Reinventing Gender in Engineering: The (In)visibility Paradox and the Experience of Female Students at the University of São Paulo in São Carlos, Brazil

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complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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ABSTRACT

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Magdalena Martinez

Science and technology scholars, university administrators, and students have all asked: Why are there so few women in engineering? To answer the question, they have focused on the experience of women in the field, their motivations, and the challenges they face in pursuing the profession. Recently, scholars have shifted the focus from the "problem of women" toward "gender in engineering," a term coined by Wendy Faulkner (2011). Such framing recognizes that gender norms in engineering (the "man engineer") have influenced the experience of women. Through the concept of the (in)visibility paradox, Faulkner argues that while women are highly visible as women, they are also invisible as engineers. During four months of ethnographic research, I conducted in-depth interviews and participant observation with female engineering students at the University of São Paulo in São Carlos, Brazil. Based on the data collected, I ask: What are the processes through which the visibility and invisibility of female engineering students are performed and established? I attempt to show, on the one hand, the ritualization of gender roles on campus, and, on the other hand, female students' negotiations of gender roles. To achieve their goals, female students play with their visibility spectrum. In that way, they create a new engineer identity, one that is transitional between man and woman, transcending the "man engineer" identity. Any attempt to control their visibility creates a response from fellow colleagues or professors. In the face of this challenge, women make compromises and change their strategies of adaptation.

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GLOSSARY

Portuguese Terms

Portuguese Terms	English Translation
Alojamento	On-campus student accommodation
Assédio	Harassment
Batucada	Drumming protest
Bixete/Bixo/bixos	First-year female student/First-year student/First-year students
Caloura/Calouro/Calouros	First-year female student/First-year student/First-year students
Chapa	Student government party
Coletivo	Collective
Coletivo de Mulheres do CAASO e da UFSCar	Women's Collective
Coletivo Elza Soares	Black Students Collective
Corso	Tusca opening party
Creche	Daycare
Cultura do estupro	Rape Culture
Cursinho	Preparatory course
Diversidade	Diversity
Equidade	Equity
Empoderamento/ Empoderar	Empowerment/Empower
Ensino técnico	Technical degree
Espaço misto	Mixed social space
Espaços seguros	Safe spaces
Esquenta	Pre-gaming parties
Esquenta das Minas	Pre-gaming of the Girls
Feminicidio	Feminicide
Fora Temer!	Temer Out!
Formação	Training

Garota de programa	Sex worker
Gincana	Competition
Heteronormativo	Falling within traditional gender roles
Igualdade	equality
Integração	Integration
Juntas/Juntos	Women's chapter of *Juntos*/Youth social movement
Liberdade/Liberdade de expressão	Freedom/Freedom of expression
Machismo	Machismo can be defined as an ideology that defends and justifies the superiority and the dominance of men over women
Masculinizada	Masculinized
Miss Bixete	Miss Freshman
Novato	First-year student
Nuances	LGBT Students Collective
Objetificação	Objectification
Opressão/Opressivo	Oppression/Oppressive
Palquinho	Open air space outside the student centre used for events, selling tickets, student gathering, hanging out.
Pardo	Term used to refer to Brazilians of mixed ethnic ancestries.
Passar desapercibida	Go unnoticed
Peitão	Show breasts
Problematizar	Problematize, question, or denounce
Putaria	A word referring to sexual acts, orgies, and prostitution
Reais	Brazilian currency
Representatividade	Diversity/Representation
República	Shared House
Respeito	Respect
Semana de Recepção	Orientation week
Semana do MACACO	MACACO week

Show	Night parties with musical attractions
Silenciar	Silencing
Tenda	Daytime parties during Tusca
Trote	Hazing activity
Vestibular/Vestibular da fuvest	Entrance examination/Fuvest entrance examination
Veterana/Veterano/ Veteranos	Senior female student/Senior student/Senior students
Violência	Violence
Visibilidade	Visibility

Abbreviations

Abbreviations	Portuguese	English
CAASO	Centro Acadêmico Armando Salles Oliveira	Student Centre Armando Salles Oliveira
EESC	Escola de Engenharia de São Carlos	School of Engineering of São Carlos
FUVEST	Fundação Universitária para o Vestibular	University Foundation for Entrance Examination
GAP	Grupo de Apoio à Putaria	Group in Support of *Putaria*
HE		Higher Education
Tusca	Taça Universitária de São Carlos	University Cup of São Carlos
UFSCar	Universidade Federal de São Carlos	Federal University of São Carlos
USP-SC	Universidade de São Paulo em São Carlos	University of São Paulo in São Carlos
USP	Universidade de São Paulo	University of São Paulo
WIE		Women in Engineering
PSOL	Partido Socialismo e Liberdade	Socialism and Liberty Party
IFISC	Instituto de Física de São Carlos	Physics Institute of São Carlos
MACACO	Movimento Artístico e Cultural do CAASO	CAASO Artistic and Cultural Movement

Introduction: A Feminist Ethnography of Female Engineering Students

Science and technology scholars, university administrators, and students have asked: Why are there so few women in engineering? Why have those numbers not increased significantly in recent decades? Why are women not choosing to study engineering and, most strikingly, why are women quitting the field? To answer such questions, scholars have focused on the experience of women in the field of engineering, their motivations, and the challenges they face to pursue the profession. They have overwhelmingly focused on the "problem of women," by considering ways of changing women's interests to make them fit for the field. Recently, scholars have shifted the question toward "gender in engineering," a term coined by science and technology scholar Wendy Faulkner (2011). According to Faulkner (2011, 278), "a gender framing […] encourages us to investigate how particular genders are *performed*, or actively constituted, through everyday interactions and social institutions within engineering communities of practice." Gender norms in engineering, the identity of "man engineer," have influenced the experience of women. Therefore, women are not recognized as engineers by virtue of being women. Central to Faulkner's study of women in engineering is the concept of the (in)visibility paradox. She states that while women are highly visible as women, they are invisible as engineers. Moreover, she argues that their visibility as women has concrete consequences, such as sexual harassment in the workplace.

When looking at women's experience in engineering, it becomes central to observe their university experience. As faculties attempt to increase numbers of female students, they lack knowledge on the challenges these women face. Understanding the female experience can lead to real change and proper support for students. In my thesis, I wish to analyze the visibility and invisibility of women in the university context as an active process. Therefore, I ask: What are the processes through which the visibility and invisibility of female engineering students are performed and established? In responding to this question, I attempt to show, on the one hand, the ritualization of gender roles on campus, and, on the other hand, the negotiation through which the female student can challenge such gender roles. During four months of ethnographic research, I conducted in-depth interviews and participant observation with female engineering students at the University of São Paulo in São Carlos (USP-SC) in Brazil, a public elite university. At USP-

SC, half the student population attends the School of Engineering of São Carlos (EESC), while the other half is divided among the chemistry, physics, computer science, and architecture faculties. Beyond being a male-dominated campus, USP-SC was at the centre of a media scandal in 2013, targeting an initiation activity in which women were encouraged to model and strip. Moreover, the campus has a strong women's collective formed at USP-SC that, since 2009, has been actively denouncing *machismo* on campus. The USP-SC context, a male-dominated campus with a strong activist presence, renders this site unique for the study of the experience of women in engineering.

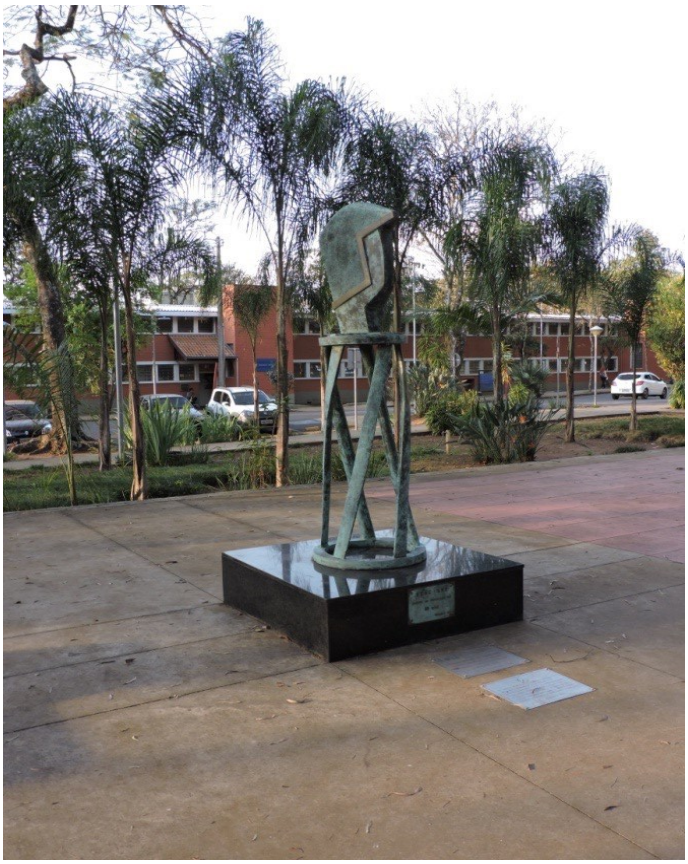

Image 1. EESC Statue.

Women in Engineering and the University Experience

In Europe and North America, men have dominated science and technology fields, although a steady and considerable increase in the participation of women has been observed in the recent years. However, there is persistent underrepresentation of women in engineering

university programs and the related job market. For instance, in the United States, only 20% of engineering graduates and 11% of engineers are women, and more female students than male students change their major during their studies or do not pursue a career in engineering upon graduation (Fouad et al. 2016; Hunt 2016). According to economist Jennifer Hunt (2016), dissatisfaction with promotion opportunities is the central motivation for women to leave the field, while family-related reasons, such as raising children, are secondary. Hunt (2016) argues that the problem of underrepresentation needs to be understood as specific to the male-dominated engineering profession, including the lack of mentorship and networks for women and discrimination by managers and coworkers.

The failure to attract more women to the field of engineering is also due to a lack of awareness of the challenges women face to conform to the identity of the male engineer (Faulkner 2011; Tonso 2006; Mcllwee and Robinson 1992). In fact, as important as job qualifications, being able to navigate in the workplace culture is essential for engineers to attain higher positions and a satisfying career. According to sociologists Judith S. Mcllwee and Gregg J. Robinson (1992, 138): "It is women's membership not their competence that is at question. They do not conform, or more accurately, do not appear to conform to the culture of the workplace." According to Faulkner (2011), the workplace culture, the everyday interactions, conversations, and socialization between engineers, often reveal dynamics that generally include men and exclude women. Faulkner (2011, 189) argues that "such dynamics make it easier for (most) men than (most) women engineers to build and maintain working relationships and to progress their career." For instance, she observed the use of fraternal greetings, the dominance of stereotypically male topics of conversation such as football, and the existence of social networks only accessible to men. Understanding the culture of the field, the challenges to membership, and the personal experience of women in engineering are important components in the study of female engineering students' development of a sense of belonging to the field.

Recent research looks at women's earlier experiences in engineering, focusing on the motivations to undertake a university program in this field and to complete it. Such studies have been conducted in different countries, such as Japan, Portugal, Malaysia, and the United States, showing a similar pattern across these regions (Hinterlong et al. 2014; Hosaka 2014; Saavedra et al. 2014; Youn and Choi 2014; Win and Win 2013). A study conducted at a private university in Malaysia showed a lack of female representation in the faculty of engineering, where only 35%

of professors and 8% of students were female (Win and Win 2013). While academics from fields such as psychology, anthropology, and women's studies are concerned with these disparities, engineering faculties have a particular interest in understanding the situation in order to attract more female students and to provide them with appropriate support.

In recent years, universities worldwide have come under scrutiny for the treatment of women on campus. Often, institutions are accused of not taking direct action against cases of sexual assault, while hiding such instances from official reports. In 2015, the documentary "The Hunting Ground" explored the mishandling of rape cases by university administrations across the United States. Moreover, the media has questioned gender dynamics on campus, pointing to specific events or situations. In 2014, the Canadian media uncovered a Facebook group called "The Gentleman's Club," created by students of the Dalhousie University's Faculty of Dentistry, in which students posted misogynistic content (Backhouse et al. 2015). Finally, students have mobilized to denounce unequal gender dynamics on campus. In September 2016, law students at the Université de Montréal published an article in their student journal to denounce the ambiance at initiation activities, during which, for instance, women were pressured to undress (Teisceira-Lessard 2016). In several instances, seeing the persistence of violence and abuse of women on campus and the failure of university administrations to take action, students have argued that the situation reflects what has come to be termed "rape culture." In 2016, at Carleton University, sexual assault survivors demanded that the administration acknowledge "rape culture" in the new policy on sexual violence (Crawford and Sandstrom 2016; see the section: *Research Questions and Theoretical Framework* for a definition of rape culture).

In Brazil, feminist activists denounce the sexualization and *objetificação* (objectification) of women's bodies and *assédio* (harassment) on campus. Across the eleven University of São Paulo (USP) campuses, at least eight feminist collectives are active in representing female students in faculties such as law, literature, medicine, social sciences, engineering, and communications. In 2013, female students from the USP Faculty of Medicine (FMUSP) created the collective *Coletivo Feminista Geni* (Geni Feminist Collective) in response to the inaction of the university in handling sexual abuse claims. Moreover, university feminist collectives have a growing social media presence on Facebook. For instance, a Facebook page with more than 15,000 likes named *Ele é da USP* (He is From USP) publishes anonymous stories about gendered abuse of female students at USP, such as sexual or verbal assault from students or professors.

In 2013, the Brazilian media reported demonstrations against an event taking place during orientation week at the University of São Paulo in São Carlos (USP-SC), one of the most prestigious universities in the country. The event, *Miss Bixete* (Miss Freshman), was a beauty contest in which newly admitted female students participated in various challenges, including modelling and stripping, surrounded by an all-male senior student audience. Moreover, *garotas de programa* (sex workers) were hired to act as fellow students and to encourage female students to take off their clothes. The media scandal revolved around the physical and verbal assault of activists from the student feminist collective *Coletivo de Mulheres do CAASO e da Federal* by male students. In 2009, a group of female students from USP-SC and the Federal University of São Carlos (UFSCar) founded the feminist collective to protest *Miss Bixete* and raise awareness of the event's activities among new female students. While in 2013 the University administration banned the on-campus event, it continues to take place in fraternity houses nearby. Nevertheless, its popularity has diminished and new female students' participation is rare. Although I was not able to gather much information on the current state of the *Miss Bixete* contest, students stated that *garotas de programa* were still hired. Following the suspension of the *Miss Bixete* contest, the feminist collective continues to protest against similar events and verbal and physical assault of female students on campus. The USP-SC case draws attention to the experience of female students in male-dominated campuses and faculties.

Field Site: The University of São Paulo at the Core of Brazilian Higher Education

In Latin America, from the conquest to the independence of colonies, the Spanish founded more than 30 colonial universities, both pontifical and royal. In 1538, the Spanish founded the first university of Latin America in Hispaniola, the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo. In 1812, the Spanish established the last colonial university, University of León of Nicaragua (Tünnermann Bernheim 1999). Contrary to the Spanish early expansion of universities, the Portuguese opposed the development of universities. The colony was perceived as an economic exploitation enterprise and any attempt at acquiring autonomy was deterred (Santos and Cerqueira 2009). Therefore, during the colonial period of Brazil, from 1500 to 1822, the leading classes received higher education in Europe with certain courses offered only partially in Brazil, requiring their completion in Portugal. In 1808, as Napoleonic troops invaded Portugal, the Portuguese Royal Family fled to Brazil. In the following years, they established university

faculties for professional training in engineering, law, and medicine, which served governmental needs and the local elite in the main capital cities (Santos and Cerqueira 2009; Pereira and Morosini 2005). Following independence, political leaders of the First Republic perceived the university as unnecessary for the development of the "new world," favouring the creation of further technical and professional courses. Therefore, it was almost a century after independence, in 1920, that the first university of Brazil was founded, the University of Rio de Janeiro. Nevertheless, the university continued to serve elite families and focused on teaching and professional courses (Oliven 2002).

In 1934, the founding of USP represents an important new direction in higher education (HE) in Brazil. USP was the first institution to attempt a move from teaching to a research-focused university. As the richest state in the country, the São Paulo State government created its own public university following a coffee crisis that affected its political power at the national level. The objective was to create a university of high academic and scientific standard, autonomous from the control of the federal government. Through merging existing traditional and independent Faculties and hiring European researchers and professors, USP became the biggest research centre in the country. Despite the university attempts to make the Faculty of Philosophy its axis to integrate all courses and research activities, traditional Faculties (law, medicine, and engineering) retained their own selection process and insisted on controlling the entire education of their students. Moreover, the Faculty of Philosophy did not attract many applications, as the São Paulo elite continued to favour traditional professional courses (Oliven 2002).

The Brazilian HE system is now the largest in Latin America (Pereira and Morosini 2005). In 2012, Brazil had 2,416 HE institutions, including 193 universities, 139 university centres, 2044 independent Faculties, and 40 federal institutes of education, science, and technology and centres of technological education (INEP 2012). However, the increase in the HE system has continued the dynamics of the early establishment, reproducing inequity and favouring elites. In the past twenty years, the growth of the Brazilian private HE sector resulted in increased access to HE for low-income students, but inequalities were reproduced as access was limited mainly to private universities of low quality (Pedrosa et al. 2014). Moreover, 2069 HE institutions are private, accounting for almost 86% of all HE institutions in the country. Finally, the state of São Paulo possesses a total of 598 or almost 25% of all HE institutions in the

26 Brazilian states, followed by the state of Minas Gerais with almost 15% (INEP 2012). While public universities offer free tuition to all students, they are also highly competitive. Federal and state universities, known as the most prestigious institutions in the country, require a *vestibular* (entrance examination) for admission. Often, white students from the middle and upper-middle classes who have attended private high schools are more likely to be admitted, while many also attend expensive *cursinhos* (preparatory courses) before writing the entrance examination (Kussada 2016).

