

Interpersonal violence in the academic environment: perceptions of a university community

Violência interpessoal no ambiente acadêmico: percepções de uma comunidade universitária (resumo: p. 18)

Violencia interpersonal en el ambiente académico: percepciones de una comunidad universitaria (resumen: p. 18)

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This study aims to understand the perceptions of violence at the university in an academic community from the reports of its occurrence on a university campus. Seventeen qualitative interviews were carried out with key informants: students, lecturers, and staff members who had a manager position or representation in the collegiate. The interviews were transcribed, and their content analyzed. It was possible to identify the types of violence into five categories, according to the participants' experience and their recurrent discursive references. They are: hazing, gender or race-based violence, moral harassment, institutional violence, and other kinds of violence. The acts of violence in the university are varied and to know them offers subsidies to improve the institutional responses or create news forms of facing it.

Keywords: Types of violence. Gender-based violence. Racism. Institutional violence. Interpersonal violence.

Introduction

The university, a form of unification of medieval culture, throughout history has changed its relationship with the State and functions¹. According to the Constitution², the Brazilian University is an autonomous institution, where teaching, research and extension are inseparable, and where access is given “according to the capability of each individual”².

In the Brazilian context, 72.6% of the population cannot even complete high school, and only 17.4% complete higher education³. Thus, the university is occupied by an elite portion of the population.

New policies have been proposed to change this scenario: social and racial affirmative actions in public universities⁴ and funding programs in private universities⁵. Although these changes are ongoing, the elitist culture remains, and some say that the presence of this new part of society will bring new conflicts and violence⁶.

In fact, in times of “academic capitalism”, under pressure from the Global University Rankings, everything becomes a commodity⁷, and the “Performing Neoliberal University”⁸ reinforces meritocracy, and “excellence”⁸ translates into commodification where ideas are treated as “product”⁸. In this context, competition increases and historically discriminated groups, whose access to university has recently increased, are subject even more to discrimination and violence.

In Brazil, university violence gained visibility in 2014 from complaints made to the Legislative Assembly of the State of São Paulo that resulted in the Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry (CPI) to investigate human rights violations in São Paulo universities. Its final report blamed universities for the different forms of identified violence⁹, and Law 15,892/2015¹⁰ was enacted, which prohibits hazing rituals in state schools.

Brazilian universities are called upon to face every day interpersonal violence (IPV), especially gender-based violence (GBV), which is all pervading in the CPI report. There are examples of confrontation in the implicated universities in São Paulo¹¹⁻¹⁴.

At the University of São Paulo (USP) policies were established to combat GBV after pressure from a movement of professors/researchers, resulting in the creation of the *Não Cala* (Not be silent) Network. As an official response, the USP Women’s Office was created, directly linked to the Rector¹⁵. This context of mobilization also resulted in the creation of special commissions to deal with violence and currently USP has 33 of them¹⁵.

Finding out about the occurrences and dimensions of IPV was the objective of the “Interactions at USP Research”¹⁶. Results showed that 39% of the students responded that they had been victims of some type of violence at the university, with 26% reporting moral violence, 7% sexual and 3% physical.

Violence is defined as “the use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that results in or is likely to result in suffering, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation”¹⁷ (p. 1165). The World Health Organization (WHO) classifies IPV into two categories¹⁷: violence in the family/with intimate partners and violence in the

community, between people who may or may not know each other. By recognizing violence as a public health problem, the WHO draws attention to the consequences of violence for all those involved¹⁷.

Our study addresses community IPV, which took place at the university. This work describes and discusses the types of IPV present on a campus, according to the perception of key informants.

In Brazil, studies on IPV in the university environment are not frequent¹⁸, although the literature¹⁹⁻²¹ points to the fact that university violence is among the causes of maladjustment and academic failure, affecting mental health and student retention. A study of its types expands the understanding of the phenomenon, helping the university to establish policies to face this problem.

