Master Thesis:

The impact of social movements on organizational members' experiences in the workplace

Student:

Raquel Carrillo-Duran

ID: 1058560

First Examiner: Prof dr Yvonne Benschop

Second Examiner: dr Joke Leenders

Personal Information:

E-mail: raquel.carrilloduran@student.ru.nl

Abstract

Social movements as presented in literature, can be the cause of organizational change towards fairness and equality in the workplace, yet there is a lack of empirical evidence to understand how organizational members experience this impact in their place of work. The National Women's Strike (NWS) was a protest that urged women across Mexico to disappear from public life for a day to raise awareness to gender violence in the country and reflect on the value of women in society. As the NWS took place on a Monday, organizations were affected by an estimate of 70% working women joining this protest. This study utilizes the case of the NWS to examine the impact of social movements on the account of organizational members' experiences. Eleven individual interviews were conducted with working women that experienced the NWS. The impact of the NWS was identified through a wave of employee activism, organizational involvement and sowing seeds through consciousness raising. In addition, multiple obstacles were identified and included in the results that limited the impact of the NWS in the workplace. This research contributes to social movements and employee activism theory by providing empirical evidence on the impact of social movements to the workplace.

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1. Introduction

Social movements as presented in literature, can be the cause of organizational change towards fairness and equality in the workplace. The impact of social movements to organizations has received attention for their potential to influence organizational culture and individuals' beliefs; impacting workplace culture (Brown & Battle, 2020; Georgallis, 2017; Germain, Robertson, & Minnis, 2019; Opie & Roberts, 2017) and decision-making processes to promote social change initiatives (Georgallis, 2017; King, 2008; Schulz, 2017; Sobande, 2019). As workplaces are sites where social inequalities are legitimized and experienced (Acker, 2006; Opie & Roberts, 2017), social movements can raise visibility over collective grievances among organizational members in the workplace, leading to an awaken desire to promote change within the workplace through behaviors such as employee activism (Scully & Segal, 2002). This thesis will focus on how social movements impact organizational members' experiences in the workplace.

Previous research has elaborated on how social movements can bring ideals of gender and racial equality into the workplace impacting organizational members' individual experiences. Brown & Battle (2020) examined how the timely popular #MeToo movement has cemented an atmosphere of solidarity and trust towards victims of sexual harassment. This shift has minimized the fear victims associate to exposing a personal case of sexual abuse in the workplace such as ostracism and isolation. Conversely Opie & Roberts (2017) argued that although the Black Lives Matter movement has received a significant amount of attention from the public, it has failed at influencing how African Americans experience racial inequality in the workplace due to the rigidness of inequality structures and racist predispositions among organizational members. These studies have debated the potential of social movements in shaping how gender and racial inequality is experienced in the workplace as well as its boundaries to achieve effective change, however both lack providing empirical evidence to support their arguments on the impact of social movements from the perception of organizational members and their experiences in the workplace.

The main limitations from the currently available literature on the impact of social movements to individual experiences in the workplace reside on two main factors. Firstly, previous literature has focused on the impact of social movements to decision-making

processes as social movements have the potential of influencing the implementation of diversity policies and other social initiatives. Secondly, there is no empirical evidence of how social movements impact organizational members' experiences in the workplace. Lacking individuals' perceptions on the impact of social movements overlooks an important perspective to understand how organizational members experience the influence of a social movement in the workplace.

The context in which the impact of social movements on individual experiences will be analyzed is the women's movement in Mexico by focusing on women's experiences in the workplace. The women's movement has been significantly active over the last few years in the country, gaining the attention of the media as marches, institutional boycotts and other demonstrations of discomfort take place regularly and are often mediatized (CNN Español, 2020). As an attempt to raise awareness over gender violence and the raising cases of feminicides, feminist collectives across the country urged all women in Mexico to "disappear" for an entire day on March 9th of 2020, implying not going to work or school, avoid shopping in any form, evade using social media and even skipping domestic tasks.

The National Women's Strike to which I will refer as NWS, reached enough attention to actually become a national matter that successfully pressured corporations to take a stance on the women's movement by undertaking measures to support their female employees in their right to strike (El Economista, 2020; Forbes México, 2020). Several corporations took the protest as an opportunity to present themselves not only against gender violence, but also committed to gender equality in the country and their workplace (Forbes México, 2020). The NWS had an unprecedent influence to Mexican corporations, as it is estimated that 70% of working women in Mexico joined the NWS (El Economista, 2020). This immediate effect on corporations and business activities proves the powerful influence of the women's movement in Mexico, offering an ideal opportunity to analyze the impact of social movements on the experiences of organizational members in the workplace. Despite the overwhelming mass participation to the NWS of both corporations and women, it has not been documented how it impacted women's experiences in the workplace, or if it effectively transmitted awareness over gender violence nor yet if it cemented a foundation for social change in favor of gender equality in the workplace.

To fill the lack of empirical evidence on the impact of social movements, and the effects of the NWS in the Mexican workplace, the research question is constructed as follows: *How did the NWS impact women's experiences in the workplace?* In order to answer the research question, a qualitative study consisting of individual semi-structured interviews was conducted, taking an interpretivist approach and feminist standpoint theory as epistemological guidance. The results indicate the NWS impacted women's experiences in the workplace by motivating a wave of employee activism, achieving organizational involvement from corporations and a sowing seeds effect in consciousness raising among colleagues. Despite these positives outcomes, according to the respondents the NWS did not achieve what was expected, as it was met with obstacles taking multiple forms, such as lack of managerial commitment, stigmatization of the women's movement and the Covid-19 pandemic, limiting the potential of the NWS to influence social change.

This thesis is divided in five sections to understand the reasoning behind the research question and examine the results from the data collection. The first chapter of this research is the introduction, in which the topic of the research will be discussed, the research question introduced, and the relevance of the study presented. The next chapter is the theoretical framework, which will include the theoretical foundations necessary to understand the impact of social movements in organizations, the achievements of the women's movement in Mexico, gender equality in the workplace and specifically, gender equality in the Mexican workplace. The third chapter is the methodology section, where the choice for conducting a qualitative research and the process for data collection will be addressed. The fourth chapter is the results, which will contain a careful analysis of the gathered interviews, and the last chapter will be the discussion, where the main findings will be analyzed and contested.

2. Theoretical Framework

For this section, concepts and theory recovered from previous literature surrounding the themes mentioned in the research question will be exposed. As the research question aims to inquire how the NWS impacted women's experiences in the workplace, the outline of the theoretical framework will be as follows: Firstly, literature review over the impact of social movements to organizations and the workplace. Secondly, I will expose the major achievements of the women's movement in Mexico, to stress the relevance of the movement in promoting social change and influencing policy makers. Third, the concept of gender inequality will be discussed, exploring how it is experienced and legitimized in the workplace. Finally, the contextual specifications of inequality in the Mexican workplace will be exposed for the reason that the subjects of the qualitative research will be working women in Mexico.

2.1 Social movements and organizational change

The impact of social movements to organizations has been widely researched by organizational and social movement scholars, understanding what social movements are and how they can influence organizational members experiences in the workplace is relevant to argue and comprehend how the NWS protest could impact experiences of organizational members in the workplace.

2.1.1 Linking Social Movements to organizations

Social movements can impact organizations by spreading their message among members of society, including organizational members, influencing their individual beliefs and their desire for change. Social movement are identified as a collective expression of dissatisfaction alongside a shared desire for change among multiple members of society (Georgallis, 2017; Zald & Berger, 1978). Social activists often engage in activism through public marches and protests to raise awareness over collective grievances and spread the message of social movements (Zald & Berger, 1978). By doing so, social movement activism can lead to an urgent desire among members of society for challenging power structures and dominant ideologies (Vergara-Camus, 2016; Zald & Berger, 1978) to meet the social movement objectives. Even if the change desired by the social movement representatives is not achieved

in sudden time, social movements can create social and institutional foundations that can later be transformed into political settlements (Benítez Quintero & Vélez Bautista, 2018), and within an organizational context it could lead to the creation of corporate policies (Georgallis, 2017) or even a cultural shift within the workplace (Brown & Battle, 2020; Opie & Roberts, 2017).

Social movements have been presented in literature as a cause of organizational change towards fairness and equality in the workplace. For instance, social movements have served to raise awareness over social inequalities in the workplace, influencing the role organizations take to combat structural inequalities (Vergara-Camus, 2016). In addition, Georgallis (2017) discussed the mechanisms through which social movements have the potential to influence the implementation of social initiatives in the workplace. The author argues that social movements can influence individual's beliefs and bring visibility to shared grievances within organizations, impacting how managers react to injustices and the employees' expectations of fairness (Georgallis, 2017). These effects can later lead to social change. Moreover, Zald & Berger (1978) compared corporations to nation-states to understand the impact of social movements, arguing that the hierarchical and bureaucratic nature of organizations allows for the negotiation of change initiatives, in accordance to social movement ideals (Zald & Berger, 1978). Furthermore, resource mobilization theory has also been utilized to describe the processes through which social movements provoke change in organizations by securing control and resources needed for collective action (Jenkins, 1983).

Multiple scholars have contributed to the role of managers as people in leadership positions in the successful implementation of social and diversity initiatives within organizations (Vinkenburg, 2017; Lombardo & Mergaert, 2013; Benschop & Verloo, 2006). Their findings suggest that the support of people in positions of power or authority in organizations is essential for effectively conducting social initiatives (Vinkenburg, 2017) and for motivating other organizational members to engage in change actions (Georgallis, 2017). For some individuals, organizational change is perceived as an unwanted disruption of the current way of things and for that reason, resistance among organizational members is expected (Lombardo & Mergaert, 2013). Once again, the role of people in managerial

positions becomes relevant, as they can act as facilitators to diminish resistance or even as gatekeepers, to avoid change from happening (Lombardo & Mergaert, 2013).

2.1.2 The impact of social movements on the workplace

As it has been discussed, social movements can promote the implementation of policies towards fairness and equality influenced by social movements ideals, in addition they can influence organizational members individual beliefs and expectations regarding equality and fairness in the workplace. Given the aim of this thesis, it is necessary to expose the current available literature on the impact of social movements on individual experiences in the workplace, which will be elaborated in this subsection.

Multiple scholars have argued that social movements and political events can surpass workplace boundaries and impact people's experiences within work settings (Scully & Segal, 2002; Brown & Battle, 2020; Siebers & Dennissen, 2015). Social inequalities and social movement activism in society, are reflected and reproduced in the workplace, affecting organizational members' experiences (Scully & Segal, 2002). For instance, Siebers & Dennissen (2015) examined how social events and political statements targeting minorities negatively affect organizational members interactions in the workplace, affecting their wellbeing and satisfaction. In addition, Brown and Battle (2020) and Opie & Roberts (2017) analyzed how social movements are capable of impacting the workplace culture and thus, organizational member's experiences in the workplace.

Movements such as "Me Too" and "Black Lives Matter" have gained worldwide attention over the recent years, raising awareness towards sexual harassment and police brutality against black people, respectively. To analyze how a social movement can influence individual experiences in the workplace, Brown and Battle (2020) argued that the popularization of the Me Too movement has created an atmosphere of trust and empathy towards victims of sexual harassment. This change in the atmosphere reflected in the workplace by diminishing the fear of being ostracized or judged after exposing cases of sexual abuse or harassment in the workplace (Brown & Battle, 2020), from the perspective of the victims.

