How Large-Scale Social Events Change Employees' Attitudes and Behaviours

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ABSTRACT

How Large-Scale Social Events Change Employees' Attitudes and Behaviours

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In this dissertation, I study the relationship between large-scale social events, individual experiences, and social identities. Particularly, I explore the impact of social events, using Quebec's Bill 21 as a case study on people's experiences and behaviour in the workplace. My discussions and results are based on qualitative and quantitative research.

I discovered two distinct informants with varying perceptions of Bill 21 in my qualitative study. The individuals directly targeted by the law faced personal, emotional, and daily life consequences and expressed feelings of devaluation, exploitation, exclusion, discrimination, and hopelessness. On the other hand, individuals who did not consider themselves targets maintained a more detached, objective perspective. They focused on societal implications, secularism, neutrality, and the law as a symbol of Quebec's identity and autonomy.

In addition, I categorize responses to the challenges of a social event into avoidance behaviours, involving strategies like role change, identity concealment, or enhancement to protect threatened identities, and engagement behaviours encompassing identity distinctiveness, sympathizing among minority groups, and pro-social voice. Avoidance behaviours include individuals leaving their professions or concealing religious symbols, while engagement behaviours involve supporting the law, fostering solidarity among minority groups, and advocating for change. These findings offer insights into the complex dynamics of identity and societal responses, emphasizing the importance of considering social identities and identity threats in understanding reactions to mega-events.

In the quantitative study, I study three other overarching mega-events: the MeToo movement, COVID-19, and the change of abortion laws in the US. Additionally, I extend my discussion to include gender and racial identity. By employing both qualitative and quantitative methods, I aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of social events. While the qualitative study uncovers the nuanced emotional and personal repercussions experienced by those directly targeted by the law, the quantitative phase seeks to understand people's workplace behaviours in the larger population.

This research contributes to understanding mega-events impact on individual identity and behaviour and provides insights into how employees from minority groups react to such events. By shedding light on the relationship between social identities, individual experiences, and mega-events, I offer valuable contributions to both research and practical applications in organizational contexts.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Who would you be without your job? How would you describe yourself if you detach yourself from the organizations you have worked for? It is hard to imagine how we will define ourselves if we remove our workplace from the equation. Organizational life plays a vital role in how we perceive ourselves and the group that we associate ourselves with, or in other words, our identity. Researchers have built upon existing studies exploring how individuals shape and uphold their personal and social identities (R. Baumeister, 1998; Goffman, 1959; Tajfel, 1974; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). This body of literature has now expanded and become more comprehensive, focusing on the examination of how organizations impact people's identities, as well as how individuals can, in turn, influence organizations (Ashforth et al., 2001; Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016; Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Brown, 2015; Pratt, 2003; Spears, 2021). Although organizations have a prominent place in people's identities, organizations themselves are embedded in a larger society, which can significantly shape peoples' identities beyond and above the organization's control (Morgeson et al., 2015).

Thus far, however, the literature on organizational influence on identity has paid little attention to social events that can influence people's identities. This is a prominent gap in the literature, given the importance of the extent to which social influences such as pandemics or other major disasters can change the course of people's lives. There are, however, some exceptions. For example, Petriglieri (2015) studied the 2010 Gulf of Mexico oil rig explosion and spill influence on British Petroleum executives (Petriglieri, 2015), Leigh and Melwani (2022) studied the mass shooting targeting Asian Americans and police killings of Black civilians on minority employees in the US (Leigh & Melwani, 2022), or Tilcsik and Marquis (2013) study of natural disasters or significant sports events on philanthropic behaviour of big firms (Tilcsik & Marquis, 2013). My research adds to this body of research by studying how mega-events influence an individual's identity in the workplace.

My goal in this research is twofold. The first main goal is to explore and understand the intricate relationship between social identities and individual experiences, especially in the context of religious identity and the challenges presented by mega-events. This goal seeks to advance our understanding of Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and its application in shaping identity and influencing behaviour. By examining how individuals with religious identities respond to identity threats, such as those posed by Law 21, I aim to uncover the resulting behavioural consequences, including diminished self-esteem, withdrawal from public roles, feelings of alienation, and even legal action. This goal is motivated by the desire to shed light on the complexities of identity-behaviour dynamics. Moreover, I study how exactly mega-events change people's workplace attitudes. To do so, first, I examine how mega-events influence people's identity. To make sense of the world, individuals create identity narratives to guide them in different contexts (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016); they use identity narratives that resonate with how they see themselves. People usually construct identity narratives when they are newcomers in a context (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016). However, people sometimes build or reconstruct their identity when there is a novel cue, especially when there is an identity threat or an unprecedented event (Morgeson et al., 2015; Petriglieri, 2011).

The second main goal is to understand different responses to an identity threat. By doing so, I aim to gain insights into the factors that drive individuals to engage or avoid identity threats, such as those posed by Law 21 in Quebec. Moreover, given that people react to mega-events differently based on their group membership (Leigh & Melwani, 2019), I focus on how employees who are from minority groups would respond to certain events and how they interact with other groups differently. I contend that mega-events can positively or negatively impact employees and that, in some ways, they may be a "blessing in disguise." I expect to propose recommendations organizations can use to help employees deal with mega-events.

My research will make three contributions. First, my research offers valuable insights into the relationship between social identities and individuals' experiences, particularly in the

context of religious identity and the challenges posed by mega-events. By applying Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), the study underscores the significance of social categorization and social comparison in shaping individual identities and influencing their behaviours. This understanding provides a framework for comprehending how identity threats can lead to various behavioural consequences, such as diminished self-esteem, withdrawal from public roles, feelings of alienation, and even legal action. This contribution highlights the relevance of Social Identity Theory in dissecting mega-events effects on individual behaviour, offering a foundation for further research in this field.

Second, the discussion contributes by categorizing behavioural responses into avoidant and engaging behaviours in the face of identity threats. This categorization provides an understanding of why individuals choose to respond in particular ways when their identities are threatened. It underscores the importance of discerning the motivations behind these behaviours and how understanding these motivations can inform the development of targeted interventions and strategies to promote positive responses to identity threats. Additionally, this categorization aids individuals in aligning their reactions with their specific needs. It is an essential tool for organizations seeking to mitigate the adverse effects of identity threats on their employees and overall workplace dynamics. This contribution enhances our understanding of how individuals navigate and respond to identity threats, offering practical applications for research and organizational contexts.

Third, I focus on members of underrepresented minority groups in organizations. Minorities are organizational members who have less power and status and may include the subcategories of race, ethnicity, gender, age, and religion (Ragins, 1997); the minorities in this research do not refer to the numerical status of the people, instead, the term refers to group power. In this research, a minority is defined based on group power rather than numerical relations among groups. A person is considered a minority if they belong to a group historically possessing less power than others. The focus is not on the numerical representation of different

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groups but on their relative power dynamics (Ragins, 1997). There have been several studies that have focused on the experiences of minorities within organizations (Amis et al., 2020; Bell et al., 2021; Eagly & Carli, 2007). I contribute to the existing research by addressing the need to study the unique experiences of minorities within organizations.(Bell & Nkomo, 2001). I focus on how minorities construct their identity in the workplace.(Roberts et al., 2008, 2014). Notably, by studying religious minorities, as I do in this research, we can understand how minorities construct/reconstruct their identity in organizations and how that could differ from other groups.

In this research, I have structured the following chapters to comprehensively explore the relationship between social identities, individual experiences, and the challenges mega-events present, particularly in the context of religious identity. Chapter 1 serves as the foundation, offering a literature review and detailing the research methodology. It covers mega-events, identity, identity threats, and responses to such threats, ensuring a solid theoretical and methodological framework. In Chapter 2, I discuss the findings of my qualitative study. This chapter delves into the perceptual aspects, examining how people perceive a megaevent and how these events influence their identity enhancement and distinctiveness. Additionally, I discussed behavioural responses to a mega-event by categorizing behavioural responses into avoidant and engaging behaviours. I mainly focus on the unique experiences of employees from minority groups and how they interact with other groups differently in response to mega-events. In chapter 3, in a cross-sectional online field study involving 233 participants from Canada and the US, I examine the influence of three major events (the MeToo movement, COVID-19, and changes in US abortion laws) on individuals' perception of identity threat and subsequent organizational outcomes. Finally, in Chapter 4, I engage in a general discussion that synthesizes the findings from the previous chapters and explores their broader implications while also identifying areas for future research.

1.1. Key Concepts

1.1.1. Mega-events

Events have a longstanding presentation in organizational studies as an essential factor that significantly influences organizational life (Pillemer, 2001); some scholars have gone even further and suggested that organizational life is nothing but a series of continuous events (Langley et al., 2013). Although events have been studied for a long time, they have been conceptualized in different ways, such as "jolts" (Meyer, 1982), "crises" or "adversity" (James et al., 2011; Williams et al., 2017), and "shocks" (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). Following the emphasis on events in the literature, Morgeson and colleagues (2015) argued that events influence organizations "from the most molar environmental level to the most molecular individual level (Morgeson et al., 2015, s. 515). In this research, I focus on mega-events (Tilcsik & Marquis, 2013). Tilcsik and Marquis (2013) defined mega-events as "large-scale cultural, political, athletic, and commercial events that attract significant media attention" (Tilcsik & Marquis, 2013, s. 114). Mega-events have two characteristics that differentiate them from other conceptualizations of events. First, they are large-scale events, meaning they influence various people and organizations (Roche, 2006). Second, mega-events receive much media attention in traditional media, such as newspapers, and more recent ones, such as social networks (Tilcsik & Marquis, 2013). Additionally, I focus on mega-events outside the organization's control because they were created by a natural phenomenon (e.g., a tornado) or governments.

Traumatic events such as losing a family member make people question their identity (Neimeyer et al., 2002). People usually have a preset idea about how the world around them should work; when trauma or an external event contradicts that perception, people may perceive an identity threat. Individuals' first reaction to the events is to question their identity by asking who they are, and then they look for a new narrative to replace their old identity (Pals & McAdams, 2004). For example, in a study of four musicians after a severe physical injury, Maitlis (2019) found that individuals start to question, "Who am I now?" after a trauma that

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affects their actions as musicians. She found that after the initial stage of self-doubt and questioning, people found a silver lining in their accident and reconstructed their identity into a new positive identity (Maitlis, 2009). To sum up, a mega-event that interrupts your living routine can result in you questioning who you are and making you rebuild your identity. Before going further into how mega-events can influence identity, I should explain what I mean when talking about identity.

1.1.2. Identity

According to social identity theory, people perceive their identity based on their social group membership and characteristics (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). That is, people answer the question, "Who am I?" based on how they perceive their social identity (e.g., gender, race) and their personal identity (e.g., skills and interests). For example, if you ask a random person, "Who are you?" he or she could answer, "I am a student," or "I am a Canadian," or "I am a foodie." In the "I am a student" or "I am a Canadian" example, identity is defined based on the social aspect of the person, and in the "I am a foodie" example, identity is determined based on the person's interest. Therefore, your interests or your social group can be your identity in different situations.

Furthermore, people have multiple identities at different levels, such as individual or collective (Pratt, 2003). Individual identity has two parts: personal and social. The personal part shows each person's unique skills and interests, and the social part offers the group membership of each person (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Thus, for example, if you answer the question "Who are you?" by saying, "I am an independent woman," you show your individual identity by your personal trait (being independent) and your group membership (being a woman). The social part of the individual identity "derives from knowledge of membership of a social group (or groups) together with the emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel, 1974, p. 69). The interesting point here is that although the social part refers to a group, it resides within an individual; however, a group shares a collective identity and lives within a group of people (Pratt, 2003). Thus, you can have your individual and several collective identities in an

organization. Your collective identity can be an overall identity based on the whole organization, your department, your educational background, and so on (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

You can switch between your individual or organizational identities based on the situation or the importance of the identity (Ashforth et al., 2001). Imagine a university professor's day. In the morning, she has to prepare her children for school as a parent, then prepare her notes for a lecture in the school as a teacher, review an article as a researcher, and attend a departmental meeting as an administrator at the end of the day. Thus, during a single day, you can transition among different roles. As Kreiner and colleagues (2000) argue, "Each role has an identity, which contains goals, values, beliefs, norms, interaction styles, and time horizons." (Ashforth, 2000, s. 264). Therefore, you transition among different roles with different identities based on how important the role is to you and what the organization or outside world demands.

As discussed, people put different weights on their identities based on the context or the role that they have, or in other words, people assign different salience to their identities (Ashforth et al., 2001). Aside from salience, people have different levels of identity malleability, meaning some identities are more stable than others (Kreiner et al., 2006a). For example, one individual can have different social identities as a man, Black, or Catholic and have different organizational identities as an engineer or a soccer coach. The identity of being black is much more stable than being a soccer coach. The malleability differs based on different reasons: the first reason is how easily the identity's meaning can be changed (Petriglieri, 2011), the second reason is if they have been acquired voluntarily or they were assigned (Ellemers et al., 2002), the third reason is how easily the identity can be replaced by another one (Petriglieri, 2011). Using our previous example, people can negotiate a coach's meaning much more accessible than being Black. Also, people can easily leave the soccer coach identity and replace it with another identity, hence, the coach identity is more malleable than the Black identity.

Related to the salience and malleability of identities is the centrality of different identities (Markus & Kunda, 1986). Some identities are central to how people define themselves, meaning that people use some identities more often, across different situations, and various times (Markus & Kunda, 1986). Using our last example, being Black and a soccer coach are the same person's identities, but being Black plays a much more critical part when an individual defines herself or himself in different situations and contexts.

To summarize, when we talk about identity, we have to consider the identity level, whether we are talking about an individual or collective identity (Pratt, 2003). Moreover, we must remember that identities have different aspects: some identities are more central, stable, and accessible than others (Kreiner et al., 2006a). In the next section, I discuss sources of identity threat that can change identity salience, stability, or accessibility.

1.1.3. Identity Threat

As discussed, identities differ in how important or accessible they are to people. This difference in the hierarchy of identities tends to last throughout a person's life (Shamir, 1991). People tend to keep their hierarchy of identities because this would give them a sense of consistency over time (Petriglieri, 2011). Also, according to social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), people derive a sense of self-worth from their social identity. Therefore, people's chances to change their identity over time are low without pressure or threatening reason.

According to Social Identity Theory, we partly define ourselves by the social group to which we belong (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). To understand how social identities shape your identity, you must first understand how social categorization and social comparison work (Grigoropoulou, 2020). Social categorization occurs when the in-group is similar in distinct aspects, reinforcing group similarities and sharpening intergroup boundaries (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Categorizing oneself and others into ingroups and outgroups leads to perceiving targets as embodiments of relevant prototypes, resulting in depersonalization. This process aligns self-perception and behaviour with the ingroup prototype, giving rise to various group phenomena

such as normative behaviour, stereotyping, positive ingroup attitudes, cooperation, and shared norms, without carrying the negative connotations of deindividuation or dehumanization (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Social categorization alone, however, does not lead to intergroup conflict or bias; the process of social comparison creates the potential for intergroup conflict.

Social comparison establishes the value of group membership over others, leading individuals to compete for favorable assessments, higher social identity, and increased self-esteem (Hogg et al., 1995). These social identities will determine our characteristics, personalities, and behaviours (Hogg et al., 1995). To sum up, Social Identity Theory suggests that our social group membership partly defines our individual identity, and understanding the roles of social categorization and social comparison is crucial in comprehending how social identities shape our behaviours. While social categorization reinforces group similarities and boundaries, it is the process of social comparison that establishes the value of group membership and has the potential to lead to intergroup conflict (Grigoropoulou, 2020). These social identities, influenced by social categorization and social comparison, impact our characteristics, personalities, and behaviours.

Petriglieri (2011) argued that identity threat happens when the meaning value or enactment of perceived identity is at risk (Petriglieri, 2011). According to this definition, there are three types of individual identity: threat to value, meaning, and enactment. People usually link their identity to their self-worth, so the higher value they assign to their identity, the more positively they see themselves (Tajfel, 1974), however, this value can be undermined. For example, certain groups have traditionally been appraised as having a low value, such as "dirty workers"[1] (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999). Also, according to self-categorization theory (Turner et al., 1987), individuals enhance their self-esteem by devaluing out-groups, which can lead to stereotypes. Consequently, being a member of a devalued group or experiencing intergroup bias

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[1] Dirty workers are people whose jobs have been traditionally appraised as disgusting such as gravediggers or prostitutes.

can threaten one's identity. Secondly, a threat to meaning happens when the sense you assign to an identity changes over time (Petriglieri, 2011). Imagine you are interested in changing your community for good, so you decide to enter politics. After becoming a politician, however, you see that most of your job deals with bureaucracy that does not help your community. This is an example of a threat to meaning. Finally, a threat to enactment happens when you cannot use the identity that is important to you (Kreiner et al., 2006a). People have different identities, and some can conflict with each other (O'Driscoll et al., 1992), especially when personal identity and work identity conflict, so one of them can not be enacted (Latack, 1981). For example, in a study examining the behaviours of priests, Kreiner et al. (2006b) discovered that priests experience pressure to embody their priestly identity in all aspects of their lives. They felt unable to separate themselves from their priest role, even during casual activities like playing softball with friends. Consequently, they could not express or enact other aspects of their identity that were non-priest related (Kreiner et al., 2006b). This lack of flexibility in enacting different identities is an example of an identity threat.

1.1.4. Mega-events and Identity Threat

Mega-events can cause identity threats by creating individual conflict and changing the social interaction of different groups. People usually shift to the identity that is more relevant to the context (Kreiner et al., 2006a); if they perceive that their organization setting demands specific characteristics that could even be against their social identity, they will turn on the organizational identity which they perceive is more appropriate for work, this is especially true for minority or low-status groups who see their social identity as conflicting with their organizational identity (Phillips et al., 2009). For example, Roberts and colleagues (2014) found that Asian journalists who work in the US media try to change how others perceive their identity by downplaying their racial identity differences, emphasizing the commonalities among different races, or boosting their racial identity. Although employees may face conflicting identities at work, they can live with it as long as they have a separate mental space (Ashforth, 2000).