Method

This is a qualitative, descriptive-exploratory study. The meaning of social experiences and their interpretation, as well as social interactions and behaviors, characterize qualitative research, from the participants' point of view²².

Four key informants, identified from their role of representing, researching or attending to cases of violence were invited to participate and then, with the support of the snowball technique, other participants were recommended and invited to the interview. With the exception of one person, all participants accepted the invitation. The qualitative interview, with a semi-structured script, included new questions depending on the narratives presented by the participant²².

Universe and Participants

This study was carried out on a campus consisting of eight faculties, 919 professors, 1,642 non-teaching staff, 6,703 undergraduate students, distributed among 43 courses; and 4,442 graduate students, distributed among 62 master's and 49 doctoral programs²³.

The 17 participants had an institutional link with six faculties and the administration of the campus, with students, professors and employees considered key informants, due to their roles played in the community: managers, representatives of their peers; researchers on the topic, participants in human rights commissions, course coordinators or other positions that positioned them in situations of facing IPV. Since the university community of this campus is relatively small, we chose not to mention the unit of origin of the participants, to preserve confidentiality.

The closing of the sample used the criterion of "power of information", from the objective of the study, the specificity of the sample, use of the established theory, quality of dialogue obtained in data collection, and strategic analysis²⁴.

Procedures

The study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee, the interviews were carried out from 10/05/2019 to 13/11/2019, and recorded and transcribed in full.

Content analysis^{25,26} was used to identify thematic categories, with a deductive approach. The content was identified by the use of codes or keywords for reading, based on the objectives of the study, as well as new perspectives that emerged from the analyzed material^{27,28}.

The analysis followed three steps: data reduction, its spatial display and interpretation, based on the objectives of identifying and describing types of violence.

Results and discussion

The characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 1. There is a great diversity of age, gender, race/color, sexual orientation, and factors that can influence the perception of IPV²⁹. The people included in the study are identified as Participants from 1 to 17, they are put into chronological order of participation and their faculties are numbered.

Table 1. Sociodemographic characteristics of the participants

Participant	Category	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Sexual Orientation	Faculty
1	Student	25	Female	Asian	Bisexual	1
2	Teacher	44	Female	Caucasian	Heterosexual	2
3	Teacher	50	Female	Caucasian	Homosexual	1
4	Student	23	Female	Caucasian	Heterosexual	1
5	Teacher	39	Female	Black	Heterosexual	3
6	Employee	67	Female	Black	Heterosexual	2
7	Employee	43	Female	Mixed-race	Heterosexual	4
8	Employee	49	Female	Mixed-race	Heterosexual	2
9	Teacher	73	Male	Caucasian	Heterosexual	2
10	Teacher	65	Male	Asian	Heterosexual	5
11	Teacher	39	Male	Caucasian	Homosexual	6
12	Employee	55	Female	Caucasian	Heterosexual	7
13	Teacher	40	Female	Caucasian	Heterosexual	6
14	Student	21	Female	Caucasian	Bisexual	2
15	Student	27	Male	Black	Heterosexual	3
16	Student	22	Female	Caucasian	Bisexual	2
17	Student	28	Male	Caucasian	Homosexual	3

Source: Authors own.

The violence recurrently narrated by the participants is presented: Hazing; Violence based on gender and race; Moral harassment and institutional violence. Sexual violence has been addressed in another publication³⁰.

Hazing

Hazing rituals have their roots going back to Medieval Europe when universities were occupied only by noble people. They are entrance or initiation rituals, aimed at maintaining the hierarchy between groups. Traditionally, popular courses have more violent hazing rituals³¹.

Students approached in this study mention hazing from a hierarchy perspective. There is a belief that students who started before (veterans) have power over new entrants (freshmen):

When you enter the university, you are adopted, you receive a nickname and undergo a hazing ritual, [...] just for being in the university before, [...] he is in a position of superiority, this is crazy. There is a lot of violence, a lot of harassment, because people enter the university they have to adapt to this culture. (P15, male student)

Not participating in hazing rituals can result in exclusion from the group, and integration and a sense of belonging are very important for new students³¹:

There is no direct punishment, if the person says they won't do it, something bad will not happen to them right away, but that person will be ostracized over time. (P14, female student)

Although there is no direct punishment for those who refuse to participate in the hazing rituals, not participating means being excluded from student activities. It was reported that often during hazing there is coercion to drink alcohol, which increases people's vulnerability to suffering violence.

