

THE EXPERIENCE OF GREEK PREGNANT WORKING WOMEN:
A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF GENDER EXPECTATIONS AND ROLE CONFLICT

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

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in

COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY & PSYCHOTHERAPY


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
“The Experience of Greek Pregnant Working Women: A Qualitative Exploration of Gender Expectations and Role Conflict” a thesis prepared by Aysegul Saglam Tsoukos in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Science degree in Counseling Psychology & Psychotherapy was presented on 30th Sep 2022, and was approved and accepted by the thesis committee and the School of Graduate & Professional Studies.

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
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Title: THE EXPERIENCE OF GREEK PREGNANT WORKING WOMEN:

A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF GENDER EXPECTATIONS AND ROLE CONFLICT

Majority of the working women will get pregnant while employed and integrating roles of a professional and a mother can be significantly challenging. Transitioning cultural context of Greece with strong stereotypes of gender roles, relatively low rates of women at work, make it worthy to explore the experience of pregnancy at work. This study sought to give voice to the women's own lived experience of integrating their upcoming mother role into their home and work roles. It is the first qualitative research on the subject in Greece. Interpretational phenomenological analysis was used as the methodology. Participants were four Greek women, working in the private sector, pregnant for their first child. Three master themes were identified within the analysis: *being pregnant while at work: maintaining a fragile balance; protecting the personal and professional identity when everything is going through change; on the thorny route of becoming a working mother*. The experiences of the participants were impacted by the social expectations that, the workplace is a male-dominated domain, where reliability and presence are key requirements and the gender expectations that child-care is primarily a female responsibility. The participants frequently strived to match the standards of the 'good' mother and the 'good' employee, experienced guilt and anxiety when they felt they were not able to keep up with both roles. As this is a qualitative study with a small sample size, representative conclusions cannot be drawn. Future research on the experiences of working parents and working women with different cultural backgrounds are recommended.

Keywords: pregnancy, motherhood, women, work, gender stereotype, role conflict

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Literature Review

Introduction

A woman goes through physiological and mental changes during the pregnancy period that causes changes not only in her body but also the way she thinks and behaves. It is a state where both the body and the soul are burdened by handling different psychological tensions. These tensions result from changes in personal identity, feelings of uncertainty and loneliness, fears of losing the baby, and or giving birth. Pregnancy, through the somatic and psychological character changes, also impacts the woman's interactions with the social environment. Just through the way it changes the body shape, pregnancy has the strength to impact relationships. A pregnant body is in continuous communication with the outer world. Pregnancy is a complex bio-psycho-social phenomenon where a woman confronts her biological femininity, goes through physical and psychological changes and where her personality, lifestyle and social status influence her attitude towards herself and her social environment with reflections into the future. (Kannen, 2013; Bjelica et. al, 2018; Bulgakov et. al, 2018)

Almost half of the workforce consists of women in the USA and the European Union. As high as 90% of women will get pregnant while employed and therefore will go through the transition into motherhood within the context of work (Jones, 2017; Salihu et al, 2012). For working women, pregnancy demands a change into their mode of being, which calls for the establishment of a balance between one's self, the unborn baby, the partner and the colleagues. (Hackney & Perrewé, 2018).

Integrating her role as a professional and as a mother can be one of the most significant challenges a woman faces in the workplace (Salihu et al., 2012).

Social Role Theory

Social roles are socially shared anticipations from individuals who own a specific social position or are members of a certain social group. Gender roles are socially shared beliefs on the traits of males and females. As per the social role theory, those who observe others engaging in different sort of activities suppose that there is an alignment with the type of activities people undertake and their natural inclinations. The gender roles therefore originate from the activities that different sexes undertake in their typical social roles, translated into their qualities that are required to perform these acts. Examples of this can be the men's roles as breadwinners and occupants of high-status roles and women's roles as homemakers and lower status roles. Social role theory proposes that a great part of the beliefs concerning attributes of different sexes refer to communal or agentic traits.

Communal qualities that show a concern for the welfare of the others - for example, loving, kind, empathetic, supportive, helpful, caring, nurturing, tender - are more strongly attributed to women, while agentic qualities that point at an assertive, confident and controlling inclination - for example, aggressive, determined, competitive, domineering, self-sufficient, independent, ambitious - are more strongly attributed to men. Gender stereotypes also include beliefs about differences between men and women in many other aspects of the individual, including physical looks, cognitive capacity, abilities, and emotional tendencies. Once the gender roles are developed, they can foster sex differentiated behaviors through

various mechanisms. First, through social reward or penalty mechanism where behaviors compatible with the gender role are rewarded and the behaviors incompatible with the gender role are penalized. Second, through self-regulation mechanism, where one adapts behavior to align with the gender role. Third, through learning and practice of role-appropriate skills. And lastly, through employment of hormonal mechanisms that support the role. Commonly, these mechanisms work collectively impacting sex-specific behavior. (Eagly & Mitchell, 2004; Eagly & Karau, 2002)

Considering that role-based identities prescribe standards of behavior in line with the social expectations, there are unique challenges associated with adopting multiple social group identities concerning the potentially discrepant expectations of different social groups an individual may simultaneously be part of. A person is more likely to follow the prescriptive standards of a specific role when this becomes more significant for the person's identity and social relationships. For instance, "motherhood" either as a structural position within a family or as a social identity concerning membership to a broader group of mothers, come along with expectations that impact the woman's behavior (Hirsh & Kang, 2016). These expectations may concern that women are natural mothers, who are able to care for their baby right away, and that they find ultimate fulfillment in this caring and nurturing role, in a self-sacrificing manner (Choi et al, 2005). In today's industrialized society, women have access to a wider range of roles and more and more women are being raised with the realistic idea that many opportunities are available to them

to exploit. However, sexism is still present in a yet more modern and covert form and women may not realize that it still exists (Erchull et al, 2009; Swim et al, 1995).

Feminist Theory of Identity Development & Psychological Well-Being

According to Downing and Roush's (1985) Feminist Theory of Identity Development, women go through five stages of development, from low levels of awareness of sexism and gender inequality, toward greater levels of awareness, struggling with feelings of prejudice and discrimination and coming to terms with its meaning in their personal lives, leading to the development of an authentic and positive self. The five feminist identity stages are Passive Acceptance, Revelation, Embeddedness-Emanation, Synthesis, and Active Commitment. In the Passive-Acceptance stage, the women are either unaware or deny the existence of prejudice and discrimination against women. They accept the male dominated world as it is, together with the traditional gender roles and even consider that such roles may provide advantages to them. Revelation stage is expected to be precipitated by women's experiencing a series of crises or contradictions that make it impossible for them to ignore the existence of gender discrimination and oppression in their world. Women intensely examine themselves and primarily feel anger and secondarily guilt for the oppression they have experienced and how they personally contributed to that. The feelings of anger and guilt might cause them have negative opinions about their lives. In this stage, a separational thinking may exist where men in general might be perceived negatively and women in general positively. Embeddedness-Emanation, is the stage during which women try to separate themselves from the male world and get connected with other women like them, finding the opportunity

to release their anger, receive affirmation and gain strength within the supportive female company. The fourth stage, synthesis, is where women can integrate sexism related causes and other factors in attributing explanations to events and develop an authentic feminist identity. They become more flexible in their evaluation of gender roles, may take decisions according to their personal values and can view men and women as individuals, apart from the stereotypes. They may start appreciating their lives in a novel way as women. In the fifth stage, active commitment, women depending on their priorities, take action work towards societal change, in favor of women. The development among stages, rather than being linear in direction, may cycle within stages and a woman may be at multiple stages at the same time.

(McNamara & Rickard, 1989; Yakushko, 2007)

The relationship of feminist identity development and psychological well-being has been demonstrated in studies. According to the study by Saunders and Kashubeck-West (2006), the women at more advanced stages of feminist identity development reported higher psychological well-being and women at earlier stages of feminist identity reported lower psychological well-being. The authors attributed this potentially to the more advanced levels of feminist identity enabling those women better differentiate what is healthy vs social rooted and make more beneficial choices. On the other hand, women at the lower levels of the identity development may choose to comply with the socially prescribed behaviors that might not be beneficial for their psychological health. Similarly, Yakushko (2007) in her study, found that women with feminist and moderate values had significantly higher scores on overall wellbeing compared to women with traditional values. The

difference was particularly prominent on subscales of purpose in life, autonomy and personal growth.

Feminist counseling points at the social and political origins of women's problems when it comes to the conceptualization of the etiology and the maintenance of mental health issues. Central to its understanding is that, in today's world, women hold lower political and economic power than men and that the patriarchal structure of the society has an adverse impact on women's mental health. The two key distinctive assumptions of feminist therapy on the mental health issues are: (1) the personal is political and (2) problems and symptoms originate as coping mechanisms to survive within an oppressive environment. The "personal is political" reflects the assumption that individual issues are often related to or impacted by the political and social environment that people live in. Feminist counseling prefers to use the terms of problems in living or coping strategies rather than the term pathology to convey the view that mental health issues are inseparably connected to the social, political, economical and institutional influencers on individual choices. Reducing the explanation of issues to intrapersonal problems and the adoption of a medical model of diagnoses create a tendency towards decontextualization of issues, promote gender bias, or support victim blaming. Therefore, feminist therapy comprises a course of assisting women explore to what extent her issues are of external origin, residing in social factors and the focus of the therapy is the gradual development of the client in autonomy, self-sufficiency and eventually contribution to sociopolitical change in favor of women.

(McNamara & Rickard, 1989; Garner & Enns, 2004; Enns, 2012)

Women's Roles and Sources of Role Conflict

According to the feminist theory, although the number of roles the women occupy in today's society have increased in number, the view of motherhood as woman's top occupation is rooted within white Eurocentric culture (Enns, 2004). There has been a big shift from the harsh, punitive child-rearing practices of the 19th century into the 20th century, thanks to the new appraisal of children as human beings with rights, in need of acceptance and continued care, however, the position of the mother is retained as the owner of the childcare responsibility, creating a new concept of intensive mothering. The intensive mothering concept has the following assumptions: children are sacred and beyond value, childcare is ideally and preferably performed by mothers, child rearing guided by expert-opinions, emotionally demanding and labor-intensive is the best. Intensive mothering is extremely costly for the mothers, as it demands time, emotional investment and economic power, causing mothers to get stressed and overwhelmed. The mothers who try to comply with intensive mothering struggle with feelings of guilt when they leave their children to the care of someone else or on their own. Their interests and pursuits of achievements in other domains of life are subject to the consistent self-questioning of whether they are doing the right thing and whether they are adequate in their mothering. Many women put themselves up to the standards of a woman with super powers, who can both be a super woman and a super mom, that in the end brings nothing but feelings of failure and disappointment as the expectations of being a high achiever outside home and practicing intensive mothering in parallel are not realistic. Intensive mothering is also financially

demanding from the women, considering the costs associated with outsourced child care, costs of nurseries, costs concerning extra- curricular activities for kids, etc.

Women, becoming mothers, typically are expected to sacrifice themselves for their family, while as individuals they have legitimate needs, desires and aspirations of their own and they have to be esteemed for that. (Gross. 1998)

Women's well-being is related with the different roles they possess.

Motherhood is one of the roles that women might hold across their lives. While family roles (wife, daughter, daughter-in-law, mother, etc.) and family related connections and accomplishments have a pivotal position in women's lives, work role provides additional sources of self-esteem and self-efficacy. Employment, career advancement, achieving positions of responsibility, authority, autonomy and challenge can be among significant life satisfaction sources. Subsequent economical and work security also contribute to well-being. (Campione, 2008).

However, a person's social roles may demand the performance of incompatible behaviors, leading to role conflict. Role conflict has been described by Kahn et. al (1964) as discordant role expectations from within an individual's role group: "At any given time they may impose pressures on him toward different kinds of behavior. To the extent that these role pressures give rise to role forces within him, he will experience psychological conflict" (Tidd & Friedman 2002).

Among the key domains, where role conflicts manifest, are work and family. The increase in the dual-earner households gives rise also to the potential conflicts between the demands of the family and career roles. The social expectations for family and work roles are frequently discordant, resulting in identity conflicts, that

lead to increased dissatisfaction and stress in both areas. Work-family conflict is also related to negative consequences including increased life dissatisfaction, impairment in mental health, and reduction in productivity. Work-family role conflict has been described on 3 dimensions. The first, time-based conflict refers to the distribution of time, energy and opportunities among work and family roles, where scheduling is difficult, time is restricted and the demands are incompatible. The second, strain-based conflict, refers to strain spillover, where the experienced strain in one role impacts the performance in another role. The third, behavior-based conflict, refers to the conflicting expectations for behavior a person has for work and for family. Women, specifically are disadvantaged versus men, as they experience such work-family conflicts at a higher rate, due to the fact that there is a greater mismatch between how women are expected to behave at work and at home. Employed mothers are more found to be more vulnerable to negative spillover from family to work. (Hirsh & Kang, 2016; Gyllensten & Palmer 2005; Hobfoll et al, 2003; Dilworth, 2004).

The contradictory expectations at work put women through a dilemma without resolution. On one side, they are approved when they demonstrate traditionally female characteristics of warmth and expressiveness, on the other side, for professional advancement, they are expected to act in accordance with the power-centric model, which necessitates them to employ an assertive, competitive and firm attitude. The other dimension of the dilemma professional women face is that they are expected to have a “man’s” commitment at work, while in parallel that they are prescriptively demanded to prioritize their family roles. Considering the

stronger internal, relational and societal pressures women are exposed to, concerning compliance with the family and household roles, working women, in comparison to men, experience heavier strain of competing work and family demands. (Gyllensten & Palmer 2005; Hobfoll et al, 2003)

Despite the drastic changes in the family structure and the labor force participation, relatively small changes followed concerning the allocation of household tasks. The majority of the errands remain to be within the woman's responsibility, which exposes the woman to the stress of enduring multiplied work within a day. There is also a higher likelihood of women taking on other family-linked caring roles, for example caring for the sick and elderly, organizing childcare. (Gyllensten & Palmer 2005). The "gender perspective" tries to explain the gap between men and women in terms of household roles, despite the changes in the work marketplace. According to this perspective, it is claimed that, masculinity might be characterized within the financial provider role. Men may show reluctance to taking over tasks labelled as feminine, particularly when their function as a provider gets compromised. On the other hand, women also might be reluctant to give up the control present in the "maternal gate-keeping" role (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010).

Research done in 2006 in Australia by time use data (Craig, 2006), showed that mothers compared to fathers spent more overall time with children, engaged in more multitasking, operated with a more rigid timetable, spent more time alone with children, and had more overall responsibility for managing the care. According to OECD statistics; in comparison to men, women on average are spending 127

minutes more per day on unpaid work and 27 min more per day in total work, which make 32 and 7 days more per year, respectively. (OECD, n.d.)

According to the social role theory, gender roles can affect opinions. There might be a spillover of the gender roles to the workplace which cause expectations to differ for female and male owners of the same work role. For example, the relatively relaxed standards assigned to job seeking fathers may be a reflection of the alignment among the father's job search behavior and the financial provider role. Moreover, due to the assumption concerning the financial provider role, fathers are considered to be more in need of the job compared to the mothers. There is also double standard concerning judgement of performance on work and family roles between employed mothers and employed fathers. Employed fathers tend to be regarded as better parents and more competent employees as aligned with the financial provider role. A woman's work role conflicts with her parental role but not a man's. Employed mothers are expected to do more to be labeled as a good parent and are subjected to higher performance standards at work in comparison to the employed fathers (Fuegen et al, 2004). In the study done by Fuegen et. al (2004) on how gender and parental status influenced judgements of job performance, while parents in general tended to be judged as less committed than the ideal worker, only the male parent benefited by being held to lower performance standards than the ideal worker.

Work and Family Roles of Women in Greece

In the early years of Greece, the discriminatory regulation of the female role was easily notable in the regulations of the family law. Following the end of the dictatorship period in 1974, the equality of men and women was declared in the New Greek Constitution of 1975 for the first time. Later, a significant number of legislative changes have been put into place in order to align with the new constitutional regulations of gender equality and the EU directives. Substantial changes have been introduced in family law in 1983 and equal treatment of men and women at work was established by law in 1984. Moreover, international agreements concerning equality in different domains of social life were reflected in Greek lawmaking. (Nina–Pazarzi & Tsangaris 2008). Despite the changes in the legislation, the cultural transition has been slower. The remains of a traditional society base are easily observable and are displayed in the family and gender roles. (Thorpe et al,1992).

In Greece, the normative family is constituted by a heterosexual couple and is seen as a sacred institution, with an enormous value assigned to motherhood. Greek literature is full of representations of mothers as heroes because they sacrifice and suffer for the good of their honor, family and children. From a religious perspective, motherhood is depicted as unquestionably and absolutely good through the representation of Holy Mary. Women are stereotypically seen as the pillars of family and home within the society and despite the entrance of women into the labor market in large rates within the last decades, reassignment of gender roles and responsibilities has not advanced much. Within family, women have taken over double burden of care and housework to a large extent. Childcare, care of the sick

and the elderly have constantly been evaluated as women's work and usually provided by female members of the family within the home context. By tradition, grandparents and other relatives have been supporting women in handling this double burden. During the 1990s, middle and upper-class women were able to informally transfer some of their burden to migrant female domestic workers and carers. However, the economic crisis and the subsequent reductions in household income have impacted the affordability of this help and raised once more questions around the renegotiation of gender roles. Cost of child care is an important factor that negatively and significantly impacts the women's probability of participation in labor force. In 2010 68.6% of the total female population had care responsibilities, compared to 28.3% for the EU-27. (Kambouri, 2013; Tsouroufli, 2020; Nikolitsas, 2006; Daouli et al, 2004; Davaki, 2013).

The analysis by Nina-Pazarzi & Tsangaris (2008) on a set of TV commercials aired during 3 different periods of 70's, 80' and 90's, to understand how the woman's image is constructed in Greek media, revealed that representations of woman's role as "housewife" changed only according the time's fashion of looks. Despite the gradual improvements in the legislation concerning gender equality during the periods, a conservative depiction of housework was sustained in all the commercials where the woman skilled in housework was handling the responsibility without the involvement of men in any house or childcare related tasks. The representations of women in the work life at the two latter periods also revealed conflicts. Neither commercial depicted women in positions that supervised men. However, in one commercial, a superwoman was depicted with increased

responsibilities, duties and obligations. The authors in conclusion questioned whether these depictions presented women as self-sufficient, independent and truly equal to men, or merely displayed the high number of societal demands from the female role.

Concerning woman's participation in the labor market in Greece, Moussourou (1984), a Greek sociologist had claimed that according to the existing evidence until the mid-80's, with the exception of the highly educated women, employment was viewed by both the women and their family, as a necessary evil. Apart from the highly educated and specialized, women worked due to economic needs rather than personal choice. In case the economic need did not exist or ceased to exist or if the cost of working was higher than the income (e.g., childcare arrangements), Greek women would tend to avoid paid employment. She also had claimed that work decisions of Greek women were part of social mobility strategies. Nevertheless, other research showed that women's quest for change of status and opportunity to contribute to the family budget are sourced in their needs of detachment from their extended family, negotiate equality within their nuclear family and achieve personal autonomy. A very large nationwide study done by Symeonidou (1989), on how Greek women's value system and attitudes towards gender roles relate to employment, revealed that women with less 'traditional' attitudes were more likely to be employed. Interestingly, perceived partner's attitudes were also in correlation to women's employment rates, where perceived 'progressive' partner attitude was increasing and perceived 'traditional' partner attitude was reducing participation at paid workforce during the duration of married

life, with employment sustained for 75% and 10% of married life respectively. Marriage and the birth of the first child seemed to play an important role in women's employment. Within the 26% of the women who stopped their work and never returned, 75% of them did so at the time of marriage or the birth of the first child. The study done by Dragonas et. al in 1997 on pregnant working women confirmed similar results. Preparation for the baby was the overwhelming reason for those who gave up their job. Women with higher level of education tended to remain employed rather than give up paid work. Results in line with the above, concerning the impact of husband's cultural attitude and the woman's educational level on the woman's labor force participation was shown 20 years later by Papapetrou and Tsalaporta (2018) investigating the intergenerational transmission of female labor force participation and the intergenerational transmission of educational outcomes in Greece. Results show that a wife's labor force participation decision is related to her husband's mother's and mother's participation, and even more strongly related to her own level of educational achievement along with the number of children in the household. The labor force participation of the mother of the husband is more important than that of the woman's own mother, indicating a strong transmission of the husband's cultural model. Concerning educational attainment, parental educational background, and especially maternal, is identified as a key determinant of women's high level of educational achievement.

Important steps have been taken during the 90's in regards to policies concerning the integration of the work and family life. Laws guaranteeing pregnancy,

maternity and parental leaves for both parents were introduced and benefits and tax immunities were put into place for families with children. However, the implementation of these policies has been at a larger extent in the public sector and stayed somewhat limited in the private and self-employed sectors. The majority of parental leave is still taken by women in both the public and the private sector, in line with the traditional expectations, however, the actual parental leave periods of Greek mothers are lower compared with the UK, Sweden, Germany, Austria, France, Lithuania and Hungary. Burden of care for women was targeted to be reduced by the introduction of all-day schools, opening of day care centers, nurseries and elderly care day centers. However, they remained limited in scope and geographical coverage, as the concentration is in urban areas. Issues of accessibility together with the questions on quality of services offered, most dual income families feel obliged to resort to private sector to hand over the care responsibility, taking over an extra financial burden. (Kambouri, 2013; Tsouroufli, 2020; Nikolitsas, 2006).

According to the OECD data, in Greece, in 2020 around 59.3% of women aged between 15 and 59 participated in the labor market. The corresponding figure for the European Union of 27 Member States (EU-27) was around 67.6%. Despite the significant increase within the last decades, which was accompanied by an upgrading of the role of women in the labor market, together with the improvement in the education level of the representative woman, the female participation in Greece has always been lower than that in the EU and the gap is significant and sustained over the years, if not increased. The gap in employment vs population ratio is even bigger, with figures of 47.5% vs 62.6% respectively. (OECD, n.d.; Nicolitsas, 2006).

Moreover, in contrast to the cultural value assigned to motherhood in the country, in 2020, fertility rate for Greece was 1.4 births per woman, below the EU average of 1.5. The rate fell gradually from 2.2 births per woman in 1960. Greece belongs to the group of countries within EU with a higher-than-average mean age of women at the birth of their first child but a lower total fertility rate than the EU average (Eurostat statistics explained, 2022). Nicolitsas (2006) had identified a negative correlation between the number of children and the labor force participation together with the shortage of childcare facilities in Greece.