Therefore, individuals may face situations where their different identities require them to engage in conflicting behaviours. However, as long as these identity-related conflicts occur in separate contexts, individuals can navigate their lives without significant challenges. For instance, you might take pride in your identity as a person of color or a woman but feel the need to downplay those aspects of your identity in the workplace. Individuals can continue with their daily lives without significant difficulties if there is a separate mental space where these conflicting identities can be managed. However, when a mega-event happens, people pay more attention to their social identity when it threatens their identity (Leigh & Melwani, 2019). For example, the police shootings of Black Americans have brought to the surface the social identities that have been downplayed before (Leigh & Melwani, 2019). Black Americans have been very vocal about the shootings and have stated that they felt personally attacked by the shootings (Leigh & Melwani, 2019). These events made them feel that their identity value was threatened because being Black was equated with being a criminal. Therefore, mega-events can tilt the balance of identities and make people reconsider their contradicting identities.

To sum up, mega-events can potentially generate identity threats through internal conflicts within individuals. When individuals perceive that their organizational setting requires certain characteristics that go against their social identity, they may prioritize their organizational identity over their social identity, especially among minority or low-status groups. While individuals can typically manage conflicting identities in separate mental spaces, mega-events can disrupt this balance. In instances like police shootings of Black Americans, such events bring suppressed social identities to the forefront, leading individuals to feel personally attacked and threatened as their Black identity becomes associated with criminality. Consequently, mega-events have the potential to shift the dynamics of conflicting identities and prompt individuals to reassess their identity priorities.

Furthermore, mega-events can influence people's interactions with others. After traumatic events, people search within to find answers to the new reality; they start by self-

questioning and doubt to reach a new understanding of themselves (Maitlis, 2009). Additionally, people work in groups and interact with others to respond to threatening events and build a new collective understanding of reality (Leigh & Melwani, 2019). Therefore, people will reach out to others to discuss the event and understand how they should cope with the new challenges. For example, after the MeToo movement, many women used social media to tell their stories and cope with the trauma that they had faced.

Some scholars argue that people from different demographic groups (e.g., gender or race) have a more difficult time building a high-quality relationship (Phillips et al., 2009) and have more chances of miscommunications (Srikanth et al., 2016). Therefore, in the aftermath of a mega-event, people are more likely to seek out their demographic in-group for assistance and collective sense-making, which can result in people distancing themselves from other demographic groups. When groups do not interact and share personal information, they are less likely to share resources or trust each other (Phillips et al., 2009). Hence, as we discussed in the integrated threat theory (Stephan & Stephan, 2000) when people perceive competition over resources and that the values between groups are different, they feel identity threat by the other group.

In conclusion, mega-events impact individuals internally and influence their interactions with others. Following traumatic events, individuals engage in self-questioning and introspection to make sense of the new reality, ultimately leading to a revised understanding of themselves. People can build this new understanding by engaging in collective sense-making. Individuals seek out others to discuss the event and navigate its challenges. For instance, the MeToo movement witnessed women using social media as a platform to share their stories and cope with the trauma they experienced. Therefore, in the aftermath of a mega-event, people are more likely to turn to their demographic in-groups for support and collective sense-making, potentially leading to distancing themselves from other demographic groups. This reduced interaction and sharing of personal information between groups can result in decreased resource sharing and

trust, particularly when individuals perceive competition over resources and perceive differing values, thus eliciting identity threat towards the other group.

1.1.5. Response to Identity Threat

Petriglieri (2011) argued that people respond to identity threats in two ways: they either protect their identity or restructure their identity (Petriglieri, 2011). First, in preserving an identity, people will try to keep the importance and meaning of an existing identity. One way to do that is to discredit the attacker by derogating him. In this way, the threat has no legitimacy in the individual's mind (Crocker et al., 1991). Another way to protect an identity is to enhance the meaning of the threatened identity (Roberts et al., 2014). In this way, the individual embraces the identity in public and emphasizes the positive aspects of the identity (Bell & Nkomo, 2001).

The second way people respond to identity threats is to restructure their identity, meaning they change some aspects of the identity to mitigate the identity threat (Petriglieri, 2011). An individual may attempt to change the meaning of an identity that may fit the current situation better (Bell & Nkomo, 2001). For example, as I mentioned, the expectation of being a politician can differ from the reality of being one, which could result in identity threats. This threat can be mitigated by updating the meaning that was assigned to the identity. Alternatively, an individual may exit the identity altogether, for example, by quitting their job as a politician (Petriglieri, 2011). Identity exit requires more effort than changing the meaning of identity because people should psychologically and physically distance themselves from the identity to exit the identity (Ebaugh & Ebaugh, 1988). Also, identity exit is only possible for some identities. For example, one can quit being a soccer coach or a politician, but quitting being Black is impossible. Lastly, an individual can change the importance of identity as a response to identity threats (Petriglieri, 2011). As we discussed, identities have different levels of significance for people (Ashforth et al., 2001). Some identities are more central than others (e.g., being Black vs being a soccer coach). To mitigate the identity threat, people can change the importance of their identity, so the identity will no longer be central to them. For example, when you see that being a politician is

not what it was supposed to be, you change your appraisal of the job as a big part of your life and would only see it as something that needs to be done. Instead, you may focus on your personal life and try to be a better parent, so being a parent becomes more important than being a politician.

Finding support for all the mentioned responses, Holmes et al. argued that people use these responses and three additional ones to mitigate identity threats (Holmes et al., 2016). They analyze people's narrative of their identity threat and argue that in addition to restructuring and protecting identities, people may ignore the threat altogether, seek assistance from their social group, or act constructively (Holmes IV et al., 2016). They found that some people ignore the threat by not thinking about the threat at all or use their social group for support without taking any further actions. Alternatively, individuals may respond to identity threats productively without directly addressing the threat itself. For instance, when faced with negative stereotypes, some individuals may counteract them by working harder and demonstrating their value through their actions without necessarily emphasizing the positive distinctiveness of their group identity. (Holmes IV et al., 2016).

1.1.6. Identity Threat Responses to Mega-events.

So far, I have discussed the individual response to all types of identity threats, but the reactions can differ according to the sources of identity threats (Petriglieri, 2011). For example, suppose an employee is consistently working in a hostile environment that stereotypes her. In that case, she may choose to change the importance of the identity or exit the identity because of continuous threats (Ashforth, 2000). On the other hand, when an individual experiences a threat due to role conflict, they may decide to disregard the threat and continue living with the conflict. Role conflict occurs when a person is confronted with incompatible expectations or demands from different roles, such as conflicting expectations between their personal and professional life. In such cases, individuals may prioritize maintaining the multiple roles they are engaged in, even if it means disregarding the threat and enduring the internal conflict caused by the

conflicting expectations. This decision to ignore the threat and accept the role conflict can be a coping mechanism to manage the complexities and demands of their various roles. (O'Driscoll et al., 1992). In this paper, I focus on mega-events as the sources of identity threats.

Even with mega-events as the source of identity threat, people can respond to a threat differently (Petriglieri, 2011). Some people may behave in a defensive way (Branscombe, Ellemers, et al., 1999), some in an aggressive manner (Branscombe & Wann, 1994), some may conceal their identity or try to create a positive meaning (Roberts et al., 2014). Below, I describe the conditions that will result in different responses.

In a study of reactions to feelings of discrimination, Branscombe and colleagues (1999) found that African Americans who perceive racial discrimination acted more aggressively toward White Americans and identified more with ingroups (Branscombe, Schmitt, et al., 1999). People who perceive identity threats may derogate the attackers to discredit the source of the threat (Crocker et al., 1991). Therefore, derogating as a response to a mega-event happens only in situations in which the source of threat is associated with a particular group. For example, in the case of the police shooting in the US, people only act aggressively to out-groups if the police shooters are associated with White Americans. But in the case of a natural disaster such as a tornado, people are less likely to behave defensively or derogate out-groups.

In summary, even when mega-events serve as the source of identity threats, individuals can respond to these threats in various ways. The specific conditions surrounding the threat influence these different responses. Individuals facing identity threats may derogate the attackers as a means of discrediting the source of the threat. However, derogatory reactions to mega-events typically occur when the threat is associated with a specific group. For example, in police shootings in the US, people may act aggressively towards out-groups if the shooters are associated with White Americans. On the other hand, in situations such as natural disasters like tornadoes, defensive behaviours and derogation towards out-groups are less likely to be observed.

Moreover, some people may downplay their identity further or conceal their identity depending on how strongly they identify with the ingroup or how vital the identity is to them (Branscombe, Ellemers, et al., 1999). Branscombe and Wann (1994) conducted a study examining the impact of social identity threat on individuals categorized as high identifiers and low identifiers among Americans. The findings revealed that only individuals classified as high identifiers responded to social identity threats by derogating outgroups. High identifiers are individuals who strongly identify with their social group and place significant importance on their group membership as a source of self-esteem and identity. In the face of social identity threat, these individuals are more likely to engage in derogatory behaviours towards outgroups as a defensive response to protect and affirm their own social identity. On the other hand, low identifiers, who have a weaker attachment to their social group and assign less importance to their group membership, may not exhibit the same level of derogation towards outgroups when confronted with social identity threats. (Branscombe & Wann, 1994). Competing with other groups and behaving aggressively toward them comes from people who highly identify with their groups. This behaviour can be explained by social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). When high identifiers' social identity is threatened, their collective self-esteem is damaged. To restore their damaged self-esteem, high identifiers derogate the outgroups and act aggressively toward them (Branscombe, Schmitt, et al., 1999). However, they don't show the same behaviour because low identifiers do not feel that their collective self-esteem is damaged as much as high identifiers. Low identifiers tend to downplay or conceal their identity because they don't see that identity as a defining part of themselves, and when that identity is under threat, they try to distance themselves from that identity so they are less likely to be associated with that identity (Ethier & Deaux, 1994). To summarize, the response to social identity threat varies based on the strength of identification with the ingroup and the importance of the identity. High identifiers who strongly identify with their group respond to social identity threats by derogating outgroups and behaving aggressively towards them. This behaviour stems from a need to protect and restore their collective self-esteem. On the other hand, low identifiers with a weaker attachment

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to their group tend to downplay or conceal their identity when faced with threats, as they do not perceive it as integral to their self-concept.

Another outcome occurs when people create positive meaning around their social identity as a response to identity threats (Roberts et al., 2014). As we discussed, some identities are more central than others, meaning people use some identities more than others to make sense of their world in many situations and contexts (Markus & Kunda, 1986). Furthermore, the centrality of a similar identity differs from person to person (R. F. Baumeister, 1989). For example, for some people, race, gender, or religion plays a more significant role in how they define the world around them than others. When an individual has high regard for an identity that is being undermined by an external threat, they are more likely to bold and boost the positive aspects of that identity (Roberts et al., 2014). However, people positively boost their identity if they have a social group to support them (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999); if individuals perceive that highlighting their identity will result in backlash and more threats without any social support, they may not engage in positive boosting. In conclusion, in response to identity threats, individuals may choose to create positive meaning around their social identity. The centrality of different identities varies among individuals, with some identities playing a more significant role in shaping their worldview. When individuals highly value an identity that is being undermined, they are more likely to emphasize and amplify the positive aspects of that identity. However, the extent to which individuals engage in positive boosting depends on the presence of a supportive social group, as highlighting their identity without social support may lead to backlash and further threats.

Some scholars have argued that mega-events can have positive effects, too; for example, certain events can create a stronger sense of community or make people speak up (Leigh & Melwani, 2019; Tilcsik & Marquis, 2013). For example, in a study of local firms after bushfire disasters in Australia, Shepherd and Williams (2014) found that local communities came together after the disaster to help the impacted local firms (Shepherd & Williams, 2014).

Minorities sometimes hide their social identity because they perceive their identity as unprofessional, or they may fear stereotypes (Phillips et al., 2009; Roberts et al., 2014). However, mega-events can make minorities heed their social identity because it is not about their individual identity at work anymore; it is about them as a group that has been targeted. This new realization can result in in-group cohesion and a sense of belongingness. For example, the police shooting of African Americans has made many African Americans speak up and support other African Americans. Furthermore, people who are not the main target of mega-events can have a new understanding of the targeted minorities because discussing the targeted group becomes mainstream. That can help people see and understand problems they have not considered before.

To summarize, mega-events can bring about positive outcomes by strengthening community bonds and encouraging individuals from both minority and non-minority groups to speak up. While minorities may typically conceal their social identity due to concerns about professionalism or stereotypes, mega-events can motivate them to embrace their identity as a targeted group, fostering unity within their own communities. Moreover, mega-events can also inspire individuals from other groups to express their support for minorities. Open discussions about targeted groups following mega-events can also contribute to a greater understanding and awareness among the wider population (Leigh & Melwani, 2019; Tilcsik & Marquis, 2013).

1.2. Methods

Before presenting my findings, I must provide context regarding the data and methodology I employed in this research. I initiated the study by addressing two key research questions: how people perceive mega-events and what factors contribute to the variations in individual responses to these events. To answer these questions, I collected data through qualitative and quantitative methods. I employed various data collection forms, such as surveys and interviews, to gather comprehensive and diverse perspectives. Furthermore, I applied rigorous data analysis techniques involving statistical analysis and grounded theory to extract meaningful insights from the collected data. This approach ensures a comprehensive grasp of

how mega-events impact workplace attitudes and uncovers the underlying reasons for individual response variations.

First, I started my data collection by interviewing 20 informants. The findings from this qualitative study guided my subsequent quantitative study by showcasing the possible outcomes of mega-events. This approach helped me qualitatively contextualize the research and provided valuable insights into potential effects, which required further exploration in the quantitative phase. The qualitative data gave me a preliminary understanding of how mega-events influence workplace dynamics, forming a solid basis for the subsequent quantitative analysis. In the quantitative phase, I collected data on a larger scale through surveys and employed statistical analysis techniques. The insights from the qualitative phase informed the design of the quantitative study, ensuring that the survey questions and analytical approaches were aligned with the themes and factors identified in the qualitative findings. This approach aimed to quantitatively validate and build upon the qualitative insights, providing a comprehensive understanding of how mega-events affect workplace outcomes.

By integrating qualitative and quantitative methods, my research explores mega-events impact on workplace attitudes, shedding light on the factors contributing to response variations. This methodological approach enhances the depth and breadth of my research, enabling a more robust and nuanced understanding of this complex phenomenon.

CHAPTER TWO: " Understanding the Impact of Quebec's Bill 21 on people's perception"

2.1. Research Context and Data

Bill 21 history. Bill 21 (i.e., religious ban) was passed in June 2019 in Quebec, Canada, which forbids public sector employees with authority (e.g., police, judges, teachers) from wearing religious symbols like headscarves or turbans. It is essential to understand the history of Quebec to understand how Bill 21 came about. Reviewing such a long history is outside the

scope of this paper. Thus, I will briefly summarize what has happened since the quiet revolution in the 1960s and 1970s that led to the passage of Bill 21 into law in 2019. The Quiet Revolution "…[was] a period of rapid change in Quebec as institutions and attitudes were swept away, transforming state, economy, family, and society" (Young & Dickinson, 2008, s. 332). Quebec underwent significant social, political, and cultural changes during this time. The Quiet Revolution was driven by a desire to modernize and secularize Quebec society, reduce the influence of the Catholic Church, and address longstanding socio-economic disparities. The period saw a shift in power from traditional elites, such as the Church, to urban intellectuals and progressive politicians. Reforms were implemented in various areas, including education, healthcare, labor relations, and the state's role. The Quiet Revolution aimed to assert Quebec's distinct cultural identity, promote the French language, and address social injustices. It also paved the way for the rise of Quebec nationalism and the pursuit of greater autonomy within Canada. The Quiet Revolution had a lasting impact on the province, shaping its politics, institutions, and socio-cultural fabric (Young & Dickinson, 2008).

During the early 2000s, the debate on secularism heated up after a new wave of immigration from Muslim French-speaking countries (Bouchard & Taylor, 2008). The heated debates resulted in political and societal turmoil, which prompted the Quebec Liberal Party to mandate two scientists to examine "reasonable accommodation" in Quebec. Reasonable accommodation involves balancing the rights and needs of diverse individuals or groups while maintaining social harmony and cohesion (*Reasonable Accommodation | CDPDJ*, n.d.). It involves developing policies and strategies that allow for the fair and equitable treatment of individuals with differing cultural, religious, or linguistic backgrounds—examining reasonable accommodation aimed to explore how Quebec could navigate the complexities of diversity and ensure inclusivity while upholding the principles of justice and equality for all its residents (Bouchard & Taylor, 2008). Having conducted over a year of research, the committee concluded that the severity of reasonable accommodations having a significant effect was unfounded. They

also recommended that government officials with "coercive" powers remain neutral and should not wear religious symbols (Bouchard & Taylor, 2008).

Following the report's publication in 2008, all elected governments have enacted bills to ensure the "laicite" of the state, but they were either overruled in court or not followed by the next government. The political situation changed when the Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) government successfully passed Bill 21 into law. Law 21, also known as the "Secularism Law," is legislation in Quebec, Canada, that prohibits certain public sector employees, including teachers, police officers, and judges, from wearing religious symbols or attire while on duty, aiming to promote secularism in the province (Souissi, T., 2021). Unlike the previous bills, Bill 21 has remained in force despite court challenges (see Appendix A for more details).

Research data. In this inductive study, I interviewed 20 people with various jobs, all affected by Law 21 in different ways. The participants were diverse, with 12 identifying as white, five as West Asian, and three as South Asian (see table below for demographic information and appendix B for the interview guide). Out of the 20 participants, six were immigrants, while 14 were born in Canada. Among those 14, four were children of immigrants. Interview durations varied between 20 minutes and 1 hour and 20 minutes, with an average duration of 45 minutes.

TABLE 1. INTERVIEWEES DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

#	Age	Gender	Job	Pseudonym	Ethnicity
1	20s	Male	Student- employee of BQ party in Ottawa	Olivier	White
2	30s	Female	Volunteer at an immigration center- Student-artist	Rachel	White
3	40s	Male	Student- activist- artist	Youssef	West Asian
4	70s	Male	Artist- retired teacher and lecturer	Pierre	White
5	40s	Male	Former teacher - student	Ryan	White

6	40s	Female	Social worker at a nonprofit	Melissa	White
7	40s	Female	Teacher at a CEGEP	Leila	West Asian
8	40s	Male	Teacher at a high school	Matthew	White
9	40s	Male	Works in hospitality	Lucas	White
10	30s	Female	University lecturer	Neeta	South Asian
11	40s	Male	University professor, teacher	Richard	White
12	40s	Male	IT & Tech Services Manager-writer, activist	Tarek	West Asian
13	20s	Female	Lawyer	Camille	White
14	30s	Female	Home day-care educator	Amira	West Asian
15	30s	Female	Lawyer	Fatima	West Asian
16	50s	Male	Former Liberal MP	Robert	White
17	40s	Female	English school board	Eleanor	White
18	30s	Female	CEGEP teacher	Laura	White
19	50s	Female	Secondary school teacher	Mariam	South Asian
20	50s	Female	Journalist – Retired teacher	Safiya	South Asian

In recruiting, I have used the following criteria: participants must be Quebec residents since 2018, must have had the same job since 2018, and their job must be affected, or they must have been actively involved with the bill. I have recruited participants using several strategies. Firstly, I have asked all members of my social network to consider who they know who fits the recruitment criteria. Secondly, I have contacted the school boards in Montreal to post my flyer on their social media (Appendix C). Thirdly, I contacted the people who have organized campaigns against Law 21. Finally, I have used the snowballing method, which means that at the end of every interview, I asked the participants whom they knew who fit the criteria.