I feel the hazing itself is not OK. Many people were there and were not comfortable with it, but at that moment the girls say 'I want to participate', but they are embarrassed, they don't feel comfortable... in relation to the alcoholic drinks pranks [...] there was no such thing as the person choosing not to drink, you kind of had to accept. Everyone had to drink, there is psychological pressure for everyone to drink: I consider this situation abusive. Everyone's drinking and you're the only one left out? I think there's pressure and you see things like: the person who drinks is the person who is accepted, so there are ways in which the person is cornered, it's not exactly because the person wants it, but because she wants the result of it: she wants to be accepted and wants to socialize. (P1, female student)

Hazing rituals involve psychological, physical and sexual violence¹⁷. In the literature on IPV in university health related courses, hazing was classified as physical abuse (punching, slapping, pushing)³². Seeking to understand the concept of violence and its experience among health students, a study shows that physical violence was the most perceived by 56.6% of the participants (physical aggression, bodily harm, physical contact)³³:

...one of the things they were doing was slapping the face, hitting the face... with a student, a freshman. (P9, employee)

During the reception week, these things happen a lot: slapping the face, spitting beer, spitting saliva, forming a human chain, licking the armpit, licking the foot: these are things that still happen... 'chewing' too... a person eats something, chews it, then you pass it on to someone else, they chew it, and they pass it on to another: forcing someone to eat someone else's vomit, you know? (P14, female student)

In the narratives above, we can identify crimes: slapping the face is bodily harm³⁴, spitting in the face and forcing one to lick body parts can be actual injury³⁴ or illegal humiliation³⁴, being forced to eat someone else's food can constitute the crime of torture³⁵. Another situation that we identified that could be an illegal harassment³⁴ is the "toll": freshmen ask for money from people who drive by on the streets, under the command of veterans:

When the toll collecting happens, several *elders* [graduated students] are there, with their cars, then they put the freshmen inside the cars and take them [...] Sometimes the *elders* get very upset: 'there's very little money, get some more' [...] There's hot sun in the afternoon, it's obvious that the freshmen will be tired, there's no way! (P14, female student)

Other narratives mentioned are derogatory nicknames that can be classified as insulting³⁴ and other forms of illegal humiliation³⁴: participating in activities such as imitating animals; having to stay in uncomfortable/humiliating body positions, situations mentioned by professors, employees, and students.

All these situations demonstrate the hierarchy present between senior and freshman students. Since the Middle Ages, students have been subjected to rituals that involve shaving their heads, ingesting spoiled drinks or excrement, they are called "animals": animals that should be trained³¹. These are humiliating situations of subordination and psychological violence. Hazing rituals can involve numerous forms of violence, and, although prohibited by state law⁸ and university regulations³⁶, they still occur.

These illegal practices perpetuate the elitist character of universities, marking the beginning of university life with a violence that can last as long as the person is in the institution and make them reproduce these behaviors, including in their professional life. A literature review on violence in nursing education³⁷ found a study that shows that students who suffer violence sometimes have feelings that indicate the desire to practice violence as a way of fighting back.

Violence based on gender and race

Many narratives by the participants contain situations that can be characterized as psychological violence¹⁷, where social markers of gender and race are identified, and when these are present at the same time this encompasses the concept of intersectionality²⁹, i.e. discrimination and violence suffered due to gender and at the same time time depending on race/color, social class, and place of origin. Violence from the intersection of these social markers is structural and is reproduced in social relationships.