Among those women, who participate in the labor force, few of them reach higher levels of the managerial ladder and female representation in executive level positions in Greece is often very small, this being evident in political positions as well. According to EU statistics, In Greece, although the women constitute the 42.6% of the total work force, they occupy only 28.7% of the managerial positions, vs an EU average of 46.5% and 35.0% respectively. (Eurostat, 27th April 2022). Although women can reach lower and middle hierarchical levels, a small minority can pass through the glass ceiling. Gender-based stereotypes toward women in power positions are deeply rooted in the patriarchal society of modern Greece.

Due to the high percentage of university degrees, women find themselves in the position to accept clerical jobs, that are not related to their qualifications. Those who assume managerial responsibilities tend to stay at the lower parts of the ladder. There are many factors working together preventing women from climbing up the stairs to higher levels. Stereotypes and traditional view concerning gender roles, inherent formal and informal power structures, inherent institutional and social

structures and the unequal division of household responsibilities are the most significant of them. Not to forget, Greek fathers are also challenged and facing ambivalences within their roles. They are struggling with becoming self-autonomous and gaining independence from their family of origin. Despite the increase in the urban, educated middle-class men's participation in family life, including domestic chores and childcare, together with intimacy with children, they still view their participation at domestic work and care responsibilities as an act of good will towards spouses (Mihail, 2006; Petraki-Kottis & Ventoura-Neokosmidi, 2020; Tsouroufli, 2020). According to OECD data, in Greece, the difference between women and men on the time spent in work is, 164 minutes for unpaid work per day and 75 minutes more for per day in total work, which make 42 days in unpaid work and 19 days more in total work more for women respectively. (OECD, n.d.) This is well above the OECD average in both unpaid and total work.

Tsouroufli (2020) in her study, analyzed how Greek female medical academicians conceptualize and enact motherhood and what classed and gendered strategies they utilized for the reconciliation of the notions of 'good' motherhood with the 'good' academician. It was found that the personal and professional choices of this elite group were impacted by the patriarchal norms of the Greek society. Although these women found ways of reconciling the 'good' mother and 'good' academician roles, these were not through the challenging of the traditional Greek fatherhood or the traditional Greek mother roles of as primary carers of children and the household. The strategies utilized by these women were dependent on their class wealth and the class status achieved through heterosexual marriage.

On top of the above concerning the cultural context, the inadequacy of public and institutional provisions for the support of work family reconciliation, cause the aggravation of the issues. As a result, due to the excessive burden, Greek working women with families have limited time and energy to invest in the advancement of their career, while at the same time the constantly increasing participation in high level education in all fields are evident of the Greek women's motivation to move higher. (Petraki-Kottis & Ventoura-Neokosmidi, 2020; Tsouroufli 2020).

In summary, despite the limited amount of research in Greece on how different roles of women interact and impact women's participation and stay in labor force, it can be said that conflicts emerge between the existing gender, family and work roles in the era of the transformation within the Greek socio-cultural and parenthood policy context. A very recent and nice depiction of the experience of these conflicts by a Greek working mother is made in the 'Ah Vre Marinaki' video series prepared by the organization Lean in Hellas for raising awareness on sexism and stereotyping against women in the Greek work place. (Lean in Hellas, 2020)

Experience of Pregnancy at Work

Since the industrial revolution, work has been considered a fundamentally masculine, public domain, while women have been expected to preside over the private sphere of family and household. The cultural images of good workers and the related organizational structures and practices are immersed with masculinity. In today's world where half of the workforce is female, the discrepancy between the inherent 'good' employee and the female employee becomes visible and impossible to ignore when the employee is pregnant. A 'good' employee is not supposed to

choose pregnancy, which is a direct exhibition of feminine and sexual qualities, a 'good' employee doesn't prioritize personal choices over corporate needs, a 'good' employee can be in the office any time upon demand, a 'good' employee always looks and acts professional and fit.

Pregnancy, bringing reproduction, which is an unquestionably private phenomenon as it involves intimacy, sex and babies, to the workplace, through the working pregnant woman, challenges the traditional view of what fits with the public domain. (Major, 2004; Buzzanell & Liu, 2005).

The experience of pregnancy at work is an under researched phenomenon and the majority of the existing research is done in US, UK, Australia, Scandinavian countries and Western Europe. Therefore, we are lacking knowledge in the experience of working pregnant women in different cultural and/or employment contexts.

Based on our knowledge from literature, when working women get pregnant, their identities go through a change to include motherhood together with being an employee. Based on the inherent stereotypes concerning how to be a 'good' employee and how to be a 'good' mother can be contradicting for the pregnant women. According the study of Ladge et al (2012) on identity transition during pregnancy, pregnancy brings up uncertainties on the impact of growing a motherhood identity on the woman's worker identity. The pregnant women in the study reacted in three different ways to overcome the experienced uncertainties: dismissal of changes to the work identity in light of upcoming motherhood,

suspension of the work concerning identity changes, and attainment of identity change.

Furthermore, stereotypes concerning how to be a 'good' employee and how to be a 'good' mother can be contradicting for others, causing them to question whether motherhood and career advancement can be managed simultaneously. This may lead to stigmatization of pregnant employees and discrimination against them. In fact, pregnant women are viewed as more vulnerable, like children and receive more care and assistance than nonpregnant women (Hebl et al, 2007; Hackney & Perrewé, 2018). Nonetheless, pregnant women may also be targets of hostility even at higher rates than working women in general due to the prejudice, which can be explained by Eagly and Karau's (2002) 'role incongruity' model. According to this model, hostile prejudices are activated when a member of a social group attempts to enact a social role for which that group is stereotypically "mismatched". Pregnancy by the obvious visibility of it, is a strong representation of femininity in terms of sexuality and fertility. With the activation of the 'traditional woman' stereotype, where women are viewed as more delicate and less competent versus men, pregnant women may be seen as mismatched for a significant number of jobs. Pregnant women in managerial positions are more likely to evoke this type of reaction as managerial positions require high levels of competence and traits that are traditionally associated with masculinity. Pregnant women applying for jobs also may encounter more hostile reactions, when they are considered for jobs that are traditionally masculine than do their nonpregnant counterparts. They might also be

recommended for a lower starting salary and less likely to be recommended for hiring than the nonpregnant candidate (Hebl et al, 2007; Masser et al, 2007)

Moreover, working pregnant women highlight the existing societal conflict over women's traditional parenting and modern work roles. Although women's working outside home may not be seen as controversial anymore, there is still substantial debate about whether mothers should work, especially during the early years of their children. While pregnant worker may appear as challenging the 'traditional family values' nonworking pregnant woman conform with those values and produce positive reactions. (Hebl et al, 2007)

In the workplace, colleagues might have bitter feelings against pregnant workers due to expectations of reduced commitment, lower productivity and increase in coworkers' workload both during pregnancy and after due to the long absence period of the maternity leave. In fact, some pregnant working women may feel less committed to work during this period. The hostility and discrimination against pregnant women are more likely to happen in interpersonal forms rather than institutional due to the protective legislations against discrimination. For the very same reason, they happen to be in more subtle, relational forms and in general not actionable. (Hebl et al, 2007; Hackney & Perrewé 2018). Women anticipate and experience discrimination related to their status as pregnant employees. The most common discriminatory experiences women reported were that they felt they were viewed as more emotional, that others felt they would quit their jobs after giving birth, that they were less committed to their jobs, that they were given less

responsibility, that they felt invisible and excluded from a future in the organization.

(Fox & Quinn, 2015; Greenberg et al. 2009; Milward, 2006)

Women engage in both intrapersonal and interpersonal identity negotiations throughout pregnancy at work (Greenberg et al, 2009). Intrapersonally, they reevaluate their personal and work identity in the light of their upcoming motherhood and try to resettle their sense of efficacy in managing their new set of responsibilities. Interpersonally, they anticipate, experience discrimination, try to challenge the prejudices on their expected commitment and performance reduction and also manage how their body and the physical aspects of the pregnancy and childbirth become a public material for discussion. Some women feel the need to limit career aspirations, in the light of the increasing value of their mother role. (Greenberg et al. 2009).

Trying to balance two roles obviously places conflicting demands on pregnant employees. The study of Hackney (2017) on job stress and pregnancy revealed that pregnancy disclosure, perceived discrimination and identity role conflict were positively associated with experienced stress including job tension. Lojewski et al (2018) in the study exploring stressors for pregnant employees in Germany, found that the most frequently mentioned stressor was the negative attitudes from employers or line managers. The women in the study also often suffered from concerns about their work and their fetus' health. Staneva et al (2015) pointed at how women felt both frightened and empowered when they realized their role in the well-being of the baby, the pressure that came with it. The health advice given by medical professionals might also be aggravating these stressors. Gatrell (2011), in

her qualitative study on exploring how pregnancy related health advice may be implemented at work, showed that, first, women felt pressurized to disregard being pregnant and proceed working through feeling sick and exhausted, in efforts to fit to the demanded qualities of reliability and presence at work. Second, the health advice might not have been practically possible to be followed at work (e.g. taking naps, sitting on ice packs), even at home, in case there were other care duties expected from the women. Women noted frequently feeling guilty due to their restricted work ability and the consequences of underperforming due to their pregnant condition while expressing an overall need for being understood, accepted without stigmatization, and caring for themselves without a sense of guilt. (Lojewski et al, 2018; Staneva et al, 2015)

The experience women have at work during their pregnancy has been shown to impact their identity reconciliation and consecutively their desire to return to work after delivery. Fursmann (2002) explored how work experiences during pregnancy influenced women's identities as workers and as mothers and pointed at the importance of workplace support on the maintenance of worker identity during pregnancy. According to the results, pregnant women who felt that their multiple roles and identities are supported by their workplaces, found it easier to keep worker as a primary part of their self and easier to resist exaggerated norms of intensive mothering. On the other hand, pregnant women who had negative experiences in the workplace were more likely to give in to the normative view of the superiority of motherhood as an identity. Fox and Quinn (2014) in their study examining the link between women's discriminatory experiences and workforce

attrition, showed that when women feel they have been stereotyped or discriminated against, they are more likely to intend to leave their jobs following the birth of their children. Ladge et al (2012) argued that those pregnant women working in organizations that do not support women to envision themselves as contributors to work or women who are denying their upcoming motherhood and expecting to have their work identities unimpacted following childbirth, are more likely to exit the organizations later or to be dissatisfied with their work and life following the arrival of their child. Hackney (2017) suggested that greater levels of job tension experienced during pregnancy led to increased turnover intentions. In a recent study from South Africa, authors concluded that women are likely to leave the workforce after getting married or having children, especially if their jobs and workplaces make it difficult to combine their family responsibilities with their work obligations (Makola, Rudolph & Joubert, 2020).

Women utilize different strategies to defend their working identity against stigmatization and manage discrimination. According to the studies done by Major (2004), Little (2015) and King & Botsford (2009): delaying disclosure, maintaining the pre-pregnancy pace, not asking for accommodations, sustaining professional outfit, downplaying the pregnancy, spending extra effort and shortening the maternity leave were among these strategies. While these efforts work to reduced perceptions of discrimination, lessened burnout (Little, 2015), it appears to be a strenuous job as shown in the qualitative study done by Alsveit et al (2010) in Norway, where women felt overstretched and exhausted along getting prepared for becoming a mother and by adapting to professional life.

Studies concerning experience of pregnancy in Greece are very few, they belong to 90's and main focusing on the emotional well-being of the pregnant women. In both studies (Dragonas et al, 1997; Thorpe et al 1992) the stressful life events relating to the family structure and level of social support received from partner, family and friends appeared as important factors of for the well-being of the pregnant women. Dragonas et al (1997) found that emotional well-being of mothers was related with their being employed (only in the subsequent pregnancy group), their perception of receiving support from their immediate and more distant social environment and that they can rely on themselves rather than project the responsibility of their own life onto others. In the study of Thorpe et al (1992) comparing Greek and British women, many Greek women reported that family, rather than being supportive, were a source of stress. Many more Greek women lived with their parents or parents-in law and many more reported arguing with family or friends. Greek women also were less satisfied with the level of social support they received. The authors attributed this to the fact that Greek women, compared to British women, had higher culturally-based expectations of support from family and friends, and when this support wasn't made available to them due to the rapid transition of the social structure, they were disappointed. In addition, while the emotional status of the British couples were found to be linked, those of Greek couples were independent. This may reflect the greater differentiation of sex roles in Greek culture. (Thorpe et al, 1992). These findings imply that interactions with the family and social circle might play a relatively greater part in how Greek

women experience pregnancy at work due to the culture-based expectations on roles.

Although importance of family and social support during pregnancy in general is shown by research, research on how social support impacts pregnant women's work experience is almost non-existent. Only, in a recent qualitative study, again from Norway, women highlight the partner and mother's role in providing support to sustain working full-time while pregnant, which indicates that these relations are important to pregnant women. (Selboe & Skogas 2017)

In summary, existing research on the experience of pregnant working women mainly focus on the interaction between the women and their work environments and is limited to mainly Western countries and cultures. Pregnant working women go through identity and role negotiations, in the presence of their upcoming motherhood, trying to integrate what was there and what is new. They expect and face discrimination at work mainly in relational forms, questioning their commitment and competence, sourced in the gender stereotypes, positioning women more suitable for familial roles rather than work roles. In efforts to manage the perceived conflict between different role expectations, pregnant women employ different strategies usually overstretching themselves. The job strain experienced during this period is found to impact the commitment to the workplace and working in general. Yet, it is also observed that there are yet underexplored research areas like the role of friends and family circle, medical guidance and care in the shaping of the experience of pregnancy at work.

Research Rationale

Considering the transitioning cultural context of Greece with strong stereotypes of gender roles, the relatively low rates of women participating in the labor force and even at lower rates in managerial positions, together with the relatively low birth rates in Greece, it will be worthy to explore the experience of pregnancy at work by Greek women, especially those working as managers. This study seeks to give voice to the women's own lived experience of integrating their upcoming mother role into their home and work roles, the emotions associated with this transition and the intrapersonal and interpersonal challenges they feel they have to deal with at work and at home. The phenomenological exploration seeks to add to the already existing knowledge of stigmatizing and discriminating workplace factors, sourced in gender expectations and the reflection of the conflict between the 'good employee' and the 'good mother' stereotypes, in a relatively more traditional cultural context. Furthermore, the role of the family and friends circle in the shaping of this experience, an area which hasn't been extensively addressed by the literature so far, is targeted to be explored.

Methodology

Theoretical Approach to and Method of Analysis

Qualitative methodologies are about emerging theory and concepts rather than hypothesis testing and are concerned with capturing the individual's perspective, the reality constructed by the individual and are interested in the richness and depth of data, rather than its concreteness and reliability. Because pregnancy is a complex bio-psycho-social phenomenon and the female work role is relatively new within the female's span of roles, a qualitative methodology is chosen to explore how participants are making sense of their personal and social world within this unique and significant period of their lives where they are in the process of integrating the motherhood role into their existing group of roles (Muurlink, 2018; Smith & Osborn, 2008)

In this study, interpretational phenomenological analysis (IPA) is used. The researcher has identified only one IPA study within the area of research topic, which was conducted in Finland. This study is the first qualitative study in Greece on the research topic. IPA is phenomenological in that it is concerned with individuals' subjective experience in its own terms, rather than according to predefined categories and it acknowledges that research is a dynamic process. The researcher attempts to access "the participant's personal world" as much as this is feasible. IPA researcher understands that the participants might struggle in expressing what is

thought and felt, there might be reluctance concerning self-disclosure and that the investigator has to interpret mental and emotional states from what participants say. IPA also acknowledges that access depends on and is complicated by the researcher's own conceptions which intervene in the interpretative process, while the researcher is making sense of the participant's personal world. The term interpretative phenomenological analysis is thus used to reflect the dualistic aspect of the method and the analysis produced include combined reflections of both the participant and the researcher. (Brocki & Weardern, 2006; Smith & Osborn, 2008). In IPA, each participant case is first analyzed in detail on its own, before searching for patterns across cases. The experience concerning a specific component of the phenomenon might be similar across participants but their interpretations of that component might be radically different (Miller et al, 2018). This type of difference is also shown in previous research concerning pregnancy at work, where the same situation like accommodations offered at work due to pregnancy can be perceived negatively or positively by different participants. These qualities make the method of IPA suitable for the exploration of the unique and individual experience of pregnancy at work.

Recruitment of the Participants

Participants were Greek women, working in the private sector, living with their partner and pregnant for their first child. Single participants were excluded for better representation of the experience within the normative family structure in Greece. Participants with same sex participants partners were excluded due to misfit with the normative family structure and the stereotypes of gender roles. Participants

with high-risk pregnancies were excluded. The investigator recruited 5 participants of which 1 was for the pilot interview. Private sector employees were recruited to ensure homogeneity within the group as the maternity leave policies present differences between private and public employees, in favor of public employees for both the mother and the father in terms of duration of leave, together with job security (Hatzivarnava-Kazassi & Karamessini, 2020). The participants were identified through informal networking of the investigator, through announcements on the Linked-in and Facebook pages of the organizations Women on Top and the Facebook page of the group 'Έγκυος και Νέα Μαμά'.

Four women, going through pregnancy for their first child, participated in the study. Two of the participants were educators in the private sector, one was an archaeologist working for the state through private contract and one was self-employed as a business owner. Two of the participants had people management responsibilities. All participants were university graduates and were residing in Athens, Greece. Participants' age range was 28 to 45. All participants were married and living with their spouses. All participants' spouses were employed in the private domain. One participant was within the second trimester of the pregnancy (16 w), while the other three were within the last trimester (26 w and above). None of them had high risk pregnancies. The demographic details can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1

Interview participants

Name	Age	Profession	Week of Pregnancy	Marital Status
Iro	28	Arts Teacher	31	Married
Lia	45	Archaeologist	16	Married
Rena	41	Business Owner	26	Married
Zoe	33	Foreign Language Teacher	32	Married

Interview Procedure

Within the week before the interview, the interviewees were presented the aim of the study in writing and were asked to sign an informed consent form (Appendix A) and an audio/video release form (appendix B). They were also asked to provide demographic info on age, marital status, pregnancy number and week, sector of employment, profession, position, level of pregnancy risk to check for participation eligibility. Because all the participants preferred online interviews the interviewees were asked to email the signed forms in electronic format prior to the online interview. The interviews were conducted in Greek, using the Zoom platform, within July 2022. To ensure privacy, timing was mutually agreed between the interviewees and the investigator. Only with one participant, the interview got rescheduled 2 times due to schedule conflict of the investigator and the interviewee's family member health issues.

The interviews lasted 40- 50 minutes and were recorded in both audio or video format as accepted by the participants. Zoom platform was used for recording the meetings. No trial contacts could be planned with the participants to test

technical capabilities. A pilot interview was conducted to test out the questions and flow of the conversation. There was no major revision to the interview guide, however the investigator noted of areas to prompt concerning the expectations around being a working mother.

The pilot recording is not used at any time during analysis. The recordings of the research interviews were saved directly to the investigator's password-protected computer. Following the interview, a debriefing form (appendix C) was sent to the participants by e-mail. The interview recordings will be kept in the investigator's computer until 31st Dec 2022.

Interview Schedule

A semi-structured interview of approximately 50 minutes, consisting of the following open-ended questions, were conducted. The questions are presented in English and Greek.

- (1) How would you describe the motives behind your choice of being employed?
- (2) How would you describe the experience of being pregnant?
- (3) How do you like being pregnant and working?
 - a. Have you found that your pregnancy impacts how you work in some way?
 - b. Have you noticed that your pregnancy impacts the way others treat you at work in some way? Prompt for supervisors, colleagues and subordinates.

- c. What kinds of pleasant or unpleasant, expected or unexpected experiences have you been through within yourself, emerging out of your being pregnant and working at the same time?
- a. What kinds of pleasant or unpleasant, expected or unexpected experiences have you been through in your relations with others, emerging out of your being pregnant and working at the same time?

(1) How does your spouse, family and friends approach your being pregnant and working?

- a. Have you found that your pregnancy impacts your home life in some way?
- b. Have you noticed that your pregnancy impacts the way you are treated by your family and friends in some way?
- c. What kinds of pleasant or unpleasant, expected or unexpected experiences have you been through, emerging out of your being pregnant and working at the same time?

(2) How do you foresee yourself as a working mother when you go back to work?

What do your spouse, family and friends think about your being a working mother?

- a. Do you think your home life will be impacted in some way?
- b. Do you think your work life will be impacted in some way?

c. What kinds of pleasant or unpleasant experiences do you expect to go through as a working mother?

- (1) Πώς θα περιγράφατε τους λόγους / τα κίνητρα που σας οδήγησαν να επιλέξετε να εργαστείτε;
- (2) Πώς θα περιγράφατε την εμπειρία της εγκυμοσύνης;
- (3) Πώς θα περιγράφατε την κατάσταση να είστε έγκυος και να εργάζεστε;
- a. Έχετε παρατηρήσει ότι η εγκυμοσύνη με κάποιο τρόπο επηρεάζει τον τρόπο που εργάζεστε;
 - b. Έχετε παρατηρήσει ότι η εγκυμοσύνη με κάποιο τρόπο επηρεάζει την συμπεριφορά των άλλων προς εσάς κατά την εργασία; Ρωτήστε για προϊσταμένους, συναδέλφους και υφισταμένους.
 - c. Σε σχέση με τον εαυτό σας, τι είδους εμπειρίες έχετε βιώσει, αναμενόμενες ή απροσδόκητες, ευχάριστες ή δυσάρεστες, ενώ είστε έγκυος και εργάζεστε;
 - d. Σε σχέση με τους άλλους, τι είδους εμπειρίες έχετε βιώσει, αναμενόμενες ή απροσδόκητες, ευχάριστες ή δυσάρεστες, ενώ είστε έγκυος και εργάζεστε;
- (4) Ποια είναι η στάση του συζύγου, της οικογένειας και των φίλων σας στο γεγονός ότι είστε έγκυος και εργάζεστε;

- a. Έχετε παρατηρήσει ότι η εγκυμοσύνη με κάποιο τρόπο επηρεάζει την προσωπική σας ζωή;
- b. Έχετε παρατηρήσει ότι η εγκυμοσύνη με κάποιο τρόπο επηρεάζει την συμπεριφορά της οικογένειας ή των φίλων σας προς εσάς;
- c. Τι είδους εμπειρίες, ευχάριστες ή δυσάρεστες, αναμενόμενες ή απροσδόκητες, έχετε βιώσει στην προσωπική σας ζωή, ενώ είστε έγκυος και εργάζεστε;

(5) Πώς βλέπετε τον εαυτό σας ως εργαζόμενη μητέρα όταν επιστρέψετε στην εργασία σας; Ποια είναι η στάση του συζύγου, της οικογένειας και των φίλων σας στο να είστε εργαζόμενη μητέρα;

- a. Θεωρείτε ότι η προσωπική σας ζωή θα επηρεαστεί με κάποιο τρόπο;
- b. Θεωρείτε ότι η επαγγελματική σας ζωή θα επηρεαστεί με κάποιο τρόπο;
- c. Τι είδους εμπειρίες, ευχάριστες ή δυσάρεστες, προβλέπετε να ζήσετε ως εργαζόμενη μητέρα;

The interviews were transcribed verbatim in Greek using Google Docs dictate function and then checked multiple times by the investigator for corrections. Wide margins were allowed on the right and left for subsequent use of note taking during analysis. Each line and page were numbered. Due to time limitations, the whole transcribed texts in Greek were not translated into English.