2.2. IMPACT ON EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTIONS

2.2.1. Method and Data Analysis

I used the interviews discussed in the previous section to build my findings and discussion. I iteratively analyzed the interview data as I collected it, moving back and forth between iterations. I used the constant comparison method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to identify patterns and variations in the data as I collected data and reviewed relevant literature. I began by open-coding the transcripts of my interviews and creating as many categories as possible, which helped me stay close to my informants' terms. As I reviewed the transcripts line-by-line, I identified similarities and differences between the codes and grouped the similar codes into 1st-order codes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). When possible, I labeled the categories using the informants' terms; when this was not possible, I used descriptive labels. For example, I observed participants expressing a sense of feeling devalued in their workplace, a sentiment that was echoed across interviews. Some participants described instances of exploitation by others in their work environment, such as being assigned menial tasks or overlooked for career advancement opportunities. These recurring themes and experiences were represented in the data as codes and systematically categorized into 1st-order codes. Next, I started to code the data into a 2nd-order analysis, asking whether the emerging themes suggested concepts that might help us describe and explain the phenomena we observed (Gioia et al., 2013). This phase focused on ideas that didn't seem to have adequate theoretical referents in the existing literature or existing concepts that ''leaped out'' because of their relevance to a new domain. This process facilitated the development of a workable set of themes and ideas, which, in turn, culminated in achieving "theoretical saturation" (Gioia et al., 2013). Lastly, I investigated whether it was possible to distill the emergent 2nd-order themes even further into 2nd-order ''aggregate dimensions." This step involved building a data structure and cycling between emergent data, themes, concepts, dimensions, and the relevant literature. The aim was to create a vibrant model grounded in the

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data, as exemplified by the data structure. This model would theoretically capture the informants' experience, providing a comprehensive and structured understanding of mega-events impact on workplace attitudes (Gioia et al., 2013).

2.2.2. Findings

I analyzed the informants' responses using Tajfel and Turner's Social Identity Theory (SIT) to answer my first question. A person's identity is defined by personal characteristics and group membership (Tajfel et al., 1979). Therefore, I coded my data when the informants discussed their group membership or personal factors. In addition, I evaluated the data based on Petriglieri's (2011) definition of identity threat. She defines identity threat as the compromise of value, meaning, or enactment of one's identity. I aimed to code all incidents of Law 21 influencing people's identities in my data. It became apparent from the first few interviews that perceptions of Law 21 influence varied greatly between people who feel they are being targeted directly (first group) and people who do not think they are being targeted (second group). In the first group, composed of individuals who felt directly targeted, their perceptions of Law 21 were deeply influenced by their personal experiences and the perceived consequences they faced due to the law's implementation. These individuals often expressed solid emotions and concerns about how the law affected their daily lives, choices, and opportunities. Their views on Law 21 were shaped by their experiences of being directly impacted, leading to a more intense and personalized perspective.

Conversely, the second group, individuals who did not perceive themselves as targets of Law 21, held a more detached and objective perspective. These individuals tended to view the law's effects from a broader societal standpoint rather than a personal one. Their perceptions were often framed regarding general principles, broader societal implications, and potential long-term consequences. Because they didn't feel directly affected, their opinions were less emotionally charged and more focused on the overall impact of the law.

It is worth noting that the initial presumption of a divide between francophone native white Quebecers versus Anglophones and immigrants, designed to categorize individuals into these groups, did not hold true after the data coding process. The analysis revealed that there are white francophones in the first group who perceive the bill as discriminatory, and there were Anglophones in the second group who saw the bill as a societal necessity and a way to progress. I will, therefore, present my findings according to each group. I have 12 informants in the targeted group (first group) and 8 informants in the non-targeted group (second group). I will start by answering my first research question and then move to the second question.

FIGURE 1. DATA STRUCTURE FOR GROUP 1 – MEGA-EVENT APPRAISAL
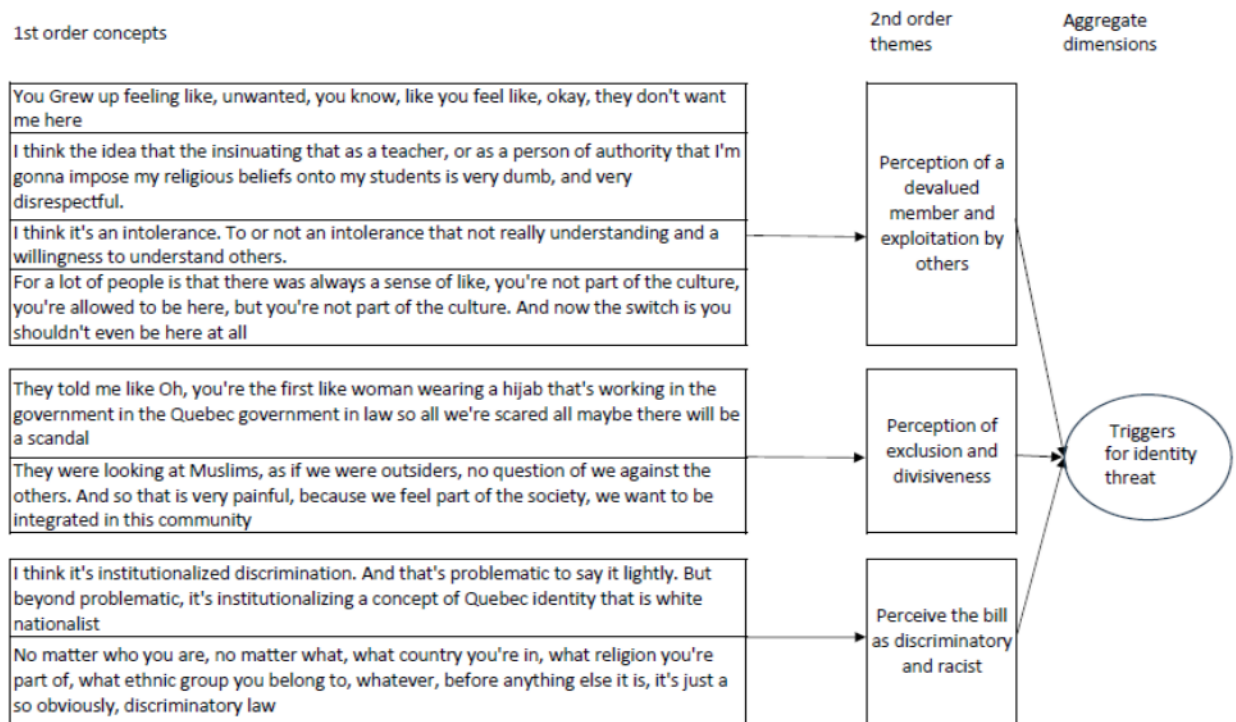
FIGURE 2. DATA STRUCTURE FOR GROUP2 – MEGA-EVENT APPRAISAL
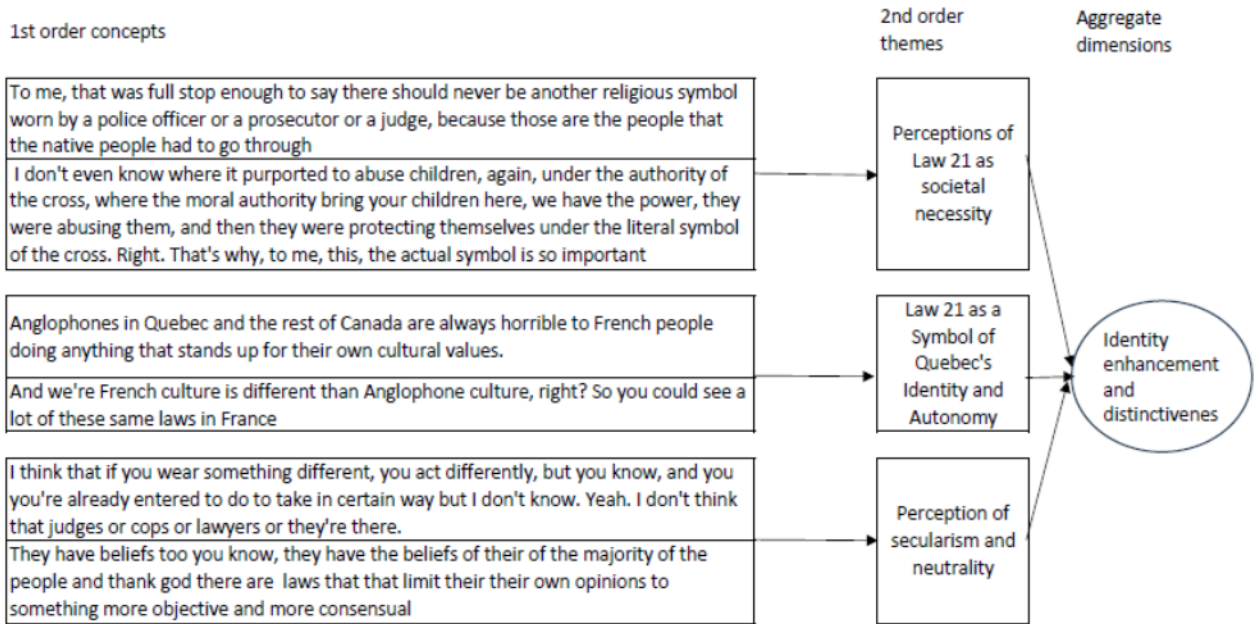
How do people perceive Law 21?

1ˢᵗ group. Perception of a Devalued Dember and Exploitation by Others. Some interviewees felt that Law 21 has dramatically impacted their lives, as it made them feel their lives are worth less than those who are not the main targets of this law. During the interviews, they mentioned that their work now holds less significance and that their contributions carry a different value than others. This was particularly evident in the case of the female lawyer who wore a hijab in her job, whom I will refer to as Fatima. According to Fatima, she was the first and only female lawyer working in Quebec's government who wore a hijab. Becoming a lawyer had always been her lifelong dream because she believed that minorities were underrepresented in Quebec's legal system, and she wanted to represent people from Muslim and Arab

communities. However, following the implementation of Law 21, she felt unwelcome in the legal environment in Quebec, and she perceived that her work needed to be regarded with a different value than others. As you can see from the quotes below, she sees herself as a devalued member of society after Bill 21 became law.

"I feel like this bill cheapened the lives of people like me and our feelings, our labor; everything was seen as cheap. And, something that is not worthy"

"I, these people, if you ask them now, like even though like the like, do you feel this girl like work hard, they will say no, she did nothing."

Fatima also shared that she has spoken to her Muslim friends who work as teachers or daycare educators, and they expressed similar feelings about the law. She mentioned that her friends are afraid to discuss their emotions openly, fearing they may be perceived as unprofessional. They only confided in Fatima because they believed she could empathize with their situations. Additionally, Fatima noted a significant disparity between Muslim women working in Quebec and those in other provinces. She recounted a conversation with a female Muslim radio talk show host friend in a different province. Fatima was surprised to learn that her friend did not have to conceal her religious practices at work and that her work environment embraced and accepted her as a Muslim woman.

Moreover, some interviewees' perceptions of the law extended beyond feeling devalued or excluded. They expressed a sense of being exploited, believing that others took advantage of them due to their diminished value. This feeling was echoed by Fatima, who described her concern that her work would be reduced and that others would unjustly claim credit for it. She said:

"I feel like they will diminish my work. And they, I don't know how to say it, but like, they want it so hard to like invisible eyes, my work, and take them as theirs."

This feeling of exploitation was also evident in my interview with Amira, an immigrant who arrived in Quebec four years ago and runs a small home daycare. Amira mentioned the high demand for daycare educators and teachers in society, which facilitated her immigration to Quebec. However, she felt that the government would not hire them if they had other options, leading to a lack of appreciation for their work as educators. Amira believed that the only reason she could work was that the government had no other choice and that her work would not be valued. The perception of the law among some interviewees went beyond feeling devalued or excluded, extending to a sense of exploitation where they believed others took advantage of them due to their diminished worth. Consequently, some interviewees felt like they were being manipulated and exploited by others. They thought that no matter how hard they worked and how much they contributed to their work, others either did not see their work or saw them as something marginal.

To sum up, several interviewees emphasized that Law 21 significantly impacted their lives, making them feel their worth was diminished compared to those unaffected by the law. This sentiment was particularly evident in the story of Fatima, who believed her work lost value after the law's implementation. Muslim friends working as educators shared similar feelings. Some interviewees went beyond feeling undervalued and expressed a sense of exploitation, perceiving that others took advantage of their reduced status. The shared perception was that their contributions were overlooked and marginalized, leading to a sense of exploitation and diminished worth.

1st group. Perception of Exclusion and Divisiveness. Interviewees whose job was not directly impacted but felt targeted by the law still felt unwelcome differently than the devalued group. They experienced a sense of not belonging to society anymore, a feeling of being outsiders. This was the case for Safiya, a Muslim woman who immigrated to Quebec in the 1970s seeking the freedom of thought she lacked in her home country. Safiya worked as a teacher in English and French schools and is now retiring. She actively participates in various

councils and campaigns promoting equality and inclusiveness, particularly for Muslim women. She mentioned that after all her years in Quebec, Law 21 made her question her sense of belonging in society. She felt that the broader community viewed her as an outsider who did not belong among them.

"they were looking at Muslims as if we were outsiders, no question of we against the others. And so that is very painful because we feel part of the society; we want to be integrated in this community."

Furthermore, Safiya mentioned that the law excluded her and other Muslims from society and fostered animosity among various religious and ethnic groups. According to her, the law introduced a divisive atmosphere that categorized individuals into two groups: those who supported the law and belonged to the "us" group and those who opposed the law and belonged to the "against" group. In her belief, this division generated significant tension among different groups.

"there is this feeling of animosity against the entire community. I myself when I was discussing it with people, you know, who are not Muslim, obviously, and they were, so they were looking at Muslims, as if we were outsiders, no question of we against the others."

Interviewees, including Safiya, who were not directly impacted by the law, still felt unwelcome in a distinct manner from the devalued group. They experienced a deep sense of alienation and no longer felt belonging within society. This feeling of being an outsider can be present in minorities even before a mega-event such as Law 21, however, this law brought the perception of exclusion into minorities forefront, which can cause an identity threat and make them actively look for a response.

Furthermore, they believed the law excluded Muslims from society and intensified animosity among religious and ethnic groups. The law's divisive nature categorized individuals into supporters or opponents, leading to heightened tensions between different groups.

1ˢᵗ group. Perceive the Law as Discriminatory and Racist. Another aftermath that came after the feeling of exclusion and devaluation was the feeling that specific groups, specifically religious groups, were targeted. Some interviewees mentioned that Law 21 was specifically designed and passed to discriminate against religious groups. In their belief, on the surface, Law 21 was passed to protect the state's secularism (or laicity), but the real reason for that law was to discriminate against minorities. For instance, Matthew viewed the law as irrelevant to job performance and having little to no impact on the secular nature of the state and society. Matthew, a teacher at an all-boys Catholic high school, was born and raised in Quebec in a Catholic family. According to him, the state or government has no authority to dictate what individuals should or should not wear in their workplace.

"if those people might feel like they're being discriminated against, they may feel hurt by that decision. And ultimately, they may leave the profession. And in a world where we're already fighting as it is to get police officers and to get teachers, and they get nurses and doctors and all that kind of stuff, it's just one more thing to alienate people from going into those jobs."

Lucas not only saw the law as something that serves society, but he also saw it as something that would give racist individuals opportunities to express their racism. As a semi-retired part-time teacher currently working in the hospitality industry, Lucas's parents had immigrated to Canada before his birth, and he himself was born and raised in Montreal, Quebec. According to him, those who supported the law were, in his perception, driven by racist sentiments and a desire to exclude other minority groups from society. In his opinion, the law would divide people into groups, eventually hindering communication among them.

"I've already been witnessed two people being hassled in public for wearing a red religious item in public. And I think it's noteworthy that I've seen more since that law than I'd ever seen in my entire life before"

Some interviewees believed that Law 21 had been specifically designed and enacted to discriminate against these groups. While they acknowledge that the law claims to protect the

secular nature of the state, they felt it was a means to discriminate against minorities. Moreover, they believed the law's supporters harbored racist sentiments, aiming to exclude minority groups. They feared that the law would divide people and hinder communication between them.

1ˢᵗ **group. Hopelessness About the Future.** Another perception observed within the first group during the interviews was a sense of hopelessness regarding the future. Despite ongoing legal challenges to Law 21 and the possibility of being reviewed by higher courts, some interviewees believed the law would ultimately be upheld. Notably, it is important to acknowledge that not all informants in the first group felt the same way, and there were individuals who remained hopeful that the law would be struck down in court. However, the majority expressed a prevailing sense of hopelessness. They perceived a lack of sufficient societal resources and willpower to effectively stop or challenge the law, as evident from Leila's (a teacher at a college in Montreal who actively advocates for gender equality) quote:

"I don't know there's much hope to cancel, cancel or anything with the law... I think we lost our chance this is this. I'm definitely not pessimistic but in this case I am and I'm talking about from my research about the the social movements organizing around bill 21 and we lost our chance we didn't do we didn't do a good job"

2ⁿᵈ **group. Perceptions of Law 21 as a Societal Necessity.** As discussed, people's perceptions and reactions varied greatly depending on whether they were being targeted. For some interviewees, Law 21 was not an identity threat but a law they see as necessary for society. Ryan was one of the interviewees who thought like that. He was born and raised in Ontario in an anglophone family and had worked as a teacher in the past for some time. He viewed Law 21 as something that can help minorities have better lives. Although he acknowledged that some racist individuals may be happy because of this law, he saw the law as necessary for society. He mentioned that some minorities themselves are so glad about this law and see it as something that can help society move forward.