Conversely, Opie & Roberts (2017) argued that in the face of the raising popularity and political relevance of the Black Lives Matter movement, racism is so deeply rooted into

managerial practices, that African Americans still have to deal with incidents of racism at their workplace, such as being limited to express their blackness, being denied opportunities and receive smaller remunerations for the same work compared to their white colleagues (Opie & Roberts, 2017). As mentioned in the introduction chapter, both of these studies lack empirical evidence to support their argumentations, therefore, to fully understand the impact of social movements to individual experiences in the workplace, it will be relevant to explore how organizational members experience this impact themselves, and whether as mentioned by Brown & Battle (2020), there is a shift in the workplace culture reflecting a social movement ideals', or as Opie & Roberts (2017) suggest, the rigidness of institutional practices is overall apathetic towards social movements activism and organizational change does not actually occur as a consequence of it. Organizational members can partake a role in promoting structural change in the workplace through employee activism. The following subsection will focus on how social movement activism influences organizational members experiences in the workplace and the roots of employee activism.

2.1.3 The impact of social movement activism in the workplace

Social movement activism taking place in society can influence organizational members experiences in the workplace. Protests and public marchers are often used by activists to make social issues salient and attract visibility to the social movement (Simons & Aranda, 2018). As public protests such as mass marches and strikes raise awareness to collective grievances experienced by members of society, they can influence organizational members' individual beliefs, impacting how they react and acknowledge inequality in the workplace (Germain, Robertson, & Minnis, 2019; King, 2008; Esquivel Domínguez, 2019) or even promote institutional change through policy (Simons & Aranda, 2018; Zald & Berger, 1978). Becoming aware of structural inequalities in the workplace can lead to feelings of frustration and a desire for change, or so much as the promotion of social movement activism within the workplace (Scully & Segal, 2002), also referred as employee activism.

Germain, Robertson, & Minnis (2019, p.157) identify employee activism as organizational members engage in the promotion of social movement activism using organizational resources to impact policies and practices. Employee activists can make use

of different organizational resources and strategies to promote change in the workplace, as analyzed by Scully & Segal (2002). The authors further elaborated on the concept of "passion with an umbrella" to explain how the activist role of an employee is often delimited by the rules, authorization and acceptance provided by management (Scully & Segal, 2002).

In brief, social movements can inspire individuals to acknowledge their disadvantaged position and desire for structural change in the face to social inequalities in the workplace, moreover, as timely social movements influence individuals' beliefs and expectations, they can have an effect on how organizational members experience and react to inequalities. Coming back to the research question of the thesis, that focuses on the experiences of women in the Mexican workplace, the following section will discuss how the women's movement in Mexico has been a driver for structural change to defend women's rights and lives.

2.2 The societal impact of the women's movement in Mexico

Throughout this section, I will comment on the societal and political impact that the women's movement has achieved for women in Mexico. As it will be detailed, the collective and organized participation of women to demand their rights has shaped legislation in favor of gender equality and women's rights. Lately, the visibility brought to women's marches and protests across the country has been essential in the promotion of new policies in favor of gender equality. These advancements towards gender equality have impacted women's lives, including their participation in the labor market and experiences in the workplace.

According to Benítez Quintero & Vélez Bautista (2018), the greatest achievements of the women's movement in Mexico are; voting rights for women, gender parity in education and raising awareness on gender violence. Women obtained the right to vote on 1953, the first big achievement of the feminist movement in Mexico, and since then, the participation of women in politics has not ceased to increase, occupying positions as mayors, senators and even becoming candidates for national presidency (Benítez Quintero & Vélez Bautista, 2018). Meanwhile, the Mexican government has implemented gender quotas to ensure gender parity in political organisms and the participation of women in politics (El Financiero, 2019). On 2018, Mexico had the highest percentage of women in congress amongst the members of the OECD (IMCO, 2018). The second achievement of the women's movement

is gender parity in education, and it is reflected on the raising percentage of women completing university education as well as their raising participation on careers of masculine domain. Lastly, the third greatest achievement of feminism in Mexico is also the main objective of the NWS; raising awareness towards gender violence. Combatting gender violence has become part of the political agenda from a municipal to a federal level both as social and public health issue. In addition, multiple laws have been introduced to protect women's lives, as well as the creation of institutions to support victims of gender violence (Benítez Quintero & Vélez Bautista, 2018).

Within the Mexican contemporary context, the women's marches have been crucial in raising awareness to the women's movement, and in particular to gender violence in the country. Most of these marches have the objective to pressure the government into bringing justice and safety to women and girls in the country. Protests are an effective medium to raise awareness over collective discontent and promote legislation (Germain, Robertson, & Minnis, 2019; King, 2008), and the women's movement in Mexico is an example of such affirmation as feminist collectives have promoted multiple law initiatives by organizing public marches in the memory of victims of gender violence or feminicide (Esquivel Domínguez, 2019).

To illustrate the previous paragraph, I will expose two law initiatives that were supported by the women's movement in Mexico and have now become approved legislations. Firstly, the law "Ingrid" criminalizes the diffusion of multimedia depicting specifically gender violence, the law initiative was presented five days after the feminicide of Ingrid Escamilla as pictures of her murder were distributed on the internet. This case was supported by a feminist march to commemorate her life and raise awareness over her case (Vera & López, 2020). Secondly, the law "Olimpia" recognizes the distribution of multimedia with sexual content and without consent a punishable crime (Pearson, 2020). Olimpia Coral is a victim of digital violence, as videos of her were distributed online without her consent, affecting her social life and emotional health significantly. Later, she decided that she would seek justice, however there were no laws that could help her defend her case. Luckily, she was supported by feminist collectives and transformed her case into a law initiative to protect sexual intimacy (Noticieros Televisa, 2019), which was approved in November of 2020.

Although the aim of this study is to focus on women's experiences in the workplace rather than the impact of social movements in the creation of policies, addressing that the women's movement is influencing social change and legislation, implies that women's lives and expectations are being impacted (Benítez Quintero & Vélez Bautista, 2018; López-Fernández & Atristain, 2017; Serret, 2000), affecting women's experiences in the workplace (López-Fernández & Atristain, 2017). Despite the current triumphs achieved, it is important to address that the women's movement in Mexico is far from over, as women are still facing gender inequality in multiple ways (Benítez Quintero & Vélez Bautista, 2018; Bolio, et al., 2018; López-Fernández & Atristain, 2017).

2.3 Gender Inequality in the workplace

The workplace is a site were gender inequality occurs and is legitimized (Acker, 2006; Kirton & Green, 2015), as one of the objectives of the women's movement in Mexico is to ensure gender equality across all spheres of life (Benítez Quintero & Vélez Bautista, 2018; Serret, 2000), understanding how gender inequality is reflected in the workplace will be helpful for comprehending the impact of social movements on individual experiences. In this section, the definition of gender equality will be presented, how it is presented in the workplace and specially in the Mexican workplace.

2.3.1 Gender Inequality

Gender equality is a concept that describes equal access to resources, opportunities, and outcomes among individuals regardless of their gender, in contrast, gender inequality is the absence of these conditions. With an organizational focus, Acker (2006) defines inequality as "*systematic disparities between participants in power and control over goals, resources and outcomes*" (Acker, 2006, p. 443), comprising opportunities for promotion, participation in decision making, job security and the distribution of benefits and rewards (Acker, 2006). Indicators such as employment/unemployment rates, gender gap, occupational segregation and wage gaps amongst genders prove that gender inequality persists in most countries and regions (Kirton & Green, 2015), impacting how women experience gender inequality in the workplace (Bolio, et. al., 2018; López-Fernández & Atristain, 2017).

The analysis of inequalities in organizations has been a focus of research for multiple scholars as corporations play an important role in institutionalizing, creating, and even

diminishing inequalities between genders (Acker, 2006; Eyben, 2013). Organizational practices that foster inequalities can be identified by analyzing the inequality regimes through which organizations function (Acker, 2006). Inequality regimes are the interlocked practices and processes that result in continuing inequalities in all work organizations (Acker, 2006). These regimes can be examined by identifying and analyzing the following concepts: The bases of inequality, shape and degree of inequality, organizing processes that produce inequality, the visibility of inequalities (degree of awareness), legitimacy of inequalities and finally, control and compliance (Acker, 2006). Such a thorough analysis of an organization's inequality regimes is beyond the scope of this thesis; however, it is worth noting that inequality in organizations can take multiple forms.

Another focus that has been given to the legitimization of inequalities, and particularly to gender inequality is the influence of cultural predispositions to maintain gender differences in organizations and the workplace (Acker, 2006; Bolio et. al., 2018; Limón González & Rocha Sánches, 2011; López-Fernández, Andrée, & Atristain, 2017; Quiroga-Garza, et. al., 2021). Current social constructs that reinforce differentiation between women and men maintain structures where gender equality is unattainable (Acker, 2006). For instance, in organizations where patriarchal values are strongly grounded, women may be perceived as unable to take positions of leadership (Kirton & Green, 2015; Limón Gonzáles & Rocha Sánchez, 2011), rejected from taking part in important projects or decision making process (Zimmerman, Carter-Sowell, & Xu, 2016), and being target of sexist microaggressions (Mcabe, 2009; Basford, Offermann, & Behrend, 2014); all of these issues can be reflected in feelings of isolation and ostracism (Zimmerman, Carter-Sowell, & Xu, 2016), anxiety (Brown & Battle, 2020; Mcabe, 2009) and even depression (Basford, Offermann, & Behrend, 2014), impacting women's overall well-being and productivity in the workplace.

2.3.1 Gender Inequality in the Mexican workplace

The objective of this subsection is to introduce the reader into the specific complexities that cause and maintain gender inequality in the Mexican workplace to have an overview of how women experience inequality in the country. Previously, I have addressed that some of the main achievements of the feminist movement were the increased legislation to promote

women's participation in politics, gender parity in education and raising awareness to gender violence, however, it is yet to be addressed how gender inequality takes form in the Mexican workplace. This section is relevant to the research, as the subject of the interviews for this study are Mexican working women. Understanding their context is advisable for analyzing their experiences.

Economic indicators suggest that gender inequality in the Mexican workforce persists, which is reflected in other outcomes such as a gender wage gap and structural gender discrimination in the workplace. Mexico has one of the highest gender gaps in labor participation within the OECD countries, the employment-unemployment ratio indicates that 78% men have a remunerated job, compared to 47% of women (OECD, 2020). Moreover, women are critically underrepresented on high level positions, which is also reflected in the wage gap (Bolio et. al., 2018). In addition, López-Fernández & Atristain (2017) argue that Mexican women suffer from structural violence in the workplace in the form of harassment, exploitation, unequal wages, belittlement, and gender segregation.

Multiple researchers attribute the existent gender inequality in Mexican corporations and the workplace to the cultural context grounded on patriarchal values (Bolio et. al, 2018; Limón González & Rocha Sánchez, 2011; López-Fernández & Atristain, 2017; Quiroga-Garza et. al., 2021). For instance, Bolio et. al. (2018), argue that the gender gap in both horizontal and vertical levels of organizations is caused by the strong expectation inflicted on women to take responsibility over domestic tasks and motherhood, which limits their career developments and opportunities for promotion. In addition, women in leadership positions are commonly underestimated as sexist beliefs persists in people's ideals of women, deeming them uncapable of performing tasks allegedly masculine (Limón González & Rocha Sánchez, 2011). Furthermore, even women occupying leadership positions in organizations have reported to be ignored, spoke upon by their male peers and excluded from important decisions (Bolio et. al., 2018). Another role that culture plays in the legitimization of gender inequality in the workplace, is in the justification of the disruption between organizational policies and the implemented corporate practices, as people find gender segregation common and inevitable (López-Fernández & Atristain, 2017), as people find gender segregation common and inevitable due to the gender differences between people.