Today, USP is recognized as one of the most prestigious institutions for higher education across Latin America, offering 249 undergraduate courses, and 239 graduate programs, with 58,000 undergraduate students and 28,000 graduate students. The university is composed of many campuses in the cities of São Paulo, Bauru, Lorena, Piracicaba, Pirassununga, Ribeirão Preto, Santos, São Carlos, and various *unidades de ensino* (teaching units), museums, and research centres throughout the state (USP 2016). As a public and prestigious institution, USP has a highly competitive selection process, including an entrance examination named *vestibular da fuvest*. Student activists have protested against the discrimination of the selection process, as it does not effectively account for class, race, and gender disparities, leading to less student *representatividade* (diversity). According to black activist students, there should be quotas to increase the numbers of black students at USP to be representative of the Afro-Brazilian population. The university has responded to such criticism by creating a scoring system that considers the educational background of the student, granting a 12% to 15% bonus to students who have attended public schools. In spite of this action, in 2015, the percentage of students accepted from public schools was only 35% of all students admitted (G1 2015).

USP-SC, located in São Carlos or the *Capital da Tecnologia* (Technology Capital City), is a prestigious centre of technological and educational development founded in 1948 (USP 2015). USP-SC is formed of five institutes of engineering, computer science, chemistry, and architecture: EESC, Mathematics and Computer Sciences Institute (ICMC), Physics Institute of São Carlos (IFSC), Chemical Institute of São Carlos (IQSC), and the Architecture and Urbanism Institute (IAU). In 2015, USP-SC counted 5,199 undergraduate students, 2,579 graduate students, 531 professors, 23 undergraduate programs, and 18 graduate programs. EESC, the first implementation of USP in São Carlos, offers ten engineering undergraduate programs: aeronautical, civil, computer, electrical, energy systems, environmental, material, mechanical,

production, and robotic engineering (USP 2015).

For a few decades, the school of engineering was the only faculty at USP-SC. Now, the school of engineering remains the biggest faculty at USP-SC, accounting for 50% of undergraduate students on campus. USP-SC programs of study are historically related to male elite professions, which might in part explain the demographics of the university student population. Statistics from the *Fundação Universitária para o Vestibular* (Entrance Examination Foundation; FUVEST by its Portuguese acronym) show the predominance of white male students from private high schools in the engineering faculty EESC. Among the students from the EESC 2016 cohort, 87% were white, 85% were male, and 79.5% had completed all years of secondary school in a private institution (see Appendix A for statistics).

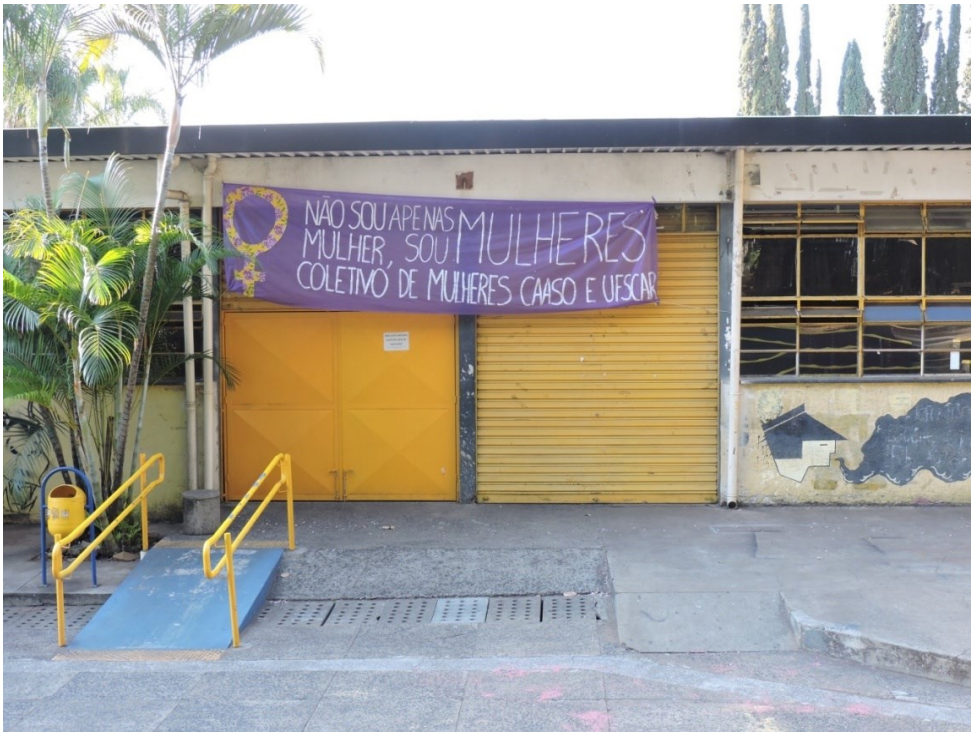

Image 2. CAASO building. There is a purple sign at the CAASO main door. It was created by female students during the first women's collective meeting of the second semester 2016. Collective members invited the USP-SC community to join them to paint this sign. It reads: "I am not only a woman, I am women. *Coletivo de Mulheres CAASO e UFSCar.*" On the left side of the sign, there is a female symbol with flowery patterns.

Despite being an elite higher education institution, USP-SC is also recognized for having

an influential student movement led by the student centre *Centro Acadêmico Armando Salles Oliveira* (CAASO) since 1953. CAASO is the student academic centre that represents all students at USP-SC. With the main objective to defend public education and teaching quality, CAASO is recognized as a central figure in both campus history and national politics. For more than 60 years, CAASO has participated in numerous strikes and mobilizations, such as during the 1963 military regime of President João Goulart and in the 1980s movement for re-democratization (CAASO n.d.). Throughout the years of dictatorship and fierce censorship, CAASO published the newspaper *Jornal Mural*, in which it exposed the abuses and crimes committed by the military regime. After the dictatorship, the force of the CAASO as a national voice gradually weakened as it faced serious financial problems, including a large debt to the *Fundo Universitário Estudiantil* (Student University Fund). Recent years have been wrought by tensions between the CAASO and other student groups with different interests (CAASO n.d.).

Research Question and Theoretical Framework

In the literature on gender in engineering, a special concern for visibility and invisibility has been raised in recent years. Faulkner (2011, 279), who, as noted above, coined the term "the (in)visibility paradox" explains this as the paradox "whereby women engineers are simultaneously highly visible as women yet invisible as engineers, both within their own communities of practice and in the wider world." The (in)visibility paradox draws attention to the visibility of the female body in the field of engineering and the challenges this poses to women seeking careers as engineers or researchers. While, on the one hand, men see women as sexualized objects (thus highly visible in that sense), women's input as engineers is often diminished and ignored (thus invisible). Anthropologists writing on the social construction of the idea of a public sphere and the meanings of a so-called public-private dichotomy have argued that "the often-discussed problem of 'the invisibility of women' has to be viewed in conjunction with the kind of visibility that they have. Women are often literally invisible—absent or unseen—on certain occasions, or in particular places, in many societies" (Dube, Leacock and Ardener 1986, 3; see also Phillips and Cole 2013).

In my thesis, I observe and describe this paradox of the simultaneous visibility and invisibility of women studying engineering as they are seen during initiation rituals, university parties, public events, and the classroom. When looking at instances of visibility and invisibility,

I ask: What are the processes through which the visibility and invisibility of female engineering students are performed and established? Thus, I argue that women are *made* visible and invisible through the use of rituals of violence, for instance, through the reproduction of mechanisms of *machismo*, rape culture, and feminicide. I further argue that the purpose of *making* women visible and invisible is multi-faceted: to domesticate the female student to remain in a constrained space to serve as an object for male bonding, to reproduce the status quo of engineering as male, to train men for future participation in male-dominated capitalist society, to establish membership in engineering through inclusion and exclusion, and to affirm and assert heterosexuality. Finally, I present how female students negotiate the space that is given to them and how they attempt to work through the system of containment to achieve their goals. To do so, they play with their visibility spectrum, for instance, they become invisible as women in order to go unnoticed. Another strategy is masculinizing, by changing the way students dress, speak, and act. In that way, they create a new engineer identity, one that is transitional between man and woman, transcending the identity of the "man engineer." Any attempt to control their visibility is likely to create a response from fellow colleagues or professors, who will try to silence women. In the face of this challenge, women make compromises and change their strategies of adaptation.

Faulkner (2011) argues that we need to look at gender in/of engineering, rather than to the problem of women in engineering. Through her own ethnographic inquiries, she observed the influence of normative gender expectations of masculinity and femininity in the field (Faulkner 2011, 33):

> I have come to see gender norms as a major force for stability, one consequence of gender norms being that particular activities and behaviours are perceived and felt to be more 'gender authentic' for particular groups at any given time and place. I have coined the term gender in/authenticity to capture the normative pressures of 'the way things are'—pressures that lead people to expect the gender norm (in this case, the man engineer) and to notice when they see something different (the woman engineer).

Women do not conform to the gender norm of the man engineer and, because of that, they are "matter out of place," to borrow a term coined by anthropologist Mary Douglas (1969). Her description of dirt, as matter out of place, is a fitting analogy to the situation of women in

engineering. As such, women challenge the purity and stability of the engineering profession. Women in engineering are a "polluting" presence to be managed. Douglas (1969, 35-40) explains:

> If we can abstract pathogenicity and hygiene from our notion of dirt, we are left with the old definition of dirt as matter out of place. This is a very suggestive approach. It implies two conditions: a set of ordered relations and a contravention of that order. Dirt then, is never a unique, isolated event. Where there is dirt there is a system. Dirt is the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter, in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements. [...] To conclude, if uncleanness is matter out of place, we must approach it through order. Uncleanness or dirt is that which must not be included if a pattern is to be maintained. To recognize this is the first step towards insight into pollution.

The social world of engineering excludes women in order to create stability. In a way, it needs the processes of exclusion that promote visibility and invisibility to ensure the continuity of order. To achieve this, it uses several mechanisms. In this thesis, I describe *machismo*, feminicide, and rape culture as ordering mechanisms.

In discussing the place that women occupy on campus, it becomes central to observe the relations between private and public spaces. Public and private categories have long been used to describe the division of labor between men and women. The "public-private dichotomy" and "the sexual division of labour" were among the first subjects of analysis and deconstruction of second wave feminists in anthropology (Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974; Reiter 1975; Rubin 1975). In the West, men have occupied the public sphere, such as leadership and professional positions, while women have been seen as responsible for the private sphere, such as the home and the family. Feminists have used these concepts to express their desire for an equal society, in which men and women could share responsibilities that transcend strict gender roles (Phillips 1991). Moreover, the division between the private (home) and the public (outside the home) has been used to classify issues as trivial or important. Feminists have been outspoken about the seriousness of issues considered private, bringing these issues to the public sphere. For instance, they argued for considering violence against women, sexual assault, and the division of housework tasks as part of structural relations of power. Challenging these distinctions has been a central feminist

concern as is expressed by political scientist Anne Phillips (1991, 92):

> Things once shrouded in the secrecies of private existence are and should be of public concern. The sexual division of labour and the sexual distribution of power are as much part of politics as relations between classes or negotiations between nations, and what goes on in the kitchen and bedrooms cries out for political change.

The work of feminist activists has certainly brought about a change in the way we think of these issues. Nevertheless, the struggle for recognizing women's issues as public concerns and as political continues. In my thesis (chapter 3), I use these concepts to show the struggle women face to voice their concerns in public spaces and for such concerns to be recognized as important by the campus community.

Machismo, Feminicide, and Rape Culture

In the field, collective members often use the concept of *machismo* to describe events (parties, initiation activities, etc.), the environment of the campus, or a particular individual's actions or discourse. For example, the *Miss Bixete* contest is considered *machista* because of the *objetificação* of women's bodies for the male student audience's gaze. Since its creation, the collective takes as a principal objective the fight against machismo. Students who are not part of the collective also refer to the concept to describe similar instances of violence or attacks on women. For such reasons, *machismo* is central to the study of the experience of female students and can be situated in a rich literature. The concept of *machismo* has been used in Latin America to describe a situation of subordination of and violence against women. Psychology scholars José Moral de la Rubia and Sandra Ramos Basurto (2016, 39) offer a complete definition of *machismo*:

> *Machismo* can be defined as an ideology that defends and justifies the superiority and the dominance of men over women; promotes qualities labeled masculine such as aggressiveness, independence and dominance, while stigmatizing qualities labeled feminine

such as weakness, dependence and submission.[1]

On campus, machismo is discussed in relation to *violência* (violence)*, opressão* (oppression)*, liberdade* (freedom)*, objetificação,* and *silenciar* (silencing). *Violência* is used to describe an array of attacks against women—such as sexual assault and physical violence. *Oppressão* is a term used in many instances to describe any discrimination against women and minorities on campus; it is also used to refer to a constant state in opposition with *liberdade.* While *oppressão* reduces the possibilities of action of individuals, *liberdade* means that one feels one has the freedom to act. *Silenciar* is used to refer to actions intended to devalue, discredit, de-legitimate, and disarm the voices of women. Finally, *objetificação* refers to the use of the women as objects. *Machismo*, *violência, oppressão, liberdade,* and *objetificação* are terms that members of the collective and feminist activists on campus use often.

In 2015, Dilma Rousseff, ex-president of Brazil, approved a law recognizing the spread of *feminicidio* in the country. While *feminicidio* is an important concept for feminist activists in Brazil, the term was not used at USP-SC to refer to the general environment of the campus. *Feminicidio* refers to the high numbers of cases of murder of women and girls, but the theory of feminicide offers important analytical points and has been applied in instances of gender violence generally. In 1992, feminist scholars and activists Diana Russell and Jill Radford developed the theory of feminicide to describe a situation of genocide against women. Feminist anthropologist and activist Marcela Lagarde y de los Rios (2010, xvi) defines feminicide as follows: "Feminicide is genocide against women, and it occurs when the historical conditions generate social practices that allow for violent attempts against the integrity, health, liberties, and lives of girls and women." Lagarde (2010) emphasizes that such attacks target women and girls of diverse backgrounds in class, education, and ethnicity and the crimes typically receive impunity.

According to Rosa-Linda Fregoso and Cynthia L. Bejarano (2010, 3), using the concept of feminicide allows the recognition of "power dynamics and relations of gender, sexuality, race, and class underlying violence." In Latin America, feminist activists first used the term *feminicidio* in the Dominican Republic, in the 1980s, in relation to widespread gender violence (Fregoso and Bejarano 2010). *Feminicidio* has also been used to refer to the high instances of the

[1] My translation from Spanish.

murder of women in Ciudad Juarez, a border city in Mexico, where 370 women were killed between 1993 and 2005 (Fregoso and Bejarano 2010). In 2010, the highest number of feminicides was recorded, with 306 deaths in only one year (Villalpando and Castillo 2011). Moreover, according to the feminist organization *Red Mesa de Mujeres de Ciudad Juárez*, between 2010 and 2016, the murder of more than 806 women has been reported (Ávila 2016).

According to anthropologist Rita Laura Segato (2010, 76), the attack on a single female body sends two different messages. The first message is directed toward the victim and to all women:

> [The aggressor's] discourse acquires a punitive aspect, and the aggressor takes on a moralizing profile as a safeguard of social morality, because in that shared imaginary woman's destiny is to be contained, censored, disciplined, and reduced by the violent gesture of he who reincarnates the sovereign function through this act.

The attacker directs the second message to his peers:

> He petitions to be accepted into their society, and from this perspective, the raped woman becomes the immolated sacrificial victim of a ritual of initiation; he competes with his peers, showing that, because of his aggressiveness and power of death, he deserves to be part of the virile brotherhood [...].

The description of rape as a strategy to gain membership in a brotherhood is in line with anthropologist Peggy Reeves Sanday's (2007) analysis of gang rape in her ethnographic study at the University of Pennsylvania. Sanday argues that rape is used in fraternity houses as a means to acceptance and male bonding and as an initiation ritual for male adulthood in a male-dominated society.

Because rape and violence against women persist and often with impunity, feminist scholars and activists argue that we live in a rape culture. In 2016, at Carleton University, sexual assault survivors demanded that the administration acknowledges "rape culture" in the new policy on sexual violence. The policy on sexual violence is a requirement of Ontario's Sexual Violence and Workplace Harassment Action Plan, adopted following the publication by the

Ontario government of an action plan on sexual violence and harassment in March 2015 (Crawford and Sandstrom 2016). The "It's Never Ok" action plan, followed by a progress report in 2016, "deals not only with the prevalence of sexual violence and harassment in our society, but confronts the rape culture and misogyny that are at its root" (Ontario 2016, 2). In this document, rape culture is defined as "a culture in which dominant ideas, social practices, media images and societal institutions implicitly or explicitly condone sexual assault by normalizing or trivializing male sexual violence and by blaming survivors for their own abuse" (Ontario 2015, 9). Therefore, the meaning of a rape culture is not that rape is rampant or common; it rather means that, when it occurs, the surrounding society condones and normalizes rape. In an interview, Laura Montgomery (Crawford and Sandstrom 2016), a Ph.D. student at Carleton University, argues that "rape culture is a bigger broader system but Carleton University is definitely a part of it." She explains how survivors on campus have difficulty when attempting to file a complaint of sexual abuse at the university, including finding the information needed, speaking to lawyers, and receiving the support needed. According to Montgomery, it is an arduous process to report rape because of rape culture, victim blaming, and having to take on the burden of proof. Therefore, the university should acknowledge rape culture to begin a process of change (Crawford and Sandstrom 2016).