"I guess this bill is kind of, to me, like laws about murder, or rape ... I mean, most of the laws in society won't affect me specifically, but I still believe that we should have them in order to build a society for the future."

In summary, people's perceptions and reactions to Law 21 varied based on whether they perceived themselves as targeted. Some interviewees viewed the law as an identity threat, while others saw it necessary for societal improvement.

2nd group. Perception of Secularism and Neutrality. For some, Law 21 is simply a law that protects the secularism and impartiality of the state. They interpret the law based on its literal meaning: a law that affirms and protects the laicity of the state. They view the law as something Quebec governments have always wanted to establish for Quebec society. Pierre was a retired art and history professor born and raised in a francophone family in Quebec. He saw the law as a continuation of Quebec society's efforts to address the problems and issues present in Quebec for some time. He discussed how Quebec society has experienced a series of religious atrocities in the past and how Quebec, as a society, has always strived to stand up against religious fanatics.

"I think that if you wear something different, you act differently, but you know, and you you're already entered to do to take in certain way but I don't know. Yeah. I don't think that judges or cops or lawyers or they're there. They have beliefs too you know, they have the beliefs of their of the majority of the people and thank god there are laws that that limit their their own opinions to something more objective and more consensual."

Interviewees, similar to Pierre, perceive Law 21 as something that protects society from reverting to the times when religion, specifically Catholicism, controlled and oppressed people. They see Law 21 not as a recent act but as part of an ongoing process unfolding over the past several decades. They view Law 21 as a continuous process that began with the Quiet Revolution in the 1960s and has persisted since then. In summary, for some, Law 21 is not something beyond the present; rather, it represents a lengthy process to free society from religious chains.

2ⁿᵈ group. Law 21 as a Symbol of Quebec's Identity and Autonomy. Like people in the first group who see Law 21 as not just a law about secularism, people in the second group also see Law 21 as something more significant. They see Law 21 as a symbol of Quebec's independence and how Quebec is culturally and politically different from the rest of Canada. They consider Quebec a nation with its own history, culture, and language, which sets it apart from the rest of the country. They believe the law should be discussed and debated in Quebec, free from pressure from the federal government of Canada or other provinces. They see Law 21 as representing Quebec's identity and values.

"Anglophones in Quebec and the rest of Canada are always horrible to French people doing anything that stands up for their cultural values. And we're French culture is different from Anglophone culture, right? So you could see a lot of these same laws in France."

Many people in Quebec consider the law as a representation of their unique identity, which is closely related to the language debate. They believe that some individuals are against the law because they want to enforce their own views on Quebecers, much like how English is enforced on French-speaking people. They see the controversy surrounding Law 21 as inextricably linked to the language debate, with opposition to the law being akin to an attack on the French language. Therefore, in their eyes, Law 21 is about protecting the state's secularism and safeguarding Quebec's identity, values, and language.

"It's not just about the religious symbol, essentially, that it's also related to language debate, you know, to being dependent on that, like, as as a country today"

Moreover, for some individuals, Law 21 represents more than just protecting society from religion or guaranteeing religious freedom for all. It symbolizes Quebec's unique values and culture. These individuals perceive the law as an extension of the language debate between French and English in Quebec. Following the quiet revolution in the 1960s, the control of the Quebec government shifted to the Francophone majority (Young & Dickinson, 2008). Since then, there have been numerous attempts to pass laws to protect the French language from

English influence ("A Brief History of the Language Laws of Quebec," 2011). These attempts and laws have sparked intense debate within society, with some viewing them as insufficient to protect the French language and others seeing them as unjust and discriminatory (Young & Dickinson, 2008).

Therefore, for many individuals, whether they support or oppose Law 21, it is an extension of this ongoing language debate. Supporters of the law believe that it explicitly showcases the unique and distinct nature of Quebec's culture compared to the rest of Canada. They view it as a means to elevate the characteristics of Quebec's culture that have been undervalued and undermined in the past. Consequently, they perceive Law 21 as asserting a unique and independent way of life not dictated by external forces. In their view, the law strengthens and amplifies the unique culture and values of Quebec, as is evident from Pierre's quote:

"It's not that just let us protect ourselves of being. Because it's not normal for someone who speaks French not be able to speak his own language in his own place. You know, that's not. And this is, I would say, this is all we want to basically says all we want."

2.2.3. Discussion

A MODEL OF MEGA-EVENT APPRAISAL

Perception of Identity Threat. Optimal distinctiveness theory (ODT) argues that the human feeling of inclusion is shaped by balancing the need for assimilation (i.e., the need to have a stable and robust relationship with in-group members) and the need for differentiation (i.e., the need to feel valued and unique from others or inter-group members) (Brewer, 2011). This means that for you to feel included as part of a community or society, you need to feel

connected with the rest of the group members while expressing your unique values and differences within the group. However, if you think you can't satisfy your need to assimilate, you perceive that you are excluded from that group or community. Some interviewees explicitly expressed that Law 21 made them feel that they were no longer part of society and were being perceived as outsiders.

This feeling of being an outsider can be present in minorities even before a mega-event such as Law 21, however, this law brought the perception of exclusion to minorities forefront, which can cause an identity threat and make them actively look for a response. One of the responses that interviewees discussed was that they are being excluded because they do not hold the same values as others. When you feel like your identity does not have the same value as you thought before because you belong to a specific group, you appraise identity threat (Petriglieri, 2011). People who appraise Law 21 as an identity threat express that they think their work and even their as individuals are being undermined and not seen by others because they belong to a specific religious group.

There are numerous social identities, such as gender, ethnicity, or race, that individuals utilize to define themselves. Among these, religious identity holds particular significance, as individuals are motivated to distinguish their religious group from others to maintain positive self-esteem or achieve self-enhancement (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Processes of social categorization and comparison apply to various social identities, but religious identity, being a sacred and eternal group membership that provides profound meaning, becomes especially important during distressing circumstances (Ysseldyk et al., 2010). Consequently, when individuals perceive an event targeting them based on their religious group membership, it triggers a heightened sense of identity threat.

Not every event in your life can be considered an identity threat. Identity threat encompasses three types: threat to value, meaning, and enactment (Petriglieri, 2011). In the context of my data analysis, Law 21 in Quebec has resulted in identity threats, as it makes

individuals feel devalued, discriminated against, and exploited. This aligns with the framework, as the law challenges the perceived value of individuals' religious identities, undermines the meaning they attach to their religious symbols, and restricts their ability to enact their faith freely, thus constituting a clear case of identity threat (Petriglieri, 2011).

Threat to Value. Fatima's experience and the feelings shared by Muslim educators highlight the threat to the value of their religious identities brought about by Law 21. These individuals believed that their worth in the workplace was diminished due to the law. Their ability to express their religious identity through symbols or attire was curtailed, leading them to perceive that their beliefs were considered less important than secular values. This devaluation disrupted the equilibrium between assimilation and differentiation (Brewer, 2011). While they desired inclusion within the broader society, they also sought recognition of their unique identities as Muslim individuals and professionals. Moreover, devaluing their religious identities can lead to specific behavioural consequences (Brown, 2015). For instance, individuals affected by this threat may experience lower self-esteem and self-worth. This reduced sense of value can result in withdrawal from public roles or interactions, as they may feel that their contributions are not valued as highly as those of individuals unaffected by such laws (Aquino & Douglas, 2003).

Threat to Meaning. When individuals find that their contributions and religious expressions are overlooked and marginalized due to Law 21, it disrupts their meaningful attachment to their religious symbols and practices. For them, these symbols are not just garments or accessories but hold deep personal and spiritual significance. This aligns with the identity threat related to the threat to meaning. The behavioural consequences of this threat can manifest in various ways. Individuals may become less motivated to openly express their religious identity, as they feel it is not acknowledged or respected (Brown & Coupland, 2015). Individuals may experience a sense of alienation or disconnection from society as the meaningful aspects of their identity are marginalized (Cheryan et al., 2020). This could lead to social isolation and a reduced sense of belonging (Brewer, 2011).

Threat to Enactment. Optimal distinctiveness theory (ODT) (Brewer, 2011) suggests that individuals seek to enact their identities by expressing their unique characteristics and roles within their social groups. The interviewees' perception of exploitation and belief that others took advantage of their reduced status under Law 21 underscores the law's restriction on enacting their religious beliefs. This restriction goes beyond just curbing the display of religious symbols; it affects their professional roles and interactions within society. The interviewees feel that their ability to enact their faith in public roles fully is restricted, resulting in a sense of exploitation and a diminished sense of worth. This aspect of identity threat aligns with the concept of threat to enactment. Individuals affected by this identity threat may exhibit frustration and dissatisfaction with their restricted ability to express their faith openly (Cheryan et al., 2020). They may also experience a sense of exploitation, as they believe others are taking advantage of their reduced status. This can lead to tensions and conflicts within society as individuals with religious identities feel marginalized and excluded (Manunta et al., 2022). In extreme cases, this threat can result in legal challenges or advocacy efforts to overturn or modify such laws, reflecting a proactive response to protect their rights and identity.

In conclusion, this discussion sheds light on the intricate relationship between social identities and the experiences of individuals, particularly in the context of religious identity and the challenges posed by mega-events like Law 21. Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) underscores the role of social categorization and social comparison in shaping our identities, emphasizing the importance of understanding how these processes influence our behaviours. The analysis of Law 21 in Quebec illustrates how individuals with religious identities face threats to their value, meaning, and enactment, which in turn have behavioural consequences. These consequences encompass diminished self-esteem, withdrawal from public roles, feelings of alienation, and, in extreme cases, legal action.

Identity Enhancement and Distinctiveness. The different perceptions of Quebec's Law 21 discussed in the previous sections can indeed result in identity enhancement and distinctiveness for the people.

Identity Enhancement. People use identity enhancement to create a positive meaning about their social group (Roberts et al., 2014). Law 21 catalyzed identity enhancement for some individuals by reinforcing Quebec's identity as a forward-looking and inclusive identity. It does so by upholding the principle of a clear separation of religious symbols from positions of authority while valuing diversity. This identity is marked by a deep commitment to social cohesion and equal opportunities for all residents, irrespective of their religious beliefs. Quebec's identity manifests societal harmony, where removing religious symbols from public roles is seen as a proactive step toward unity. It signifies an unwavering commitment to a society where individuals are judged based on their abilities and character rather than their religious affiliations, thus fostering a stronger sense of unity and shared purpose.

According to Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), individuals derive self-concept and self-esteem from identifying with their social groups. In Law 21, individuals supporting the law may perceive their group as upholding values such as secularism or cultural preservation. This belief allows them to create a positive meaning about their social group by portraying it as a defender of certain principles and values, thus enhancing their collective identity (Dutton et al., 2010).

Additionally, some individuals saw Law 21 as a representation of their identity that takes the form of an identity that has transcended its historical religious influences by fully embracing secularism. This identity represents a departure from the historical religious institutions, marking a profound commitment to modernity and individual freedoms. This identity becomes synonymous with the pursuit of intellectual and personal liberty. The law symbolizes the province's evolution from a history steeped in religious conservatism to a society that champions intellectual independence and personal autonomy. This transformation underscores identity as a

beacon of progress in a world that the forces of secularism and enlightenment have shaped. Law 21 contributes to identity enhancement by fostering inclusivity, embracing secularism, and affirming Quebec's distinct nationhood.

Identity Positive Distinctiveness. Positive distinctiveness refers to strategies aimed at increasing the status of one's own group by restoring its positive distinctiveness (Roberts, 2005). It involves communicating that differences within a group are valuable (Roberts, 2005). Social Identity Theory suggests that individuals tend to favor their in-group over out-groups. In this context, individuals not targeted by the law may support the status quo, including Law 21, to maintain their group's distinctiveness. By aligning with the prevailing norms and policies, they emphasize the distinctiveness of their in-group, which adheres to the law's principles. This distinctiveness reinforces their identity as part of a group that upholds specific values and practices.

Some individuals who view Law 21 as necessary for society employ positive distinctiveness. By supporting the law to promote social cohesion and equal opportunities for all residents, regardless of their religious beliefs, they convey that Quebec's commitment to diversity and inclusivity is valuable. Furthermore, some individuals interpreting Law 21 as a continuation of Quebec's historical efforts to address religious issues engage in positive distinctiveness. They see the law as a means of protecting society from religious influences and promoting a secular and neutral state. These individuals assert that Quebec's identity, culture, language, and values are distinct and valuable. They argue that Quebec should have the autonomy to make decisions that reflect its distinctiveness, reinforcing that Quebec's identity is an essential and valuable component of the Canadian federation.

In all these cases, individuals express their views on Law 21 in ways that contribute to positive distinctiveness. They emphasize the value of Quebec's commitment to diversity, secularism, and autonomy, conveying that these aspects of Quebec's identity are valuable to its residents and within the broader societal context. Thus, the perceptions and arguments presented

in the text reflect efforts to enhance the status and positive distinctiveness of Quebec and its people.

In conclusion, the various perceptions of Law 21 examined in this discussion show identity enhancement and positive distinctiveness for some individuals. Individuals who view the law as a societal necessity perceive the law as a forward-looking and inclusive event to create social cohesion and equal opportunities. Additionally, positive distinctiveness is evident among individuals who support the law to promote diversity and equality and those who see it as a safeguard against religious influences, both groups emphasizing the unique and valuable aspects of Quebec's identity.

2.3. EMPLOYEES' BEHAVIOURAL RESPONSES

2.3.1. Introduction

In this section, I study people's behavioural responses to a mega-event. The people who perceived an identity threat and those who did not perceive an identity threat as a consequence of the mega-event. The responses to Law 21 can be grouped into two distinct categories: avoidance behaviours and engagement behaviours. Avoidance behaviours involve deliberately distancing oneself from aspects of their identity threatened by the law (Midgley, 2014). On the other hand, engagement behaviours encompass active responses aimed at addressing identity-related challenges head-on (Saks, 2006). This study explores how individuals navigate these responses within two groups, examining their motivations, choices, and implications.

The first group, encompassing role change and identity concealment, highlights individuals' various strategies to shield their threatened identities from further harm (Shih et al., 2013). Some

choose to leave their professions or relocate to other provinces to escape feeling targeted. In contrast, others opt for concealing or abstaining from displaying religious symbols to avoid unnecessary attention and conversations in the workplace. These responses reflect the diverse ways individuals protect themselves when faced with identity challenges.

Conversely, the second group delves into more proactive engagement behaviours, such as sympathizing among minority groups, and pro-social voice (Saks, 2006). For some, Law 21 has fostered solidarity among minority groups, with some individuals actively supporting and advocating for one another. Others engage in pro-social voice, voicing their concerns not because they are directly impacted but because they perceive the law as unjust and discriminatory. These behavioural responses are critical for understanding how individuals navigate identity threats within Law 21.

2.3.2. Findings

I utilized the interviews discussed in the previous section for the following findings and discussions. I now discuss my results regarding the second research question. The second research question aims to explore the diverse reactions exhibited by people when their sense of identity is threatened. As before, I present the findings according to groups who felt they were being targeted by the bill and those who did not feel the same way.

Q2: How do people respond to events?

1st group. Role Change. In response to feelings of exclusion and devaluation, some interviewees who perceive themselves as direct targets of the law may choose to leave their roles as teachers or lawyers and pursue alternative paths where they do not feel targeted. For example, Fatima mentioned that she is considering leaving Quebec to pursue her legal career in another province. Additionally, she expressed regret over obtaining a legal degree from a French school since it cannot be utilized in other provinces. Furthermore, she noted that some of her friends, teachers, or daycare educators, consider taking similar actions.

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"she went to British Columbia to become a teacher there. But you have like to quit everything like her family, her friends her life in Montreal, to become a teacher in another province at the other end of Canada"

One of the responses people have when they feel an identity threat is identity exit (Petriglieri, 2011). When individuals feel that their identity is devalued due to their membership in a particular group, they may choose to exit that identity either by disengaging from the group or by relinquishing the role associated with that identity (Ashforth & Dukerich, 2001). In response to feelings of exclusion and devaluation, some individuals who perceive themselves as direct targets of the law may leave their roles as teachers or lawyers and seek alternative paths where they feel they are not targeted.

Identity exit is a costly response to identity threat and occurs only when there are viable alternatives to the current identity (Petriglieri, 2011). Individuals choose identity exit when they perceive that the cost of restoring the value of the threatened identity outweighs the cost of pursuing an alternative. Of course, leaving their career and jobs are only an option for some. People choose this response when they perceive that the cost of restoring the value of the threatened identity outweighs the cost of pursuing an alternative. Therefore, the feasibility of finding an option determines whether people choose identity exit or seek other responses to the identity threat.

1st group. Identity Concealment. Some interviewees believed that wearing a religious symbol in the workplace is often perceived negatively by others. As a result, they opt to conceal or abstain from wearing such symbols altogether. These individuals noted that the introduction of the law has placed significant attention on individuals who wear hijabs or other religious symbols, resulting in both positive and negative attention. For them, the decision to wear a hijab or other religious symbols was not linked to their job; instead, it was a personal choice. They did not wish for their appearance to become the focal point of conversations or attention in the workplace, so they decided to avoid wearing these symbols altogether. While none of the

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individuals I interviewed had personally made this choice, they shared instances where colleagues or acquaintances had done so. For example, Leila mentioned that she had witnessed her colleague opt not to wear a hijab to avoid answering questions at work.

"I had a colleague who was wearing wearing headgear. I mean, she was wearing a hijab, and just at some point, she stopped wearing."

Some interviewees discussed the negative perception of wearing religious symbols in the workplace, leading them to hide or avoid wearing them altogether. They believed that Law 21 had brought significant negative attention to those who wear hijabs or other religious symbols. For these individuals, wearing religious symbols was a personal choice unrelated to their job, and they preferred to avoid drawing attention or engaging in conversations about it at work. Although none of the interviewees had made this choice personally, they shared instances where colleagues or acquaintances had opted not to wear religious symbols to avoid attention.

2nd group. Sympathizing Among Minority Groups. Some interviewees who felt targeted by the law mentioned receiving significant support from other minority groups since its implementation. They experienced increased solidarity and received support from groups with limited prior interaction. For instance, Mariam, a secondary school teacher, mentioned that minorities such as Anglophones demonstrated substantial support for those being targeted. According to her, Anglophones have a better understanding of the challenges faced by targeted groups because they are a minority in Quebec, allowing them to empathize with the experiences of these targeted individuals.

