

This paper aims at gaining a better insight into pregnant women's interpretation of experienced unfavourable behaviour. Specifically, we examine how such interpretation reflects women's prior understanding of the mutual obligations involved in the employment relation, and in turn, shapes their attitudes towards their employer as well as current and future paid work. Our analysis relies on theory of the psychological contract, an enduring mental model of the employment relationship. The data presented were collected through two focus groups with a total of 15 Belgian women who recently had a child while professionally active. By conceptualizing pregnant women's interpretation of unfavourable behaviour as breaches of their psychological contract, we account for the negative feelings they develop and their subsequent behaviour not only towards their current employer but also, more broadly, towards future employers and paid work in general. Through the content analysis of the focus groups, we could identify psychological contract breaches and violations resulting from four main types of perceived unmet promises: 1) the perceived failure of the organization to respect their legal rights as foreseen in the law, 2) the perceived unwillingness of the organization to be flexible in working conditions during the pregnancy and after it, despite existing legal provisions, 3) the perceived failure of the organization to show what is considered as socially acceptable, respectful behaviour toward the employee's maternity and 4) the perceived imbalance in the perceived met obligations between themselves and the employer over the long term.