Methodology

From July to November 2016, I conducted four months of ethnographic fieldwork at USP-SC, looking at the experiences of women in engineering. The research methodology is a combination of participant observation and in-depth interviews. I conducted participant observation during a four-month period, coinciding with a full semester of study at USP-SC. I participated in various groups; including the women's collective, Women in Engineering (WIE) in São Carlos, Semente, and ENACTUS. I attended most meetings of the WIE, which was in the process of being officialised. I was invited to present initial findings of my research during the WIE presentation activity at the end of the semester. I participated weekly in the group Semente, a student-run initiative to teach scientific skills to public school children. I also attended a meeting of ENACTUS, a social entrepreneurship extracurricular society, and conducted a group interview with members. Adding to my participation in these groups, I observed various events occurring on campus, such as conferences, debates, and daily life.

I conducted interviews with 43 students, 42 women and a non-binary person, and a professor. 43 were from USP-SC and one from UFSCar. I met participants through snowball sampling and my participation in groups. 35 participants were in engineering programs at USP-SC: six in mechatronics, six in electrical, six in environmental, three in production, three in civil, three in computer, three in mechanics, three in material, and two in aeronautics. I interviewed nine students who were not in engineering programs (six in architecture, one in chemistry, and two in physics) because they were part of a student group, such as the women's collective and the *Coletivo Elza Soares* (black students' collective), or because they had knowledge about an aspect of student life such as student housing or child services. From student groups, I interviewed six members of the women's collective, six members of the WIE, three members of Semente, two members of ENACTUS, one member of *Coletivo Elza Soares*, one member of Nuances (LGBT collective), and three individuals involved in the daycare mobilization. Among the students interviewed, there were also members of the student centre and various student associations, members of other groups such as *Levante Popular da Juventude* and *Juntas*, and members of various academic extracurricular groups such as Warthog and *Empresa Junior*. There were three graduate students, two of whom had completed their undergraduate degree at USP-SC. At least two students had lived in student housing on campus. Three students were mothers. At least three students received student financial aid. At least one student had completed all previous studies in a public institution. At least five students identified openly as lesbian or gender non-binary.

To ensure privacy and to protect the confidentiality of the participants, I replaced their names with pseudonyms.

Thesis Structure

In the first chapter, "Initiation Rituals and Gender Hierarchies," I focus on initiation rituals at USP-SC, specifically on *Miss Bixete*. Using ethnographic data, I analyse *Miss Bixete* as a ritual of initiation whereby male bonding occurs through the *objetificação* of the female body. To do so, I use Peggy Reeves Sanday's argument of initiations as training for men to be placed in male hierarchies those they will meet as adults in capitalist military-industrial societies. Training serves to establish junior:senior, superior:inferior, and boss:subordinate relations among men. Moreover, the *objetificação* of even a single woman sends a message to all women on campus, defining and thereby disciplining women as sexual objects, and making them visible as women.

In the second chapter, "Rape Culture and the University Party," I present the dynamics of university parties in relation to *cultura do estupro* (rape culture). I explore the relevance of the concept in the context of ethnographic data gathered on Tusca, an inter-university sports competition. Tusca attracts 50,000 students from universities of the interior of the state of São Paulo, offering parties 4 days in a row, and having an open bar at all events. During the week of Tusca, female students complain of increased instances of sexual abuse, as they are assaulted during parties. The event raises questions about sports, drinking and sexual cultures on campus, and the consequences for female students. Moreover, I discuss the dialogues between students, collectives, and organizers, as they prepare for Tusca.

In the third chapter, "Silencing of Women's Voices on Campus," I use ethnographic data gathered through participant observation to show three cases of the management of women's voices. The examples explore moments when women attempt to speak about the challenges they face on campus in private or public spaces. In such instances, I describe the response they receive from the student population, either direct confrontation or attempts to dismiss and silence their speech. As women attempt to denounce the difficulties they live on campus, they are showing a desire to occupy more space and receive equal attention to other students.

In the fourth chapter, "Inside the Classroom: 'I really am *machista*, can't you see it?'," I analyze classroom dynamics among students and between students and professors using data gathered through in-depth interviews. I observe how these dynamics make women visible as objects and invisible as engineers. Moreover, I look at ways women negotiate their visibility in the classroom, showing agency in attempting to reach their goals, either to remain safe, to be recognized academically, or to be accepted into the group. Even though many students are able to navigate successfully through the expectations they receive and their own desires, others remain dissatisfied. In fact, while women can achieve many of their professional objectives, they continue to be dismissed, attacked, and pressured to change their identity.

Chapter 1: Initiation Rituals and Gender Hierarchies

Semana de Recepção (orientation week) is one of the most important moments for students at the University of São Paulo in São Carlos (USP-SC). For many, orientation week coincides with their first visit to campus, initial contact with students of their cohort, and the first taste of university life. As young as 17 years old, the majority of new students move out from their homes for the first time to live with other students in *repúblicas* (shared houses), apartments within walking distance of campus, or on-campus accommodations. Parents often drive students to the university and stay with them for a few days while they settle down. During *Semana de Recepção,* the university, each faculty, and student associations organize activities for new students. During most initiation activities the main supervision for first-year students, known as *calouros, bixos or novatos*, is that of their *veteranos* (senior students) who wait impatiently for the *trotes* (hazing)*, gincanas* (competitions)*,* and many other initiation activities.

According to the School of Engineering of São Carlos (EESC) director, Paulo Sergio Varoto (2017), the main purpose of orientation activities is the *integração* (integration) of new students into the campus community. Therefore, such activities are telling of the dynamics between students, of who is accepted into the group and who is not. In a campus dominated by men, gender dynamics during orientation week can reflect strategies of exclusion and inclusion of female students. In this chapter, I describe the experience of female students during orientation week as revealed to me by students and feminist activists. I present a particular event that took place on campus for decades until 2013, *Miss Bixete* (Miss Freshman), a beauty contest among female students, as an example of the rituals of belonging that serve to exclude certain students and include others. Membership into the engineering students group is, in part, achieved through the objectification of the female body. And through this initiation ritual, women's visibility as sexualized bodies is asserted. The performance serves to send a message to the campus population on the role of women on campus.

Expectations and Background of Female Engineering Students

Female students often give similar reasons for their choice to study engineering. Most had excelled in areas such as mathematics and science and are looking for a degree that will give them concrete career options. The first interview I conducted was with Andrea, a senior

mechatronics engineering student I had met during my first visit on campus a year earlier. Andrea was now looking for her last-year internship but remembered clearly the reasons that motivated her to study engineering in the first place:

> Like most, during high school, I started thinking about what profession I'd like to do. Because I had a preference for subjects in mathematics and science, I looked into related careers. I wasn't sure yet. I was slightly inclined [toward careers in mathematics and science], but I wasn't sure if I wanted an academic field. So, that led me to choose a program that would have practical possibilities. I hesitated between statistics, engineering, and applied mathematics. Finally, I thought engineering would give me more career opportunities. That was why. I never had a particular interest to become an engineer, it was a rational choice because I didn't have a specific passion.

Wendy Faulkner (2005) argues that most women engineers in the United States, like Andrea, choose the profession because "they liked maths and science at school, see themselves as 'practical' people and wanted a good career" (Faulkner 2005, 17). Even though engineers as a whole have similar motivations, Faulkner argues that men engineers are just a bit more excited by engineering technologies, in what is referred to as a "love of technology" (Oldenziel 1999, 9, in Faulkner 2005, 17).

When I asked Debora, a mechanical engineering student, why she had chosen to study at USP-SC, she did not hesitate to answer:

> The University of São Paulo (USP) is the best university in Brazil. I would have the option of coming to São Carlos or to São Paulo, at the [*Escola Politécnica da USP*] (Polytechnic School of USP), and I don't like São Paulo, a big city. I preferred a smaller city, in the interior. I think it is more welcoming.

The main reason to apply to USP-SC was overall related to the prestige of the university. With a few exceptions, such as students in aeronautical engineering who had applied to the Aeronautical Technology Institute (ITA) of Brazil, the first choice of most students was USP. Several had purposefully chosen the São Carlos campus because it was situated in a smaller city than the São

Paulo campus. Moreover, many were motivated to apply to USP-SC because of the reputation of the EESC and the intensity of student life at USP-SC, which offers many opportunities for extracurricular academic and non-academic activities, undergraduate supervised research with the possibility of funding, and an influential student movement led by the student centre *Centro Acadêmico Armando de Salles Oliveira* (CAASO).

Before starting their studies in engineering, many female students had some experience with masculine and technical environments. Because of the competitiveness of the *vestibular* (entrance examination) at USP, many students attend *cursinhos* (preparatory courses) for at least 6 months and, in many cases, up to several years. Preparatory courses are private and can be costly. Some students might continue preparing for several years until finally passing the exam. Some female students who had completed a preparatory course were able to observe certain gender dynamics. Mariana, a senior production engineering student I met volunteering at the Semente project, remembered her first reaction as she started a *cursinho* in São Paulo:

> Surprisingly, [in the preparatory course], I could already see how a more masculine than feminine environment could be. In a cohort of 180 people, only 10 or 20 were girls. Then, in the classrooms specialized in mathematics and science, you could already see the *machista* environment. The boys would make jokes about homosexuality, and, because there were not many girls, they made jokes about girls too. Not only did the students make jokes, but also the professors.

Moreover, Mariana believes that, compared to USP-SC, the *cursinho* culture is more competitive and *machista*. In her classroom, students were preparing for the most difficult *vestibulares* (entrance examination), such as medicine and engineering, to have access to a very limited number of *vagas* (spaces available). After class, students stayed long hours revising course material, including on weekends, under the pressure of parents who fully financed their education.

During high school, some institutions offer an *ensino técnico* (technical degree) which prepares students to enter the job market in technical fields. Camila, a computer engineering student, had completed an *ensino técnico* while she attended high school, which allowed her to have a first experience in the field of IT and programming.

> Before going to technical college, I studied in a school run by nuns. They accepted boys but it was traditionally girls only. In my class, of 30 people, two-thirds were girls and one-third boys. When I got into technical college… from 40 slots, only 10 were girls and 30 were boys. I started to get used to having fewer girls in the class. When I got in here, from 50 students, only 4 were girls. It was harder.
>
> I went to a technical school which offered courses in computing while going to the standard school at another institution. I had my first contact with programming and IT at the technical school, while I learnt various programming languages. Because I liked this area of study, and to graduate from technical school, I had to do an internship. I worked at a company. I was 17 years old. I started working at a company as a programmer. I was part of a real team with various projects.

At the internship, people were often surprised to hear that Camila was in programming, the only woman on the 10-person team. They thought she worked in design, testing, or client relations. Once at USP-SC, students often told her: "You don't look like someone who studies computer engineering." Despite facing constant questioning, for Camila, it remains important to persevere in the field to show that women can be programmers and successful engineers.

Students who had previous experience in related fields report a smoother transition to university because they are better prepared for the gender dynamics in an engineering program. However, many female students arrive at USP-SC directly after completing high school at the age of 17 or 18 years old. Students with limited experience in male-dominated environments found the transition from high school to university difficult.

> I came to USP at 17 years old, after completing high school… From 50 people in my cohort, only 4 out of the 50 were girls. At the beginning it was hard. It was difficult because in my hometown we studied with boys and girls, but the boys were childish, very childish, I didn't create a friendship with them. I had one or two male friends. My group of friends was of girls. I got here and there were only men. At first, I would go back home and say I don't want to go back to São Carlos, there are no girls to be my friends (Debora,

Mechanical Engineering Student).

For most students, their first contact with the university is during orientation week. While some arrive on campus without a clear expectation of what the first week will be like, others have heard of the popular *trotes*. Female students who do a simple Google search about the campus often find news articles about *Miss Bixete*, a controversial initiation event that happened on campus until 2013. In 2013, students demonstrated against *Miss Bixete* and received an aggressive response from certain male students. Before arriving to campus, Ana Marcela, a mechatronics engineering student, found out about *Miss Bixete.* I met Ana Marcela briefly during a conference on the different branches of feminism, a year earlier. She was then a first-year student, exploring student life on campus. We met again as I was conducting fieldwork and she explained in more detail her first-year experience:

> When I saw I had been accepted, I started doing research on the city. One of the first things I saw was the reports about *Miss Bixete.* There was a protest and a guy took off his pants. That was the first impression I got from the university. So, when I came to orientation week, I remained cautious because I knew that if that happened here before, anything could happen. I was worried. I was kind of waiting for something like that to happen.

Previous experiences affect the expectations of female students. Some students have friends or older siblings who are in university already and have shared some of their experiences with them. Parents also advise female students to remain careful, often reminding them that engineering is not a place for women. Beyond such expectations, students' experiences will be affected by the simple fact of being women.

Class, sexual orientation, and race can also affect women's university experience. On a campus dominated by middle and upper-middle class white men, the intersectional experience of women is a prominent issue. The majority of engineering students at USP-SC, including women, is white, from middle and upper-middle class families, and has attended private schools for at least part of their previous studies. Some students received scholarships to attend a private high school. Only a few completed all elementary and secondary education in public institutions. Most families can afford to cover students' living costs throughout the five-year undergraduate

program. Students from lower-income families can receive financial support of 400 *reais* (Brazilian currency) a month, or a space in the *Alojamento* USP (on-campus student accommodation), and fully subsidized weekday meals at the student cafeteria. The university built on-campus accommodations to receive visiting athletes. In 1965, the student movement occupied the buildings to pressure the university to offer accommodation to low-income students. The accommodation is composed of 5 buildings and is self-managed by students. However, with no sections reserved for female students, overcrowded rooms, and precarious maintenance, such as showers without curtains or doors, female students often do not feel safe to live in the on-campus accommodation.

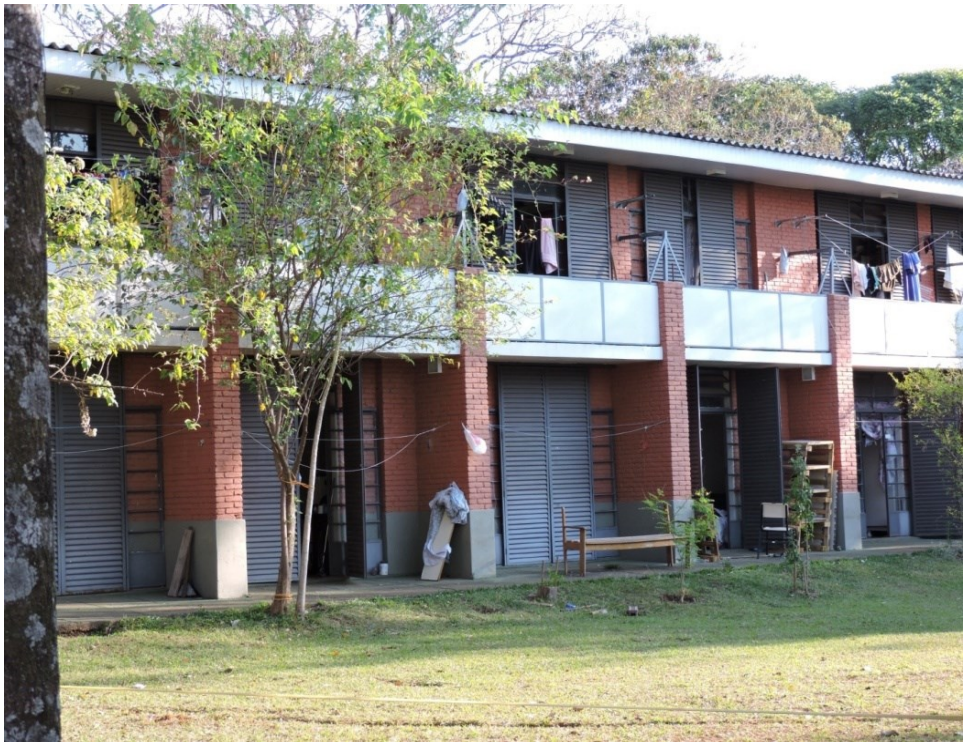

Image 3. A building of the *Alojamento USP*.

To make ends meet, students on financial support often need to work part-time, such as at university events or at the library, and attempt to secure supervised research projects with funding. Rebeca, a third-year electrical engineering student, has received the monthly allocation of 400 *reais* since her first year at USP-SC, as well as subsidized cafeteria meals. She also works as a waitress during holidays. Early on, she chose to live in an apartment off-campus because on-campus accommodation is often crowded making it difficult to study. Rebeca cannot afford to go

out with friends during the weekend or even get a snack from the student bar. During the weekend, when the cafeteria is closed, she often eats instant noodles for all her meals. Rebeca found many strategies to live on a small budget, but she remembers her first year to be very difficult.

> The first year is the hardest because the bursary only arrives in May and you are accepted in February. From February to May you have to deal with it alone. I stayed as a favour [in a friend's house] but it was not good for me to study. I had to follow the people who lived there around. I didn't even have a key. I had nothing.

Economic strains can often be disincentives for students to persevere in their course of study. Moreover, they are reasons for students to become isolated as they cannot follow the rhythm of student life: parties, dinners, expensive cars, and more.

Female students' experience during orientation week, their first contact with the university, is as heterogeneous as their backgrounds and expectations are. Throughout this chapter, I explore some of the aspects of orientation week as they can often influence in some way female students' undergraduate life. Moreover, orientation week is an important moment of transition for first-year students, as they move from their status as high school students to that of university students. Their identity is under transformation and their belonging to a new group is tested.

The Role of Senior Students in "Integration" Activities

Various academic centres, the CAASO student centre, and the CAASO athletics centre organize activities for *Semana de Recepção*. The most popular activities are *trotes* performed by senior students on first-year students. Different challenges are organized, such as going up a hill while jumping on the back of another student, getting painted, or asking strangers for money at the traffic light. The main presumed objectives of orientation week are to create group cohesion and integrate new students. Throughout the activities, students get to know their classmates and make new friendships. Female students' experiences during orientation week vary greatly depending on their program of study, the activities they choose to participate in, and the different people they meet. For instance, students in the environmental engineering program receive

greater information from the academic centre on the different activities they can join, which stresses the environmental engineering faculty's disassociation from certain events and from common practices they see as degrading or humiliating. Several other engineering academic centres and the student centre also raise awareness of age and gender hierarchies accentuated through *trotes* and propose alternative activities that promote inclusion and safety.