Analysis of Data and Validity

The analysis was carried out in 4 steps. Firstly, the interviews were listened and the transcripts were read multiple times to get acquainted with the data, using the right margins of the transcript for making notes of interesting and significant comments. Secondly, these initial notes were reviewed to identify emerging themes and making note of them on the left margins of the transcript. The emerging themes were then reviewed again to see whether there has been over interpretation of the participants comments. Thirdly, the emergent themes were examined to identify any connections or patterns and later grouped under superordinate themes with conceptual labels. A table of themes is formed with details of the themes and the supporting quotes from the transcript (Appendix D). To simplify the analysis process, the investigator's initial notes, identified emerging themes and the developed superordinate themes were prepared in English by the investigator. The translations are done by the investigator due to time and funding limitations.

Quality

Yardley (2000) discusses four essential characteristics of the qualitative research as; sensitivity to context, commitment and rigor, transparency and coherence, importance and impact.

Sensitivity to Context: Sensitivity to context concerns the awareness on the theoretical and research literature, awareness of the socio-cultural setting of the study and the social context of the relationship between the investigator and the participants, including the language, and the specific characteristics of the

investigator, apparent to the participants. In this study the research question was formulated referring to the related theoretical and research literature and understanding that qualitative research exploring how pregnant working women experience role integration is limited. The study utilized open-ended questions to enable communication of unbiased perspective of the participant. Interviews were conducted in the mother tongue of the participants. Face-to-face or online meeting options were made available to the participants considering the changes in communication preferences and opportunities within the post Covid era. Although the investigator is not Greek by origin, is coming from a similar socio-cultural background, is a fluent speaker of the language and her surname reflects her membership of a Greek family. The investigator's female gender and being a Psychology Master's student potentially contributed to the openness and depth of the conversation.

Commitment and rigor: Commitment comprises of lengthy encounter with the subject of the research, the development of competence and skill in the methods used and deep involvement in the relevant data. Rigor refers to the completeness of the data collection and analysis. Although the investigator has not had a lengthy engagement with the topic as a researcher, she has gone through 2 pregnancies herself while full time working in a private company in a managerial position. She also has had a chance to witness other women through their pregnancies while working in private or public sectors, in managerial or nonmanagerial positions. This was the second research study of the investigator using IPA methodology and interviewing for research purposes; however, the

investigator is currently a practicum student with multiple number of clients and has past experience in hiring interviews as part of her previous work. Data triangulation is used in the completion of the analysis incorporating contributions of a student colleague of the investigator and the supervisor of the study. The student colleague, also pursuing research using IPA methodology, was presented with selected extracts of the interview with the investigator's comments and categorizations and was asked to provide feedback. The investigator's supervisor also interacted with the data and offered a different point of view.

Coherence and transparency: Coherence and transparency relate to the clarity and strength of the descriptions and argumentations. Following an initial thorough analysis by the investigator, the supervisor contributed to ensure the production of a coherent final text. Transparency is demonstrated in the definition of the steps to be taken in the analysis which later was complemented with the description of how verbatim extractions from the transcript, sufficient in number, are connected with the subthemes and superordinate themes developed. The data categorization was be presented in table format including the master themes, subthemes and the respective referred transcription extracts, identifiable by page and line numbers within the transcripts. Transparency is also demonstrated by the personal reflexivity statement of the investigator, where she described her position as a researcher towards the research phenomenon.

Impact and importance: Impact and importance concerns not only the theoretical and practical impact of a study but also the its socio-cultural impact. This

study is one of the few studies on pregnant working women in Greece and the first qualitative research. It is also the first study to explore how participants' social circle contributes to the experience of role conflict, besides personal and organizational factors. The data from this study may improve understanding of the phenomenon and may contribute to the planning of further research to understand how this experience can be related to the participation of women in labor force.

Ethical Considerations

The research was initiated following approval of the proposal by the faculty of the American College of Greece on 15th June 2022. The researcher ensured that the participants are fully informed on the purpose and the nature of the interview study and the voluntary disclosure of type of the information. The participants were sent the Informed Consent form (Appendix A) and the Audio/Video Release form (Appendix B) for review 1 week prior to the research interview and asked to review and sign before the trial contact date. Through the informed consent, the participants were informed of their rights to withdraw from the interview process at any time without any penalty. Through the informed consent form, the participants were also informed of possibility of contacting the investigator and the supervising professor to address any questions and in case she would like to see the results following the completion of the study.

Confidentiality and anonymity are ensured through the choice of a quiet and empty room to conduct the interview. The participant names are altered in the transcripts. While the participants' educational, professional and family status are

shared within the research, specific names, which could lead to the identification of the participant, are not used. Only the investigator and the supervising professor have access to the full transcripts. The participants were given a Debriefing Form (Appendix C) at the end of the interview to reconfirm the content, nature and purposed of the study, to provide guidance on how to access the results once the study is completed and referral information of 3 centers that specifically offer support to women during and after pregnancy, in case any psychological distress is experienced during the process.

Researcher Reflexivity Statement

I am a 47-year-old female, a dual citizen of Greece and Turkey, with Turkish origin. I am married to a Greek and I am a mother of 2 boys at the ages of 9 and 6. I hold a Bachelor's degree in Management and following a 21-year career in commercial management, I started my studies in the field of Psychology. I was full time employed, in the same managerial position during both of my pregnancies. My work involved management of multi country teams, extensive international and domestic travel and long hours of working. In my first pregnancy I worked until I was 36 weeks pregnant and in my second until 32 weeks, which were the maximum limits allowed by law. I was one of the few female leaders at my level, within the leadership team of Europe and the only one who was pregnant. During my pregnancies, especially during the first one, I strongly felt the need to downplay my pregnancy and stretch myself so that pregnancy wouldn't impact any of my business goals or regular business travels. I was committed to retain the same employee role

while at the same I was searching and reading about pregnancy and giving birth, in efforts of preparing myself for the upcoming motherhood. I spent extra effort to be able to retain my professional dressing style and care. I rejected to interview for one significant promotion opportunity before disclosure of my first pregnancy, thinking that a later pregnancy disclosure wouldn't be welcomed by my company and also that I wouldn't be able to fulfill the requirements of the job anyway. During my second pregnancy, while I was looking for an obstetrician in Greece, I discontinued follow up with two options due to perceived misfit with my work schedule and requirements. Concerning how others treated me, my supervisor was supporting and understanding concerning maternity leave planning, however the expectations of day-to-day operations and the pressure of business results remained the same. My spouse in general had been very supportive of my continued pace at work and any warning or discontent from his side on the amount of my travelling was rejected by the reasoning of the obligations of work. I also happened to be in the positions of first level supervisor to a female pregnant manager and second-level supervisor to multiple female employees in managerial or non-managerial positions.

My cultural background and experience of pregnancy at work, both as an employee and manager, on multiple occasions were expected to enhance my capacity to understand and interpret the experiences of the participants. However, this level of familiarity and knowledge in the field might bring with itself the risk of assumptions and bias where I could have prejudices about the meaning and importance of work and career for my participants, their expectations from their organizations and social circle and how pregnancy might have impacted them

physically. These assumptions could include expectations around the work role having and sustaining its prominent position in the participants lives, an organization acting in line with the legal frame of non-discriminating acts, offering maternity leave in line with the legal requirements, the existence and sustainment of boundaries between the family members on work related decisions and the tolerable level of physical discomfort pregnancy brings.

During the research process, I have realized the diversity of the work environments the participants were in and that I wasn't familiar with the specificities of the working conditions of different professions. Participants' different than mine work contexts, like self-employment, irregular work hours, contractual nature of work, different career trajectory, helped to reduce potential bias related to my own experience. Zoe was the first to open my eyes to the fact that there are many different work settings than the corporate one in the private sector and the specific difficulties of it. Rena showed me the conflicting sides of being a business owner which offers many flexibilities and limitations simultaneously. Lia introduced me to a contract and project-based work setting, where the supervisors and colleagues changed at intervals. Finally, Iro introduced me to the concept of a split work setting.

Some of the participants were from within my personal network's circles and therefore might have been informed that, I am a mother myself. In addition, all participants probably knew or understood that I am married, at least by the double surnames I hold. These might have aided in building instant rapport between me and the interviewees and help them open up more easily.

During the interviews, I realized that it has been challenging for me to stick to the interview guide at times, concerning the questions on the participants' close social circle and my prompts remained focused to the partners and the first-degree families. Technical challenges concerning the quality of the sound, combined with Greek being my second foreign language occasionally required me asking clarifications from the participants or them asking me for clarifications concerning the questions. Listening to the transcripts I recognized that, at times I had interrupted the interviewees to ask for more information concerning the subject. These additional prompts have not always been standard across the participants. I also recognized that at certain points I agreed with the participants' points, reflecting my thinking aligned with theirs. These instances included, when they expressed they were lucky with their employers, their pregnancies and when they claimed their autonomy and personal rights.

My analysis is informed by my low-medium level familiarity with sexism and feminism literature. I do not identify as a feminist but I am a supporter of various feminist ideas, belonging to domains of liberal and radical feminism. I recognized that my immediate interpretations after the interviews and my informed interpretations, following my supplementary reading and my supervisor discussions had differences between them concerning identification of social expectations, gender stereotypes and benevolent discrimination against women.

Results

Analysis Overview

The following themes and subthemes have emerged from the analysis. The table of themes, along with the identifiers of the respective extracts from within the transcript can be found in Appendix D. Extracts used in the presentation are English translations of the original quotes in Greek and are selected to represent the sample. The complete list of extracts in original Greek with English translations can be found in Appendix E.

1. Being pregnant while at work: Maintaining a fragile balance

- A. "I'm just lucky": Supportive work environment as an exception
- B. As one woman to another: An implicit understanding between women
- C. Not stirring up trouble: Pregnancy as a subversive act at work
- D. Pregnant body becoming an obstacle to work: Unforeseen and uninvited
- E. Work as a refuge from pregnancy

2. Protecting the personal and professional identity when everything is going through change

- A. Proving one's worth at work
- B. Becoming a child-adult: Autonomy vs vulnerability
 - a. Turning into a China doll: Sweet and fragile
 - b. 'Do's and Don'ts' from others: Judging who has a say

3. On the Thorny Route of Becoming a Working Mother

- A. Going back to work: A catch-22 situation
 - a. Ambivalence over the right choice: Freedom vs responsibility
 - b. Child-care as a 'female' responsibility: Expected and enforced
- B. Integration of parenthood into the self and one's life: Strings attached
 - a. Anticipation of challenge on the existing self: Worried with a touch of hope
 - b. Pleading with the partner for personal time

Presentation of Analysis

All the participants and their spouses, when necessary, are identified with pseudonyms. Within the quotes, omitted material is indicated by empty brackets ([...]). Parenthesis with comments in bold (*abc*) are used to show the researcher's clarifications when necessary.

Being pregnant while at work: Maintaining a fragile balance

The first master theme refers to the experience of being pregnant at work. The participants, tried to maintain a fragile balance between meeting the demands of the pregnancy and work. This balance depended on many variables, including the employer attitude towards pregnancy, workplace environment, type of work, pregnancy induced bodily and emotional changes.

"I'm just lucky": Supportive work environment as an exception. The participants referred to their pregnancy experience at work as a matter of luck which is dependent on the stance of their employers. The participants considered working in an understanding and supporting work environment as an exceptional situation, comparing themselves with colleagues, acquaintances depending on their stories of the present and the past.

'for my own experience and for the specific work environment, the managers show excellent understanding [...] It's really ideal, I consider myself very lucky, very much. Because I also hear cases where this is not the case and I think that is the usual.' (Lia, 10, 196-220)

'I consider myself one of the lucky ones, I mean, I am neither an example nor the average Greek woman.' (Rena, 22, 498-500)

'I am very, very lucky because I work in a private space in which my employers are excellent.' (Zoe, 3, 53-55)

As one woman to another: An implicit understanding between women.

Participants pointed at working with female managers or colleagues who have already experienced becoming mothers as important contributors to their positive experience at work. They attributed the understanding attitude they have experienced from their supervisors or colleagues, to their being women and mothers, which potentially wouldn't be the case if they were men.

*'...they are 2 women (**supervisors**), they are mothers, so I think that plays a big role, [...], they have also gone through these difficulties, [...] so there's a huge understanding from these people.'* (Lia, 9-10, 200-207)

'I don't want to stand out or be considered a feminist, but I think a little bit that depends on who the employer is, a woman has a different sensitivity towards another woman and other sensitivity a man will have towards a pregnant woman' (Zoe, 8, 162-167)

'... especially the colleagues were very caring, because, what happens is that they are all women, they already have children, [...] while they were at this school, they got pregnant and gave birth.' (Iro, 9,188-193)

Not stirring up trouble: Pregnancy as a subversive act at work. Participants referred to how pregnancy might be perceived as troublesome and subversive at work by employers.

'...every employer, tells you, I want to do my job above all, that is it. Now what is that you do? And that if you bring a child into the world, that is not something important.' (Zoe, 8, 168-172)

'...they look at you with askance, because pregnancy is not convenient for them and that you can be absent, either with sick leave or with your regular one, after all, they get very much incommoded.' (Lia, 38, 854-859)

The participants themselves felt responsible for their pregnancy causing potential trouble.

'...I think it also starts with us, the way we are, that is, I wasn't someone who said 'Oh, I won't do that' or 'Oh, I'm afraid to pick up the book' or 'Oh, today I'm not well' (Zoe, 11-12, 251-256)

'I have of course felt moments when there may be my own need for something and I am not capable, this is not what I like because anyway I, myself, create a problem' (Lia, 18, 391-395)

It was relieving for the participants to know that their pregnancy was accepted and within the norm of the workplace.

'This was very good, because I felt that I was not alone, that I was not doing anything illegal and what was happening was very natural.' (Iro, 9, 193-196)

'There is a pregnancy environment in there, [...] I have children, we also deal with children, so okay, the atmosphere is positive in that regard.' (Zoe, 9-10, 203-211)

Pregnant body becoming an obstacle to work: Unforeseen and uninvited. Participants experienced that pregnancy, either through the bodily changes that came with it or through preventive acts, had been limiting the ways they did their work, their work results or impacted how they interacted with others at work. These changes were not expected and they came uninvited.

'I can't be in the garage as many hours as I'd like to be, due to physical fatigue, because I can't run, I can't park as easily, I can't, I can't, I can't' (Rena, 5-6, 115-119)

'...I told her, it's not like I'm trying to avoid it, but when I told you yes, I said it with the mind then, when I had the body with the endurance I had, but now they are not the same, this. I mean it was, my belly had already grown. I was in the sixth month, I was already getting heavy.' (Iro, 12, 259-267)

'I was very different because I had all this trouble with my stomach, so I was going to work, sitting at my desk, barely speaking, I mean, my own behavior towards others had changed.' (Lia, 14-15, 317-322)

Iro also referred to how pregnancy was the reason of her leaving from one of the jobs she had, bearing with the financial consequences.

'...at the beginning of the school year, precisely because I was part-time at school, I also worked at a cafe, but then, due to pregnancy, I stopped working at the cafe, so I was only at school, [...] that is, with a much lower income.' (Iro, 4, 82-88)

Work as a refuge from pregnancy. Participants referred to work as a refuge that provided shelter for them from being consumed by pregnancy.

Lia, despite the pregnancy related stomach problems she was having, still wanted to go to work as it also provided a distraction from her difficulties.

'The physical condition definitely affects the result of your work. The days I went to work, on the other hand, I felt that it was keeping me awake and that was taking my mind off it, I mean, I wanted to go (to work).' (Lia, 12, 253-258)

Iro and Zoe referred to how the purpose and structure offered by work felt essential for their mood.

'I wanted to look for something additional during that time, [...] and I was pretty anxious, [...] that I have to do, I have to find something, but mostly not for financial reasons, but for emotional reasons, so that I don't have many hours empty and this beats me down psychologically.' (Iro, 16, 347-356)

'...now I see that I've been sitting at home for a month already, that no, I'm not having a good time, that is, I'm constantly looking for

things to do [...] so this thing is hard, being at home and not having anything to do, not working' (Zoe, 1-2, 19-26)

Protecting the personal and professional identity when everything is going through change

The second master theme concerns how the participants tried to hold on to their personal and professional identities while pregnancy imposes changes to both how they work and the way they are perceived and treated by others, including their colleagues and family members.

Proving one's worth at work. The participants felt that their pregnancy and the pregnancy induced changes in the way they work, challenged their worth as an employee and utilized various strategies to hold on to their work identities.

Iro and Lia pushed themselves to keep up with the work demands and commitments even beyond their obligations.

'...they assigned me some things that were, they had to do with some scenes which were too big, for the theater, that were, uhm, I shouldn't have done, and I should have refused, but I didn't.' (Iro, 9-10, 207-212)

'...she was sharp and somewhat bossy that it must be done. Explaining to her that I had probably proven throughout the year that I am, I am hard-working, that is, I don't look for reasons to avoid, ... on the contrary. I had served them in too many things that weren't even my business' (Iro, 11-12, 248-254)

'This let's say, it's a job that I haven't stopped doing. Although I am on leave, I have offered to do this myself, because it is simpler for me, that I know how to do this recording work, than for another archaeologist who may have his own [...] workload' (Lia, 19-20, 430-437)

Zoe attributed her image as an employee remaining unaffected, to her downplaying her pregnancy.

'...because I was relaxed, despite what I had gone through, but I was too calm and too much like I'm not pregnant, that is, I didn't behave like, neither resenting nor doing such things, so maybe my whole behavior is what caused others to treat me as before' (Zoe, 13, 287-294)

Becoming a child-adult: Autonomy vs vulnerability. The participants talked about a change in the attitude of others towards them once they learned about their pregnancy. On one hand, they were perceived as vulnerable and in need of care, on the other hand, their autonomy became open to challenge from others through attempted interventions into their acts.

Turning into a China doll: Sweet and fragile. The participants recognized the change in the attitude of the others towards them, where others became more accepting, accommodating, caring, protecting once others learnt that they were pregnant. This change was unexpected yet felt positive.

'...everything kind of revolves around you, 'Are you well, have you eaten well?'. So, all this growing care is nice, it's nice' (Iro, 21, 476-479)

'They are more receptive, they are calmer, they are more cooperative, [...] they are kinder and nicer towards me [...] To be honest, no I didn't expect it.' (Rena, 8, 160-185)

'...they were all very warm, they were all and with a word, 'Today are you ok?' 'Today are you better?', this, a care let's say ' (Lia, 16, 353-356)

'Do's and Don'ts' from others: Judging who has a say. Participants came across with occasions where others got involved in decisions concerning their work. There were instances where they were told by family members or healthcare professionals to avoid stress, reduce workload or reject requests.

*'The comment about the part of I'm working and I'm pregnant, all of them (**family**), regardless, I mean, I'm fine, I'm not fine and so on, a first conversation is 'Be careful and take time off', that is, don't go to work' (Lia, 22-23, 500-505)*

*'...not only from his (**husband**) side, that is, from our families as well, they all complained that, 'Ah, ah, you work too many hours, it is not good' (Zoe, 16, 360-363)*

*'...for what I told you about working on the theatre scenes, both of them (**husband and mother**) told me not to do it.'* (Iro, 15, 341-343)

These advices were negotiated depending on the judgement of the eligibility of the those who make them. While family advices were rejected or met by counterarguments, physician advices were taken seriously and valued as actionable.

*'...concerning work, to be honest with you, I didn't even ask them (**family**). I mean, since it's my job, uh, I don't think it's anyone's business, it's, it's entirely up to me what I'm going to do and how I'm going to do it.'* (Rena, 13, 277-283)

"So, when my doctor came to me and said I don't want in any circumstance, you come across with tension and get agitated, I can identify in my work what will agitate me and why and how, and I avoid it' (Rena, 11, 241-247)

'No one ever told me it is not good. My doctor never told me, 'Don't work.' (Zoe, 16, 363-365)

*'It made me nervous, I was angry, because I said you (**family**) can't tell me what to do.'* (Zoe, 18, 401-402)

*'Now, in essence, because the condition is so favorable, and I'm conveying that, [...] They (**family**) know that if I judge that I can or cannot, I will act accordingly.'* (Lia, 23, 506-518)

On the Thorny Route of Becoming a Working Mother

The third master theme concerns the participants perspectives on becoming a working mother. All participants expected to go through a transition in their lives and their self which they anticipated to be challenging. Going back to work and integration of parenthood to their lives appeared as the main themes, where, not only what they wanted, but also what others expected of them and what support they were provided mattered a lot.

Going Back to Work. A catch-22 situation. All participants were planning to go back to work following birth of their child. However, the decision around the timing and conditions of going back to work and the handling of child care appeared to be areas that were connected and unfortunately working against each other. The participants were struggling to identify which choice would be the best, while each and every choice meant something important to sacrifice. The legal framework regulating the maternity/paternity leave options and the social expectations on the responsibility of child care appeared as important contributors to the conflicts they experienced.

Ambivalence over the right choice: Freedom vs responsibility. The participants did not have a clear picture of when, where and in what conditions they would be going back to work. They were negotiating within themselves and with those from their work and families trying to match what they would want to do with what they felt responsible of doing. The participants were struggling to identify which choice would be the best, while each and every choice meant something important to sacrifice.