"Anglophone schools, they feel themselves also being a minority in Quebec. So, they themselves are a minority, because the majority of people are French speaking. And so, I suppose they sympathize with visible minorities, meaning immigrants, who are part of the minority, another minority"

Even interviewees who did not perceive that they were the direct target of Law 21 expressed concerns about its potential effects and how it could set a precedent for similar laws.

Some individuals mentioned that the law could be a slippery slope, affecting all minorities in the long run. To sum up, some interviewees who were not direct targets expressed concerns about its potential effects and the potential for similar laws to impact all minority communities.

2nd group. Pro-social Voice. In the literature, organizational voice refers to employees expressing their thoughts and concerns to their managers and supervisors about organizational issues (Morrison, 2014). Pro-social voice, a specific form of organizational voice, occurs when individuals speak up not because they are directly affected or personally harmed but because they seek to advocate for and assist others they perceive as being targeted or facing challenges (Dyne et al., 2003). Some individuals view the law as problematic not because it directly impacts them personally or professionally but because they perceive it as unfair and discriminatory towards certain groups. Consequently, they choose to voice their opinions and support others through various means, such as participating in demonstrations or campaigns, as is evident from Robert quote, a retired liberal member of parliament:

"I met them at a local school. And at the local school. The teachers were there, and her students were there... And that, you know, they were willing to stand up with her and help her fight for her rights"

FIGURE 3. DATA STRUCTURE – BEHAVIORIAL RESPONSES

1st order concepts

2nd order themes

Aggregate dimensions

| If we feel like we're being discriminated against, we may feel hurt by that decision. And ultimately, we may leave the profession. |
| I saw students of mine because I teach the undergraduate student teachers, right people in the BA program, hijabi students telling me like, so, I will be moving to British Columbia now. |

Role change

| I've seen that happen with two two women teachers, whenever used to wear the hijab. And and then later on, I see them start wearing and now they're keeping it for, you know, for as part of their dress |
| Two to three people actually who have done that. So they used to wear the hijab every time they were outside their home. These three ladies, they're not related to each other or anything. I'm just talking about three people I know. And nowadays, they don't wear hijab, |

Identity Concealment

Triggers for avoidant behavior

| It is noteworthy that the majority of the people who have thanked me have been specifically young, Middle Eastern people. |
| They realize right away that, you know, it doesn't affect me, but that doesn't mean that it gives me a free pass to not care about it. |

Sympathizing among minority groups

| I do think that we need to keep on voicing our opinions, because only we're gonna be the only way we'd be taken seriously is by continuing to voice our opinions. |
| I know, people who are directly affected by the results of the law, which is, feeling and feeling more emboldened to vocally express their perceptions |

Pro-social voice

Triggers for engaging behavior

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2.3.3. Discussion
A MODEL OF IDENTITY THREAT RESPONSE

Avoidant behaviours are characterized by deliberate efforts to shift away from tasks, actions, or expressions associated with one's threatened identity (Midgley, 2014). These behaviours often involve purposeful inaction or disengagement from aspects of one's identity (Aquino et al., 2006). One of the reasons for avoidant behaviour is to protect your identity from being attacked or threatened (Aquino et al., 2006). When you perceive an identity threat, you may choose to disengage or withdraw so the identity threat's root is no longer present. This withdrawal can manifest as a withdrawal from social interactions, roles, or activities to shield themselves from potential harm or rejection (Richards & Schat, 2011).

Engaging behaviours, in contrast, involve active responses to identity threats. These responses often entail individuals taking proactive measures to address the challenges they face about their identity (Saks, 2006). Engaging behaviours can encompass various actions, such as advocacy, activism, and efforts to empower oneself and others (Saks et al., 2022). Individuals who engage their identity actively work to assert their rights and values, challenge discrimination, and promote inclusivity (Saks et al., 2022). Additionally, engaging behaviours may involve seeking solidarity from other minority groups, actively supporting and advocating for others, and building alliances to address identity-related challenges collectively.

Categorizing behavioural responses into avoidant and engaging behaviours is essential for several reasons. By categorizing behaviours, we gain insights into the motivations behind individuals' actions. Understanding why some people engage while others avoid can inform the development of targeted interventions and strategies. Moreover, categorization can help promote positive responses to identity threats. When people understand their reactions to identity threats, they can adopt a response that more closely aligns with their needs. In conclusion, categorizing

behavioural responses into avoidant and engaging behaviours is essential for understanding how individuals navigate identity threats.

Avoidant responses

Passive Acceptance and Support. Individuals who view Law 21 as a societal necessity may passively accept the law without actively engaging in any response. They see it as a means to address broader social issues and maintain societal harmony (Ashforth et al., 2001). This passive response involves compliance with the law and may not involve any further action. Additionally, individuals who perceive Law 21 as a symbol of Quebec's identity and autonomy may passively support the law. They view it as representative of Quebec's unique culture, language, and values. Their response involves agreeing with the law without actively participating in efforts to enforce or change it.

In these cases, the behavioural consequences are primarily characterized by passive responses, where individuals accept, comply with, or support the law without taking active measures to challenge or advocate for it. Their acceptance or support is rooted in their specific interpretations of Law 21 as a societal necessity, a safeguard for secularism, or a symbol of Quebec's identity and autonomy. These passive responses reflect their views on the law's role in society and its alignment with their values and beliefs.

Social Withdrawal and Isolation. Indeed, individuals facing an identity threat may choose to hide or downplay the aspects of their identity that they perceive as being devalued by the event (Petriglieri, 2011). For instance, if someone believes that displaying a religious symbol at work is negatively perceived by others, they may conceal or refrain from wearing such symbols altogether. Wearing a symbol is just one expression of one's identity, and individuals may go further by avoiding discussions about their personal lives to conceal their identity (Creed & Scully, 2000) or conform to organizational norms. This strategy mitigates the negative consequences of expressing a devalued identity in specific contexts.

One crucial condition that makes people choose identity concealment is how important identity is to them (Petriglieri, 2011). People have several identities, and each has a different importance to individuals; some identities are more central to people than others. For example, an individual can be Black and a soccer coach. For that individual, being Black may be more important and central. Therefore, if there is devaluation or a threat to both identities, he or she is more likely to choose identity concealment for the soccer coach's identity rather than the Black identity. Furthermore, one identity can be important for different people (Kreiner et al., 2006a). For example, for some religious people, religion may not play a big part in their life. Therefore, they are more likely to choose identity concealment because that identity was not that important to them in the first place. Feeling like an outsider due to identity threats can make individuals withdraw from social interactions and activities (Midgley, 2014). They may opt to isolate themselves as a means of self-preservation. This withdrawal can result in limited participation in community events, workplaces, or public spaces (Froehlich et al., 2023). It's a defense mechanism to shield themselves from potential rejection or further harm to their self-esteem.

Engaging Behaviors

      Solidarity from other minority groups. Evidence suggests that racial groups tend to form and maintain social connections primarily within their racial groups (Mollica et al., 2003). This tendency is mainly observed during times of uncertainty, such as when new employees join a workplace (Mollica et al., 2003). Consequently, racial minorities often stick together and may not actively engage or establish strong social bonds with individuals from other racial groups. Moreover, when facing identity threats, individuals often turn to their in-group for validation and support. They may intensify their involvement within their religious or cultural community, seeking reassurance that they belong and that their identity is valued (Brewer, 2011). This heightened in-group interaction can sometimes lead to further segregation from the broader

society as individuals prioritize their immediate community for security (Branscombe, Schmitt, et al., 1999). Moreover, in response to the threat, individuals may exhibit in-group favoritism by distancing themselves from out-groups or those they perceive as undermining their identity's value (Branscombe, Schmitt, et al., 1999). This could result in reduced interaction with or trust in members of other groups, leading to social divisions.

In response to identity threats, individuals may seek alternative communities where they feel more accepted and valued. This could lead to a fragmentation of social cohesion and a disconnection from the broader society (Froehlich et al., 2023). By seeking alternative communities, individuals attempt to find spaces where their identity is appreciated and where they can regain a sense of belonging.

However, these dynamics can be influenced in times of crisis or when events like Law 21 arise. Although some interviewees did not perceive direct impacts from Law 21, they expressed concerns about its potential effects and how it could set a precedent for similar laws. Some individuals mentioned that the law could be a slippery slope, affecting all minorities in the long run. Moreover, some individuals who personally felt targeted by the law mentioned receiving significant support from other minority groups since its implementation. They experienced increased solidarity and received support from groups with limited prior interaction. In times of crisis, minorities may proactively seek to form new social connections with other minority groups, even if they are not directly targeted.

Advocacy and Activism. Some individuals respond to identity threats through advocacy and activism (Sanderson et al., 2016). They become motivated to challenge discriminatory policies or raise awareness about the impact of such laws on their identity and well-being. This can involve participating in protests, legal action, or community organizing efforts to fight against the perceived threats and protect their rights (Sanderson et al., 2016). In the literature, organizational voice refers to employees expressing their thoughts and concerns to their managers and supervisors about organizational issues (Morrison, 2014). Pro-social voice, a

specific form of organizational voice, occurs when individuals speak up not because they are directly affected or personally harmed but because they seek to advocate for and assist others they perceive as being targeted or facing challenges (Dyne et al., 2003). Some individuals view the law as problematic not because it directly impacts them personally or professionally but because they perceive it as unfair and discriminatory towards certain groups. Consequently, they choose to voice their opinions and support others through various means, such as participating in demonstrations or campaigns.

It is important to note that perceiving an event as unfair to others does not always lead to a pro-social voice (Dyne et al., 2003). Engaging in a pro-social voice depends on individual dispositions, such as extroversion or having a proactive personality, the specific emotions experienced (such as anger versus fear), and other contextual factors, such as the perceived safety of speaking up (Morrison, 2014). Therefore, only some people who see Law 21 as unfair will engage in a pro-social voice, which also explains why those who engage in a pro-social voice often exhibit anger. The level of support also influences the extent of pro-social voice individuals feel they have from their social network or society at large (Bell et al., 2011).

Cultural Assertion and Empowerment. Individuals who perceive Law 21 as an extension of Quebec's language debate tend to engage actively in cultural assertion and empowerment. They embrace the law as an opportunity to empower Quebec's culture and values, believing that it strengthens their distinct identity compared to the rest of Canada. This group actively supports and promotes the law, participates in cultural events, and engages in discussions to emphasize Quebec's unique cultural identity. Their response is marked by proactive engagement in asserting their cultural distinctiveness.

In summary, the various behavioural consequences of identity threat represent coping mechanisms and responses to challenges to one's sense of identity and belonging. These responses can range from withdrawal and self-preservation to active advocacy and cultural

preservation. Understanding these behaviours is essential for understanding how individuals navigate identity threats and maintain their self-esteem and social connections.

2.4. Limitations

Several limitations in this study provide opportunities for future research on identity threats and mega-events. Firstly, my focus was specifically on a mega-event called Law 21, which the Quebec government passed. Consequently, its impact was limited to the residents of Quebec. Although it is worth noting that this law can potentially affect minority religious groups in other locations beyond Quebec, its professional implications are limited to individuals within the province. Researching mega-events with a broader reach would be advantageous, as certain events may occur in a specific place but have far-reaching effects on entire populations or even countries. For instance, let us consider the aftermath of George Floyd's killing by the police in Minneapolis, United States. This tragic incident sparked protests, demonstrations, and riots across the country, illustrating how a single event can profoundly impact a larger scale (Times, 2022). This is a limitation that I plan to address in my following study; I will study the effects of four mega-events on people's attitudes and behaviours inside the organizations:

1.   Covid-19 and stereotypes about Asians

2.   Workplace relationships among genders in the aftermath of the MeToo movement

3.   Change of abortion laws in the US

4.   Police shootings and the Black Lives Matter movement

Secondly, my study primarily concentrated on the appraisal process through which individuals perceive a mega-event as an identity threat and the underlying mechanisms involved in this process. Additionally, I examined how people respond to mega-events by showing identity-related reactions. However, an important avenue for future research would include exploring the impact of these identity responses on individuals' attitudes and behaviours toward their organization and coworkers. This crucial aspect will be the focus of my following study,

where I aim to study the interplay between identity responses and their subsequent effects on organizational dynamics and interpersonal relationships within the workplace. In my following study, I will investigate how individuals' assessment of their identity transforms in response to identity threats. I will explore whether such threats lead individuals to experience job withdrawal or, conversely, job engagement within their workplace. This investigation aims to shed light on the nuanced dynamics of identity threat and its impact on work-related attitudes and behaviours. By examining the relationship between identity evaluation, job withdrawal, and job engagement, I seek to understand how individuals navigate their professional environments in the face of identity challenges.

CHAPTER THREE: STUDY 2

Mega-Events and Identity Threat in the Workplace: Exploring Identity Perceptions and Organizational Outcomes

3.1. Introduction

In Study 1, I explored how a particular mega-event can influence people's assessment of identity threats and their corresponding responses. I discussed the Social Identity Theory and its relevance in understanding how social identities shape individual behaviours and reactions, particularly in the context of identity threats arising from external events. I found that social identity was singled out as particularly significant in my study, as individuals often seek to distinguish their group from others to maintain self-esteem and self-enhancement (Tajfel et al., 1979). This becomes especially crucial during distressing circumstances, highlighting the impact of external events on identity. Moreover, I discussed Identity threat as a central concept. An event is considered an identity threat when it is relevant to an essential identity and undermines

it, as perceived by the individual (Petriglieri, 2011). I found that this perception led to feelings of exclusion and devaluation and experiencing discrimination.

In response to Law 21, individuals exhibit various avoidance and engagement strategies. Avoidant responses include passive acceptance and support, where some individuals passively accept the law as a societal necessity or symbol of Quebec's identity without actively challenging it. Others opt for social withdrawal and isolation, concealing aspects of their identity that they perceive as devalued, and even isolating themselves to protect their self-esteem. On the other hand, engaging behaviors involve seeking solidarity within their in-group, intensifying connections with their cultural or religious community, which can sometimes lead to social divisions. Some individuals engage in advocacy and activism, challenging discriminatory policies through protests, legal action, or community organizing. Lastly, those who view Law 21 as an extension of Quebec's identity debate actively participate in cultural assertion and empowerment, promoting the law as a means to empower Quebec's culture and values. These responses reflect individuals' interpretations of the law and the importance they place on their identity.

In summary, I studied how Social Identity Theory can help us understand the impact of external events on social identities and subsequent behaviours and responses. It underscores the importance of social categorization, social comparison, and identity threat appraisal in shaping individual and collective reactions to such events. In this study, I focus on examining mega-events' influence on individuals' identity in other spheres, namely gender and racial identity. I also addressed the potential consequences these identity threats may have for organizations.

3.2. Literature Review and Hypotheses

Impact of Megaevents on the Workplace. It is important to note that workplace events are not the only factors that impact people's cognitive processes and interactions. Social events that occur within their communities and society at large also influence how they interact within the workplace (Morgeson et al., 2015). For instance, in one study, researchers investigated the

effects of Law 21 on people's perception of identity threat. The study found that individuals respond to identity threats differently. Some people choose to disengage from groups or roles that are linked to their threatened identity when they feel undervalued. The availability of alternative identities also plays a role in this decision and occurs when the perceived cost of restoring the threatened identity outweighs the cost of pursuing an alternative. Another strategy is identity concealment, where individuals hide or downplay some aspects of their identity to mitigate negative consequences. The importance of an identity to the individual influences their decision to conceal it, with less important identities more likely to be concealed.

Identity concealment can have a significant negative impact on the workplace, as it reduces authenticity. Experienced authenticity occurs when there is alignment between one's internal sense of self and external expressions. It has been shown to increase work engagement (Cha et al., 2019). When individuals hide or downplay aspects of their identity due to perceived threats, it creates a disconnection between their internal self and external behavior. This incongruence can erode their sense of authenticity, as they may feel compelled to act in ways that are contrary to their genuine selves, which can result in lower work engagement.

Moreover, external events like Law 21 can reshape social connections, leading individuals to seek solidarity with other minority groups, even if they aren't the primary targets. A pro-social voice, an organizational voice, arises when individuals advocate for others facing discrimination (Dyne et al., 2003). Individual dispositions, emotions, context, and perceived support from social networks influence this response. However, only some people who perceive an event as unfair engage in a pro-social voice; only those who feel they have enough organizational support at work (Nishii, 2013).

Studying the impact of social events on people's attitudes and behaviours at work can be accomplished by examining how such events influence individuals' identities within the workplace (Elsbach & Kramer, 1996). Depending on the importance of identity and how people perceive the event, they appraise an event as a threat to their identity (Petriglieri, 2011). Some

researchers have studied how events influence people at work through an identity lens (Amiot et al., 2012; Javadizadeh et al., 2023; Korf & Malan, 2002). This study aims to contribute to the existing body of research by addressing the following questions: How do external events impact individuals' assessment of identity threats? And how does the perceived identity threat influence people's interactions within the workplace?

Mega-events and Identity Threats. I use social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and identity theory (Stryker & Burke, 2000) to explain and understand how mega-events influence people's perception of identity threats. According to social identity theory, individuals develop their self-concept based on both personal attributes (such as their profession or hobbies) and their group affiliations (such as gender, race, or ethnicity) (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Similarly, identity theory proposes that social structures shape people's identity (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Building upon the foundations laid by social identity theory, identity theory, as proposed by Stryker and Burke (2000), emphasizes that social structures play a fundamental role in shaping individuals' identities. It acknowledges that our identities are not isolated but are deeply intertwined with the broader societal context. This theory highlights the interplay between an individual's identity and their roles and affiliations within social structures. In the context of mega-events, identity theory allows us to explore how external factors, like the legal or social consequences of these events, can significantly influence how individuals perceive their identities. It provides insight into how these broader societal structures can shape the meaning and significance individuals attribute to their identities.

