus of their life. The manager identity remains part of her identities because she is still connected to the workplace and is intending to return to a managerial role in the future. The manager identity comes back into focus in the second stage when women are considering their return to work.

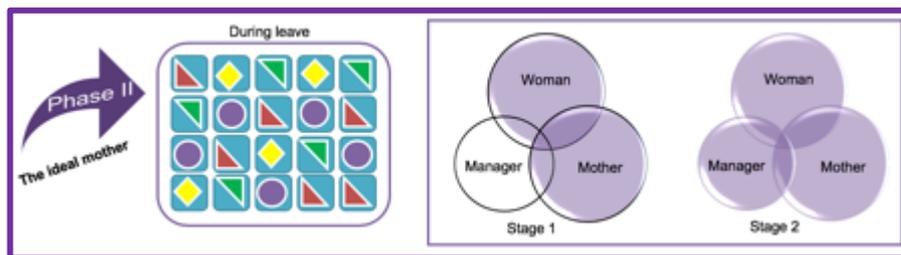


Figure 6-4: Phase II, the ideal mother

The shaping of the mother identity indicates the first identity transition when women are pregnant in the workplace and are no longer seen as managers. This reflects the shift where motherhood moves from a theoretical construct of expected or desired mothering behaviours guided by personal values, beliefs and culture to the lived experience of being a mother. This can expose the conflict between the reality of motherhood and the expectations of being an ideal worker. The transition to the mother identity occurs when the ideal worker identity ceases to be a focal priority in the lived reality.

The way managers see motherhood as incompatible with career, both in the long- and short-term, is not true for the transitioning women in this study. Women see motherhood as a short-term disruption not a lifetime career disruptor. This is in contrast to the managers in the study. The longevity of the motherhood penalty has been shown to last well into women's mid-life,

careers not recovering until the women are in their 50s when working mothers may surpass the careers of childless women (Kahn, García-Manglano and Bianchi 2014). Managers' actions cast a deep motherhood shadow by viewing working mothers' situations as absolutes, failing to consider life choices change and the costs of children grow as women get older (Kahn, García-Manglano and Bianchi 2014). This longevity of maternity transitions is reflected in the continued evolution of the mosaic and the ongoing need for new and changing pieces. It contrasts with the narrow view that women's future needs remain unchanged during their care life cycle.

For first-time mothers, many of whom have only ever identified with the phase I stage 1 persona in building a career, there was a naivety relating to transitioning to phase II, a new identity as a mother. The visualisation of the new identity, whilst having no experience on which to base decisions, resulted in theoretical and mechanical associations or choices about what that new identity might be. It was clear that it was difficult for women to objectively assimilate this new identity as a mother. With no experience of this mysterious mother identity, the women approached their maternity transition like a management decision by both presenting as the ideal worker while pregnant and initiating shorter maternity breaks. They had no basis for knowing, while pregnant, what their transitioning identity or new identity as a mother would be like in reality.

Literature focuses heavily on the "choice" to stay home or be career woman (Stone and Lovejoy 2004; Colaner and Giles 2008; Moses 2007; Nowak, Naudé and Thomas 2012; Chandler 1991; Cote Hampson 2018; Johnston and Swanson 2006), transitioning or integrating identities (Grady and McCarthy 2008; Bataille 2015; Hennekam 2016; Ibarra 1999; Spector and Cinamon 2017) and on extensive and intensive mothering ideologies (Christopher 2012). The literature points to strategies for women to manage the balance between the identities, rather than a particular focus on how professional management women assimilate their motherhood identity through a process of transference of management experience by "managing"

their baby. The transference of management skills identified by women in this study offers new insight into identity shifts for women.

For some of the women, planning a shorter time on maternity leave was their way of signalling to the organisation that they wanted their professional identity to remain their primary identity. This reflected women as wanting to maintain control over their identity transitions by maintaining the ideology that they most identified with at that stage. However, once they leave the workplace pregnant, they have left behind the ideal worker identity, gaining the new identity of working mother, even if it's ascribed to them, because they don't feel the shift within themselves straightaway. Acknowledging that they had been clinging to the known professional identity was an observable realisation by working mothers in this study once on maternity leave and living, or at least aspiring to, the ideal mother persona. The emergence of the mother identity was an awakening after having visualised, and often underestimated, what's involved in motherhood. For some this resulted in extending their break from the workplace. There was a realisation of the distinction between worker and mother for women, and an understanding of how separate the two worlds are, and how these worlds operate under different circumstances and expectations, their own and others.

6.2.2.3. Phase III: The ideal working mother

Figure 6-5 illustrates phase III which is the ideal working mother. It reflects a focus on achieving balance between woman, manager and mother identities.

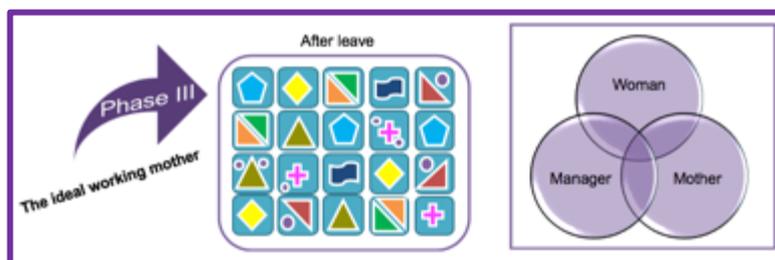


Figure 6-5: Phase III, the ideal working mother

While women are focused on transitioning from one identity to the next (sequentially), this research suggests managers in the study leap ahead to the working mother identity. This is consistent with earlier discussion showing that motherhood casts a shadow often from the beginning of women's careers (Cote Hampson 2018; Ridgeway and Correll 2004; Williams and Cooper 2004; Gloor et al. 2018). Skipping the mother identity is difficult and challenging for women, as they have no foundation for the working mother without experiencing the mother identity first. This exposes the power of the organisational culture in the role of identity construction that Cote Hampson (2018) describes as stronger than the policy implemented to overcome it. It highlights the need for specific attention to address organisational cultures.

The working mother is a stereotype attracting bias, argued by Cote Hampson (2018) as being reinforced by policies aimed at bettering economic outcomes for women. Cote Hampson's point focuses on culture and implementing policy, stating policies will never address endemic cultures or biases within an organisation and only work to further cement bias towards the working mother. Cote Hampson cites examples where policy is believed to create unfair advantage to working mothers in the military where they are seen as enabling women to get out of deployment, and in academia where it's seen as enabling women to extend publishing timelines (Cote Hampson 2018). Ridgeway and Correll (2004) and Williams and Cooper (2004) also describe the potential of motherhood as a characteristic linked with status, where caregiving is seen as displaying a lower degree of skill than professional roles. The lower degree of skill is directly translated to work performance and thus the working mother's perceived ability to hold decision-making roles (Cote Hampson 2018). Bias towards women's future motherhood potential has been referred to the "maternal wall" (Ridgeway and Correll 2004) and the "maybe baby" (Gloor et al. 2018). The motherhood potential and working mother bias discussed by Ridgeway and Correll (2004), Williams and Cooper (2004) and Cote Hampson (2018) is a key factor influencing how women seek to achieve balance between identities and the organisational

constraints that challenge this. It impacts on women as early as phase I, as illustrated in Figure 6-3.

The experiences of the working mother are salient to the paradox mindset discussed by Sleesman (2019), Waldman et al. (2019) and Zheng, Kark, and Meister (2018). A paradox is based on “contradictory, yet interrelated elements that exist simultaneously and persist over time” (Smith and Lewis 2011, 382), a tension that the working mother experiences. It impacts the working mother through the tensions they experience and the response it stimulates while managing their mosaic pieces. Sleesman (2019) argues that the degree of positivity with which one approaches finding a solution is linked to one’s acceptance of the problem and reflects the sentiments of Zheng, Kark, and Meister (2018), who refer to this as the paradox mindset over a dilemma mindset. Therefore, the working mother commits to a broad, complex, uncharted search through multiple scenarios for a solution (Waldman et al. 2019, 1) that best captures and addresses the most effective pattern she can make from the pieces of the mosaic available to her.

As women reached the final transition identity, conversations moved to the tensions regarding what it means to be a working mother. The support mechanisms enabling women to be present and engaged, establishment of boundaries between work and home, access to benefits/networks/skills, and mentors become the key elements for the working mother. These are discussed in detail in the following sections.

6.3. The regulatory boundaries of the mosaic

As noted above, the outer layer reflects the legislation, the whole of government policy setting minimum standards and results. As reflected in Chapter 2, it notes the relationship between government, organisations and people. In the mosaic, the regulatory layer is the rigid boundary to the middle and inner layers.

This section provides the foundational basis for exploring research objective 3, what organisations do during a workforce transition.

6.3.1. Standards for maternity leave

Managers described the legislative framework as a tool for providing equality for parents (mother, father or partner), yet acknowledged the reality is flawed and operates on a traditional male model, noting this as a hurdle to overcome. Legislative frameworks are constructed to reflect the minimum rights for employees outlined within the National Employment Standards (Australian Human Rights Commission 2014c). Traditionally, governments take a conservative approach in bargaining for the conditions extended to public sector employees around maternity (Williamson 2015).

Participants acknowledged the 14 weeks maternity leave benefits offered to state government employees were attractive. Many of the participants noted this as one of the major reasons they chose to work for the public sector, along with the flexibilities offered for when they were ready to return to work. Results indicated that the introduction of the paid scheme signalled to women that they were valued economically and could take time off work either on full pay or extended on part-pay to care for their newborn child and then return to their former role.

The women noted a tension regarding the utilisation of personal leave provisions during pregnancy, and the potential disadvantage this created by depleting leave accruals. This raises policy issues relating to lack of access to maternity leave provisions for pregnancy-related appointments prior to the birth, which impacts on other leave provisions. The concern demonstrated an inherent conflict between the provisions within the award and how they are constructed to service all employees equally in the workplace, but which have a differential impact on women.

The maternity leave provision, or its interpretation, worked against mothers immediately following birth. Maternity leave commenced when women

transitioned from the workplace to give birth. For some of the women this was prior to their due date, with and without health concerns; for others it resulted from an emergency birth. Access to personal leave provisions was not generally offered to women experiencing health risks and the maternity leave provision was activated. Due to the construction of the legislative provisions, partners are unable to access parental leave to care for their family in such circumstances.

From the interviews it was noted that interpretation of, or changes in, legislated provisions occurring over time has impacted on experiences for those who have had more than one transition. Participants highlighted how pivotal that interpretation can be.

Access to personal leave in an emergency situation would alleviate the burden on families in having to seek alternative forms of leave at an already difficult time. Caveats or differentials in interpretation on what may or may not be supported can significantly impact on the transition experience/s, particularly at a time when challenging such interpretations is often the last consideration. These mothers felt aggrieved and powerless to fight the system if they wanted to have a continuing career, pushing them to accept what was being offered. This elevates the power of the provision to one of privilege not right, within a policy framework designed and often applied from a conservative mindset. It could be argued that this is not the genuine intent of the provision and results in an outcome that negatively impacts on women's careers.

6.3.2. Standards for equality

Research conducted in the European Union shows there is a fundamental weakness in the principle of equality, that even the best policy frameworks are unable to overcome (Guerrina 2002). The weakness is the failure to address the way women work before, during, after and between pregnancies, and is considered to impact on women's decisions around motherhood and work (Guerrina 2002). Substantive equality and the European Union's

recognition of its failing to assist with women reconciling home and work responsibilities around pregnancy, is a key point also found in this study. The failing may be contributing towards gender inequality in management, with the policy based on traditional standards of work, gender and division of labour rather than developing structures that reduce home and work tensions.

Managers' insight and behaviour in this study reflect the essence of this weakness. There is opportunity and scope within the public sector policy framework for departments to enable gender equity. However, the lived practice of managers — experienced by a number of women participants — was that good policy implementation did not appear to be widely practised. The results suggested that this may be a combination of comfort with tradition, lack of knowledge of the policy provisions, or a lack of confidence to implement them. The findings of the study showed that the small number of managers willing to explore good gender equity outcomes was linked to the relationship they had developed with the woman as managers. For these women, the mosaic pattern was highly individualised and a genuine reflection of co-created solutions. For many, however, policy implementation was that the same standard or solutions needed be applied for all and such application was conservative in nature. This demonstrated the rigidity of the regulatory system within which managers feel they are operating. The impact of this had a limiting effect on genuine gender equity outcomes for women in senior levels of the public sector. Specific and targeted use of legislative and policy parameters could pioneer the way for change, if managers felt empowered or encouraged to challenge the rigidity of the customary standard policy practice.

In this study, managers' insight was not suggestive of outside-the-box thinking in considering the needs of their most valued asset, their employees. Instead, most managers appeared to operate within the regulated environment, appearing to use policy as a protection against employees. Women reported that human resources functions were required to intervene

on occasion to educate managers on policy and practice to better support women in the workplace. This reflects how lived experience differs from the espoused condition, where enabling policies do not necessarily result in the intended outcomes, such as returning to work part-time (Lott and Klenner 2016). Organisational culture and prevailing norms can mean that actions are implemented despite particular policy frameworks that are in place, and this culture works to maintain the status quo rather than support practice changes.

A “one size fits all” approach was found to be problematic for the working mothers and for some it increased rather than decreased inequities. This particularly emphasised the difficulty of shifting and repositioning the pieces in the working mothers’ mosaic. Workplace fairness can be a challenging and difficult task for managers. They are often dealing with competing demands for efficiencies and perceived fairness for all employees. The complex nature of managing fairness in return to work is acknowledged by managers as an area in which organisations struggle. Rindfleish (2002, 37) states “equal employment opportunity policies must be monitored and managers need to enact appropriate strategies that enable change”. Managers’ comments were reflective of the effort, and dissatisfaction towards the effort, that goes into enacting equal employment opportunity policy. The comments provided by managers went to the heart of the issue: the difference between equity and equality. Managers were displaying concerns about treating people fairly which was associated with treating everyone the same (equality), rather than ensuring men and women have access to the same opportunity and same outcome (equity) (United Nations 2014). Thus, the challenge is the effort required to shift from a “one size fits all” to a bespoke or individualised style of management showing respect for the uniqueness and possible options for each woman, mother, child and situation.

Objectivity and freedom emerged in the results as the main two management factors that undermined the potential success of gender equity policy. Firstly, was a lack of managerial objectivity which generally resulted in stereotypical

responses relating to views on gender and working mothers. Secondly, there are limited degrees of managerial freedom and a willingness to act to provide individual solutions. As a result, the women were caught between the conflicting stereotypes. Succeeding in one aspect was seen as failing in the other, i.e. good workers aren't good mothers and good mothers aren't good workers (Cote Hampson 2018). This creates a pressure cooker environment for women to be efficient and effective and to model expected norms despite their changed circumstances and having to negotiate a new model or mosaic pattern.

The foregoing discussion regarding the regulatory system sets the scene for consideration of the specific role of managers and the women's experiences with their managers.

6.4. The organisation, a mosaic space or a set pattern?

The middle layer focuses on organisations and how policy in the workplace focuses on minimum standards, with equal opportunity policy increasingly framed as providing the same for everyone. Policies remain focused on an ideal worker and a one-size-fits-all approach, which is problematic when individual circumstances don't fit the ideal. Most policies include provisions relating to management discretion. Thus, conscious and unconscious bias that may be held by managers can result in difficulty for women gaining even minimum standards.

This section considers research objective 3 that seeks to understand what organisations (human resources managers and/or line managers) do during a workforce transition; and research objective 5 to identify the enablers and/or barriers impacting on transition and career progression for working mothers. As detailed in 6.2, when describing the Mosaic Model, the organisation is responsible for implementing procedural parameters within a regulatory framework. In the transition experience managers play a key role in how policy is implemented and, in their willingness, or not, to find solutions that work for both working mothers and the organisation.

6.4.1. Work and role value

The cost of maternity leave can be an added pressure for public sector organisations managing government-imposed staffing or salary caps, especially for smaller organisations if multiple women are on paid maternity leave at the same time. This is an issue where no centralised funding to cover maternity leave is available.

There were two costs identified to workplaces: the cost to the organisation in funding the 14 weeks paid maternity leave (out of recurrent funding from their budget), and the costs associated with backfilling and potentially drawing a double salary against the role. The managers' narrative linked the relationship between cost and the need to backfill as a key element that shapes some of the decision-making, resulting in either not backfilling or providing flexible options to help to balance the financial burden on the workplace over the duration of the leave.

Managers felt that financial and backfill issues were exacerbated with back-to-back maternity bookings. A second maternity leave accessed immediately following the first was thought to be pushing boundaries of fairness and not considered by managers to be in the spirit of the award. Back-to-back maternity bookings were viewed as a double draw-down of 14 weeks paid leave, attracting a lot of negative conversation.

The decision to leave maternity positions vacant creates a visual implication of the role's work value. Managers' decision not to backfill was based on whether they perceived the role as critical or could they do without it for a period of time to save costs. When this occurred, it suggested to women that the skills and resources of their role were not important. This decision created a greater sense of insecurity and concern amongst mothers about whether the position would be there on their return. Where managers elected to park work for the duration of the maternity break, anxiety and fear of work value or being forgotten was heightened. Mothers want their roles

backfilled for two reasons: to have someone physically present to advocate on their behalf by keeping their work value alive, and to create a sense of assurance they will have a role to return to. How women measure their value or see their value measured is explored further in 6.5.1.1.

Managers understood the individualised nature of maternity transitions yet felt constrained by the budgetary expectations placed on them and the policy, procedure and guidelines to support flexibility or reintegration. The lived experience of the working mothers, within a regulatory environment that espoused to enable them to return in a modified family-friendly capacity, was instead one which was often hostile to them for such requests. There was little in the findings of this research to indicate managers were individualising the parameters within the regulatory environment to meet the needs of women's personal journeys.

6.4.1.1. **Fading professional value**

Working mothers' value or contribution was equated with time spent in the workplace; less time worked being perceived as lower value. Perceived value appears to influence the type of work managers believe working mothers can undertake, the space or real estate they are allocated in the office, their commitment to the workplace, and for the practice of legitimising redundancies. Behaviours toward working mothers are subtly reflected in workplace values of presenteeism (Cahusac and Kanji 2014; Bilimoria, Godwin and Zelechowski 2007; Michielsens, Bingham and Clarke 2013; Johnson 2004) and full-time over part-time roles. This is an interesting finding and there is more to be understood about setting the tone of expectation around value. Managers appear to be perpetuating a culture based on presenteeism associated with full-time work, rather than a focus on outcomes. This has a profound impact on women as managers, as the working mother is unable to present a perfect mosaic pattern to fit into the workplace when no other change is made. The underlying value system of presenteeism is undermining women's ability to be seen to be meeting the outcomes required of their organisational role.

As women's identity transitioned so too did their increasing invisibility in the workplace. Transitioning women noticed managers focused on employees able to be physically in the workplace. This experience brings to the foreground how quickly participants cease to be seen and considered in the workplace. Discussions are parked, despite being about matters that will clearly affect their employment into the future. Consistent with the literature, working mothers describe the need for a process of high level education to shift management styles from recognition of presenteeism to one that focuses on characteristics and attributes that enable women's success (Bilimoria, Godwin and Zelechowski 2007).

The women focused on the intrinsic relationship between visibility and value that was evolving before they had even transitioned temporarily out of the workplace. There was a strong sense of becoming less visible as an asset to the organisation due to their approaching maternity transition, whilst at the same time becoming more visible because of their pregnancy. What women gave voice to was their experience in being shelved, based on speculation of what they would want in the future; assuming "she" is not going to come back because they don't need the money, "she" is not career-focused, or "she" wants to be a stay home school mum. The overt and covert speculation was found to be undermining and depersonalising; and influenced, often negatively, the individual journey.

There was also a depersonalisation that occurred as women's professional value faded, where the working mother moves to "she". The pronoun shows how the working mother moves to a subject or object of discussion, and is the first sign of fading visibility. Depersonalising illustrates how managers and workplaces stop seeing the value in the change to working mother. In the mosaic, this demonstrates the pattern visible to management and that when presented with an alternative pattern, it is overlooked as a visible piece of the whole. Using the analogy of the mosaic, managers are unable to see all the pieces, the whole, and the pieces within the whole to identify new patterns.

Fading professional value was emphasised in workplace behaviour signifying maternity transitions with finality; a “separation” from the organisation where women are out of sight and out of mind. The finality of the separation imposed on women was considered by women participants as surreal and quite a shock to the system in moving from being perceived as a professional asset to what felt like having no identifiable or tangible value to the business. Managers were making a value judgement based on what they could see, unable to engage or connect with a workforce that is not physically present. In the mosaic, as far as management is concerned, there are no other pieces because they don’t or can’t see them.

Working mothers’ fading professional value can be understood relative to the “social value and status that society attaches to a role and the wages it pays people to perform it” (Ridgeway and Correll 2004, 688). When the working mothers talked about workplace visibility, they were reflecting a diminished professional status that is associated with the wages attracted to perform the role. Maternity breaks or part-time work doesn’t attract wages or status and illustrates the motherhood penalty in the loss of earnings (Bear and Glick 2017; Lake 2019; Chung 2018). This discussion in literature confirms the faded professional value working mothers felt when they returned to work, when their skills as assets to the organisation were overlooked. German research by Lott and Klenner (2016) shows that in return for reduced hours not only do they receive reduced wages, they also are given less meaningful work. While women rationalised this as personal sacrifice for the short term to fit in their additional pieces, managers’ treatment left them feeling undervalued (Cahusac and Kanji 2014).

Working mothers felt their faded professional value was linked to the managers’ or workplace’s level of communication while they were absent from the workplace. Managers more commonly deal with shorter absences where contact is naturally reduced due to recreational holidays and employees return to their role without change. This is quite unlike maternity leave where absences are initially defined but may change in duration and

often on return invoke some change. These observations appear to suggest that within the organisational context there was not a sophisticated mechanism for dialogue with an absent workforce to elevate their profile, visibility and value to the workplace.

6.4.1.2. **Normalising the standard ways of work**

While mothers were on maternity leave, for managers it is “business as usual”. During such times, some workplaces undergo change and transformation that may or may not have commenced prior to women’s maternity leave. Structural changes impacting on roles, responsibilities and/or reporting relationships require consultation, providing staff with the opportunity to comment or give feedback.

However, as women’s transition journey moved them temporarily out of the workplace, they encountered greater role uncertainty and insecurity resulting from organisational restructure and abolition of positions. Despite organisational guidelines being followed, the women found the level of communication and interaction to be inadequate and often superficial. For example, communication to inform mothers their position was abolished was considered mechanical and transactional in nature, and void of any emotional connection.

The pressures being placed on managers for efficiencies resulted in a default to standard ways of working and limiting workplace flexibility. Women shared stories of managers reining in flexibility, forcing women to make a choice about their career trajectory or future with the employer. Management pressure to reduce or restrict flexibility on those who would like, or need to work flexibly, is becoming more common, and is known as flexism (Crabb 2019). This type of behaviour is consistent with controlling the design of their workforce. In line with Australian Human Rights Commission (2014c) and Cooper and Baird (2015) who argue workplaces are legitimising redundancies through organisational restructures, in this research a small number of women experienced loss of their role due to restructure whilst on

maternity leave. This has significant impact on working mothers and suggests that the objectives of the workplace are strongly focused on efficiencies within the standard ways of working. It reflects an unchanging mosaic pattern at the organisational level.

Normalising the workforce into expected standards of work is concerning because there appears to be a culture of covering bias through legitimisation. This was evidenced in the findings, suggesting managers appear to outwardly follow the rules and there was an awareness of subtle and ongoing discrimination that goes unchallenged. This is profoundly important when discrimination related to pregnancy, parental leave and return to work has been proven nationally and within Western Australia (Australian Human Rights Commission 2014a; Equal Opportunity Commission 2019). Complaint data highlights the subtlety of the issue, demonstrating a greater emphasis is needed to manage conscious and unconscious biases.

6.4.1.3. **Situational, flexible availability**

Workplace flexibility is highly valued by the recipient and so it is revered and protected at all costs (Kelliher and Anderson 2010). Webber and Williams (2008) argue it is something earned through hard work and dedication.