Recent research at this university¹⁴ listened to 13,377 students and identified violence based on gender, race and social origin, types of violence also present in society in general, pointing to the structural character of IPV. In this study we show examples of the reproduction of this violence in the university environment, highlighting its character of socially produced violence, although individually perceived.

The sexist and racist structure is perceived in university songs and chants that sexualize and belittle women, especially black women:

At the same time, you are maintaining, perpetuating sexist ideas, perpetuating an environment of competitiveness, of machismo [...] there's that thing like: undergrad slut. (P1, female student)

In the case of the drum schools they had a collection of a lot of sexist songs[...] racist chants, there was a song that was misogynistic, [...] it said that brown women were for sex, white women were for marriage and they would not have sex with black woman even if she had washed herself with bleach. (P15, male student)

There were songs that said this: black woman with a dirty pussy [...] in the racist sense too, for example, there was a song that spoke of course armpit hair, course hair. P17, male student)

The songs and chants reproduce a culture that subordinates women and is perpetuated by other practices in the student environment:

The boys at the academic center ranked the girls, ranking from beauty to professional attributes, it was very difficult to deal with. (P4, female student)

There is a college team that is male and that has an event where the players [...] sit and discuss, judge, who was the sluttiest girl in the room. (P16, female student)

Being ranked in terms of beauty and sexual performance without authorization is considered a type of moral violence and was identified by 3.7% of the survey respondents¹⁴. A similar understanding appears in the research “Violence against women in the university environment”³⁸, beauty rankings were considered psychological violence, with 24% of women identifying as a victim and 11% of men reporting having practiced it. The same study identified the unauthorized sharing of photos and videos as psychological violence, with 14% of women being victims, 10% of men practicing it, and 31% of them not recognizing it as violence, demonstrating that it is in fact GBV (Gender based violence).

There were a lot of photos on WhatsApp: so-and-so felt sick, and a photo of the person feeling sick [...] even things of a sexual nature would appear [...] I heard about some WhatsApp groups that were posting photos of girls at a party, dancing, taken without consent. (P1, female student)

Still within the scope of GBV, participants talk about situations in which women suffer psychological violence because they do not fit into beauty stereotypes:

They [male students] were making fun of this fat girl a lot [...] when she got up to go to the bathroom, the boys laughed at her. (P14, female student)

In a review study on violence in the Nursing course, the practice of bullying among students was identified, often motivated by issues of race/color³⁷. In a literature review on violence in health education³², 21.8% of the studies identified prejudice involving gender and race stereotypes, gender discrimination, homophobia, racism, and discrimination due to social class and regional origin.

Participants’ accounts highlight the presence of sexist and racist behaviors, such as the disqualification of women and blacks, leading students to denounce them when they occur in the classroom:

It was the teacher who made a sexist joke: women drive the economy because they buy shoes [...] I think it’s violence to feel that you don’t belong in that environment, or to feel that you’re worth less, or to feel that you’re less capable’, who’s ‘dumber’... I think this is aggression, it doesn’t have to be exactly about you, but hearing the teacher ridicule another woman I think it’s a situation of violence. (P1, female student)

‘The bank prefers internet banking and an ATM to hiring a woman, because an ATM doesn’t get pregnant’, a teacher said this in the classroom. Or saying that girls only come to college to get a rich husband or saying that girls are not capable of passing a difficult subject... (P4, female student)

There is a teacher [...] who made extremely sexist comments during class... there was a slide that was a drawing of a guy looking at the microscope, but the microscope lens was not pointed at the slide, it was pointed at the breasts of a woman who was in front of him, she was a complete stereotype of a woman, she had big tits, and there was some grotesque caption. (P16, female student)

GBV in an intersectional way with race is also present in the context of the classroom:

The professor said that [when examining] black women you do not need to close the speculum, you can remove it still open because the vagina of black women is much larger. (P14, female student)

The narratives presented show that these violent occurrences are structural and are present throughout the university environment. They are present in the interpersonal relationships between students and student-professors, regardless of the power relationship established according to the hierarchy. However, when violence involves hierarchy, victims are less able to react/report.