Despite the current legislation and corporate policies to promote gender equality in the workplace, most authors believe that Mexican organizations need to improve labor conditions so that women experience equal treatment in the workplace (Benítez Quintero & Vélez Bautista, 2018; Bolio et. al., 2018; López-Fernández & Atristain, 2017). There are several laws on the Mexican Federal Labor Law designed to assure gender equality in the workplace; these are aimed at preventing gender discrimination, provide equal pay for equal job and offer parental leave for both mothers and fathers; however these laws are not put into practice in corporate Mexico (Bolio et. al., 2018) and there is a recognized cognitive dissonance between what is preached and practiced (López-Fernández & Atristain, 2017), which is justified on cultural beliefs that defend gender roles and differentiation between men and women.

The main conclusions from this chapter are the following: First, social movements influence organizational by influencing individual beliefs and promoting a desire for change. Second, the women's movement in Mexico has effectively raised awareness over issues of gender inequality and promoted law initiatives. Third, experiencing gender inequality in the workplace can negatively impact women's experiences in the workplace. And fourth, gender inequality persists in the Mexican workplace and culture is functioning as a structural boundary to equality. The link between social movements and gender inequality in the workplace resides on the potential of social movements to raise awareness over collective grievances and invoke a desire for structural change in the workplace. Despite this evidence, the impact of social movement on organizational members' experiences in the workplace is yet to be supported by providing empirical evidence.

3. Methdology

In this section I will explain the choices made for conducting a qualitative exploratory research for the purpose of answering the research question, the techniques used for data analysis, research ethics and the role of reflexivity on this research.

3.1 Research Approach

To comprehend the impact of social of social movements on organizational members' experiences in the workplace, an exploratory qualitative research was conducted. One of the qualities of qualitative research is that it allows for a thorough examination of phenomena through human interpretation (Langley & Abdallah, 2011). The NWS was used as a point of reference to analyze the impact of social movements on organizational members' experiences in the workplace, based on the supported assumption that social movements and social movements activism can influence organizational dynamics and impact organizational members' experiences (Brown & Battle, 2020; Germain, Robertson, & Minnis, 2019; Scully & Segal, 2002.

3.1.1 Analyzing women's experiences

As mentioned in the research question, the impact of the NWS in the workplace was examined by analyzing solely experiences of working women who experienced the NWS. In this case, women experiences were considered as the main sources of truth and knowledge for this study. The study followed an interpretivist ontological position, recognizing that individual experiences provide different interpretations of reality (Symon & Cassell, 2012). Additionally, a feminist standpoint approach was considered to interpret women's experiences in the workplace.

Feminist standpoint theory suggests that experiences and perceptions of inequality are shaped from a conscious awareness of occupying the less privileged position on a patriarchal society (Brooks A. , 2011; Hennessy, 1993). As the intention of this research was to analyze the impact of a protest initiated associated with the women's movement and in favor of women's rights, only women were contacted to be respondents for this research, assuming women can provide the most insightful perspectives. Under the premise of the feminist standpoint theory, women can provide insightful opinions and depictions over topics

such as gender inequality as well as a potential to recognized shared vulnerabilities (Brooks A. , 2011) experienced in the workplace.

3.2 Data Collection

Semi structured interviews with working women who experienced the NWS were conducted to understand the impact of social movements to the workplace. Conducting interviews is a recommended qualitative method for understanding complex experiences within organizational studies analyzing organizational members' experiences (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2012). The interview was designed taking a respondent position, meaning that the objective was to engage participants into elaborating on their own experiences and opinions surrounding the NWS (Symon & Cassell, 2012). Following a semi-structured interview guide (Galletta, 2013) allowed me as a researcher to take a flexible approach to the interview guide by improvising questions I found pertinent at the moment to enrichen the data collection. As expected, the impact of the NWS was perceived in a complex way and the data collection method proved to be effective to analyze these complex experiences.

All the interviews were conducted and recorded through Zoom. The choice of conducting remote Zoom interviews was based on two main reasons: the global pandemic that encourages personal isolation and the fact that most of the participants are currently living in Mexico. Interviewing using Zoom offers multiple advantages, such as more flexibility to schedule interviews with the participants, reduced burdens related to location, minimizing the effort to find and reserve a suitable place for interviews and finally the possibility to easily record audio and video from the meeting (Brown, Lo Iacono & Symonds, 2016), which was significantly helpful for transcribing and analyzing the interviews. However, this method of interviewing can also present disadvantages. Such as unexpected issues with the software, troubles with the internet and missing body language cues (Lo Iacono, Symonds, & Brown, 2016). In addition, I expected time differences could cause difficulties in scheduling interviews with the participants. Luckily, all of the interviews ran smoothly, and the voluntary participants showed a very open disposition to schedule interviews within short period notices and unconventional time arrangements.

Permissions from private organizations to access information were not necessary, as not one organization was analyzed specifically, and the organizations the respondents work

or worked for will remain anonymous. Nevertheless, as Symon & Cassell (2012) recommend, I made sure to gain consent of all participants to contribute to this research and insisted that their participation was voluntary. In addition, three concerns were considered for choosing the sample that will be described in the following subsection.

3.2.1 Sample: Choosing participants

To choose a purposeful set of participants, three principles recommended by Symon & Cassell (2012) were followed: First, to gather a significant sample size. Second, choose an appropriate sampling technique to answer the research question and third, choose a sample that enables the researcher to collect the required data (Symon & Cassell, 2012).

Although there are no strict thresholds for choosing a sample size, a recommendation for interview sampling is to obtain between 3 and 16 respondents (Robinson, 2014). Considering the recommendations from the thesis supervisors and the time constraints, I conducted 11 individual semi-structured interviews. These interviews allowed me to obtain different perspectives on the topic of research while acknowledging the individuality of each case. Seven of the participants were chosen on principles of convenience (Symon & Cassell, 2012) from my personal acquaintances, and the last four respondents volunteered to participate by self-selection sampling (Symon & Cassell, 2012). To get in contact with volunteers, I made two posts on Facebook groups for students of the Radboud University and UDLAP (my former University in Mexico) inviting working women willing to share their experiences on the NWS to participate in an interview for the purpose of my master thesis. The motivation of the respondents to participate in this research was specially compelling, many of them were pleased to share their experiences and contribute to research on the NWS, as they felt it was a legitimate but foreshadowed protest. Some of them also insisted on sending them back a final copy of my thesis, as they were looking forward to getting a look on the results.

Gathering a non-probabilistic sample, rather than a population representative one, allowed me to define my sample purposively to answer the research question. As the intention of the study was to analyze the impact of the NWS on organizational members' experiences in the workplace, the participants had to meet the following criteria: All respondents identified as women, they were working for the same employer at least three months before

and after the NWS took place, and they were willing to discuss how the NWS was experienced in their place of work. The participant selection technique led me to a set of respondents belonging to significantly small demographic group of privileged, highly educated young women, between the ages of 25 and 30 years old. Without neglecting the validity of their responses, it is important to keep in mind that it is not advisable to consider this sample as representative of the whole female population in Mexico.

3.3 Interview Guide

For the Interview guide I followed Galleta (2013) approach to semi-structured interviews. As the topic of research is a complex matter, this method offered distinct advantages. This approach consists of elaborating an interview guide that is divided in three segments (Galletta, 2013). The interview guide started with an opening segment explaining the purpose of the research, followed by an expression of gratitude for their voluntary involvement and reassuring their consent as well as their right to withdraw. Next, I asked simple open-ended questions to develop a trusting environment where participants could feel confident to share and build up on their opinions. Following was the middle segment (Galletta, 2013), where I addressed the topic of research, the NWS, and its impact. At last is the concluding segment, where comments that needed further clarification were revisited. Finally, I asked if they would like to add more comments and I thank them for their participation in the study (Galletta, 2013). During the interview, I maintained the essence of semi-structured interviews, reacting to the participants comments and delving deeper on answers I found especially significant. The interview guide can be found on Appendix 1.

3.4 Data Analysis

All interviews were transcribed in Spanish prior to the coding phase. As the interviews were conducted in Spanish, the quotes included in the results section are translations made by myself. A widely used technique for analyzing individual interviews in qualitative research is template analysis, the greatest advantage it proposes for analyzing phenomena is its flexibility to analyze the data without assigning a fixed number of codes or a priori themes. This quality was useful during coding as it offered flexibility for adding, subtracting, and modifying codes and themes during the data analysis phase (Symon & Cassell, 2012).

3.4.1 Specificities of coding for Template Analysis

Coding is a central activity for template analysis. As defined by Symon & Cassell (2012), "*coding is the process of attaching a label (code) to a section of text to index it as relating to a theme*" (p.431), and a theme is a recurrent and relevant topic found in the data. Developing a list of a priori themes before preliminary coding is frequently used for the template analysis technique (Symon & Cassell, 2012), however it remains as an optional step for analysis (Brooks & King, 2015), given that this research is not drawn to any particular theory on social movements or any other topic, a list of a priori themes was not constructed.

For this research, I included the main topics of interest in the interview guide to assure the topic of the research question was discussed, as well as other topics mentioned in the theoretical framework. A first round of coding including the first three interview transcripts served for the identification of recurrent themes and codes. However, as the interviews transcripts were completed and the research question subtly changed, the template was modified to propose a more simple and concise answer to the research question. The data analysis also included going back and forth between the recovered empirical evidence and literature, therefore themes such as employee activism, the impact of social movement activism, etc., were included in the theoretical framework after coding, providing a richer understanding of the results.

The information gathered was organized in a hierarchical coding scheme, from the initial template to the final version of the template. Hierarchical coding is used to structure data in orders of themes, from top level themes to sub themes. This procedure was useful for organizing the recovered data in levels of specificity drawn from coding (Symon & Cassell, 2012). Four main themes were identified: Employee activism, organizational involvement, identified obstacles and sowing seeds. The final template can be found on Appendix 4

3.5 Research Ethics

This research required the respondents to share their opinions about their experiences in the workplace surrounding a sensitive topic for the Mexican society, which is the NWS. Therefore, it was important to remain cautious on how to address this subject. To ensure the research was done in an ethical manner, I followed Symon & Cassell (2012) principles to conduct a qualitative research ethically, such as not modifying the respondents' opinions

during the data analysis, using concepts and language carefully and maintain anonymity of respondents. Following these principles allowed me to firstly, ensure the wellbeing of the participants and secondly to provide truthful data analysis.

In addition, I also considered another set of principles to achieve an ethical research proposed by Halai (2006). This researcher suggests that there are five main principles to follow an ethical research: informed voluntary consent from participants, confidentiality of information shared, anonymity of research participants, no harm to participants and reciprocity. Reciprocity is the ability of the researcher to actively compensate participants for their time and effort (Halai, 2006). At the start of the interview and before starting the recording I stated that their participation would remain anonymous and voluntary, that they were able to choose to withdraw from the research or stop the interview if desired and that their contributions would be part of my master dissertation. Participants were told that their participation would not be compensated, as my research was conducting without funds. This fact was not discouraging for any of the participants, however I reminded them how valuable their participation would be and how much I appreciated their time.