Empirical evidence presented by Ko and Hur (2014) indicates that workplaces can achieve greater social exchange when employees see the benefits being offered, such as flexibility, as being beyond the mainstream. This is where the co-design of the mosaic pattern is fundamental to the reciprocity and negotiation in the social exchange. A small number of women in this study co-designed enhanced benefits through re-engineering roles, reflecting the positive side of social exchange theory (Cropanzano and Mitchell 2005). Cooper-Thomas and Morrison (2018) caution on the complexity of workplace relationships in the process, indicating there is both reward and cost to the social exchange.

For most women who challenged or experienced failed negotiation to co-design the mosaic, the result was emotional exhaustion and subjugation. While Cooper-Thomas and Morrison (2018) argue this can result in withdrawal of organisational citizenship behaviours, such as loyalty, the findings of this research did not reveal women as being less loyal, and in fact they stayed with the organisations they knew, perhaps in recognition that it was unlikely to be better elsewhere.

Overall, the managers' showed resistance to change in the standard ways of work (Bierema 2016). Managers immediately focus on the potential impact to productivity and efficiency according to workplace needs and traditional ways of achieving outcomes. This reflected an ongoing struggle between women and the workplace regarding what it means to be a manager and if these roles could be constructed differently. Some of the dilemma can be linked to the part-time stereotype raised by Lott and Klenner (2016), perceived as a never-ending, forever arrangement agreed to out of goodwill and not expected to be an ongoing commitment. For this reason, support extended to working mothers was varied and conservative in nature. Mosaic attributes such as being able to adjust and balance to changing conditions were often not apparent in the organisational paradigm, making it harder for working mothers to blend or fit their pieces into the organisational constructs.

Flexibility was framed conceptually by managers as "situational" and described as a mechanism enabling the business to meet demand, requiring working mothers to adapt to business requirements. The construct of "situational flexibility" was geared toward organisational gain, it was not discussed by managers in the reverse, such as giving reciprocal flexibility to women based on personal requirements. Conceptually this reflected a rigid framework within which women had to fit their pieces with little opportunity to change a predefined pattern. What resulted was in line with Kelliher and Anderson's finding (2010), where an imposed work intensification occurred, with working mothers doing more to make up for the lack of availability and ensure productivity is not affected. However, Lott and Klenner (2016) argued intensification was a strategic tool to draw on the "dedication" of the flexible

workforce to the organisation's advantage by working them to full-time capacity at little to no cost. This was in line with the findings of this study. The women in the study worked extra because they were "expected" to meet certain productivity requirements and constraints on their availability were considered a hindrance to the workplace. An interesting and subtle impact of the imposed intensification was women's return to full-time work sooner than planned.

The highly regulated design of the system holds the managers back, and by virtue of that, holds the workplaces back. The operating environment is highly restrictive, limiting organisational thinking or supports to construct new mosaic patterns. Thus, working mothers are forced into clunky and ill-suited mosaic patterns. As a result, the mosaic design women face is rigid and unresponsive to the changing shape of their pieces and does not reflect any malleability.

Williams, Blair-Loy, and Berdahl (2013) argue that even with a long and sustained effort to integrate flexibility into the workplace, there has been little impactful change. Munsch (2016) argues greater structure is needed to prevent decision-makers from slipping into stereotypical judgements, and this is where Lott and Klenner (2016) believe human resources, supervisors and co-workers have sway. This would certainly be consistent with the findings from women in this study who were questioning how to establish a dynamic exchange process with mutual benefit. In this study, co-designed solutions between managers and working mothers were uncommon. However, where it did occur it demonstrated a process of developing mosaic patterns that were highly customised and provided mutual benefit, but which were outside the norm of the operating environment.

Rubery (2015) proposes that the new ways women are working challenge existing employment frameworks regarding how the work day is constructed (Rubery 2015). Whilst this style of work is employee-led and would fit with managers' views found in this study that working mothers need to come up with solutions (Rubery 2015), the current constraint is that such solutions

need to be acceptable to managers and the range of acceptable solutions is small. The difference and challenges are in shifting to results-based deliverables.

Guillaume and Pochic's (2009) French study showed that while the managerial expectation is based on excessive availability, there is an emerging model of "flexible availability" that focuses on competence, performance and results. The practice observed inside the French organisation was both innovative and disciplined in the way that it involved fitting work around children's schedules to optimise time (Guillaume and Pochic 2009). Practices such as these are not without merit, however it would be likely to encounter resistance in the public sector where more standardised practices remain the norm. It also speaks to the informal nature of the mosaic design arrangements only experienced by a small number of women in this study as being outside formal constructs.

6.4.2. Culture and organisational context

The management structure of those making decisions on workplace policy affecting women was non-reflective of gender and disconnected by generation. Managers generally met minimum standards as required by legislation or organisational policy. This made it difficult for women seeking further adjustment, as it was seen as asking for more than they were entitled to. Thus, the rhetoric of flexibility and support did not match the reality of a standard response, regardless of circumstances. Traditional attitudes guided expectations at a management level with change requests escalated through the organisation and required signing off by chief executive officers. This reflects a gendered regulatory decision-making structure, suggesting cognitive diversity in decision-making over genuine support. Thus, the decision requires endorsement from white, middle-aged men of similar experience and background.

In the organisational context, it was somewhat surprising to find that strong outdated attitudes and ideas preside over women's role in the workplace.

While equality and impartiality may be etched into the public sector's employment framework, some managers demonstrated active conscious personal biases directed toward expected management norms. Conscious organisational bias can be dangerous ground, particularly in the absence of discussions or workable mechanisms to address known prejudices. Having a system for equity and impartiality in place is ineffective when organisations are complicit in conscious bias and do not address a culture that is either turning a blind eye or continues to feed accepted bias.

6.4.2.1. **Mosaic conflicts of maternal bodies**

Managing professional identity was a challenge in an environment that was focused on the primacy of work, where family must come second.

In line with empirical research into the maternal body at work by Gatrell (2013), the findings of this study confirmed the physical and emotional changes women experience while pregnant are not well understood or managed within the workplace. Pregnancy is viewed as a long-term disruption, that will either pass or the woman will transition to leave with little or no need to do anything differently. Gatrell (2013) argued that women draw on strategies of stoicism and self-regulation to negotiate the borders of public and private worlds, instead of receiving proactive support to manage their career during and after pregnancy.

It was evidenced in the findings that women's lived experience indicated managers displayed a real lack of awareness and sophistication in considering or responding to the physical or emotional needs of pregnancy. As a result, pregnant women attempting to conform to norms were exposed to risk or strain of long hours, travel commitments, or standard ergonomic settings. This is the early sign of women needing to begin the mosaic adjustment with the possible inclusion of more pieces or a rearrangement of existing pieces into a new pattern which may not fit as neatly into existing boundaries.

Manager behaviours explained by some women showed there was little consideration for modification of workspace or work practice even when occupational safety and health modifications were required. The managers' behaviours were reactive in addressing concerns of women or reliant on colleagues elevating matters to management to achieve action. Managers appeared to place little to no importance in proactively or reactively addressing modifications of a short-term nature, responding to these more as a matter of inconvenience. This shows the mosaic pattern, desired by managers, was seen as fixed and unable to accept new pieces or patterns. It portrayed a structure and way of behaving that was ingrained.

By way of self-regulation, women recognised the need to conceal their pregnancy for as long as possible, as the new pieces don't fit within the current mosaic structure. Women were actively in a state of identity management, attempting to move their pieces of mosaic whilst concealing their pregnancy. This is in line with findings by Gatrell (2013) and Grady and McCarthy (2008). While managers operated from the assumption that standard conditions are suitable for pregnancy and wait for alternatives to be requested, women felt justified in concealing their pregnancy in fear for their career. The dialogue reflected the additional pressure placed on women in having to continue to conform to work expectations despite a changing maternal body. This was most obvious when set against those women who were offered ergonomic assessments, sideways moves to a less stressful environment, reduced travel, or being able to work at home. These women were highly appreciative of not being actively required to conceal their pregnancy or manage work expectations.

Pregnancy and breastfeeding are attributes associated with motherhood where women adopt, by choice or by virtue, concealment strategies (Grandey, Gabriel and King 2020; Gatrell 2013). These attributes are largely nonvisible and potentially considered to have lower social value in some contexts, such as the workplace (Lynch and Rodell 2018), resulting in women managing their identity through the information they choose to share or conceal from their peers in the workplace. Women make choices around

the timing of what they reveal and to whom to manage the consequence of the stigma attributed to pregnancy (Jones and King 2014). While it may be better to disclose information about their pregnancy (Lynch and Rodell 2018), decisions around concealment are guided by interactions within context, i.e. observations of manager support and policy enactment (Jones and King 2014).

To foster sharing, a manager and workplace need to demonstrate a willingness to reshape the mosaic pattern beyond rigid boundaries to create new mosaic patterns. Concealment strategies indicate managers are not providing nurturing environments for women to openly bring new pieces and alter the mosaic. The results demonstrated a limited ability or willingness of managers within a workplace culture to think and explore new patterns. Exploring a new pattern requires a reason, and trust, to try.

6.4.2.2. **Mosaic needs binding organisational loyalty**

In this study working mothers expressed a feeling that presenting as pregnant to a prospective employer would attract bias and that it is easier for them to maintain their professional identity within a workplace where they are known. Transition identities create uncertainty, for women and managers. Professional aspiration shifts to professional survival, with working mothers choosing to commit to their present organisation for longer over seeking advancement.

Working mothers' decision for concealment to manage identity is consistent with Ibarra and Petriglieri's (2016) identity work. Working mothers were responding to a threat/conflict to their professional identity, one in which the mosaic pattern was strong, structured and contained. Concealing pregnancy from a potential manager when applying for promotion was a tactical choice to project the ideal worker norm. Pregnancy conflicts with the standard organisational model for success and expectations. Women were subconsciously applying identity theory to construct provisional selves (Ibarra 1999) to determine what mosaic pieces fit and if the pattern works. Through

play, women in this study were mind mapping, testing out scenarios of what identity would fit within the given context (Ibarra 1999). The testing process was informing their judgement on what was considered appropriate to pursue while pregnant in the workplace. Getting a feel for the pieces and pattern of the mosaic by exploring the provisional identity was part of a security check for where their mosaic pieces conflicted with or fitted within the organisational model for success.

6.4.2.3. **Enabling and sustaining capital to professional identity**

Maintaining a professional identity was important to working mothers and was considered to stabilise their reputation. Women in this study focused on transitioning with the same employer where they believed that they had built sufficient social capital. Social capital resulted in ongoing contact with peers and the workplace during a transition that enabled women to regulate their professional identity with those they had existing relationships with and who had already invested in them. Sustained personal contact helped some keep professional identity alive. Others opted to check emails remotely and for some it was reading news feeds in their field/discipline or keeping abreast of organisational issues. Doing so ensured the woman's mosaic would continue to evolve and support her with new patterns of employment when she returned.

Maintaining social capital was more common for first-time transitioners who reported high levels of anxiety or fear of being forgotten. This was not an issue for those having second transitions. Working mothers were very sensitive to the professional disadvantage of being overlooked for potential opportunities. They perceived the longer the time away from the workplace, the greater the damage to their professional identity. Those in their second transition had already determined and established a new mosaic pattern so were less anxious. Women with established social capital were much more likely to be offered corporate equipment such as laptops while on leave, which they saw as enabling them to maintain a window into the workplace and continuity of their professional identity.

Women's attention to their professional identity during transition helped the organisation to maintain a corporate memory of their value. This demonstrated the women's awareness of the structured boundaries of the mosaic and a focus on how to keep their visibility alive through an active connection with the workplace.

6.4.2.4. **In hiatus, a break away from work or management**

Managers refer to maternity transition journeys as being a "hiatus period". The choice of the word "hiatus" accentuates the transition as being a gap, lull, break, pause, interval or interruption to career because of the introduction of family. It is applied through a lens of visibility and implies during such a time one will not be seen and therefore are perceived by managers to be in a hiatus. In contrast to women, for men the introduction of family can be a career bonus (Bear and Glick 2017; Shah 2014; Hodges and Budig 2010; Crabb 2019), where their career accelerates. This demonstrates an emphasis on family binding women to mid-level management until later in life when family push-pull tensions lessen and an executive career is plausible (Grady and McCarthy 2008). The findings of this study support research by O'Neil and Bilimoria (2005) that finds women accepting the hiatus imposed on them by workplace norms and committing to a future with the present organisation to focus on their career at a later stage. In doing so working mothers are reflecting the three-step career pattern described by O'Neil and Bilimoria (2005, 185) as a focusing on self, on other, and then a balance between self and other. The three-step pattern reflects some of the pieces in the mosaic that move in/out during women's transition journey. It demonstrates the focal objectivity required of women to construct the mosaic by moving the pieces in, out and around simultaneously.

The managers focus on a hiatus, thus binding woman to mid-level management, was emphasised by one respondent articulating a view espoused by others that "you can do it all, but not at the same time" (Quasr 2012; Robins-Early 2013). These were strong words that clearly separated

the two worlds of motherhood and management, shifting the meaning of hiatus to not just being a break away from work but a break away from management. Managers are clearly delineating the difference between careers of the women before children, and the more limited careers they envisage for a working mother that accommodates children. The working mother is expected to accept the hiatus as a period of compromise related to accommodating children, then career will follow.

The workplace appeared to be driving the narrative, creating tensions that suggested it can only be one or the other, but not both. This is in contrast to O'Neil and Bilimoria's (2005) three-step career pattern of self, other, both. This was particularly evident in the way managers discussed the policy setting flexibilities as being at management's discretion; it shaped an environment of corralled decisions toward traditional norms. Furthermore, it demonstrated managers were not concerned with understanding what supports the working mother needed or wanted to enable her to continue her role in management, rather than just putting her career on pause.

Some managers saw the hiatus as a break away from management, a time for working mothers to consolidate their career and work on skills while their focus was seen to be on family. They assumed working mothers do not want a career and tended not to offer professional development or acting opportunities; rationalising and justifying their assumptions during this period as working mothers being frail, fragile and exhausted — therefore not ready for or disinterested in management. They also noted during this time it was important to maintain women's confidence in their ability. This appears to be in conflict with not providing development or acting opportunities. It raises questions on how managers make judgements about who to protect and who to develop without asking the working mothers themselves what they want or need. Managers ceasing to provide professional development or acting opportunities to working mothers who they perceive to be focusing on family, not career, is of concern. These managers consider themselves aware of working mothers' reservations, in not wanting to take on roles unless they had the experience or skills. This suggests a managerial paradox, as it

would be difficult for managers to provide working mothers with the reassurance they perceived necessary to maintain their confidence, while withholding support and development. It appeared managers' actions were counterintuitive and fostered an environment of insecurity and control by holding women in a hiatus employment pattern.

In contrast, some managers suggested that working mothers could use the hiatus break away from work, during a time where family is the focus, as an opportunity to develop and broaden their thinking as a leader. This could be taken to mean that managers saw value in the skills women develop during this time. This brings an interesting element to the mosaic, showing that the working mother's thinking evolves and brings new pieces or skills to the workplace, reflecting where workplaces stand to gain from women's experience by bringing leadership attributes to the workplace. This finding also demonstrates a shift in women's thinking before and after motherhood. Before motherhood, thinking was narrower and lacked full awareness of the organisational mosaic. Afterwards, based on their changed circumstances, women have an ability to adjust and balance elements in response to changing conditions to find new patterns, including those that will fit within existing constraints. The added dynamic of motherhood positions women as skilled leaders and demonstrates how women's mosaic thinking can be influential in shifting norms in the workplace.

6.4.2.5. **Under the veneer of office talk**

The practice of framing things with humour, to laugh off as a joke, set an accepted tone and culture in the workplace that indicated it was okay to speak to pregnant women or working mothers in a different more personal way than before pregnancy. The language (jokes) toward women was noted by the interviewees as hurtful and unnecessary in the workplace. The behaviours of managers appeared to be institutionalising gendered culture that devalues the role of women as working mothers by perpetuating the unpaid work and labour division toward women through their jokes.

Language was a key identifier marking this shift for women in the transition experience.

Buzzanell and Liu (2007) describe maternity leave as a conflict, usually as the result of resourcing. Maternity leave as conflict was evident as women tried to rearrange the pieces of their mosaic. Language as a form of expression, made the conflict in this study visible. This study showed that the conflict was not isolated to the maternity leave itself and extended into the return to work. This demonstrates the impact on women of taking a maternity break, beginning with the visibility of pregnancy which cannot be isolated to a period of time. For as long as the effects of children are visible to the workplace, the conflict remains.

Pregnancy, or the act of getting pregnant, seemingly invited the private domain of intimacy into the workplace (Buzzanell and Liu 2007). In doing so, appropriate and inappropriate boundaries are blurred and what would normally be unmentionable or at least distasteful becomes acceptable. Buzzanell and Liu (2007, 465) described the crossover of private domains into public domains of the workplaces because “sexuality dissolves the veneer of rationality and gender neutrality”. It was apparent to women in this study that boundaries had changed once they were pregnant and so did the expression towards them. What might normally be quite offensive comments were now the new norm to navigate. The maternity conflict Buzzanell and Liu (2007) refer to was occurring in this study, where threats and putdowns toward women were somehow now appropriate or acceptable. This demonstrated how normal separation of domains dissolved in the workplace and resulted in expression that immediately diminished the new identity of the woman and asserted a dominance through the use of language. The behaviours were typical of dominating conflict management theory (Buzzanell and Liu 2007), by weakening women’s power to deal with “time” as resource and the source of conflict.

6.5. The individual, pieces to fit in the mosaic

The innermost layer of the model is the individuals layer. The initial pattern reflects women before pregnancy where they were able to fit their pieces into the structure that was available. However, once they became pregnant, they had more pieces to fit into their layer. The pieces increased once they went onto maternity leave and then returned to work. This section focuses on how the women sought to and were expected to fit their extra pieces into the existing structure, and the challenges this presented.

As a result of the struggle to fit their additional pieces into the existing structure of the Mosaic Model, women experienced the potential for disenfranchisement. Also, because of the decisions made for them, their career can stall despite their own desire to continue an upward trajectory. Thus, this impacts on strategies aimed at developing the management pipeline, especially getting women into more senior management roles.

This section highlights the paradox of policy and practice in this area, and a key finding is that organisations continue to struggle to develop inclusive practices for short-term changes in working arrangements. The section considers research objective 4 that seeks to understand how women, who are mothers, manage their professional identity during transition and achieve career goals or aspirations in management; and research objective 5 to identify the enablers and/or barriers impacting on transition and career progression for working mothers.

6.5.1. Adjusting and balancing the mosaic pieces to organisational practice

6.5.1.1. Mosaic positioning, career and professional standing

As the focus on motherhood increases, women begin visualising the pattern a career and family will present. They are visualising a workforce transition in the same frame as they are visualising an identity transition. Visualisation

is the beginning of career management shift as a preliminary stage in the shift in identity, where women acknowledge potential new identities and new focal priorities for the future. They do this within the Mosaic Model framework, visualising the new pieces and how they might fit together. While focused on the first phase of the transition (described in Figure 6-3), the woman begins managing her career trajectory before the norms of a motherhood identity have significant influence. Women in this research aligned themselves with a public sector organisation and role that best enabled their visualised identity transition. This included identifying the desired path, timeframe and positioning required to manage their career around the transition. For a number of the women in the study, as reflected in their stories, pregnancy was planned and purposeful. It was not seen as necessarily disrupting their career, although it was acknowledged by most that it would cause some change as they established a new mosaic pattern that encapsulated career and pregnancy.

Prior to actual pregnancy, some women in the study were constructing their career and identity with an acute awareness of what it might mean to add family to the mix. Managing their professional identity meant factoring in time out of the workplace, unlike their male colleagues, and required careful consideration how best to manage their career trajectory when they were planning potential changes in their lives. While in phase I of their workforce transition, the women were able to accelerate and position their career and professional standing to their advantage. They built strong social capital networks to facilitate smooth workplace and identity transitions.

These results are consistent with previous research by O'Neil, Hopkins, and Bilimoria (2013) who identified the importance of human capital and social capital to women's careers. Women need the human capital to manage their career trajectory. The social capital provides women with the information and support networks necessary both inside and outside of organisation networks at a key point in their career. The results of this study show women to be utilising human capital and social capital as key tools to manage the changes in their mosaic patterns.

Sandberg (2013) discussed professional position from the position of leaning in, stating that women lean out too early making decisions about what job or what promotion to take based on the potential of future motherhood. What is being described by Sandberg (2013) is not consistent with the women in this study. While most of the women made a choice about working in the public sector, they were not “leaning out”. The women in this study spoke about actively considering how to manage their professional identity, career trajectory, and their capital during a transition.

Transitioning to the mother identity was acknowledged by participating women as a challenge. These women went from a very busy full life as an ideal worker to being at home looking after an infant. How they felt about themselves, their self-esteem, and maintaining their interest or currency with the workplace were all key factors in shaping and defining their new identity. Ferrante (2018) describes the minutiae of motherhood as something that can't be prepared for. Particularly when the new motherhood identity based on a patriarchal institution of motherhood (Jiao 2019), expects women to devote all their energy into raising the children (Ridgeway and Correll 2004). This can be challenging and difficult for professional women to assimilate. What the women in the study were discussing in relation to their new identity was a decreased visibility (Millward 2006). The visibility was linked to their self-worth, which was established in their former identity as an ideal worker and a desire to remain connected with the workplace (Spector and Cinamon 2017).

Transitioning to the mother identity, particularly for the first-time mothers, was a shock. The ideal worker identity was something that reduced over time as the women adapted to their new reality and the world of motherhood, and maternity leave became more familiar. In this transition between identities some women wanted to return to work early. This was a reaction to the lack of control the women felt they had in their new world. In the workplace women had a sense of control, in the transitional identity space they didn't see themselves as either worker or mother. The new identity with a baby felt

outside of their control. Once an acceptable level of control returned to their life, the transitional identity ceased, and the maternity break together with their new identity as a mother were embraced. This signalled a break away from the worker identity as the final threads were released and the mother identity became the main focus. At this point women expressed that they found absolute enjoyment and satisfaction in being a full-time mother. The difference in thinking style demonstrates a paradox mindset to manage the tensions (Zheng, Kark and Meister 2018; Waldman et al. 2019; Smith and Lewis 2011). The paradox mindset describes the tensions women in the study feel and how they deal with them.

Clinging to the ideal worker identity exposed two tensions for women: a naivety in thinking identity transition was seamless; and a level of professional insecurity. This was apparent when contrasted to women with a previous maternity transition experience; these women had a greater depth to their thinking, accepting the temporary loss in control and transitioning more easily through the identities. The transition for the latter group to the mother identity was immediate because the starting point was different; these women could draw on past experience, transitioning back and forth with much greater ease between the mother and working mother identity.

For women straddling the ideal worker and mother identity, there was a realisation the maternity break was not perceived as good time/service toward their professional standing. The concept of time out of the workplace for mothering was perceived by some, as noted earlier, as offering no tangible value transferable back into the workplace, resulting in professional insecurity. Some interviewees noted that exposure to ideas and thinking available through professional learning, media and networks can be a significant element in maintaining that connection and momentum. This shows women to be drawing on and further developing human capital and social capital elements (O'Neil, Hopkins and Bilimoria 2013). However, such activity was driven by the women, with little or no organisational input.

This behaviour transfers what some perceived as worthless time, in terms of career progression of a maternity break, to recognised tangible value to the workplace. Women are exhibiting behaviours to influence their potential and the momentum of their career whilst maintaining a connection to both worker and working mother identities. This aligns with research by Nowak, Naudé, and Thomas (2012) who have shown the necessity for mothers to sustain and develop their careers with professional learning and access to networks while on maternity leave. This was closely linked to organisations actively extending support during leave and when returning to work (Nowak, Naudé and Thomas 2012). Lott and Klenner (2016) however propose the responsibility for personal development and cultivating networks was the role of the ideal worker and that the individual needed to take control and not expect the employer to do so. Whilst some of the participants did actively take control of their development, this research shows there is a need for new practices to support mothers to maintain and have recognised human capital and social capital that is developed when they are absent from the workplace.

6.5.1.2. **Trust and conflict as a mosaic attribute**

As women transitioned identities, relationships with managers and peers often changed. Some memories were raw and stood out as defining events that changed the psychological contract (Thomas, Au and Ravlin 2003) and relationships. By exploring relationships, the study revealed trust and conflict as defining mosaic attributes and a central point in the transition experience. It also framed the experience as being, for some, an individual and lonely process where help to fit in extra pieces is not always available.