Moral harassment

Among the different types of psychological violence, moral harassment is a category that is legally contextualized in the work environment, and which occurs in the relationships between boss and subordinate, but it is also possible that it happens between people of the same hierarchical level or even ascending level³⁹. Moral harassment is highlighted for its importance in a hierarchical environment with evident power relations.

Moral harassment⁴⁰ consists of a series of humiliations suffered in the work environment, a form of psychological torture resulting from exposure to negative acts by one or more people. Its main characteristic is the systematic repetition of acts that humiliate, constrain, and disqualify, showing the conflict between those who hold more power and their subordinates. It is exemplified as acts of intolerance, racism or discrimination that turn into persecution, isolation, denial of communication, overload, or denial of responsibilities, generating suffering for the victim⁴⁰.

In this study, it was possible to recognize that the hierarchy present in the classroom, in the professor-student relationship, also gives rise to situations that fit the perspective of moral harassment. In the university context, there are many motivations for the violence that characterizes moral harassment. Maffisoni *et al.*³⁷ mention sexual, religious and racial prejudice, the hierarchy present in the professor-student relationship, lack of professional preparation, lack of student interest and the search for academic excellence. This last motivation can be recognized in the following narrative:

It has a lot to do with the issue of class and race as well, that people demand more from those they think are not really capable, I think the treatment is different. (P15, student)

In this situation, the student has the perception that moral harassment can be more intense when there is the question of race involved, which points to the intersectionality of this violence.

The study by Maffisoni *et al.*³⁷ shows that psychological violence is what most affects students, and includes moral harassment committed by professors against students, in which the professor expresses disbelief in the student's knowledge, there is the impediment to expressing opinions and a raised tone of voice to correct them. One of the explanations for psychological violence between professors and students is the rigid hierarchical relationships established in the academy, exercised by grades and passes, negligence of teaching or lack of patience in approaching content.

A study that investigated different configurations of violence in pedagogical relationships at the university (professors-students) based on the theory of violence/symbolic power, argues that the difference in power/hierarchy between students and professors can motivate such violence⁴¹. Psychological violence was evidenced in situations where professors exposed students to embarrassment, humiliation and psychological pressure, such as when a student asks a question and is humiliated by the teacher. There are situations in which teachers consider students to be incapable of learning, underestimating their ability and questioning the fact that they are in that environment, making demands from them beyond their ability and denying them supervision:

A teacher started yelling at the student in the hallway: 'stupid, incompetent', saying that she shouldn't be there, in front of everyone [...] There was a case of a teacher yelling at a student who was performing a procedure. (P15, male student)

A resident did something that the [doctor] assistant did not like, and she started screaming at the girl, she overreacted to the situation, to the point where the student was unable to stay on duty, she went out to cry in the parking lot and completely fell apart. (P2, teacher)

There was a situation where a teacher started calling the students stupid in the classroom, she said to the students "Give up this subject, you don't have the ability to take this subject". P4, student)

All the international principles⁴² of education and the Brazilian university² are contradicted when IPV is tolerated in the academic environment.

A teacher reported that some teachers practiced moral harassment against students for political reasons, at the time of the election, defending candidates in classrooms. This violence of moral harassment is also present in post-graduate studies:

Many professors end up passing on jobs that should be theirs for the graduate student to do, even services, which I see, services in the hospital, which is something that is not right, but ends up happening. [...] he uses his superior position as a professor with the student who's there to do things that they should not have to do, which is not the student's role. It's harassment. (P8, employee)

In the boss-subordinate relationship there are also reports of moral harassment. Barreto and Heloani⁴⁰ argue that isolated and repeated acts of discrimination, intolerance or racism result in moral harassment. In our study, some situations were identified:

I had a case of serious moral harassment, from a nurse to a technician [...] not only because of the hierarchical issue, but she abused a poor and black nursing technician. Only she was black too. So she chose that person and she did horrible things, threats, psychological harassment. (P2, teacher)

Other presented narratives point to situations of moral harassment involving race/color, sexual orientation and health condition. These can be present in veiled or explicit situations, questioning the performance of the employee based on beliefs and myths about ethnic origin:

The teacher is of Japanese origin, and so is the employee: 'Oh, because we are of oriental origin, we are better and you don't fit into this. Your work, way of functioning, does not fit in with our origins'. And that really affected the person. We managed so that she didn't have to work with this professor anymore, but until today, if you say she's going to meet her, she starts shaking, she goes to therapy [P8, employee].