3.6 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a process on which the researcher becomes aware of how her or his knowledge affects the object of study, the methodology and the findings (Symon & Cassell, 2012). Choosing the case of the NWS is a clear reflection of my interest to comprehend how the massive participation of Mexican organizations and working women to support a protest of the women's movement truly impacted working women experiences the workplace, as this information is currently lacking. Moreover, I personally support the women's movement marches and protests taking place in the country and believe that the NWS successfully raised awareness of the many structural issues women face at a national level. My personal interest and political position towards the NWS may have affected the way in which I conducted the interviews and analyzed the results, as I truly wanted to find a positive impact in the workplace caused by the NWS.

Another aspect that should be considered is the fact that several of the respondents are friends of mine, therefore it was expected to have at a certain extent shared opinions on the topic of research. Nonetheless, I retained myself from making any assumptions over their

believes and maintain a professional interviewer-interviewee attitude throughout the conversation. In the role as researcher, I consider that the friendship bond between myself and some of the respondents impacted positively the results, as conversations ran smoothly with a convenient amount of trust. However, I could be unaware of how it may have limited the respondents from sharing some thoughts or experiences they found inappropriate to share with me.

3.7 Master Thesis Planning

For writing my thesis, I made a planning schedule, that helped me keep on track with my duties as a researcher. It consists of six phases, focusing on the most important parts of the research, writing the introduction, theoretical framework, methodology, data collection, data analysis and the finishing details. This scheme is on Appendix 2.

4. Results

This chapter consists of a thorough analysis of the data collected from the interviews. As mentioned earlier, the data was analyzed following the template analysis technique, for which recurrent themes were identified and later organized hierarchically. Four main themes were identified describing the impact of social movement in the workplace: Employee Activism, Organizational Involvement, Identified obstacles and Sowing Seeds. The final template can be found on Appendix 4.

4.1 Employee Activism

The NWS initiative offered an opportunity for working women around Mexico to collectively express their discontent and desire for social change, as well as an opportunity for raising awareness on a subject of great matter. The NWS was a protest that effectively persuaded women across the country to take a stance and actively participate on the women's movement. By joining this protest, working women in Mexico chose to be absent at work, making their dissatisfaction towards gender violence and support to the women's movement visible to their workplace, hence engaging in social activism and awareness raising. Additionally, the buzz around the NWS allowed for spontaneous instances of dialogue between colleagues on the ideals of the NWS, which opened a space for working women to comment on their position regarding the NWS and transmit the social movement's agenda to the workplace. Employee activism takes place as organizational members make use of organizational resources to effect change, usually in favor of social initiatives (Scully & Segal, 2002). On this study, most of the instances of employee activism identified as an effect of the NWS were on the eve of the NWS and the day itself, rather than a long-term engagement in employee activism. The way in which the respondents engaged in employee activism were analyzed using Scully & Segal (2002) contributions on grassroot activism and Meyerson & Scully's (1995) study of strategies used by tempered radicals in the workplace to promote change within organizations.

4.1.1 Engaging in plural performativity

The totality of the working women who participated in this study found the NWS as a legitimate protest and chose to support it by effectively disappearing for a day. The respondents showed their commitment to the cause and interest to maximize its impact by

staying at home evading any kind of monetary consumption, communication with the exterior and presence on social media. The term plural performativity (Tyler M. , 2019) is used to describe the engagement of respondents to the NWS. Plural performativity has been defined as a "way of sanding together that powerfully connects bodies, ethics and practices in opposition to normative regimes" (Tyler M. , 2019, p. 50). This term has been used to describe how public protests, such as marches or strikes gather people with similar concerns to send a collective message to the public. By being absent for a day, working women showed a shared feeling of dissatisfaction towards the current social situation, evidencing collective grievances and shared vulnerability to gender violence. Within their role as organizational members, they sent a message to everyone in their workplace, hence bringing visibility to their stance and engaging in employee activism (Scully & Segal, 2002).

> R7: We said we wanted to take the NWS so that people could reflect on what a day without us (women) would be, and not only being absent at work, but not leaving our home at all… because that was what the NWS stood for. And that's what we did, we did not answer the work nor the personal cellphone, we did not use social media not even Netflix… I just stayed at home with my sister and my mom watching DVD's.

> R10: When I heard about the NWS I thought it was very necessary. The enterprise I work for is very "squared", they do not like going off the protocol… and this rigidness is even reflected in some *machismo.* So, I thought it was necessary both at society and at my workplace. The first thing I thought when I heard about the NWS was… "of course we are going to do this".

The quotes R7 effectively summarizes most women in the study experienced the NWS. Her response illustrates that she knows what the NWS stands for and that for her, being committed to the cause is due to a legitimate personal concern. Meanwhile the R10 quote, explains that she found the NWS not only legitimate but necessary. She finds that gender violence takes place in her workplace and the NWS offered an opportunity to express this discontent alongside her colleagues, challenging the rigid structure of the organization she works for. As women became absent for a day, the NWS served as a platform for plural performativity to send a message collectively, expressing what most women feel or think towards gender violence in the country.

The interviewees agreed that the NWS was the topic of conversation among colleagues on the days prior to the strike, after that day the conversation diminished for reasons such as lack of follow-up from management and the arrival of Covid-19 to Mexico. According to the respondents, these conversations turned into discussions between those who criticized and challenged the credibility of the NWS and those who defended it. These situations allowed for two outcomes of employee activism to be perceived specially on the eve of the NWS. First, bringing the social movement agenda to the workplace (Scully & Segal, 2002) and second, engaging in local and spontaneous action (Meyerson & Scully, 1995).

> R7: I was very angry towards the person who complained to management about us women joining the NWS. I confronted him and told him he should not speak on the subject because he was not a woman and he has never felt what it is like to be a woman in Mexico, how normal street harassment is for us and other things.

> R9: I remember that around that time, a few colleagues where criticizing feminism and the NWS. And some of us took it as an opportunity to explain to them that the objective of the NWS was to bring visibility to the problem of gender violence, specially to government and to make our voices finally be heard…

> R10: I confronted everyone that questioned the NWS at work… I told them that gender violence is real and to imagine that one day I just don't show up to work because I got killed or kidnapped. I really think it had an impact at my area, because they completely respected our decision to join the NWS. I also encouraged all the women at the department to join the NWS. I do not know if it is because I take things to seriously, but I also think it is our responsibility to raise awareness.

Facing other colleagues' resistance to the women's movement and the NWS served as a motivation express their support to the NWS and the women's movement; explaining what the strike stood for and the reasons why it was an important and legitimate protest to have. By addressing these issues, they brought the movement's agenda to the workplace using their connections as resources to spread a message (Germain, Robertson, & Minnis, 2019), hence engaging in employee activism. Some of these responses suggest that without an initial

confrontation, the respondents would not have shared their views on the women's movement at their workplace, implying that there were no strategic actions taken to express their voices, as they use spontaneous and local moments (Meyerson & Scully, 1995) to express their voices and commitment to a cause, while at the same time raising consciousness towards an issue of social matter. In accordance, confronting comments of discrimination or stigma associated to a movement or social initiative has been identified as an advocacy behavior utilized by allies of social movements within workplace stings (Sabat, Martinez, & Wessel, 2015), for the authors it can be an effective method to progressively change attitudes and others individual beliefs.

> R4: I had a co-worker that would frequently criticize the women's movement activism and sometimes I tried to explain to her what these women are fighting for. I would try telling this colleague "Imagine it is your aunt, or your sister who is kidnapped or abused"… But after a while I realized that I was going to get nowhere, they would just to bully me or grow hatred towards me… they even made fun of me a few times, or they would call me "feminazi", things like that. That is where I decided not to speak on the subject again, I realized that even if I shared articles, videos or arguments, it was not going to work.

The previous response somewhat exposes the common dilemma experienced by tempered radicals in the workplace. Tempered radical is a term used to describe individuals who are passionate or committed to a social cause but struggle to express this side of their identity at work because of the dominant norms that reject their personal values (Meyerson & Scully, 1995, p. 585). Previously in the interview, this respondent expressed that the law sector in Mexico is known for being significantly sexist, and women in the industry, such as her are aware of this. The incident described by the respondent shows that she is truly concerned about the women's cause and for a while she found convenient to legitimize the movement by engaging in conversations or discussions with her colleagues, trying to raise awareness to the issues she considers relevant for the women's movement. After a while, she experienced emotional burdens to express her personal beliefs as her colleagues called her with offensive names and made hurting comments. At the end, she realized that there was a greater possibility to be ostracized than to change someone else's mind. It is important to note that although her experience was described as one of tempered radicals, her actions were eventually limited by her own fear of being ostracized or damaging her relationship with her

colleagues. For Meyerson & Scully (1995) the radicalism of tempered radicals resides on their efforts or commitment to disrupt current structures, therefore it could be argued that by silencing her voice, this respondent ceased her activism and thus her classification as tempered radical. However, Bell et. al (2003) argue that tempered radicalism among organizational members is sustained as personal beliefs continue to contrast those of the dominant ideology at the organization, rather than their continuous commitment to activism in their workplace. For the authors, being silenced by the organizational structure can be considered as a sign that the dominant regime has triumphed over the efforts of the tempered radicals (Bell et. al., 2003).

4.2.3 Negotiating the right to strike: Analyzing risks

At this point, it is important to mention that the working culture in Mexico is not as permissive to take days off from work for personal reasons as it is in most European countries. The law only guarantees 6 days for personal holidays per year and asking for extra days off is not a common thing to do, nor for a boss to accept within a few days' notice. Therefore, missing a day of work for the NWS was expected to be a source of confrontation at the workplace. As the NWS initiative gained popularity on social media, working women started to consider joining the protest in support. As ironic as it can sound, many working women had to be sure to get an okay from their employers to strike, as the risk of being punished or even fired was realistic. Analyzing risks associated to engaging in employee activism is a common behavior among organizational members in grassroot activism (Scully & Segal, 2002).

> R4: Some of my colleagues did not want to join the NWS, because they were afraid of delivering a statement to the workplace. They feared being punished for joining the strike. But at the end, we were granted the permission to join the NWS and most of us did.

This respondent explains the fear associated with taking a stance on the women's movement and how after a decision was made in management and the risks diminished, they chose to join the protest. Once again, the ambivalent character of tempered radicalism (Meyerson & Scully, 1995) in employee activism came to light. The respondent explained that she wanted to strike because of her personal beliefs but just as long as she was certain that her

relationships at the workplace would not be at risk. The behavior of analyzing risks, was also discussed by Scully & Segal (2002) as activists are often limited by organizational burdens.

Conversely, there were other participants that relied on the power of collective to diminish the risks associated to joining the NWS. Relying on the collective participation of women in their workplace to the strike served as a guarantee that their actions would not be followed by negative consequences.

> R3: When they told us, it was okay for us women to strike, we were not looking for their permission anymore, most of us had already chosen whether we were going to join the strike or not, regardless of the consequences.