'...if it was up to me, I, after the second month, would like to go back to my job.' (Zoe, 15, 324-326)

'On the one hand, I say, oh, that's great, okay, we're going to have a baby, I have to find time for the baby, but on the other hand, I'm sad that I won't be at my job like I was before and at the hours I was before.' (Zoe, 34, 754-759)

'I don't know how this will dawn on me. I think I want to stay as long as I can. Yes, I hope that it won't catch me, feeling of being trapped.' (Iro, 22, 494-497)

'I would like, precisely because my experience was not the best, I would like to look for another job, [...] but there is this insecurity that at least I somehow got to know this area, [...] so when I return, having a child will already be a big change [...] I have some doubts regarding this. I don't know what I'm going to do.' (Iro, 22-23, 504-516)

Rena considered herself lucky to be able to have the flexibility of arranging her work programme and the maternity leave the way she likes, because she is the business owner. However, this flexibility was also subject to limits, as she expected to be available for her work from morning to evening, having the baby with her while doing work.

'I don't have a schedule, you understand, I'm available from morning to night for my work. I'm available only that I have the little one with me [...] Now I'll take some days, weeks, now I don't know how to

answer that. [...] I definitely think it will be 2-3 weeks' (Rena, 16-17, 353-378)

Child-care as a 'female' responsibility: Expected and enforced. The participants assumed primary responsibility for child-care, either as providers or organizers. A 'female' gatekeeping appeared as the socially anticipated and preferred option for child-care where the mother assumed the main responsibility. The fathers' joining child-care was welcomed and appreciated but expected mainly as periodical support, due to either doubts over fathers' competency or it becoming a heavy burden on top of their real 'work'.

'I think it's 80, 20, the mother always (child care), [...] in general he likes children, [...] but I think [...] if I see that he's doing something and he's not doing it the way I want him to do it, [...] I'll say, 'Let me do it,' and eventually [...] we will end up everything done by me.' (Zoe, 26, 574-589)

'I say to him 'Hey Phoebus, but if I won't be working this time' [...], 'It's a shame that you wake up at night when the next day you will go to work'. [...] Based on my logic, I think that a person who has not slept at night and then has to go to a job, must somehow to perform, he has another fatigue, [...] at least I can the next day, for an hour, if the baby is sleeping, chill on the couch.' (Lia, 32-33, 730-751)

The child-care being a female responsibility was enforced by social expectations which identify the mother as primarily responsible and excuse the

fathers out of the responsibility, but also by the legal framework, which don't allow the fathers take paternity leave for more than 15 days in the private sector.

'My husband [...] thinks that I absolutely must, the child wants his mother, so he says that I must stay at home with the child for at least 6 months. [...] He says, okay, I won't push you, I didn't say stay at home, but, he says, it has to be either both of us or it has to be you, because he's too young and all, so he throws it a little bit at the kid.'
(Zoe, 15, 326-339)

'...he can't take a leave, because he runs everything almost by himself, because it's a family business, [...] Unfortunately, he cannot be absent, so we will pull it again, the women, that's where we end up' (Zoe, 25, 558-570)

'I think it's only 2 weeks for the private sector (for dads). Now if the question went to whether he had more leave, because he was a public servant and so on, would he get it? He would take it' (Lia, 34, 770-774)

Interesting, yet mentioned by only Zoe was where the father's motivation to participate in child care was expected to increase because of the male gender of the baby.

'He's very enthusiastic because it's a boy, so I think just with the thought that it's a boy, he supposedly is more willing to help with everything, just knowing it's the heir, coming' (Zoe, 27, 601-605)

The female gatekeeping of child care had a hierarchical nature where the mothers were followed by grandmothers and then a nanny as the last choice, when the previous options were not available. There was a natural expectation from grandparents in providing support for the child care if they are present and capable.

'I have the possibility of help from our family, a little from one grandmother, a little from the other [...] Family is that, whenever you want, we are here, we will help as much as we can. Of course, when they hear the possibility of a stranger looking after the child, they are all negative' (Zoe, 23, 503-517)

'The good thing is that, the very positive thing is that, this year, my mother also got retired. Viktoras' father is already retired, as is his mother, so that kind of comforts me in thinking that there will be people who can help.' (Iro, 26, 580-586)

'We are a bit of a special case because I, for my part, do not have a family [...] and my husband for his part, he recently lost his father and his mother is very old [...] That is why we had looked to find someone to come and help us.' (Rena, 21, 461-473)

However, Zoe also pointed at potential conflictual thinking of the grandparents on willingness in providing this support and also how receiving this type of support might cause friction between family members due to different child rearing choices of the carers and the potential intrusion that might come with it.

'...these grandmothers, I think they also don't know what they want, that is, on one hand they tell you, 'Of course, I will help you, I'll look after the child' and on the other hand they say to you 'So, you're having a child and I will raise it?' So, it's a little bit, the situation is, it must be, there has to be a balance in things everywhere, that is, neither more one grandmother, nor more the other grandmother, so there must be a, a middle ground in everything [...] Yes, all right, they are against a foreign woman, they want to help, they both want to help very much, I just think it gets too intrusive afterwards.' (Zoe, 23-24, 518-533)

Integration of parenthood into the self and one's life: Strings attached.

Through the integration of motherhood into their selves and their lives, participants expected change within who they are and what they do, and they foresee that it will be challenging. There were different levels and types of change expected and/or (un)desired. Participants felt the need to return to their spouses asking for support to manage the time conflict they expect to come across.

Anticipation of challenge on the existing self: Worried with a touch of hope.

Participants anticipated their existing self and life to be challenged by the upcoming motherhood, based on what they have observed and have seen in others going through the same period. They felt worried but at the same time hopeful that they would be able to find a balance.

Zoe and Lia were worried but they hoped that motherhood would not consume them.

'It scares me, the truth is. Because, okay, from what I hear at least, which is from my friends who have become mothers and so forth, that I see them all day and all night talking about their kids or going to the workplace and talking about their kids, I hope I won't be like that. So, I try as of now to avoid the mistakes that I see or hear so strongly.'

(Zoe, 21-22, 472-483)

'I'm thinking many times, I say, 'Oh, how nice, until now it was me and Phoebus, we slept whenever we wanted, we woke up whenever we wanted, we did whatever we wanted', that all this will enter a completely different environment and both with work.' *(Lia, 32, 719-725)*

'...if I am going to be swallowed up by the part, I'm a mom and I'm only that from now on or if I'll be a mom and whatever else I was. I do not know it. I want to believe it will be more balanced for all of us.'

(Lia, 35-36, 795-804)

Iro expected the baby to become a priority in her life and she also hoped this would help her relax and reduce her stress at work.

'...something a colleague told me, she had told me that since she had children she stopped being so indulgent about work, [...] the center of gravity of her life has been modified, they are now her priority [...] So

that's been relieving for me. Yes, I can get it too. Because I was very stressed with work. I would like to relax' (Iro, 28, 626-637)

Rena hoped that she would be able to minimize the change by teaching the baby adapt to her life.

'... if it will be affected, so as not to be absolute, it will not be for a long time. I consider the child to be adapting. It depends on how you teach them. [...] It is what they say, the child and the dog as you teach them.' (Rena, 22, 479-491)

Pleading with the partner for personal time. Participants recognized that motherhood would challenge them to sacrifice personal time and they felt the need to negotiate with their partners upfront to be able to secure some time to themselves and pursue their interests.

'So, I've already made it clear to my husband that, when the baby arrives, you should know that once a week, twice a week, there will be those times when I will have to do something for myself, so that we are all well and my mental health is normal.' (Zoe, 28, 632-639)

'I've been discussing it a lot lately with Viktoras. How would... er, that I would like to start at a conservatory that I used to go to, I would like to work out. How will all this be done? He reassures me that we will find a way, that during the hours he will be at home, I will be able to do my activities' (Iro, 29, 658-665)

The analysis of the results showed that these pregnant working women's experiences were centred around intrapersonal and interpersonal challenges concerning keeping up with the demands of work and pregnancy, the transition in their identity to include the upcoming motherhood and their perspectives on the early motherhood period concerning anticipated changes and challenges in their work and private lives.

Discussion

This study explored experiences of 4 women, on being pregnant and working, together with their perspectives on becoming working mothers. The results will be discussed in the context of gender expectations and experience of role conflict by these women. Three master themes are identified within the analysis of the interview data: *being pregnant while at work: maintaining a fragile balance, protecting the personal and professional identity when everything is going through change, on the thorny route of becoming a working mother.*

Being pregnant while at work: Maintaining a fragile balance

For working women, pregnancy demands a change into their mode of being, which calls for the establishment of a balance between one's self, the unborn baby, the partner and the colleagues (Hackney & Perrewé, 2018). Integrating her role as a professional and as a mother can be one of the most significant challenges a woman faces in the workplace (Salihi et al., 2012). The participants of the study also experienced the challenge of maintaining this fragile balance. This balance appeared to depend on multiple factors, including the employer attitude towards pregnancy, workplace environment, type of work, pregnancy induced bodily and emotional changes. The participants' experiences on these different domains constituted how much effort they had to spend on maintaining a balance between their identities as future mothers and employees.

"I'm just lucky": Supportive work environment as an exception. The participants considered themselves lucky to have a supportive work environment, comparing themselves with colleagues, acquaintances depending on their stories of the present and the past. They considered themselves to be lucky to have been working in an exceptionally supportive environment. The discrimination against female employees is widespread in the private sector in Greece (Kambouri, 2013) and the participants appeared to know and expect it. Rena, who is a business owner, attributed her positive experience to her being the boss and refers to this as *'I consider myself one of the lucky ones, I mean, I am neither an example nor the average Greek woman.'* According to the Feminist Identity Development model of Downing and Roush (1985), within the first stage named Passive Acceptance, women accept the discrimination and oppression in male dominated world as it is. The participants' identifying themselves as lucky may indicate that, they considered the discrimination against women in the workplace as the norm but they were unable to confront it.

As one woman to another: An implicit understanding between women.

Participants attributed their positive experiences at work to having female managers or colleagues who have already experienced becoming mothers. This gender dependent understanding approach towards pregnancy was expressed by Zoe as *'I don't want to stand out or be considered a feminist, but I think a little bit that depends on who the employer is, a woman has a different sensitivity towards another woman and other sensitivity a man will have towards a pregnant woman.'* The participants' pointing at this conditional understanding showed their awareness

of the expected discrimination and oppression a woman would face in a male-dominated work environment. However, Zoe's discomfort of potentially being identified as a feminist by pointing at this gender expectation is also noteworthy. Saunders & Kashubeck-West (2006), in their study also drew attention at this difference of women supporting feminist thinking versus identifying as feminists. In the study while 82% of the women appeared to be in the advanced stages of the feminist identity, indicating their adherence to an advanced level of feminist thinking, only 11% of them considered themselves as feminists and 20% probably feminists. Authors discuss the potential reasons behind this reluctance as a concern for being negatively evaluated by others, disbelief in the function of such an identification in resisting gender discrimination or a view of the typical feminist as supporter of a more extreme ideology. In Zoe's case, it seems to have been a concern for a potential negative evaluation from others as she refers to being considered a feminist. This is understandable as feminist thinking potentially wouldn't be welcomed at work, accepted as a male-dominated world.

Not stirring up trouble: Pregnancy as a subversive act at work. Participants referred to how pregnancy may be perceived as troublesome and subversive at work by their employers. Work has been considered a masculine and public domain by foundation, starting with the industrial revolution, while women have been anticipated to lead the private domain, consisting of the family and the household (Major, 2004). Pregnant employees bring reproduction which is a private phenomenon to a place which by definition doesn't belong. Zoe referred to this separate functioning of the work and family domains as '*...every employer, tells you, I*

want to do my job above all, that is it. Now what is that you do? And that if you bring a child into the world, that is not something important.' The cultural images of the good workers and relevant organizational structures and practices are also immersed with masculinity (Buzzanell & Liu, 2005). The 'good' employee doesn't prioritize personal needs over the workplace's, a 'good' employee is reliable and present at work whenever needed. Lia referred to how pregnancy conflicts with the 'good' employee image and is viewed as a disturbance at work *'...they look at you with askance, because pregnancy is not convenient for them and that you can be absent, either with sick leave or with your regular one, after all, they get very much incommoded.'* Interestingly, the participants also seemed to have accepted these masculine standards of 'good' employee and feel responsibility for the disturbance they cause by getting pregnant. Zoe, although she had previously mentioned about the high level of support she had been receiving from her employers, pointed at her own role in securing this support by not expressing any pregnancy related hurdles at work *'...I think it also starts with us, the way we are, that is, I wasn't someone who said 'Oh, I won't do that' or 'Oh, I'm afraid to pick up the book' or 'Oh, today I'm not well'.* Iro, referred to her anxiety of going against a norm and doing something 'illegal' at work by getting pregnant. *'I felt that I was not alone, that I was not doing anything illegal and what was happening was very natural'.*

Pregnant body becoming an obstacle to work: Unforeseen and uninvited.

Pregnancy, through the somatic and psychological changes impacts the woman's interactions with the social environment (Kannen, 2013; Bjelica et. al, 2018; Bulgakov et. al, 2018). Participants experienced that their pregnancy-related bodily

changes or their preventive behaviors to secure the health of the fetus, limited the ways they did their work, their work results or impacted how they interacted with others at work. These changes were not expected and they came uninvited causing a conflict with the participants' work roles and work identity.

Role conflict has been described as the discordant role expectations from within an individual's role group (Kahn et al, 1964). Work-family conflict is among the key domains where role conflict manifests itself (Hirsh & Kang, 2016; Gyllensten & Palmer 2005; Hobfoll et al, 2003; Dilworth, 2004). There are three dimensions of work-family conflict (Hobfoll et al, 2003): time conflict, strain-based conflict and behavior-based conflict. Majority of the participants experienced strain-based conflict where their pregnancy induced struggles spilled over to work and impacted their performance in their work roles. Iro, talked about how the changes she experienced made it difficult for her to keep up with the work commitments she had made *'...I told her, [...] when I told you yes, I said it with the mind then, when I had the body with the endurance I had, but now they are not the same'*. She also referred to how pregnancy was the reason of her leaving from one of the jobs she had, bearing with the financial consequences. *'...at the beginning of the school year, [...], I also worked at a cafe, but then, due to pregnancy, I stopped working at the cafe, so I was only at school, [...] that is, with a much lower income.'* Lia, talked about how her stomach problems impacted the way she interacted with others at work, having a potential impact on her work image. *'I was very different because I had all this trouble with my stomach, so I was going to work, sitting at my desk, barely speaking'*.

Work as a refuge from pregnancy. In parallel, participants referred to work as a refuge that provided shelter for them from being consumed by pregnancy, providing purpose, structure and distraction from the hurdles of pregnancy.

Women's well-being is related with the different roles they possess and while family roles have a pivotal position in women's lives, work role provides additional sources of self-esteem and self-efficacy. Employment and work positions providing responsibility, authority, autonomy and challenge can be sources of life satisfaction for women. (Campione, 2008)

This was visible in the participants comments seeking for work in the absence of it or even despite the physical challenges it imposed. Lia, despite the pregnancy related stomach problems she was having, still wanted to go to work as it also provided a distraction from her difficulties. *'I felt that it was keeping me awake and that was taking my mind off it, I mean, I wanted to go (to work).'* Iro, referred to how the purpose and structure offered by work felt essential for her mood. *'I wanted to look for something additional during that time, [...] and I was pretty anxious, [...] that I have to do, I have to find something, but mostly not for financial reasons, but for emotional reasons, so that I don't have many hours empty and this beats me down psychologically.'* These experiences also appear to be in line with the finding of the study by Dragonas (1997) in Greece that the emotional well-being of post-partum mothers was related with their being employed. Work, depending on the environment it provides to the pregnant women, can both be a source of stress but also a source of coping with the pregnancy induced change.

Protecting the personal and professional identity when everything is going through change

Women engage in identity negotiations throughout pregnancy at work. They anticipate, experience discrimination and try to challenge the prejudices on their expected commitment and performance reduction. (Greenberg et al, 2009). The participants of the study also strived to hold on to their personal and professional identities while pregnancy-imposed changes to both how they work and the way they are perceived and treated by others, including colleagues and their family members. This may be due to the positioning of work role as sources of self-esteem and self-efficacy for these women. (Campione, 2008)

Proving one's worth at work. Women utilize different strategies to defend their working identity against stigmatization and manage discrimination. According to the studies done by Major (2004), Little (2015) and King & Botsford (2009): delaying disclosure, maintaining the pre-pregnancy pace, not asking for accommodations, sustaining professional outfit, downplaying the pregnancy, spending extra effort and shortening the maternity leave were among these strategies.

The participants of the study also appeared to use of some of these strategies, as they felt that their pregnancy and the pregnancy induced changes in the way they work, challenged their worth as an employee. Iro talked about her potential stigmatization for reduced commitment by a colleague and how she spent extra effort to prevent it. *'She was sharp and somewhat bossy that something must*

be done. Explaining to her that I had probably proven throughout the year that I am, I am hard-working, that is, I don't look for reasons to avoid, ... on the contrary. I had served them in too many things that weren't even my business'. Zoe attributed her image as an employee remaining unaffected, to her downplaying her pregnancy. 'I was too calm and too much like 'I'm not pregnant', [...] so maybe my whole behavior is what caused others to treat me as before'.

Women not only feel that they are stigmatized but also feel guilty due to their restricted work ability and the consequences of underperforming due to their pregnant condition (Lojewski et al, 2018; Staneva et al, 2015). This was experienced by Lia and although she was on short-term sick leave, she offered to continue to do a part of her job, to prevent it from being a burden to someone else. *'Although I am on leave, I have offered to do this myself, because it is simpler for me, that I know how to do this recording work, than for another archaeologist who may have his own [...] workload'.*

Becoming a child-adult: Autonomy vs vulnerability. The participants recognized that the attitude of others towards them changed once they learned about their pregnancy. On the one side, they were viewed as vulnerable and in need of care, on the other side, their autonomy opened up to challenge as others attempted to interfere into their work life and role.

Turning into a China doll: Sweet and fragile. The participants recognized the change in the attitude of the others towards them, where others became more accepting, accommodating, caring, protecting once others learnt that they were

pregnant. This experience is in line with the literature where it is shown that pregnant women are viewed as more vulnerable, like children and receive more care and assistance than nonpregnant women (Hebl et al, 2007; Hackney & Perrewé, 2018). This change in attitude towards pregnant women coming from men has been evaluated as paternalistic and associated with benevolent sexism in some literature, however in this study this change seemed to have happened independent of the gender of the others.

The participants of the study didn't expect this change but felt positive about it. Iro expressed how nice it feels to be in the center of attention. *'...everything kind of revolves around you, 'Are you well, have you eaten well?'. So, all this growing care is nice, it's nice'*. However, this type of experience could have been perceived as negative as well by some participants like in the study of Hackney (2017). There might be personal or cultural differences impacting the difference in perceptions or whether this type of maternalistic/paternalistic care is accompanied by any type of hostile behaviors.

'Do's and Don'ts' from others: Judging who has a say. Participants came across with occasions where family members or healthcare professionals got involved in decisions concerning their work, through advices to avoid stress, reduce workload or reject requests.

Importance of family and social support during pregnancy in general is shown by research (Dragonas et al, 1997; Thorpe et al 1992), however, research on how social support impacts pregnant women's work experience is almost non-existent. In

one qualitative study, pregnant women highlighted the partner and mother's role in providing support to sustain working full-time (Selboe & Skogas 2017). Pregnant women understand and feel the pressure of their role in the well-being of the baby and they already might struggle with fear associated with it (Staneva et al 2015). The advice received by the participants of the study were mainly from family members, where these women were asked to prioritize their mothering role over their work role, creating a potential role conflict in them, where the 'good' mother and the 'good' employee were mismatched. Lia told how her family advised her to take time off work irrespective of any health risks *'all of them (family), regardless, I mean, I'm fine, I'm not fine and so on, a first conversation is 'Be careful and take time off', that is, don't go to work' (Lia)*. The entitlement of family members giving such advice and attempting to interfere with the autonomy of the participants may be rooted in their view of the pregnant women as vulnerable and child-like. Zoe felt that her identity was threatened and she responded to it with anger *'It made me nervous, I was angry, because I said you (family) can't tell me what to do.'*

The participants of the study, coped with the role conflict using strategies of persuasion, rejection, ignorance or acceptance judging the credibility of the source of the feedback and the most credible reference appeared as their physician. It is noted in literature that health advice given by medical professionals might be aggravating stress during pregnancy when it might not be practically possible to be followed at work (Gatrell, 2011). In this study, Rena, although she had mentioned that it wasn't her family's business to interfere with her work, when her doctor made an advice to avoid stress, tried to find a way of implementing it. *"So, when my*

doctor came to me and said 'I don't want in any circumstance, you come across with tension and get agitated', I can identify in my work what will agitate me and why and how, and I avoid it'. Zoe found support from her physician's stance in resisting her family's advice to reduce workload. 'No one ever told me it is not good. My doctor never told me, 'Don't work!'. These experiences point at the importance of medical professionals having a holistic picture of the pregnant woman's life, including work, considering the potential impact of the health advices in the woman's life, in the form of psychological conflict.

On the Thorny Route of Becoming a Working Mother

All participants expected to go through a transition in their lives and their self on the route of becoming a working mother, which they anticipated to be challenging. Going back to work and integration of parenthood into their lives appeared as main sources of identity and role conflict which were rooted in gender expectations. According to the feminist theory, although the number of roles the women occupy in today's society have increased in number, the view of motherhood as woman's top occupation is rooted within white Eurocentric culture (Enns, 2004). Mothers' interests and pursuits of achievements in other domains of life, like work, are subject to the consistent self-questioning of whether they are doing the right thing and whether they are adequate in their mothering. Many women put themselves up to the standards of an ideal with super powers, who can both be a super woman and a super mom, that in the end brings nothing but feelings of failure and disappointment at oneself, due to the unrealistic expectations

of being a high achiever outside home and practicing 'good' mothering in parallel.

(Gross, 1998)

Going Back to Work. A catch-22 situation.