During our interview, Ana Marcela told me in great detail about her experience during the first week at USP-SC:

> It was very traumatic. I'm from the interior... I lived in a small town, in a bubble. When I got here I had come to live in a city I had not seen in my life. I arrived with my mother, she left and I stayed here. The student orientation was quite shocking. I had done some research before coming and found out about the *Miss Bixete* contest, a beauty contest among the new female students where they had to show their body. I was already scared. When I arrived one day an event was happening in the CAASO square and a lot of people were drinking, smoking and pulling pranks on the new students. It was a little humiliating. All this was happening in the middle of the university. So I was so scared. Also, the relationship between *veterano* and *calouro* was somewhat disproportionate. So that scared me too. Then, I heard people singing the CAASO anthem and I asked: what are they talking about, screaming this sort of thing, heavy things, and offensive lyrics?
>
> Also, my first impression was that I had arrived in a place that I thought was one thing and it was quite another. People kept arguing whether or not they could drink inside the university, and I did not think I would hear that kind of debate here. I heard what was going on at parties, the barbarities that happened. I was very scared. And when I entered the classroom, we were only two women. After two weeks, the other girl dropped the class. So I get to class and I'm the only woman in the class with a lot of guys. They are actually kids. Everyone thinks they were very good in high school, one ego bigger than the other. My first impression was very bad, a despair. Where have I come? How will I survive? I ended up closing myself up to deal with all this, being alone in the middle of this jungle. My first impression was terrible.

Ana Marcela's experience reveals a lot about the impact of orientation week for female students. From the first moments on campus, she observed the complex power relationship between senior student and first-year student, the drinking culture among students, and the treatment of female students on campus. Ana Marcela's reaction to these realizations, closing herself to social interaction, is also common among female students who attempt to *passar desapercibida* (go unnoticed).

When the academic year begins at USP-SC, senior students are eager to meet *their* first-year students. The relationship between senior and first-year student is complex and can vary greatly. Students often argue that *veteranos* hold a higher hierarchical position over first-year students, at times exploited to derive power and benefits. For instance, in certain shared houses, first-year students are responsible for cleaning and cooking, while they might also be subject to pranks and hazing. Flávia, a material engineering student, argued that several female-only shared houses also expected new students to do more housework and did pranks on new students. For instance, she heard of friends in other universities who had to eat a garlic clove every day for their entire first year of studies. Flávia also remembers when her "friend in her first year made out with a guy during a party and was made fun of by the girls in her *república* until they took her bed to the roof and made her sleep on the roof." Another component of the relationship is mentorship and guidance, which includes academic support and advising on university life. For instance, senior students might give their class notes to first-year students, help them study and complete assignments, and introduce them to extracurricular activities.

Gender differences and student hierarchies affect the relationship between students. Female senior student and male first-year student relations often include an important component of respect from the first-year student to the senior student because of the hierarchical position she holds in the program. However, male first-year students might also view *veteranas* (female senior students) as "sexual objects." Catharina, a student in production engineering, argues that: "a *bixo* (male first-year student) [might] prank all female senior students through private message or in the [student's] Facebook group." The relationship between male senior student and female first-year student can also be problematic. Although most female first-year students trust their male senior students and follow their advice, male senior students might view female first-year students as *carne nova* (fresh meat), potentially sexually available. Catharina states: "I realized that when *bixetes* (female first-year students) arrive, there is this thing about fresh meat. In my

cohort, we were few girls, so there was a competition from the boys. I heard about it. I think on Facebook much was going on, but they were not able to find me."

Early on, the *Fundação Universitária para o Vestibular* (University Foundation for Entrance Examination; FUVEST by its Portuguese acronym), the organization responsible for admission exams, publishes several lists with the names of admitted candidates on their website. Each list corresponds to a program of study in a specific campus, for example, a list might specify the names of the 40 admitted candidates for the 2017 cohort of aeronautical engineering at USP-SC. Senior students from each department retrieve the names in preparation for orientation week. A few weeks preceding the start of the semester, they create a Facebook group, where both senior and newly admitted students of their program are invited to join. The main purpose of the group is to welcome new students in order to get to know them before orientation week. Special attention is given to female first-year students. For instance, certain students use the group to access the Facebook profiles of first-year female students in order to contact them in private. The excitement to meet female first-year students continues throughout orientation week. Daniela, a mechatronics engineering student, remembers meeting her male senior students, who happily proclaimed: "Wow! Another *bixete*, there's already 5!"

Miss Bixete and the Telltale Signs of Machismo

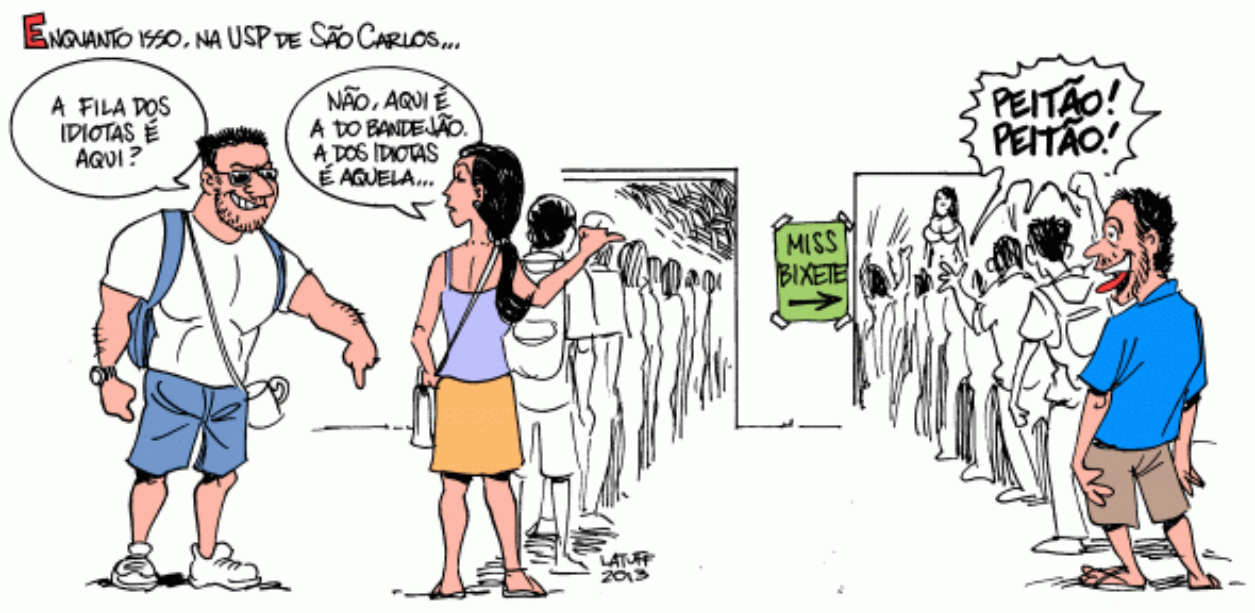

Image 4. Brazilian freelance cartoonist, Carlos Latuff (2013), published this cartoon in response to the controversial *Miss Bixete* contest (cartoon reproduced with author's permission). The top

line reads: “Meanwhile, at USP-SC…”. Students are lining up to enter two separate rooms. A male student approaches a female student standing in the first line and asks: “Is this the idiots’ line?” She answers: “No, here is the line for the student cafeteria, the idiots’ line is that one.” She points to the second line, in which students are yelling “*Breasts! Breasts!”* Inside the second room, there is a woman standing above the students, with her shirt off.

Miss Bixete, a beauty contest among newly admitted female students, was the trigger of Ana Marcela’s discomfort with USP-SC social life. Until 2013, the event took place on campus, in the CAASO main room. Organized by a student group named *Grupo de Apoio à Putaria* (Group in Support of *Putaria*—a word referring to sexual acts, orgies, and prostitution; GAP by its Portuguese acronym), it attracted hundreds of male spectators, mostly *veteranos*. The day of the event, female first-year students from each program of study were invited to participate. Usually, that day coincided with their arrival on campus. For the first time, perhaps, they would hear about *Miss Bixete*. As they had spent the day following orders, some might have followed senior students to the event. Others were advised to join an alternative activity or were exhausted from a day running around campus. Most female students would only know what happened inside the CAASO room days after.

In 2011, Vitória read about *Miss Bixete* in her first-year student kit given out by the environmental engineering department during orientation week. The department of environmental engineering did not promote the event, rather, they held a meeting explaining its different aspects and emphasizing the fact that students were not obliged to participate. After being informed about the event, Vitória remembers male students from other departments calling her out and urging her to participate. “Some guys called me out: ‘Go there’ and said something else. I answered: ‘No, I don’t want to.’ They insisted ‘Go there.’ They were really annoying me. ‘Ah, so you are boring, you are from environmental engineering.’” Even though Vitória chose not to participate, she remembers hearing about what happened that year. For instance, she remembers that the girl who took more pieces of clothing off would win party tickets and be named the *Miss Bixete* of the year.

By the end of the afternoon, as students were lining up at the cafeteria to have dinner, on the other side of the room, a crowd was growing in the student centre room. Male students, drinking beer, yell “*Peitão, Peitão!*” (Breasts! Breasts!), taunting women to show their breasts.

Female participants would make an awkward attempt at walking on the catwalk, while male students reached out to touch them. *Veteranos* stretched their arms to catch the scene on cell phones and cameras. One of the girls, older and more confident, starts taking her clothes off. The crowd yells "*Arquitectura! Arquitectura!*" But no architecture student participates. She is a *garota de programa* (sex worker) paid to act as a student. By taking off her shirt, the organizers hope she will influence other students to do the same. In the end, the student who shows her breasts will win the competition, with a free ticket to a party. The following day, in the CAASO room, the snack bar is back running; students sit on one of the sofas, taking a break, while a student plays the piano. Students challenge each other in a game of pool and a table is set for selling tickets for the next party.

This is how I imagine *Miss Bixete* as I stare at the large wooden pieces belonging to the *Miss Bixete* catwalk, now stacked in a corner of the student room. They are a ghostly reminder of a recent past. I reconstructed the event in my mind from stories I have heard throughout the years, videos watched, and newspaper articles. Viviana, a Masters student at EESC, remembers each detail of her experience vividly as a female first-year student participant.

In 2010, Viviana was 18-years old, freshly arrived in the city of São Carlos with all the excitement of being a newly admitted student to one of the most prestigious higher education institutions of the country, the University of São Paulo. Throughout High School, Viviana excelled in the areas of mathematics and physics and was searching for a career that would allow her work to have a societal impact. She found such a place in civil engineering. Right out of high school, and back from a study exchange, she was admitted to USP-SC and looked forward to moving out from her family home to become more independent. In March, after summer vacation, São Carlos is flooded with students coming back from their hometowns, from the state of São Paulo and all corners of the country, but also of new students looking forward to the orientation week. Under the heat and the rains of the end of summer, senior students await the arrival of the *bixos* for the many activities they have prepared.

Throughout the first day, Viviana joined in on all the activities she was invited to, making new friendships with senior students who appreciated her enthusiasm. If senior students told her to dance, she would dance, and if they told her to sing, she would sing. "I did everything because when I did people said: "You are cool. You are nice. You represent [the university]. You are a good *bixete* because you do everything we ask." I took everything as a game. I did not see any

malice. Except that something happened afterward." For the first time, Viviana heard about *Miss Bixete*. Senior students told Viviana that she should participate in the contest; after all, she was not like other girls. She was open to new experiences and did not care about other people's opinions. "You should go [to *Miss Bixete*] to represent civil [engineering]," senior students told her. "It's really fun, nothing bad will happen to you." In the end, female senior students persuaded Viviana to participate, as they reassured her about the event. They told her: "You have to do a cute [thing], nothing [bad] is going to happen, it is very relaxed. You can go, we went last year and it was ok." Viviana went to *Miss Bixete* with a friend, and while, at first, she felt embarrassed to be there, she tried to persuade herself it was just another game.

Senior students had told Viviana that there would be sex workers paid to participate. They might take their shirt off, they said, but you are not obliged to do the same. Viviana was uncomfortable about that aspect of the event, but she told herself she would only have to walk back and forth a couple of times before leaving. However, her experience was very different from what she had imagined:

> In the end, it was very long. They told me: "Viviana, go there now and do that. If you do that you will win for sure and it's going to end." They told me: "Give a kiss to your friend and for sure you are going to win and it will end." They kept on pressuring me and I did not want to be there anymore. It got worse. They invited an older student from civil engineering and she kept touching me. Then, she kissed me and I thought it went way too far. I couldn't get out of it. They kept telling me it was about to end, to just do it a little more. At some point, I just left.

As Viviana and her friend left *Miss Bixete*, they felt relieved and laughed at how ridiculous the event had turned out to be. However, later that same day, Viviana worried about what other people would think of her. As it was her first day at university, this was the first impression that her classmates would have of her.

After *Miss Bixete*, Viviana went to a party with senior students and shared her concerns with them. "No, Vivi. It's not like that. Everyone knows it means nothing," they told her. Senior students apologized to Viviana because they recognized the event had gone too far. Female senior students who had participated the previous year told her it had not been like that for them: "It

shouldn't have been like that and we saw it." Viviana was reassured that this event would not impact her relationships on campus, but once classes started she felt isolated from her cohort:

> I felt that people from my cohort were not speaking to me. The girls in my class told me a long time after that they had a very bad first impression of me because of [my participation in *Miss Bixete*]. They told me afterward, "I thought you were someone else." Only once I started a relationship, four months later, other students started to talk to me. Before, I was the *biscate*, a slut. "So you are not like that, now we can be your friend." That is what I felt [they meant].

Not only were people on campus aware of her participation in *Miss Bixete*, but the event reached people as far as in Viviana's hometown:

> There was a moment when we were dancing and they put a camera in between our legs. At the time, I didn't pay attention but on the day after I said: "They filmed, what is going to happen with that?" ...I didn't watch the video... but my friends helped me to denounce it. I don't know if they got to take it off. ...A friend [from my hometown] called me and said he had watched the video. It was a lie. ...Adding to what people here were thinking, people from my hometown could see my video. What were they going to think?

When thinking back to the event, Viviana reflects on the reason she went to *Miss Bixete* and why she felt like she could not leave. Throughout the years, the agency of female students to participate in *Miss Bixete* has been questioned. On the one hand, *Miss Bixete* organizers have accused feminist activists of undermining the agency of female students of choosing to participate in the event. On the other hand, feminist activists have recognized the agency of female students while pointing to the lack of information they receive regarding the event and its impact on first-year students' lives and the pressures they are subjected to during orientation week. Viviana believes that: "No one had forced me to go but there was psychological pressure to see that everyone would like you. If you went everyone would see that you don't mind. Everyone would think you are cool." In the years following her participation in *Miss Bixete*, Viviana utilized the influence she had as a female senior student to inform female first-year students about

the event and share with them her own experience:

> It was so bad that I insisted on always being there during orientation week to make sure nothing similar would happen. That was my way to be there. I thought if the girls did not participate, [*Miss Bixete*] was not going to happen. At least civil engineering girls would listen to me. That is something I could do.

Throughout her undergraduate degree, while Viviana continued approaching new female students, she did not join the *Coletivo de Mulheres do CAASO e da UFSCar* (the women's collective). As a Master's student, she is now an active member of the collective and often shares her experience with others. She is one of the few remaining students on campus who actually was a *Miss Bixete* participant, which reminds younger students that the event is not so far back in campus history.

The Creation of a Women's Collective

Image 5. Logo of the *Coletivo de Mulheres do CAASO e da UFSCAr* representing a drum as a symbol of the *batucadas* (drumming protests) against *Miss Bixete* .

In 2009, a group of students from USP-SC formed the *Coletivo de Mulheres do CAASO*, whose main objective was to denounce the *objetificação das mulheres* (women's objectification) in the *Miss Bixete* event. In 2011, the collective welcomed students from the Federal University of São Carlos (UFSCar), changing its name to *Coletivo de Mulheres do CAASO e da UFSCar* in

2012. Every year, the women's collective engaged in dialogue with the student centre and the GAP to try to cancel the event on campus. Marisa, a student in civil engineering, was one of the directors of the student centre in 2013. She described the difficulty the centre encountered in trying to get the event cancelled:

> [The student centre] took a position against *Miss Bixete* but we did not have the power to get to GAP and tell them there will be no [*Miss Bixete*]. …It had been some years since we were trying to tell them not to have *Miss Bixete*, to change it. In 2010, people said the experience was really bad. At least transform it into a *gincana* like the athletics people do. Try to change it a bit, do something different, to soften the situation.

As Marisa revealed, attempts at cancelling the event were met with resistance from GAP and students supporting the event. For instance, GAP has used political tactics to maintain the event by threatening to form a student party for the next student centre elections. As the event continued to take place every year, the collective organized demonstrations outside of the CAASO room. Both female and male students who opposed the event joined in a *batucada* (drumming protest) outside the room, while students inside participated in *Miss Bixete*. They brought posters with various slogans such as: "We are women, not inflatable dolls. We have ideas, we are not manipulable" and "We have brains, not just breasts."