> R7: At the beginning, my female colleagues decided that we would take the day off and justify our absence as a holiday, because we really thought it was an important act, and that it would help us as a department. We knew it was impossible for all of us to get fired, but if we lost the payday, we would be fine with it. We organized collectively at a departmental level, so we were sure no one would get punished.

These responses also align with the term of plural performativity and the potential of female assembly to sustain a protest (Tyler M. , 2019). By assembly Tyler M. (2019) refers to the act of standing together as group that shares similar experiences. The women in this study identified with what the NWS initiative stood for, and the female assembly that the NWS permitted served to leverage their position as organizational members to support the NWS and confront consequences. By organizing collectively to make sure all women in the workplace would be absent on the NWS, they felt secured that no penalties would follow their decision. This affirmation supports the claim previously made by Scully & Segal (2002), where employee activists find strength and security to express their ideals through the power of collectiveness.

As explained above, missing a day at work to join the NWS was at some extent a joint decision between employers and employees. In the following section of the findings, it will be argued how publicly acknowledging the NWS, defined as Organizational Involvement on this study is in itself an effect of the NWS to the workplace.

4.2 Organizational involvement

In the introduction chapter it was mentioned that an approximate of 70% working women joined the NWS and did not go to work. From the 11 people interviewed for this study, all were openly allowed to strike by their employer and just one of the respondents was sanctioned by having a day deducted from her salary. The organizations communicated their position on the NWS and the right of women to strike by either sending corporative brief, oral announcement from managers and WhatsApp messages.

Taking a decision on the NWS and sharing it to organizational members implies that the employees' desire to join the protest was acknowledged at a managerial level, allowing for an exposure of collective dissatisfaction towards the current issue of gender violence in Mexico. Organizational involvement has proven to be essential for pushing bottom-up initiatives with the aid of employee activism (Scully & Segal, 2002), besides conceding to activist demands or boycotts serves as an indication that firms are willing to be persuaded towards change matching a movement's agenda (King, 2008). On the account of the respondents' experiences in the workplace, the organizational involvement went just as far as acknowledging the NWS and giving permission to the female employees to strike, despite having an opportunity to formally take a role on raising awareness or taking other measures. Nevertheless, the mass outreach that the NWS achieved should not be underestimated. As people in leadership positions took a stance on the NWS, it is implicit that the message has reached decision makers, which could serve as a foundation for social change.

4.3.1 Reacting to the organization's response

Regardless of the organizations' disposition to openly allow their female employees to join the NWS and in some cases to publish a press release to the external community expressing their support to the NWS and the women's movement in general, most of the respondents concurred that this disposition did not reflect in an interest to promote any of the ideals behind the NWS; such as the simplest one of raising awareness to gender violence within the organization. For some of the respondents, their employers took a stance on the NWS just to evade social pressure or a damaged reputation.

R4: I wasn't so happy when they let us strike, because I really wanted them to reflect of the NWS, but I feel they did so just to evade social pressure so we wouldn't deem them as sexists or *machistas*…

This respondent explains that she felt disappointed when her employer supported the right of female employees to strike but engaged in no efforts to promote the ideals of the NWS. According to the respondent, taking a stance on the NWS was a way to evade being called sexists.

R6: The organization even sent a message to the external community expressing their support to the NWS… and it was not surprising for me. But for example, the firm does not really have a policy for gender equality or anything to justify they support the women's cause… I think they chose to participate just because they could not risk their image by saying no.

R9: I think they chose to support the NWS because they do not want to lag behind as an inclusive and socially responsible firm, they care about showing that they respect women's rights. I think that because it is an organization that really cares about its reputation, they do every possible thing for the employees' wellbeing.

The two previous quotes add the role of firm reputation in supporting the NWS. The NWS reached such attention nationwide, that firms were socially pressured to take a stance on the movement. Claiming that the risk of losing reputation by not conceding to activist demands supports King (2008) findings of firm's reputation as an important factor for organizations' interactions with social initiatives, such as boycotts or strikes. Moreover, the quote from R9 expressed that in congruence with the organizational values of the firm where employee well-being is one of the most important values, their support to the strike was expected. This supports the claim that corporate responses to social movement activism are often expressed in congruence with the corporate values (Schulz, 2017), and the public response is positive when there is consistency between the two.

4.2.2 Influencing social initiatives

On one instance the impact of the NWS surpassed the boundaries of the workplace, such is the case of the following comment. Although this did not affect the experiences in the workplace of the respondent, as it took place in a consumer store of the company the

respondent works for, it is a thoughtful initiative that proves the message of the NWS was transmitted and inspired an initiative committed to the eradication of gender violence.

> R7: After the NWS, we took a decision to join a social initiative of "safe spaces" across the city. By saying that our stores are a "safe space" it means that if you are walking by and you do not feel safe, you can enter the store and we will help you. If you need to make a call, or if you feel like you are being stalked or chased by someone, you can come in and get help. We put stickers at the front door of the four stores that we own in the city center.

From this testimony, it is possible to identify two aspects concerning the impact of social movements to organizations. First, Georgallis (2017) argued that social movement activism can help promote social initiatives by influencing people's individual beliefs. As the NWS raised awareness towards gender violence in the country and the day-to-day insecurity women experience, this company chose to respond to a social need by becoming a responsible agent of society offering temporary refuge for women who feel their safety is at risk. Second, Schulz (2017) claimed that organizations are conscious about their target audiences as they engage in social initiatives. By being a clothing store for women, they engaged in an initiative that favors their target customer, it is not expected to raise feelings of approval among the clientele, as suggested by Schulz (2017).

4.2.3 Mass protests as a turning point for the women's movement

Over the last recent years, the women's movement in Mexico has received an increasing visibility due to the frequent marches taking place all over the country. One respondent explained how one particular case of feminicide that affected her working community and was followed by collective protests and marches of solidarity, has been a turning point for the involvement of the organization she works for to the women's movement. Although it is an isolated case within the study, it shows the impact of the women's movement activism in organizations.

> R3: For me, one of the most important women marches has been the one of Mara. I noticed a lot of solidarity towards her… That march was a turning point for the University, since then the school has supported all the feminist marches. And it is hard to forget her case at the University, every Day of the Dead they dedicate an altar to her, every march 8th there is a speech, or a discussion panel dedicated to her…

The experience of this respondent shows how mass protests are effective in promoting solidarity towards a movement. The respondent explains that since the feminicide of Mara, the University she works for has become an ally to the women's movement against gender violence. In line with Aranda & Simons (2018) research, social movement activism can bring visibility to issues and gain support not only from the general public but from policy makers. In this case, the protests were endorsed by the organization, which has led to a continuous support for the women's movement against gender violence.

However, it is important to mention than publicly condemning gender violence and supporting the women's movement should be distinguish from internally committing to the eradication of gender violence or inequality in the organization.

4.3 Identified obstacles for the effectiveness of the NWS

As I was collecting the interviews, the answer to the research question of how the NWS impacted women's experiences in the workplace started to incline towards little or no impact. Most respondents, regardless of their personal support and conviction to the NWS, missed a concrete impact on their experiences in the workplace as an effect of the NWS. The following quotes are categorized according to the reasons or obstacles the respondents recognized to perceive a change in their workplace experiences as an effect of the NWS. Social movement activism is often led by a desire to disrupt the current power structures, and resistance to change has been acknowledged as a common and at some extent expected outcome to the implementation of gender initiatives and the women's movement activism (Ernst Kossek & Zonia, 1993; Lombardo & Mergaert, 2013; Kivijärvi & Sintonen, 2021), and the NWS was not an exception.

4.3.1 Lack of commitment from management

As the date of the NWS approached, organizations took a stance on the NWS by sharing public message on social media outlets announcing the support to the women's movement and reproval of gender violence, besides providing concessions to let their female employees strike ensuring no negative consequences would follow their choice. Nonetheless, on the respondents account, these public stances were not followed by consecutive actions to directly address the subject on the workplace and take a further step in raising awareness. According to the participants, the ideals behind the NWS were ignored and not transmitted

to the workplace by their organization. Another issue identified by the respondents was that people in leadership positions retracted themselves from trying to influence or inform others on the NWS.

> R1: I feel like *that* was missing, the message and the intention of the NWS were not really transmitted to the workplace… they just said it was okay to take the day off to join the NWS, but they did not take it as an opportunity to explain what it was about or what were the objectives of the protest.

> R2: The enterprise never said they were okay with the NWS. They ignored it completely. We did not get paid that day, and the next day everything was back to normal. I felt bad afterwards, because the NWS had a real motive and it did not matter, there were no discussions, nor more information on the subject.

> R4: One day, at the end of the workday the managers just came out from the offices and they said something like: "We know what is being organized, what is circulating on social media… we have discussed it and we decided to give you the freedom to choose to come or not, you will get paid but fix your pending tasks for the day, because the world continues even if you are not here". It was very awkward, like they did not want to say it was for the NWS, as if it was something unmentionable… like Voldemort. They never made a reflection to why the NWS was important or anything.

> R6: I was worried that the message (of the NWS) would not get transmitted, some people just took it as a holiday… and gender violence was pushed into the background.

The respondents explained that even though their organizations took a supportive stance on the NWS and their right to strike, no efforts were taken to transmit the ideals of the NWS or promote the eradication of gender violence to the workplace, missing an opportunity to raise awareness or start a discussion among colleagues upon an issue of national matter. Some scholars have described this lack of engagement to social initiatives as a lip-service commitment (Hoobler, 2005; Tyler A. C., 2016), that denotes that words are not turned into actions. This supports the claim of López-Fernández & Atristain (2017) that incongruence between policies and practices in the realm of gender equality is a common issue in Mexican organizations. Although the motives behind this lack of managerial commitment are beyond the scope of this thesis, resistance from people in top level positions could find its sources in gender bias and prejudices (Vinkenburg, 2017), gender blindness approach to diversity

management (Benschop & Verloo, 2006; Tyler A. C., 2016) and systemic reluctance to disrupt the status quo (Hoobler, 2005).

4.3.2 Stigmatization of the women's movement

When respondents were asked about the impact of the women's movement activism, they argued that on the recent years the movement had gained visibility and support from society. However, as the respondents expressed these outcomes as positive, it became recurrent to immediately address the negative consequences to the attention recently gained by the movement. This counterproductive effect was recognized as stigmatization and delegitimization of the women's movement, which was identified among their colleagues and other acquaintances of the respondents.

> R2: The negative impact (of the women's marches) is that many people complain about the way feminists are protesting, because they sign walls or because they cause traffic. But I think if they weren't protesting this way, we would not be in the position we are now.

> R4: On the other hand, I think the marches have only caused men becoming even angrier, not only do they perceive us as inferior… but now there is a growing hatred towards the awakening of the women's movement.

> R5: People complain about women marches because they paint monuments or walls… but they are just walls, not a life. I feel that most of the people do not agree with feminists.

Resistance towards social initiatives is a well-known effect to women's movement activism and gender initiatives in the workplace. The NWS turned the stigmatization towards the women's movement and feminism visible as consequence. Kivijärvi & Sintonen (2021) argued that initiatives carrying a feminist connotation are often met with resistance, as some people may choose to detach themselves from the stigmatization assigned to the feminist movement. The conversations described by the respondents imply that for some individuals the NWS carried the stigma associated to the women's movement. As the NWS challenged people's anti-feminist personal beliefs, they reacted by showing resistance and non-compliance to the initiative (Lombardo & Mergaert, 2013), limiting its impact.