Changes to relationships after a significant conflict is consistent with Buzzanell and Liu's (2007) dominating conflict management theory. The conflicts discussed by some women resulted in stalemates, breakdowns (Buzzanell and Liu 2007) and loss.

Working mothers with longstanding supportive work-based relationships felt safer and happier to negotiate changing and changed mosaic patterns. They had social capital and psychological contracts that remained intact and carried them throughout their transition. These women recognised the trust extended to them, considering themselves fortunate to have such enduring relationships within the broader context of the division or organisation. Workplace capital was generally lower or weaker in brokering mosaic patterns where women had limited tenure to form enduring relationships.

Working mothers emphasised how significant an impact broken pre-established psychological trust had on their career and on their relationships. This conflict and breakdown in trust provides insight into how managers and workplaces need to create a proactive culture that seeks to support and encourage women. This includes enabling different mosaic patterns to be created. Greater emphasis needs to be placed on building a culture that speaks to the role that the manager and woman play in building a mosaic pattern together, demonstrating the importance of culture as instrumental to the change.

What was symbolic of the women's observations of maternity transition was having to source information alone, with little support from their HR departments. There was a lack of confidence in the workplace that fuelled women's need and desire to be fully informed to make good decisions in relation to their career and their new role as a mother. However, they found there was limited information readily available within and external to the workplace. Women were often left to fend for themselves, to decipher their rights in a range of options including: maternity payments, leave without pay, over-payments, options for half pay, or superannuation. A telling finding was the recognition by participants of the need — in preparing for discussions with their manager — to know one's rights and options. Tensions occurred when women felt backed into a corner by a conservative operating environment. Women felt paralysed and completely vulnerable, with little or no HR support, and fear of the career damage an influential person, such as

the senior executive officer, could exert should they challenge a management decision.

The results emphasise the need for centralised information to assist managers and women in constructing the transition narrative. Where this can be difficult, is for those without an appreciation of the type of questions to ask, particularly for a first-time mother or first-time manager supporting a maternity transition. Transparency of information would support an open dialogue, by equalising the power relationship between women and managers in policy discussions, rather than a mystery to be solved or learnt through (in)experience.

It further suggests that managers and workplaces need to adapt to provide safe and trusting environments to reduce the mental and physical burden on women in the face of perceived stigma (Jones and King 2014). Safe and trusting environments encourage or empower different approaches to revealing information and will foster more favourable outcomes (Jones and King 2014; Lynch and Rodell 2018), in constructing mosaic patterns that are adaptive.

6.5.1.3. **Navigating the mosaic with mentors and coaching**

Re-orientation at re-entry is another aspect that attracts little workplace focus, and information and support are seldom provided. Providing supports or training during and upon return (Nowak, Naudé and Thomas 2012) is central to developing and nourishing the maternity transitions.

Managers indicated a reliance on informal mentoring relationships and pre-existing performance management programs where discussions around career aspirations, development and professional goals occurred, rather than considering how to maintain career value during a transition. Conversations of this nature were dependent on the value managers and workplaces ascribed to them and where women were in a development cycle when a working mother returned, resulting in irrelevant pulse checks or missed

opportunities. Managers recognised that re-entry was the right time to have mosaic conversations around fitting in new pieces and managing expectations of both; however, this was not organisation-led as Kolb et al. (1998) have argued it should be.

When faced with the tensions of managing and transitioning identity, women found it extremely beneficial to draw on mentors to help regulate their actions and reactions to behaviours in the workplace. Interaction with a mentor assisted in forming a strong working mother identity, validating decision-making and boosting self-confidence which an absence from the workplace had diminished. Mentors help working mothers find and establish their identity by exploring anxiety in the transition process, providing gentle reassuring support, articulating and exploring career aspirations where managers did not. Working mothers wanted their managers to play a more active role in facilitating genuine formalised career conversations on re-entry, and to explore leadership development opportunities with some forward planning. Commentary of participants suggests that little planning or thinking was occurring at either end of the maternity transition.

The results of this study on the challenges and missed opportunities relating to workforce re-entry are supported in the literature. A formalised process, such as maternity coaching, outside of informal mentoring relationships and complementary formal organisational mentoring programs (Filsinger 2012) could offer role-specific career planning. Chubb (2008) argues that maternity coaching is a useful re-engagement tool by providing clarity and expectation in work and the future. Maternity coaching supports the working mother before, during and after their maternity break to explore elements relating to career and family (Chubb 2008) and is an emerging tool in business, providing workplaces with the edge in supporting re-entry and retention of talented women (Filsinger 2012; Vitzthum 2017; Parke 2012). Evidence suggests that providing maternity coaching — which is different to other “in-workplace” coaching models — assists in early identification of transition-type issues (Chubb 2008). While the coaching is largely targeted at supporting the women, there is also focus on educating the manager of the

working mother (Parke 2012). There was no evidence in participant conversations that this kind of support mechanism existed within the public sector. This would be a valuable mechanism for both working mothers and managers in supporting the re-working of the mosaic, and could assist in identifying the new pieces at each stage of the transition and identify their place within the mosaic. The potential impact of implementing a maternity coaching process is that it could support the full cycle of a maternity transition and establish a solid platform for mosaic narrative to be constructed for women and their workplaces.

Constructing a space for the mosaic narrative to take place is an essential part of ensuring new patterns can develop within the Mosaic Model. It creates a space for more fluid boundaries enabling additional pieces to be added without disruption to the overall pattern determined by the regulatory outer layer. Participants described the importance of a lateral thinking culture, a willingness by managers and workplaces to look past personal/previous experience and co-design a bespoke solution with women. The approach discussed in this study is consistent with Yeo's (2002) learning loop. A small number of working mothers experienced workplaces where managers displayed lateral thinking and successfully constructed new mosaic patterns. These women were positive and energised about their return, exposed to different or challenging projects, and experienced a higher-level opportunity or promotions.

6.5.2. Adjusting and balancing the mosaic Identity

6.5.2.1. Separating worlds, defining boundaries

Working mothers in the study saw a clear distinction between their professional identity (worker) and their personal identity (mother). They spoke as though sharing the experience of their day with their partner was almost an extension of their professional self in the home. However, they were very clear to separate their professional self from their personal identity

as a mother. Defining moments or acts were used to separate and distance the identities, where the professional identity was “turned off” and motherhood identity “turned on”. For working mothers, it was about managing headspace or compartmentalising what they were dealing with to mindfully give themselves a space to fully engage with the environment they were in, to enable them to be fully present as a worker and fully present as a mother.

Literature focuses on tensions that result from the spillover of work and home (Chung 2018; Evans et al. 2014; Garcia 2007; Nowak, Naudé and Thomas 2013; Stevens 2013; Symmetra 2014; Teasdale 2013) and the adaptive strategies women use to manage the tension (Ezzedeen and Ritchey 2009). There is little to no focus on the compartmentalisation that these working mothers adopted to separate and shift between what they saw as their distinct identities. These conscious decisions on when and how working mothers bring which identity into focus is significant, because it shows the malleable nature of identities and that the pieces that form their mosaic patterns move in and out of focus as required.

Much of the literature focuses on the tension between worker and mother identities. However, the importance of acknowledging the multiple identities working mothers have to their employer, to their family, to others and to themselves was highlighted by the women in this study. Revealing multiple identities often occurred at a time when working mothers were experiencing the most tension or felt it important to challenge social constructs. Influences on the construction of the working mother’s professional identity were varied, ranging from the experience of overt judgement or bias, to acknowledgement of over-compensation. As a result, working mothers consciously constructed their professional identity to purposefully distance or separate the mother identity from their professional image. They did this by dressing professionally, speaking with authority and confidence, removing maternal anchors, and arranging for alternative paid care when children were sick. No matter how purposeful the construction of the professional identity, there were moments where mother identity seeped into the professional and

emphasised the working mother identity. While they didn't deny it, they did feel this impacted and undermined their professional standing in a way that their male colleagues did not experience, and this added to the tension they at times, experienced.

6.5.2.2. **Identity struggles, sacrifice and trade-off**

The working mothers struggled with reconciling career and family, expressing a desire for a malleable career, enabling them to parent by choice with accepted trade-off rather than guilt. The struggle women experienced was described as though unending, always there, and explains the dynamic relationship between work and home environments. It also highlights guilt as a big factor in decision-making. To manage the guilt imposed by not being able to meet organisational ideal employee model expectations, some women felt forced to accept a pause in career advancement. The trade-off illustrates how some women manage the struggle of trying to fit in extra pieces. The women in this study began to clearly define roles by creating separation between work and home as a strategy to fit in all the pieces of their mosaic.

Solid support mechanisms reduce the cost of the emotional tug between motherhood and management. Women indicated the value there was in knowing there is an acceptable substitute to themselves to enable them to achieve the dual capacity of career and parenting. Knowing they had solid reliable supports — such as househusbands or partners, trusted family, and flexible drop-off/pick-up from care in place — enabled them to actively fulfil the working mother identity and be fully present at work. Despite supports that were in place, some women and managers spoke of sacrifices that still needed to be made. Guillaume and Pochic's (2009) empirical study of a French utility company showed that women's sacrifice continues to be an expectation to achieve career progression, although the tradition of spousal sacrifice was shifting with the rise of dual-career families. While this may be true, the findings show that sacrifice is transferred to others for the working mother identity to exist and prosper. Therefore, a rise in more dual-career

families is not wholly a departure from tradition and in part is the result of sacrifice transference. The transference of care to others was not without emotional burden and a daily reminder of their conflicting identities.

The working mother identity juggles the demands of motherhood and management. This is where women seek to build a balanced picture that works for them, characterised here within the Mosaic Model. Women seek to create focus on each identity or part to create the working mother identity that recognises both their managerial and motherhood roles. The ideas discussed here present the difficulty of fulfilling a single identity when they were living the reality of more than one identity.

6.5.2.3. **The pressure to be perfect**

As highlighted in this research, there is an impossible paradox for women in achieving the expected norms of both ideal worker and ideal mother, each is at odds with the other. Lott and Klenner (2016) focus on work time as the biggest “expected” sacrifice women must make to comply with mothering norms. Complying with mothering norms requires women adopt mosaic patterns that knowingly violate the standards of work ethic expected for some industries and professions (Lott and Klenner 2016). Meeussen and Van Laar (2018) referred to pressure to conform to norms, particularly for women in professional roles, as attracting a greater degree of social pressure to be the perfect mother and sacrifice career.

Women participants expressed an implicit pressure to minimise time away from children and household duties, and thus accept a reduced exposure to developing human and social capital. Meeussen and Van Laar (2018) argue that societies’ focus on being the “perfect mother” could be associated with parental burnout and directly affect career ambitions, particularly for those with higher aspirations. Women in this study regulated their identity in response to the pressures to be the perfect mother. The women participants responded to the pressure by not participating in out-of-hours workshops or events that could build their skills and networks. Working mothers tried to

maximise and maintain a visible presence in the workplace, also foregoing time off to attend workshops or other career enhancing activities occurring during normal working hours. Reduced human and social capital may eliminate tensions in the private world, however it impacts professionally on women's career ambition and trajectory.

The working mothers in this study experienced diminished access to opportunities to increase or maintain their skills either through lack of opportunities provided by organisations or by choosing not to access such opportunities because of the need to be visible either at work or at home. The results demonstrate a mosaic pattern that changes when organisational pieces remain rigid, making their role more difficult. In the current way the Mosaic Model is constructed, women are basically being asked to construct a pattern with no corresponding pressure on the organisation to change its pattern. They experienced the burden of being on display, pressure to perform, to be on top of projects and available for staff — and at risk of failing — because of a mosaic pattern that was unable to be easily integrated into the operating environment.

6.6. Chapter summary

This study has shown that current work structures have not progressed as much as expected and still propagate a male model of participation, assuming the social conditions of a male breadwinner model (Kaźmierczak and Karasiewicz 2019). This is evident in the positioning of motherhood within the ideal worker identity. The mosaic shows the modern workplace still reflects the ideal worker and has not evolved to consider more contemporary thinking to reflect women's range of identities. Instead, it highlights that identities outside of the norm attract attention and consequence.

The origins of the ideal worker have morphed into the present-day worker with an expectation on maximising work productivity; something that can only

be achieved when there is ultimate devotion to work and little inconvenience to others in the workplace. This requires the maintenance of a clear gendered delineation between home and work. A focus on outcomes rather than time in the workplace would profit both the employing organisation and the working mother.

The ideal worker expectation of a person who is full time, with a working life that is without a break in service (Williams and Cooper 2004), remains firmly entrenched. It presents a significant challenge to women, particularly when motherhood is an organisational expectation regardless of whether or not it is a reality. These norms are deeply rooted in the system and organisation and regulatory layers of the mosaic, where positions are expected to be full time and operate within traditional or, for managers extended, business hours. As such the ideal worker, as framed in literature, is shown to be pre-evolution of stage 1, outside of the mosaic construction with motherhood as a pre-loaded reality. This shows that for women motherhood is “always there”, regardless of whether they have children or not, and this impacts on their career maintenance and trajectory.

The Mosaic Model framework can shift employee engagement practices toward co-creation of solutions and improve gendered workplace culture in the public sector. Co-created solutions between working mothers and HR/line managers (organisations) are highly individualised, outcomes-based and bespoke. By utilising the Mosaic Model to implement co-created solutions, a positive dynamic of reciprocity and mutual benefit to both woman and manager is established. This shift will enhance the genuine intent of gender equity outcomes within policy frameworks.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1. Introduction

This study was a personal and professional journey to find out how women navigate maternity transitions in management in the Western Australian public sector.

Outlined in Chapter 1, the research question “How do women navigate maternity transitions in management?” had five key objectives to assist in understanding and identifying factors influencing women’s maternity transitions. These objectives were:

To understand:

- 1) the transition experience for women managers who become mothers
- 2) how women define themselves professionally during workforce transitions
- 3) what organisations (human resources managers and/or line managers) do during maternity workforce transitions
- 4) how women, who are mothers, manage their professional identity during transition and achieve career goals or aspirations in management

And to identify:

- 5) the enablers and/or barriers impacting on transition and career progression for working mothers.

Chapter 2 presented an overview of women and work in Australia with a focus on Western Australia. To help set the context for this research, an overview was provided of the historical progression towards the current environment for women’s rights, women’s economic value, pregnancy discrimination, and the challenges of motherhood and managerial careers.

Chapter 3 examined key literature relevant to the research question and objectives. It focused on gendered workplaces, policy design, how managerial jobs are defined, professional identity and career behaviours, careers and motherhood, and career models. Gaps in the existing body of knowledge were identified for maternity transition experiences, transition identities, and mothers as managers.

Chapter 4 explained how the inquiry was undertaken by detailing the research question and nature of the research paradigm, theoretical perspectives, design, analysis, and rigour. Coming to know or understanding meaning was informed through a constructivist ontology based in interpretivist epistemology. Central to understanding meaning was the phenomenological theoretical approach based on lived experience.

Chapter 5 presented the voices of participants, 17 women who had experienced a maternity transition and 4 HR/line managers who had organisational responsibilities for transition management. These participants provided an understanding of women's transition experiences and the organisational influences during the transition. Collectively, these voices presented how women managed their professional identity, their career and the factors influencing their maternity transition experiences. The findings followed the story of a maternity transition pre-planning and planning, pregnancy at work, maternity leave and navigating a return. It concluded by presenting how women managers have managed their careers as mothers and managers and what this entails.

The findings detailed in Chapter 5 led to the discussion in Chapter 6 regarding the implications of the women's stories and identified structural shifts that are needed for change. The discussion was an interplay of where literature intersected with the findings and where new understanding of this transition experience were identified. The Mosaic Model was developed, presenting a new model for understanding maternity transitions and career maintenance. The focus on the regulatory system (outer layer), the

organisation (middle layer) and individual (inner layer) highlighted the challenges of fit for the individual following a transition if structural changes are not made.

This final chapter of the thesis, in line with the focus of the applied nature of this research, details the thesis contributions to knowledge of the transition process, and the policy and practice implications for key stakeholders. The contributions are summarised according to the research objectives and follow the Mosaic Model structure of the regulatory system (outer layer), the sector organisations (middle layer) and the individuals (inner layer). The limitations of this research are identified, as are the opportunities for future research. The chapter concludes with my personal reflection, living my own thesis.

7.2. The social reality: contributions to knowledge and practice

Referring to Woensdregt's illustration of John Godfrey Saxe's fable, *The six blind men and the elephant* (Woensdregt 2007), the social truth (Kitchlew, Shahzad and Bajwa 2015) voiced by the 21 participants has shaped the social reality of maternity transitions in the Western Australian public sector.

This research set out to understand women's experiences, with the aim of identifying proactive strategies that would support career progression for women managers who are also mothers. The Mosaic Model is the key contribution of this research. Each story provided evidence that, in the face of a standard mosaic pattern, which the middle layer in particular desired to keep, the women needed to change their mosaic pattern so that it might better accommodate their individual needs. If managers have an understanding of the changes in patterns that occur within an overall system, one that recognises that the pieces can be put together differently, this can lead to a change in mindset regarding how maternity transitions can be managed. This could then be seen as having a mosaic mindset, because managers can see the pieces and the whole and the different patterns that can result. A mosaic mindset recognises the diversity in the patterns,

responding to the unique individual worker circumstances, and understands that different pieces can be fitted into a pattern that is still in the interests and requirements of the overall pattern of the mosaic.

7.2.1. Findings

The key findings as detailed in Chapter 5 and discussed in Chapter 6 are summarised below, according to the objectives of the study.

7.2.1.1. Transition experience – women to mothers to managers (Objective 1)

At the individual level (inner layer), women demonstrate a complex and dynamic process of moving the pieces with each transition to create new mosaics that reflect their shifts in identity. These pieces change shape as new demands emerge. They visualise each single piece, its relationship with/to the surrounding pieces, picturing the wholeness and fragmentation at once. They often find themselves trying to make the differently shaped pieces, arising because of their transitions, fit into a rigid framework. There can be a level of flexibility that is real so that newly shaped pieces can be accommodated by a softening of the rigid framework. However, for some, flexibility is an illusion and they are left trying to fit into old patterns that no longer work effectively for them.

Some managers use power to maintain the rigid boundary thus privileging the ideal worker, creating challenges for the working mothers who cannot fit this model. There is an imbalance of power between the individual level (inner layer) and organisational level (middle layer), with some managers using this power to leverage policy discussions. Women spoke of the disempowerment they experienced in having conversations in the workplace and maintaining their career goals and aspirations in management.

Despite the challenges faced, the women remained committed to their careers. Driven by women, a mosaic pattern was used to map out their

career around family. This included career positioning prior to pregnancy, family planning, utilising human and social capital supports in and around their transition, and managing their professional identities to ensure a continued career in the public sector.

7.2.1.2. Professional identity and career through transition (Objectives 2 and 4)

Human and social capital are critical to maintaining professional value to nourish and sustain career through a transition. However, maintaining their professional value can be challenging for women when absent from the workplace for an extended period of maternity leave. What was demonstrated was that for many women developing and maintaining their human and social capital was undertaken at an individual level and not supported by the organisational level.

The findings make it clear the work women managers undertake to carefully arrange, position and present their transition identities. Regardless of the care taken, stereotypes regarding motherhood, working mothers, and managers can result in a professional identity that is not necessarily of the women's choosing.

The stories of the participants show that the ideal worker model remains strongly entrenched, and does not mirror the rate of change with new career models and employment patterns of women. The Mosaic Model is used to illustrate that when the ideal worker model is entrenched, the mosaic constructed has rigid boundaries which cannot accommodate new or different shaped mosaic pieces. Unless changes are made at the organisational level, the challenge for working mothers to maintain their career trajectory will remain individualised.

7.2.1.3. Managers' role in transition (Objective 3)

At the organisational level (middle layer), managers and workplaces for the most part enact equality by treating everyone the same. As a result, this

one-size-fits-all approach provides little leeway in crafting a range of options to address changing individual needs.

In contrast to this, a mosaic mindset from managers would recognise the changes that occur at the individual level, and how these can be more effectively managed by understanding the single pieces that are the patterns of individuals' lives, and that these change during transition, and thus change their relationship within and to the surrounding pieces. Thus, a picture of wholeness and the changing pattern of individual fragments can be held simultaneously.

The highly structured/bound policy environment was preventing managers the freedom to enact policy and re-vision work and roles. The policy environment was being used to legitimise ideal worker standards and unfavourable actions or treatment of working mothers through “situational flexibility” (a new term discussed in Chapter 6), redundancy, and social capital. What this confirms is that managers make decisions about women long before motherhood, casting a lifetime motherhood shadow. Impending motherhood and subsequent return to work often changed how women were seen in relation to their ongoing career trajectory or future work commitments.

Findings show that the minimum standards were applied, and whilst practical application of procedural parameters attracts some flexibility, it is still quite rigid. Unless organisations are able to shift mindsets to recognise the way different pieces fit together in the interest of an overall pattern, part-time women managers, and working mothers more generally, will continue to be considered less valuable to the organisation.

7.2.1.4. Factors influencing transition for working mothers (Objective 5)

Factors enabling transitions show women need working patterns that reflect flexibilisation and organisations need training to explore and support

workforce transitions. Rubery (2015, 634) describes flexibilisation as “how we work, under what forms of employment contract, for how many hours, at what times of day and with what degrees of employment security.” For women, this might look like breaking up their pattern of where and when they work around their children, such as at a café while their child is at playgroup; or around their child’s sleeping patterns early in the morning and late in the evening. Another option that could change the lived transition experience is maternity coaching, where both women and managers are supported to explore expectations and design or re-engineer fit-for-purpose roles.

The Mosaic Model demonstrates that as a result of becoming a working mother, women end up with more pieces that don’t fit neatly into the structured environment established by the system. Findings show the system layer is rigid and slow to change, forming the boundaries of the mosaic and the shape of some of the constituent mosaic pieces. This reflects the challenge for women whose individual patterns are complex and changing in comparison to stable unchanging organisational patterns within the broader system boundaries.

In the highly structured system where employment conditions are based on minimum standards, the challenge is to design policy environments that reflect contemporary practices toward flexibilisation that support women’s careers in management. In the mosaic, the system acts as rigid outer boundary constraining changes in shape and fit for the inner two layers. Findings show there is more opportunity at the organisational level to achieve flexibility with a mosaic mindset.

The system offers support through, for example, paid maternity leave for women. However, at a practical level the costs and options of backfilling positions is borne at the organisational level. Thus, it has the potential to continue to position women as mothers and managers in a welfare domain as a cost, and potentially an inconvenience, to the organisation. This will remain a challenge and contribute to the continuation of highly individualised mosaic patterning by women over organisations contributing to reintegrate

working mothers in management. This produces a gendered policy delivery pattern which has the potential to continue to position women as the problem that needs to fit into existing frameworks.

The research showed the difference between having equality and equity, and how this influences outcomes that are less favourable for women. The regulatory system provides a good backdrop to reconsider organisational practice of equality and move to an equity approach to more effectively support women reconcile home and work responsibilities around pregnancy. The study exposed a weakness in the management practice of good policy implementation. Specific and targeted use of legislative and policy parameters could pioneer the way for change, if managers are empowered or encouraged to utilise outside-the-box thinking when developing individualised solutions. The challenge will be enacting organisational change to support genuine equity to enable women to have access to the same opportunity and same outcome in management as men (United Nations 2014), and monitoring the implementation of support strategies to address managerial objectivity and freedom.

Therefore, a mosaic mindset is needed at the system level to enable equity frameworks that organisations can use effectively to manage transitions.

7.2.2. Contributions

While there is a significant body of knowledge more broadly on the barriers to women in management (discussed in chapters 2 and 3), this study is original in that it specifically focuses on workforce transitions in the Western Australian public sector. This study addresses the gap in knowledge around the transition experience, transition identity and mothers as managers by providing a model to explain “how women manage maternity transitions in management”.

The Mosaic Model provides visualisation of the process women go through at the individual level as they incorporate new identity pieces and seek to fit

them into existing structures. The Model is used to explain the complexity of workforce transitions, and the process of constructing and reconstructing the mosaic pattern as identities shift and change. This also demonstrates the value of having a mosaic mindset, to visualise the “pieces” and the “whole” and the different patterns that can result from different worker styles, and to identify where shifts in existing structures can be made.

These are summarised below in relation to the contribution to knowledge in two main areas: women in management, and organisational practice.