In 2013, during the collective's demonstration, student activists received an aggressive response from some male students. Among others, the aggressions included a student simulating rape on an inflatable doll and students giving out a pamphlet with the inscription *50 golpes de cinta* (50 Strikes of a Belt) referencing to the book *50 Shades of Grey*. Moreover, students threw two small bombs at protesters and two male students exposed their genitalia. During an interview with senior electrical engineering student Maria Clara, who I had met in the first meeting of the Women in Engineering (WIE) group, I asked her about her memories of *Miss Bixete*:

> I was there. I remember there was a thing with a boy who took off his clothes, people all over campus were talking about it. People who study with me had never been to *Miss Bixete*. I don't know many boys who went. Those who went only went inside to see and then left. So, I don't know anyone who has participated. But I remember that at the time it

> was strange. There was a conversation from both sides. People say they were only playing. But I remember there was an inflatable doll in the middle of campus. It was unnecessary. I remember thinking about the boy [who took off his clothes], what will he tell his parents? I remember he is from the same city as me…800 km away. They were saying he was suspended, something like that. I kept thinking, he will go back home and tell his mother what he did. How will he tell his mother that he was suspended: "I will not go to class this semester because I got naked and made out with a plastic doll in front of the cafeteria, in front of everyone?" I kept wondering what he would say. It seemed surreal to imagine something like that.

The altercation, especially the action of the two male students, received high media coverage, with the news outlet G1 doing a short video reportage. In this reportage, an organizer of the 2013 *Miss Bixete* contest claimed that the "traditional" event reflected their *liberdade de expressão* (freedom of expression) and that students were not coerced to participate in any of the components of the event (Turioni 2013). Some of the 40 protesters spoke and argued that *Miss Bixete* was an *opressivo* (oppressive) and *machista* event that objectified women. Following the media scandal, the university banned the event, but it continues to take place off campus. The two male students who exposed their genitalia were suspended from the university for an undetermined amount of time. According to a Maria Carla, however, one of the two students was now studying on campus.

In a letter released after the event, the women's collective explained their action (Coletivo de Mulheres do CAASO e Federal 2013). According to the women's collective, since 2005, several students have positioned themselves against the event, and have actively sought ways to express their views and to inform incoming students. Some, such as Viviana, wanted to share their own experience with new students. Marisa, a student in civil engineering, remembers when she entered university in 2011. "In general terms, senior female students were very nice with us. They were caring. They told us not to go to *Miss Bixete*. I had no information about it. I didn't know what it was. I knew nothing. Only afterward, I learned what it was." Feminist senior students talked with new students who were planning to participate in the event and let them know that there were people who did not support the event. During my first visit on campus, a year earlier, I had met Ariana, an environmental engineering student. When I first met her, she

was an active member of the women's collective, as well as a member in a youth social movement. Moreover, she was among the earlier feminist activists on campus and had participated in the demonstrations against Miss Bixete. Now a senior student, she was no longer part of the collective, as she was looking for her last-year internship. Nevertheless, she cherished every memory of her many years as an active member, in particular, she remembered with a smile the strategies they used to reach *Miss Bixete* participants:

> We used to go behind the catwalk, in naïveté, pretending we were no one. We didn't get there yelling. We tried to talk with [the female students], talk, try to explain to them they were not forced to do anything. Tell them there were other activity options, there was soap soccer down there, it was much more fun. She might not feel well, so she could go out whenever and we would be there. We also tried to tell them that the girl who won *Miss Bixete* would be known for that at the university, for the rest of her studies. They did not know that when they went up the catwalk. We rapidly tried to emphasize, when they wanted to listen, that this could be bad for their future.

However, she explained that while they searched for dialogue, they also observed that there was a greater pressure put on girls from the crowd waiting for the event. Therefore, participants might feel ashamed to leave and afraid of giving a bad impression to the group.

Although *Miss Bixete* has no longer been part of the official orientation activities for more than three years, the memories of the event, the demonstrations, and the media scandal remain present for many students. For the *Coletivo de Mulheres do CAASO e da Federal*, *Miss Bixete* is the event that motivated the creation of the feminist collective. Therefore, *Miss Bixete* and the actions of the women's collective in relation to the event are often central to presenting the group's history and main objectives. Now that *Miss Bixete* has been banned on campus, some new students become acquainted with the event before entering university when researching on the internet or asking friends about the city and the campus. Learning about what happened in *Miss Bixete* often worries new students and affects their integration during orientation week. For instance, they might choose not to drink during the events or avoid participation in most activities.

Discussion: From Visibility to Feminicide

Many weeks before the beginning of the university year, before she steps foot on campus for the first time, the female engineering student's process of identity formation begins. As soon as she sees her name in the list of accepted students in the FUVEST website, as soon as others see her name on that same list, she becomes the *bixete*, the *caloura*, the *novata* (first-year female student). Her name is out: Viviana or Marcela or Andrea. Her name is remembered more easily than João, Leonardo, Lucas, Guilherme, Felipe, and others. In that way, she stands out. Her name is searched through Facebook. She is imagined. She also belongs to a number: the number of female students in her cohort. When she arrives on campus, she is intercepted, she is looked for. Everyone is looking for her, everyone sees her. She is invited to parties, she is given all the attention. She also receives the attention of students who try to guide her and protect her. Perhaps no one knows who is Tiago, Pedro, or Diego. They blend into the mass of students running around, but people see her. She is also brought to a stage, she is shown, and she is admired. All around her, she sees the indistinguishable faces of the crowd. But she will be remembered. She is visible. She is visible as a woman. She is singled out because she is a woman. She is admired for the only fact of being a woman. Her body is sexualized from the very first day she appears on a list.

The first encounter of the female student on campus reveals one aspect of her identity: her visibility as a woman. Faulkner (2011, 284) argues that: "women engineers tend to get pigeon-holed by their colleagues into certain stereotypically feminine identities—most commonly as (hetero)sexually available or as mother—identities which have nothing to do with the job and which can be extremely problematic." Faulkner explains that women are categorized as either "real women" (heterosexual and attractive to men) but not "real engineers" or engineers but not real women. Women are sexually visible or, in other words, women are seen as sexual beings. Furthermore, Faulkner points to serious consequences of visibility. Being sexually visible is related to increased aggressions against women, such as sexual harassment (Faulkner 2011). However, the term visibility does not make clear the power dynamics and processes that bring this state. Women did not choose to be visible in all of these ways. The visibility was imposed, as was the violence that followed. Who or what *made* her visible?

On stage, the female student is not only desired, she is not only seen. In *Miss Bixete*, the female engineering student is put under the spotlight to be touched, yelled at, filmed, pressured to

undress, in a performance that is almost theatrical. She is made visible by the students that surround her, by the colleagues that brought her onstage, and by those who insist that she continue playing along. This attack on the female body sends messages similar to the ones Rita Segato (2010) argues are communicated through feminicide. On the one hand, the treatment of the one female body sends a clear message to that particular student and to all women on campus. Women are objects to be controlled and disciplined by men. On the other hand, the female body is used for the purpose of this initiation ritual, for newly admitted male students to bond, to show to each other their power and aggressiveness and to reaffirm the status quo of masculine power. By analyzing *Miss Bixete* through the context of feminicide, we observe the process of transforming the female student into a sexual object and the impunity that this behaviour receives from the administration.

By observing the process through which female students *become* visible in certain ways, sexualized and objectified, we observe that they *are* not visible or invisible. They are *made* visible. They are *made* invisible. In this chapter, it becomes clear how an initiation ritual transforms the female student's identity to create a statement on the role of women on campus. However, women are not lacking agency, as they can understand rapidly the process of initiation and attempt to challenge it. In that way, Marcela chose to become invisible to her colleagues as a woman, as a sexually available woman. To do so, for instance, she avoided participation in activities and rarely engaged in conversations with colleagues. Moreover, the process through which women are made visible or invisible has as objective, not only to influence the identity of women and exclude them, but also to reinforce and solidify practices of male bonding and perform male domination and female subordination. Putting on a show for an exclusively male audience, who are going to act in unison (singing the same anthem, yelling similar slogans, and being in close proximity) strengthens their identity as a group and reinforces membership.

Chapter 2: Rape Culture and the University Party

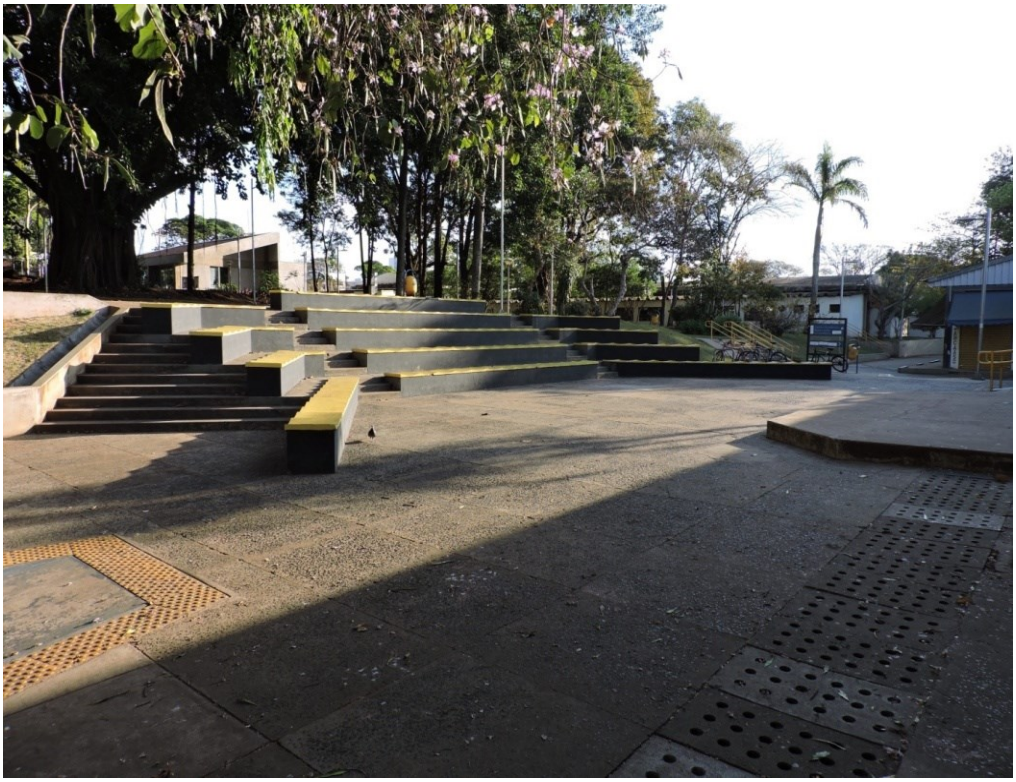

Image 6. *Palquinho* space outside the CAASO building, where student parties take place.

I Will Never Sleep Again

Past midnight on a Wednesday night, I lie in bed unable to fall asleep. The *república* (shared house) across the street is hosting a party. A parked car blasts music at full volume. The beat makes my apartment building shake. From time to time, the crowd loudly yells "*Nunca Mais Eu Vou Dormir!*" (I will never sleep again), the catchphrase from the João Brasil 2016 song "Michael Douglas." Parties are a central part of student life at the University of São Paulo in São Carlos (USP-SC). Engineering students, under the stress of a heavy course load, various extracurricular activities, and many late nights studying, attend parties to release pressure. Female students enjoy going to parties but critique the gender dynamics present at social events.

> As soon as I have some time off, I like to go to a party to socialize. It is a fun way to meet new people in a more informal space… Experiences of *machismo* will always exist. It is inevitable. Someone will try to take you by force, try to do something to you. Sadly, I am

> used to [this behaviour]. I do not think it is normal, but if I try to avoid doing things because of that, I will end up doing nothing (Camila, Computer Engineering Student).

Every week offers a new array of social events organized by shared houses, student associations, the CAASO athletics, the CAASO (student centre), and other student groups. Hosting events is a great way to raise funds to finance future activities and projects for members. Parties take place in venues on or off campus, although the university administration banned parties and alcohol on campus several years ago. On campus, the most popular events are *palquinhos*, free open air student-organized parties with local bands, DJs, or singers, taking place outside the student centre. Off campus, most parties take place in shared houses or larger venues. In this chapter, I discuss gender dynamics during university parties, using as an example the biggest event of the year, Tusca.

Since 2009, the *Coletivo de Mulheres do CAASO e da UFSCAR* (women's collective) is outspoken against gendered abuse during social events. The first action of the women's collective was to manifest against *Miss Bixete* (Miss Freshman), a "beauty contest" for newly admitted female students (see chapter 1). The collective has also pressured event organizers to change party posters that objectified the female body and to stop selling tickets at different prices for women and men. Frederica, a senior environmental engineering student, remembers the party ambiance before the university prohibited all events on campus:

> Parties used to take place twice or three times a week inside the CAASO. They gave life to the campus and people liked that a lot. Many different types of parties took place. Usually, each department's student association organized them. The student centre allowed associations to host one party each semester inside the student centre room. Association representatives looked for different ways to make the party a success to get more money for their activities. Often times, it came down to the idea that there are few women on campus, so the party should attract more women to attract more men. Then, we will have a great party. The discussion around party posters was very present. Women from the collective always discussed that. Week after week, party posters placed women in an object place, as a sexual symbol. ...Party tickets were also an issue. Precisely, the issue was trying to attract more women because the party would be good if there were more women. Women will get

drunk and we'll be able to take advantage of that.

Moreover, Frederica describes a party that took place inside the student centre room several years ago: *Primeiro as Damas* (Ladies First). The name of the party referred to the concept of the event. In fact, ladies did go first. For a couple of hours, the student room welcomed women only, offering them a tequila open bar. According to Frederica, the party organizers attempted to get women drunk before inviting men in. Although Frederica denounces certain party practices, she insists on how important social events are for students. Frederica states: "I think [parties] are a great socializing space. But spaces that should've served that purpose instead centred on a dynamic of gender inequality: how to take advantage of women, and how to use women as objects to promote your own interests." Party posters are less of an issue now, but gendered abuse during parties remains a central concern for the women's collective.

Students often group parties into two main categories: "traditional parties" (also known by some students as "hetero" or *"heteronormativo*"; falling within traditional gender norms) and "alternative parties." The term "traditional parties" refers to an array of large events taking place yearly in shared houses or larger off-campus venues, related to the *Grupo de Appoio a Putaria* (GAP), CAASO athletics, and established shared houses such as *Irmãos Metralha* (The Beagle Boys). Activist students, the LGBT community, and members of the collectives use the terms hetero and *heteronormativo* to describe the gender dynamics that take place in most university parties, where men aggressively chase after women. Additionally, organizers frame certain events, such as *Miss Bixete*, as traditional to defend their place on campus when they come under criticism. A few years ago, in response to what they describe as the high levels of *oppressão* (oppression) at parties, student associations, architecture students, some shared houses, and collectives such as Nuances (an LGBT collective) started organizing smaller events that would better represent their interests. Students use the term *oppressão* to describe physical, sexual, and verbal abuse during parties, especially toward women, black students, and LGBT students. "Alternative parties" promote a safe and inclusive space and publish a clear statement against abuse in their event invitations. During alternative events, students can alert the organizers if they witness any aggression or unwanted advances. The organizers will remove the abuser from the party and write their name on a list. I was not able to get further information on whether this list would be used during future events.

Alternative and traditional parties also have a clear difference in ticket price. Traditional events cost around 50 *reais* (Brazilian currency), while alternative parties are about 20 *reais* and offer an even lower price for students who do not drink at the open bar. Some alternative events are also free, with the option to buy drinks on site. This is the case for the *palquinho*, an open air on-campus event. The price flexibility of alternative parties makes them more accessible to lower-income students. Evelyn, an electrical engineering student, explains that she prefers to go to alternative parties because she enjoys the ambiance, but also because they are more affordable. Nevertheless, she says: "Even though [parties] are expensive, they are not expensive for most students. USP is a very elite school. It's no problem going to these parties for most students. But for me, these parties were expensive." Finally, most students attend at least one traditional party during their undergraduate degree because they are an important part of the typical university experience. However, a smaller proportion of students attend alternative parties. Students attending alternative parties tend to share similar political views and social concerns, which are often incompatible with those of most students at USP-SC. In recent years, this population has become increasingly present on campus. For instance, they create collectives and participate actively in the student movement.

During my fieldwork, I attended an alternative party and a traditional party. In September, students in the women's collective invited me to *TropiCaos*, a party organized by architecture students in a shared house close to campus. In the information text of the Facebook event, the hosts welcomed visitors with the by now popular "*FORA TEMER!*" (TEMER OUT!), making a clear statement in opposition to the current government and its leader Michel Temer. The organizers promoted the event as "fleeing from the mundane and usual celebrations of our *San Carlense* routine" by proposing "an elevation of spirit through Brazilian music." They concluded with the signature phrase: "*NENHUMA OPRESSÃO SERÁ TOLERADA! Vem no respeito e dança!*" (NO OPPRESSION WILL BE TOLERATED! Come respectfully and dance!). I bought two tickets, for my partner and myself, a few days in advance. At the door, we attached the tickets to our wrists, forming a bright orange bracelet that we had to show at the open bar of beer and *corote* (a drink of *cachaça* and juice). We walked across a corridor that led us to the backyard patio of the house, where a small stage was ready to welcome a band from Piracicaba, a neighbouring city. For the rest of the night, the official DJ was a CAASO Sound Group member. Students were already standing in line for the bar, each bringing their own mug as is common at

university parties. I looked around among the small crowd to find some of the students I knew. Throughout the night, I met up with many members of the women's collective and a few students I had interviewed. Later on, when the band was playing, the singer shouted "FORA!" and people all around answered with conviction "TEMER!". The second party I attended was during a São Carlos university sports competition that takes place yearly for four days in a row and attracts more than 50,000 students daily from the biggest universities of the interior of the state of São Paulo (Tusca 2015). The *Taça Universitária de São Carlos* (University Cup of São Carlos; Tusca by its Portuguese acronym) is known as the biggest event of the year.