According to the interview data, participants' motivations for work were self-efficacy, autonomy, purpose, economical needs and social expectations. All participants were clear about going back to work following their maternity leave. None of them referred to any intentions of quitting work due to child birth. None of them referred to their husband's or families' advice towards leaving work due to child birth, either. Considering that all the participants are university graduates, this is expected, in line with the previous research of Dragonas et al (1997) where women with high level of education tended to remain employed rather than quit paid work. The interview data revealed that at least two participants had working (or retired) mothers and mother in laws, so this also appears aligned with the research of Papapetrou & Tsalaporta (2018), where the female labor participation is shown to carry characteristics of intergenerational transmission getting impacted from the work status of the mother and mother-in-law.

The decision around the timing and conditions of going back to work and the handling of child care appeared to be closely related and dependent on each other. The participants were struggling to identify which choice would be the best, while each and every choice meant something important to sacrifice. The social expectations on the 'female' responsibility of child care and the legal framework

regulating the maternity/paternity leave options were the main sources of the psychological conflict they were experiencing.

Ambivalence over the right choice: Freedom vs responsibility. The participants were negotiating within themselves and with those from their work and families on when and how they would be going back to work trying to match what they would want to do with what they felt responsible of doing. These efforts targeted to match the 'good' mother and the 'good' employee. Considering the stronger internal, relational and societal pressures women are exposed to, concerning compliance with the family and household roles, working women, in comparison to men, experience heavier strain of competing work and family demands (Gyllensten & Palmer 2005; Hobfoll et al, 2003). Many women, due to their communal orientation, sourced in the gender roles, may not see their work as a justified reason for allocating less time to the family. This may lead them feel pressurized causing them to feel guilty and anxious that they are not able to meet all of their responsibilities. (Hobfoll et al, 2003). Zoe expressed this conflict nicely *'On the one hand, I say, oh, that's great, okay, we're going to have a baby, I have to find time for the baby, but on the other hand, I'm sad that I won't be at my job like I was before and at the hours I was before.'*

Iro wanted to look for another job following the maternity leave because of her unpleasant experience during her pregnancy at her workplace. Fox and Quinn (2014) had shown that when women feel they have been stereotyped or discriminated against, they are more likely to intend to leave their jobs following the

birth of their children. Hackney (2017) also had suggested that greater levels of job tension experienced during pregnancy led to increased turnover intentions. Despite this tendency to look for a new job, Iro carried concerns that she wouldn't be able to meet the demands of being a 'good' mother and 'good' employee which would be both unknown territories for her. *'I would like, precisely because my experience was not the best, I would like to look for another job, [...] but there is this insecurity that at least I somehow got to know this area, [...] so when I return, having a child will already be a big change [...] I have some doubts regarding this. I don't know what I'm going to do.'*

On the other hand, Rena considered herself lucky, as a business owner, to have the freedom of arranging her work programme and the maternity leave the way she likes. However, she planned to assume double responsibility of work and child-care, even very early into the motherhood. *'I don't have a schedule, you understand, I'm available from morning to night for my work. I'm available only that I have the little one with me [...] Now I'll take some days, weeks, now I don't know how to answer that. [...] I definitely think it will be 2-3 weeks'*. She didn't consider to ask for support from her (male) business partner in taking over her responsibilities. This might be a way of coping for her, with the conflict of 'good' mother and 'good' employee.

Child-care as a 'female' responsibility: Expected and enforced. The participants assumed primary responsibility for child-care, either as providers or organizers. Zoe described it like *'I think it's 80, 20 (percent), the mother always*

(child care share of the mother vs father)'. Participants welcomed fathers' joining child-care and appreciated it but expected it mainly as periodical support, due to either doubts over fathers' competency or it becoming a heavy burden on top of their real 'work'. Gender roles might explain the gap between men and women in terms of the household roles, despite the changes in the work and family domains. Women may be reluctant to give up the control in the 'maternal' domain which they view as their primary role and might be having difficulty accepting assistance from their partners. Receiving a great level of support may be perceived by working women as a 'failure' at their "real" role as mother (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010; Hobfoll et al, 2003). Zoe pointed at her difficulty of accepting help from her partner because she doesn't think he will be competent enough *'if I see that he's doing something and he's not doing it the way I want him to do it, [...] I'll say, 'Let me do it,' and eventually [...] we will end up everything done by me.'* In addition, receiving a high level of support from their partner may create feelings of guilt in these women as they cannot fulfill their 'real' role as mother. Lia referred to her feelings of guilt, concerning her partner's involvement in childcare, on top of his real 'work'. *'I say to him 'Hey Phoebus, but if I won't be working this time' [...], 'It's a shame that you wake up at night when the next day you will go to work'.*

In Greece, women are stereotypically seen as the pillars of family and home within the society and despite the fast pace of women's entrance into the labor market within the last decades, change in the reassignment of gender roles and responsibilities has been slow and limited. Women, to a great extent, have assumed double burden of care and housework. Despite the increase in the urban, educated

middle-class men's participation in family life, men still view their participation at household duties and care responsibilities as an act of good will towards spouses (Kambouri, 2013; Tsouroufli, 2020). In parallel to this, Zoe shared her husband's perspective on her being the primary caregiver *'My husband [...] thinks that, [...] the child wants his mother, so he says that I must stay at home with the child for at least 6 months. [...] He says, okay, I won't push you, I didn't say stay at home, but, he says, it has to be either both of us or it has to be you'*. Interestingly, Zoe also referred to her husband's likely increased motivation to participate in child care because of the male gender of the baby, that puts him in the position of the heir. Research is needed to understand whether child's gender plays a role in father's participation in child care.

In Greece, fathers rarely utilize the parenting leave options provided within the legal context, while these options are already limited and with a significant difference between public and private employees (Kambouri, 2013). All participants in the study had spouses working in the private sector. Lia referred to this limitation by law as a reasoning of limited opportunities that her husband has even if he wanted to join child-care at a higher rate. *'I think it's only 2 weeks for the private sector (for dads). Now if the question went to whether he had more leave, because he was a public servant and so on, would he get it? He would take it'*. On the other hand, gender perspective might again explain men's reluctance to take over childcare, which is labelled as feminine, especially if their function as a provider gets compromised (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010). This view seems to be accepted by women as well. Zoe described why her husband cannot take time off from his work at a family

business, to share child-care responsibilities and how this leads to the responsibility falling on to her '*...he can't take a leave, because he runs everything almost by himself, because it's a family business, [...] Unfortunately, he cannot be absent, so we will pull it again, the women, that's where we end up*'.

According to the participants' experiences, the female gatekeeping of child care had a hierarchical nature where the mothers are followed by grandmothers and then a nanny as the last choice, when the previous options are not available. There was a natural expectation from grandparents in providing support for the child care if they are present and capable. This is in line with the general Greek context where care has always been a considered women's work, provided mainly in the household, informally as one of the main functions of the family. Traditionally, the extended family (grandparents and other relatives) play an important role in helping women with the burden of care (Davaki, 2013; Kambouri 2013). Rena considered theirs to be a special case because they don't have access to the support of the extended family and attributed their choice for looking for outside support to the lack of the family support. '*We are a bit of a special case because I, for my part, do not have a family [...] and my husband for his part, he recently lost his father and his mother is very old [...] That is why we had looked to find someone to come and help us.*' This culturally-based expectation of support from the extended family was identified also in the study of Thorpe et al (1992) where Greek and British women were compared. The authors had attributed the relatively higher dissatisfaction of Greek women from the level of support they received, to their high level of expectations compared to British women. This culturally-based expectation of

grandparents offering support in child care might produce strain for the grandparents as well. On one hand, grandparents may consider that child-care is a family responsibility, disfavoring receipt of support from outside the family, on the other hand, they might not feel willing or ready to provide such a support, returning the responsibility to the mother. Zoe pointed at this dilemma of the grandparents *'...these grandmothers, I think they also don't know what they want, that is, on one hand they tell you, 'Of course, I will help you, I'll look after the child' and on the other hand they say to you 'So, you're having a child and I will raise it?'* The working mother in Greece might get frustrated with the level of support she receives in comparison to her expectations and might get further squeezed between her mothering and work roles. Moreover, the involvement of grandparents in childcare, when available, require maintenance of a fragile balance between involved parties and might come at a cost of interference at the nuclear family, especially concerning child rearing practices. Zoe referred to this *'Yes, all right, they are against a foreign woman, they want to help, they both want to help very much, I just think it gets too intrusive afterwards.'*

In summary, in Greece, strong gender and cultural expectations concerning child-care responsibility, supported by the parental leave framework appear as a major source of work-family conflict for working mothers. However, the participants of this study seemed to accept this deep-rooted discrimination in the society, as expected in the Passive Acceptance stage of the feminist identity development.

Integration of parenthood into the self and one's life: Strings attached.

Participants expected change within who they are and what they do through the integration of motherhood into their selves and their lives, and they anticipated it to be challenging. Identity conflict and time conflict appeared potential sources of stress for these women.

Anticipation of challenge on the existing self: Worried with a touch of hope.

Women reevaluate their personal and work identity in the light of their upcoming motherhood and try to resettle their sense of efficacy in managing their new set of responsibilities (Greenberg et al, 2009). Participants of this study anticipated their existing self and life to be challenged by the upcoming motherhood, based on what they have observed and have seen in others going through the same period.

According to Ladge et al (2012) pregnancy brings up uncertainties on the impact of growing a motherhood identity on the woman's worker identity and an identity transition process is initiated. Social expectations concerning motherhood are that women are natural mothers, who are able to care for their baby right away, and that they find ultimate fulfillment in this caring and nurturing role, in a self-sacrificing manner (Choi et al, 2005). In Greece, an enormous value is assigned to the motherhood identity. Greek literature is full of representations of mothers as heroes because they sacrifice and suffer for the good of their honor, family and children (Tsouroufli, 2020). In this study, the majority of the participants felt threatened by the potential invasion of motherhood and assumed a defensive stance holding on to their personal and work identity. Rena hoped that she would be able to minimize the change by teaching the baby adapt to her life. '*... if it will be affected, so as not*

to be absolute, it will not be for a long time. I consider the child to be adapting. It depends on how you teach them. [...] It is what they say, the child and the dog as you teach them.' Iro, on the other hand, expected that motherhood would become her priority and act as an antidote to the disliked aspects of her work identity. Social expectations around the superiority of the motherhood identity for a woman might be the source of the challenge these women experienced and result in the resisting and welcoming stances against the upcoming motherhood identity.

Pleading with the partner for personal time. Participants recognized that the upcoming motherhood would cause a time-based conflict for them, challenge them to sacrifice personal time to keep up with the requirements of the 'good' mother and the 'good' employee roles. Time-based conflict refers to the distribution of time, energy and opportunities among work and family roles, where scheduling is difficult, time is restricted and the demands are incompatible (Hobfoll et al, 2003). Mothers are likely to experience more time-based conflict than men, as per data by Craig (2006), where in Australia, mothers compared to fathers spent more overall time with children, engaged in more multitasking, operated with a more rigid timetable, spent more time alone with children, and had more overall responsibility for managing the care. According to OECD statistics; in comparison to men, women on average are spending 32 days more on unpaid work and 7 days more in total work more per year, compared to men. (OECD, n.d.) Again, according to OECD data, in Greece, the respective differences are 42 days in unpaid work and 19 days more in total work more for women. (OECD, n.d.) Statistics show how women are disadvantaged in finding personal time to themselves.

To cope with the challenge of the upcoming time-based conflict, many participants felt the need to discuss with their partners upfront to be able to secure some personal time and pursue their interests. Iro shared her concerns with her husband and found relief in the support offered by him. *'I've been discussing it a lot lately with Viktoras. How would... er, that I would like to start at a conservatory that I used to go to, I would like to work out. How will all this be done? He reassures me that we will find a way, that during the hours he will be at home, I will be able to do my activities'*. The participants potentially felt the need to negotiate their need for personal time with their spouses because the social expectations concerning motherhood prescribe that mothers sacrifice themselves for the good of the family and children. If they didn't claim for it, their partners might not have considered to offer it. This is another area that the participants didn't seem to recognize the discrimination against women, through the double standards for mother and fathers in terms of time allocation to work and household responsibilities.

Clinical Implications

The results of this study support the feminist counseling perspective on the social and political origins of women's mental health problems. Psychotherapists serving the female population in Greece are encouraged to become familiar with the feminist counseling principles. Professionals working with women need to understand the particular circumstances of each individual woman, including the interactions between her personality and her social and work environments. Reducing the explanation of issues to intrapersonal problems and the adoption of a

medical model of diagnoses create a tendency towards decontextualization of women's issues, promote gender bias, or support victim blaming. Through feminist therapy, psychotherapists may assist women to explore the social and political origins of their issues and work through their development in autonomy and self-sufficiency. To be able to do so, psychotherapists would be better placed to help pregnant working women if they explored and understood their own biases and assumptions regarding this particular category.

The results of this study also concern the medical professionals, gynecologists, midwives and nurses serving this population in Greece. While giving health advice, they are recommended to understand the different roles these women have and consider their holistic well-being, at home and at work. They are also advised to encourage women to seek support from a mental health professional in coping with potential stressors at home or at work.

Limitations & Future Research

This is the first qualitative research on the experience of pregnant working women in Greece. Considering that this study design is qualitative with a small sample size, representative conclusions cannot be drawn on the research topic.

The sample consisted of pregnant working women with university degrees, living in Athens, with their spouses, within heterosexual marriages. All the participants and their partners were working within the private domain. This might indicate a sample bias towards a specific sociodemographic profile. Although the sample included different professions and age groups, and 2 of the participants had

people management responsibilities, due to the time limitations concerning recruitment, the sample could not include the profile of a pregnant woman working in a managerial position within a corporate setting. This might have caused the absence of data concerning potential role conflict specific to this group, that has been discussed in the literature. For the same reason, data concerning career expectations might be limited in scope.

To complement the scope of this qualitative study into the motherhood experience, future qualitative research studies are recommended with working mothers. To complement the gender perspective, future qualitative research on the experience of the working fathers would be very valuable.

It will also be valuable to explore the research topic among working women with different cultural backgrounds both within Greece and across countries with different cultural views concerning women, work and motherhood.

Quantitative research on the subject will enable inclusion of different populations and generation of representative findings. These results will contribute to the guidance of the organizations and policymakers in developing support structures, intervention programs and law adjustments.

Within the discussion references are made to the Feminist Identity Development Model and associations are made between participants' experiences and different stages of feminist identity development. It would be worthy to investigate whether there is a relation between feminist identity development stages, experience of role conflict and psychological well-being within the pregnant

or working women population in Greece. The results of such a study will be valuable for psychotherapists serving this group. However, it should be noted that the scales measuring feminist identity are developed in US and are not validated in Greece.

Conclusion

The experiences of the pregnant working women in this study were impacted by the social expectations that, the workplace is a male-dominated domain, where reliability and presence are key requirements and the gender expectations that child-care is primarily a female responsibility. The women frequently found themselves striving to match the standards of the 'good' mother and the 'good' employee prescribed by the social expectations, experienced guilt and anxiety when they felt they were not able to keep up with both roles. They experienced that pregnancy impacted their work roles either through the somatic obstacles or through how others perceived them once they learned they were pregnant. They themselves felt responsible for their pregnancy as a subversive act at work. They used various strategies to protect their personal and professional identities, like spending extra effort and downplaying pregnancy at work. Strain-based conflict and time-based conflict were the two frequent work-family conflicts experienced and expected by the women. Family was found to serve as an important means of support but also social pressure imposing the mothers-to-be to prioritize their child-care role over their work role. Health care professionals appeared as important reference points for mother-to-be's in the management of the potential work-family conflict, through the health advice they give concerning the fetus' health. Responsibility of the child-care was the most significant factor impacting the

mothers' decision on going back to work. Mothers felt ambivalence between what they would want to do and what they felt they were responsible to do. Fathers' contribution to child-care was appreciated but expected as periodical support as permitted by their 'real' work. A hierarchical female gatekeeping of child-care appeared where mothers came first, followed by grandparents and a nanny in case the previous are not available. The legal framework regulating the maternal and paternal leaves also reinforced the female responsibility of child-care. Women anticipated their existing self and life to be challenged by the upcoming motherhood and returned to their spouses to claim for some personal time to cope with the time-conflict they expected to experience.

Psychotherapists serving this population in Greece are advised to consider the social and political origins of the mental health problems women might be experiencing within this period. The scope of this qualitative study can be extended with future research on the experiences of working mothers and fathers and working women with different cultural backgrounds. Quantitative research on the subject will enable inclusion of different populations and generation of representative findings, that will contribute to the guidance of the organizations and policymakers in developing support structures, intervention programs and law adjustments.

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Appendix A

The American College of Greece

Informed Consent Form for Human Research Subjects

You are being asked to volunteer in a research study called 'A Qualitative Analysis on the Experience of Greek Pregnant Working Women', conducted by Aysegul Saglam Tsoukos, student at MSc in Counselling Psychology and Psychotherapy program, at the American College of Greece. This project is supervised by Dr. Maria Ersi Koliris, faculty member of the department of Psychology at the American College of Greece. The purpose of the study is to qualitatively analyse the experience of pregnant working women in Greece.

As a participant, you will be asked to participate at an interview which will be conducted face-to-face or through Zoom and answer some open-ended questions. The interview will last approximately 50 minutes. While there is no direct benefit for your participation in the study, it is reasonable to expect that the results may provide information of value to policymakers, organizations and psychotherapists.

Your identity as a participant will remain confidential. Your name will not be included in any forms, questionnaires, etc. This consent form is the only document identifying you as a participant in this study; it will be stored securely at the American College of Greece and will be available only to the investigator and Dr. Maria Ersi Koliris. Data collected will be stored anonymously in electronic form for further research within the investigator's OneDrive storage in American College of Greece. If you are interested in seeing the results, you may contact the principal investigator.

If you have questions about the research, you may contact the student investigator, Aysegul Saglam Tsoukos, a.tsoukos@acg.edu and the faculty advisor Dr. Maria Ersi Koliris, mkoliris@acg.edu.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. Refusal to participate or discontinue participation at any time (including the interview process), will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

You have fully read the above text and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the purposes and procedures of this study. Your signature acknowledges receipt of a copy of the consent form as well as your willingness to participate.

Typed/Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

The American College of Greece

Φόρμα Συγκατάθεσης

Σας ζητείται να συμμετάσχετε εθελοντικά σε μια ερευνητική μελέτη με τίτλο «Μια Ποιοτική Ανάλυση για την Εμπειρία των Ελλήνων Εγκύων Εργαζομένων Γυναικών», που διεξάγει η Αϊσεγκιούλ Σάγλαμ-Τσούκου, στα πλαίσια του Μεταπτυχιακού Προγράμματος Συμβουλευτικής και Ψυχοθεραπείας στο Αμερικανικό Κολλέγιο Ελλάδος. Το έργο αυτό επιβλέπεται από την Δρ Μαρία Έρση Κολίρη, Καθηγήτρια Ψυχολογίας του Αμερικανικού Κολλεγίου Ελλάδος. Σκοπός της μελέτης είναι η ποιοτική ανάλυση της εμπειρίας των εγκύων εργαζόμενων γυναικών στην Ελλάδα.

Ως συμμετέχων, θα σας ζητηθεί να συμμετάσχετε σε μια συνέντευξη που θα διεξαχθεί δια ζώσης ή μέσω του Zoom και θα απαντήσετε σε ορισμένες ανοιχτές ερωτήσεις. Η συνέντευξη θα διαρκέσει περίπου 50 λεπτά. Αν και δεν υπάρχει άμεσο όφελος για τη συμμετοχή σας στη μελέτη, είναι λογικό να αναμένουμε ότι τα αποτελέσματα μπορούν να παρέχουν χρήσιμες πληροφορίες σε υπεύθυνους χάραξης πολιτικής, οργανισμούς και ψυχοθεραπευτές.

Η ταυτότητά σας ως συμμετέχων θα παραμείνει εμπιστευτική. Το όνομά σας δεν θα συμπεριληφθεί σε κανένα έντυπο, ερωτηματολόγιο κ.λπ. Αυτό το έντυπο συγκατάθεσης είναι το μόνο έγγραφο που σας προσδιορίζει ως συμμετέχοντα σε αυτήν τη μελέτη. Θα αποθηκευτεί με ασφάλεια στο Αμερικανικό Κολλέγιο Ελλάδος και θα είναι διαθέσιμο μόνο στην ερευνήτρια και στην Δρ Μαρία Έρση Κολίρη. Τα δεδομένα που συλλέγονται θα αποθηκευτούν ανώνυμα σε ηλεκτρονική μορφή για περαιτέρω έρευνα, στην αποθήκη OneDrive της υπεύθυνης ερευνήτριας στο Αμερικανικό Κολλέγιο Ελλάδος. Εάν ενδιαφέρεστε να δείτε τα αποτελέσματα, μπορείτε να επικοινωνήσετε με την υπεύθυνη ερευνήτρια.

Εάν έχετε ερωτήσεις σχετικά με την έρευνα, μπορείτε να επικοινωνήσετε με τη υπεύθυνη ερευνήτρια, Αϊσεγκιούλ Σάγλαμ-Τσούκου, a.tsoukos@acg.edu και τη σύμβουλο έρευνας Δρ. Μαρία Έρση Κολίρη, mkoliris@acg.edu.

Η συμμετοχή σας σε αυτή την έρευνα είναι εθελοντική. Η άρνηση συμμετοχής ή η διακοπή της συμμετοχής ανά πάσα στιγμή (συμπεριλαμβανομένης της διαδικασίας συνέντευξης), δεν συνεπάγεται καμία κύρωση ή απώλεια παροχών που διαφορετικά δικαιούστε.

Έχετε διαβάσει πλήρως το παραπάνω κείμενο και είχατε την ευκαιρία να κάνετε ερωτήσεις σχετικά με τους σκοπούς και τις διαδικασίες αυτής της μελέτης. Η υπογραφή σας επιβεβαιώνει τη λήψη αντιγράφου του εντύπου συγκατάθεσης καθώς και την προθυμία σας να συμμετάσχετε.

Δακτυλογραφημένο/Εκτυπωμένο Όνομα Συμμετέχοντος

Υπογραφή Συμμετέχοντος

Ημερομηνία

Appendix B

Audio/Video Release Form

I voluntarily agree to be audio or video recorded during the interview to be conducted by Aysegul Saglam Tsoukos, student at the MSc in Counselling Psychology and Psychotherapy program at the American College of Greece. I agree that the audio or video recording will be done by Aysegul Saglam Tsoukos in case of face-to-face interview or by Zoom in case of online interview and understand that the recording will be used only for research purposes and will be accessed by Aysegul Saglam Tsoukos. The recording will be downloaded from Zoom to the personal computer of Aysegul Saglam Tsoukos the day following the interview, shared by myself and will be kept on the personal computer of Aysegul Saglam Tsoukos. The recording will be erased by Dec 31st 2022.