7.2.2.1. **Mosaic Model and mosaic thinking**

The Mosaic Model contributes to theory by conceptually displaying the practicality the mosaic mindset. The mosaic mindset can be defined as the process used by women as they make adjustment and changes to their identity by finding new patterns and arrangements that will enable them to maintain their managerial career after motherhood. This research adds to Ibarra and Petriglieri’s (2010, 2016) identity work providing a conceptual model to explain how these women have sought to test a range of possible selves as they transition from manager to working mother as manager.

The Mosaic Model reflects the mindset used to rearrange the mosaic pieces at each stage of the motherhood transition to ‘fit’ – before, during and after. The mosaic mindset is the ‘thinking’ behind the action itself. The mosaic mindset can be seen as an abstract non-linear thinking process (Sharp 2007), that focusses on triangular patterning by finding “regularities, symmetries, and connections in complex organisational issues” (Keidel 1997, 213). Simply, this style of thinking process addresses the paradox dilemma holistically by developing patterns for alternative scenarios (Keidel 1997). The mosaic mindset used by women and by some managers in organisations is constantly adjusting identity, purpose and means to ‘fit’ in a way that is reciprocal or mutually influential.

The organisations and regulatory environment do not interact at a holistic level with a mosaic mindset. The approach for organisations is point to point or linear thinking (Keidel 1997) and tends to minimise the organisational reality experienced by women. Organisations want decisions to be clear, and unambiguous, so things 'fit' neatly and there is no need for a changing pattern.

This research supports the cultural prescriptions described by Ibarra and Petriglieri's (2010, 2016) making it impossible for women to 'fit' authentically into the organisational structures. It shows that organisational thinking is not geared to a mosaic mindset and continues to project norms with the expectation that women do the thinking required to 'fit'.

7.2.2.2. **Women in management**

This research adds to the body of work by providing perspectives on the experiences of women who are in management roles when they go through a maternity transition. The Mosaic Model provides a basis for visualising how women seek to move their "mosaic" pieces within organisational constraints. They exhibit fluidity and adaptability to manage both motherhood and management. Focusing on women's experiences before, during and after the transition highlights its complex and dynamic nature in relation to their identity and career.

The study highlights the primacy within the workplace of an ideal worker identity, with motherhood sitting outside this. This is highlighted by how early women consider and plan for identity management because of the importance they see placed on being an ideal worker and what becoming a mother may mean for their career. Conceptually, the maternity transition is cyclic — women are in managerial roles, they have a child and then return to their managerial role. However, the identity transition resulting from the experience is linear — women move from the ideal worker, to the ideal mother, to the working mother. Unlike the cyclic structure of the maternity transition, which can be experienced multiple times, the linear structure of

identity transition is a one-way process with no return to the ideal worker identity. Once the working-mother-manager identity has been reached, women are constantly trying to achieve a balance combining the three roles. Findings show that the working-mother-manager experience is a constant adjustment of the mosaic pattern where one identity can be stronger and more prominent than another in the workplace at any time.

The study revealed the significance for women of managing their professional identity and staying connected to the ideal worker identity for as long as possible. This adds to Hennekam's (2016) research that marked the key point in identity transition as being the integration of the maternal (mother) identity into their professional identity. This research, however, emphasised the difficulty integrating the mother identity into professional identity, as the working-mother-manager is seen outside the norm and difficult to fit into existing patterns. The Mosaic Model provides a visualisation for the process women go through at the individual level as they incorporate new identity pieces and seek to fit them into existing structures. This can be challenging and isolating at the individual level. At the organisational level, it can result in career derailment or curtailment because of inflexible structures or stereotypical attitudes toward working mothers which result in a devaluing of their professional identity. This research suggests therefore, that a mosaic mindset is necessary at the individual, organisational and structural levels to enable systems and structures to change in ways that will more readily accommodate women managers who are mothers.

The importance of human and social capital, and role models or mentors to maternity transitions for women to maintain their careers in management confirms previous research by Nowak, Naudé, and Thomas (2012) and Nowak, Naudé, and Thomas (2013). Women with career goals or aspirations for management were highly invested in managing professional capital. Professional capital is a collective term, identified by this research, to describe how women draw on a variety of tools available to them, associated with physical, human and social capital to manage their professional status

or standing to achieve continued career success. It captures how a mosaic mindset can help adapt, change or construct new professional identities with an organisational setting to achieve career goals and aspirations in management. Nourishing one's professional capital may create the potential for the mosaic to continue to evolve and respond to needs through a process of working out the right fit of the pieces in an evolving picture. For some, the pattern needed cannot be made to fit within the rigid organisational constraints. Thus, trying to get the right fit involves a constant readjustment and realignment of the pieces to make a whole that is recognisable and acceptable to the organisation. This becomes a shared activity when there is an organisational mosaic mindset that can move to individualised arrangements with supportive managers.

The complex dynamics of a mosaic which facilitated the maternity transitions of women would provide mechanisms for the mosaic pieces to be moved and mixed. It allows for women's identities and careers in concert with the organisation that can lead to structural shifts that will allow different patterns to emerge.

7.2.2.3. **Organisational practice**

This study reveals organisational practice relating to women's maternity transitions in management contributes to the women's poor representation in senior levels of the public sector.

The research supports the work of O'Hagan (2014) regarding the norms governing pathways to/in management, and O'Neil, Hopkins, and Bilimoria (2008) that motherhood and management are two distinct worlds and even with flexible practices are unlikely to overlap. The divide between the two worlds continues to be defined in organisational practices which prevent women from achieving their career goals or management aspirations as working mothers.

The research highlights a clear separation between the world of the ideal worker and the working mother. Management practice in the public sector was affirmed as reflecting traditional worker norms. The research shows that the ideal worker model remains strongly entrenched and does not mirror the rate of change with new career models and employment patterns desired by women. The norms in effect cover the administrative arrangements under which managers work, such as service delivery and budget, where some opt for short-term convenience to achieve outcomes rather than longer term calculations of the needs for policy implementation in the area of gender equity and flexible work. Thus, the success of other worker models within the organisational construct, such as the working mother in management, are often overlooked as viable potential new norms.

This has relevance to women's diminished professional value, as they cease to be seen as an ideal worker and visible professionally to the organisation. The severing of this identity is viewed with finality by the organisation and is an influential transition point to women's careers in management. The organisational construct adds to previous work in the public sector by Nowak, Naudé and Thomas (2012) that shows that the way work is organised, socio-cultural attitudes and practices prevent working mothers who happen to be in part-time management roles from accessing training, development and senior roles (Nowak, Naudé and Thomas 2012). This continues to have an impact on women's careers in management, preventing any significant organisational gain from work-life balance strategies.

7.2.3. Implications

The findings of this study have significant implications for the key stakeholders experiencing and managing maternity transitions in the public sector.

The mosaic mindset enables visualisation of the "pieces" and the "whole" and the different patterns that can result from different worker styles in existing structures. This has been developed with an understanding of what, why

and how (Del Corso and Rehfuss 2011) individuals manage their work-self throughout their career. As women's careers in particular are reflecting more modern, non-linear career models driven by women, organisations need to stay alert and maintain a contemporary outlook to nourish and retain a strong workforce.

7.2.3.1. **Women**

Women demonstrated an appreciation of the traditional mosaic pattern, which is the worker norm in the workplace, and the difficulty of fitting new pieces into their working mother identity within that pattern. This demonstrates women are questioning the seemingly fixed nature of the mosaic pattern and are able to envisage the need for, even the possibility, that the pattern is not immutable and that other patterns can be enabled which fit the changed pieces the new mother wishes to incorporate into her manager identity. The mosaic mindset is then a pattern-building mindset or pattern-modifying mindset in terms of the value in constructing the working mother identity to build flexibility into the mosaic pattern.

Women require a fluidity to be built in their maternity transition. This can be achieved with organisational awareness of the transition identities, phases and patterns required to achieve a balance between home and work that works for women and the workplace. A mosaic mindset provides women with a tool to visualise, deconstruct and re-construct their individual experience. Their maternity transition in management is a highly complex and dynamic process that requires the pieces to move in, out and around simultaneously. An implication for women is the need to understand the relational factors associated with organisational practice that influence the transition experience.

Given how early the motherhood shadow begins, the research suggests that there is value for women being proactive through seeking to manage and accelerate their career early through, for example, coaching support or to be seeking and establishing valuable support networks that will nourish their

career through a transition. Mechanisms, such as maternity coaching, can help women to explore and create new mosaics by identifying the pieces, their relationship with/to the surrounding pieces, and the wholeness and fragmentation of the maternity transition. Emerging research emphasises the importance of the maternity coach to both the mother and the manager (Chubb 2008; Bussell 2008; Filsinger 2012; Parke 2012; Vitzthum 2017).

Achieving career goals and aspirations in management has been identified as a three-step career pattern of self, other and both (O'Neil and Bilimoria 2005) that takes careful arrangement and positioning of the mosaic with an acute awareness of the influential organisational pieces. Knowing and understanding the organisational norms governing pathways in management and emphasis on the ideal worker for the workplace was key to the transition. Insight into how women were navigating organisational norms governing pathways into management and what managers were doing to support this suggests that some norms are shifting. Knowing the factors influencing where organisational change is occurring (or not occurring), why and what was required for greater impact identifies how the transition experience can be improved for women. The research found organisational norms operated counterintuitively to the mosaic and were a great source of grief to some women. Having an awareness of this may prevent some hardship or provide a point for reflection to decide if this organisation is the right match to achieve the desired career goals and aspirations in management. Similarly, an awareness in early career before transition may ensure values alignment between the organisation and individual to support their careers.

Proactive strategies and a mosaic mindset will assist women to initiate discussions with the workplace and negotiate more effective policy outcomes to manage maternity transitions and the longer term balance of home and work whilst maintaining their managerial career trajectory.

7.2.3.2. **Managers and workplaces**

This study highlights the importance of the role of the manager and the workplace to women's transition experiences. Therefore, organisations are also encouraged to focus on developing a mosaic mindset to foster change.

Organisations need to implement adaptive learning loops in the policy environment to assist in identifying and addressing organisational/cultural biases that are legitimising unfavourable workforce segmentation. An adaptive learning loop focuses on developing, liberating and empowering managers with the freedom to enact policy, thus re-visioning work.

In doing so, the primary focus is directed to improving culture and promoting equity with the support of the policy, rather than leading by policy. Equity is needed for women rather than continued views around equality that focus on the need for everyone to be treated equally. Positioning policy as a support agent, changes the balance of power between managers and their employees, creating a space to genuinely explore mosaic solutions. The individual, manager and organisation each play a role in the learning loop (Yeo 2002) and design new organisational models for success.

This will require "de-regulating" the policy environment to lift the gendered lens off management by challenging traditional organisational and work models, to invite contemporary practices and individualised ways of working. It opens the opportunity for co-creation of solutions that can have mutual benefit.

Planning for women's future in the organisation recognises women's careers are non-linear and may be subject to career breaks. This requires organisations to invest in women's human, social and professional capital to nourish and sustain careers. Considering women's careers with a mosaic mindset, requires organisations to think about the pieces that make their pattern and their relationship to the other pieces and the whole. Only then will women's careers not be negatively impacted by a motherhood shadow.

Supported by the learning loops that explore and invite contemporary practices for individualised ways of work, women's roles following a maternity transition will be improved. Workplaces will be better equipped to explore and re-vision work for women that incorporates professional development through a maternity transition, fosters safe and inclusive culture, re-engineers roles to individual's capacity (part-time) and stimulates modernised flexibilisation.

Establishing solid mechanisms, such as maternity coaching, as noted above in section 7.2.3.1 can be a key part of improving the journey. Managers are influencers — they can correct and address bias around them — therefore are uniquely positioned to promote change in the maternity transition experience. However, the need for them to be supported in managing maternity transitions has been identified. The open dialogue enacts positive supports for re-entry and retention of talented women (Filsinger 2012; Vitzthum 2017; Parke 2012).

These factors will re-vision a workplace from one-size-fits-all, focused on ideal worker models, to organisational partnering in women's individualised journey.

7.2.4. Limitations and future research

This research was targeted to the public sector in one state in Australia and an advantage is in making the results specific and meaningful to the sector. While the research objectives of the study were achieved, there were some limitations noted in the theoretical perspective and research design previously discussed in Chapter 4. These related to the epistemology, participant recruitment for data collection, and longitudinal data.

Participant recruitment of data collection – There is potential that the sampling that occurred as part of the study created sample bias and did not achieve proportional coverage in the participant groups. In the study there were only 4 “HR/Managers” and 17 “women” discussing the maternity

experience. Of the “HR/Managers” all were women and the male voice was absent from the organisational perspective for a maternity transition. Given the low percentage of women in leadership roles in the public sector, the inverse percentage for men should mean male voices would be easy to come by. Therefore, the absence of men from this participant group is not reflective of the leadership characteristics in the public sector. This could be considered a key point given the managers, to whom women refer and from whom they derived their maternity experience, are men. The limited access to HR/Managers and male voices in the participant group responding to the study means the study may not truly represent the sector population and/or saturation for the organisational maternity transition experience. Further research linked to the voices of senior male leaders, such as executive directors or chief executive officers, would assist in deeper understanding of corporate behaviours and actions. Larger sample sizes of HR/Managers’ actual experiences, rather than those derived through women, would assist in drawing stronger relational conclusions as part of the research. The small sample size may present a challenge in drawing precise conclusions relating to strategic interventions or strategies for change.

Longitudinal data – “Women” participants were invited to contribute to the study based on a criterion of holding a level 7+ role and those who have taken parental leave and have returned to work in the past two years. Given the motherhood shadow cast on women, the five-year limit may mean the maternity transition may be considered incomplete. To understand the broad ranging factors influencing women’s maternity transitions longitudinal data, 10, 15 or 20 years later, could provide further insight into the management career progression that has occurred since the transition. Talking to women who remain in the sector or those who have chosen to leave would add greater insight into maternity transition experiences and the strategies women use to cope professionally in the public sector.

Insider epistemology – A limitation of this research may be linked to the space between, where the researcher forms part of the membership of the researched and has “insider” knowledge and/or experience shared with

participants (Corbin Dwyer and Buckle 2009). Insider knowledge and experience can springboard understanding in the depth and breadth of transition experiences to interpret meaning, it can also be perceived as bias (Corbin Dwyer and Buckle 2009). The “insider” was considered to be an important aspect of this study, as women are known to downplay some of their hardships (Westmarland 2001). Therefore, as an insider the researcher’s deep interest and commitment to accurately interpret and present the results for the broader good is an advantage. It was also relevant to the lived experience set within the phenomenological research design. The insider thread running through the research was the researcher’s intimate knowledge, characteristics, role and experience shared with the researched (Corbin Dwyer and Buckle 2009). The insider thread is known to provided advantageous access to the participants and the sharing of experiences more readily, due to the common threads shared with the researcher (Corbin Dwyer and Buckle 2009). A disciplined approach and acute awareness by the researcher of objectivity via bracketing, reflective mentoring/journaling, transparency, ethics, trust, comparison and collaboration was critical to managing Hall and Stevens (1991) standards of rigour linked with feminist research. From an outsider perspective, this may be perceived as a potential risk to subjectivity in analysis and objectification of the researcher within the research. This degree of researcher personalisation could be considered a key point in access to participants, influence in the researcher’s perspective, conceptualising the group experience more broadly to see what is occurring. There are both benefits and costs to insider/outsider research; neither offer complete sameness or difference to the membership of the research and this needs to be weighed within the research design. For this research it was considered essential to understanding the lived experience of women. However, the impact of insider epistemology may be a limitation that could be addressed in the future. Research being conducted by an “outsider” may also assist in further explaining the experience at an organisational level since HR/line manager participants, who despite a range of recruitment strategies, were not as well represented.

7.3. Reflections, living my thesis

This study began as a quest to understand why mothering was considered a barrier to management. It was born through my professional work, my own life experience at the time being on maternity leave, and my desire to know the path ahead. I wanted to understand why the system within which I worked, the public sector, had such lagging and profound gender inequality at the senior levels. What started out as a search for understanding, became much more, I was living my thesis — as an insider.

The realisation I was living my thesis, as an insider, was an enlightening research and personal moment. In this moment I reached an awareness of where my research, personal and professional worlds converged, and that I had suppressed these two worlds to maintain an objectivity. I became deeply aware that I too was experiencing and identifying with the stories I was privileged to hear. My difference however, was I had developed a deeper understanding of the research paradigm, the context for women in leadership, and could identify elements for what was happening in literature in my experiences. And, I understood why. For that I felt emotional, vulnerable and angry, but mostly I felt inspired and determined that the findings of my study would foster change for future generations of women combining motherhood and management (including for my daughter).

My lived thesis became my purpose, my “reason for being”. I wanted this to create and inspire change, be my legacy and the legacy for the women’s voices who shared their stories. There was a great honour in bringing meaning to their experiences in order to give greater opportunity for more mothers to be working in management.

Often in my management role, I found myself reflecting on what I had heard, and it inspired me to lead differently from the inside. That in itself was both enlightening and sometimes a challenge. I found that to share (at the right time) pieces of my story, my learning, influenced those around me to think about their part in how they influence work environments for mothers in

management and create environments for them to prosper. The slow accomplishments for women in leadership since starting this journey, is a strong reminder of how long change takes.

8. APPENDICES

8.1. Letter of invitation

LETTER OF INVITATION

for women and organisations

Study: Maternity Transitions in Management

I am writing to you as one of the HR practitioner's in the public sector instrumental in recruiting and retaining a skilled workforce.

As a public sector employee I am interested in understanding the factors affecting women's representation in management. As such, I am undertaking my Doctorate in Business Administration part-time. The primary focus of my research is women's maternity transitions in management.

Could you please kindly enquire within your organisation if there are any:

- a) human resources managers and/or line managers who have been involved with women's maternity transitions and would like to participate from an organisational perspective, and/or
- b) women in your organisation who are level 7 and above and have returned to work in the last 2 years following a maternity transition that may be interested in participating from an individual/personal perspective.

Please find attached the *Participant Information Sheet* and *Participant Consent Form*, which can also be forwarded with this e-invitation and will put context to the research.

As part of this research project I would like to stress that any involvement either organisationally or individually will remain confidential. All information obtained and used will be non-identifiable and there will be no correlation between agency and individual.

I thank you for your participation consideration in advance.

Kind Regards,
Cherie Wabeke

8.2. Participant information sheet (women)



GPO Box U1987
Perth Western Australia 6845

Principal Investigator: Associate Professor Therese Jefferson (supervisor)
Email Therese.Jefferson@gsb.curtin.edu.au
Mobile 9266 3724

Co-Investigator: Ms Cherie Wabeke (research student)
Email cherie.wabeke@postgrad.curtin.edu.au
Mobile 0408 250 300

Co-Investigator: Associate Professor Linley Lord (co-supervisor)
Email Linley.Lord@gsb.curtin.edu.au
Mobile 9266 4239

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

for women

Study: Maternity Transitions in Management

Investigators:

- Principal Investigator: Associate Professor Therese Jefferson (supervisor)
- Co-Investigator: Ms Cherie Wabeke (research student)
- Co-Investigator: Associate Professor Linley Lord (co-supervisor)

Background

Western Australia's economic environment, like other global economies, is experiencing significant challenge. A key aspect of this challenge is attracting and retaining skilled and experienced employees to the public sector. This study focuses specifically on women's workforce participation and representation in management for the public sector. Literature identifies many barriers impacting on women's careers in management. Career breaks associated with child rearing is recognised as one of those barriers.

In this study we are interested in learning more about women's experiences in combining motherhood and management. We believe that by exploring the workforce transition (**pregnancy, maternity and workplace**) where women move from being a 'female employee' to a 'working mother' will provide valuable information on what individuals and organisations are doing to retain and increase their representation of women in management.

We are specifically interested in exploring individual and organisational themes of the working pregnancy, the career break while on maternity leave, and the re-engagement back into the workforce at a management level. If you are employed in the public sector as a level 7 (or above) with decision making capacity and have returned to work following maternity leave within the last 2yrs, we are inviting you to participate in semi-structured interviews to be conducted over the next few months.

Aim of the Research Project

This study aims to investigate the factors that shape women's experiences in management. It also aims to identify possible policies to enhance women's career prospects in management following a maternity transition. It is also viewed that this information will directly contribute to addressing the wider workforce literature on women in management. The study aims to add to the existing knowledge base by providing a rounded understanding of the full maternity transition cycle.

The research will form the basis of a thesis for the award of a Doctor of Business Administration at Curtin University. Outcomes from the research will also form the basis of written reports and scholarly publications.

What Does Your Participation Involve?

We would like to hear about your maternity transition experiences and what informed your decisions moving through the workforce during the maternity transition. This will involve you consenting to participate in a digitally recorded, semi-structured, face-to-face interview lasting approximately one hour in duration. In these conversations you will be asked to share 'your story'. Cherie Wabeke will conduct the interviews as part of her doctoral research project. Cherie will ask you a series of questions that target your experience during the workforce transition. The questions will touch on a variety of different issues, such as your working arrangements; management support; and the fit between your personal life circumstances and your job. The questions will cover a variety of different issues including your working arrangements; management support; the fit between your personal life circumstances and your job; your managerial experience in the public sector; your experience of becoming a mother in management (during pregnancy, maternity leave, and return to work); and your personal reflections on what assists a successful maternity transition in management.

There are no compulsory questions in this study, and as a participant you are able to determine which issues you are comfortable discussing. Your involvement in this study is voluntary and will not, in any way affect your employment now or in the future. We would be delighted for you to participate in this study. If you wish to decline involvement we thank you for considering our request and will respect your decision. If at any stage you wish to cease your involvement from participating in this study, you may do so without prejudice or consequence and are not required to provide an explanation.

Confidentiality

If you choose to participate in this study by consenting to an interview, you will be asked at the time if the interview can be digitally recorded for the researcher to transcribe later. Following transcription, you will be provided with a copy of the transcript for verification and given an opportunity to change the transcript to more accurately reflect your views if you feel this is necessary. You will not be identified in the transcription, or any other material that may be published or presented. At no stage will any information be shared with your manager or your organisation, confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

The research will be conducted in strict accordance with Curtin University protocols and ethics guidelines, the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research. As such, all hard copy materials relevant to the interview including audio files, transcripts and field notes will be stored within a locked cabinet in the research supervisor's office at Curtin University. Electronic materials will be password protected and accessible only by the researchers named above. The research materials will be kept for five years following thesis publication and then destroyed.

Possible Benefits

This research looks beyond motherhood as a barrier to management. By exploring the diverse range of experiences of women working as managers in the public sector, the study will assist in identifying and designing contemporary career models that could assist in facilitating sector-wide change. The study aims to move women's workforce participation beyond flexibility as a way of integrating women and address the representation of women in management. This may contribute to social benefits with greater career opportunities for working mothers and increased support mechanisms for the transitional cycle.

Possible Risks

There are no specific risks anticipated with participation in this study. However, if you find that your involvement is distressing in any way, participation can be terminated. At this point you will be encouraged to access support from your organisation's Employment Assistant Program.

Questions

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study please feel free to contact the researcher, Cherie Wabeke. I would be happy to discuss any aspect of the research with you; my contact details are listed above. Alternatively, if you wish to talk to an independent person about any aspect of this study you can contact Curtin University's Human Research Ethics Committee on 9266 2784 or email hrec@curtin.edu.au

Once interview data has been analysed the information will be made available to you in a summary report. Again, you are welcome to contact me at that time should you wish to discuss of this content.

With Thanks

We would like to thank you in advance for your participation in this research project. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

This study has been approved by the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval Number HR 01/2013). The Committee is comprised of members of the public, academics, lawyers, doctors and pastoral carers. If needed, verification of approval can be obtained either by writing to the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee, c/- Office of Research and Development, Curtin University, GPO Box U1987, Perth, 6845 or by telephoning 9266 2784 or by emailing hrec@curtin.edu.au.