4.3.3 Trivializing the NWS

Several respondents noticed that the NWS was not taken as a serious protest by their fellow colleagues, as they heard on multiple occasions comments from co-workers trivializing the NWS initiative. By saying that the NWS was just an excuse not to go to work, or not recognizing the issues the NWS stood for, the participants perceived that the ideals behind the NWS were not taken seriously.

> R4: I think that one of the outcomes of the NWS, was that our colleagues thought we were lazy and that we were taking any little chance to miss a working day. It was very disappointing.

> F6: For example, I chose to disappear completely for that day, yet I got some messages from my colleagues asking me things about work… it is like they did not take the NWS seriously.

> R7: For example, one of the administrators said that we just wanted to join the NWS because we were lazy or did not want to work…

> R10: Before the strike, you would hear some people saying that we wanted an extra holiday, or we just wanted to watch movies and party together on the NWS… that it was just an excuse.

The respondents interpreted these comments as a push back to the NWS. Trivializing the need for change has been identified as a form of resistance towards gender mainstreaming initiatives (Lombardo & Mergaert, 2013). According to the authors, by trivializing an initiative, organizational members challenge the credibility of the problem, hindering a possibility for change. Insisting that going into strike was a joke could be interpreted that for some individuals the ideals behind the NWS, such as raising awareness towards gender violence are unnecessary, either because they believe the problem is not important or because they do not recognize that it is an existing social issue. This supports the claim by (Benschop & Verloo, 2006) that suggests that a reason for resistance to social initiatives is lack of recognition of the seriousness of some social issues, and as they do not find the problem legitimate, there is no need for finding a solution.

4.3.4 COVID-19 and home office

Another limitation that was encountered to perceive the impact of the NWS was the Covid-19 pandemic. Although the NWS took place before the pandemic arrived in Mexico, it was

just around the corner. On the one hand, the respondents felt that the pandemic took some of the attention the NWS had gained and on the other one hand, switching to home office came along the lost interpersonal interactions and other dynamics with their colleagues where they could have expected some changes or behavioral shift through casual conversations, becoming difficult to detect any alterations in behavior or organizational culture.

> R8: I feel that the conversation continued (on the women's movement and gender violence), but the pandemic brought it down…

> R10: From what I have heard, very few women went to work that day. So I do think that the NWS impacted the organization and our absence was very visible… however, something that took the attention away was the pandemic, around 2 days after the NWS took place, the first case of Covid-19 in Mexico was announced, and this person happened to work at our organization, so that attracted a lot of attention and it quickly became the topic of conversation.

One of the achievements perceived of the NWS was raising awareness towards gender violence and the women's movement. According to the respondents, the NWS was the topic of conversation for days and people expressed their opinions on the protest. However, another unprecedented event took place during that time, the Covid-19 pandemic. The respondents believe that the pandemic took the attention away from the NWS, people were more interested in speaking about Covid-19 and management had to change their priorities without further notice. Although, this is an assumption from the respondents, it goes in accordance with Benschop & Verloo (2006) argument of how social initiatives, such as gender mainstreaming may be hindered by other priorities in the working agenda.

4.4 Sowing seeds in the workplace

Sowing seeds is the final section of the findings as it provides an overview of how the NWS impacted organizational members' experiences in the workplace. At this point, I have argued how the NWS inspired a wave of employee activism in the workplace, and how corporations were pushed to stake a stance on the NWS due to the social pressure and recognized interest among employees to strike. Combined with these steps towards change, multiple obstacles were identified that limited the impact of what a protest of this reach could have had within organizations. Next to the previously described immediate effects the NWS had on

organizational life; on this section I will describe how the NWS has contributed to a collective consciousness raising among individuals that could develop in long lasting effects in the quest for gender equality.

Two respondents described in their own words the impact of the NWS to their workplace as a "sowing seeds" effect, an expression that encompassed how most respondents perceived the aforementioned impact. The sowing seeds effect was identified in a collective consciousness raising and assimilation of ideals behind what the NWS represented, recognizing the potential of social movements to influence individual beliefs at different levels of an organization and create social foundations for change (Georgallis, 2017; Vergara-Camus, 2016; Germain, Robertson, & Minnis, 2019). Despite the impact on consciousness raising, the NWS was not sufficient to promote social initiatives in the workplace neither to provoke a clear cultural shift in favor of gender equality or the eradication of gender violence affecting organizational members' experiences in the workplace. Coming back to the sowing seeds expression, the seed has been planted but the fruits are yet to grow and be harvested.

4.4.1 Collective consciousness raising

The NWS is a protest initiated and intrinsically associated to the women's movement in Mexico, since the topic of this research is to analyze the impact of social movements, participants were requested to describe the perceived impact of the women's movement activism not only to their workplace, but to the Mexican society. Consciousness raising refers to the process of becoming aware of how systemic grievances affect oneself personally and in relation to others (Snow, 2013). Social movements can engage on diverse forms of activism to raise consciousness among members of society (Germain, Robertson, & Minnis, 2019), from the participants experiences, the following were identified: collective identification of agenda, assimilation of ideals and growing interest on the movement, as respondents recalled engaging in discussions with colleagues.

> R11: I think that within my limited experiences, I have seen some reflection from others… at least that, a reflection… not so much as a change that is visible or tangible, but a greater reflection of the subject.

This respondent explains that the women's movement activism has brought awareness to the ideals behind the women's movement. She explains that she has perceived consciousness

raising among her close social circle, as people around her are reflecting on issues discussed by the women's movement, however a clear change in culture or practice has not yet been perceived. The women's movement has previously been identified as an important source to raise awareness over the collective grievances experienced by women affecting their lives (Snow, 2013; Tyler M. , 2019; Germain, Robertson, & Minnis, 2019).

Although none of the respondents commented on their intentions to actively promote change as a result of the influence of the NWS in their consciousness raising, I argue that as consciousness raising occurs among organizational members, a new opportunity for change arises. Culture has been deemed as a crucial factor for driving or inhibiting institutional change in favor of gender equality (López-Fernández & Atristain, 2017), and as social movements influence individual beliefs and individuals adopt values such as gender equality, a path towards gender equality could be foreseen. In addition, consciousness may have also taken place at a managerial level among individuals who actually have the power to install change, however a managerial perspective on the impact of the NWS was not covered in this study.

Identification of agenda and increased visibility

Over the recent years, the women's movement in Mexico has been significantly active by organizing mass protests to demand equal rights (Vera & López, 2020; Benítez Quintero & Vélez Bautista, 2018), identified by multiple respondents. Participants found that the women's movement activism in Mexico has received increasing attention on the recent years through media exposure and presence on social media. This has brought visibility to movement and the agenda it stands for into the mainstream, exposing collective grievances that affect most women across the country such as gender violence and sexism.

> R8: What they are achieving is to bring visibility to the problem, even if the media is only showing one side of the women marches, they are having an impact. We are finally looking at this issue (gender violence) … because it has been there for a long time, but no one really cared until now.
>
> R10: I think the way they manifest is already a cry for help… of trying to be heard and I do think there has been a great change, or at least noise in society. The women marches are

giving visibility to issues like sexual harassment, gender violence, inequality, and injustice across the country, which is very important.

By identifying the agenda behind a social movement, collective consciousness raising be perceived among organizational members (Germain, Robertson, & Minnis, 2019), suggesting that the women's movement is influencing people's individual beliefs, as argued by Georgallis (2019). The respondents explained that some issues affecting women were ignored and are now coming to light because of the women's movement activism, which supports the claim by Zald & Berger (1978), who suggest mass protest allow members of society to identify collective grievances.

Assimilating movement ideals

Another way in which consciousness raising caused by social movements can be identified is through solidarity towards a movement and assimilation of ideals (Germain, Robertson, & Minnis, 2019). Being able to mobilize individuals and recruit allies is a sign of success of social movements (Sabat, Martinez, & Wessel, 2015), which was achieved by the NWS. Some respondents pointed out that they are recognizing more people within their personal network becoming supportive of the women's movement and even joining public marches for the first time. Because of the stigma feminism has received in the country, many of the respondents found this outcome as something surprising and inspiring.

> R4: I found it incredible to see so many of my ex-schoolmates and high and medium class older ladies at the women's mega-march (a march the day prior to the NWS). I was extremely impacted and happy to see women that were raised on a *machista* society and that even legitimized it… are now finally realizing that it is wrong and even coming to marches… defying old ways…

> R8: The impact I perceived is that most of my colleagues joined the march the day prior to the NWS. I really think last year was very powerful, so many women within my context, friends and family joined it and I had never seen that.

> R10: I think that the year prior to the NWS, the movement gained a lot of strength… I had not joined a women's march until 2020, and it was very impressing.

Collective consciousness raising was perceived by the assimilation of ideals of the women's movement (Germain, Robertson, & Minnis, 2019). As of these quotes, both respondents

explained that this behavior reflects the influence of social movements, people that were previously perceived as sexist or uninterested are now openly engaging with the women's movement, supporting the previous argument of the impact of social movements on individuals' beliefs (Georgallis, 2017).

> R3: I would say the NWS had a positive impact overall, now we can at least speak about these subjects. For example, now it is more common for bosses to ask us if it is okay to say "Hi" with a kiss or by stretching hands, or if they can call us by a nickname… Now these kinds of situations are being spoken of with more frequency. The fact that we are speaking about this, means that these issues have gained some visibility.

Brown & Battle (2020) theorized how the Me Too movement has normalized discussions over sexual harassment in the workplace. On the same line of reasoning, this respondent finds that the women's movement has normalized some discussions, such as correct conduct in the workplace to avoid any instances of harassment or misinterpretation of physical contact between colleagues. This result goes in accordance with Scully & Segal (2002) study, who argued that as social movement activism raises awareness, organizational culture can be impacted. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that their study focused on localized efforts arranged by activist groups in the workplace targeted at their organization.

Raising spaces for dialogue in the workplace

Most of respondents concurred that the NWS raised the interest among organizational members on the topics of gender violence and the women's movement; in some instances, this authentic interest led to dialogue between coworkers where ideas were shared, allowing for a recognition of collective grievances and raising awareness.

> R5: For example, around the time of the NWS I would talk to one of my colleagues about these issues, and another male colleague approached us to ask our opinions on the subject, or ask for articles or books, because he wanted to know and understand the subject better. After a while, he told me that the way he saw things had changed a lot since then.

> R9: I think the impact rested on conversation; it was really the topic around those days… However, these conversations occurred informally and not at a managerial level. Nevertheless, the impact is there… as **sowing seeds**… engaging in conversations. I do think that has helped a lot, for people to speak on the subject and not just leave it as it is.

R10: For example, I did get a message from one of my colleagues on the NWS, that he had reflected on our absence and even thanked us for sending a "message". I think that the NWS worked out somehow, I see it as if it had **sowed a seed**… it was a drastic measure somehow, but considering the context we live in, I do see it as the correct way to give a powerful message.

Consciousness raising was also perceived by an interest to speak about the NWS and other issues surrounding the women's cause (Germain, Robertson, & Minnis, 2019). Speaking about these issues in the workplace, has led to a better understanding of the subject, empathy towards the cause and a moment of reflection among colleagues. Following the sowing seeds logic, having spaces for dialogue with colleagues is an opportunity for an idea to flourish or to be founded, however it has not reflected in a change of norms nor an immediate call for action. Moreover, according to Scully & Segal (2002), raising awareness towards a social cause is an indispensable first step towards change in organizations.