Signature of the Participant

Date

Signature of Investigator

Date

Φόρμα Έκδοσης Ήχου/Βίντεο

Συμφωνώ οικειοθελώς να καταγραφεί ήχος ή βίντεο κατά τη διάρκεια της συνέντευξης που θα διεξαχθεί από την Αϊσεγκιούλ Σάγλαμ-Τσούκου, στα πλαίσια του Μεταπτυχιακού προγράμματος Συμβουλευτικής και Ψυχοθεραπείας στο Αμερικανικό Κολλέγιο Ελλάδος. Συμφωνώ ότι η εγγραφή ήχου ή βίντεο θα γίνει από την Αϊσεγκιούλ Σάγλαμ-Τσούκου σε περίπτωση συνέντευξης δια ζώσης ή από το Zoom σε περίπτωση διαδικτυακής συνέντευξης, και κατανοώ ότι η ηχογράφηση θα χρησιμοποιηθεί μόνο για ερευνητικούς σκοπούς και θα έχει πρόσβαση από την Αϊσεγκιούλ Σάγλαμ-Τσούκου. Η ηχογράφηση θα μεταφορτωθεί από το Zoom στον προσωπικό υπολογιστή της Aysegul Saglam Tsoukos την επόμενη μέρα της συνέντευξης, θα μοιραστεί με μένα και θα διατηρηθεί στον προσωπικό υπολογιστή της Αϊσεγκιούλ Σάγλαμ-Τσούκου. Η ηχογράφηση θα διαγραφεί έως τις 31 Δεκεμβρίου 2022.

Υπογραφή Συμμετέχοντα

Ημερομηνία

Υπογραφή Ερευνητή

Ημερομηνία

Appendix C

The American College of Greece

Debriefing Statement

Thank you for your participation in this research study named 'A Qualitative Analysis on the Experience of Greek Pregnant Working Women' and for the time you dedicated to participate in the interview.

The purpose of the study is to qualitatively analyze the experience of pregnant working women in Greece. It is important to reveal the experiences of pregnant working women in order to design further research that will provide input to policymakers and organizations concerning work and family policies, to enhance participation of women in the labor force and to psychotherapists who are providing counseling services to this group.

If you would like to receive any further information regarding this study or you would like a copy of the results of the study once completed at 31st Dec 2022, you may contact the student investigator, Aysegul Saglam Tsoukos at a.tsoukos@acg.edu and the faculty advisor Dr. Maria Ersi Koliris at mkoliris@acg.edu. Moreover, if any psychological distress may be experienced during or after the completion of the study's interview, you may seek professional support via "Κοιτίδα" at www.koitida.com, 210 7719960 or via "Φαιναρέτη" at www.fainareti.gr, 210 9319054 or via [ιατρείο Ψυχικής Υγείας Γυναικών](http://www.iaτρείοΨυχικήςΥγείαςΓυναικών), της Α΄ Ψυχιατρικής Κλινικής του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών του Αιγινήτειου Νοσοκομείου at <https://www.facebook.com/WomensMentalHealthClinic>, 210 7297957.

Thank you again for taking part in this study!

Signature of Investigator

Date

The American College of Greece**Φόρμα Ενημέρωσης**

Σας ευχαριστούμε για τη συμμετοχή σας σε αυτήν την ερευνητική μελέτη που ονομάζεται «Μια Ποιοτική Ανάλυση για την Εμπειρία των Εγκύων Εργαζόμενων Γυναικών στην Ελλάδα» και για τον χρόνο που αφιερώσατε για να συμμετάσχετε στη συνέντευξη.

Ο σκοπός της μελέτης είναι η ποιοτική ανάλυση της εμπειρίας των εγκύων εργαζόμενων γυναικών στην Ελλάδα. Είναι σημαντικό να αποκαλυφθούν οι εμπειρίες των εγκύων εργαζόμενων γυναικών προκειμένου να σχεδιαστεί περαιτέρω έρευνα που θα παράσχει πληροφορίες, τόσο σε υπεύθυνους χάραξης πολιτικής και οργανισμούς, σχετικά με τις πολιτικές εργασίας και οικογένειας για την ενίσχυση της συμμετοχής των γυναικών στο εργατικό δυναμικό, όσο και στους ψυχοθεραπευτές που παρέχουν συμβουλευτικές υπηρεσίες σε αυτήν την ομάδα.

Εάν θελήσετε να προσθέσετε πληροφορίες σχετικά με αυτήν τη μελέτη ή εάν θέλετε ένα αντίγραφο των αποτελεσμάτων της μελέτης μόλις ολοκληρωθεί στις 31 Δεκεμβρίου 2022, μπορείτε να επικοινωνήσετε με την υπεύθυνη ερευνήτρια, Αϊσεγκιούλ Σάγλαμ-Τσούκου στο a.tsoukos@acg.edu και την επιβλέπουσα της μελέτης Δρ. Μαρία Έρση Κολίρη στο mkoliris@acg.edu. Επιπλέον, εάν εμφανιστεί οποιαδήποτε ψυχολογική δυσφορία κατά τη διάρκεια ή μετά την ολοκλήρωση της συνέντευξης της μελέτης, μπορείτε να αναζητήσετε ψυχολογική υποστήριξη μέσω της «Κοιτίδα» στο www.koitida.com, 210 7719960 ή μέσω της «Φαιναρέτη» στο www.fainareti.gr, 210. 9319054 ή μέσω του Ιατρείου Ψυχικής Υγείας Γυναικών, της Α΄ Ψυχιατρικής Κλινικής του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών του Αιγινητείου Νοσοκομείου, στο <https://www.facebook.com/WomensMentalHealthClinic>, 210 7297957.

Σας ευχαριστούμε και πάλι για τη συμμετοχή σας σε αυτή τη μελέτη!

Υπογραφή Ερευνητή

Ημερομηνία

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Appendix E
Extracts by Theme

1. Being pregnant while at work: Maintaining a fragile balance

A. "I'm just lucky": Supportive work environment as an exception

‘για τη δική μου εμπειρία και για το συγκεκριμένο εργασιακό περιβάλλον, οι υπεύθυνες δείχνουν εξαιρετική κατανόηση [...] Είναι πραγματικά ιδανικό, θεωρώ ότι είμαι πάρα πολύ τυχερή, πάρα πολύ. Γιατί ακούω και περιπτώσεις που δεν είναι έτσι και νομίζω ότι είναι το σύνηθες.’ (Λία, 10, 196-220)

‘for my own experience and for the specific work environment, the managers show excellent understanding [...] It's really ideal, I consider myself very lucky, very much. Because I also hear cases where this is not the case and I think that is the usual.’ (Lia, 10, 196-220)

‘...νομίζω ακούστηκαν όλα πολύ ιδανικά, αλλά είναι πολύ η αλήθεια μου, δηλαδή, μπορεί να είμαι, δεν ξέρω, και μοναδική που να σ’το είχα πει όλα τόσο ιδανικά, αλλά είναι, και μακάρι δηλαδή να ήτανε για όλες τις γυναίκες, έτσι.’ (Λία, 37, 826-831)

‘... I think everything sounded very ideal, but it's very much my truth, I mean, I may be, I don't know, the only one that I had told you everything so ideal, but it is and also I wish it was for all women, like that.’ (Lia, 37, 826-831)

‘.θεωρώ ότι είμαι από τους τυχερούς, δεν αποτελώ δηλαδή, ούτε κάποιο παράδειγμα, ούτε η μέση Ελληνίδα.’ (Ρένα, 22, 498-500)

‘I consider myself one of the lucky ones, I mean, I am neither an example nor the average Greek woman.’ (Rena, 22, 498-500)

‘...είμαι πάρα πολύ τυχερή γιατί εργάζομαι σε έναν ιδιωτικό χώρο στον οποίο είναι εξαιρετικοί οι εργοδότες μου.’ (Ζωή, 3, 53-55)

‘I am very, very lucky because I work in a private space in which my employers are excellent.’ (Zoe, 3, 53-55)

B. As one woman to another: an implicit understanding between women

‘...είναι 2 γυναίκες, είναι μαμάδες, οπότε αυτό νομίζω παίζει μεγάλο ρόλο, το ότι είναι μαμάδες, έχουν περάσει και αυτές τις δυσκολίες τους. Ε, εννοώ τις δυσκολίες γενικά, όταν είσαι έγκυος, το να έχεις ένα μωρό και να έχεις και δουλειά, οπότε υπάρχει μια τεράστια κατανόηση από τους συγκεκριμένους ανθρώπους.’ (Λία, 9-10, 200-207)

‘... they are 2 women, they are mothers, so I think that plays a big role, the fact that they are mothers, they have also gone through these difficulties. Well, I mean the difficulties in general, when you're pregnant, having a baby and also having a job, so there's a huge understanding from these people.’ (Lia, 9-10, 200-207)

‘... δεν θέλω να ξεχωρίζω η να θεωρηθώ φεμινίστρια, αλλά θεωρώ λίγο ότι, ανάλογα με το τι είναι ο εργοδότης, άλλη ευαισθησία έχει μια γυναίκα προς γυναίκα και άλλη ευαισθησία θα έχει ένας άντρας ως προς μία γυναίκα έγκυο’ (Ζωή, 8, 162-167)

‘...I don't want to stand out or be considered a feminist, but I think a little bit that depends on who the employer is, a woman has a different sensitivity towards another woman and other sensitivity a man will have towards a pregnant woman’ (Zoe, 8, 162-167)

‘...εγώ που έχω γυναίκα εργοδότη και επειδή είναι και πολύ κοντά σε εμάς και επειδή είχα περάσει και την πρώτη εμπειρία αυτή, να μεν δεν μου είπαν ποτέ τίποτα.’ (Ζωή, 8, 174-178)

‘...in my case, that I have a female employer and because she is also very close to us and because I had also gone through this first experience, well, they never told me anything’ (Zoe, 8, 174-178)

‘Υπάρχει ένα περιβάλλον εγκυμοσύνης εκεί μέσα, βέβαια είμαστε και γυναίκες και είμαστε κοντά σε ηλικία όλες, οπότε είναι λόγω ηλικίας και όχι λόγω εργασίας.’ (Ζωή, 9-10, 202-206)

‘There is a pregnancy environment in there, of course we are also women and we are all close in age, so it is because of age and not because of work.’ (Zoe, 9-10, 202-206)

‘...ειδικά οι συνάδελφοι ήταν πολύ φροντιστικοί, γιατί, συμβαίνει το εξής ότι είναι όλες γυναίκες, έχουνε ήδη παιδιά, τα οποία είναι και σε μικρή ηλικία, δηλαδή όσο ήτανε σ’ αυτό το σχολείο μείνανε έγκιες και γέννησαν.’ (Ηρώ, 9, 188-193)

‘... especially the colleagues were very caring, because, what happens is that they are all women, they already have children, who are also at a young age, that is, while they were at this school, they got pregnant and gave birth.’ (Iro, 9,188-193)

C. Not stirring up trouble: Pregnancy as a subversive act at work

‘Νομίζω ότι η διεύθυνση λίγο, η διευθύντρια μάλλον κάπως τον είδε σαν να..., σαν να σάστισε λίγο...’ (Ηρώ, 9, 185-187)

'I think the management a little bit, the headmaster, I guess, kind of saw it, she was like... like a little stupified.' (Iro, 9, 185-187)

‘..υπήρχε, επιφανειακά, ήτανε πολύ φροντιστική, και ότι χρειάζεται τα λοιπά, αλλά, δεν με πρόσεξε όσο θα ήθελα’ (Ηρώ, 9, 205-207)

'...there was, on the surface, she was very caring, and whatever you need etc, but, she didn't take care of me as much as I would have liked' (Iro, 9, 205-207)

‘...ήταν σαν να μην γνώριζαν τι ακριβώς χρειάζεται (για την άδεια). Σαν έπρεπε εγώ να ρωτήσω και να μάθω, εγώ να ψάξω τι ακριβώς πρέπει να γίνει’ (Ηρώ, 14, 314-317)

'...it was as if they didn't know exactly what was needed (for the maternity leave). As if I had to ask and find out, I had to look for what exactly needs to be done.' (Iro, 14, 314-317)

‘...ο κάθε εργοδότης, σου λέει θέλω να κάνω τη δουλειά μου, πάνω από όλα είναι αυτό. Τώρα εσύ τι θα κάνεις; Και ότι αν φέρνεις στον κόσμο ένα παιδί, αυτό δεν είναι κάτι. Δεν το θεωρούν κάτι σπουδαίο.’ (Ζώη, 8, 168-172)

'...every employer, tells you, I want to do my job above all, that is it. Now what is that you do? And that if you bring a child into the world, that is not something important.' (Zoe, 8, 168-172)

‘εντάξει, δεν δημιούργησα εγώ φέτος κάποιο θέμα, αλλά ακόμα και για την επιστροφή μου, υπάρχει, μία πίεση για το πότε θα επιστρέψω, [...] αλλά δεν με έχουνε πιέσει τόσο πολύ όσο μπορεί να με πίεσαν κάποιοι άλλοι θεωρώ.’ (Ζώη, 8-9, 178-186)

'OK, I didn't create any issue this year, but even for my return, although there is a pressure on when I will return, [...] I have not been under so much pressure, as some others would have pressurized me, I think. (Zoe, 8-9, 178-186)

‘...δεν με δυσκόλεψε καθόλου και πουθενά (η εγκυμοσύνη) , δηλαδή, ήμουνα από την πρώτη στιγμή στη δουλειά μου σωστή, δεν έλειψα ποτέ, δεν είχα κανένα θέμα’ (Ζωή, 4, 80-83)

'...it didn't make it difficult for me at all and anywhere (pregnancy), that is, I was right from the first moment at my work, I was never absent, I didn't have any problems' (Zoe, 4, 80-83)

‘η αλήθεια είναι, στην πρώτη είχα μια πρόωρη εγκυμοσύνη που δεν ευδοκίμησε, [...] εκεί ας πούμε ήτανε το τέρμα αντίθετο. Παιδεύτηκα πολύ, απλά είχε πέσει, είχε συμπέσει με την πρώτη καραντίνα που έγινε το lockdown, [...] οπότε και πάλι ήμουνα τυχερή γιατί δεν δημιούργησα πρόβλημα στη δουλειά μου.’ (Ζωή, 4, 84-92)

'...the truth is, in the first one I had a premature pregnancy that didn't thrive [...] there, let's say, it was quite the opposite. I had a lot of difficulties, it just fell, it coincided with the first quarantine that was the lockdown, [...] so again I was lucky because I didn't create a problem at my work.' (Zoe, 4, 84-92)

‘...εγώ στην αρχή φοβήθηκα λίγο ότι μην σκεφτούν ότι ‘Ωχ, μην έχει καμία εμπειρία όπως την προηγούμενη και μας δημιουργήσει πρόβλημα’ (Ζωή, 11, 246-249)

'I was a little afraid at first that they might think that 'Oh, hope she won't have any experience like the previous one and create a problem for us' (Zoe, 11, 246-249)

'...όλα νομίζω ότι ξεκινάνε και από εμάς, το πως είμαστε εμείς, δηλαδή δεν ήμουνα καμία που έλεγα 'Αχ, δεν θα κάνω αυτό.' ή 'Αχ, φοβάμαι να σηκώσω το βιβλίο' ή 'Αχ, σήμερα δεν είμαι καλά.' (Ζωή, 11-12, 251-256)

'...I think it also starts with us, the way we are, that is, I wasn't someone who said 'Oh, I won't do that' or 'Oh, I'm afraid to pick up the book' or 'Oh, today I'm not well''

(Zoe, 11-12, 251-256)

'Υπάρχει ένα περιβάλλον εγκυμοσύνης εκεί μέσα, [...] το κάνω παιδιά, ασχολούμαστε και με παιδιά, οπότε εντάξει, είναι θετικό το κλίμα ως προς αυτό' (Ζωή, 9-10, 203-211)

'There is a pregnancy environment in there, [...] I have children, we also deal with children, so okay, the atmosphere is positive in that regard.'

(Zoe, 9-10, 203-211)

'Αυτό ήταν πολύ καλό, γιατί αισθανόμουν ότι δεν είμαι μόνη, το ότι δεν κάνω καμιά παρανομία και είναι πολύ φυσικό αυτό που συμβαίνει.'

(Ηρώ,9, 193-196)

'This was very good, because I felt that I was not alone, that I was not doing anything illegal and what was happening was very natural.' (Iro, 9, 193-196)

Έχω νιώσει φυσικά στιγμές που μπορεί να υπάρχει η δική μου ανάγκη για κάτι και εγώ να μην μπορώ να ανταπεξέλθω, αυτό δεν μου αρέσει γιατί τέλος πάντων δημιουργώ εγώ ένα προβληματάκι' (Λία, 18, 391-395)

'I have of course felt moments when there may be my own need for something and I am not capable, this is not what I like because anyway I, myself, create a problem' (Lia, 18, 391-395)

‘νομίζω τους, σε κοιτάνε και με μισό μάτι, γιατί δεν τους βολεύει τώρα κιόλας η εγκυμοσύνη και το ότι εσύ μπορείς να λείψεις, είτε με αναρρωτικές είτε με τις κανονικές σου, τέλος πάντων, ξεβολεύονται πάρα πολύ.’ (Λία, 38, 854-859)

'...they look at you with askance, because pregnancy is not convenient for them and that you can be absent, either with sick leave or with your regular one, after all, they get very much incommoded.' (Lia, 38, 854-859)

‘..εγώ ποτέ δεν θα σκεπτόμουνα στη δουλειά που είμαι, ‘Α ωραία θα πάρω όλες τις άδειες, θα πάρω ό, τι δικαιούμαι’, δηλαδή, να ωφεληθώ εγώ προς όλες τις πλευρές και μετά θα τους πω ‘Α, τώρα, εγώ δεν έρχομαι’. Νομίζω είναι κακή σκέψη εξαρχής.’ (Λία, 28-29, 638, 643)

'...I would never think in the work that I am, 'Oh fine I'll take all the leaves, I'll get whatever I'm entitled to', that is, I will owe to all sides and then I will tell them 'Ah, now, I am not coming'. I think it's malicious thinking in the first place.' (Lia, 28-29, 638-643)

D. Pregnant body becoming an obstacle to work: Unforeseen and uninvited

‘...εγώ ήμουνα πολύ διαφορετική γιατί είχα όλη αυτή τη δυσκολία με το στομάχι μου, οπότε πήγαινα στη δουλειά, καθόμουν στο γραφείο μου,μίλαγα

με το ζόρι, θέλω να πω, είχε αλλάξει η δική μου συμπεριφορά προς τους υπόλοιπους.’ (Λία, 14-15, 317-322)

‘...I was very different because I had all this trouble with my stomach, so I was going to work, sitting at my desk, barely speaking, I mean, my own behavior towards others had changed. (Lia, 14-15, 317-322)

‘...στο γκαράζ δεν μπορώ να είμαι όσες ώρες θα ήθελα να είμαι, λόγω φυσικής κόυρασης, γιατί δεν μπορώ να τρέξω, δεν μπορώ να παρκάρω με την ίδια ευκολία, δεν μπορώ, δεν μπορώ, δεν μπορώ’ (Ρένα, 5-6, 115-119)

‘...I can't be in the garage as many hours as I'd like to be, due to physical fatigue, because I can't run, I can't park as easily, I can't, I can't, I can't’ (Rena, 5-6, 115-119)

‘...στην αρχή της σχολικής χρονιάς, ακριβώς επειδή ήμουνα part-time στο σχολείο, δούλευα παράλληλα και σε ένα καφέ, άλλα μετά, λόγω της εγκυμοσύνης σταμάτησα να δουλεύω στο καφέ, οπότε, ήμουνα μόνο στο σχολείο, [...] δηλαδή με ένα εισόδημα πολύ λιγότερο.’ (Ηρώ, 4, 82-88)

‘...at the beginning of the school year, precisely because I was part-time at school, I also worked at a cafe, but then, due to pregnancy, I stopped working at the cafe, so I was only at school, [...] that is, with a much lower income’ (Iro, 4, 82-88)

‘δεν είναι ότι προσπαθώ να το αποφύγω, αλλά όταν σας είπα ναι, το είπα με το μυαλό το τότε, που είχε και το σώμα με τις αντοχές που είχα, αλλά τώρα δεν είναι ιδίες, αυτό. Δηλαδή ήταν, είχε ήδη μεγαλώσει η κοιλιά μου. Ήμουνα στον έκτο, είχα ήδη λίγο αρχίσει να βαραίνω.’ (Ηρώ, 12, 259-267)

'...I told her, it's not like I'm trying to avoid it, but when I told you yes, I said it with the mind then, when I had the body with the endurance I had, but now they are not the same, this. I mean it was, my belly had already grown. I was in the sixth month, I was already getting heavy. (Iro, 12, 259-267)

‘...επειδή νοσηλεύτηκα στο νοσοκομείο (στην πρώτη εγκυμοσύνη), τους εξήγησα, το ξέρανε φυσικά τι είχε γίνει, καλά, αλλά ήταν τόσο σοβαρός ο λόγος που εντάξει, δεν μπορούσα να κάνω και αλλιώς.’ (Ζωή, 7, 149-152)

'... because I was hospitalized (in the first pregnancy), I explained to them, they knew of course what had happened, well, but it was so serious the reason that ok, I wouldn't be able to do otherwise.' (Zoe, 7, 149-152)

E. Work as a refuge from pregnancy

‘ήθελα εκείνο το διάστημα να ψάξω και κάτι άλλο, [...] και είχα αρκετό άγχος, δηλαδή ένα διάστημα, ότι πρέπει να κάνω, πρέπει να βρω κάτι, περισσότερο όμως όχι για οικονομικούς λόγους, αλλά για συναισθηματικούς, για να μην έχω πολλές ώρες κενό και με ρίξει αυτό ψυχολογικά.’ (Ηρώ, 16, 347-356)

'I wanted to look for something additional during that time, [...] and I was pretty anxious, I mean, for some time, that I have to do, I have to find something, but mostly not for financial reasons, but for emotional reasons, so that I don't have many hours empty and this beats me down psychologically.' (Iro, 16, 347-356)