8.3. Participant information sheet (HR/Line Managers)



GPO Box U1987
Perth Western Australia 6845

Principal Investigator: Associate Professor Therese Jefferson (supervisor)
Email Therese.Jefferson@gsb.curtin.edu.au
Mobile 9266 3724

Co-Investigator: Ms Cherie Wabeke (research student)
Email cherie.wabeke@postgrad.curtin.edu.au
Mobile 0408 250 300

Co-Investigator: Associate Professor Linley Lord (co-supervisor)
Email Linley.Lord@gsb.curtin.edu.au
Mobile 9266 4239

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

for Human Resource Practitioners/Line Managers

Study: Maternity Transitions in Management

Investigators:

- Principal Investigator: Associate Professor Therese Jefferson (supervisor)
- Co-Investigator: Ms Cherie Wabeke (research student)
- Co-Investigator: Associate Professor Linley Lord (co-supervisor)

Background

Western Australia's economic environment, like other global economies, is experiencing significant challenge. A key aspect of this challenge is attracting and retaining skilled and experienced employees to the public sector. This study focuses specifically on women's workforce participation and representation in management for the public sector. Literature identifies many barriers impacting on women's careers in management. Career breaks associated with child rearing is recognised as one of those barriers.

In this study we are interested in learning more about women's experiences in combining motherhood and management. We believe that by exploring the workforce transition (**pregnancy, maternity and workplace**) where women move from being a 'female employee' to a 'working mother' will provide valuable information on what individuals and organisations are doing to retain and increase their representation of women in management.

We are specifically interested in exploring individual and organisational themes of the working pregnancy, the career break while on maternity leave, and the re-engagement back into the workforce at a management level. If you are employed in the public sector as a human resource manager or line manager and have dealt with maternity transitions, we are inviting you to participate in semi-structured interviews to be conducted over the next few months.

Aim of the Research Project

This study aims to investigate the factors that shape women's experiences in management. It also aims to identify possible policies to enhance women's career prospects in management following a maternity transition. It is also viewed that this information will directly contribute to addressing the wider workforce literature on women in management. The study aims to add to the existing knowledge base by providing a rounded understanding of the full maternity transition cycle.

The research will form the basis of a thesis for the award of a Doctor of Business Administration at Curtin University. Outcomes from the research will also form the basis of written reports and scholarly publications.

What Does Your Participation Involve?

We would like to hear about your experiences as a human resources manager or line manager dealing with maternity transitions and what informed your decisions. This will involve you consenting to participate in a digitally recorded, semi-structured, face-to-face interview lasting approximately one hour in duration. In these conversations you will be asked to share 'your story' from an organisational context. Cherie Wabeke will conduct the interviews as part of her doctoral research project. Cherie will ask you a series of questions that target your experience during the workforce transition. The questions will cover a variety of different issues including working arrangements; management support; the fit between organisation and person; your managerial experience in the public sector; your experience managing a woman/en managers (during pregnancy, maternity leave, and return to work); and your personal reflections on what assists a successful maternity transition in management.

There are no compulsory questions in this study, and as a participant you are able to determine which issues you are comfortable discussing. Your involvement in this study is voluntary and will not, in any way affect your employment now or in the future. We would be delighted for you to participate in this study. If you wish to decline involvement we thank you for considering our request and will respect your decision. If at any stage you wish to cease your involvement from participating in this study, you may do so without prejudice or consequence and are not required to provide an explanation.

Confidentiality

If you choose to participate in this study by consenting to an interview, you will be asked at the time if the interview can be digitally recorded for the researcher to transcribe later. Following transcription, you will be provided with a copy of the transcript for verification and given an opportunity to change the transcript to more accurately reflect your views if you feel this is necessary. You will not be identified in the transcription, or any other material that may be published or presented. At no stage will any information be shared with your manager or your organisation, confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

The research will be conducted in strict accordance with Curtin University protocols and ethics guidelines, the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research. As such, all hard copy materials relevant to the interview including audio files, transcripts and field notes will be stored within a locked cabinet in the research supervisor's office at Curtin University. Electronic materials will be password protected and accessible only by the researchers named above. The research materials will be kept for five years following thesis publication and then destroyed.

Possible Benefits

This research looks beyond motherhood as a barrier to management. By exploring the diverse range of experiences of women working as managers in the public sector, the study will assist in identifying and designing contemporary career models that could assist in facilitating sector-wide change. The study aims to move women's workforce participation beyond flexibility as a way of integrating women and address the representation of women in management. This may contribute to social benefits with greater career opportunities for working mothers and increased support mechanisms for the transitional cycle.

Possible Risks

There are no specific risks anticipated with participation in this study. However, if you find that your involvement is distressing in any way, participation can be terminated. At this point you will be encouraged to access support from your organisation's Employment Assistant Program.

Questions

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study please feel free to contact the researcher, Cherie Wabeke. I would be happy to discuss any aspect of the research with you; my contact details are listed above. Alternatively, if you wish to talk to an independent person about any aspect of this study you can contact Curtin University's Human Research Ethics Committee on 9266 2784 or email hrec@curtin.edu.au

Once interview data has been analysed the information will be made available to you in a summary report. Again, you are welcome to contact me at that time should you wish to discuss of this content.

With Thanks

We would like to thank you in advance for your participation in this research project. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

This study has been approved by the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval Number HR 01/2013). The Committee is comprised of members of the public, academics, lawyers, doctors and pastoral carers. If needed, verification of approval can be obtained either by writing to the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee, c/- Office of Research and Development, Curtin University, GPO Box U1987, Perth, 6845 or by telephoning 9266 2784 or by emailing hrec@curtin.edu.au.

8.4. Interview questions (women)



GPO Box U1987
Perth Western Australia 6845

Principal Investigator: Associate Professor Therese Jefferson (supervisor)
Email Therese.Jefferson@gsb.curtin.edu.au
Mobile 9266 3724

Co-Investigator: Ms Cherie Wabeke (research student)
Email cherie.wabeke@postgrad.curtin.edu.au
Mobile 0408 250 300

Co-Investigator: Associate Professor Linley Lord (co-supervisor)
Email Linley.Lord@gsb.curtin.edu.au
Mobile 9266 4239

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

For women participants

Study: Maternity Transitions in Management

Part 1: Background (Ice Breakers)

- 1) To start off with, can you tell me about yourself - your career, your family, your background?
- 2) Can you tell me about your current role and what interests you in this role?

Part 2: Management Experience

- 3) How long you have been working in the public sector and what attracted you to the sector?
- 4) How long have you been working in management, ie level 7 or above?

Part 3: Maternity Transition (individual context)

- 5) Can you tell me about your experience of becoming a mother in management, ie during pregnancy, maternity leave and when you returned to work?

Prompts (may come out in other questions)

- What were your thoughts (or approach) to your maternity transition during pregnancy, maternity leave, or on return to work? Did your thinking change in any way and if it did what do you think might have influenced this change?
- What was your experience transitioning from *employee* to *working mother* with co-workers and supervisors? Did relationships change or stay the same?
- What do you think it is that working mothers do during a maternity transition that enhances or hinders their management career?

Part 4: Maternity Transition (organisational context)

- 6) Can you tell me about what support was extended to you by the organisation during pregnancy, maternity leave and when you returned to work?

Prompts (may come out in other questions)

- Tell me about the role the agency took in your workforce transition?
- What do you think it is that organisations do during a workforce transition that enhances or hinders working mothers management career?

Part 5: Personal Reflection

- 7) What do you think makes a maternity transition in management successful or otherwise?
- 8) Can you think of someone that you consider as having a successful maternity transition and what in your mind defines their experience as successful?
- 9) What difference, if any, do you think that motherhood has made to your management career?
- 10) Is there anything else that you would like to tell me?

Prompts (may come out in other questions)

- How has your transition experiences shaped your management experience?
- Knowing what you do now, what would you do differently and what advice would you give to other women approaching a maternity transition?

8.5. Interview Questions (HR/Line Managers)



GPO Box U1987
Perth Western Australia 6845

Principal Investigator: Associate Professor Therese Jefferson (supervisor)
Email Therese.Jefferson@gsb.curtin.edu.au
Mobile 9266 3724

Co-Investigator: Ms Cherie Wabeke (research student)
Email cherie.wabeke@postgrad.curtin.edu.au
Mobile 0408 250 300

Co-Investigator: Associate Professor Linley Lord (co-supervisor)
Email Linley.Lord@gsb.curtin.edu.au
Mobile 9266 4239

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

for Human Resource Practitioners/Line Managers

Study: Maternity Transitions in Management

Part 1: Background (Ice Breakers)

- 1) To start off with, can you tell me about yourself - your career, your family, your background?
- 2) Can you tell me about your current role and what interests you in this role?

Part 2: Management Experience

- 3) How long you have been working in the public sector and what attracted you to the sector?
- 4) How long have you been working in management, ie level 7 or above?

Part 3: Maternity Transition (Human Resources/Line Manager context)

- 5) Can you tell me about your experience dealing with maternity transitions for women becoming a mother in management, ie during pregnancy, maternity leave and when they returned to work?

Prompts (may come out in other questions)

- Can you tell me was your experience dealing with maternity transitions as a manager of women becoming a mother in management or have you taken maternity leave while in management yourself?
- What were your thoughts (or approach) to managing the maternity transition during pregnancy, maternity leave, or on return to work? Did your thinking

change in any way and if it did what do you think might have influenced this change?

- What was your experience managing a maternity transition for a *female employee > working mother* with co-workers and supervisors? Did relationships change or stay the same?
- How did you manage the workplace on re-entry? Do you think the working mother felt she was portrayed as a capable, reliable, and promotable employee?
- What do you think it is that working mothers do during a maternity transition that enhances or hinders their management career?

Part 4: Maternity Transition (organisational context)

- 6) Can you tell me about what support was extended to the working mother by the organisation during pregnancy, maternity leave and when she returned to work?

Prompts (may come out in other questions)

- Tell me about the role the agency took in the workforce transition?
- What do you think it is that organisations do during a workforce transition that enhances or hinders working mothers management career?

Part 5: Personal Reflection

- 7) What do you think makes a maternity transition in management successful or otherwise?
- 8) Can you think of someone that you consider as having a successful maternity transition and what in your mind defines their experience as successful?
- 9) What difference, if any, do you think motherhood makes to women's management career?
- 10) Is there anything else that you would like to tell me?

Prompts (may come out in other questions)

- How has your experience managing maternity transitions shaped your approach?
- Knowing what you do now, what would you do differently and what advice would you give to other human resources managers or line managers who manage women through a maternity transition?

8.6. Consent form

CONSENT FORM

Study: Maternity Transitions in Management

Investigators:

- Cherie Wabeke (Curtin University Student, Doctor of Business Administration program)
- Associate Professor Linley Lord (Curtin University – Supervisor)
- Dr Therese Jefferson (Curtin University – Co Supervisor)

I have read and understand the information sheet provided to me about the study on:

“Maternity Transitions in Management”.

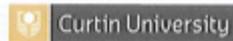
I have been extended the opportunity to ask questions and am satisfied with the answers received.

I am freely agreeing to participate in this study according to the conditions outlined in the participation information sheet and understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time, without prejudice.

I understand that my interview will be digitally recorded and that the researcher will not reveal or disclose any information that may potentially identify me in material that may be published or presented. Information such as my identity and/or personal details pertaining to my employment will remain confidential and only known to the researchers/investigators listed above.

_____ / /
Participant Name (please print) Signature Date

8.7. Non disclosure/confidentiality agreement for Transcription Services



NON DISCLOSURE / CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT Transcription Services

Title: Maternity Transitions in Management

I, **Caroline Hackman**, agree to maintain full confidentiality in regards to any and all audio files and documentation received from Cherie Wabeke related to her doctoral study on *Maternity Transitions in Management*. Furthermore, I agree:

1. To hold in strictest confidence the identification of any individual, organisation or department that may inadvertently be revealed during the transcription of audio-taped interviews, or in any associated documents;
2. To not make copies of any audio tapes or computerised files of the audio files or transcribed texts, unless specifically requested to do so by Cherie Wabeke;
3. To store all audio files, transcripts and all related materials in a safe, secure location as long as they are in my possession;
4. To return all audio tapes, files and transcripts to Cherie Wabeke in a complete and timely manner.
5. To delete all electronic files containing study-related documents from my computer hard drive and any backup devices unless otherwise requested to maintain electronic copies.

I am aware that I can be held legally liable for any breach of this confidentiality agreement, and for any harm incurred by individuals if I disclose identifiable information contained in the audio tapes and/or files to which I will have access.

In receipt for the transcription of the audio files during the 2013/14 period, a one off \$200.00 in kind payment was received.

Transcriber's name (printed) Caroline Hackman

Transcriber's signature C. Hackman

Date 15/6/14

8.8. Interview Questions – Women

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Study: Maternity Transitions in Management

Part 1: Background (Ice Breakers)

- 11) To start off with, can you tell me about yourself - your career, your family, your background?
- 12) Can you tell me about your current role and what interests you in this role?

Part 2: Management Experience

- 13) How long have you been working in the public sector and what attracted you to the sector?
- 14) How long have you been working in management, ie level 7 or above?

Part 3: Maternity Transition (individual context)

- 15) Can you tell me about your experience of becoming a mother in management, ie during pregnancy, maternity leave and when you returned to work?

Prompts (may come out in other questions)

- What were your thoughts (or approach) to your maternity transition during pregnancy, maternity leave, or on return to work? Did your thinking change in any way and if it did what do you think might have influenced this change?
- What was your experience transitioning from *employee>working mother* with co-workers and supervisors? Did relationships change or stay the same?
- How did you reassert yourself in the workplace on re-entry as a capable, reliable, and promotable manager?
- What do you think it is that working mothers do during a maternity transition that embraces or hinders their management career?

Part 4: Maternity Transition (organisational context)

16) Can you tell me about what support was extended to you by the organisation during pregnancy, maternity leave and when you returned to work?

Prompts (may come out in other questions)

- Tell me about the role the agency took in your workforce transition?
- What do you think it is that organisations do during a workforce transition that embraces or hinders working mothers management career?

Part 4: Personal Reflection

17) What do you think makes a maternity transition in management successful or otherwise?

18) Can you think of someone that you consider as having a successful maternity transition and what in your mind defines their experience as successful?

19) What difference, if any, do you think that motherhood has made to your management career?

20) Is there anything else that you would like to tell me?

Prompts (may come out in other questions)

- How has your transition experiences shaped your management experience?
- Knowing what you do now, what would you do differently and what advice would you give to other women approaching a maternity transition?

8.9. Interview Questions – HR/Line Managers

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

for Human Resource Practitioners/Line Managers

Study: Maternity Transitions in Management

Part 1: Background (Ice Breakers)

- 21) To start off with, can you tell me about yourself - your career, your family, your background?
- 22) Can you tell me about your current role and what interests you in this role?

Part 2: Management Experience

- 23) How long you have been working in the public sector and what attracted you to the sector?
- 24) How long have you been working in management, ie level 7 or above?

Part 3: Maternity Transition (Human Resources/Line Manager context)

- 25) Can you tell me about your experience dealing with maternity transitions for women becoming a mother in management, ie during pregnancy, maternity leave and when they returned to work?

Prompts (may come out in other questions)

- What were your thoughts (or approach) to managing the maternity transition during pregnancy, maternity leave, or on return to work? Did your thinking change in any way and if it did what do you think might have influenced this change?
- What was your experience managing a maternity transition for a *female employee > working mother* with co-workers and supervisors? Did relationships change or stay the same?
- How did you manage the workplace on re-entry? Do you think the working mother felt she was portrayed as a capable, reliable, and promotable employee?
- What do you think it is that working mothers do during a maternity transition that embraces or hinders their management career?

Part 4: Maternity Transition (organisational context)

26) Can you tell me about what support was extended to the working mother by the organisation during pregnancy, maternity leave and when you returned to work?

Prompts (may come out in other questions)

- Tell me about the role the agency took in the workforce transition?
- What do you think it is that organisations do during a workforce transition that embraces or hinders working mothers management career?

Part 4: Personal Reflection

27) What do you think makes a maternity transition in management successful or otherwise?

28) Can you think of someone that you consider as having a successful maternity transition and what in your mind defines their experience as successful?

29) What difference, if any, do you think motherhood makes to women's management career?

30) Is there anything else that you would like to tell me?

Prompts (may come out in other questions)

- How has your experience managing maternity transitions shaped your approach?
- Knowing what you do now, what would you do differently and what advice would you give to other human resources managers or line managers who manage women through a maternity transition?

8.10. Pilot phase, developing phenomenological theme category listing (open coding)

	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5
PINK (GOVERNMENT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders of old culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General issue of their own perception about women Only female voice in a room of men 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government benefits sold to me 2nd maternity seen as rorting the system Token gesture returning to work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I'll work for the government while having kids Sector needs to ask itself where does our responsibility begin and end Can see affirmative action required for some organisations Want to take it further but knew I would never work in government again 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making the job less attractive
GREEN (ORGANISATION)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Push back on the organisation in the way we structure our expectation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have been hired under this condition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As an organisation we need to not label all women as being the same Program manage women while on maternity leave What I did lose is my career in terms of my passion Not being proactive about retaining their interest in the work place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level 8 and above really shouldn't get pregnant and have babies Dealing with other people's perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We really need someone full time for this Off for your long weekend

PURPLE (individual)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconcile having a career and a family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very supported in transition into maternity leave • In return I have been very loyal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce more than the average person to justify not being in the office • Guilt and that reflection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations about what it is to be career successful • No one is stopping me from doing that, I'm stopping myself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
BLUE (Individual)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You just learn management styles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible work arrangements (FWA) doesn't mean work will be compromised • You can have flexible work practices for different reasons • The larger the team the more difficult it is to manage FWA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conscious about what the balls are and which one you are letting drop • Is it really an issue or is it that you aren't managing it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
YELLOW (individual)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't tell people you are pregnant until you want to • Expectation you would like to come back to work • Go on maternity leave when you feel you are ready • Be clear that is what you want • Recognise your own individual capacity • Both your career and your parenting are very, very long- term projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

8.11. Main study, extract of phenomenological theme category listing (selective coding)

- ▼ ● THE INDIVIDUAL
 - ▼ ● -a-) pregnancy in the workplace
 - ▼ ● acting as LB towards the end of my pregnancy, which was hard work
 - before I went on maternity leave had been really stressful
 - difficult to travel and do the hours
 - not having to manage people at that time was good
 - wanting to coast in the last few months, that was difficult
 - ▼ ● becoming pregnant people perceive you differently
 - ▼ ● do I tell or not
 - ▼ ● get a feel for if they are going to be supportive
 - extraordinarily accommoating
 - flatly refused to do anything
 - got pregnant and then my world changed
 - ▼ ● got quite stroppy about why I wasn't physically in the office
 - I had a lot of morning sickness
 - very supportive, she would step in and make sure work was done
 - ▼ ● get informed about the simple things
 - ▼ ● I didn't take it further because i was vulnerable
 - to pick up and talk to someone...there would be an investigation
 - ▼ ● My HR team should have take care of that
 - Payroll, I had to seek out from them my options
 - negotiating my salary while I was pregnant and feeling so dishonest
 - ▼ ● it was predominantly a female workforce, everyone was excited
 - don't think there were any surprises given my age and marital status
 - the workforce is all men, they know you are pregnant and that is as much as they k...
 - you have a whole floor of women, I was the first in management to have a child
 - ▼ ● commitment for longer...more difficult to transition pregnant and return to work
 - family is more important than maintaining this job
 - its not a good time to be changing roles
 - ▼ ● issue about having to use personal leave
 - generally always booked (ultra sounds) in the morning
 - scans during working hours
 - ▼ ● nothing changed for me when I was pregnant (work wise)
 - I continued like I was not pregnant
 - we dont want to be responsible for loosing her baby
 - ▼ ● people dont realise how forward planning you are
 - applied to do my masters at the time I was pregnant
 - looked at options for working and offered to trial for 3mths on return
 - making the job less attractive
 - things that make it easier to come back
 - ▼ ● people onto their 2nd pregnancy are far more empathetic (directors)
 - #2 was different because I had #1 at home
 - ▼ ● right up until the last week I felt I was engaged and fully valued
 - I was able to go off on leave...I felt like I had tied up all my loose ends
 - important to me that I wasn't marginalized or put to the side
 - ▼ ● yep, have your baby and come back
 - GM said stop and reconsider pumping out the baby and returning to work
 - ▼ ● told if I had plans to come back I would have to take a lower level position
 - you see it as giving up your career
 - timed when we had our first child

▼ ● THE ORGANISATION AND MANAGER

- ▼ ● -a-) pregnancy in the workplace
 - ▼ ● a very supportive, wonderful environment
 - don't think they gave me any less or expected any less out of me
 - ▼ ● advice in terms of their entitlements
 - before someone goes on mat leave, you have to explain those options
 - being able to give advice to her when no one in her team or her manager knows
 - had a OHS assessment beofre they changed the minimum
 - once my concerns got to the more senior role and needed to take seriously
 - talk about things (informally) from an ergonomic perspective
 - you are not going to take me over to the Commission on this
 - work women up to the day they leave and then they leave

▼ ● THE SYSTEM AND SECTOR

- ▼ ● -a-) pregnancy in the workplace
 - inform yourself of those rights and demand them

9. LIST OF REFERENCES

- Acker, Joan. 1990. "Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations." *Gender and Society* 4 (2): 139–158.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotraca_cademiconefile_A12638708.
- Adams, Eike. 2010. "The Joys and Challenges of Semi-Structured Interviewing." *Community Practitioner* 83 (7): 18–21.
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/577411458?accountid=10382>.
- Adamson, Gary, Joe Pine, Tom Van Steenhoven, and Jodi Kroupa. 2006. "How Storytelling Can Drive Strategic Change." *Strategy & Leadership* 34 (1): 36–41. <https://doi.org/10.1108/10878570610637876>.
- Ahmed, Mastufa. 2019. 2019 Sees Highest Percentage of Women in Senior Management Globally: Report. *People Matters*, 7 March, 2019, 1.
https://www.peoplemattersglobal.com/article/leadership/2019-sees-the-highest-percentage-of-women-in-senior-management-globally-report-21036?media_type=article&subcat=empower-her&title=2019-sees-the-highest-percentage-of-women-in-senior-management-globally-report&id=21036.
- Alvesson, Mats, Cynthia Hardy, and Bill Harley. 2008. "Reflecting on Reflexivity: Reflexive Textual Practices in Organization and Management Theory." *Journal of Management Studies* 45 (3): 480–501. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2007.00765.x>.
- Arthur, Michael B., Svetlana N. Khapova, and Celeste P. M. Wilderom. 2005. "Career Success in a Boundaryless Career World." *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 26 (2): 177–202.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iil99/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_224896489.
- Auster, Carol J. 2018. "Book Review: Mothers at Work: Who Opts Out? By Liana Christin Landivar." *Gender & Society* 32 (5): 743–745.
<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0891243218763060>.
- Australian Human Rights Commission. 1999. *Pregnancy Fact Sheet*. Sydney, Australia: Australian Human Rights Commission.

- Australian Human Rights Commission. 2012. "About Sex Discrimination."
Australian Human Rights Commission. December 14, 2012. Accessed April 5, 2020. <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/sex-discrimination/about-sex-discrimination>.
- Australian Human Rights Commission. 2014a. *Headline Prevalence Data: National Review on Discrimination Related to Pregnancy, Parental Leave and Return to Work*. Sydney, Australia: Australian Human Rights Commission. <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/sex-discrimination/publications/headline-prevalence-data-national-review-discrimination>.
- Australian Human Rights Commission. 2014b. "How to Promote Gender Equality in Laws and Policies in Australia?" In *All China Women's Federation (ACWF) Workshop, Beijing, China, 2014b*: Australia Human Rights Commission. <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/about/news/speeches/how-promote-gender-equality-laws-and-policies-australia>.
- Australian Human Rights Commission. 2014c. *Supporting Working Parents: Pregnancy and Return to Work National Review – Report*. Sydney, Australia: Australian Human Rights Commission. <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/sex-discrimination/publications/supporting-working-parents-pregnancy-and-return-work>.
- Australian Institute of Family Studies. 2013. "A Short History of Australia's Family Leave Policies." Dad and Partner Pay: Implications for policy-makers and practitioners (Web page). Australian Government. Accessed August 11, 2019. <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/dad-and-partner-pay-implications-policy-makers-and-prac/short-history-australias-family>.
- Australian Institute of Family Studies. 2020. "Births in Australia." Australian Government. Accessed July 10, 2020. <https://aifs.gov.au/facts-and-figures/births-in-australia>.
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. 2020. *Australia's Mothers and Babies 2018 – in Brief*. Canberra.

<https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/aa54e74a-bda7-4497-93ce-e0010cb66231/aihw-per-108.pdf.aspx?inline=true>.