Based on these theories, I examined how a mega-event influences individuals' identity by triggering the perception of identity threat in my initial study. The study revealed that people's appraisal of identity threat varies depending on whether they perceive themselves as the event's target. Those who believed that the event (e.g., Law 21) directly targeted them based on their group membership experienced feelings of devaluation in their work, exclusion from society, exploitation, and discrimination. Conversely, individuals who did not perceive themselves as

targets had a different perspective on the event. They either did not sense an identity threat or perceived the law as a means of protecting their identity. Building upon these findings, I hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 1. *If individuals perceive a mega-event directly impacting them based on their group membership, they will experience an identity threat. Conversely, individuals who do not share this perception will not experience identity threats.*

Identity Threat and Social Identity. In this context, it is crucial to recognize that evaluating one's social identity is not a static or uniform process (Kreiner et al., 2006a). Instead, it is influenced by the dynamic interplay between an individual's assessment and how they perceive others evaluating their identity**.** As previously mentioned, social identity is a multidimensional concept that exhibits variations in its centrality, stability, and accessibility to individuals. (Kreiner et al., 2006a). Furthermore, according to certain identity scholars, individuals differ in the extent to which they evaluate their social identity positively or negatively (Ashmore et al., 2004). For instance, specific individuals may take great pride in their identity as a woman and perceive it as a highly positive aspect of their life. However, not everyone may share the same positive evaluation of their social identity. This variability in evaluation can also apply to other social identities, such as race and ethnicity (Ashmore et al., 2004).

The evaluation aspect of social identity can be viewed from two perspectives: one's evaluation of one's social identity and the evaluation of one's social identity by others (Ashmore et al., 2004). Both aspects, one's personal evaluation and the evaluation by others, significantly affect how individuals appraise their social identity regarding positivity or negativity. For instance, for someone to have a positive evaluation of their race, such as being Black, they should possess a positive personal evaluation of their racial identity. Additionally, they must perceive that others also positively evaluate their racial identity. The perception of how others

evaluate one's social identity can influence and shape one's personal evaluation of that identity (Stryker & Burke, 2000). However, there are cases where individuals may feel that the perception of others regarding their social identity is inaccurate or unjust, leading to negative evaluations. For example, if someone is labeled a "dirty worker" based on their occupation, they may strongly disagree with this perception and find it unfair or incorrect. In such situations, individuals may resist or reject the negative evaluations imposed by others on their social identity (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999). Hence, when individuals become aware of others holding negative or less favorable evaluations of their social identity, it can influence their evaluation of that identity. This phenomenon is particularly evident in the context of identity threats following mega-events.

This interaction between personal evaluation and the perceived evaluation by others has significant implications for identity dynamics following mega-events**.** For example, individuals who perceive themselves as direct targets of laws like Law 21 may experience a profound shift in their evaluation of their racial or gender identity. Such mega-events can lead to feelings of devaluation and exploitation based on their race or gender, significantly changing their evaluation of their racial and gender identity due to these perceived threats and negative experiences.

Hypothesis 2. When individuals perceive an identity threat, they are likely to change their assessment of the positivity of their gender or racial identity.

Social Identity and Organizational Outcome. Scholars have researched the individual and organizational consequences of identity threats, recognizing that they can have both positive and negative effects on organizations (Fiol et al., 2009; Karelaia & Guillén, 2014; Leigh & Melwani, 2022; Pachankis, 2007). One of the central findings of my qualitative study is that individuals respond to identity threats in many ways. The multifaceted nature of these responses highlights the complexity of how external events influence internal dynamics within the

workplace. Two primary response categories emerged: avoidant behaviours and engaging behaviours. Avoidant behaviours manifest as deliberate efforts to disengage from aspects of one's threatened identity (Midgley, 2014).

Avoidant work behaviours are characterized by two key features: they signify a deliberate shift away from tasks or activities rather than an active engagement with them, and they involve purposeful inaction (Midgley, 2014) and are exemplified through increased work withdrawal (discretionary input reduction) (Scott & Barnes, 2011) and decreased social engagement (purposeful reduction in interpersonal connection) (Sun & Bunchapattanasakda, 2019). This definition aligns closely with the identified responses to identity threats. Firstly, when individuals opt to change their organizational role in response to an identity threat, they are effectively distancing themselves from their previous responsibilities. By doing so, they engage in avoidant behaviour as they move away from their existing tasks, duties, and interactions. Secondly, those who choose to conceal their identity also participate in avoidant behaviour. This response often involves diverting attention from their true selves or taking on a less threatening persona. In this process, individuals avoid confronting the underlying identity threat by masking their authentic identity, essentially engaging in inaction regarding their genuine selves. Lastly, the response of reaching a state of hopelessness can be seen as an extreme form of avoidant behaviour. When individuals succumb to despair, they effectively give up on finding a constructive solution to the identity threat. This resignation leads to a disengagement from work-related activities, resulting in inaction and further avoidance.

A lower positive racial or gender identity can significantly increase the likelihood of avoidant behaviour while decreasing the possibility of engaging in the behaviour. Individuals with less positive racial or gender identities often experience lower life satisfaction and higher stress levels (Karelaia & Guillén, 2014). This reduced life satisfaction can contribute to disillusionment and disengagement, driving them away from active participation and social engagement, perpetuating avoidant behaviour. Moreover, when you feel like your group identity

does not have a positive value, you become demotivated to focus on constructive contributions in your workplace. On the other hand, if you positively evaluate your group identity, you are more likely to feel content and experience less stress; therefore, you are more likely to engage in proactive behaviour and participate actively in your workplace.

Hypothesis 3a. *Individuals who perceive identity threat in the workplace are more likely to engage in job withdrawal, which is mediated by lower positive gender or racial identity.*

Hypothesis 3b. *Individuals who perceive identity threat in the workplace are less likely to engage in social engagement, which is mediated by lower positive gender or racial identity.*

3.3. Method

To examine the impact of four specific mega-events on individuals' perception of identity threat and the resulting organizational outcomes, I conducted a cross-sectional online field study involving 233 participants. The study included individuals residing in Canada or the US who hold at least a part-time job from panel data in Prolific. Among the 264 participants who completed the survey, 233 were approved participants, while I rejected 31 who failed the screening test or finished the survey in a short time. To ensure a diverse sample, quota sampling was utilized to maintain a relatively equal representation of participants from different racial groups. See below for the demographic table.

TABLE 2. PARTICIPANTS DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Characteristic	N = 233[1]
Age	
18-24 years old	37 (16%)
25-34 years old	90 (39%)
35-44 years old	59 (25%)
45-54 years old	28 (12%)

Characteristic	N = 233[1]
55-64 years old	13 (5.6%)
65+ years old	6 (2.6%)
Gender	
Female	113 (48%)
Male	118 (51%)
Non-binary/third gender	2 (0.9%)
Ethnicity	
Asian - Eastern	34 (15%)
Asian - Middle Eastern	2 (0.9%)
Asian - Southern	13 (5.6%)
Black / African-American	14 (6.0%)
Latino or Hispanic	9 (3.9%)
Native American / Native Canadian	1 (0.4%)
Other, please specify:	2 (0.9%)
Prefer not to say	1 (0.4%)
Two or More	5 (2.1%)
White / Caucasian	152 (65%)
Employment Status	
A homemaker or stay-at-home parent	9 (3.9%)
Other	5 (2.1%)
Retired	3 (1.3%)
Student	16 (6.9%)
Unemployed and looking for work	20 (8.6%)
Working full-time	140 (60%)
Working part-time	40 (17%)
Marital Status	
Divorced/Separated	14 (6.0%)

Characteristic	N = 233[1]
Living with a partner	35 (15%)
Married	79 (34%)
Never been married	104 (45%)
Widowed	1 (0.4%)
Education Level	
Bachelor's degree	88 (38%)
Graduate or professional degree	43 (18%)
High school diploma	25 (11%)
Some college, but no degree	51 (22%)
Some high school or less	1 (0.4%)
Technical degree	25 (11%)

[1]n (%)

The four mega-events that were the focus of the study were:

1. Change of abortion laws in the US: The history of changes in abortion laws in the United States has been marked by significant legal and political developments. Prior to the landmark Supreme Court case Roe v. Wade in 1973, many states had restrictive abortion laws that either criminalized or heavily regulated the procedure. Roe v. Wade established a woman's constitutional right to choose to have an abortion, effectively legalizing it nationwide. However, subsequent rulings, such as Planned Parenthood v. Casey in 1992, allowed states to impose certain restrictions on abortion as long as they did not place an "undue burden" on a woman's access to the procedure. In June 2022, the US Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade and paved the way for individual states to curtail or outright ban abortion rights. This has led to an ongoing debate and a series of state-level efforts to enact more restrictive and permissive abortion laws, resulting in a complex

patchwork of regulations that vary across states and remain a subject of political and legal contention (*Historical Abortion Law Timeline*, 2023).

2. COVID-19 and stereotypes about Asians: The COVID-19 pandemic, originating in late 2019, brought stereotypes and discrimination directed at Asians, particularly those of Chinese origin. These stereotypes included falsely associating Asians with being carriers of the virus and blaming them for its spread, fueled by misinformation and xenophobia. Such discrimination had a global impact, leading to harassment, discrimination, and hate crimes against Asian individuals and communities worldwide. Advocacy and awareness efforts aimed to combat these stereotypes, and some governments condemned discrimination while emphasizing support for Asian communities (Huang et al., 2023).

3. Workplace relationships among genders in the aftermath of the MeToo movement: The #MeToo movement, originating from activist Tarana Burke's work in 2006, gained global prominence in October 2017 when it went viral on social media with the hashtag #MeToo. Triggered by allegations of sexual misconduct against Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein, the movement encouraged survivors of sexual harassment and assault to share their stories. This viral campaign led to a cascade of personal accounts from people worldwide, sparking a cultural reckoning on the pervasive issue. Beyond social media, #MeToo prompted investigations, resignations, and changes in industries like Hollywood, politics, and workplaces. It also created the Time's Up movement and spurred legal and policy reforms to address sexual harassment and discrimination. As an ongoing advocacy force, #MeToo pushes for cultural change, survivor support, and gender equality (*Me Too Movement*, 2023).

4. Police shootings and the Black Lives Matter movement: Police shootings and the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement are closely intertwined topics that have garnered significant attention in recent years. The issue revolves around instances of law enforcement officers using lethal force, particularly against individuals from Black

communities. The Black Lives Matter movement emerged in response to systemic racism, racial profiling, and instances of police brutality disproportionately affecting Black individuals. The movement gained momentum, especially after high-profile cases of police shootings of unarmed Black individuals, such as Trayvon Martin. BLM advocates for justice, accountability, and an end to racial profiling and police violence. It seeks to raise awareness about systemic racism and calls for reform in policing practices, including increased transparency, accountability, and the demilitarization of law enforcement (*Black Lives Matter*, 2023).

To ensure participants have sufficient knowledge and information about the mega-events, I gave them a short excerpt from a news report regarding each event (see Appendix D). Before presenting the news excerpt, participants were asked if they were aware of the specific mega-event. This step was crucial to gauge their familiarity and exposure to the event.

The subsequent stages of the study involved assessing participants' perception of the mega-event as a threat to their identity, understanding the event's influence on their identity (positively or negatively), and exploring their responses to the event. The measurement steps for these stages are summarized below:

1. Awareness of the mega-event: Participants were asked if they were aware of the specific mega-event before being shown the news excerpt.

2. Perception of identity threat: Participants were asked to use a Likert scale to indicate how much they perceived the mega-event as a threat to their identity.

3. Influence on identity evaluation: Participants were asked to evaluate how the mega-event impacts their identity, indicating whether it positively or negatively influences their identity perception.

4. Response to the event: Participants were asked to describe or select their response to the mega-event, such as social engagement, and work withdrawal.

3.4. Measures

Racial and gender identity. I asked participants to self-identify their race and gender. I used a dummy variable to capture it.

Perceived identity threat. Based on my conceptualization of identity threat (Petriglieri, 2011), I have used measures that capture identity threats which relates to threat to value, meaning and enactment. My focus is on identifying external factors that could undermine an individual's self-esteem, beliefs, or values, and their ability to express and live out their identities in different settings, including the workplace. Additionally, I intend to investigate the impact of identity threats on an individual's sense of purpose, the importance they attach to their identities, and the potential consequences of disruptions in meaning.

Therefore, I adopted three items from Amiot et al. (2012) and five items from Korf and Malan (2002). ("I experience a loss of personal identity due to incidents like this." "I feel like my personal values are threatened at work.", "Incidents like this significantly impact my personal identity at work.", "I feel threatened by incidents like this.", "I had to make a lot of adjustments in my organizations.", "It is a negative attribute to announce my personal identity in my organization.", "In most situations nowadays, it is to my disadvantage to show disagreements in my organization.", "I feel that my employer discriminates against me because of incidents like this."). The items are measured on a 7-point scale (1 = Does not describe my experience to 7 = Clearly describes my experience). In this study, Cronbach's Alpha for this scale was .85.

Racial and gender identity. To measure the positivity and negativity of racial and gender identity, I used the collective self-esteem scale (CSES; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). I changed the "social group" in the CSES to the racial group of participants. ("I often regret that I belong to some of the social groups I do," "In general, I'm glad to be a member of the social groups I belong to," "Overall, I often feel that the social groups of which I am a member are not worthwhile", "I feel good about the social groups I belong to", "Overall, my social groups are considered good by others", "Most people consider my social groups, on the average, to be more

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ineffective than other social groups", "In general, others respect the social groups that I am a member of", "In general, others think that the social groups I am a member of are unworthy"). All items use a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree). Cronbach's Alpha for Positive Racial Identity, Positive Female Identity, and Positive Male Identity were 0.84, 0.89, and 0.82 respectively.

Organizational outcome. For work withdrawal, I adopted measures from Lehman and Simpson's measures (1992). ("I let my mind wander while at work, as I think about incidents like these.", "I let others do my work while I'm thinking about incidents like these.", "I spend time at work on personal matters related to incidents like these."). All items use a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = Almost Never True and 7 = Almost Always True). Cronbach's Alpha for this scale was .71.

For social Engagement, I adopted measures from Soane et al. (2012). ("I seek out connections with my work colleagues while I'm thinking about incidents like these.", "I enjoy spending time with my work colleagues while I'm thinking about incidents like these.", "I seek out opportunities to work with others on tasks related to the incident like these."). All items use a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = Almost Never True and 7 = Almost Always True). Cronbach's Alpha for this scale was .84.

3.5. Results

Descriptive statistics and correlations among variables for the three mega-events are shown in Tables 3, 4, and 5: the change of abortion laws in the US (Table 3), COVID-19 and stereotypes about Asians (Table 4), and workplace relationships among genders in the aftermath of the MeToo movement (Table 5). Out of the total 233 participants, 71 contributed to the survey on the change of abortion laws in the US, 68 participated in the study related to COVID-19 and stereotypes about Asians, and 64 were involved in examining workplace relationships among genders in the aftermath of the MeToo movement. However, because I had only 30 participants

for the survey on Police shootings and the Black Lives Matter movement, I deemed the data insufficient for meaningful statistical analysis. Therefore, I did not conduct tests for this specific mega-event and did not include it in the results and discussion sections.

TABLE 3. MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND CORRELATIONS BETWEEN VARIABLES – ABORTION LAWS

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3
1. Perceived Identity Threat	4.02	2.17			
2. Positive Gender Identity	2.53	1.53	-0.26**		
3. Work Withdrawal	2.93	1.47	0.42**	-0.22*	
4. Social Engagement	3.01	1.74	-0.36**	0.13*	-0.57**

*p<.05, **p<01*

TABLE 4. MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND CORRELATIONS BETWEEN VARIABLES – COVID-19

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3
1. Perceived Identity Threat	3.92	2.23			
2. Positive Ethnic Identity	2.42	1.77	-0.21*		
3. Work Withdrawal	2.82	1.42	0.23**	-0.32*	
4. Social Engagement	3.95	1.23	-0.37**	0.11*	-0.49**

*p < .05, **p<.01*

TABLE 5. MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND CORRELATIONS BETWEEN VARIABLES – METOO MOVEMENT

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3
1. Perceived Identity Threat	3.56	2.80			
2. Positive Gender Identity	2.7	1.80	-0.17*		
3. Work Withdrawal	2.34	1.45	0.89**	-0.28*	
4. Social Engagement	3.64	1.34	-0.17*	0.37*	-0.31*

*p < .05, **p<.01*

Confirmatory factor analysis

I conducted a confirmatory factor analysis to evaluate al the variable's construct validity in the study. The perceived identity threat model was assessed, and the 1-factor model demonstrated a strong fit, with all fit indices falling within acceptable thresholds: χ^2 (15)=32.79, p=.005, CFI=.98, TLI=.96, SRMR=.04. Similarly, I used fit indices to assess the goodness of fit for the all the measurements, the CFA results showed that all factor loadings were acceptable and significant. The positive Racial identity model displayed good construct validity with the 1-factor model, as indicated by fit indices within acceptable ranges: χ^2 (5)=6.41, p=.268, CFI=1.00, TLI=.99, SRMR=.03. The construct validity of the positive gender identity model was assessed. The 1-factor model is shown to have a good fit since all the fit indices are within their acceptable thresholds: $\chi^2(5) = 35.64, \ p < .001, \ CFI = .976, \ TLI = .932, \ SRMR = .07$.

Additionally, the construct validity of the work withdrawal model was examined, revealing a strong fit with the 1-factor model and all fit indices meeting acceptable criteria: χ^2 (0)=0, p = NA, CFI=1.00, TLI=1.00, SRMR=.00. Lastly, the social engagement model was also assessed through confirmatory factor analysis, and it displayed a robust fit with the 1-factor model, as all fit indices were within acceptable thresholds: χ^2 (0)=0, p = NA, CFI=1.00, TLI=1.00, SRMR=.00. To sum up, all variables were a good fit.

Hypothesis testing

Mega event 1: Change of abortion laws in the US

I created two groups for each mega-event: one directly targeted and another not. In the case of a change of abortion laws in the US, I compared men vs women's perception of the event and their responses (Female = 44, Male = 27). I conducted separate analyses for each dependent variable. When comparing the perceived identity threat between men and women, I discovered that, in line with Hypothesis 1, women experienced significantly higher levels of perceived identity threat following the mega-event (M = 0.15, SE = 0.23, p < .01).

Subsequently, I conducted a bootstrapped mediation analysis to evaluate Hypothesis 2, which posited that individuals experiencing identity threat would exhibit a less positive gender identity. My findings supported this hypothesis, revealing a positive and significant direct effect of gender on positive gender identity through perceived identity threat. This suggests that heightened perceived identity threat was associated with a less positive gender identity in the aftermath of the mega-event. Using bootstrapped structural equation modeling (SEM) conducted in R using the Lavaan package (Hayes et al., 2017), I examined the mega-event's indirect effect on work withdrawal and social engagement. The hypothesized model displayed a relatively good fit to the data, as indicated by the model fit statistics. In accordance with Hypotheses 3a and 3b, my findings demonstrated that the mega-event prompted women to engage in higher levels of work withdrawal and lower levels of social engagement.