4.4.2 Firsthand impact on personal beliefs

Another effect perceived from the women's activism, including the NWS, was consciousness raising on an individual level, which differs from the previous section as respondents saw in themselves, rather than in their surroundings, a growing interest on the women's movement agenda, becoming supportive to the movement.

R2: I believe women marches are effectively turning heads towards women. I did not know what a feminicide or what being a feminist meant. I was not aware about the hatred towards women. Less did I know how to react! There was a lot of disinformation compared to now.

R9: I see people talking much more about the subject on social media, and honestly that is good, because that opens your eyes… I did some research back then about the physical violence that women suffer. It is very important to see how there is so much *machismo* in Mexico and no one seems to care.

These respondents explained how the women's movement activism has served them in identifying and getting educated on concepts used by the movement's agenda. The fact that the NWS was able to inspire so many women on one cause, suggests that gender violence and insecurity were recognized as a shared vulnerability, enhancing feelings of solidarity among women (Tyler M. , 2019). The raise of awareness to the women's movement has

reflected on an interest among these individuals to know more about the movement's agenda and structural issues of gender inequality. According to Germain, Robertson, & Minnis (2019), getting informed on subjects is a reflection on consciousness raising provoked by social movement activism. In addition, influencing people's personal beliefs through social activism leads to greater chances on achieving the expected outcomes of social movements (Soule, 2018).

Personal experiences as motivation to support the women's movement

Others acknowledged that personal experiences, rather than the social movement activism itself, were behind their initial motivations to support the women's movement, and since then they find themselves more empathetic to the cause and with a greater sense of urgency for change.

> R5: I feel that sometimes… us women have to go through something disgraceful to change our own minds. That was my case… I had to go through something traumatic to acknowledge the injustice and rage of knowing that the government does not take you into account.

> R9: I have joined two women marches, the one of the current year (2021) and the one from the year before. I went through some stuff personally that motivated me to join these marches, it was what really made me want to go.

A couple of the interviewees recalled that until they personally felt exposed to gender violence and ignored by authorities, they recognized the legitimacy behind the women's marches and their demands. These events challenged what were once their personal ideals and served as motivation to join collective acts of protest. Tyler (2019) exposed how marches and public protests serve as an embodied shared vulnerability experienced by a group, which in this case is women. Embodied ethics refers to the acknowledgement that our lives are experienced through our bodies, and public forms of activism such as women marches and protests offer a space to recognize an embodied and shared vulnerability (Tyler M. , 2019). Part of the success of the NWS in recruiting women across the country to join this protest relies on its power to embody a shared vulnerability that affects women on the day-to-day, hence the emphasis on the embodied experience.

5. Discussion

For the last chapter of this study, a conclusion from the key findings will be exposed. Then, the theoretical and practical implications developed from this study will be presented followed by a critical reflection on the limitations of this research, finalizing with recommendations for further research.

5.1 Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to analyze the impact of social movements to the workplace taking the National Women's Strike (NWS) as point of reference. To analyze this impact, the research question was constructed as follows: *How did the NWS impact women's experiences in the workplace?*, which will be answered on the following paragraphs.

Firstly, employee activism was identified as causal effect of the NWS to the workplace. In the path towards social change, recognizing a collective dissatisfaction (Tyler M. , 2019) and a desire for change (Scully & Segal, 2002) are the first steps for achieving transformation, by creating foundations for social initiatives. The NWS provided an unprecedented opportunity for organizational members to express their support to a protest initiated by the women's movement. Previous research on employee activism (Scully & Segal, 2002; Meyerson & Scully, 1995) served as reference to identify the tactics employee activists utilized to express their voices to support change, as well as the struggles associated with being a tempered radical in the workplace. Furthermore, the collective character of the NWS was found as the greatest strength of the movement as it led to two main outcomes; provided the participants an opportunity to send a message of collective dissatisfaction to the workplace, and it helped them leverage their right to strike, and ensure no negative consequences would follow their act of protest.

Secondly, organizational involvement was identified as another effect of the NWS, as this initiative was able to effectively mobilize a women's strike on a national level, pressuring organizations to acknowledge a collective discontent and take a stance on supporting the right of their female employees to strike. A couple of respondents shared that their organizations engaged in social initiatives derived from the NWS, but these were directed to the external community, thus an impact on the workplace was minimal. Despite of this involvement, the participants mentioned their organizations did not commit in further

expressing the message of the NWS, nor to ameliorate women's experiences in the workplace in any way. In accordance with previous literature, these responses were identified as lip-service commitment to social-initiatives (Hoobler, 2005; Tyler A. C., 2016), due to the lack of further action despite the communicated commitment. Furthermore, the respondents found that their organizations' motives to take a supportive stance on the NWS were merely to protect their reputation and evade social stigma, supporting previous claims by King (2008) on corporate responses to social movement activism. Despite the lack of follow-up through policy or behavior, previous literature suggests that as organizations concede to activists' protests or boycotts it shows that they are more willing or potentially open to implement change in favor of social initiatives (King, 2008). Therefore, the organizational involvement achieved by the NWS could be considered as step forward in combatting gender inequality in the workplace, however as perceived by the respondents, more commitment is expected from organizations to promote and achieve change.

Thirdly, multiple obstacles were identified by the respondents that limited the impact of the NWS to the workplace. Multiple researches have analyzed how resistance to social or diversity initiatives is experienced within organizations (Ernst Kossek & Zonia, 1993; Hoobler, 2005; Lombardo & Mergaert, 2013; Benschop & Verloo, 2006; Vinkenburg, 2017) which were helpful for understanding the limited impact of the NWS in the workplace. These obstacles manifested both at a managerial level and among organizational members, through lack of managerial commitment, stigmatization of the women's movement and trivialization of the NWS. Lack of managerial commitment has previously been recognized as an inhibitor for organizational change in favor of social initiatives (Vinkenburg, 2017; Lombardo & Mergaert, 2013; Benschop & Verloo, 2006), as people in managerial positions have the ability to influence or adopt gender initiatives. In addition, the association of the NWS to the women's movement was identified as a barrier to the NWS, as the women's movement in Mexico is often stigmatized, or deemed as illegitimate among a great part of society. Finally, the Covid-19 pandemic was considered for some respondents as the main responsible for the decline of the NWS relevance in the workplace. Nonetheless, it is important to mention that Covid-19 further increased the reported cases of domestic violence, as people were forced to isolate at home (UN Women, 2020), then rather than diminishing the need to protest gender violence, Covid-19 may have increased it.

Finally, the term sowing seeds was utilized to encompass how most of the respondents perceived the impact of the NWS to their experiences in the workplace. The NWS, next to the women's movement has effectively raised awareness and brought visibility to collective grievances affecting women in the country. The emphasis on consciousness raising among organizational members was adopted from Germain, Robertson, & Minnis (2019) research on the impact of social movement activism in organizational change and Georgallis (2017) research on the influence of social movement in individuals' beliefs. The respondents perceived instances of consciousness raising both in their social context and at an individual level. However, the insistence on the concept of sowing seeds is to express that the impact of the NWS has not yet been "harvest" as a clear cultural shift, nor through corporate policy affecting women's experiences in the workplace. Although there has not yet been a call for action from managers nor from organizational members, the findings suggest that the NWS has been successful in raising awareness towards the gender violence movement and hopefully inspired others to become supportive of the cause.

At this point, it would be arguable that the NWS reached the stage of coalescence by strategically organizing a mass protest to send a message to the population, but it did not get to the point of institutionalization that is usually accompanied by formalized settlements (Christiansen, 2009), such as including gender equality objectives within organizational policy. Notwithstanding, the NWS achieved its objective of raising awareness and recruiting women in the country to collectively protest. For some researchers, reaching formalized settlements or managerial initiatives is a sign of success of social movements (Christiansen, 2009; Georgallis, 2017; Hoobler, 2005), for others this impact can be perceived by a cultural shift or the influence on individual's beliefs in accordance to the social movement ideals (Brown & Battle, 2020; Georgallis, 2017; Opie & Roberts, 2017; Germain, Robertson, & Minnis, 2019; Tyler M. , 2019; Scully & Segal, 2002). According to the experiences recovered on this study, the NWS proved to be successful in the second way. Although a direct impact or change in policies has not yet been perceived through organizational members' experiences, for some respondents having conversations with colleagues about gender violence or getting asked about issues such as feminism or correct conduct in the workplace, were signs that people in the workplace are reacting and adopting the message of the NWS, which was raising awareness to gender violence and the value of women to society.

Finally, I argue that through employee activism, organizational involvement and collective consciousness raising, social foundations for change towards gender equality, could have been created; however more commitment from organizations is required and desired by organizational members to actually perceive change.

5.2 Theoretical Implications

By addressing the lack of empirical evidence on the impact of social movements in the workplace, this study offers three main theoretical implications.

First, this study contributes to existing theory on employee activism. The findings provide empirical evidence to support the claim that extra-institutional tactics promoted by social movements can lead to spontaneous instances of employee activism. As working women became absent for a day to join the NWS, they shared their stance on the NWS and their dissatisfaction towards gender violence to the workplace, and through spontaneous action they brought the movement's agenda to the workplace and challenged resisters to the NWS. Although other studies had demonstrated the influence of social movements on employee activism, this study provides evidence to show a direct causal effect of a mass protest in employee activism.

Second, this study contributes to existing theory on social movement and organizational change. By describing the impact of social movements as a sowing seeds effect, this study contributes to social movement theory suggesting that organizational members can also perceive the impact of social movements through a progressive consciousness raising among their colleagues and themselves, through assimilation of ideals, increased visibility, discussions in the workplace and becoming supportive of the movement.

Third, this study corroborated on the importance of managerial commitment in the implementation of social initiatives. Lack of managerial commitment was identified as an obstacle for the effectiveness of the NWS. According to the respondents, despite the wide reach the NWS achieved and the concessions provided by organizations to let their female employees to strike, without a follow-up or commitment from people in positions of leadership, the message of the NWS was not fully transmitted to the workplace and the impact of the NWS quickly faded away in their day to day working lives.

5.3 Practical Implications

Providing practical implications from this research proves to be a complicated task due to the subtleness of the effect the NWS had on the Mexican workplaces, however two important implications could be considered for further practice.

Focusing on the context of this study, which is the Mexican workplace and the Mexican women's movement, the motivation all working women who participated in this study to join the NWS is worth noting. Drawing from the findings, I consider that is important for Mexican workplaces and human resources practitioners to acknowledge the current concern women share over gender violence and other ideals behind the women's movement. During the interviews, a few respondents told me that gender violence was a fear that accompanied them on their working lives, as for some taking public transportation to get to work or walking in the streets past daylight made them feel insecure. Organizations could focus on developing more thoughtful initiatives to improve women's experiences. Starting by having spaces of dialogue where female employees can share their concerns could be a good start.

Another practical implication resides on the identification of stigmatization and trivialization of the women's movement as an impediment for successful repercussions of the NWS. Strategies such as gender mainstreaming led by diversity and inclusion professionals, or human development specialists could be considered for normalizing policies in favor of gender equality and gaining support from all organizational members.