- Australian Research Council. 2007. *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*. Australian Government.
http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/r39.pdf.
- Baird, Marian. 2004. "Orientations to Paid Maternity Leave: Understanding the Australian Debate." *Journal of Industrial Relations* 46 (3): 259–274. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0022-1856.2004.00144.x>.
- Barge, J. Kevin. 2004. "Reflexivity and Managerial Practice." *Communication Monographs* 71 (1): 70–96.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03634520410001691465>.
- Bataille, Christine D. 2015. "Exploration, Adaptation and Expression: Women's Identity Work across Career and Family Transitions." *Academy of Management Annual Meeting Proceedings* 2015 (1): 1-1.
<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=116915436&site=ehost-live>.
- Baxter Magolda, Marcia B., and Patricia M. King. 2007. "Interview Strategies for Assessing Self-Authorship: Constructing Conversations to Assess Meaning Making." *Journal of College Student Development* 48 (5): 491–508.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_195177682.
- Bear, Julia B., and Peter Glick. 2017. "Breadwinner Bonus and Caregiver Penalty in Workplace Rewards for Men and Women." *Social Psychological and Personality Science* 8 (7): 780–788.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1177_1948550616683016.
- Becker, Gary S. 1975. *Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, with Special Reference to Education*. 3rd ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/15oatim/CUR_ALMA2183675090001951.

- Belotto, Michael J. 2018. "Data Analysis Methods for Qualitative Research: Managing the Challenges of Coding, Interrater Reliability, and Thematic Analysis." *Qualitative Report* 23 (11): 2622–2633.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/1ogov0m/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_2133763005.
- Benschop, Yvonne, Marieke van den Brink, Hans Doorewaard, and Joke Leenders. 2013. "Discourses of Ambition, Gender and Part-Time Work." *Human Relations* 66 (5): 699–723.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_businessinsightsgauss_A337167577.
- Bierema, Laura L. 2016. "Women's Leadership: Troubling Notions of the 'Ideal' (Male) Leader." *Advances in Developing Human Resources* 18 (2): 119–136.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1177_1523422316641398.
- Biese, Ingrid, and Marta Choroszewicz. 2019. "Opting Out: Professional Women Develop Reflexive Agency." *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal* 38 (6): 619–633.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_2269860931.
- Biggerstaff, Deborah, and Andrew R. Thompson. 2008. "Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA): A Qualitative Methodology of Choice in Healthcare Research." *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 5 (3): 214–224. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14780880802314304>.
- Bilimoria, Diana, Lindsey Godwin, and Deborah Zelechowski. 2007. "Influence and Inclusion: A Framework for Researching Women's Advancement in Organizations." In *Handbook on Women in Business and Management*, Diana Bilimoria and Sandy K. Piderit, eds., 392. Cheltenham, Gloucestershire: Edward Elgar Publishing.
<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/curtin/detail.action?docID=283350>.
- Bland, Andrew M., and Bridget J. Roberts-Pittman. 2013. "Existential and Chaos Theory: 'Calling' for Adaptability and Responsibility in Career

- Decision Making.” *Journal of Career Development* 41 (5): 382–401.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0894845313498303>.
- Briscoe, Jon P., Douglas T. Hall, and Rachel L. Frautschy Demuth. 2006.
 “Protean and Boundaryless Careers: An Empirical Exploration.”
Journal of Vocational Behavior 69 (1): 30–47.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotraca_cademiconefile_A194210076.
- Broderick, Elizabeth. 2010. “Mind the Gap.” *HR Monthly* April: 18–19.
- Bryman, Alan. 2008. “Of Methods and Methodology.” *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management* 3 (2): 159–168.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/17465640810900568>.
- Bryman, Alan, and Catherine Cassell. 2006. “The Researcher Interview: A Reflexive Perspective.” *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management* 1 (1): 41–55.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/17465640610666633>.
- Burke, Ronald J. 2007. “Career Development of Managerial Women: Attracting and Managing Talent.” In *Handbook on Women in Business and Management*, Diana Bilimoria and Sandy K. Piderit, eds. Cheltenham, Gloucestershire: Edward Elgar Publishing.
<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/curtin/detail.action?docID=283350>.
- Burke, Ronald J., and Mary C. Mattis. 2005. *Supporting Women’s Career and Advancement: Challenges and Opportunities*. Northampton, MA Edward Elgar Publishing.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/15oatim/CUR_ALMA2192939170001951.
- Burman, Erica. 1993. “Reviewed Work(s): Motherhood: Meanings, Practices and Ideologies by Ann Phoenix, Anne Woollett and Eva Lloyd.” *Feminist Review* 43 (Spring): 95–97.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/1395075>.
- Bussell, Joy. 2008. “Great Expectations: Can Maternity Coaching Affect the Retention of Professional Women?” *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring* (S2): 14–26.

- https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_doaj_primary_oai_doaj_org_article_9702a1d486f54bf2aaa5d7a8444e41a7.
- Buzzanell, Patrice, and Meina Liu. 2007. "It's 'Give and Take': Maternity Leave as a Conflict Management Process." *Human Relations* 60 (3): 463–495.
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/231447297?accountid=10382>.
- Cabrera, Elizabeth. 2007. "Opting out and Opting In: Understanding the Complexities of Women's Career Transitions." *Career Development International* 12 (3): 218–237.
- Cabrera, Elizabeth F. 2009. "Protean Organizations: Reshaping Work and Careers to Retain Female Talent." *Career development international* 14 (2): 186–201.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_219354589.
- Cahusac, Emma, and Shireen Kanji. 2014. "Giving Up: How Gendered Organizational Cultures Push Mothers Out." *Gender, Work & Organization* 21 (1): 57–70.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotraca_cademiconefile_A351317596.
- Cain Miller, Claire 2014. "The Motherhood Penalty vs. The Fatherhood Bonus." *New York Times*, September 6, 2014.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/07/upshot/a-child-helps-your-career-if-youre-a-man.html>.
- Cannings, Kathleen, and Claude Montmarquette. 1991. "Managerial Momentum: A Simultaneous Model of the Career Progress of Male and Female Managers." *ILR Review* 44 (2): 212–228.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_236389089.
- Cassells, Rebecca , Daniel Kiely, Silvia Salazar, and Richard Seymour. 2019. *2019 Women's Report Card: An Indicator Report of Western Australian Women's Progress*. Western Australia.
<https://www.communities.wa.gov.au/media/2015/womens-report-card-2019.pdf>.

- Cassells, Rebecca, and Alan Duncan. 2018. *Gender Equity Insights 2018: Inside Australia's Gender Pay Gap*. Australia: Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre. https://bcec.edu.au/assets/BCEC-WGEA-Gender-Equity-Insights-2018-Report_WEB.pdf.
- Caulley, Darrel N. 2008. "Making Qualitative Research Reports Less Boring: The Techniques of Writing Creative Nonfiction." *Qualitative Inquiry* 14 (3): 424.
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/221647608?accountid=10382>.
- Chandler, Genevieve E. 1991. "The Workplace: On Good Mothers and Good Managers." *Nursing Management (Springhouse)* 22 (12): 36–37.
<https://doi.org/10.1097/00006247-199112000-00012>.
- Choi, Sungjoo. 2019. "Breaking through the Glass Ceiling: Social Capital Matters for Women's Career Success?" *International Public Management Journal* 22 (2): 295–320.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1080_10967494_2018_1425225.
- Christopher, Karen. 2012. "Extensive Mothering: Employed Mothers' Constructions of the Good Mother." *Gender & Society* 26 (1): 73–96.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotraca_cademiconefile_A311955711.
- Chubb, Laura. 2008. "Law Firm Supports Staff with Maternity Coaching." *People Management* 14 (1): 13–13.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotraca_cademiconefile_A176083902.
- Chung, Heejung. 2018. "'Women's Work Penalty' in Access to Flexible Working Arrangements across Europe." *European Journal of Industrial Relations* 25 (1): 23–40. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959680117752829>.
- Chung, Heejung, and Mariska van der Horst. 2017. "Women's Employment Patterns after Childbirth and the Perceived Access to and Use of Flexitime and Teleworking." *Human Relations* 71 (1): 47–72.
<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0018726717713828>.
- Clarke, Amanda. 2006. "Qualitative Interviewing: Encountering Ethical Issues and Challenges." *Nurse Researcher* 13 (4): 19–29.
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/200780227?accountid=10382>.

- Colaner, Colleen, and Steven Giles. 2008. "The Baby Blanket or the Briefcase: The Impact of Evangelical Gender Role Ideologies on Career and Mothering Aspirations of Female Evangelical College Students." *Sex Roles* 58 (7–8): 526–534.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_225367101.
- Colley, Linda. 2018. "For Better or for Worse: Fifty Years since the Removal of the Marriage Bar in the Australian Public Service." *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 64 (2): 227–240.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotraca_cademiconefile_A556451839.
- Cooper, Rae, and Marian Baird. 2015. "Bringing the 'Right to Request' Flexible Working Arrangements to Life: From Policies to Practices." *Employee Relations* 37 (5): 568–581.
<https://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/abs/10.1108/ER-07-2014-0085>.
- Cooper-Thomas, Helena D., and Rachel L. Morrison. 2018. "Give and Take: Needed Updates to Social Exchange Theory." *Industrial and Organizational Psychology* 11 (3): 493–498.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_2110776379.
- Corbin Dwyer, Sonya C., and Jennifer L. Buckle. 2009. "The Space Between: On Being an Insider-Outsider in Qualitative Research." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 8 (1): 54–63.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1177_1609406918788176.
- Correll, Shelley J. 2017. "SWS 2016 Feminist Lecture: Reducing Gender Biases in Modern Workplaces: A Small Wins Approach to Organizational Change." *Gender & Society* 31 (6): 725–750.
<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0891243217738518>.
- Cote Hampson, Sarah. 2018. "Mothers Do Not Make Good Workers: The Role of Work/Life Balance Policies in Reinforcing Gendered Stereotypes." *Global Discourse: An interdisciplinary journal of current affairs* 8 (3): 510–531.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/23269995.2018.1521129>.

- Cox, Sonja, Christine Thompson, and Cherie Wabeke. 2019. *Women in Leadership in the Western Australian Public Sector*. Perth, Western Australia: Public Sector Commission.
- Crabb, Annabel. 2015. *The Wife Drought*. North Sydney, NSW: Ebury Press. https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/15oatim/CUR_ALMA21119831930001951.
- Crabb, Annabel. 2019. *Quarterly Essay: Men at Work Australia's Parenthood Trap*. Edited by Chris Feik. Vol. 75. Victoria: Morry Schwartz.
- Cropanzano, Russell, and Marie S. Mitchell. 2005. "Social Exchange Theory: An Interdisciplinary Review." *Journal of Management* 31 (6): 874–900. https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotracaademiconefile_A140074984.
- Cullen, Dallas. 1990. "Career Barriers: Do We Need More Research?" *Journal of Business Ethics* 9 (4/5): 353–359. https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_198083078.
- Cullen, Lisa, and Theo Christopher. 2007a. "Perceived Barriers to Career Progression in the Western Australian State Public Sector." *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Business and Government* 13 (2): 81–98.
- Cullen, Lisa, and Theo Christopher. 2007b. "Perceived Barriers to Career Progression in the Western Australian State Public Sector." *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Business and Government* 13 (2): 81–98. <http://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=427639044369979;res=IELBUS>.
- Currie, Graeme, and Dimitrios Spyridonidis. 2016. "Interpretation of Multiple Institutional Logics on the Ground: Actors' Position, Their Agency and Situational Constraints in Professionalized Contexts." *Organization Studies* 37 (1): 77–97. <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0170840615604503>.
- Curtin University. 2020. *VC Terry Farewell*. YouTube video, 8.02. Australia: Curtin University. July 12, 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3y3GBGjKd5o>.
- Cypress, Brigitte S. 2017. "Rigor or Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research: Perspectives, Strategies, Reconceptualization, and

- Recommendations.” *Dimensions of critical care nursing* 36 (4): 253–263. <https://doi.org/10.1097/DCC.0000000000000253>.
- D'enbeau, Suzy, and Patrice M. Buzzanell. 2013. “Constructing a Feminist Organization’s Identity in a Competitive Marketplace: The Intersection of Ideology, Image, and Culture.” *Human Relations* 66 (11): 1447–1470.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1177_0018726713479621.
- Del Corso, Jennifer, and Mark C. Rehfuss. 2011. “The Role of Narrative in Career Construction Theory.” *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 79 (2): 334–339.
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0001879111000509>.
- Department of Consumer and Employment Protection. 2007a. “Circular to Departments and Authorities No. 2 of 2007 – Parental Leave.” Department of Commerce.
https://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/atoms/files/circular_03_of_2007_-_parental_leave.pdf.
- Department of Consumer and Employment Protection. 2007b. “Circular to Departments and Authorities No. 3 of 2007 – Parental Leave.” Department of Commerce. Accessed March 22, 2020.
https://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/atoms/files/circular_03_of_2007_-_parental_leave.pdf.
- Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety. 2019. “Key Features of the WA Industrial Relations System.” Department of Commerce. Accessed March 22, 2020. <https://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/labour-relations/key-features-wa-industrial-relations-system>.
- Department of Treasury. 2018. *Model Annual Reports*. Perth, Western Australia. <https://www.wa.gov.au/government/document-collections/model-annual-reports>.
- Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment. 2011. *Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment Annual Report 2011*. Perth, Western Australia: Government of Western Australia.
http://www.publicsector.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/deope_annual_report_2011_final.pdf.

- Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment. 2019. *DEOPE Annual Report 2018/19 – a New Paradigm for Workforce Diversification*. Perth, Western Australia: Government of Western Australia.
https://publicsector.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/deope_ar_18_19.pdf.
- Dörfler, Viktor, and Marc Stierand. 2018. "Bracketing: Transpersonal Reflexivity for a Phenomenological Inquiry in an Interpretivist Framework." In *QRM 2018: 6th International Qualitative Research in Management and Organizations Conference*, March 27–29, 2018.
<https://strathprints.strath.ac.uk/63811/>.
- Dörfler, Viktor, and Marc Stierand. 2020. "Bracketing: A Phenomenological Theory Applied through Transpersonal Reflexivity." *Journal of Organizational Change Management* (ahead-of-print).
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1108_JOCM_12_2019_0393.
- Dries, Nicky. 2011. "The Meaning of Career Success: Avoiding Reification through a Closer Inspection of Historical, Cultural, and Ideological Contexts." *Career Development International* 16 (4): 364–384.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1108_13620431111158788.
- du Toit, Angelique. 2003. "Knowledge: A Sense Making Process Shared through Narrative." *Journal of Knowledge Management* 7 (3): 27–37.
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/230339037?accountid=10382>.
- Durbin, Susan, and Jennifer Tomlinson. 2014. "Female Part-Time Managers: Careers, Mentors and Role Models." *Gender, Work & Organization* 21 (4): 308-320. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12038>.
- Eagly, Alice H., and Linda L. Carli. 2007. "Women and the Labyrinth of Leadership." *Harvard Business Review* September: 63–71.
- Eberle, Thomas S. 2012. "Phenomenological Life-World Analysis and Ethnomethodology's Program." *Human Studies* 35 (2): 279–304.
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/1023285302?accountid=10382>.
- Eberle, Thomas S. 2013. "Phenomenology as a Research Method." In *SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*, Uwe Flick, ed., 665. SAGE Publications.

- <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/curtin/reader.action?docID=1707694&ppg=209>.
- Eiser, Barbara, and Page Morahan. 2006. "Fixing the System: Breaking the Glass Ceiling in Health Care." *Leadership in Action* 26 (4): 8.
<http://proquest.umi.com.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/pqdweb?did=1153897591&Fmt=7&clientId=22212&RQT=309&VName=PQD>.
- Ellingsæter, Anne Lise, and Arnlaug Leira, eds. 2006. *Politicising Parenthood in Scandinavia: Gender Relations in Welfare States*. 1st ed. Bristol, United Kingdom: Policy Press.
<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/curtin/detail.action?docID=419298>.
- Equal Opportunity Commission. 2019. *Annual Report 2018–19*. Western Australia. <http://www.eoc.wa.gov.au/publications/annual-reports>.
- Equal Opportunity Commission. 2020. "The Equal Opportunity Act WA: A Short History." Government of Western Australia. Accessed March 22, 2020. <http://www.eoc.wa.gov.au/about-us/the-equal-opportunity-commission-wa>.
- Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency. 2008. *Generation F: Attract, Engage, Retain*. Sydney, Australia: Australian Government.
http://www.eowa.gov.au/Information_Centres/Resource_Centre/EOWA_Publications/Generation_F/Documents/GENERATION_F.pdf.
- Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency. 2012. "Gender Workplace Statistics at a Glance (Updated Jan. 2012)." Sydney: Australian Government.
- Erickson, Amanda. 2017. "This Australian Politician Made History by Breast-Feeding in Parliament." *Washington Post*, May 11, 2017.
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/05/10/this-australian-politician-made-history-by-breastfeeding-in-parliament/>.
- Erkovan, Hilal. 2017. "Does the Career Adaptation Process Change as a Function of an Employee's Age or Employment Gaps? An Investigation of Relationships among Personal Resources, Contextual Factors, Coping Behaviors, and Career Success." Dissertation, Graduate Faculty in Psychology, The City University of New York.

- https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_1986243611.
- Etherington, Kim. 2007. "Ethical Research in Reflexive Relationships." *Qualitative Inquiry* 13 (5): 599.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotraca_cademiconefile_A169943698.
- Evans, Mark, Meredith Edwards, Bill Burmester, and Deborah May. 2014. "Not yet 50/50' – Barriers to the Progress of Senior Women in the Australian Public Service." *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 73 (4): 501–510.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotraca_cademiconefile_A397564166.
- Ezzedeen, Souha R., and Kristen G. Ritchey. 2009. "Career Advancement and Family Balance Strategies of Executive Women." *Gender in Management: An International Journal* 24 (6): 388–411.
<https://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/abs/10.1108/17542410910980388>.
- Fair Work Ombudsman. n.d. "Australia's Industrial Relations Timeline." Australian Government. Accessed March 22, 2020.
<https://www.fairwork.gov.au/about-us/legislation/the-fair-work-system/australias-industrial-relations-timeline>.
- Fenwick, Tara J. 2004. "Learning in Portfolio Work: Anchored Innovation and Mobile Identity." *Studies in Continuing Education* 26 (2): 229–245.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1080_158037042000225236.
- Fenwick, Tara J. 2006. "Contradictions in Portfolio Careers: Work Design and Client Relations." *Career Development International* 11 (1): 66–79.
<https://search.proquest.com/docview/219387562?accountid=10382>.
- Fenwick, Tara J. 2008. "Women's Learning in Contract Work: Practicing Contradictions in Boundaryless Conditions." *Vocations and Learning* 1 (1): 11–26.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1007_s12186_007_9003_9.

- Ferrante, Mary B. 2018. "The Pressure Is Real for Working Mothers." *Forbes Media*. August 27, 2018
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/marybethferrante/2018/08/27/the-pressure-is-real-for-working-mothers/#4885518d2b8f>.
- Filsinger, Claudia. 2012. "How Can Maternity Coaching Influence Women's Re-Engagement with Their Career Development: A Case Study of a Maternity Coaching Programme in UK-Based Private Law Firms." *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring* June: 46–56.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_doaj_primary_oai_doaj_org_article_4b1615cfb5a14a7abddc11ab67fa782b.
- Finefter-Rosenbluh, Ilana. 2017. "Incorporating Perspective Taking in Reflexivity: A Method to Enhance Insider Qualitative Research Processes." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 16 (1): 160940691770353.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1177_1609406917703539.
- Flick, Uwe. 2013. "Mapping the Field." In *SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*, Uwe Flick, ed., 665. SAGE Publications.
<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/curtin/reader.action?docID=1707694&ppg=209>.
- Frear, Katherine A., Samantha C. Paustian-Underdahl, Eric D. Heggstad, and Lisa Slattery Walker. 2018. "Gender and Career Success: A Typology and Analysis of Dual Paradigms." *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 40 (4): 400–416.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotraca_cademiconefile_A584588293.
- Freiberg, Arie. 2017. *Regulation in Australia*. Annandale, NSW: Federation Press.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/15oatim/CUR_ALMA21156422200001951.
- Freundlich, Naomi. 1997. "Book Review: Maybe Working Women Can't Have It All (When Work Doesn't Work Anymore and When Mothers Work: Loving Our Children without Sacrificing Ourselves);" *BusinessWeek*

(3544): 19–22.

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=9709104009&site=ehost-live>.

Garcia, Jane. 2007. "Flexibility and Paid Leave Key to Balancing Work and Family." *Government News*. Accessed Feb, 2007.

<http://www.governmentnews.com.au/>.

Gatrell, Caroline J. 2011. "Policy and the Pregnant Body at Work: Strategies of Secrecy, Silence and Supra-Performance." *Gender, Work & Organization* 18 (2): 158–181.

https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotraca_cademiconefile_A249618442.

Gatrell, Caroline J. 2013. "Maternal Body Work: How Women Managers and Professionals Negotiate Pregnancy and New Motherhood at Work." *Human Relations* 66 (5): 621–644.

<https://search.proquest.com/docview/1353279143?accountid=10382>.

Gatrell, Caroline J., and Cary L. Cooper. 2016. "A Sense of Entitlement? Fathers, Mothers and Organizational Support for Family and Career." *Community, Work & Family* 19 (2): 134–147.

https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1080_13668803_2016_1134121.

Gloor, Jamie L., Xinxin Li, Sandy Lim, and Anja Feierabend. 2018. "An Inconvenient Truth? Interpersonal and Career Consequences of 'Maybe Baby' Expectations." *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 104 (C): 44–58.

https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotraca_cademiconefile_A546474582.

Gottlieb, Eli. 2012. "Mosaic Leadership: Charisma and Bureaucracy in Exodus 18." *Journal of Management Development* 31 (9): 974–983.

https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_1040776519.

Goulding, Christina. 2009. "Grounded Theory Perspectives in Organizational Research." In *Sage Handbook of Organizational Research Methods*, David A. Buchanan and Alan Bryman, eds., 738. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.

https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/15oatim/CUR_ALMA2185374800001951.

Grady, Geraldine, and Alma M. McCarthy. 2008. "Work-Life Integration: Experiences of Mid-Career Professional Working Mothers." *Journal of Managerial Psychology* 23 (5): 599–622.

<http://search.proquest.com/docview/215868991?accountid=10382>.

Grandey, Alicia A., Allison S. Gabriel, and Eden B. King. 2020. "Tackling Taboo Topics: A Review of the Three Ms in Working Women's Lives." *Journal of Management* 46 (1): 7–35.

https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1177_0149206319857144.

Grant Thornton International Ltd. 2019. *Women in Business: Building a Blueprint for Action*. London: Grant Thornton International Ltd.
https://www.grantthornton.com.au/globalassets/1.-member-firms/australian-website/reports/gtal_2019_women-in-business-2019-report-grant-thornton.pdf.

Grant Thornton International Ltd. 2020. *Women in Business 2020: Putting the Blueprint into Action*. London: Grant Thornton International Ltd.
https://www.grantthornton.global/globalassets/1.-member-firms/global/insights/women-in-business/2020/women-in-business-2020_report.pdf.

Grant-Vallone, Elisa J., and Ellen A. Ensher. 2011. "Opting in Between: Strategies Used by Professional Women with Children to Balance Work and Family." *Journal of Career Development* 38 (4): 331–348.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0894845310372219>.

Guan, Yanjun, Michael B. Arthur, Svetlana N. Khapova, Rosalie J. Hall, and Robert G. Lord. 2019. "Career Boundarylessness and Career Success: A Review, Integration and Guide to Future Research." *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 110 (Part B): 390–402.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotraca_cademiconefile_A572684045.