Another type of moral harassment that appeared in the narratives of three participants (P8, employee, P9 and P10, Professors) deserves to be highlighted: the victim, an employee who provides services in the teaching unit hired by the foundation, without stable employment, and the aggressor a professor. Reports describe that the professor's demands in relation to the activities performed were unreasonable, and the employee was subjected to an excessive workload, and, despite all her efforts, she received many criticisms and demands for work beyond her job description. The peak of the harassment occurred when the father of this employee died, the professor, ignoring her right to leave, pestered her with calls, requesting her services. The employee became ill, was removed, needed psychological follow-up, and was relocated to another sector:

Later, talking to the employees there, I realized that with USP employees, the professor didn't have much power over them, because USP employees were already established, they already had a certain stability [...] he took out everything he couldn't do with USP employees on her. So, she ended up being a scapegoat. (P8, employee)

In relation to outsourced employees, situations were reported of bosses who have a very strict control over schedules, even interfering with how these were distributed to students. Also, outsourcing services contributes to precariousness at work, increasing the number of accidents, illnesses and mental disorders⁴⁰.

With the exception of P4's report, the accounts given in this section took place in health courses or services. Although it is not the only place where moral harassment occurs, there is a lack of a culture of humanism in technical courses and in the field of health. In a study on violence with students in the health field, Rosa *et al.*³³ understood that the process of training in health is centered on biomedical rationality and the curricula of these courses show inadequacies in content and pedagogical practices for the exercise of activities that involve the plurality of health service needs in the country, including the issue of violence.

A literature review on violence in undergraduate nursing³⁷, discusses that training in this area presupposes the relationship between human beings, essential for the development of skills and competences, which, added to gender, class and race issues, can accentuate the degree of vulnerability of students, generate competitiveness and raise the level of stress and manifestations of violence in this context.

Institutional violence

Institutional violence⁴³ is produced by an institution, through actions, when it practices violence against someone, through an employee of the institution who behaves aggressively or uses their judgment of value to respond to any complaint they receive due to their institutional role. It can also occur by omission, when you do not take proper care of a person who has been through a situation of violence.

There is the account of an employee in regard to a situation that came to their knowledge involving a professor-student relationship which illustrates this: the professor, a university employee, in the performance of their duties, commits violence against the student by reprimanding her in public. This is a gender issue as it involves motherhood as an exclusive female responsibility, which increases women's vulnerability:

She had children in daycare. But when one child was sick, she couldn't take it to day care, she took it to the classroom: 'Look, professor, it's a one-off thing because I have nowhere to leave her'... when it came to this professor, she realized that he didn't like it.... The baby started to cry... but she took the baby and left. When she came back, he said a lot to her, in front of everyone... (P12, employee)

Another report made by P2, a professor, narrates obstetric violence as possibly present: the violence suffered by pregnant patients. It is a type of institutional violence, as it is a violence present in the health system, committed by professors in a teaching environment that can be reproduced by students in the future.

In a research aimed at understanding the occurrence of violence during health training³², community, cultural and institutional IPV was found, concluding that these types of violence are part of the students' training, they are often naturalized. This trivialization makes it difficult for institutions to face up to them, and they become reproducers of violence.