"Do We Deserve Tusca?": Parties During the Inter-University Sports Competition

On Tuesday morning, October 19, I make my way to the library, minutes away from the apartment I had rented for the 4 months of fieldwork. I walk on the side of the campus fence, by the construction site of a new apartment building, and through the mathematics campus entrance, with its own security post and guard. I almost fail to notice the crows of roosters as I pass the CAASO College. On what seems just another weekday morning, I pass one of the many male students on campus and notice something is off. He had shaved the hair in the middle of the head, leaving two sides of bright yellow dyed hair. In the following minutes, I become more attentive and see that it appears that most male students (but absolutely no female student) got new haircuts and dyed their hair yellow overnight. As I sit down in the group study room, which is unusually quiet, I realize this is Tusca week. Students are not rushing to class, study spaces are empty. But Tusca was not to start before Thursday. By the end of the weekend, I will get used to the sight of students covered in mud and fake CAASO tattoos, simultaneously drunk and hangover, walking in groups from their homes to the buses that will take them to the parties.

Tusca, organized by the private company Atmosfera, collaborating with athletics CAASO and athletics UFSCar (São Carlos Federal University), is the biggest event of the year. A sports competition between six major universities of the region, Tusca attracts thousands of people every day. The event takes place from Thursday to Sunday, offering various parties each day. Tusca parties are "traditional," partly because they have taken place for more than 35 years in São Carlos. On August 11, more than two months before the event, Atmosfera announced the opening of sales for the first set of the ticket packages, including all parties and concerts for the lowest price (165 *reais*). After that date, the price of ticket packages started increasing. At the

door, tickets for each event were available from 50 *reais* for daytime events to more than 100 *reais* for concerts. During Tusca, concerts host some of Brazil's most famous musicians. In 2016, the two major music attractions were Anitta (a pop singer known for her *Show das Poderosas)* and DJ Alok (a young prominent DJ in the Brazilian electronic scene). All parties and concerts took place in a large open-air venue situated on the city outskirts. Private shuttle buses, vans, and taxis drove students from Campus 1 to the venue and brought them back at the end of each party, charging a small fee.

I first heard about Tusca when I asked participants about their experience during parties. Understanding Tusca was a challenge for me, as students often assumed it to be common knowledge. Not only was the concept of the event difficult to understand, but the vocabulary used to describe different parties required knowledge of specific words such as *tenda, corso,* show*,* and *esquenta*—creating a party jargon of sorts. During an interview with Catharina (chapter 1), a production engineering student, I asked her to tell me more about the event itself:

> C: Parties take place on Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, at the same time as the games. Athletes focus on the games, which take place on Saturday and Sunday. Parties during the day are the *tendas.* Until now, *tendas* did not have an open bar, but they will have one this year. And there are night parties, the biggest shows. Other than that, people usually do *esquenta* (pre-gaming) before the *tenda*.
> M: What time do the *tendas* start at?
> C: I don't know. At around 3 pm.
> M: So people start drinking before *tendas*?
> C: They start drinking while they have a barbecue. Because it is 4 days of partying, people get into drinking right after waking up. I never drank too much. People want to get drunk.

No holiday or study break coincides with Tusca week, but a student explained to me that no one attends classes from Thursday on, and many even start missing classes on Wednesday. Therefore, many professors cancel classes. Students visit campus for lunch or dinner at the university cafeteria or to attend the sports competitions. They spend most of their time at the party venue.

For more than 30 years, on the first day of the event, Thursday, was an opening party, the *corso*. The *corso* started with a crowd following a *trio elétrico* (a band playing on a truck) from

USP-SC campus 1 to UFSCar. In 2009, more than 30,000 students walked a 3.8 km trail to UFSCar, where athletics UFSCar prepared an open-air party with various bands (Redação São Carlos Agora 2011). Trucks carrying beer would follow the trail, distributing the alcoholic beverage to students. The city strongly opposed the *corso* after three deaths, in relation to the event, were reported in 2010 and 2011. In 2010, a student's body was found the morning after showing signs of asphyxia and head trauma. In 2011, a student was fatally hit by a beer truck and an elderly woman was hit by a student who, according to police, presented signs of alcohol consumption (Rodrigues 2012). Consequently, in 2011, the mayor of São Carlos, Oswaldo Barba, declared a ban on *corso* due to "the excess consumption of alcoholic beverages and the unfolding of the events" (Redação São Carlos Agora 2011). The mayor added that although the organizers followed the event's protocol and various entities collaborated to ensure safety, including the Military Police, the Municipal Guard, and firefighters, the city of São Carlos was not able to successfully host the event. Nevertheless, on Thursday of Tusca 2016, the first *tenda* included an activity inside the venue that reproduced the atmosphere of the *corso*. Following changes in the event's structure, citizens of São Carlos continue voicing their concerns about the place of Tusca in their city. In 2016, the title of a column about the event in the online local newspaper *São Carlos Agora* was: "Naked students, sleeping in trash containers, and defecating in the streets. Does São Carlos deserve Tusca?" (Rodrigues 2016).

On Friday night, my partner and I eat at a local restaurant that serves *pastel*, fried turnovers. Around us, students from various universities wear their university t-shirts with matching dyed hair and fake tattoos. I see the colour yellow which represents the CAASO (student centre) and red for Federal (UFScar). I ask my partner what the other colours represent. He believes red and black colours are for Unicamp, blue is for Unifei, and orange and back are for USP Ribeirao. Students are waking up from their *siesta*, still recovering from the afternoon party. I cannot tell if they are already drunk or still hungover. I look at them, fascinated. I am debating whether I should go to Tusca. I have a busy weekend writing scholarship applications. My partner, now a full-time intern at a local company, has no interest in reliving his Tusca days. Nevertheless, he believes I must have the Tusca experience before leaving the field. On Saturday, we spend the day in the group study room, where a chess competition is ongoing. I only leave for a few hours to help women's collective members distribute pamphlets to party-goers at the bus stop. I returned to the study room after students hopped on a bus to the *tenda* party. At night, the

room is empty and rain is pouring outside. I wonder if it is still possible to buy tickets for the last concert starting in a few hours. On the Facebook event, many students are ready to sell their concert tickets, unable to make it for another night out. My partner says many people also sell their tickets at the venue and there is ticketing at the door. Let's do it, I say.

We go back home and I start putting on a dress. I see my partner shaking his head in disapproval. You can't go like that, he says. Take your oldest clothes, they will get muddy, he explains. I follow the instructions and try to imitate the look of third-day party goers; a t-shirt, my oldest pair of jeans, and a pair of worn-out flats will do. We get to the buses early, by 11 pm, pay the driver, and are on our way to Tusca. With a significant delay to pick up a group of students from a shared house, we get there around midnight. We have to walk a long path to the venue, past food and drink kiosks. Once there, hundreds of people are lining up. We find someone selling tickets. At the entrance, someone scans our tickets and asks for an ID, then, a security guard makes a body check. Once inside, I see the giant stage, a covered party section, and big tents on the sides. Each tent has a sign with the name of a different kind of alcoholic or non-alcoholic beverage. On the Tusca website, the organizing company prides itself on offering 23,000 litres of beer, 5,500 litres of vodka, 8,465 litres of energy drinks, 3,200 litres of soda, 5,000 litres of juice, and 6,000 litres of water (Tusca 2015a). Bartenders have already poured several plastic cups on a table to give them out rapidly. A band is playing the opening act. The singer says a few words, which incite people to throw their cups up in the air. The rain stopped and the ground is not too muddy, but we are getting wet from the vodka and beer of falling cups. We leave early, at 5am, and take a bus home. While my experience at Tusca allowed me to visualize the ambiance of the party, the stories shared by female students are more telling of the gender dynamics of the event.

"I Went to Tusca Once; I Left Crying"

Aside from the many drunken incidents that occur during Tusca and profoundly disturb the inhabitants of São Carlos, who feel disconnected from the student lifestyle, the Tusca tradition of getting drunken four days in a row certainly increases the instances of gendered abuse experienced by female students, as well as other oppressions denounced on campus. On Saturday, I closely followed the Tusca Facebook Event and found some posts with pictures of female students who were missing since the last party. Several hours later, all the missing students were

safely found. However, no one was looking for the male students who disappeared throughout the night to be found sleeping in trash cans or on the street. The concern for female students was revealing of the fear of aggressions. In the days following Tusca, students shared several stories about Tusca in posts on the CAASO Facebook group or in the Tusca Facebook event. Many of the stories revealed gender dynamics and were similar to those I had heard during interviews.

Throughout interviews with female engineering students, a few party dynamics became clear. Many students reported that some men grab women by the arm and try to kiss them by force during parties. Although this is common at most traditional parties, students believe Tusca is far worse. According to Vitória (chapter 1), an environmental engineering student, the amount of drinking influences the number of aggressions toward women at Tusca:

> It happens that men grab you by the arm to bother you. They keep insisting. That happens a lot but less so when you're with a man. Then, nothing happens. In Tusca, I think it happens a lot, it is worse to walk on the street. More men try to get with you… People drink a lot more then. In Tusca parties the behaviour of the men is more aggressive.

As Vitória mentions, many female students see that they are harassed less during parties when they are in the company of a man. Júlia, an architecture student, remembers going to Tusca one year with a male friend:

> On the third day, I went with a friend, because he got an invitation for me. During the party, he had to protect me. Because, on the third day, many guys tried to get to me in an uncomfortable way. One even talked. I remember talking to him, I told him I did not want anything. …But I think because I was with a male friend it helped. Sometimes they would not even come to me, they would ask him if I was with him. They did not even ask me. He said: "No, she's with me." That's what set me free because he was there. If I had been with girl friends I would not have been comfortable, mainly because, on the third day, people lose it. They lose the line. People don't care they want to enjoy it.

While students feel safe when accompanied by a male friend, another student reported that when girls went to Tusca with a group of male friends, the guys often left their female friends to go

find girls.

Therefore, students search for alternative ways to attend Tusca parties safely. Adriana, a senior student in environmental engineering, had been to Tusca in her first year at USP-SC and had a negative experience. She returned with a different strategy in mind, when years later one of her younger roommates wanted to experience the famous party:

> I went to Tusca once and left crying. If you are in a group or with your boyfriend, nothing happens. If you are alone, you cannot go around. Everyone puts their hands on you, talks to you. I left crying. During one Tusca, we organized to go together and went well prepared. We were four students with feminist t-shirts, three girls, and a gay guy. We were ready to stay together and face any situation. We were able to have a safer Tusca. Sometimes I wonder, it seems done on purpose, it appears as the only goal that girls get drunk enough so that it is not the man's fault.

Female students worry about their safety during Tusca, and other big events, but they are still interested in participating. In line with the interests of female students, women's collective members wish to create actions that will positively impact the experience of women. They do not necessarily believe that Tusca should not occur or that women should not attend the parties. Rather, they campaign to improve Tusca so that it will become an enjoyable party for all students.

Esquenta Das Minas: The Women's Collective Prepares for Tusca

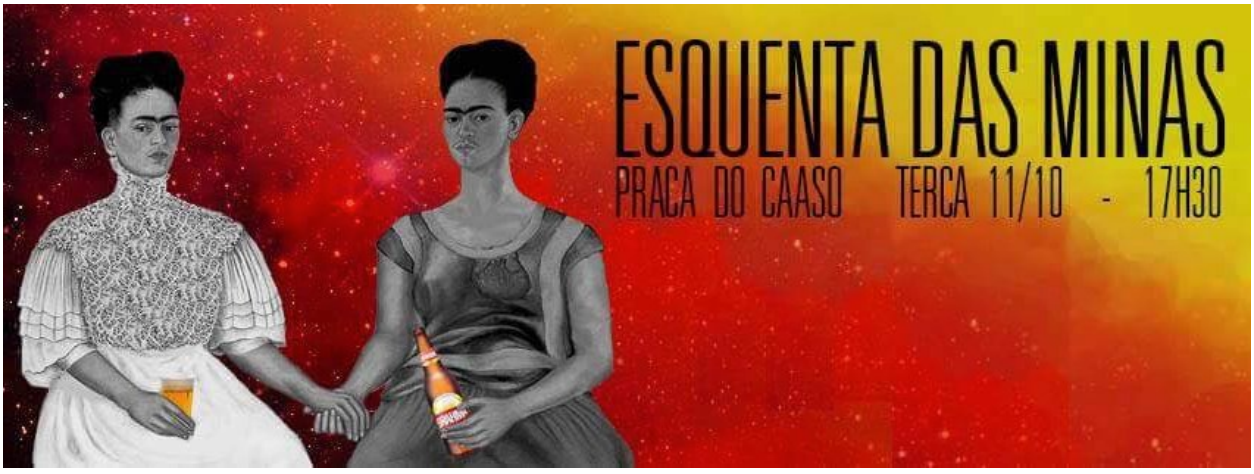

Image 7. Image created by students to promote the *Esquenta Das Minas* event.

Since the beginning of the second semester of the year, women's collective members clearly expressed the need to have a campaign during Tusca. For the women's collective, Tusca was one of the main concerns, as the group receives many reports of abuse happening during the parties. A few weeks before the event, an image of the intended 2016 GAP t-shirt reached one of the members. Every year, the GAP creates a t-shirt to sell for Tusca. That year's intended image portrayed the CAASO mascot, a pig, eating a live pigeon, smoking, and drinking while killing a dragon. In the background, a female pig cheerleader was wearing a see-through t-shirt, showing her breasts, and a short skirt, on which the initials of a São Carlos women-only shared house appeared. The students who live in the shared house have long been friends with GAP members. Nevertheless, in recent years, they have questioned certain activities of the GAP. Enraged by the image, students from the shared house, the women's collective, and the student centre contacted the GAP to speak about the issue. Ultimately, the image was not printed on the Tusca t-shirt.

A couple of weeks before Tusca, during a collective's meeting, members decided to organize an event in response to the upcoming parties. We debated if it would be better to have a meeting to discuss the experiences of female students at the parties, or to talk about possible actions that the collective could take. Moreover, we briefly considered creating a space with all campus collectives to touch on the experience of other minorities. Finally, once we decided it would be a women-only event in which we would discuss both experiences and possible actions, we started thinking of ways to attract students to the event. We began sharing ideas for a name, image, and possible diffusion strategies. We decided on the name "*Esquenta das Minas*" (Pre-gaming of the Girls), a playful way to express our wish to get together to get ready for the party. A few students created an image for the Facebook event: two Frida Kahlos drinking beer. Two students were in charge of preparing activities and leading the meeting.

The week before Tusca, the women's collective hosted the *Esquenta das Minas* inside the student centre game room. About ten students attended the meeting, including three students who came to the collective for the first time. They were in their first year and wanted to know more about the parties. They wanted to live the university experience at its fullest but were also worried about possible negative experiences. To open the meeting, Brenda, an architecture student and member of the collective, read an excerpt from a text entitled "*Nosso Tempo é Agora*" (Our Time is Now) by Camila Pitanga (D'Ercole 2016):

> *Empoderamento* (empowerment) is consciousness of who we are, how we live, and what we want […]. Women's empowerment […] has led us to new places and strengthened us, one another, in marches and even in blocks of Carnival. On the internet, women have turned websites, blogs, and social networks into *espaços seguros* (safe spaces) for affirming identities. In these safe spaces, discussions about our lives became public and revealed oppression and violence in intimate and affective relationships. They helped create collective consciousness, form alliances, and amplify voices.

To begin a meeting, a student often reads a text or a poem, either written by them or quoted from another author. Sometimes, the text is about the specific event and introduces the topic or activities that will take place. Following Brenda's reading, Viviana (chapter 1) introduced the history of the collective and her experience during *Miss Bixete* to the new participants. Then, she explained that the meeting was a *formação* (training), referring to an informative meeting, about Tusca. Viviana stated that the collective does not place itself against Tusca, rather it argues that the spaces are not safe for women. In fact, many of the students involved in the collective were going to participate in Tusca parties. Then, she invited everyone to present themselves and share an experience they had lived during a party. For confidentiality, I will not share the specific examples the women gave of their experiences during parties. Generally, they described similar dynamics to the ones described above, adding a general concern about going back home alone at night. Often, students feared going home alone after a party late at night and had encountered difficult situations when men approach them on the street or in passing cars.

Following the presentations, Viviana talked about the GAP t-shirt images, including the issue that had occurred that year. She brought a couple of t-shirts from earlier years to show students. In 2010, she remembered, there was too much information on the image and some details went unnoticed. Therefore, she stressed the importance of being attentive to the messages that circulate on campus. Moreover, students talked about the lyrics of the CAASO anthem and its problematic content. Below is an excerpt (Podô 2009):

> *Nós somos lá de São Carlos*
> *viemos aqui pra zonear*

No esporte nós somos bosta,
nosso negócio é a cachaça!

E mesmo que nós não ganhe,
que nós apanhe, vamos brindar
A comida da diarréia
e as mulheres dão gonorréia!!!

A pinga queremos com limão;
mulheres com muito mais tesão!
Porém se a USP amada precisar da macacada,
*P*ta merda que cagada!*

Translation:

From São Carlos we come
We are here to party
In sports, we are shit
Our business is *cachaça* (sugarcane liquor).

Even if we don't win
When we lose, we toast
Food gives you diarrhea
Women give you gonorrhea.

We take our shots with lemon
We want more horny women
But if our beloved USP
Needs our crowd
Fucking shit, what crap!

During the second part of the meeting, we discussed possible measures women could take to help each other individually. Students suggested that if we saw a girl who looked very drunk, we should see if she was well and if she was with friends. They also proposed to follow the slogan "*Vamos Juntas*" (Let's Go Together), related to a movement that encourages women to go with others in a group on the way home. Students said if they saw a woman alone in the street, they could ask her to walk with them. They mentioned a sense of *sororidade* (sorority*)*. Another student suggested that they could talk with *bixetes* (first-year female students) to raise awareness of event dynamics. The third and last part of the meeting was a discussion about possible actions that the women's collective could take. Among other ideas, students proposed to create a poster campaign to raise awareness, to contact the company Atmosfera, and to create a list of phone numbers for women to call to denounce abuse. To conclude the event, a member of the collective read another text.