Gudmundsdottir, Sigrun. 1996. "The Teller, the Tale, and the One Being Told: The Narrative Nature of the Research Interview." *Curriculum*

- Inquiry* 26 (3): 293–306.
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/194699668?accountid=10382>.
- Guerrina, Roberta. 2002. "Mothering in Europe: Feminist Critique of European Policies on Motherhood and Employment." *European Journal of Women's Studies* 9 (1): 49–68.
<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1350506802009001381>.
- Guillaume, Cécile, and Sophie Pochic. 2009. "What Would You Sacrifice? Access to Top Management and the Work-Life Balance." *Gender, Work & Organization* 16 (1): 14–36.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotraca_cademiconefile_A191268703.
- Hall, Douglas T. 1996. "Protean Careers of the 21st Century." *Academy of Management Executive* 10 (4): 8–16.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_5465_AME_1996_3145315.
- Hall, Joanne M., and Patricia E. Stevens. 1991. "Rigor in Feminist Research." *Advances in Nursing Science* 13 (3): 16–29.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1097_00012272_199103000_00005.
- Halrynjo, Sigtona. 2009. "Men's Work-Life Conflict: Career, Care and Self-Realization: Patterns of Privileges and Dilemmas." *Gender, Work and Organization* 16 (1): 98–125.
<https://search.proquest.com/docview/747756497?accountid=10382>.
- Hamilton Volpe, Elizabeth, and Wendy Marcinkus Murphy. 2011. "Married Professional Women's Career Exit: Integrating Identity and Social Networks." *Gender in Management* 26 (1): 57–83.
<https://search.proquest.com/docview/852259049?accountid=10382>.
- Harding, Nancy, Jackie Ford, and Marianna Fotaki. 2013. "Is the 'F'-Word Still Dirty? A Past, Present and Future of/for Feminist and Gender Studies in Organization." *Organization* 20 (1): 51–65.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1177_1350508412460993.
- Haslam, S., and M. Ryan. 2008. "The Road to the Glass Cliff: Differences in the Perceived Suitability of Men and Women for Leadership Positions

- in Succeeding and Failing Organizations.” *Leadership Quarterly* 19 (5): 530.
<http://proquest.umi.com.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/pqdweb?did=1582507941&Fmt=7&clientId=22212&RQT=309&VName=PQD>.
- Heikkinen, Suvi S. 2014. “How Do Male Managers Narrate Their Female Spouse’s Role in Their Career?” *Gender in Management: An International Journal* 29 (1): 25–43.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_2085699471.
- Hennekam, Sophie. 2016. “Identity Transition During Pregnancy: The Importance of Role Models.” *Human Relations* 69 (9): 1765–1790.
<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0018726716631402>.
- Heron, Alexandra, and Sara Charlesworth. 2016. Discrimination Law Fails Pregnant Women Who Lose Their Jobs. *The Conversation*, May 30, 2016. <https://theconversation.com/discrimination-law-fails-pregnant-women-who-lose-their-jobs-60057>.
- Hewlett, Sylvia A., and Carolyn B. Buck Luce. 2005. “Off-Ramps and on-Ramps: Keeping Talented Women on the Road to Success.” *Harvard Business Review* 83 (3): 43–6, 48, 50–4 passim.
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/67518008?accountid=10382>.
- Hewlett, Sylvia Ann. 2002. “Executive Women and the Myth of Having It All.” *Harvard Business Review* 80 (4): 66.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/1ogov0m/TN_cdi_proquest_miscellaneous_227776043.
- Higgins, Christopher, Linda Duxbury, and Karen Lea Johnson. 2000. “Part-Time Work for Women: Does It Really Help Balance Work and Family?” *Human Resource Management* 39 (1): 17.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1002__SICI_1099_050X_200021_39_1_17__AID_HRM3_3_0_CO_2_Y.
- Hill, E. Jeffrey, Alan J. Hawkins, Maria Ferris, and Michelle Weitzman. 2001. “Finding an Extra Day a Week: The Positive Influence of Perceived Job Flexibility on Work and Family Life Balance*.” *Family Relations* 50 (1): 49–58.

- https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_213934192.
- Hirsch, Paul M., and Kimberly B. Boal. 2000. "Whose Social Construction? Berger and Luckmann Revisited." *Journal of Management Inquiry* 9 (3): 256.
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/203310400?accountid=10382>.
- Hodges, Melissa J., and Michelle J. Budig. 2010. "Who Gets the Daddy Bonus?: Organizational Hegemonic Masculinity and the Impact of Fatherhood on Earnings." *Gender & Society* 24 (6): 717–745.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1177_0891243210386729.
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. 1998. *Equal Pay Handbook*. Australia: Commonwealth of Australia.
https://humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/pdf/sex_discrim/equal_pay.pdf.
- Ibarra, Herminia. 1999. "Provisional Selves: Experimenting with Image and Identity in Professional Adaptation." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 44 (4): 764–791.
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.2307/2667055>.
- Ibarra, Herminia, Robin Ely, and Deborah Kolb. 2013. "Women Rising: The Unseen Barriers." *Harvard Business Review* 91 (9): 60–67.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_proquest_miscellaneous_1424346955.
- Ibarra, Herminia, and Jennifer L. Petriglieri. 2010. "Identity Work and Play." *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 23 (1): 10–25.
<https://search.proquest.com/docview/197557586?accountid=10382>.
- Ibarra, Herminia, and Jennifer L. Petriglieri. 2016. "Impossible Selves: Image Strategies and Identity Threat in Professional Women's Career Transitions." *INSEAD Working Paper Collection* No. 2016/12/OBH: 1–26. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2742061.
- Jackson, Chris J. 2009. "Using the Hybrid Model of Learning in Personality to Predict Performance in the Workplace." In *8th IOP Conference, Manly, Sydney, Australia, June 25–28, 2009*.
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Donald_Stewart3/publication/426

22334_Broadening_the_Scope_of_Work-Life_Balance_Experiences_of_Australian_Muslims/links/02bfe51198866b05cf000000/Broadening-the-Scope-of-Work-Life-Balance-Experiences-of-Australian-Muslims.pdf#page=76.

- Jacobs, B. 2007. "Through the Labyrinth: The Truth About How Women Become Leaders/What Men Don't Tell Women About Business: Opening up the Heavily Guarded Alpha Male Playbook." *The Booklist* 104 (4): 28.
<http://proquest.umi.com.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/pqdweb?did=1368891561&Fmt=7&clientId=22212&RQT=309&VName=PQD>.
- Jacobson, Nora, Rebecca Gewurtz, and Emma Haydon. 2007. "Ethical Review of Interpretive Research: Problems and Solutions." *IRB* 29 (5): 1–8.
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/204809935?accountid=10382>.
- James, Al. 2014. "Work-Life 'Balance', Recession and the Gendered Limits to Learning and Innovation (or, Why It Pays Employers to Care)." *Gender, Work & Organization* 21 (3): 273–294.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotracaademiconefile_A360746819.
- Jennings-Edquist, Grace. 2018. "Pregnant and Discriminated against at Work? Here's What to Do." ABC. August 19, 2019 Accessed April 5, 2020. <https://www.abc.net.au/life/pregnancy-discrimination-what-to-do/10378212>.
- Jiao, Min. 2019. "Mothering and Motherhood: Experience, Ideology, and Agency." *Comparative Literature Studies* 56 (3): 541–556.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_5325_complitstudies_56_3_0541.
- Johnson, Janice. 2004. "Flexible Working: Changing the Manager's Role." *Management Decision* 42 (6): 721–737.
<https://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/abs/10.1108/00251740410542302>.
- Johnston, Deirdre D., and Debra H. Swanson. 2006. "Constructing the 'Good Mother': The Experience of Mothering Ideologies by Work Status." *Sex Roles* 54 (7–8): 509–519.

- https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iil99/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_225374554.
- Jones, Kristen P., and Eden B. King. 2014. "Managing Concealable Stigmas at Work: A Review and Multilevel Model." *Journal of Management* 40 (5): 1466–1494.
- https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotraca_cademiconefile_A377929989.
- Jorgensen, Gunnar. 2006. "Kohlberg and Gilligan: Duet or Duel?" *Journal of Moral Education* 35 (2): 179–196.
- <http://search.proquest.com/docview/232578236?accountid=10382>.
- Kahn, Joan R, Javier García-Manglano, and Suzanne M Bianchi. 2014. "The Motherhood Penalty at Midlife: Long-Term Effects of Children on Women's Careers." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 76 (1): 56–72.
- https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iil99/TN_cdi_pubmedcentral_primary_oai_pubmedcentral_nih_gov_4041155.
- Kaine, Sarah, and Martijn Boersma. 2018. "Women, Work and Industrial Relations in Australia in 2017." *Journal of Industrial Relations* 60 (3): 317–336.
- <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0022185618764204>.
- Kanter, Rosabeth M. 1977. *Men and Women of the Corporation*. New York: Basic Books.
- https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/1tj6bos/CUR_ALMA2198294550001951.
- Kaufmann, Jodi. 2011. "Poststructural Analysis: Analyzing Empirical Matter for New Meanings." *Qualitative Inquiry* 17 (2): 148. Poststructural Analysis: Analyzing Empirical Matter for New Meanings.
- Kaye, Beverly, Lindy Williams, and Lynn Cowart. 2018. "The New Optics of Career Mobility: Up Is Not the Only Way." *Leader to Leader* 2018 (88): 13–17. https://bevkeye.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/The-New-Optics-of-Career-Mobility-_LTL2018.pdf.
- Kaźmierczak, Maria, and Karol Karasiewicz. 2019. "Making Space for a New Role – Gender Differences in Identity Changes in Couples Transitioning to Parenthood." *Journal of Gender Studies* 28 (3): 271–287.

https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1080_09589236_2018_1441015.

- Keidel, Robert W. 1997. "Organizational Representation: Process, Structure, Mindset." *Journal of management inquiry* 6 (3): 210-219.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/105649269763005>.
- Kelliher, Clare, and Deirdre Anderson. 2010. "Doing More with Less? Flexible Working Practices and the Intensification of Work." *Human Relations* 63 (1): 83–106.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_businessinsightsgauss_A218695200.
- Kennedy, Brianna L. 2009. "Infusing Participants' Voices into Grounded Theory Research: A Poetic Anthology." *Qualitative Inquiry* 15 (8): 1416–1433.
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/61850018?accountid=10382>.
- Kitchen, Alison M., and Grant Wardell-Johnson. 2018. *Ending Workforce Discrimination against Women*. Australia: KPMG.
<https://assets.kpmg/content/dam/kpmg/au/pdf/2018/ending-workforce-discrimination-against-women-april-2018.pdf>.
- Kitchlew, Naveda, Khuram Shahzad, and Sami Ullah Bajwa. 2015. "Challenges for Inquiry and Knowledge in Social Construction of Reality." *Journal of Social Research & Policy* 6 (1): 57–64.
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/1810269420?accountid=10382>.
- Kmec, Julie A. 2011. "Are Motherhood Penalties and Fatherhood Bonuses Warranted? Comparing Pro-Work Behaviors and Conditions of Mothers, Fathers, and Non-Parents." *Social Science Research* 40 (2): 444–459.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotracademiconefile_A283992323.
- Ko, Jaekwon, and Seunguk Hur. 2014. "The Impacts of Employee Benefits, Procedural Justice, and Managerial Trustworthiness on Work Attitudes: Integrated Understanding Based on Social Exchange Theory." *Public Administration Review* 74 (2): 176–187.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotracademiconefile_A362039432.

- Kolb, Deborah, Joyce K. Fletcher, Debra E. Meyerson, Deborah Merrill-Sands, and Robin J. Ely. 1998. *Making Change: A Framework for Promoting Gender Equity in Organizations*. *Centre for Gender in Organizations* 1998.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/284594385_Making_change_A_framework_for_promoting_gender_equity_in_organizations.
- Kossek, Ellen E., Rong Su, and Lusi Wu. 2017. "‘Opting out’ or ‘Pushed Out’? Integrating Perspectives on Women’s Career Equality for Gender Inclusion and Interventions." *Journal of Management* 43 (1): 228–254.
<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0149206316671582>.
- KPMG. 2018. "Improving Workforce Participation Rates for Women Could Boost GDP." Media Release, April 25, 2018.
<https://home.kpmg/au/en/home/media/press-releases/2018/04/improving-workforce-participation-rates-for-woman-could-boost-gdp-26-april-2018.html>.
- Kyriakidou, Olivia. 2012. "Negotiating Gendered Identities through the Process of Identity Construction." *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal* 31 (1): 27–42.
<https://search.proquest.com/docview/918507073?accountid=10382>.
- Ladge, Jamie J., and Danna N. Greenberg. 2015. "Becoming a Working Mother: Managing Identity and Efficacy Uncertainties During Resocialization." *Human Resource Management* 54 (6): 977–998.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotraca_cademiconefile_A440012486.
- Laff, Michael. 2007. "The Invisible Wall." *T&D March*: 32–38.
- Lake, Rebecca. 2019. "The Hidden Penalty of Motherhood." *The balance*. October 3, 2019. Accessed April 5, 2020.
<https://www.thebalance.com/how-the-hidden-penalty-of-motherhood-affects-women-careers-4164215>.
- Landau, Jacqueline, and Michael B. Arthur. 1992. "The Relationship of Marital Status, Spouse’s Career Status, and Gender to Salary Level." *Sex Roles* 27 (11–12): 665–681.

- https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotraca_cademiconefile_A13578409.
- Linden, Pamela R. 2012. "Women and the Organizational Chess Game: A Qualitative Study of Gender, Discourse, Power, and Strategy." PhD, Capella University. Minneapolis, Minnesota.
<https://search.proquest.com/docview/1033212728?accountid=10382>.
- Liston-Smith, Jennifer, and Margaret Chapman. 2009. "Keeping Mum in the Workplace." *Coaching at Work* 4 (1): 57–57.
<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=36891322&site=ehost-live>.
- Livermore, Tanya, Joan Rodgers, and Peter Siminski. 2011. "The Effect of Motherhood on Wages and Wage Growth: Evidence for Australia*." *Economic Record* 87 (Supp.1): 80–91.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1111_j_1475_4932_2011_00745_x.
- Lott, Yvonne, and Christina Klenner. 2016. *Ideal Workers and Ideal Parents: Working-Time Norms and the Acceptance of Part-Time and Parental Leave at the Workplace in Germany*. Düsseldorf: Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut (WSI) Hans-Böckler-Stiftung.
<https://www.econstor.eu/handle/10419/146748>.
- Lott, Yvonne, and Christina Klenner. 2018. "Are the Ideal Worker and Ideal Parent Norms About to Change? The Acceptance of Part-Time and Parental Leave at German Workplaces." *Community, Work & Family: A time for renewal: developing a sustainable community, work and family interface* 21 (5): 564–580.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1080_13668803_2018_1526775.
- Lovejoy, Meg, and Pamela Stone. 2012. "Opting Back In: The Influence of Time at Home on Professional Women's Career Redirection after Opting Out." *Gender, Work & Organization* 19 (6): 631–653.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotraca_cademiconefile_A306243310.
- Lynch, John W., and Jessica B. Rodell. 2018. "Blend in or Stand Out? Interpersonal Outcomes of Managing Concealable Stigmas at Work."

- Journal of Applied Psychology* 103 (12): 1307–1323.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_2083633526.
- Mainiero, Lisa A., and Donald E. Gibson. 2018. “The Kaleidoscope Career Model Revisited: How Midcareer Men and Women Diverge on Authenticity, Balance, and Challenge.” *Journal of Career Development* 45 (4): 361–377.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1177_0894845317698223.
- Mainiero, Lisa A., and Sherry E. Sullivan. 2005. “Kaleidoscope Careers: An Alternate Explanation for the Opt-out Revolution.” *Academy of Management Executive* 19 (1): 106–123.
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/210512989?accountid=10382>.
- Mallon, Mary. 1998. “From Managerial Career to Portfolio Career: Making Sense of the Transition.” Sheffield Hallem University. United Kingdom.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_1963245183.
- Mallon, Mary. 1999. “Going ‘Portfolio’: Making Sense of Changing Careers.” *Career Development International* 4 (7): 358–370.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_219280907.
- Markus, Hazel, and Paula Nurius. 1986. “Possible Selves.” *American Psychologist* 41 (9): 954–969.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_614286536.
- Martins, Luis L., Kimberly A. Eddleston, and John F. Veiga. 2002. “Moderators of the Relationship between Work-Family Conflict and Career Satisfaction.” *Academy of Management Journal* 45 (2): 399–409. www.jstor.org/stable/3069354.
- Mason, Mark. 2007. “Critical Thinking and Learning.” *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 39 (4): 339.
http://sfx.lis.curtin.edu.au/sfx_local?genre=article&sid=ProQ%3A&atitle=Critical%20Thinking%20and%20Learning&title=Educational%20Phi

- osophy%20and%20Theory&issn=00131857&date=2007-08-01&volume=39&issue=4&spage=339&au=Mark%20Mason.
- Mavin, Sharon. 2008. "Queen Bees, Wannabees and Afraid to Bees: No More 'Best Enemies' for Women in Management?" *British Journal of Management* 19: 75–84.
- McBride, Anne. 2011. "Lifting the Barriers? Workplace Education and Training, Women and Job Progression." *Gender, Work & Organization* 18 (5): 528–547.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotraca_cademiconefile_A264691244.
- McGowan, Mark. 2017. "Major Changes Introduced to Create a More Efficient Public Sector." April 28, 2017.
<https://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Pages/McGowan/2017/04/Major-changes-introduced-to-create-a-more-efficient-public-sector.aspx>.
- McIntosh, Bryan, Ronald McQuaid, Anne Munro, and Parviz Dabir-Alai. 2012. "Motherhood and Its Impact on Career Progression." *Gender in Management: An International Journal* 27 (5): 346–364.
<http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/abs/10.1108/17542411211252651>.
- Meeussen, Loes, and Colette Van Laar. 2018. "Feeling Pressure to Be a Perfect Mother Relates to Parental Burnout and Career Ambitions." *Frontiers in Psychology* 9 (2113): 1–13.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_doaj_primary_oai_doaj_org_article_5a08043356df436394c8c65e06481d53.
- Meister, Alyson, Amanda Sinclair, and Karen A. Jehn. 2015. "'Don't Put Me in That Box!': Women Leaders Navigating Identity Asymmetries at Work." *Academy of Management Annual Meeting Proceedings* 2015 (1): 1-1.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_5465_ambpp_2015_90.
- Michel, Jesse S., Shaun Pichler, and Kerry Newness. 2014. "Integrating Leader Affect, Leader Work-Family Spillover, and Leadership." *Leadership & Organization Development Journal* 35 (5): 410–428.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/lodj-06-12-0074>.

- Michielsens, Elisabeth, Cecilie Bingham, and Linda Clarke. 2013. "Managing Diversity through Flexible Work Arrangements: Management Perspectives." *Employee Relations* 36 (1): 49–69.
<https://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/abs/10.1108/ER-06-2012-0048>.
- Miller, Leslie, and Jana Metcalfe. 1998. "Strategically Speaking: The Problem of Essentializing Terms in Feminist Theory and Feminist Organizational Talk." *Human Studies* 21 (3): 235–257.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_782552990.
- Millward, Lynne J. 2006. "The Transition to Motherhood in an Organizational Context: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis." *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* 79 (3): 315–333.
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/199347581?accountid=10382>.
- Mintrom, Michael. 2012. *Contemporary Policy Analysis*. New York: Oxford University Press.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/15oatim/CUR_ALMA2190560380001951.
- Moghaddam, Alireza. 2006. "Coding Issues in Grounded Theory." *Issues in Educational Research* 16 (1): 52–66.
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/61933068?accountid=10382>.
- Moses, Barbara. 2007. "Successful Careers and Motherhood Don't Have to Be Mutually Exclusive." *Canadian HR Reporter* 20 (19): 31.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_proquest_reports_220803883.
- Müller, Kai-Uwe, Michael Neumann, and Katharina Wrohlich. 2015. "The 'Family Working-Time Benefits Model' (Familienarbeitszeit): Giving Mothers More Time for Work, Giving Fathers More Time for Family." *DIW Economic Bulletin* 5 (45/46): 595–602.
<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=111154729&site=ehost-live>.
- Munsch, Christin L. 2016. "Flexible Work, Flexible Penalties: The Effect of Gender, Childcare, and Type of Request on the Flexibility Bias." *Social Forces* 94 (4): 1567–1591.

- https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1093_sf_sov122.
- Myers, Kit. 2017. "‘If I’m Going to Do It, I’m Going to Do It Right’: Intensive Mothering Ideologies among Childless Women Who Elect Egg Freezing." *Gender & Society* 31 (6): 777–803.
<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0891243217732329>.
- Napoli D., Whiteley A.M., and Johansen K. 2005. *Organizational Jazz: Extraordinary Performance through Extraordinary Leadership*. Sydney: eContent Management Pty Ltd.
- National Museum of Australia. n.d. "Equal Pay for Women." National Museum of Australia. Accessed June 7, 2020.
<https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/equal-pay-for-women>.
- North–Samardzic, Andrea. 2009. "Looking Back to Move Forward: The (D)Evolution of Australia’s EEO Regulatory Framework." *Economic and Labour Relations Review* 20 (1): 59–76.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_214825200.
- Nowak, Margaret, Marita Naudé, and Gail Thomas. 2012. "Sustaining Career through Maternity Leave." *Australian Journal of Labour Economics* 15 (3): 201–216.
<https://search.proquest.com/docview/1471845343?accountid=10382>.
- Nowak, Margaret, Marita Naudé, and Gail Thomas. 2013. "Returning to Work after Maternity Leave: Childcare and Workplace Flexibility." *Journal of Industrial Relations* 55 (1): 118–135.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022185612465530>.
- O’Hagan, Clare. 2014. "Broadening the Intersectional Path: Revealing Organizational Practices through ‘Working Mothers’ Narratives About Time." *Gender, Work & Organization* 25 (5): 443–458.
<https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/doi/full/10.1111/gwao.12056>.
- O’Neil, Deborah A., and Diana Bilimoria. 2005. "Women’s Career Development Phases: Idealism, Endurance, and Reinvention." *Career Development International* 10 (3): 168–189.

- https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_219351670.
- O'Neil, Deborah A., Margaret M. Hopkins, and Diana Bilimoria. 2013. "Patterns and Paradoxes in Women's Careers." In *Conceptualising Women's Working Lives: Moving the Boundaries of Discourse*, Wendy Patton, ed., 63–79. Rotterdam: SensePublishers. <https://link-springer-com.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/book/10.1007%2F978-94-6209-209-9>.
- O'Neil, Deborah A., Margaret E. Brooks, and Margaret M. Hopkins. 2018. "Women's Roles in Women's Career Advancement: What Do Women Expect of Each Other?" *Career Development International* 23 (3): 327–344. <https://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/abs/10.1108/CDI-10-2017-0196>.
- O'Neil, Deborah A., Margaret M. Hopkins, and Diana Bilimoria. 2008. "Women's Careers at the Start of the 21st Century: Patterns and Paradoxes." *Journal of Business Ethics* 80 (4): 727–743. https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_198089347.
- Oliver, Daniel G., Julianne M. Serovich, and Tina L. Mason. 2005. "Constraints and Opportunities with Interview Transcription: Towards Reflection in Qualitative Research." *Social Forces* 84 (2): 1273–1289. <https://doi.org/10.1353/sof.2006.0023>.
- Onwuegbuzie, Anthony J., Nancy L. Leech, and Kathleen M. Collins. 2010. "Innovative Data Collection Strategies in Qualitative Research." *Qualitative Report* 15 (3): 696–726. <https://search.proquest.com/docview/578480539?accountid=10382>.
- Orr, Deborah J. 1979. "Verstehen: A Critical Study of Dilthey's Epistemology and Methodology." Master of Arts, Faculty of Graduate Studies York University. Canada. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/303025507?accountid=10382>.
- Page, Margaret, Chrissie Oldfield, and Birgit Urstad. 2008. "Why Not Teach 'Diversity' to Public Sector Managers?" *International Journal of Public Sector Management*. 21 (4): 368–382. https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_234396989.