5.4 Limitations

This study presents a number of limitations. As mentioned previously, the NWS took place on the 9th of march of 2020, just a few weeks before the Covid-19 pandemic hit Mexico and working people switched to home office. The pandemic could have affected the interpretation of results in two ways: First, the interest and awareness the NWS achieved could have been diminished due to the appearance of another unprecedented event. Second, according to the respondents' perceptions, working from home affected the way in which colleagues interact with one another, making it more difficult to appreciate an impact on their experiences in the workplace.

As explained in the methodology chapter, the sample was chosen on convenience by contacting individuals from my personal network and fellow University colleagues. These choices in sampling led me to the collection of perspectives from a privileged group of highly educated working women between the ages of 25-30 years old. Therefore, generalizing the results to the Mexican population would be unadvisable. Moreover, the similarity among the responses and shared support to the NWS could be due to the small demographic that formed the sample.

As mentioned previously, the participants to this study held no managerial positions in their role as organizational members. As employees, their perspectives, and motivations to support the NWS may differ from those of a person in a position of leadership, as it is them who had to deal with the consequences of losing all female employees for a day and possible frustrations from resisters.

5.3 Recommendations for future research

For this study, it was my intention to focus on women experiences to assess the impact of the NWS in the workplace, as it was protest initiated by women and to be joined exclusively by women. The conscious position of vulnerability among the women participants led me to insightful findings on the impact of the NWS. However, it has been discussed how group membership is an influential factor in the perception of social initiatives (Ernst Kossek & Zonia, 1993). For instance, it is more likely that women support initiatives in favor of women's right than men (Ernst Kossek & Zonia, 1993). Within the context of gender violence and the Mexican workplace, men hold a position of privilege. Examining the perceptions of men on the impact of the NWS, either as bystanders or gatekeepers could be an interesting direction for research.

Multiple researchers have noticed the impact of social movements on their effectiveness to influence personal beliefs of people holding managerial positions (Georgallis, 2017; King, 2008), as it can open possibilities for positive change within organizations. Conducting an empirical study addressed to organizational members in leadership positions could be an interesting path for future research, focusing on how social movements shaped their beliefs and what this means for organizational change.

Finally, the lack of managerial commitment to transmit the ideals of the NWS to the workplace was a recurrent concern among organizational members. Many researchers have discussed the reasons for non-compliance in social change coming from people in managerial positions (King, 2008; Hoobler, 2005; Lombardo & Mergaert, 2013; Tyler A. C., 2016; Benschop & Verloo, 2006). More empirical research could be done to explore the reasons for resistance or non-compliance from a managerial perspective.

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Additional Data:

Date:

Time:

Number of interview:	
Name of interviewer:	
Name of Participant:	
Gender of Participant:	
Age of Participant:	
Position within the organization:	
Time working for the organization:	
Brief description of the organization's contribution:	
Video-calling Platform:	

OPENING SEGMENT:

Greeting Statement: First and foremost, I would like to thank for agreeing to participate in this research for the purpose of my master dissertation at the Radboud University. Your contributions will be truly valued. The purpose of this interview is to investigate the effects of social movements in particular "*El paro nacional de mujeres*" (NWS) on the workplace, from the experiences of organizational members. If desired, a transcript of your answers will be sent to you and will be open for clarification. As a voluntary participant, your participation will remain anonymous, you can answer all the questions you feel comfortable with answering or to remain silent, your answers and the organization you work for will remain anonymous. Finally, I would like to confirm your consent to participate in this interview and to be videotaped as of the first question, for a more detailed analysis.

Topic	Question
Contextual Questions The intention of this questions is to break the ice with the respondent and get a glimpse of their position at the organization.	
Position	1. Can you tell me a bit about your position at the organization you work for?
Job satisfaction	2. Have you enjoyed your time working for this organization?
Overall perception of the NWS	3. What were your thoughts when you learned about the NWS? What impacted you the most?
Perception over the impact of women marches	4. In your opinion, how do you think the women marches are impacting the national culture? Have you participated in any of the marches?
Perceptions about gender equality in the workplace	
Overall perception of gender equality	5. How would you describe your organization in terms of gender equality? (Underrepresentation of women, masculine norms, women segregation, etc.)
Promotion of GE in the workplace	6. In what ways do you think your organization has engaged in the promotion of gender equality? (workshops, courses with gender perspective, additional protections to women, etc.)
Patriarchal values in the workplace	7. Much of existent research indicates that gender inequality in the Mexican workplace is justified by sexist cultural beliefs. How do you think that the sexism of Mexican culture interferes with your personal experiences in the workplace as a woman?
MIDDLE SEGMENT At this point in the interview, we are passing to the specific topic of the research: the impact of the NWS to the workplace.	
Reactions to the NWS in the workplace	
Participation	8. Could you tell me how your organization reacted to the NWS, and what was decided on the participation of women to the strike? (did they support the NWS, who announced it and how, where there any conditions?)
Reactions to the strike	9. How did you react to the response your organization took on the strike? (happy/surprised/neutral/etc) 10. In your opinion, did all women had the same reaction to the strike? How did it differ? 11. Could you recall an incident where someone in the workplace stood against the right of ¿ women to participate in the strike? How did that make you feel?

Perceived impact of the NWS	
Ideals transmitted to the workplace	12. In your opinion, were any ideals behind the NWS transmitted to the workplace? Which ones? (gender violence in Mexico, gender inequality, etc) 13. Since the NWS, have you noticed a greater engagement to gender equality from your organization? Why do you think this happened?
Reflections and looking ahead	14. How has the impact of the NWS manifested in your workplace? Would you say it was a positive impact? (F.e: women are speaking up, dialogue was raised, management got committed to g.e) 15. Beyond supporting the NWS, what do you think your organization can do to effectively promote gender equality in the workplace?

Closing segment:

Before concluding the interview, would you like to add anything else to the conversation or clarify any of the comments made? If you wish to review your interview, I can happily send you a transcript within the following weeks. You can also contact through my e-mail (raquel.carrilloduran@student.nl) in the case you have further questions or comments to share. Finally, if you know someone that could have an interesting opinion on the subject and would like to participate in an interview, please let me know as I will appreciate greatly.

To conclude, I would like to thank you for your time and participation on this research, I appreciate deeply.

Appendix 2: Master Thesis Planning

January	Week (1-52)
(Phase 1: Introduction)	
Read articles on the topics of interest	1-4
Write the Introduction draft	2-3
First thesis circle	4
February	
Phase 2: Theoretical Framework	
Read more Articles	5-8
Assess feedback from week 4	6-7
Determine Research Question	7
Start Theoretical Framework	5-7
Thesis Circle	8
March	
Phase 3: Methodology	
Assess Feedback on TF	8-9
Correct Introduction	8
Write Methodology	9-10
Thesis Circle	11
Start doing list of Participants	10-11
Assess Feedback from TC	11-12
Deadline for thesis proposal	12
April and May	
Phase 4: Correction Thesis Proposal	
Correction of thesis proposal	14-19
Deadline for second thesis proposal	19
End May and June	
Phase 5: Conducting Interviews	
Schedule and Interview participants	20-21
Transcribing Interviews	20-23
June	
Phase 6: Data Analysis	
First round of coding	22
Define final template	23-24
Write Results	23-24
Write Discussions Chapter	24-25

| July | |
Final Details	
Final meeting with tesis supervisor	29
Holidays	29-31
August	
Phase 6: Finish Thesis	
Deadline	32
Prepare for thesis defense	33-34

1. Perceived Impact of the women's movement and the NWS
    1.1. Societal Impact
        1.1.1. Raising awareness over the issues women face in the country
            1.1.1.1.   Visibility of grievances
            1.1.1.2.   Political visibility
            1.1.1.3.   Interest from colleagues over the women's movements
        1.1.2. Debating the women's movement
            1.1.2.1.   Stigmatizing the women's movement
            1.1.2.2.   Mocking the women's movement
        1.1.3. Activist Opportunism
        1.1.4. Solidarity over cases of feminicide
        1.1.5. Mass protests as a turning point for the women's movement
            1.1.5.1.   Developing a collective memory
    1.2. Personal Impact
        1.2.1. Raised interest to know more
        1.2.2. Politics of collectiveness
        1.2.3. Complete support to the cause
2. Gender equality in organizations
    2.1. Perceived gender parity
    2.2. Women in leadership positions
    2.3. Commitment to the promotion of GE
        2.3.1. Through workshops
        2.3.2. Specific department for diversity and inclusion
    2.4. Support throughout maternity and fatherhood
    2.5. Support and empathy from leadership
    2.6. Standardized wages (fair wages)
    2.7. Equal participation in decision making processes
    2.8. Congruency with institutional values
3. Gender inequality in organizations
    3.1. Leadership
        3.1.1. Overrepresentation of men
        3.1.2. Underestimation of women as leaders
        3.1.3. Women overrepresent administrative, support or secretarial positions
            3.1.3.1.   Men in leadership positions prefer to work with women because of
                their nurturing, empathetic personality (Benevolent sexism)
    3.2. Lack of commitment to GE
    3.3. Third Party cases of misconduct
        3.3.1. Sexual harassment in the workplace
4. Linking culture and Sexism in the workplace
    4.1. Underestimation of personal skills

4.2. Motherhood pression

4.3. Catholic ideals interfere with the feminist agenda

5. Organizational reactions to the NWS

   5.1. Support from leadership

   5.2. Controversial Opinions

   5.3. Misunderstanding of the ideals of the NWS

   5.4. Expedition of public statement for external community

6. Outcomes of the NWS

   6.1. Grassroot activism

      6.1.1. Women organized to collectively support the strike

      6.1.2. Analysis of risks

   6.2. Speaking about correct conduct between co-workers… Visibility of grievances as a cause

   6.3. Mocking the NWS

   6.4. Misunderstanding of the ideals of the NWS as an obstacle for change

   6.5. Goals were not transmitted to the workplace

   6.6. Goals that were transmitted

      6.6.1. Reflecting the value of women in all spheres of life

      6.6.2. Raising awareness over gender violence

7. How can organizations do better?

   7.1. Workshops for empowering women

   7.2. Better protocols for denouncing abuse

      7.2.1. Correct follow-up

   7.3. More commitment from the organization

   7.4. More women in leadership positions

8. Personal perceptions over the NWS

   8.1. Good and necessary

   8.2. Accessible

   8.3. Skepticism towards its effectiveness

   8.4. Personal support

9. Uncategorized Themes

   9.1. Ambivalence of conduct

   9.2. Men colleagues prefer not to participate on "women issues"

Appendix 4: Final template analysis

The impact of the NWS to experiences in the workplace

1. Employee activism
    1.1. Engaging in plural performativity
    1.2. Bringing social movement agenda to the workplace
    1.3. Negotiating the right to strike: Analyzing risks
2. Organizational involvement
    2.1. Reacting to the organization's response
    2.2. Influencing social initiatives
    2.3. Mass protests as a turning point for the women's movement
3. Identified obstacles for the effectiveness of the NWS
    3.1. Ignoring the ideals of the NWS
    3.2. Stigmatization of the women's movement
    3.3. Trivializing the NWS
    3.4. COVID-19 and home office
4. Sowing seeds
    4.1. Collective consciousness raising
        4.1.1. Visibility
        4.1.2. Assimilating movement ideals
        4.1.3. Raising spaces for dialogue in the workplace
    4.2. Individual consciousness raising
        4.2.1. Personal experiences as motivation to support the women's movement