During the weekend before Tusca, a student contacted the women's collective to talk about an awareness campaign about *respeito, igualdade, equidade e diversidade* (respect, equality, equity, and diversity) between USP-SC and UFSCar at Tusca. They wanted a few representatives of the collective to take part in a radio interview at Radio UFSCar to talk about the initiative. The collective was not aware of the campaign, but Viviana and I went to Radio UFSCar on Monday afternoon to meet with the organizers in the hope of starting a new collaboration. Present were Natalia, a representative of the *Secretaria de Ações Afirmativas, Diversidade e Equidade* (Secretary of Affirmative Actions, Diversity, and Equity of UFSCar; SAADE by its Portuguese acronym); Leticia, the president of the *Liga Interdisciplinar em Saúde da Mulher* (Interdisciplinary League in Women's Health of UFSCar; LISMU by its Portuguese acronym); Lucão, the president of UFSCar athletics; and Sueli, the representative of the *Núcleo de Direitos Humanos of USP-SC* (Human Rights Nucleus of USP-SC). When we arrived at the radio station, Leticia and Natalia told Viviana and me about the campaign, which included posters for the party bus stops stating "*O onibus é público; nossos corpos não*" (The bus is public, our bodies are not) and distribution of male and female condoms within the party packages, which contained a t-shirt, a mug, tattoos, and other paraphernalia, at UFSCar and at USP-SC. At athletics UFSCar, where the party packages were distributed, nursing students were demonstrating the proper use of female condoms using a female pelvic anatomical model.

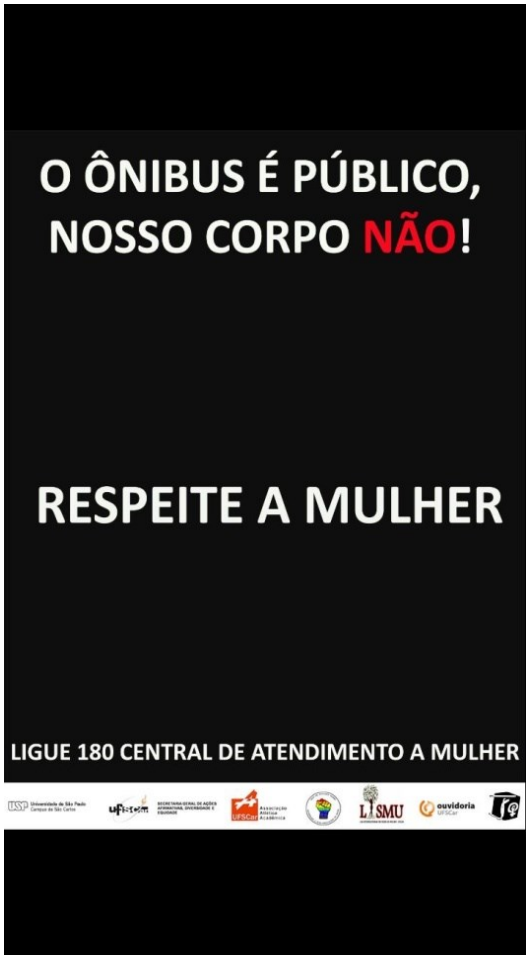

Image 8. Poster Campaign by various USP and UFSCar Groups.

At the interview, the host, Daniel Monteiro, presented the initiative as a partnership between both universities to "*conscientizar os participantes da USP da importancia sobre respeito, igualdade, equidade e diversidade*" (raise awareness on the importance of respect, equality, equity, and diversity). He asked each participant to talk about the organizations they represented and the activities they had prepared. To begin, Natalia explained that the main purpose of the campaign was to bring *visibilidade* (visibility) to issues such as *respeito* and *diversidade* during Tusca, a moment when many university students come together. Leticia added as main goal "to *empoderar* (empower) women as the protagonists of their own protection and as real owners of their bodies in relation to violence, STI prevention, and social interactions." Sueli stated that the Human Rights Nucleus was ready to receive denunciations together with the campus *ouvidoria,* an "informal, neutral, and independent body to which the USP community and citizens generally…can make suggestions, complaints, denunciations, and discuss problems

about the activities and functions of the University" (USP n.d.). Moreover, Daniel asked Lucão about UFSCar athletics' attempt to change the stigma around Tusca from a "*festival de maus comportamentos*" (Festival of bad behaviour) to what it really is, a sports cup and a *festa de integração* (integration party):

> Good afternoon, I am Lucão, the current president of the Athletics Association of UFSCar. Traditionally, athletics' reputation is that they are *machista* and so on. Honestly, as the current president, I want to change that. I would like to change this idea about athletics because athletics UFSCar has received with open arms students of all careers on campus. We have a great diversity of people who collaborate with those ideas and actions within athletics… This year we decided to engage with that and create a culture, work on the social aspects of Tusca. One of our campaigns this year, "Don't be a jerk," is about diversity and *machismo*.

After Lucão's intervention, Daniel asked Viviana to speak about the women's collective. Finally, Lucão gave a short run-through of the parties, games, and other activities that would take place from Thursday to Sunday. Following the radio interview, the group discussed ways to collaborate on the campaign. Lucão insisted that the women's collective could also collaborate with athletics UFSCar in the future. Natalia and Leticia took us to the UFSCar athletics where they showed us the booth with information about female condoms. Viviana and I went to USP to ask if female students had received the condoms within their party packages. In the following days, Viviana maintained contact with Natalia, Leticia and Sueli to print the posters of the campaign, which we placed at the shuttle stops, and around campus.

On Tuesday, Viviana asked for all members to come to the meeting because of the many things that were going on. A total of 11 students showed up to the meeting, a record for the semester. After informing the members about the visit to the radio station and the campaign that USP and UFSCar were participating in, Viviana asked if we wanted to do our own campaign. Do we have time for that? Surprisingly, only two days before the beginning of Tusca, students were very motivated to create a women's collective campaign to *mostrar o coletivo* (show the collective). We decided to create posters to place around campus, as well as small pamphlets to distribute when the shuttle buses to the parties would leave. On Wednesday, I met three members

of the collective and we worked on the different posters and pamphlets. We created three posters with the following slogans: "*Não quer voltar sozinha ao Tusca? Vamos Juntas?"* (You don't want to go home alone after Tusca? Let's go together), "*Não é não. Assédio não é paquera. Estar bêbado não é desculpa.*" (No means no. Harassment is not flirting. Being drunk is not an excuse), and "*Sexo sem consentimento é estupro*" (Sex without consent is rape). We also reproduced some of the slogans in small pamphlets to distribute to students going to the parties. We printed them on purple paper. Online, we shared the images of the posters with the hashtag *#TuscaSemAssédio* (#TuscaWithoutHarassment).

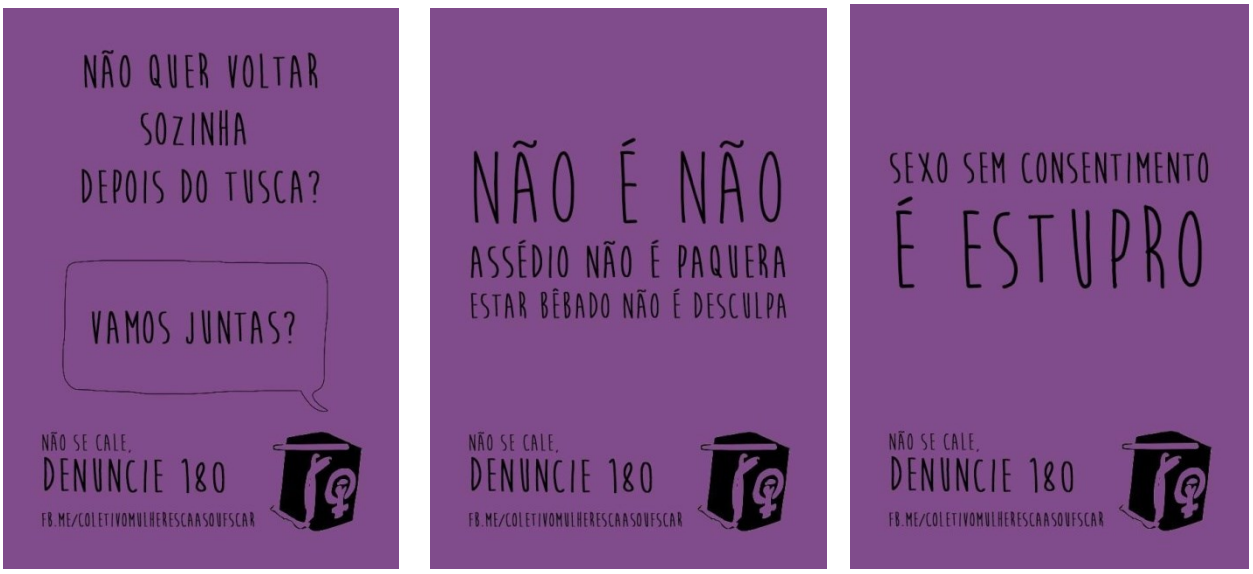

Image 9. Women's Collective Poster Campaign during Tusca.

On Wednesday and Thursday, we placed all posters around campus, at the shuttle stops, and inside the CAASO. A few people stopped to read the posters. We mainly got a positive response. On Saturday, we distributed pamphlets at the shuttle stop when students were leaving for the *tenda.* Most students were already tired from the party the night before, but the interest was very high. We did not receive any negative response. We mostly talked to female students, who, at first, were reluctant to take the pamphlets because they thought it was publicity. Once we explained we were doing a campaign against *assédio* (harassment) in Tusca they were really happy to talk to us. They often called their friends to tell them about our campaign. Many thanked us for the initiative. Male students stopped by to ask what it was all about. Many were curious about the pamphlet when we gave it to a friend of theirs. Some had no response, but

others thanked us for the initiative. Overall, it was a success! The posters were also widely shared online.

Adding to the efforts of the collective and other student groups, the organizing company, Atmosfera, created a campaign against violence. On September 14, Atmosfera, the company that organizes Tusca, took a clear stand against *machismo* posting on the Tusca Facebook page a picture of a woman placing her hands on her face to protect herself from a man's closed fist. A caption stated: "*Não Seja Um Babaca!*" (Don't be a jerk!). In the post text, Atmosfera informed: "*Vamos deixar o passado para trás assim como toda e qualquer forma de machismo. As mulheres não toleram falta de respeito e a Tusca muito menos! Lembre-se: Não é Não!"* (Let's leave the past behind us as well as any form of *machismo*. Women don't tolerate lack of respect and less so does Tusca! Remember: No is No!). Through a series of images, the company positioned itself against behaviours such as drinking and driving, homophobia, violence against women, and more. Moreover, the company also shared an image of a woman with the words "Fight like a Girl," explaining the increasing presence of women in martial arts. Finally, for the first time in the long history of the event, a complaints office was available at all parties to denounce situations of violence. However, this service was not widely promoted, with no mention made through the Facebook page.

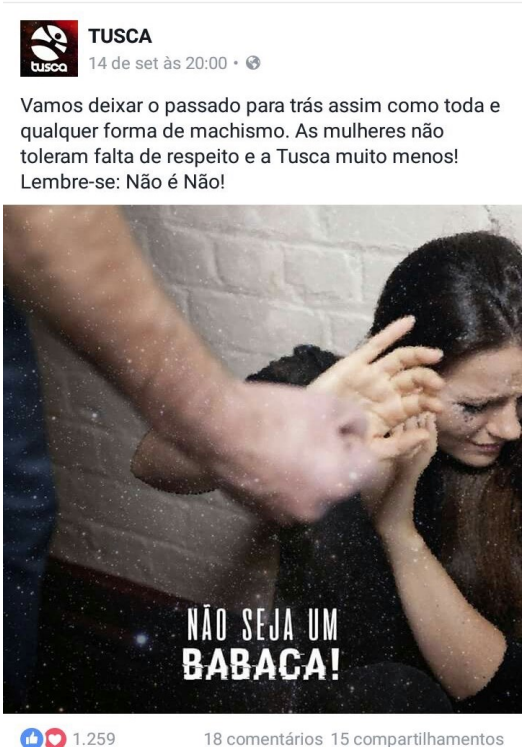

Image 10. Atmosfera campaign (Facebook Page TUSCA).

Discussion: Cultura do Estupro Seen Through the University Party

Female engineers argue that they stand out. As Wendy Faulkner (2011) states, they are visible as women, and as sexually available ones. In the university context, where the majority of students are young adults, women are constantly seen as sexually available. The only exceptions are for pregnant students, mothers, and, to an extent, students who are in a relationship. There is no better example of standing out in the crowd than a university party attracting some 50,000 people. A sports competition university party is an even more appropriate example. At a party, women become the target. They are few, but they are seen from afar. They stand out from the crowd. In that way, they are visible. They are desired. They are wanted. Parties can often be problematic because of the sexual and drinking culture that they entail. These are often reproduced through party posters where women are sexualized and through price incentives to welcome more women.

An architecture student told me about the common bragging among engineering students who boast about the girls they sleep with. Architecture girls are considered beautiful and the object of bragging. Additionally, men try to make out with as many girls as possible in one night, just grabbing any girl around. The acts of making out or having sex are often related to a sense of group belonging, through bragging and keeping count. In the context of campus gang rape, Sanday describes this behaviour as "fraternity gang rape." She argues that gang rapes are found across fraternities, athletic teams, and other male segregated settings. Sanday (2007, 7) uses "the word 'fraternity' in its broader sense to mean a group of persons associated *by or as if by* ties of brotherhood, or, any group or class of persons *having common purposes and interests."* In that way, male engineering students can be seen as a fraternity, as a strong group, perhaps a series of fraternities divided by cohort and program. Sanday continues: "The commonality is male bonding in sex acts in which the males involved aid and abet the activity. [...] The woman involved is a tool, an object, the centrefold around which boys both test and demonstrate their power and heterosexual desire by performing for one another" (Sanday 2007, 7). Students affirm heterosexuality, in addition to male power.

Students, citizens of São Carlos, and the university administration have shown concern over the drinking culture at USP-SC. The abuse of alcohol during university parties has resulted in negative consequences, including death and violence. Taking action has included the ban of university parties and alcohol consumption on campus, the cancellation of the *corso*, and several

campaigns to encourage more responsible drinking. However, events such as Tusca continue to promote drinking by increasing alcoholic beverage quantities served on-site every year, now including gigantic open bars. Moreover, the concept of the event—several days of non-stop partying—encourages acute drinking. Some students believe the excessive amounts of alcohol at large events such as Tusca influences the numbers of abuse, rendering abuse common. In her study of fraternity gang rape, Sanday (2007:202) stresses the link between rape and alcohol, showing that "brothers often set the stage for sex by getting a girl drunk" and instances of "the dehumanization of women as sex objects." In the United States, Sanday (2007, 202) argues that "the continuation of the male-dominated, binge-drinking, casual sex, party culture together with the continuing tendency for women students not to report non-consensual sex explains why the nationwide statistics of rape on campus remain more or less the same." Furthermore, she argues that not only do men desire to engage in sexual activities during or after parties, but they feel entitled to having sex. Finally, Sanday concludes that sex contributes to male bonding.

Through rape, sex, and drinking, men attempt to prove their masculinity and heterosexuality. Adding to the drinking culture, students often link the athletics culture to *machismo* and aggressiveness. A sports competition is thus a big sports show where each university attempts to prove their superiority and each athlete is admired. While there are female athletes, they are often less encouraged to participate and face the difficulty of forming female-only sports teams in a male-dominated campus. Thus, the male athlete becomes the central figure of the event, especially as he joins the party on Sunday afternoon—as all winners are announced. Although the sports culture is valorized, the USP-SC anthem also makes reference to the fact that their team is not the strongest: "In sports we are shit. ...Even if we don't win." Indeed, UFSCar has won most competitions as it has a bigger athletics program and more students participating. To compensate for their lack of sports valorization, the anthem stresses their aggressive party culture: "We are here to party… Our business is *cachaça* (sugarcane liquor)... When we lose we toast…" Failing to express their aggressiveness through athleticism, USP-SC students show their masculinity through their male-dominance, party culture, drinking excess, and sex.

Chapter 3: Silencing Women's Voices on Campus

The *Coletivo de Mulheres do CAASO e da UFSCar* (women's collective) was the first attempt to *construir* (build) a feminist movement in the history of the male-dominated campus at the University of São Paulo in São Carlos (USP-SC). It was also the first attempt of a minority on campus to organize as a group to denounce inequality and abuse. For several years, the student population ignored the concerns of the women's collective. Members were often unheard at student meetings and referred to as *extremistas* (extremists), a belief that continues to exist among the campus population and serves to undermine the actions of the collective. For instance, Luisa, a student in environmental engineering, explained that although she sympathizes with the demands of the collective, she believes the measures taken are extremist. She argued that the actions taken by the collective served to *segregar* (segregate) people because they often instigated *brigas* (fights). Nevertheless, in recent years, the women's collective, Nuances (LGBT collective) and *Coletivo Elza Soares* (black students' collective), have increasingly occupied a central space in the student centre, by which they are regularly invited to general assemblies and meetings. Concrete issues brought to the student centre often lead to serious discussion and, eventually, to a change. However, certain members of the USP-SC population continue to challenge the discourses of collectives and minorities. In this chapter, I present three events exemplifying some of the barriers women encounter when they voice their concerns.