Other narratives make it possible to identify situations in which the university demonstrates an unpreparedness to apply the planned disciplinary procedures:

I noticed that with some people who were called in to testify in the investigations, the testimony [of the complainant] was done together with the accused: instead of scheduling different days, they called both together, they were in the same room... so the person felt really embarrassed. (P8, employee)

I was a student representative of my course, nobody wanted to report [a professor] because she was teaching the subject, fear of retaliation. And then I said: 'I'm going to create an anonymous form, you send it to me' [...] I collected these complaints and we denounced it to the human rights commission. Another day, a student from the class was called to the head of the department of this teacher, sort of to find out what happened. This student was a classroom representative, but there is no institutional figure of a classroom representative. There is a representative of the course, which in this case was me. Then he should have called me. And the boy became desperate, a complaint that was supposed to be confidential. (P4, student)

A study on offensive situations caused by teaching staff due to gender and power relations existing in the institution⁴⁴, identified an organizational culture marked by virility. The university has an alleged scientific rational neutrality adapted to a meritocratic logic that values combativeness and the dissemination of virility as a rule of conduct, anesthetizing fear, and attributing suffering to the other.

These situations highlight institutional violence at the university. The seriousness lies in the fact that the university, as an institution, instead of facing up to violence ends up becoming the author, and in this context, it presents many difficulties in dealing with IPV.

Conclusion

The reports presented show us the existence of diverse types of violence and this requires special attention. Knowing about the violence allows for the identification of this public health problem to improve existing responses or create ways to face it. Understanding the specifics of violence in this environment allows for an adequate confrontation.

In this study, we recognize as a limitation the fact that it reflects the reality of only one of this university campus, but it is possible to perceive that the violence of this campus interacts with other experiences, which is a more common problem than one thinks, as shown by the studies cited herein. However, in order to fully address this problem, university policies must be based on scientific evidence.

With the need to create effective policies to face IPV, and by recognizing the complexity of the intersection of gender, race and social class markers, an immense challenge is presented in the context of the “Performing Neoliberal University”⁸, worldwide.

New parts of the population are joining the university environment and it continues to be the space to produce knowledge. Breaking away from elitist and violent practices that take place there is an urgent task for a university that needs to reaffirm its leading role and its ability to contribute to solving social problems, including violence.

Authors' contribution

All authors actively participated in all stages of preparing the manuscript.

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Conflict of interest

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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Este estudo visa descrever as percepções sobre violência na universidade em uma comunidade acadêmica com base em relatos sobre violências ocorridas em um *campus* universitário. Entrevistas qualitativas foram realizadas com 17 informantes-chave, assim considerados pelos papéis desempenhados na comunidade: estudantes, professores e funcionários, em cargos de gestão e/ou de representação. As entrevistas foram transcritas e analisadas em seu conteúdo, e referências discursivas recorrentes permitiram identificar os tipos de violência em cinco categorias de acordo com a experiência dos participantes: trote; violência em função de gênero ou raça; assédio moral; violência institucional; e outros tipos de violência. As violências na universidade são diversas; conhecê-las permite oferecer subsídios para melhorar as respostas institucionais já existentes ou criar formas de enfrentamento.

Palavras-chave: Tipos de violência. Violência de gênero. Racismo. Violência institucional. Violência interpessoal.

El objetivo de este estudio es describir las percepciones sobre violencia en la universidad en una comunidad académica a partir de relatos sobre violencias ocurridas en un *campus* universitario. Se realizaron entrevistas cualitativas con diecisiete informantes-clave, considerados de tal forma por los papeles desempeñados en la comunidad: estudiantes, profesores y empleados, en cargos de gestión y/o de representación. Las entrevistas se transcribieron y analizaron en su contenido y referencias discursivas recurrentes permitieron identificar los tipos de violencia en cinco categorías, de acuerdo con la experiencia de los participantes: novatadas, violencia en función de género o raza, acoso moral, violencia institucional y otros tipos de violencia. Las violencias en la universidad son diversas, conocerlas permite ofrecer subsidios para mejorar las respuestas institucionales ya existentes o crear formas de enfrentamiento.

Palabras clave: Tipos de violencia. Violencia de género. Racismo. Violencia institucional. Violencia interpersonal.