- Parke, Chris. 2012. "Maternity Coaching – Ernst & Young Employees Share Their Experiences." *Strategic HR Review* 11 (4).
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1108_shr_2012_37211daa_009.
- Peila-Shuster, Jacqueline J. . 2017. "Women's Career Construction: Promoting Employability through Career Adaptability and Resilience." In *Psychology of Career Adaptability, Employability and Resilience*, Maree Kobus, ed. Springer.
https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-66954-0_17#citeas.
- Perrewé, Pamela L., Shanna R. Daniels, Kaylee J. Hackney, and Liam Maher. 2019. "Pregnancy in the Workplace: The Role of Stigmas, Discrimination and Identity Management." In *Women, Business and Leadership: Gender and Organisations*, Alexander-Stamatios G. Antoniou, Cary Cooper and Caroline Gatrell, eds., 260–270. United Kingdom: Edward Elgar Publishing.
<https://www.elgaronline.com/view/edcoll/9781786432704/9781786432704.00023.xml>.
- Pfeffer, Jeffrey, and Jerry Ross. 1982. "The Effects of Marriage and a Working Wife on Occupational and Wage Attainment." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 27 (1): 66–80.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotraca_cademiconefile_A2233531.
- Pietkiewicz, Igor, and Jonathan A. Smith. 2014. "A Practical Guide to Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis in Qualitative Research Psychology." *Czasopismo Psychologiczne – Psychological Journal* 20 (1): 7–14.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263767248_A_practical_guide_to_using_Interpretative_Phenomenological_Analysis_in_qualitative_research_psychology.
- Platman, Kerry. 2004. "'Portfolio Careers' and the Search for Flexibility in Later Life." *Work, Employment and Society* 18 (3): 573–599.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/240729912_Portfolio_Careers_and_the_Search_for_Flexibility_in_Later_Life.

- Plummer, Marilyn, and Lynne E. Young. 2010. "Grounded Theory and Feminist Inquiry: Revitalizing Links to the Past." *Western Journal of Nursing Research* 32 (3): 305–21.
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/214023708?accountid=10382>.
- Pomeroy, Ann. 2007. "Cultivating Female Leaders. (Cover Story)." *HRMagazine* 52 (2): 44–50.
<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=buh&AN=24036123&site=ehost-live>.
- Powell, Gary N, and Lisa A. Mainiero. 1992. "Cross-Currents in the River of Time: Conceptualizing the Complexities of Women's Careers." *Journal of Management* 18 (2): 215–237.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iil99/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_215259245.
- Pringle, Judith K., and Mary Mallon. 2003. "Challenges for the Boundaryless Career Odyssey." *International Journal of Human Resource Management* 14 (5): 839–853.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iil99/TN_cdi_gale_businessinsightsgauss_A121928819.
- Public Sector Commission. 2011/12. *State of the Sector 2011/12*. Perth, Western Australia: Government of Western Australia.
[https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/publications/tailedpapers.nsf/displaypaper/3815406c267b4d592999df4748257ac40008bb89/\\$file/5406.pdf](https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/publications/tailedpapers.nsf/displaypaper/3815406c267b4d592999df4748257ac40008bb89/$file/5406.pdf).
- Public Sector Commission. 2018/19. *State of the Western Australian Government Sector Workforce 2018/19*. Perth, Western Australia: Government of Western Australia.
https://www.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-12/State%20of%20the%20Western%20Australian%20Government%20Sector%20Workforce%202018-19_0.pdf.
- Public Sector Commission. 2019. *Response to the Independent Review of the Public Sector Commissioner*. Perth, Western Australia: Government of Western Australia.

- Qu, Sandy Q., and John Dumay. 2011. "The Qualitative Research Interview." *Qualitative Research in Accounting and Management* 8 (3): 238–264. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/888254482?accountid=10382>.
- Quasar, Lisa. 2012. "Women Can Have It All -- Just Not All at the Same Time." *Forbes*. September 10, 2012. Accessed June 30, 2020. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/lisaquast/2012/09/10/women-can-have-it-all-just-not-all-at-the-same-time/#1cabbcae32f7>.
- Radcliffe, Laura S., and Catherine Cassell. 2013. "Resolving Couples' Work-Family Conflicts: The Complexity of Decision Making and the Introduction of a New Framework." *Human Relations* 67 (7): 793–819. https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_businessinsightsgauss_A378159901.
- Ranson, Gillian. 2012. "Men, Paid Employment and Family Responsibilities: Conceptualizing the 'Working Father'." *Gender, Work & Organization* 19 (6): 741–761. https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotracademiconefile_A306243312.
- Raply, Tim. 2013. "Sampling Strategies in Qualitative Research." In *SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*, Uwe Flick, ed., 665. SAGE Publications. <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/curtin/reader.action?docID=1707694&ppg=209>.
- Ready, Douglas A. 2002. "How Storytelling Builds Next-Generation Leaders." *MIT Sloan Management Review* 43 (4): 63–69. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/224966860?accountid=10382>.
- Reid, Erin. 2015. "Embracing, Passing, Revealing, and the Ideal Worker Image: How People Navigate Expected and Experienced Professional Identities." *Organization Science* 26 (4): 997–1017. https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotracademiconefile_A426147222.
- Ridgeway, Cecilia L. 2006. "Linking Social Structure and Interpersonal Behavior: A Theoretical Perspective on Cultural Schemas and Social Relations*." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 69 (1): 5–16. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/212751588?accountid=10382>.

- Ridgeway, Cecilia L., and Shelley J. Correll. 2004. "Motherhood as a Status Characteristic." *Journal of Social Issues* 60 (4): 683–700.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotraca_cademiconefile_A125916523.
- Rindfleish, Jennifer. 2002. "Senior Management Women and Gender Equity: A Comparison of Public and Private Sector Women in Australia." *Equal Opportunities International* 21 (7): 37–55.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_199664347.
- Robbins, Susan P., Pranab Chatterjee, and Edward R. Canda. 1999. "Ideology, Scientific Theory, and Social Work Practice." *Families in Society* 80 (4): 374–384.
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/230158032?accountid=10382>.
- Roberts, Lizzie. 2009. "Research Topic: Coaching Women." *People Management* 15 (4): 41–41.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotraca_cademiconefile_A195883939.
- Robertson, Rachel, and Paul Hetherington. 2016. "A Mosaic Patterning: Space, Time and the Lyric Essay." *New Writing* 14 (1): 36–46.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1080_14790726_2016_1235204.
- Robins-Early, Nick. 2013. "Madeleine Albright: Women Can Have It All, Just Not at the Same Time." *Intelligencer*. March 29, 2013. Accessed June 30, 2020. <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2013/03/madeleine-albright-women-have-it-all.html>.
- Rodrigues, Ricardo A., and David Guest. 2010. "Have Careers Become Boundaryless?" *Human Relations* 63 (8): 1157–1175.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_businessinsightsgauss_A249716983.
- Rothausen, Teresa J., Kevin E. Henderson, James K. Arnold, and Avinash Malshe. 2017. "Should I Stay or Should I Go? Identity and Well-Being in Sensemaking About Retention and Turnover." *Journal of Management* 43 (7): 2357–2385.
<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0149206315569312>.

- Roy, Eleanor A. 2018. "Jacinda Ardern Makes History with Baby Neve at UN General Assembly." *Guardian*, September 25, 2018.
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/sep/25/jacinda-ardern-makes-history-with-baby-neve-at-un-general-assembly>.
- Rubery, Jill. 2015. "Change at Work: Feminisation, Flexibilisation, Fragmentation and Financialisation." *Employee Relations* 37 (6): 633–644.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_2084384812.
- Rudolph, Cort W., Hannes Zacher, and Andreas Hirschi. 2019. "Empirical Developments in Career Construction Theory." *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 111: 1–6.
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0001879118301556>.
- Ryan, Michelle, and Alexander Haslam. 2005. "The Glass Cliff: Evidence That Women Are over-Represented in Precarious Leadership Positions." *British Journal of Management* 16 (2): 81.
<http://proquest.umi.com.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/pqdweb?did=869190301&Fmt=7&clientId=22212&RQT=309&VName=PQD>.
- Sandberg, Sheryl. 2013. *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead*. Sheryl Sandberg and Nell Scovell eds. London: WH Allen.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/15oatim/CUR_ALMA2196278340001951.
- Saunders, Mark, Philip Lewis, and Adrian Thornhill. 2015. *Research Methods for Business Students*. 7th ed. Essex: Prentic Hall.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_askewsholts_vlebooks_9781292016641.
- Savickas, Mark L. 2013. "The 2012 Leona Tyler Award Address: Constructing Careers—Actors, Agents, and Authors." *Counseling psychologist* 41 (4): 648–662. <https://journals-sagepub-com.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/doi/full/10.1177/0011000012468339>.
- Schein, Edgar H. 1978. *Career Dynamics: Matching Individual and Organizational Needs*. Cambridge, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/15oatim/CUR_ALMA2178830950001951.

- Schneer, Joy A., and Frieda Reitman. 1993. "Effects of the Alternate Family Structures on Managerial Career Paths." *Academy of Management Journal* 36 (4): 830–843.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotraca_cademiconefile_A14412545.
- Schupbach, Jonah N. 2010. Review of "Reflective Knowledge: Apt Belief and Reflective Knowledge, Volume II by Ernest Sosa." *Review of Metaphysics* 63 (3): 722–724.
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/89192526?accountid=10382>.
- Schwartz, Felice N. 1989. "Management Women and the New Facts of Life." *Harvard Business Review* 67 (1): 65–76.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotraca_cademiconefile_A7401771.
- Sealy, Ruth, and Val Singh. 2006. "Role Models, Work Identity and Senior Women's Career Progression – Why Are Role Models Important?" *Academy of Management Annual Meeting Proceedings* 1: E1–E6.
<https://doi.org/10.5465/AMBPP.2006.22898277>.
- Sela-Smith, Sandy. 2002. "Heuristic Research: A Review and Critique of Moustakas's Method." *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 42 (3): 53–88. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/222460599?accountid=10382>.
- Sevón, Eija. 2005. "Timing Motherhood: Experiencing and Narrating the Choice to Become a Mother." *Feminism & Psychology* 15 (4): 461–482.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1177_0959_353505057619.
- Shah, Neil. 2014. "While Moms Get Less Pay, Fathers Get 'Daddy Bonuses'." *Dow Jones Institutional News*, October 14, 2014.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_proquest_wirefeeds_2073015907.
- Shah, Sonali K., and Kevin G. Corley. 2006. "Building Better Theory by Bridging the Quantitative-Qualitative Divide*." *Journal of Management Studies* 43 (8): 1821.
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/194223850?accountid=10382>.

- Shapiro, Mary, Cynthia Ingois, and Stacy Blake-Beard. 2009. "Canaries in the Mine Shaft." *People & Strategy* 32 (3): 52–59.
- Sharp, M. 2007. "Clubbers, Mosaic Thinkers and Design Process." In International conference on engineering and product design education, Northumbria University, Newcastle Upon Tyne, United Kingdom, 13-14 September.
- Shilling, Chris, and Philip A. Mellor. 2014. "For a Sociology of Deceit: Doubled Identities, Interested Actions and Situational Logics of Opportunity." *Sociology* 49 (4): 607–623.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotrac_432070769.
- Singh, Val, Susan Vinnicombe, and James Kim. 2006. "Constructing a Professional Identity: How Young Female Managers Use Role Models." *Women in Management Review* 21 (1): 67–81.
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/213157649?accountid=10382>.
- Skjott Linneberg, Mai, and Steffen Korsgaard. 2019. "Coding Qualitative Data: A Synthesis Guiding the Novice." *Qualitative research journal* 19 (3): 259–270.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/1ogov0m/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_2234410819.
- Sleesman, Dustin J. 2019. "Pushing through the Tension While Stuck in the Mud: Paradox Mindset and Escalation of Commitment." *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 155: 83–96.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1016_j_obhdp_2019_03_008.
- Smith, Wendy K., and Marianne W. Lewis. 2011. "Toward a Theory of Paradox: A Dynamic Equilibrium Model of Organizing." *Academy of Management Review* 36 (2): 381–403.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_5465_AMR_2011_59330958.
- Snowden, David. 1999. "Story Telling: An Old Skill in a New Context." *Business Information Review* 16 (1): 30–37.
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/212627229?accountid=10382>.

- Soklaridis, Sophie. 2009. "The Process of Conducting Qualitative Grounded Theory Research for a Doctoral Thesis: Experiences and Reflections." *Qualitative Report* 14 (4): 719–734.
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/195556054?accountid=10382>.
- Spector, Michal G., and Rachel G. Cinamon. 2017. "Identity Exploration During the Transition to Motherhood: Facilitating Factors and Outcomes." *Career Development International* 22 (7): 829–843.
<https://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/abs/10.1108/CDI-01-2017-0021>.
- Spitzmueller, Christiane, Zhuxi Wang, Jing Zhang, Candice L. Thomas, Gwenith G. Fisher, Russell A. Matthews, and Lane Strathearn. 2016. "Got Milk? Workplace Factors Related to Breastfeeding among Working Mothers." *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 37 (5): 692–718.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotraca_cademiconefile_A456962263.
- Stainback, Kevin, Sibyl Kleiner, and Sheryl Skaggs. 2016. "Women in Power: Undoing or Redoing the Gendered Organization?" *Gender & Society* 30 (1): 109–135.
<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0891243215602906>.
- Stevens, Michelle. 2013. "'Women Had to Pretend Their Families Didn't Exist'." *People Management*: 30–31.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotraca_cademiconefile_A348694502.
- Stone, Pamela, and Meg Lovejoy. 2004. "Fast-Track Women and the 'Choice' to Stay Home." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 596 (1): 62–83.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotraca_cademiconefile_A123580228.
- Symmetra. 2014. *The Conundrum of Workplace Flexibility*. Symmetra.
<http://www.symmetra.com.au/symmetra-news/the-conundrum-of-workplace-flexibility>.
- Teasdale, Nina. 2013. "Fragmented Sisters? The Implications of Flexible Working Policies for Professional Women's Workplace Relationships." *Gender, Work & Organization* 20 (4): 397–412.

- https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotraca_cademiconefile_A329662093.
- Tharenou, Phyllis. 1999. "Is There a Link between Family Structures and Women's and Men's Managerial Career Advancement?" *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 20 (6): 837.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_224868602.
- Thomas, David C, Kevin Au, and Elizabeth C. Ravlin. 2003. "Cultural Variation and the Psychological Contract." *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 24 (5): 451–471.
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/224879957?accountid=10382>.
- Thomas, Eileen, and Joan Magilvy. 2011. "Qualitative Rigor or Research Validity in Qualitative Research." *Journal for Specialists in Pediatric Nursing* 16 (2): 151–155.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotraca_cademiconefile_A252567944.
- Todd, Patricia, and Jennifer Binns. 2013. "Work-Life Balance: Is It Now a Problem for Management?" *Gender, Work & Organization* 20 (3): 219–231.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotraca_cademiconefile_A325009218.
- Toy-Cronin, Bridgette. 2018. "Ethical Issues in Insider-Outsider Research." In *Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research Ethics*, Ron Iphofen and Martin Tolich, eds., 584. SAGE Publications Ltd.
https://books.google.com.sg/books?hl=en&lr=&id=inhJDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA455&dq=being+an+insider+researcher&ots=CxFYI2d_Mu&sig=kVqwCtJ49SzeGxUzblJ8I2vCPM4&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=being%20an%20insider%20researcher&f=false.
- Turner, Paaige K, and Kristen Norwood. 2013. "I Had the Luxury . . .": Organizational Breastfeeding Support as Privatized Privilege." *Human Relations* 67 (7): 849–874. <http://hum.sagepub.com/content/67/7/849>.
- United Nations. 2014. *Women's Rights Are Human Rights*. New York and Geneva.

<https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Events/WHRD/WomenRightsAreHR.pdf>.

- Valentine, Gill. 2007. "Theorizing and Researching Intersectionality: A Challenge for Feminist Geography." *Professional Geographer* 59 (1): 10–21.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1111_j_1467_9272_2007_00587_x.
- Vitzthum, Christine. 2017. "How Can Maternity-Return Coaching Complement Structural Organisational Benefits?" *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring* 15 (11): 44–56.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_doaj_primary_oai_doaj_org_article_fdecab942ef245678202af87e904bc5c.
- WA Labor. 2017. *2017 WA Labour Platform: A Fresh Approach*. Perth, Western Australia: WA Labor. <https://www.walabor.org.au/platform>.
- Wadsworth, Lori L., and Rex L. Facer. 2016. "Work–Family Balance and Alternative Work Schedules: Exploring the Impact of 4-Day Workweeks on State Employees." *Public Personnel Management* 45 (4): 382–404.
<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0091026016678856>.
- Wainwright, Emma, Elodie Marandet, and Sadaf Rizvi. 2011. "The Means of Correct Training: Embodied Regulation in Training for Body Work among Mothers." *Sociology of Health & Illness* 33 (2): 220–236.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotraca_cademiconefile_A248510229.
- Wainwright, Megan, and Andrew Russell. 2010. "Using NVivo Audio-Coding: Practical, Sensorial and Epistemological Considerations." *Social Research Update* (60): 1–4.
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/845178042?accountid=10382>.
- Walby, Sylvia, Jo Armstrong, and Sofia Strid. 2012. "Intersectionality: Multiple Inequalities in Social Theory." *Sociology* 46 (2): 224–240.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1177_0038038511416164.
- Waldman, David A., Linda L. Putnam, Ella Miron-Spektor, and Donald Siegel. 2019. "The Role of Paradox Theory in Decision Making and

- Management Research." *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 155: 1–6.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1016_j_obhdp_2019_04_006.
- Walsh, Kate, Susan S. Fleming, and Cathy A. Enz. 2016. "Give and You Shall Receive: Investing in the Careers of Women Professionals." *Career Development International* 21 (2): 193–211.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_2082129917.
- Webber, Gretchen, and Christine Williams. 2008. "Mothers in 'Good' and 'Bad' Part-Time Jobs: Different Problems, Same Results." *Gender & Society* 22 (6): 752–777.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotraca_cademiconefile_A189288346.
- West, Candace, and Don H. Zimmerman. 1987. "Doing Gender." *Gender and Society* 1 (2): 125–151. www.jstor.org/stable/189945.
- Westmarland, Nicole. 2001. "The Quantitative/Qualitative Debate and Feminist Research: A Subjective View of Objectivity." *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 2 (1).
<https://search.proquest.com/docview/867758600?accountid=10382>.
- Whitehouse, Gillian, Marian Baird, Chris Diamond, and Carol Soloff. 2007. "Parental Leave in Australia: Beyond the Statistical Gap." *Journal of Industrial Relations* 49 (1): 103–112.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1177_0022185607072253.
- Wilhoit, Elizabeth D. 2014. "Opting out (without Kids): Understanding Non-Mothers' Workplace Exit in Popular Autobiographies." *Gender, Work & Organization* 21 (3): 260–272.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotraca_cademiconefile_A360746818.
- Williams, Joan C., Mary Blair-Loy, and Jennifer L. Berdahl. 2013. "Cultural Schemas, Social Class, and the Flexibility Stigma." *Journal of Social Issues* 69 (2): 209–234.

- https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1111_josi_12012.
- Williams, Joan C., and Holly Cohen Cooper. 2004. "The Public Policy of Motherhood." *Journal of Social Issues* 60 (4): 849–865.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_gale_infotraca_cademiconefile_A125916533.
- Williamson, Sue. 2015. "A Case Study of Regulatory Confusion: Paid Parental Leave and Public Servants." *Economic and Labour Relations Review* 26 (3): 430–447.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1177_1035304615597838.
- Wilson, Peter. 2001. "State of the Union." *HR Monthly* March: 23–26.
http://www.ahri.com.au/MMSDocuments/comms/hrm_magazine/hrm_2011/hrm_2011_03_state_of_the_union.pdf.
- Woensdregt, Yme. 2007. "Finding the Truth Takes Many Views." *Daily Townsman* 2007 9.
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/356445565?accountid=10382>.
- Wolf, Carola. 2019. "Not Lost in Translation: Managerial Career Narratives and the Construction of Protean Identities." *Human Relations* 72 (3): 505–533.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1177_0018726718778094.
- Wolkowitz, Carol. 2002. "The Social Relations of Body Work." *Work, Employment and Society* 16 (3): 497–510.
https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1177_095001702762217452.
- Workplace Gender Equality Agency. 2018. *Towards Gender Balanced Parental Leave, Australian and International Trends – Insights Paper*. Sydney, Australia: Australian Government.
<https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/Parental-leave-and-gender-equality.pdf>.
- Workplace Gender Equality Agency. 2019a. *2018–19 Gender Equality Scorecard*. Sydney, Australia.

- <https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2018-19-Gender-Equality-Scorecard.pdf>.
- Workplace Gender Equality Agency. 2019b. *Australia's Gender Equality Scorecard: Key Findings from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's 2018–19 Reporting Data November 2019*. Sydney, Australia: Australian Government.
- Workplace Gender Equality Agency. 2019c. *She's Price(d)less: The Economics of the Gender Pay Gap*. Sydney, Australia: Australian Government.
- https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/She%27s-Price%28d%29less-2019-Detailed-report_0.pdf.
- Workplace Gender Equality Agency. 2020a. *Australia's Gender Pay Gap Statistics*. Sydney, Australia.
- https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/Gender_pay_gap_fact_sheet_Feb2020.pdf.
- Workplace Gender Equality Agency. 2020b. *Gender Workplace Statistics at a Glance 2019–20*. Vol. 2020. Sydney, Australia: Australian Government.
- World Economic Forum. 2011. *The Global Gender Gap Report 2011*. Cologny/Geneva Switzerland: World Economic Forum.
- http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GenderGap_Report_2011.pdf.
- World Economic Forum. 2019. *Global Gender Gap Report 2020*. Cologny/Geneva Switzerland: World Economic Forum.
- http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2020.pdf.
- Wynn, Alison T. 2017. "Gender, Parenthood, and Perceived Chances of Promotion." *Sociological Perspectives* 60 (4): 645–664.
- <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0731121416672426>.
- Yaish, Meir, and Haya Stier. 2009. "Gender Inequality in Job Authority: A Cross-National Comparison of 26 Countries." *Work and Occupations* 26 (4): 343–366.
- Yeo, Roland. 2002. "From Individual to Team Learning: Practical Perspectives on the Learning Organisation." *Team Performance Management: An International Journal* 8 (7/8): 157–170.

https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_217095134.

Young, Angela M., and David Hurlic. 2007. "Gender Enactment at Work: The Importance of Gender and Gender-Related Behavior to Person-Organizational Fit and Career Decisions." *Journal of Managerial Psychology* 22 (2): 168–187. https://search-proquest-com.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/docview/215867654?rfr_id=info%3Axri%2Fsid%3Aprimo.

Zheng, Wei, Ronit Kark, and Alyson L. Meister. 2018. "Paradox Versus Dilemma Mindset: A Theory of How Women Leaders Navigate the Tensions between Agency and Communion." *Leadership Quarterly* 29 (5): 584–596. https://catalogue.curtin.edu.au/permalink/f/iiil99/TN_cdi_crossref_primary_10_1016_j_leaqua_2018_04_001.

Zhou, Muzhi. 2017. "Motherhood, Employment, and the Dynamics of Women's Gender Attitudes." *Gender & Society* 31 (6): 751–776. <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0891243217732320>.

List of legislation

Affirmative Action Act 1986 (Cth)

<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2004A03332>

Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA), Part IX, s. 145.

[https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/prod/filestore.nsf/FileURL/mrdoc_41630.pdf/\\$FILE/Equal%20Opportunity%20Act%201984%20-%20%5B07-f0-02%5D.pdf?OpenElement](https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/prod/filestore.nsf/FileURL/mrdoc_41630.pdf/$FILE/Equal%20Opportunity%20Act%201984%20-%20%5B07-f0-02%5D.pdf?OpenElement)

Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999 (Cth)

<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2004A00572>

Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)

<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2020C00153>

Maternity Leave (Commonwealth Employees) Act 1973 (Cth)

<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2013C00257>

Industrial Relations Reform Act 1993 (Cth)

<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2004A04653>

Paid Parental Leave Act 2010 (Cth)

<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2013C00567>

Public Sector Management Act 1994 (WA)

[https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/prod/filestore.nsf/FileURL/mrdoc_42882.pdf/\\$FILE/Public%20Sector%20Management%20Act%201994%20-%20%5B12-q0-00%5D.pdf?OpenElement](https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/prod/filestore.nsf/FileURL/mrdoc_42882.pdf/$FILE/Public%20Sector%20Management%20Act%201994%20-%20%5B12-q0-00%5D.pdf?OpenElement)

Public Service Award 1992 (WA), s. 28 and s. 9.

<http://forms.wairc.wa.gov.au/awards/PUB007/p51/PUB007.pdf>

Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)

<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2018C00499>

Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (Cth)

<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2016C00895>

Workplace Relations Act 1996 (Cth)

<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2006C00104>

Every reasonable effort has been made to acknowledge the owners of copyright material. I would be pleased to hear from any copyright owner who has been omitted or incorrectly acknowledged.