‘...η σωματική συνθήκη σίγουρα επηρεάζει και το αποτέλεσμα της δουλειάς σου. Εγώ τις μέρες που πήγαινα στη δουλειά, ένιωθα από τη άλλη ότι με

κρατούσε και σε μία εγρήγορση στο να ξεχνιέμαι λίγο, δηλαδή ήθελα και να πηγαίνω.' (Λία, 12, 253-258)

'...the physical condition definitely affects the result of your work. The days I went to work, on the other hand, I felt that it was keeping me awake and that was taking my mind off it, I mean, I wanted to go (to work).' (Lia, 12, 253-258)

‘...τώρα βλέπω που κάθομαι ένα μήνα στο σπίτι ήδη, ότι δεν, δεν περνάω καλά, δηλαδή ψάχνω συνέχεια πράγματα να κάνω [...] οπότε είναι δύσκολο αυτό το πράγμα, να είσαι στο σπίτι και να μην έχεις να κάνεις κάτι, να μην δουλεύεις’ (Ζωή, 1-2, 19-26)

'...now I see that I've been sitting at home for a month already, that no, I'm not having a good time, that is, I'm constantly looking for things to do [...] so this thing is hard, being at home and not having anything to do, not working' (Zoe, 1-2, 19-26)

2. Protecting the personal and professional identity when everything is going through change

A. Proving one's worth at work

‘...μου ανέθεσαν κάποια πράγματα που ήτανε, είχαν να κάνουν με κάποια σκηνικά που ήταν πάρα πολύ μεγάλα για το θέατρο, που ήταν, εεε, δεν θα έπρεπε να κάνω, και εγώ θα έπρεπε να είχα αρνηθεί, αλλά δεν έκανα.’ (Ηρώ, 9-10, 207-212)

'...they assigned me some things that were, they had to do with some scenes which were too big, for the theater, that were, uhm, I shouldn't have done, and I should have refused, but I didn't.' (Iro, 9-10, 207-212)

‘...ήταν απότομη και κάπως επιτακτική ότι πρέπει να γίνει κάτι. Εξηγώντας της ότι, μάλλον είχα αποδείξει όλη τη χρονιά ότι, είμαι, είμαι εργατική, δεν ψάχνω δηλαδή αφορμές να αποφύγω, ...ίσα ίσα. Τους είχα εξυπηρετήσει σε πάρα πολλά πράγματα που δεν ήταν και δική μου δουλειά’ (Ηρώ, 11-12, 248-254)

'...she was sharp and somewhat bossy that it must be done. Explaining to her that I had probably proven throughout the year that I am, I am hard-working, that is, I don't look for reasons to avoid, ... on the contrary. I had served them in too many things that weren't even my business' (Iro, 11-12, 248-254)

‘Το πρώτο τρίμηνο της εγκυμοσύνης, δούλευα πολλές ώρες γιατί αναπλήρωνα μια δασκάλα εικαστικών, και, εεε, χωρίς να ξέρω πότε θα επέστρεφε. Αυτό με είχε ζορίσει πάρα πολύ κάποια στιγμή, δηλαδή αισθανόμουν ότι σωματικά δεν μπορούσα να απεξελθω.’ (Ηρώ, 7-8, 157-162)

'In the first trimester of pregnancy, I was working long hours because I was filling in for an art teacher, and, uh, not knowing when she would be back. This had put a lot of strain on me at one point, meaning I felt physically unable to cope.' (Iro, 7-8, 157-162)

‘..το τελευταίο μηνά πάλι έκανα κάποιες αναπληρώσεις, δηλαδή μπορεί να φτάσει και 20 ώρες την εβδομάδα. Ναι. Η σύμβαση μου όμως ήτανε για 8 ώρες την εβδομάδα.’ (Ηρώ, 5, 96-100)

'...in the last month I again did some replacements, that is, it might reach 20 hours a week. Yes. But my contract was for 8 hours a week.' (Iro, 5, 96-100)

‘...είναι και η φάση που θες να τα κάνεις και όλα. Δηλαδή, τώρα δεν μπορώ ας πούμε να σηκώσω βάρος, αλλά πολύ θα ήθελα να μετακινήσω αυτό το ξέρω εγώ το, το εύρημα, το ό, τι, τέλος πάντων, αυτό σημαίνει ότι θα πρέπει να του ζητήσω από κάποιον άλλον, δηλαδή λίγο σου βγαίνει ‘Καλά, δεν μπορώ ή δεν πρέπει’ και σαν να θες να το κάνεις’ (Λία, 17, 377-385)

'...it's also the phase where you want to do it all. I mean, now I can't say lift a weight, but I'd really like to move this I know the, the finding, the whatever, anyway, that means I'm going to have to ask someone else for it, I mean, it occurs to you 'Well, I can't or shouldn't' and like you want to do it' (Lia, 17, 377-385)

‘Αυτό ας πούμε, είναι μια δουλειά που εγώ δεν έχω σταματήσει να την κάνω. Μολονότι είμαι σε άδεια, έχω προσφερθεί ότι αυτό θα το κάνω εγώ, γιατί είναι απλούστερο για μένα που ξέρω πως γίνεται, αυτή η καταγραφική δουλειά, από τον να το αναλάβει ένας άλλος αρχαιολόγος που μπορεί να έχει το δικό του [...] φόρτου εργασίας’ (Λία, 19-20, 430-437)

'This let's say, it's a job that I haven't stopped doing. Although I am on leave, I have offered to do this myself, because it is simpler for me, that I know how to do this recording work, than for another archaeologist who may have his own [...] workload' (Lia, 19-20, 430-437)

‘Γιατί, επειδή είμαι, έχω διευκολυνθεί πάρα πολύ σε αυτό το εργασιακό περιβάλλον, είναι το λιγότερο να συνεισφέρω και εγώ όσο μπορώ, σ’ αυτό,

τέλος πάντων, λίγο που ασχολούμαι. Δεν, δεν είναι φοβερό αυτό που κάνω σαν δουλειά, απλά θα ήτανε μία επιπλέον δουλειά για έναν άλλον αρχαιολόγο που έχει ήδη τα δικά του.' (Λία, 20, 447-454)

'Because, because I am, I was helped out a lot in this work environment, it is the least for me to contribute as much as I can, in this, anyway, little that I am dealing with. It's not big what I do as a job, it would just be an extra job for another archaeologist who already has his own.' (Lia, 20, 447-454)

‘...επειδή εγώ ήμουν χαλαρή, παρότι ότι είχα περάσει, αλλά ήμουνά πάρα πολύ ήρεμη και πάρα πολύ σαν να μην είμαι έγκυος, δηλαδή, δεν συμπεριφερόμουν σαν τι, ούτε να δυσανασχετώ, ούτε να κάνω τέτοια πράγματα, οπότε ίσως η δικιά μου όλη συμπεριφορά να είναι που έβγαζε και στους άλλους να με αντιμετωπίζουν όπως πριν.’ (Ζωή, 13, 287-294)

'...because I was relaxed, despite what I had gone through, but I was too calm and too much like I'm not pregnant, that is, I didn't behave like, neither resenting nor doing such things, so maybe my whole behavior is what caused others to treat me as before' (Zoe, 13, 287-294)

B. Becoming a child-adult: Autonomy vs vulnerability

a. Turning into a China doll: Sweet and fragile

‘Με πρόσεξαν παραπάνω από, σίγουρα από τη διεύθυνση, και σίγουρα από αυτό από αυτό που περίμενα, ναι, με πρόσεξαν πάρα πολύ’ (Ηρώ, 15, 324-327)

'They took care of me more than, definitely from the management, and definitely from what I expected, yes, they took care of me a lot' (Iro, 15, 324-327)

'...κάποιοι έγιναν ακόμα πιο δεκτικούς, τους ήξερα και για πολύ λίγο καιρό ούτως η άλλως, πιο φιλικοί, πιο δοτικοί' (Ηρώ, 15, 332-334)

'...some became even more receptive, I knew them for a very short time anyway, more friendly, more giving' (Iro, 15, 332-334)

'Νομίζω ήταν παραπάνω ανήσυχοι και η μητέρα μου και ο σύντροφός μου.' (Ηρώ, 15, 339-340)

'I think my mother and my husband were over worried.' (Iro, 15, 339-340)

'...όλα λίγο περιστρέφονται γύρο από εσένα. Είσαι καλά, αν έχεις φάει καλά. Έτσι όλη αυτή η φροντίδα που αυξάνεται είναι ωραίο, είναι ωραίο' (Ηρώ, 21, 476-479)

'...everything kind of revolves around you, 'Are you well, have you eaten well?'. So, all this growing care is nice, it's nice' (Iro, 21, 476-479)

'Τώρα, μετά την ανακοίνωση που το ξέρουν πια όλοι, ήτανε η πρόθεση από αυτά, τέλος πάντων, που μοιραζόμασταν στο να κάνουμε κάποιες καθαριότητες και τα λοιπά, στο να μην κάνω εγώ τίποτα, στο να μην σηκώσω εγώ τίποτα βαρύ.' (Λία, 15, 336-341)

'Now, after the announcement that everyone knows, it was the intention of them, anyway, that we used to share in doing some cleanings and so

on, to me not doing anything, in not lifting anything heavy' (Lia, 15, 336-341)

‘...ήταν όλοι πολύ θερμοί, ήτανε όλοι και με μια κουβέντα, ‘Σήμερα είσαι καλά;’ ‘Σήμερα είσαι καλύτερα;’, αυτό, μια φροντίδα ας πούμε’ (Λία, 16, 353-356)

‘...they were all very warm, they were all and with a word, 'Today are you ok?' 'Today are you better?' this, a care let's say ' (Lia, 16, 353-356)

‘Πέρα από το κομμάτι του, μην κάνεις τίποτα, γιατί θα έκανα, δηλαδή, θα βρεθούμε σε ένα τραπέζι, θα συμμετείχα και εγώ, ξέρω εγώ, θα έστρωννα, τέλος πάντων, αυτά που κανείς κάνει. ‘Έλα, εσύ δε χρειάζεται να κάνεις τίποτα και κάθισε’. (Λία, 24, 531-536)

'Apart from his part, don't do anything, because I would, that is, we would meet at a table, I would also participate, I don't know, I would set up, after all, what anyone does. "Come on, you don't need to do anything and sit down.' (Lia, 24, 531-536)

‘είναι πιο δεκτικοί, είναι πιο ήρεμοι, είναι πιο συνεργάσιμοι, [...] πιο ευγενικοί και πιο καλοί απέναντί μου[...] Για να είμαι ειλικρινής, όχι δεν το περίμενα.’ (Ρένα, 8, 160-185)

'they are more receptive, they are calmer, they are more cooperative, [...] they are kinder and nicer towards me [...] To be honest, no I didn't expect it.' (Rena, 8, 160-185)

- b. ‘Do’s and Don’ts’ from others: Judging who has a say

‘Το σχόλιο ως προς το κομμάτι του εργαζομαι και είμαι έγκυος, ολονών, ανεξάρτητα, εννοώ αυτό είμαι εγώ καλά, δεν είμαι καλά και λοιπά, μια πρώτη κουβέντα είναι ‘Να προσέχεις και να πάρεις άδεια’ δηλαδή να μην πας στη δουλειά’ (Λία, 22-23, 500-505)

‘The comment about the part of I’m working and I’m pregnant, all of them (family), regardless, I mean, I’m fine, I’m not fine and so on, a first conversation is ‘Be careful and take time off’, that is, don’t go to work’ (Lia, 22-23, 500-505)

‘Τώρα, επί της ουσίας, επειδή η συνθήκη είναι τόσο ευνοϊκή, κι αυτό το μεταφέρω [...] Ξέρουν ότι, αν εγώ κρίνω ότι μπορώ ή δεν μπορώ, θα φερθώ ανάλογα.’ (Λία, 23, 506-518)

‘Now, in essence, because the condition is so favorable, and I’m conveying that, [...] They (family) know that if I judge that I can or cannot, I will act accordingly.’ (Lia, 23, 506-518)

‘..όχι μόνο από τη δική του πλευρά, δηλαδή και από τις οικογένειές μας, γκρίνιαζαν όλοι ότι, ‘Πω, πω, δουλεύεις πάρα πολλές ώρες, δεν κάνει’. (Ζωή, 16, 360-363)

‘...not only from his (husband) side, that is, from our families as well, they all complained that, ‘Ah, ah, you work too many hours, it is not good’ (Zoe, 16, 360-363)

‘...μου λέγανε ότι να κόψω τα Σαββατοκύριακα, επειδή είχα τα ιδιαίτερα, ότι, να τους έλεγα, ναι, επειδή είμαι έγκυος, πρέπει να σταματήσω να δουλεύω τα Σαββατοκύριακα.’ (Ζωή, 17, 379-383)

'...they were telling me to cut the weekends, because I had the private lessons, that, I was supposed to tell them, yes, because I am pregnant, I have to stop working on the weekends.' (Zoe, 17, 379-383)

‘Δεν μου είπε ποτέ κανένας, δεν κάνει. Ο γιατρός μου, δεν μου είπε ποτέ, ‘Μη δουλέψεις’. (Ζωή, 16, 363-365)

'No one ever told me it is not good. My doctor never told me, 'Don't work!.' (Zoe, 16, 363-365)

‘Φυσικά δεν θα το έκανα ποτέ και επιπλέον είχα ευθύνη απέναντι σε αυτά τα παιδιά, οπότε δεν υπήρχε περίπτωση να τους ακούσω, οπότε έκλεινα τα αυτιά μου και προχωρούσα.’ (Ζωή, 18, 393-397)

'Of course, I would never do that, and besides, I had a responsibility for these children, so there was no way I could listen to them, so I turned a deaf ear to them and went on.' (Zoe, 18, 393-397)

‘Με νεύριαζε, θυμό είχα, γιατί έλεγα ότι δεν μπορεί να μου λένε τι να κάνω.’ (Ζωή, 18, 401-402)

'It made me nervous, I was angry, because I said you (family) can't tell me what to do.' (Zoe, 18, 401-402)

‘...για αυτό που σας είπα για την εργασία με τα σκηνικά, και οι δυο (μητέρα και σύζυγος) μου έλεγαν να μην το κάνω...’ (Ηρώ, 15, 341-343)

'...for what I told you about working on the theatre scenes, both of them (husband and mother) told me not to do it.' (Iro, 15, 341-343)

Όταν λοιπόν ήρθε εμένα ο γιατρός μου και μου είπε ότι δεν θέλω σε καμία περίπτωση να υπάρχουν εντάσεις και να συγχύζεσαι, μπορώ να εντοπίσω στη δουλειά μου τι θα μου προκαλέσει σύγχυση και γιατί και πώς, και το αποφεύγω' (Ρένα, 11, 241-247)

"So, when my doctor came to me and said I don't want in any circumstance, you come across with tension and get agitated, I can identify in my work what will agitate me and why and how, and I avoid it' (Rena, 11, 241-247)

Άπλά να μην σκύβω, να μην, ξέρεις τώρα αυτά τα ασυναίσθητα που κάνουμε εμείς οι γυναίκες, ο άλλος (ο σύζυγος) το βλέπει και του φαίνεται τρελό. Να μην σκύβεις, να μην κουράζεσαι, να μην αυτό..' (Ρένα, 14, 312-315)

'Just don't bend over, don't, you now know these unconscious things that we women do, the other (the husband) sees it and it seems crazy to him. Don't bend over, don't get tired, don't that...' (Rena, 14, 312-315)

‘... όσον αφορά το κομμάτι της εργασίας, για να σου είμαι ειλικρινής, δεν τους ρώτησα κιόλας. Δηλαδή από τη στιγμή που είναι μια δική μου δουλειά, εεε, δεν θεωρώ ότι πέφτει λόγος σε κάποιον, είναι, είναι καθαρά στην κρίση μου τι θα κάνω και πώς θα το κάνω.’ (Ρένα, 13, 277-283)

'...concerning work, to be honest with you, I didn't even ask them (family). I mean, since it's my job, uh, I don't think it's anyone's business,

it's, it's entirely up to me what I'm going to do and how I'm going to do it.' (Rena, 13, 277-283)

3. On the Thorny Route of Becoming a Working Mother

A. Going back to work: A catch-22 situation

a. Ambivalence over the right choice: Freedom vs responsibility

‘Εμένα η επιθυμία μου είναι, αν μπορέσω αυτόν τον πρώτο χρόνο που, τέλος πάντων από όσο έχω καταλάβει και διαβάσει και νομίζω είναι έτσι πιο καίριος και για το μωρό, αυτό το, αυτό το πρώτο έτος, αν μπορέσει να προκύψει κάτι τέτοιο, θα είναι ιδανικά.’ (Λία, 30, 673-678)

‘For me, my wish is, if I can, this first year, which, after all, from what I have understood and read and I think, like, this is more important for the baby, this, this first year, if something like this can happen, it will be ideal’ (Lia, 30, 673-678)

‘...δεν ξέρω πώς θα μου ξημερώσει εμένα αυτό. Σκέφτομαι ότι θέλω να μείνω όσο παραπάνω μπορώ. Ναι, ελπίζω να μη με πιάσει κανένα, έτσι, κανένα εγκλωβιστικό’ (Ηρώ, 22, 494-497)

‘...I don't know how this will dawn on me. I think I want to stay as long as I can. Yes, I hope that it won't catch me, feeling of being trapped.’ (Iro, 22, 494-497)

‘Εγώ θα ήθελα ακριβώς επειδή η εμπειρία μου ήταν όχι η καλύτερη, θα ήθελα να ψάξω δουλειά άλλη, [...], αλλά υπάρχει αυτή η ανασφάλεια ότι τουλάχιστον αυτό τον χώρο κάπως τον γνώρισα, [...], άρα όταν επιστρέψω, έχοντας και ένα παιδί θα είναι ήδη μεγάλη αλλαγή, δεν θα

χρειαστεί να ξανά γνωρίσω το περιβάλλον, [...] Έχω κάποιες αμφιβολίες σε σχέση με αυτό. Δεν ξέρω τι θα κάνω.’ (Ηρώ, 22-23, 504-516)

‘I would like, precisely because my experience was not the best, I would like to look for another job, [...] but there is this insecurity that at least I somehow got to know this area, [...] so when I return, having a child will already be a big change [...] I have some doubts regarding this. I don't know what I'm going to do.’ (Iro, 22-23, 504-516)

‘...αν ήταν στο χέρι μου, εγώ, μετά στο δεύτερο μήνα, θα ήθελα να επιστρέψω στη δουλειά μου.’ (Ζωή, 15, 324-326)

‘...if it was up to me, I, after the second month, would like to go back to my job.’ (Zoe, 15, 324-326)

‘...η συμφωνία που κάνεις στην αρχή της χρονιάς είναι ότι ας πούμε παίρνεις 25 ώρες τη βδομάδα ας πούμε. Αν τώρα εγώ επιστρέψω στη δουλειά το Δεκέμβρη, εννοείται ότι αυτές οι ώρες θα έχουν καλυφθεί από κάποιον άλλον συνάδελφο, όταν ο καθένας υπολογίζει τα χρήματα αυτά, δεν μπορώ ξαφνικά να τους πω ‘Γεια σας, επέστρεψα, θέλω ξανά τις 25 ώρες μου’ (Ζωή, 29-30, 657-665)

‘...the agreement you make at the beginning of the year is that, let's say you get 25 hours a week, let's say, now if I go back to work in December, of course those hours will have been covered by another colleague, when everyone calculates this money, I can't suddenly say to them 'Hey, I'm back, I want my 25 hours again' ’ (Zoe, 29-30, 657-665)

‘Από τη μια λέω αχ τι ωραία, εντάξει, θα έχουμε ένα μωρό, πρέπει να βρω χρόνο για το μωρό, από την άλλη όμως, στεναχωριέμαι που δεν θα είμαι στη δουλειά μου όπως ήμουνα πριν και τις ώρες που ήμουνα πριν.’ (Ζωή, 34, 754-759)

‘On the one hand, I say, oh, that’s great, okay, we’re going to have a baby, I have to find time for the baby, but on the other hand, I’m sad that I won’t be at my job like I was before and at the hours I was before.’
(Zoe, 34, 754-759)

‘...δεν μου αρέσει η αίσθηση του ότι θα απέχω και ότι θα γίνονται πράγματα τα οποία μετά μπορεί να γυρίσω και να μην τα ξέρω’, (Ζωή, 33, 739-741)

‘... I don’t like the feeling that I will be absent and that things will happen, which I may not know about when I get back’ (Zoe, 33, 739-741)

‘...δεν έχω ωράριο, κατάλαβες, είμαι από το πρωί μέχρι το βράδυ διαθέσιμη για τη δουλειά μου. Είμαι διατεθειμένη απλώς να έχω τη μικρή μαζί μου. [...] Τώρα θα πάρω κάποιες ημέρες, εβδομάδες, τώρα δεν ξέρω να σου απαντήσω αυτό [...] Σίγουρα θεωρώ ότι θα είναι 2-3 εβδομάδες.’ (Ρένα, 16-17, 353-378)

‘...I don’t have a schedule, you understand, I’m available from morning to night for my work. I’m available only that I have the little one with me [...] Now I’ll take some days, weeks, now I don’t know how to answer that. [...] I definitely think it will be 2-3 weeks’ (Rena, 16-17, 353-378)

b. Child-care as a ‘female’ responsibility: Expected and enforced

‘Νομίζω το θέμα του χρόνου, δηλαδή του πόσο χρόνο λείπω από το σπίτι και αυτόν τον χρόνο σε ποιόν έχω μεταθέσει την ευθύνη αυτού του παιδιού, ότι, δεν νομίζω ότι, ας πούμε μια μαμά, ένας μπαμπάς θέλει να αφήσει το παιδί του, ναι, να είναι μαζί, αλλά ας πούμε δεν γίνεται, εντάξει, μετά η ευθύνη αυτουνού, δηλαδή το φορτώνεις σε κάποιον άλλον. [...] Οπότε δεν θέλω να το κάνω ανεύθυνα.’ (Λία, 31-32, 694-711)

‘I think the issue of time, that is how long I'm away from home and to whom I've transferred the responsibility of this child within that time, that, I don't think that, let's say a mom, a dad wants to leave their child, yes, they better be together, but let's say it's not possible, okay, then this responsibility, that is, you hand over to someone else. [...] So, I don't want to do it irresponsibly. (Lia, 31-32, 694-711)