In summary, perceived identity threat and positive gender identity mediate the relationship between gender and work withdrawal, and perceived identity threat also affects social engagement. Moreover, positive gender identity directly impacts work withdrawal and social engagement, supporting Hypotheses 1, 2, 3a, and 3b.

TABLE 6. SEM RESULTS FOR CHANGE OF ABORTION LAWS IN THE US

Variable	Mediator 1: Perceived Identity Threat	Mediator2: Positive Gender Identity	Dependent Variable: Work Withdrawal
IV: Gender [a]	.15(.23) *		
Mediators			
Perceived Identity Threat		-.54(.20) **	
Positive Gender Identity			-.15(.09) *
R2	.01	.20	.13
Variable	Mediator 1: Perceived Identity Threat	Mediator2: Positive Gender Identity	Dependent Variable: Social Engagement
IV: Gender [a]	.15(.23) *		
Mediators			
Perceived Identity Threat		-.51(.20) *	
Positive Gender Identity			.18(.15) *
R2	.01	.18	.05

Notes: Standard errors are in parentheses.
[a] 0 = Male, 1 = Female.
*p < .05
**p < .01
***p < .001

Mega-event 2: Covid-19 and stereotypes of Asians

I repeated the same process for mega-event 1 for mega-event 2, comparing Asians and non-Asians (Asians = 29, Non-Asians = 39). The results were consistent, and all of the hypotheses were confirmed. There were notable differences in the levels of perceived identity

threat (M = 0.29, SE = 0.29, p < .05) and positive racial identity (M = -0.33, SE = 0.26, p < .05) between the two groups. These findings suggest that the mega-event had varying effects on Asians and non-Asians concerning perceived identity threat and positive racial identity. I conducted a bootstrapped structural equation modeling (SEM) to assess the mediating role of perceived identity threat and positive racial identity. This analysis offers insights into whether perceived identity threat and positive racial identity mediated the relationship between race, work withdrawal, and social engagement. In accordance with Hypotheses 3a, and 3b, my findings demonstrated that the mega-event prompted Asian people to engage in higher levels of work withdrawal and lower levels of social engagement. In summary, this analysis indicates that the mega-event has differential impacts on perceived identity threat and positive racial identity, which may subsequently influence work withdrawal and social engagement. These findings emphasize the significance of considering race as a critical factor in understanding individual responses to significant societal events.

TABLE 7. SEM RESULTS FOR COVID-19 AND STEREOTYPES OF ASIANS

Variable	Mediator 1: Perceived Identity Threat	Mediator2: Positive Racial Identity	Dependent Variable: Work Withdrawal
IV: Race [a]	.29(.29) *		
Mediators			
Perceived Identity Threat		-.33(.26) *	
Positive Racial Identity			-.18(.13) *
R2	.05	.05	.04

Variable	Mediator 1: Perceived Identity Threat	Mediator2: Positive Racial Identity	Dependent Variable: Social Engagement
IV: Race [a]	.29(.29) *		
Mediators			
Perceived Identity Threat		-.34(.26) *	
Positive Racial Identity			.22(.17) *
R2	.05	.04	.04

Notes: Standard errors are in parentheses.
[a] 0 = non-Asians, 1 = Asians.
*p < .05
**p < .01
***p < .001

Mega-event 3: Workplace relationships among genders in the aftermath of the MeToo movement

In this section, I delve into the findings from our analysis of another significant mega-event, "Workplace Relationships Among Genders in the Aftermath of the MeToo Movement." This analysis employed the same methodology and hypotheses as in our previous section, which

investigated the change in abortion laws, and all hypotheses were confirmed. Like the last analysis, I compared the responses of men (coded as 0) and women (coded as 1) following the MeToo-related workplace dynamics. In this case, the table shows significant differences in perceived identity threat) between men and women and that perceived identity threat negatively impacts positive gender identity. The relationship between the MeToo movement and organizational outcomes was similar to previous mega-events.

TABLE 8. SEM RESULTS FOR WORKPLACE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG GENDERS IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE METOO MOVEMENT

Variable	Mediator 1: Perceived Identity Threat	Mediator2: Positive Gender Identity	Dependent Variable: Work Withdrawal
IV: Gender [a]	.07(.23) *		
Mediators			
Perceived Identity Threat		-.09(.25) *	
Positive Gender Identity			-.09(.15) *
R2	.01	.01	.27
Variable	Mediator 1: Perceived Identity Threat	Mediator2: Positive Gender Identity	Dependent Variable: Social Engagement
IV: Gender [a]	.07(.23) *		
Mediators			
Perceived Identity Threat		-.01(.20) *	
Positive Gender Identity			.43(.35) *
R2	.01	.03	.12

Notes: Standard errors are in parentheses.
[a] 0 = Male, 1 = Female.
*p < .05
**p < .01
***p < .001

3.6. Discussion

In this study, I examined the interplay between mega-events, identity threat perception, and their consequences for individuals and organizations. Drawing upon Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and Identity Theory (Stryker & Burke, 2000), my research delved into how external events influence individuals' assessments of identity threats, mainly focusing on gender and Racial identity, and explored the subsequent impacts on workplace behaviour.

Mega-event 1: Change of abortion laws in the US. For the change of abortion laws in the US, I created two groups: one directly targeted by the event and another that was not targeted. In this case, comparing men's and women's perceptions of the event and their responses revealed differences. Women, by Hypothesis 1, experienced significantly higher levels of perceived identity threat following the mega-event. This result underscores the decisive role of gender in shaping how individuals perceive and respond to identity threats triggered by significant societal events. These findings support Hypothesis 1, which posited that individuals who perceive a mega-event as directly affecting them based on their group membership are more likely to experience identity threat. This study also supported the findings of a previous study that those who believed a mega-event targeted them, experienced negative feelings such as devaluation, exclusion, exploitation, and discrimination. This aligns with previous research on identity threats and emphasizes the pivotal role of perceived targeting in shaping individuals' assessments of identity threats (Brown, 2015).

Furthermore, the study supported Hypothesis 2, demonstrating that individuals experiencing identity threats were more likely to exhibit a less positive gender identity. The bootstrapped mediation analysis revealed that heightened perceived identity threat was associated with less positive gender identity in the aftermath of the mega-event. Moreover, the investigation of the indirect effects of the mega-event on work withdrawal and social engagement aligns with Hypotheses 3a and 3b. The results showed that the mega-event prompted women to engage in higher levels of work withdrawal and lower levels of social engagement.

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This highlights the importance of considering the broader impact of identity threats on organizational behaviours, where individuals facing such threats may opt for avoidant behaviours, affecting their workplace engagement and social interactions.

Mega-event 2: Covid-19 and stereotypes about Asians. The analysis of COVID-19 and stereotypes about Asians involved a comparison between Asians and non-Asians, which yielded consistent results and confirmed all hypotheses. The data revealed notable differences between the two groups' perceived identity threat and positive racial identity. This emphasizes the varying effects of the mega-event on Asians and non-Asians, emphasizing the nuanced impact of societal events on different racial groups.

The bootstrapped mediation analysis provided insights into how perceived identity threat and positive racial identity mediated the relationship between race, work withdrawal, and social engagement, aligning with Hypotheses 3a and 3b. The findings showed that the mega-event prompted Asian individuals to engage in higher levels of work withdrawal and lower levels of social engagement. This emphasizes the complex interplay between race, identity perceptions, and organizational behaviour, showcasing the need to consider racial identity as a critical factor in understanding individual responses to significant societal events.

Mega-event 3: Workplace relationships among genders in the aftermath of the MeToo movement. This analysis delved into the impacts of the MeToo movement on workplace relationships among genders. The study replicated the methodology and hypotheses from previous analyses, confirming all hypotheses. Significant differences in perceived identity threat were observed between men and women, highlighting that women perceived a higher level of identity threat. This aligns with Hypothesis 1, emphasizing the gendered impact of the MeToo movement on identity perceptions. Moreover, the relationship between perceived identity threat and positive gender identity was in line with previous findings, indicating that perceived identity threat had a negative impact on positive gender identity. The results underscore the intricate dynamics between identity threat and personal evaluations, as identified in Hypothesis 2.

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In conclusion, these analyses demonstrated that mega-events could have differential impacts on perceived identity threat, identity evaluations, and subsequent work behaviours, with gender and race playing crucial roles in shaping individuals' responses. This highlights the significance of considering sociodemographic factors when exploring how individuals react to significant societal events. The findings underscore the importance of addressing identity threats and their consequences in individual and organizational contexts, offering valuable insights for interventions and strategies to support individuals during challenging times.

These findings contribute to the literature by underscoring identity threat perception's deeply personal and subjective nature. Perceiving oneself as a target can trigger a cascade of emotional and cognitive responses that echo throughout an individual's life, including workplace interactions (Thoits, 1995). This suggests that interventions to mitigate identity threats following mega-events should consider acknowledging and addressing perceived targeting as a key factor in individuals' experiences.

Hypothesis 2, which posited that individuals experiencing identity threat are likely to alter their assessments of their gender or racial identity due to perceptions of negative evaluations by others, finds support in the study. My research demonstrated that individuals who perceived themselves as direct targets of events such as the change of abortion laws indeed experienced shifts in their evaluations of their gender and racial identities. The previous study essentially explained these shifts that the targeted groups experience devaluation and exploitation. This finding highlights the dynamic nature of social identity evaluations. My study suggests that external events can shape how individuals perceive and evaluate their identities, particularly when they lead to identity threats. It emphasizes the intricate relationship between personal evaluations and evaluations by others, which can influence one another in a complex interplay (Ashmore et al., 2004).

The empirical data collected in this study provide substantial support for Hypotheses 3a and 3b, which explore the relationship between perceived identity threat and avoidant work

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behaviours, specifically job withdrawal and decreased social engagement. The findings from this research contribute to our understanding of the complex dynamics between identity threats and organizational outcomes (Bor et al., 2018). Additionally, Hypothesis 3a and 3b posited that individuals who perceive identity threat in the workplace are more likely to exhibit avoidant work behaviour, characterized by increased job withdrawal or decreased social engagement. This study's findings align with interviews in my first study, which showed that individuals who felt threatened by the mega-event often contemplated leaving their organizational roles. This response reflects a deliberate shift from their current work tasks and responsibilities, a key feature of avoidant behaviour. It underscores that when individuals perceive their identity is under threat, they may distance themselves from their organizational roles, thus providing empirical support for Hypothesis 3a and 3b.

The mega-events such as the MeToo movement or COVID-19 not only influence employees inside the organization but also impact employees' personal lives outside of the organization (Morgeson et al., 2015; Raja et al., 2020). Studying how mega-events influence people inside and outside the organization offers a broader perspective on how individuals respond to identity threats in different societal and organizational settings. Mega-events are not confined to the workplace alone. While organizations can take security measures to enhance employees' sense of safety, these events can affect employees even when not at work (Raja et al., 2020). Employees may carry these mega-events emotional and psychological weight into their personal lives. Inclusion of this extended influence can help managers and organizations plan strategies for employees 'support inside and outside the organization. This broader perspective allows for a more comprehensive approach to supporting employees during challenging times (Raja et al., 2020).

In summary, these findings offer valuable contributions to the existing literature by highlighting identity threat perception's deeply personal and subjective nature. Perceiving oneself as a target can trigger a complex cascade of emotional and cognitive responses, extending

beyond the individual's personal life to impact their workplace interactions (Leigh & Melwani, 2022). This underscores the importance of acknowledging and addressing perceived targeting in interventions to mitigate identity threats following significant societal events. Furthermore, the study supports Hypothesis 2, demonstrating that individuals experiencing identity threats are likely to alter their assessments of their gender or racial identity due to negative evaluations by others. The research reveals that those who perceive themselves as direct targets of significant events undergo shifts in their evaluations of their identities, driven by experiences of devaluation and exploitation. This underscores the dynamic and interconnected nature of social identity evaluations, where external events can influence how individuals perceive and evaluate their identities. Finally, the empirical data support Hypotheses 3a and 3b, shedding light on the complex relationship between perceived identity threat and avoidant work behaviours, such as job withdrawal and decreased social engagement. The findings emphasize the significant impact of identity threats on organizational outcomes and individuals' choices in response to these threats. Significantly, this research extends beyond the workplace, recognizing that mega-events can influence employees' personal lives, calling for a more comprehensive approach to supporting individuals inside and outside the organization during challenging times (Raja et al., 2020).

CHAPTER FOUR: GENERAL DISCUSSION

4.1. General Discussion

The findings from the study examining the impact of a local mega-event, like Law 21, hold broader implications that extend beyond the specific context of this law (Akkermans et al., 2020). These insights can be applied to more overarching mega-events, such as the #MeToo movement, shedding light on how individuals respond to identity threats in different societal and organizational settings.

Firstly, the parallels between Law 21 and other mega-events, such as the #MeToo movement, lie in their capacity to provoke identity threats. While Law 21 targeted religious symbols and identities, the #MeToo movement addresses issues of gender-based discrimination and harassment. Both events create an environment where individuals may perceive their identities to be under threat due to external factors. In the case of #MeToo, individuals may feel their gender, personal experiences, or professional identities challenged, leading to a similar psychological response in the Law 21 study (Vaziri et al., 2020).

Moreover, the study's findings regarding avoidant behaviours, such as job withdrawal and decreased social engagement, offer valuable insights for understanding how individuals cope with identity threats in response to mega-events like #MeToo. Employees facing gender-based challenges or workplace harassment may respond by distancing themselves from their roles or reducing their social interactions within the organization (Hashmi et al., 2022). Just as individuals influenced by Law 21 contemplated leaving their roles or concealed/enhancing their identity, those impacted by #MeToo may adopt similar strategies, leading to reduced engagement and potentially negative consequences for their careers and organizations.

Additionally, local and overarching mega-events share a commonality regarding the societal and organizational pressures they exert. These events often prompt discussions, debates, and changes in cultural norms, which can affect individual perceptions and responses (Malik & Sanders, 2021). By understanding how individuals react to identity threats in the context of a local event like Law 21, organizations and scholars can draw parallels to similar identity challenges that may arise during broader societal movements like #MeToo. This broader perspective allows for more informed strategies and interventions to support employees, maintain organizational cohesion, and address the underlying issues arising from identity threats.

Moreover, the impact of different types of mega-events on workplace identities can vary significantly. For instance, consider the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated stereotypes about Asians. The pandemic, a natural disaster with widespread socio-

economic ramifications, introduced unique challenges to workplace dynamics (Krug et al., 2021). The stereotypes about Asians, fueled by misinformation and bias, created an additional layer of identity threat for individuals of Asian descent in professional settings (Huang et al., 2023). The responses to this type of mega-event might involve not only job withdrawal and reduced social engagement but also heightened awareness of racial biases and the need for proactive measures to counteract discriminatory behaviors in the workplace. In contrast to the nuanced impact of the COVID-19-related identity threats, workplace relationships among genders in the aftermath of the #MeToo movement may manifest in distinct ways. The movement, rooted in issues of gender-based discrimination and harassment, prompts a reassessment of power dynamics, organizational culture, and norms related to workplace interactions (*Me Too Movement*, 2023). Employees, particularly those identifying with different genders, may navigate these identity threats by either actively participating in initiatives aimed at fostering respectful workplace relationships or adopting avoidant behaviors to minimize potential risks. Similarly, the change of abortion laws in the US introduces a different set of identity threats related to personal beliefs, values, and reproductive rights. Individuals affected by these legal changes may respond by engaging in advocacy efforts, voicing their perspectives, or, conversely, withdrawing from discussions to avoid potential conflicts.

In brief, this study has uncovered valuable insights into the impact of local mega-events, exemplified by Law 21, and their broader implications for understanding identity threats in diverse societal and organizational settings. By drawing parallels between Law 21 and overarching mega-events like the #MeToo movement, the research highlights the commonality in the capacity of these events to provoke identity threats, whether rooted in religious symbols or gender-based discrimination. The study's focus on avoidant behaviors, such as job withdrawal and decreased social engagement, contributes significant insights into how individuals cope with identity threats in response to mega-events. Furthermore, recognizing the shared societal and organizational pressures exerted by both local and overarching mega-events underscores the need for informed strategies and interventions. The study expands its scope to illustrate the

varying consequences of different mega-events on workplace identities, exemplified by the nuanced responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, stereotypes about Asians, workplace relationships post #MeToo, and changes in abortion laws in the US. This comprehensive understanding provides a foundation for organizations and scholars to navigate the complex landscape of identity challenges, fostering inclusive environments and addressing underlying issues arising from diverse mega-events.

Incorporating gender and racial identity into the study added a new layer of understanding of how individuals respond to identity threats in the workplace. While the Law 21 study focused primarily on religious identity, expanding the research to include gender and racial identity broadens the scope of applicability. It allows for a more comprehensive exploration of identity dynamics in the face of mega-events. The findings from this study can have broader implications for organizations seeking to create inclusive and supportive work environments. Mega-events like #MeToo often spotlight issues related to gender, race, and religious identity. Understanding how employees respond to identity threats within the context of these multifaceted events can guide organizations in developing more inclusive policies, fostering diversity and inclusion, and promoting a sense of belonging for all employees (Brewer, 2011). It acknowledges that identity threats can come from various angles and that organizations must be prepared to address them comprehensively.

Additionally, by incorporating gender and racial identity into the study, it becomes possible to draw parallels between different types of identity threats and their impact on avoidant behaviours (Midgley, 2014). Individuals facing gender-based or racial challenges in the workplace may respond similarly to those grappling with religious identity threats. They may also resort to avoidant behaviours such as job withdrawal or reduced social engagement. This cross-identity comparison can yield valuable insights into common coping strategies and their consequences, allowing organizations to develop more holistic approaches to support their employees.

Additionally, when mega-events happen, especially those of a societal or political nature, they can change the socio-economic situation in the society (Hällgren et al., 2018). For instance, in the aftermath of a significant extreme event such as the MeToo Movement, public inquiries have been initiated to investigate the causes and consequences. These inquiries have resulted in legal actions, regulatory changes, or increased scrutiny of organizations and individuals (*POLITICO*, 2023). This, in turn, can create a heightened sense of identity threat among those implicated or affected by the inquiries.