‘...του λέω ‘Βρε Φοίβο, αν όμως εγώ δεν δουλεύω αυτό το διάστημα [...] ‘Είναι κρίμα να ξυπνάς εσύ τη νύχτα που την επόμενη μέρα θα πας να δουλέψεις’ [...] Με βάση τη λογική μου, σκέφτομαι ότι ένας άνθρωπος που δεν έχει κοιμηθεί το βράδυ και μετά πρέπει να πάει σε μία δουλειά, πρέπει κάπως να αποδώσει, έχει μια άλλη κούραση, [...] τουλάχιστον εγώ μπορώ την άλλη μέρα, μια ώρα, αν κοιμάται το μωρό, να είμαι αραχτή στον καναπέ.’ (Λία, 32-33, 730-751)

‘...I say to him 'Hey Phoebus, but if I won't be working this time' [...], 'It's a shame that you wake up at night when the next day you will go to work'. [...] Based on my logic, I think that a person who has not slept at night and then has to go to a job, must somehow to perform, he has

another fatigue, [...] at least I can the next day, for an hour, if the baby is sleeping, chill on the couch.' (Lia, 32-33, 730-751)

‘Νομίζω ότι είναι μόνο 2 εβδομάδες για τον ιδιωτικό τομέα (για τους μπαμπάδες). Τώρα αν η ερώτηση πήγαινε στο αν είχε περισσότερη άδεια, γιατί ήταν δημόσιος υπάλληλος και τα λοιπά, θα την έπαιρνε; Θα την έπαιρνε’ (Λία, 34, 770-774)

‘I think it's only 2 weeks for the private sector (for dads). Now if the question went to whether he had more leave, because he was a public servant and so on, would he get it? He would take it’ (Lia, 34, 770-774)

‘...νομίζω ότι είναι 80, 20, η μάνα πάντα [...] γενικότερα του αρέσουν τα παιδιά [...] άμα δω ότι κάτι κάνει και δεν το κάνει όπως θέλω εγώ να το κάνει, θα υπάρχει πρόβλημα, οπότε θα του πω, ‘Άς το, να το κάνω εγώ’ και τελικά [...], θα καταλήξουμε να τα κάνω όλα εγώ.’ (Ζωή, 26, 574-589)

‘I think it's 80, 20 (percent), the mother always (child care share of the mother vs father) more than the father), in general he likes children, [...] but I think if I see that he's doing something and he's not doing it the way I want him to do it, [...] I'll say, 'Let me do it,' and eventually [...] we will end up everything done by me.’ (Zoe, 26, 574-589)

‘Ο σύζυγός μου, [...] θεωρεί ότι πρέπει οπωσδήποτε, το παιδί θέλει τη μάνα του, έτσι λέει, ότι πρέπει να μείνω, τουλάχιστον 6 μήνες στο σπίτι, με το παιδί. [...] Μου λέει, εντάξει, εγώ δεν θα σε πιέσω, δεν είπα να κάθεται στο σπίτι, αλλά, μου λέει, πρέπει να είμαστε και οι δυο ή

πρέπει να είσαι εσύ, γιατί είναι πολύ μικρό και τα λοιπά, οπότε το ρίχνει λίγο στο παιδί.' (Ζωή, 15, 326-339)

'My husband [...] thinks that I absolutely must, the child wants his mother, so he says that I must stay at home with the child for at least 6 months. He says, okay, I won't push you, I didn't say stay at home, but, he says, it has to be either both of us or it has to be you, because he's too young and all, so he throws it a little bit at the kid.' (Zoe, 15, 326-339)

'...δεν μπορεί να πάρει άδεια, γιατί τα τρέχει όλα σχεδόν μόνος του, επειδή είναι οικογενειακή επιχείρηση, [...] Δυστυχώς δεν γίνεται να απουσιάζει, οπότε εμείς θα το τραβήξουμε πάλι, οι γυναίκες, εκεί καταλήγουμε.' (Ζωή, 25, 558-570)

'...he can't take a leave, because he runs everything almost by himself, because it's a family business, [...] Unfortunately, he cannot be absent, so we will pull it again, the women, that's where we end up' (Zoe, 25, 558-570)

'...σίγουρα θέλω όταν επιστρέψω, να είναι το μωρό με κάποιον δικό μου, έτσι ώστε τουλάχιστον να μην έχω και αυτό το βάρος ότι, πού είναι και τι κάνει και με ποια είναι, με ποια η γυναίκα, μπορεί να είναι' (Ζωή, 22, 484-488)

'... I want to ensure that when I go back, the baby is with someone of mine, so that at least I don't have that burden of, where he is and what he is doing and who he is with, who the woman is, he might be with' (Zoe, 22, 484-488)

‘...έχω τη δυνατότητα βοήθειας από τους δικούς μας, λίγο να βοηθήσει μια γιαγιά λίγο η άλλη αν και εφόσον έχω τη δυνατότητα βοήθειας από τους δικούς μας, λίγο να βοηθήσει μια γιαγιά λίγο η άλλη. [...] Η οικογένεια είναι ότι, όποτε θες εσύ, εμείς εδώ είμαστε, όπως μπορούμε θα βοηθήσουμε. Φυσικά, στο άκουσμα ξένου ανθρώπου να κρατήσει το παιδί, είναι όλοι αρνητικοί’ (Ζωή, 23, 503-517)

‘...I have the possibility of help from our family, a little from one grandmother, a little from the other [...] Family is that, whenever you want, we are here, we will help as much as we can. Of course, when they hear the possibility of a stranger looking after the child, they are all negative’ (Zoe, 23, 503-517)

‘Είναι ξετρελαμένος επειδή είναι αγόρι, οπότε νομίζω ότι μόνο και στο άκουσμα ότι είναι αγόρι ή πρέπει να έχει μεγαλύτερη επιθυμία να βοηθήσει στα πάντα, μόνο που ξέρει ότι είναι ο διάδοχος’ (Ζωή, 27, 601-605)

‘He’s very enthusiastic because it’s a boy, so I think just with the thought that it’s a boy, he supposedly is more willing to help with everything, just knowing it’s the heir, coming’ (Zoe, 27, 601-605)

‘...αυτές οι γιαγιάδες ας πούμε, εγώ νομίζω ότι και αυτές δεν ξέρουν τι θέλουνε, δηλαδή από τη μια σου λένε, ‘Βεβαίως, θα σε βοηθήσω εγώ, θα το κρατάω εγώ το παιδί’ και από την άλλη σου λένε ‘Δηλαδή, εσύ κάνεις παιδί να το μεγαλώσω εγώ;’. Οπότε είναι λίγο, η κατάσταση είναι, πρέπει, πρέπει παντού να υπάρχει μια ισορροπία στα πράγματα, δηλαδή ούτε πολύ η μία γιαγιά, ούτε πολύ η άλλη γιαγιά, οπότε πρέπει

να υπάρχει μία, μία μέση λύση σε όλα [...] Ναι, εντάξει, είναι αρνητικές στον εβραίο γυναίκα, θέλουν να βοηθήσουν, θέλουν πάρα πολύ να βοηθήσουν και οι 2, απλά νομίζω ότι γίνεται πολύ παρεμβατικό μετά.’ (Ζωή, 23-24, 518-533)

‘...these grandmothers, I think they also don't know what they want, that is, on the one hand they tell you, 'Of course, I will help you, I'll look after the child' and on the other hand they say to you 'So, you're having a child and I will raise it?' So it's a little bit, the situation is, it must be, there has to be a balance in things everywhere, that is, neither more one grandmother, nor more the other grandmother, so there must be a, a middle ground in everything [...] Yes, all right, they are against to a foreign woman, they want to help, they both want to help very much, I just think it gets too intrusive afterwards.’ (Zoe, 23-24, 518-533)

‘Τώρα αυτό που έχουμε πει με τον Βίκτωρα είναι ότι, το έχουμε συμφωνήσει ότι, θα θέλαμε να, όσο μπορούμε, να μην χρειαστούμε τον πρώτο καιρό, όσο θα είμαι και εγώ στο σπίτι, να μη χρειαστούμε βοήθεια άλλων, των γονιών μας και τα λοιπά, ειδικά το πρώτο καιρό, για τους πρώτους μήνες. (Ηρώ, 25-26, 571-577)

‘Now what we have said with Viktoras is that we have agreed that we would like, as much as we can, not need the help of others, of our parents and the so, especially the first time, for the first months.’ (Iro, 25-26, 571-577)

‘Το καλό είναι ότι, το πολύ θετικό είναι ότι, φέτος, συνταξιοδοτήθηκε και η μητέρα μου. Ο πατέρας του Βίκτωρα είναι ήδη στη σύνταξη, όπως

και η μαμά του, οπότε αυτό κάπως με ανακουφίζει σε σκέψη ότι, θα υπάρχουν άνθρωποι που θα μπορούν να βοηθήσουν.’ (Ηρώ, 26, 580-586)

‘The good thing is that, the very positive thing is that, this year, my mother also got retired. Viktoras’s father is already retired, as is his mother, so that kind of comforts me in thinking that there will be people who can help.’ (Iro, 26, 580-586)

‘Μου λέει και ο Βίκτωρας είναι ότι ενδεχομένως αν επιστρέψω σε αυτό το σχολείο, και θα βολέψει το που τους ξέρω, ότι δεν θα χρειαστεί γνωριμία εκ νέου, αλλά και ότι μπορεί να ωφελήσει τελικά ότι είμαι μειωμένου ωραρίου.’ (Ηρώ, 23-24, 528-533)

‘Viktoras is also telling me that maybe if I go back to this school, and it will be convenient that I know them, that I won’t need to get to know them again, but also that it may ultimately benefit me that I’m on reduced hours.’ (Iro, 23-24, 528-533)

‘Ξέρω και βλέπω ότι θέλει πολύ να είμαστε όσο περισσότερο γίνεται μαζί σ’ αυτό. Ναι, ιδανικά θα ήθελα να μην εργάζεται αλλά δεν γίνεται. Εντάξει, θα πάρει αυτές τις 15 μέρες την άδειά του’ (Ηρώ, 30, 672-677)

‘I know and I see that he really wants us to be together as much as possible in this. Yes, ideally, I would like him not to work but it is not possible. Okay, he will take these 15 days, his leave’ (Iro, 20, 672-677)

‘Έχω φροντίσει να υπάρχει ένας άνθρωπος εδώ από Σεπτέμβριο, είμαι σε διαδικασία να βρω και ένα δεύτερο άτομο για να μπορέσω να

καλύψω 5 ημέρες της εβδομάδας, γιατί μέχρι στιγμής έχω καλυμμένες 2, αλλά το γεγονός ότι θα έρχεται ο σύζυγός μου νωρίς, θα μου δίνει ένα περιθώριο να αφήνω τη μικρή και να μπορώ μετά να κάνω εγώ πράγματα για μένα' (Ρένα, 20, 442-450)

'I've taken care of having one person to be here as of September, I'm in the process of finding a second person so I can cover 5 days a week, because so far I've got 2 covered, but the fact that my husband will come early, he will give me some time to leave the little one and then I can do things for myself' (Rena, 20, 442-450)

‘Είμαστε λίγο ιδιάζουσα περίπτωση διότι εγώ από την πλευρά μου δεν έχω οικογένεια [...] και ο άντρας μου από τη δική του πλευρά, έχασε πρόσφατα τον πατέρα του και η μητέρα του είναι πάρα πολύ μεγάλη σε ηλικία [...] Γι' αυτό είχαμε κοιτάξει να βρούμε κάποιον να έρχεται να μας βοηθάει πού να το ξέρουμε και να τον εμπιστευόμαστε.’ (Ρένα, 21, 461-473)

'We are a bit of a special case because I, for my part, do not have a family [...] and my husband for his part, he recently lost his father and his mother is very old [...] That is why we had looked to find someone to come and help us.' (Rena, 21, 461-473)

- B. Integration of parenthood into the self and one's life: Strings attached
 - a. Anticipation of challenge on the existing self: Worried with a touch of hope

‘...δεν ήμουνα ποτέ από τις γυναίκες που είχα αυτοσκοπό ζωής να γίνω μάνα [...] Δεν θεωρώ ότι θα αλλάξει και κάτι ή θα αλλάξω εγώ μέσα μου. Προφανώς και θα υπάρχει ένας άνθρωπος επιπλέον, στον οποίον, θα δίνεται κάποια προτεραιότητα και κάποια προσοχή, αλλά η δουλειά είναι δουλειά και αυτό δεν ξέρω, δεν νομίζω ότι θα μου επηρεάσει τόσο πολύ.’ (Ρένα, 15, 331-341)

‘... I was never one of those women whose life goal was to become a mother [...] I don't think that anything will change or that I will change in myself. Obviously, there will be one person in addition, to whom some priority and some attention will be given, but work is work and I don't know, I don't think it will affect me that much.’ (Rena, 15, 331-341)

‘... και να επηρεαστεί για να μην γίνομαι απόλυτη, δεν θα είναι για μεγάλο χρονικό διάστημα το παιδί το θεωρώ ότι κάνει adapt. Είναι αναλόγως πώς θα το μάθεις [...] Αυτό που λένε ότι το παιδί και το σκυλί όπως το μάθεις.’ (Ρένα, 22, 479-491)

‘... if it will be affected, so as not to be absolute, it will not be for a long time. I consider the child to be adapting. It depends on how you teach them. [...] It is what they say, the child and the dog as you teach them.’ (Rena, 22, 479-491)

‘σκέφτομαι πολλές φορές, λέω, ‘Α τι ωραία, μέχρι τώρα ήμουνα εγώ και Φοίβος, ό, τι ώρα θέλαμε κοιμόμασταν, ό, τι ώρα θέλαμε ξυπνάγαμε, ό, τι θέλαμε κάναμε’, ότι όλο αυτό θα μπει σε ένα τελείως διαφορετικό περιβάλλον και με δουλειά και οι δυο..’ (Λία, 32, 719-725)

'I'm thinking many times, I say, 'Oh, how nice, until now it was me and Phoebus, we slept whenever we wanted, we woke up whenever we wanted, we did whatever we wanted', that all this will enter a completely different environment and both with work.' (Lia, 32, 719-725)

‘Τώρα προσωπικά, για το ότι θα έχω λιγότερο χρόνο ή λιγότερη διάθεση ή λιγότερη αντοχή, αυτό θα μπορούσε να επηρεάσει, αλλά δεν μπορώ να το πω με βεβαιότητα, αν έμενα θα με καταπιεί το κομμάτι, είμαι μαμά και είμαι μόνο αυτό πια στο εξής ή αν θα είμαι και μαμά και ότι άλλο ήμουν. Δεν το ξέρω. Θέλω να πιστέψω ότι θα είναι πιο ισορροπημένο για όλους μας.’ (Λία, 35-36, 795-804)

'...if I am going to be swallowed up by the part, I'm a mom and I'm only that from now on or if I'll be a mom and whatever else I was. I do not know it. I want to believe it will be more balanced for all of us.' (Lia, 35-36, 795-804)

‘νομίζω η εικόνα είναι από αυτά που ακούς πιο πολύ. Δηλαδή, είτε τις δυσκολίες, είτε το την πίεση του να προλάβεις, του να τα φροντίσεις όλα. Δύσκολα θα είναι μάλλον.’ (Λία, 31, 688-692)

'I think the picture is one of the things you hear the most. That is, either the difficulties, or the pressure of catching up, of taking care of everything. It's probably going to be hard.' (Lia, 31, 688-692)

‘..., φαντάζομαι ότι θα είναι η προτεραιότητά μας, το παιδί από εδώ στο εξής, γιατί από μόνο του, είναι’. (Ηρώ, 28, 623-625)

'... I imagine it will be our priority, the child from now on, because by itself, it is' (Iro, 28, 623-625)

‘κάτι που μου είπε μια συνάδελφος, [...] μου είχε πει ότι από όταν έκανε τα παιδιά σταμάτησε να είναι τόσο παραχωρητική στο θέμα της δουλειάς, [...] το κέντρο βάρους της ζωής έχει τροποποιηθεί, προτεραιότητά της είναι αυτά (παιδιά). Οπότε έτσι με έχει ανακουφίσει αυτό. Ναι, μπορεί και εγώ να το πάθω. Γιατί ήμουν πάρα πολύ αγχωμένα, πολύ αγχώδης με τη δουλειά. Θα ήθελα να χαλαρώσω.’
(Ηρώ, 28, 626-637)

'...something a colleague told me, [...] she had told me that since she had children, she stopped being so indulgent about work, [...] the center of gravity of her life has been modified, they are now her priority [...] So that's been relieving for me. Yes, I can get it too. Because I was very stressed with work. I would like to relax' (Iro, 28, 626-637)

‘Έεε, επειδή μου ανέθεταν αρκετές εργασίες για το σπίτι, αυτό δεν ξέρω πως θα γίνει όταν μετά με ένα παιδί, με ένα μωρό. Πώς θα μπορώ να δουλέψω στο σπίτι και να είναι, έτσι...Αλλά την ίδια στιγμή δεν θα φαντάζομαι ότι, δεν θα είμαι τόσο τελειοθηρική όσο ήμουν σε σχέση με την διεκπεραίωση των εργασιών, ...ενδεχομένως θα χαλαρώσω, μακάρι να γίνει αυτό.’ (Ηρώ, 29, 646-655)

'Eh, because I was assigned a lot of homework, I don't know how it will be when I have a child, a baby. How will I be able to work at home and be like this... But at the same time, I wouldn't imagine that, I won't be as perfectionist as I was in relation to the completion of tasks, I have to

spend too many hours and it becomes a very proper work, perhaps I shall relax, may this happen.' (Iro, 29, 646-655)

‘Αυτό είναι μεγάλη υπόθεση, δεν ξέρω ακόμα, η αλήθεια είναι. Με τρομάζει η αλήθεια είναι. Γιατί, εντάξει, από αυτά που ακούω τουλάχιστον, δηλαδή από φίλες μου που έχουν γίνει μαμάδες και τα λοιπά, που τις βλέπω όλη μέρα και όλη τη νύχτα μιλάνε για τα παιδιά τους ή πάνε στον εργασιακό χώρο και μιλάνε για τα παιδιά τους, ελπίζω να μη γίνω έτσι. Οπότε προσπαθώ από τώρα να αποφύγω τα λάθη αυτά που βλέπω ή ακούω τόσο έντονα’ (Ζωή, 21-22, 472-483)

‘It scares me, the truth is. Because, okay, from what I hear at least, which is from my friends who have become mothers and so forth, that I see them all day and all night talking about their kids or going to the workplace and talking about their kids, I hope I won't be like that. So, I try as of now to avoid the mistakes that I see or hear so strongly’ (Zoe, 21-22, 472-483)

‘Δεν είμαι διατεθειμένη να αλλάξω τελείως την καθημερινότητά μου, [...] ότι θα βρίσκω χρόνο για τον εαυτό μου, γιατί γενικότερα δεν μου αρέσει, να βλέπω γυναίκες απεριποίητες και επειδή το έχω αυτό, δεν θέλω να καταλήξω έτσι. (Ζωή, 28, 625-632)

I am not willing to completely change my daily life, that is, [...] I will find time for myself, because in general I don't like to see women unkempt and because I have this, I don't want to I end up like this. (Zoe, 28, 625-632)

‘Ότι θα υπάρχει άγχος, θα υπάρχει, αυτό είναι το μόνο σίγουρο, άλλα αυτό που είπα και γενικότερα που λέω είναι ότι, ούτε η πρώτη είμαι ούτε η τελευταία, όλες εργαζόμεθα και είμαστε γυναίκες και έχουμε όλους τους ρόλους αυτούς, οπότε όπως τα έχουν καταφέρει όλες οι άλλες, θα τα καταφέρω και εγώ. (Ζωή, 22, 489-496)

‘Whether there will be anxiety, there will be, that's the only sure thing, but what I told and more generally what I'm saying is that, I am neither the first one nor the last, we are all working and we are women and we have all these roles, so as all the others have done, I will succeed too.’
(Zoe, 22, 489-496)

b. Pleading with the partner for personal time

‘Όταν αποφασίσαμε ότι θέλουμε να κάνουμε παιδί, επειδή εγώ ήξερα το πρόγραμμα το δικό μου, του εξήγησα, [...] ότι, εγώ δεν μπορώ να κάνω ένα παιδί ξέροντας ότι θα ήμουν από το πρωί μέχρι το βράδυ στο γραφείο και εσύ θα δουλεύεις το βράδυ[...] Ήτανε κάτι το οποίο ξεκαθάρισα ότι εγώ δεν μπορώ να το κάνω, δεν μπορώ, αν εσύ θέλεις θα πρέπει να βρούμε μια λύση.’ (Ρένα, 18-19, 394-415)

‘When we decided that we wanted to have a child, because I knew my schedule, I explained to him, [...] that I can't have a child knowing that I would be in the office from morning to night and you would work at night, so no one can help me with the child and I will be in a thousand pieces. [...] It was something I made clear that I can't do it, I can't, if you want, we'll have to find a solution.’ (Rena, 18-19, 394-415)

‘Αυτό το σκέφτομαι, το συζητούσα το τελευταίο καιρό πολύ με τον Βίκτωρα. Πως θα.. εεε, ότι θα ήθελα να ξεκινήσω ένα ωδείο που πήγαινα παλιότερα, θα ήθελα να γυμνάζομαι. Πώς θα γίνουν όλα αυτά; Με καθησυχάζει ότι θα βρούμε τον τρόπο’ (Ηρώ, 29, 658-665)

‘I’ve been discussing it a lot lately with Viktoras. How would... er, that I would like to start at a conservatory that I used to go to, I would like to work out. How will all this be done? He reassures me that we will find a way, that during the hours he will be at home, I will be able to do my activities,’ (Iro, 29, 658-665)

‘Όποτε το έχω ήδη ξεκαθαρίσει και στον άντρα μου, όταν με το καλό έρθει το μωρό, να ξέρεις ότι μια φορά τη βδομάδα, 2 φορές την βδομάδα, θα υπάρχουνε οι ώρες αυτές, που θα πρέπει εγώ να κάνω κάτι για εμένα, για να είμαστε όλοι καλά και να είναι και η υγεία ψυχική μου υγεία νορμάλ.’ (Ζωή, 28, 632-639)

‘So, I’ve already made it clear to my husband that, when the baby arrives, you should know that once a week, twice a week, there will be those times when I will have to do something for myself, so that we are all well and may my mental health is normal.’ (Zoe, 28, 632-639)