In response to such politico-economic consequences and public inquiries, individuals may adopt avoidant behaviours for self-preservation. They might withdraw from their roles, fearing negative repercussions, or reduce their social engagement to avoid scrutiny. On the other hand, some individuals may engage in the process, actively participating to address the politico-economic consequences (Hällgren et al., 2018). They may do so to protect their interests, seek justice, or drive positive change within their organizations or society (Sanderson et al., 2016). Their engagement can lead to valuable contributions to resolving the identity threat and preventing similar events in the future. In conclusion, the politico-economic consequences of mega-events and the dynamics of public inquiries can be powerful determinants of whether individuals respond with avoidant or engaging behaviours when facing identity threats.

4.2. Theoretical Implication

The discussions surrounding the intricate relationship between social identities, particularly religious identity, and mega-events challenges, such as Law 21, offer several theoretical implications.

Firstly, these discussions highlight the fundamental role of Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) in understanding how social categorization and social comparison influence an individual's identity and subsequent behaviours. The analysis of Law 21 in Quebec exemplifies how threats to religious identities can impact individuals on multiple levels, including their self-esteem, public participation, sense of alienation, and potential legal action (Kreiner et al., 2006a).

This underscores the need to explore further and analyze the mechanisms that link identity threats and behavioural outcomes.

Moreover, examining various perceptions of Law 21 reveals that individuals can experience identity enhancement and positive distinctiveness in response to mega-events (Roberts et al., 2014). This suggests that mega-events can trigger people to see how their identity can differ from others and yet be proud of it. As a result, people voice part of their identity that they have not expressed before (Brown & Coupland, 2015). The categorization of behavioural responses into avoidant and engaging behaviours offers essential insights into understanding the motivations behind individuals' actions in the face of identity threats. By understanding why some individuals engage while others avoid, we can effectively inform the development of targeted interventions and strategies to address identity-related challenges. This categorization also promotes more constructive and adaptive responses to identity threats, aligning individuals' responses with their specific needs and circumstances.

In summary, these theoretical implications underscore the significance of understanding the intricate dynamics between social identities, identity threats, and behavioural responses at the individual and organizational levels. This knowledge can guide the development of more effective strategies for addressing identity-related challenges and fostering positive outcomes in the face of mega-events and social changes.

4.3. Practical Implication

The insights gained from the discussions on the intricate relationship between social identities, particularly in the context of religious identity and the challenges posed by laws like Quebec's Law 21, have significant practical implications. These findings can help organizations understand the behavioural consequences of perceived identity threats and create interventions and strategies to address the impacts. By categorizing these responses into avoidant and engaging behaviours, one can gain insights into the motivations driving individuals' actions (Midgley, 2014). This knowledge is invaluable for developing targeted interventions and strategies.

Recognizing why some individuals engage with identity threats while others avoid them allows for developing tailored interventions. By understanding these motivations, organizations, and institutions can create measures that promote positive responses to identity threats, fostering a more inclusive and harmonious environment. For organizations, the findings emphasize the substantial impact of identity threats on employee behaviour, particularly in increased job withdrawal or decreased social engagement. To mitigate these adverse effects, organizations' should proactively address identity threats and provide support and resources to affected employees (Aquino & Douglas, 2003). This approach can help maintain a positive workplace culture and dynamics, ultimately improving organizational performance and employee well-being.

Moreover, it is crucial to underscore the role of education and awareness-raising initiatives in light of the identified challenges. Building an informed and empathetic community can contribute significantly to mitigating identity threats and promoting positive responses. Organizations and educational institutions can play a pivotal role by implementing diversity training programs and fostering open dialogues that encourage a deeper understanding of diverse identities. Such initiatives not only empower individuals to navigate identity challenges but also contribute to the creation of a broader societal framework that values diversity and inclusion. By incorporating educational components into interventions, there is potential to foster long-term change and create environments where individuals feel supported and acknowledged, ultimately contributing to the broader goal of cultivating inclusive communities and workplaces.

In conclusion, the discussions on the intricate relationship between social identities, particularly within the context of religious identity and the challenges posed by laws like Quebec's Law 21, offer valuable insights with profound practical implications. The understanding of the behavioral consequences of perceived identity threats allows organizations to tailor interventions and strategies effectively. Categorizing responses into avoidant and engaging behaviors provides a nuanced understanding of the motivations driving individuals'

actions. This knowledge becomes instrumental in the development of targeted interventions, emphasizing the need for organizations to proactively address identity threats, mitigate adverse effects on employee behavior, and provide necessary support and resources. Furthermore, recognizing the role of education and awareness-raising initiatives becomes paramount. By fostering an informed and empathetic community through diversity training programs and open dialogues, organizations and educational institutions can contribute to the creation of inclusive environments, ultimately promoting positive responses to identity challenges. Incorporating educational components into interventions holds the potential to drive long-term change, fostering supportive and acknowledged communities, thereby advancing the broader goal of cultivating inclusive workplaces and societies.

4.4. Strengths and Limitations

Strengths. The discussions comprehensively examine the intricate relationship between social identities and individual experiences, shedding light on the complex interplay between identity and behaviour in mega-events like Law 21. This depth of analysis contributes to a nuanced understanding of how identity threats affect individuals. Incorporating Social Identity Theory (Tajfel et al., 1979) offers a solid theoretical foundation for interpreting the findings. This theory underscores the significance of social categorization and comparison in shaping identity and behaviour, providing a robust framework to analyze the observed responses to identity threats. The discussions emphasize the practical implications of understanding identity responses. Categorizing behavioural responses into avoidant and engaging behaviours is an important aspect of the research, offering insights into the motivations behind individuals' actions. This understanding can inform targeted interventions and strategies, delivering practical value (Aquino & Douglas, 2003). The studies provide empirical support for the hypotheses, particularly regarding the impact of identity threat on organizational behaviour. The findings offer quantitative evidence supporting the claim that individuals facing identity threats are more likely to engage in avoidant behaviours, such as job withdrawal or reduced social engagement.

Limitations. The discussions primarily focus on specific scenarios, such as Law 21 in Quebec, and the findings might need to be more broadly generalizable to different cultural contexts or types of mega-events. The extent to which the results can be applied to other situations is still being determined. While the discussions comprehensively analyze identity dynamics, the complexities of individual and group identities still need to be fully explored. Identity is a multifaceted construct, and the arguments may need to be more balanced with the intricacies of identity formation and its relationship with behaviour (Kreiner et al., 2006a). The discussions present relationships between identity threats and behavioural consequences, but causality still needs to be definitively established. While the findings suggest associations, they do not prove that identity threats directly cause specific behaviours. While the discussions focus on avoidant behaviours, such as job withdrawal and reduced social engagement, they do not extensively explore positive responses to identity threats. Understanding how individuals may proactively respond to identity challenges is a valuable aspect that should be more emphasized.

Additionally, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations inherent in the use of a cross-sectional study design. Cross-sectional studies provide a snapshot of data at a single point in time, making it challenging to establish causal relationships. The discussions presented in this study primarily capture a moment in the evolving dynamics of identity and behavior, and the cross-sectional nature limits our ability to infer causality definitively (Certo & Semadeni, 2006). In considering these constraints, it is important to note that megaevents are not under the control of researchers, and as such, they are not conducive to experimental designs. Given this, a potential alternative could be the adoption of a longitudinal design, incorporating repeated measures over time. Such an approach might prove useful in tracking changes in identity, particularly within the context of long-term social movements like MeToo or BlackLivesMatter."

In summary, the discussions offer a robust analysis of the intricate relationship between identity and behaviour in the context of identity threats, guided by Social Identity Theory. However, the limitations include potential generalizability issues, oversimplification of identity

dynamics, the absence of causal conclusions, and limited exploration of positive responses to identity threats.

4.5. Broader Implications and Future Research

The implications of my study extend beyond the specific mega-events investigated here. Understanding how external events can profoundly influence individuals' identities and subsequent behaviours within the workplace has significant implications for organizations and society at large. Organizations can benefit from recognizing the potential impact of mega-events on their workforce and implementing strategies to support employees facing identity threats (Raja et al., 2020).

Future research should delve deeper into the long-term consequences of identity threats on individual well-being, job satisfaction, overall workplace dynamics, and authenticity. One avenue for future research is to study how identity threats caused by a mega-event can affect an individual's sense of authenticity in the workplace (Cha et al., 2019). That is, in what circumstances can people keep their authenticity even though they are facing identity threats from a mega-event? This exploration can explore how individuals can express their true thoughts, feelings, values, and identities in their work environment and how identity threats influence these expressions (Cha et al., 2019).

Additionally, it could be valuable to explore the role of leadership and organizational culture in managing and mitigating identity threats, including their impact on authenticity, following mega-events. Effective leadership and a supportive organizational culture can play an essential role in creating an environment where authenticity is encouraged and protected, even in the face of external challenges (Cha et al., 2019). Future research can study how leaders can help employees keep their authenticity in times of identity threat caused by a mega-event. Understanding the interplay between authenticity, leadership, and organizational culture in the context of identity threats can provide actionable recommendations for organizations striving to create inclusive and psychologically safe work environments.

In conclusion, my study advances my understanding of how mega-events can shape individuals' perceptions of identity threats and subsequently influence their workplace behaviour. It underscores the complexity of identity threat appraisal and highlights the importance of perceived targeting and social support in individuals' responses. This research contributes to the broader body of knowledge in identity theory, social psychology, and organizational behaviour, providing valuable insights for organizations and policymakers seeking to navigate the challenges posed by identity threats in the aftermath of significant external events.

The findings presented in this study shed light on the complex interplay between social identities, mega-events like Law 21, and the behavioural responses of individuals. While this research has provided valuable insights into the consequences of identity threats, there remain promising avenues for future research: Future research could delve into the contextual factors that moderate or mediate the relationship between identity threats and behavioural responses (Branscombe, Schmitt, et al., 1999). Examining how factors such as individual differences, the socio-political climate, and the specifics of the mega-event itself influence identity responses can provide a more nuanced understanding of this dynamic.

Moreover, building on the categorization of avoidant and engaging behaviours (Midgley, 2014), future studies may explore the effectiveness of interventions and coping strategies in managing identity threats. Investigating how individuals can be supported in choosing more adaptive responses to such threats can contribute to developing practical interventions at the individual and organizational levels. A longitudinal approach to studying mega-events' impact on social identities and behaviours can offer insights into how these effects evolve. This research could also reveal whether individuals adapt their responses or if the effects of identity threats persist.

Expanding the scope of research to examine various mega-events, including those beyond Law 21, can help establish whether the observed effects are consistent or if there are variations in identity responses based on the nature of the event. This comparative approach can enhance our

understanding of the generalizability of findings. Given the implications of identity threats on organizational behaviour, future research can explore practical strategies organizations can implement to mitigate these adverse effects. Understanding how organizations can foster more inclusive and identity-affirming environments is crucial for enhancing employee well-being and workplace dynamics (Emerson & Murphy, 2014).

In summary, the research presented in this study offers a foundational understanding of the relationship between social identities, mega-events, and behavioural responses. However, continued investigation in these areas can provide a deeper comprehension of the dynamics and contribute to developing strategies to support individuals and organizations in effectively navigating identity threats in a rapidly changing world.

4.6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this discussion has illuminated the intricate interplay between social identities and individuals' experiences, particularly within the context of religious identity and the challenges posed by mega-events like Law 21. Social Identity Theory has underscored the pivotal role of social categorization and social comparison in shaping our identities. It has emphasized the importance of comprehending how these processes influence our behaviours. The analysis of Law 21 in Quebec has illustrated the profound impact on individuals with religious identities, leading to threats to their sense of value, meaning, and enactment, which, in turn, precipitate various behavioural consequences, including diminished self-esteem, withdrawal from public roles, feelings of alienation, and, in extreme cases, legal action. This discussion also demonstrated that diverse perceptions of Law 21 can simultaneously serve as vehicles for identity enhancement and positive distinctiveness, as some individuals view the law as a means to promote social cohesion, equal opportunities, and safeguarding against religious influences, thereby emphasizing the unique and valuable aspects of Quebec's identity. Moreover, categorizing behavioural responses into avoidant and engaging behaviours is paramount, providing invaluable insights into the motivations behind individuals' actions, which can inform

the development of targeted interventions and strategies to promote positive responses to identity threats. The data collected in this study strongly support the substantial impact of identity threat on organizational behaviour. These findings reveal that individuals confronting such threats are more likely to resort to avoidant behaviours, manifesting as increased job withdrawal or decreased social engagement. This understanding holds significant implications for organizations seeking to mitigate the adverse effects of identity threats on their employees and overall workplace dynamics.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Law 21 History

Critical event	Political party	Explanation	Date	Source
Quiet revolution	Quebec Liberal party & Union Nationale	• a period of significant political, social and economic change that promoted the modernization of Québec, economic growth for Québec francophones (le *rattrapage*) and the creation of a secular society. • The services previously managed by the Church (education, health and social assistance) fell under the administration of the state.	1960s	Canadian encyclopedia website
Debate around reasonable accommodation	Quebec Liberal Party	• The Supreme Court of Canada reversed the Quebec Court of Appeal in the Multani case; • Several lawsuits won by religious minority groups for reasonable accommodation; • Hérouxville "Code of Life" on how newcomers should behave; • ADQ got the formal opposition in the 2007 election based on the fact that they campaigned hard on the issue of reasonable accommodation, arguing that accommodations had gone too far	2006 - 7	Canadian encyclopedia website
Bouchard-Taylor Commission	Quebec Liberal Party	• The Liberal Party mandated Taylor and Bouchard in 2007 to investigate the reasonable accommodation status in Quebec • The report was concluded in 2008 with the notion that there was no real crisis with the practice of accommodation • The report recommended a limited ban on the wearing of religious symbols by people with "coercive" powers, namely judges, prosecutors and peace officers • The report also suggested that one of the key sources of anxiety was the absence of targeted guidelines to handle accommodation or adjustment	2007 - 8	Canadian encyclopedia website

Bill 60 or Quebec Charter of Values (French: Charte de la laïcité or Charte des valeurs québécoises)	Parti Québécois (PQ)	• Bill 60 was introduced: ensures "religious neutrality" and "equality between women and men." One of the articles prohibition the wearing by public servants and employees of daycares, public schools, general and vocational colleges (cégeps), universities, and health and social service networks, as well as persons performing judicial and adjudicative functions of all religious objects that overtly indicate a religious affiliation. • It was not passed because PQ was a minority government	Nov. 2013	Canadian encyclopedia website
		• Election of the liberal party of Quebec into government: Bill 60 was not followed by the next government	2014	Wikipedia
Bill 62	Quebec Liberal Party (QLP)	• Bill 62 passes: a ban on face covering from delivering or receiving a public service	Oct. 2017	Wikipedia
		• Quebec Superior Court suspended law 62 provisions on face coverings until guidelines were drawn up	Dec. 2017	CBC
		• A portion of law 62 that dictates when Quebecers must leave their faces uncovered to receive public services has been suspended	June 2018	CBC
Bill 21	Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ)	• Bill 21 passes and becomes law. This bill made it illegal for employees in the public service with authority to wear any religious symbols such as headscarves or turbans	June 16, 2019	CBC
		• In a 2-1 ruling, the Quebec Court of Appeal decides Bill 21 won't be voided at this time	Dec. 12, 2019	ccla.org/bill-21/
		• Quebec superior court upheld most of Law 21, stopped it from applying to educators in Quebec's minority English-language school boards	April 20, 2021	ccla.org/bill-21/

Appendix B Interview Guide

Bill 21 and religious group

Background information

Age, education, ethnicity, marital status, job title

Opening questions

- Short description of your organization?
- Can you explain your job to me?
- Can you tell me why you choose this organization?
- What kind of tasks do you have to do in your job?
- What do you like/dislike about your job?
- How do you like working with your colleagues?

Key questions

- Are you familiar with bill 21?
- What do you think about the bill?
- In what way this bill influenced your job?
- Do you know anyone who has influenced by this bill?
- What do you think about the media's coverage of this bill?
- Why do you think this bill was passed?
- How important is this bill to you?
- What would you do if you have a problem in work?
- Have you talked about this bill with your co-workers/ friends?
- How did you react to this bill?
- What do you think is the right response to this bill?
- In your opinion, how other people have reacted?
- How this bill can change people's interaction in workplace? If it has.

Closing questions

- How do you think this bill will influence people's jobs in future?
- How do you think bill will evolve in the future?
- Do you wish to make any other comments about your job or how the bill has influenced you?

Appendix C. Poster for Recruitment

Appendix D. Mega-event Excerpts

Photo: Kevin Dietsch/Getty Images

BBC - Abortion was made legal across the US after a landmark legal ruling in 1973, often referred to as the Roe v Wade case.

Now the US Supreme Court - the nation's most senior legal body - has overturned that right.

Twenty-six conservative states are either certain or considered likely to introduce new abortion restrictions or bans.

Photo: Pacific Press/Pacific Press/LightRocket via Getty Images

BBC - An elderly Thai immigrant dies after being shoved to the ground. A Filipino-American is slashed in the face with a box cutter. A Chinese woman is slapped and then set on fire. Eight people were killed in a shooting rampage across three Asian spas in one night.

These are just examples of recent violent attacks on Asian Americans, part of a surge in abuse since the start of the pandemic a year ago.

From being spat on and verbally harassed to incidents of physical assault, there have been thousands of reported cases in recent months.

Advocates and activists say these are hate crimes and are often linked to rhetoric that blames Asian people for the spread of Covid-19.

Photo: BBC

BBC news - The Oscars, the Golden Globes, Cannes Film Festival. Until 2017 they were Tinsel Town's glitziest back-slapping forums. Now they're its favorite protest events.

Of course, it's down to #MeToo, the campaign against sexual harassment and abuse that swept through Hollywood last autumn and has since been Googled in every country on Earth.

In its current form, the movement began with film executive Harvey Weinstein - or rather, with the dozens of women who accuse him of sexual harassment, abuse, or rape. The New York Times printed the first allegations on 5 October, and the mogul was fired from his own company within a week. Pandora's box was open. Harvey Weinstein denies engaging in non-consensual sex.

On 15 October, actress Alyssa Milano suggested on Twitter that anyone who had been "sexually harassed or assaulted" should reply to her Tweet with "Me Too", to demonstrate the scale of the problem. Half a million people responded in the first 24 hours.