Talking Walls

Freshly arrived on campus, I explored the main libraries and study rooms, looking for possible spaces to conduct interviews. I decided to use group study rooms facing the Engineering Library, spaces that gave a sense of privacy. I was only concerned about a few details. Each room had windows toward an interior corridor, through which people could see inside. Moreover, I noticed that the rooms were not sound-proof and it was possible to hear the voices across the walls. By the end of the first month of the semester, when students were starting to meet for group projects and the campus was becoming busier, I met Isabelle for the first time. A militant member of the student movement, she participated in many groups, among others, the student association, the women's collective, and the LGBT collective. We met in one of the group study rooms and started a lively conversation. Isabelle was happy to meet someone from Quebec, who

had experienced the *Printemps Érable* 2012 student protests. I enjoyed hearing the details of student life through Isabelle's colourful descriptions. Our conversation was no louder than that of a group of male students in the room next door.

After an hour of interview, the group of students next door went from talking loudly to an almost absolute silence after a few seconds. While the space filled with the sound of our voices, I heard a few whispers next door. Then, the students started talking loudly again. Isabelle was telling me about her involvement in a youth social movement, which has a chapter for women. I asked her to tell me more about *Juntos*, the general movement, and *Juntas*, the women's movement. "*Juntos* is a youth collective that…" Suddenly, an interruption occurred. The men next door started banging aggressively on the wall that divided them from us. I could hear bursts of laughter. I was facing Isabelle, our eyes locked on each other. Her facial expression changed from excitement to irritation. I felt confused, surprised, and afraid. Isabelle paused with a short nervous laugh and said "*asss*," in a sigh of exasperation. "…that started as part of the PSOL," she continued, finishing her sentence. While Isabelle proceeded to tell me more about the PSOL movement, the *Partido Socialismo e Liberdade* (Socialism and Liberty Party), I saw one of the male students come by our window. He was frowning with curiosity while searching to recognize us. He could only see me. Isabelle and I never discussed what happened that day.

It became clear that the students had heard parts of our conversation. Disrupting our interview showed discontent with the topic. Their laughter reinforced the idea that their behaviour was inoffensive, even funny. Such were my conclusions after a few hours of reflection. But at first, I tried to convince myself nothing had happened. Why did Isabelle not say a thing about it? The whole incident must have been a product of my imagination, a simple misunderstanding. But when I went through the events time after time, it sank in. I went back to the recording of the interview to find out that the banging had lasted 5 entire seconds. In the recording, I could hear the exact sound of the banging on the wall and the silence it had caused. During following interviews, I became overly aware of the surroundings. I constantly changed the places to meet participants, now prioritizing open spaces without walls. These spaces seemed more publicly exposed and other people's presence reassured me. I also conducted a few interviews in crowded spaces, where conversations went unnoticed.

This event allowed me to think about the many ways used to undermine female voices on campus. The men banging on the wall were objecting to and trying to sever female bonding and

building friendships and women-only networks on campus. They did not like, or perhaps feared, women talking to one another and developing alternative analyses and systems of norms and values. Creating bonds, women give one another confidence eventually to express alternative and perhaps contesting points of view publicly. Anthropologist Erica Lagalisse (2013) conducted ethnographic fieldwork among a Zapatista solidarity collective based in Montreal, focusing on the "private" or "backstage" activities of the group. In her work, Lagalisse (2013, 113) argued that:

> Although social movements have often been ontologized as 'civil society' and seen through the lens of particular 'organizations', they involve various scales of social activity, rely on 'backstage' interaction and confound boundaries of 'public' and 'private'.

In her study, Lagalisse analyzes the "backstage" activities of women of the collective as direct action. She documents how this action is described and thereby dismissed as "gossip" by men of the collective to undermine women's emergent power (Lagalisse 2013, 113):

> While this activity was maligned by many male comrades as 'gossip' and 'conspiracy,' anarchist women were doing no more and no less than practicing the direct-action political philosophy as expounded by anarchist men themselves. They took back the power to name their experiences, and cooperated autonomously outside of the hierarchical institutions biased against them—in this case the anarchist collective, as well as the state—and they planted 'seeds' of a new social order within the shell of the old.

By interrupting, men were, in part, ridiculing our conversation, equating our words to gossip. However, I kept asking myself: Why were they upset with a private conversation? We were only two women meeting in a closed room. Their reaction could also be a call for attention. For once, they felt left out from a conversation happening on campus. Perhaps they feared we were ridiculing them, by ignoring their opinions. Finally, the men's reaction shows the confused boundaries between "private" and "public" spaces and the danger men perceive when women reach out to one another.

USP-SC Daycare Presentation: "Sometimes It Seems Like No One Is Listening"

During the week of October 10, the MACACO (*Movimento Artístico e Cultural do CAASO;* Artistic and Cultural Movement of the CAASO) movement presented a week of free activities. Students of USP-SC created the MACACO movement several years ago, with the purpose of discussing, promoting, and expanding contact with Arts and Culture (*a Arte e a Cultura*). They propose that such aspects are central to understanding and transforming reality and encourage students and the city population to collaborate and interact beyond consumption, through debating and producing culture. In 2016, collaborating with São Carlos arts and culture collectives, the group organized the *Semana do MACACO* (MACACO Week) with various activities, such as *oficinas* (workshops), movie screenings, *saraus* (cultural gatherings), debates, and visual arts exhibits. Moreover, the week explored the theme of identity. The organizers chose to screen the following movies to address related topics, such as homosexuality and mental health: Fight Club, Zelig, Holy Motors, and In a Year of 13 Moons. On Monday at 12:30 PM, at the student centre room, the MACACO Week presented the first event, a talk about USP-SC *Creche e Pré-Escola São Carlos, COSEAS-USP* (daycare centre), "*Cine + Roda de conversa creches universitárias*" (Cinema + Round of conversation on university daycares). The main objective of the presentation was to raise awareness about the gradual closing of the USP daycare.

To begin with, the organizers showed the documentary "*Quando os Olhos se Abrem*" (When the Eyes Open), a 2015 production about the USP-SC daycare exploring the viewpoints of teachers, workers, and families on children's right to early education. Following the screening, Diana, an engineering student and mother, introduced the guest speakers: Professor Beatriz Boriollo, daycare coordinator, and Professor Dr. Anete Abramowicz, a Professor at the Department of Pedagogical Theories and Practices at the Federal University of São Carlos (UFSCar). The speakers discussed the main issues of the USP-SC daycare before opening the floor to comments and questions from the audience. Currently, the daycare has 60 children with a capacity of 90 and the university administration only accepts the admission of children with a sibling at the USP-SC daycare. The main goal of this restriction is the gradual closing of the daycare as a whole, as part of the budget cuts imposed by the university administration. Daycare teachers and workers are also encouraged to resign, as part of the *Programa de Incentivo à*

Demissão Voluntária (Voluntary Resignation Incentive Program), through which they receive financial compensation but lose their right to retirement. In fact, the university does not have the right to fire its workers without just cause and to close the daycare if children are already registered. If teachers do not resign and the daycare closes, they will be appointed to another office, in which their expertise will not be fully appreciated. Therefore, teachers, parents, and children have a lot to lose in this situation.

The speakers stressed that the USP-SC daycare is a country-wide example of teaching quality and an inspiration for the national fight for quality early childhood education. Moreover, they argued that the campus population needs to fight to maintain the daycare and to open new spaces, in view of future cuts in student services. Losing the right to daycare is of absolute gravity, they stated. Following the Keynote presentations, daycare teachers, parents, and students shared their opinions and concerns. Aline, a professor at the School of Engineering of São Carlos (EESC) and mother of two children attending the USP daycare, argued that the current restrictions for admissions to the daycare service was a gender inequality issue: "Here at USP-SC, there will only be gender equality with the same opportunities. Female students have to drop their studies because they have children. It is very difficult for girls." Aline's comment made reference to the burden put on the mother to take care of children and the lack of accountability on the father.

Even though the debate was fascinating to me, it was difficult to pay attention due to the constant noise made by students inside and outside the room. At the *palquinho* (the space situated outside of the CAASO room), a group of students was selling tickets for a party and using speakers to play loud music. The sound interfered with the presentation and a student asked them to turn off the music. Groups of students at the tables were playing cards or talking loudly, while others were playing pool right next to the presenters. Inside the room, students had set another table for selling party tickets. Throughout the talk, several people made attempts at *shushing* students, but all failed. Nevertheless, the speakers and other participants took this opportunity to describe USP-SC students' indifference toward daycare. A university professor referred to the daycare as not of first concern to students at USP-SC because its relevance is not recognized. He continued: "If there were an election today, students would not take part." Instead, he spoke about other issues that are important for most students. For instance, he spoke about parties and alcohol prohibition on campus as the kind of issues that could be joined to form a bigger

movement. Finally, a daycare teacher said: "Sometimes, it seems like no one is listening, but I know that each word spoken here will go forward." She added that perhaps students were like children who do not pay attention but later surprise us by having learnt their lesson. They hoped the words spoken during the event would resonate in some way with university students. This metaphor was well placed, particularly as students were *playing* throughout the discussion, an uncanny reminder of children's behaviour.

In the previous example, that of the interview, male students interrupted our "private" or "backstage" encounter to dismantle women's networking and organizing. In doing so, they served to acknowledge such meetings as "direct action," as a form of political activity. However, they disguised this acknowledgement by laughing out their actions as a prank or a joke. In this section, I described a presentation that took place in a public space in front of dozens of students. The organizers had provided microphones, a screen, and sound speakers. In my opinion, this was a public presentation. However, the response from the audience suggested otherwise and, once again, challenged the meaning of public and private. They dismissed daycare as a private problem not a matter of common concern for deliberation in a public forum. In Contesting Publics, anthropologists Sally Cole and Lynne Phillips (2013) explore public:private relations, showing the variation in the meaning and use of the terms over time. One of the concepts used in the literature is "public sphere," a term coined by Jürgen Habermas (1989) to describe "the political space within which citizens of liberal nations deliberate issues of 'common concern'" (Cole and Phillips 2013, 2). Critics of Habermas's "public sphere" have challenged the meaning of "common concern" or "matters of concern" arguing they reflect interests of one group (Cole and Phillips 2013, 2-3):

> Critics argue that *if* Habermas's public sphere exists somewhere, it is the product of an elite prerogative to exclude certain populations and points of view […]. Informed also by feminist and queer perspectives, critique has generated interest in exploring the existence of not just one public but multiple publics competing for a hearing on uneven ground that is *always* 'infiltrated by power.'

One of the main goals of the participants of the event was to reach out to the student population in the hope of pressuring the university administration to reconsider the gradual closing of the

USP-SC daycare. Students passing by did not seem to recognize daycare as a public concern and did not warrant taking up public space on campus, showing a disagreement among the population about public:private matters of concern.

Despite the lack of attention of the crowd, the participants continued to engage with the campus population, attempting to reach out to them. By occupying the space, the discussants and participants were creating an alternative public space in the hope of being heard. According to Cole and Phillips (2013, 3), alternative publics challenge the limits of the dominant public sphere:

> Those excluded—the politically, economically and sexually disenfranchised—may form their own counterpublics or what John Guidry (2003) calls 'popular publics'. These are alternative publics that work to redraw the boundaries of dominant public spheres, a perspective that highlights the potential dynamic interplay among popular or alternative publics.

Later, I interviewed a student mother who had been a speaker at the event. She explained that she was the one to have requested the space for the presentation many weeks prior. Together with daycare teachers and other mothers, they had contacted speakers, created t-shirts and banners, and prepared the presentation. Indeed, they had carved the space for themselves, creating their own public stand from which to reach others.

The Women's Collective, the Black Students Collective, and the LGBT Collective Meet During Student Elections 2016

Founded in 1953 when EESC was established in São Carlos, Centro Acadêmico Armando Salles Oliveira (CAASO) is the student academic centre that represents students of USP-SC. With its main goal being to defend public education and teaching quality, CAASO is a central figure in both campus history and national politics. For more than 60 years, CAASO has participated in various strikes and mobilizations, such as during the 1963 strike to end the military regime of President João Goulart and in the 1980s' *Movimento de Redemocratização* (movement for re-democratization) (CAASO n.d.). Throughout the years of dictatorship and fierce censorship, CAASO was strongly present by publishing its own newspaper, *Jornal Mural*,

exposing news on the abuses and crimes committed by the military regime. After the end of the dictatorship, the force of the CAASO as a national voice weakened as it faced serious financial problems, including a large debt to the *Fundo Universitário Estudiantil* (Student University Fund). Since 2000, infrastructure losses added to the financial burden. Some student directors stole money from newspaper sales funds and from the funds for the *Fundo Universitário de Bolsas Estudiantis* (a fund for student bursaries) (CAASO n.d.). Recent decades have been characterized by tensions between the CAASO and certain groups of students with different interests, including the *Grupo de Apoio à Putaria* (GAP), organizers of the *Miss Bixete* and other events. To show their influence on campus, such groups often present themselves to elections to create pressure. Yearly held elections are central to student life, as students share their interests and their main expectations of the academic centre.

Every September, students start forming various interest *chapas* (parties) for the CAASO elections held at the end of the academic year. The newly elected student party has a one-year mandate. In 2016, only one party presented their candidature for the 2017 mandate, *Chapa (R)exista* (Rexist Party). In its proposal letter, the *Chapa (R)exista* affirmed its main goal was to *resistir* (resist) cuts to student services and *permanência estudiantil* (student permanence), efforts to support students' completion of their degrees, especially related to financial difficulties. Also, they denounced threats to student spaces and events, and on-campus *oppressões* (oppressions) (Chapa(R)Exista 2016). Moreover, in the letter, the *chapa* affirms (Chapa(R)Exista 2016, 1):

> We want to strengthen relations between CAASO and all groups and collectives of the university and students, by expanding a healthy relationship of mutual help among entities to build activities and promote experiences within or outside USP, all with a responsible and transparent management.

During the process of *chapa* formation, the different *chapas* go through informative workshops about the history of CAASO, bureaucratic aspects of the academic centre, and main goals of the student executive. As part of the effort to strengthen relationships between the CAASO and student collectives, Isabelle and Jéssica, the two only female members of the *Chapa (R)exista*, proposed to hold a meeting with campus collectives. In a later interview, speaking about her main intention in presenting the idea of the meeting, Isabelle says:

> An extremely important question is to speak about *oppressões*. If your academic centre cannot welcome you if you are black, *pardo* (term used to refer to Brazilians of mixed ethnic ancestries), indigenous, LGBT, or a woman, it is in big trouble because it should represent you. And if the academic centre represents women or LGBT, it does not stop representing men, white, heterosexual, or cis students. Actually, it will represent both equally. That's when people complain. [White male students] want to have it their own way. They want to have their privileges reproduced by the academic centre.

Isabelle and Jéssica invited the *Coletivo de Mulheres do CAASO e da UFSCAR* (women's collective), NUANCES (the LGBT collective), and *Coletivo de Negros e Negras Elza Soares* (black students collective) for the meeting taking place on a Wednesday lunch break inside a classroom space.

At the meeting, students had placed the tables to form a circle, around which were 5 members of the women's collective, 2 members of the black students collective, and 3 members of the LGBT collective, as well as about 5 representatives of the *chapa*, including three male students, Isabelle, and Jéssica. Isabelle and Jéssica opened the event by stating that acting together with other collectives was central to having a more representative space and hearing minorities. The meeting would begin with each collective presenting their history and current projects, then, we would open a space to speak about experiences of oppression on campus, and, if time allowed, we could have a debate on different forms of action. Before starting, each person introduced themselves. One of the three male student representatives from the *chapa* said his name and added, in a laughing voice, that he was obviously part of no collective. Isabelle interrupted him to say he was part of the *chapa* and that was why he was there. As he will be central to the event, I will call him Marcos. Marcos was not in a specific position of power in the *chapa*, quitting his participation in student government only a few weeks after the event. While I had seen the other male representatives around campus and in other events, I had never seen Marcos before. Isabelle and Jéssica proceeded to read a text written for the meeting. Here is an excerpt of my notes from the speech:

> There are many types of oppressions on campus and we will only focus on some of the

> most present ones. If oppression exists, it is because privilege exists. Oppression has psychological as well as physical consequences, such as suffering violence because of who you are and because you do not correspond to the imposed standards. Even though we all suffer, there are those who suffer simply because of who they are. The most important thing is to listen and not silence.

Following the presentation, each collective gave a short history and described the main goals of their group. I will briefly describe the interventions of the Nuances collective and the *Coletivo de Negros e Negras Elza Soares* (see chapters 1 and 2 for information on the history and current actions of the women's collective).

In 2015, students created a Facebook group to welcome new LGBT students to campus. They wanted to show their strong presence on campus, which was often hidden in the past. During orientation week, collective members created posters to place around campus, the first concrete action of the group. Coming together as a group inspired them to continue efforts to create a more welcoming campus for LGBT youth. They created the Nuances collective and defined their main goals and demands. One of their main actions is to end the *Trocado* party, an event that encourages students to dress as the opposite gender, because of its transphobic character.

In 2016, a group of black students on campus created a Facebook group to speak about racial relations on campus. Through this media, students started meeting and reached a common political stance. They formed the *Coletivo de Negros e Negras Elza Soares*. The main issue they raised was the lack of race quotas and institutionalized racism on campus. Comparing the University of São Paulo (USP) to federal universities, which already have quotas, and considering USP's influence in Brazil, they believe it is important for the university to create positive change. The collective demanded quotas to increase the numbers of black students on campus, which would in turn increase *representatividade* (racial diversity).

Following the presentations, Isabelle invited members of minority groups to share experiences of oppression. Marcos, a member of the *chapa*, questioned each intervention, turning the space into a close cross-examination of personal accounts. In this section, I present a few examples of exchanges which illustrate the ambiance of the meeting. Marcos was not aggressive and kept a laughing tone throughout the meeting, he even managed to close the event by

concluding on the importance of dialogue and debate. By turning students' personal experiences into jokes, he delegitimized their voices and their relevance to the public space (a space for serious discussion).

A member of the black students collective exemplified the positive consequences of racial diversity with an example of change. He stated that the increase of blacks in psychology and social sciences resulted in further research on racism and its effects. Right away, Marcos responded that perhaps such specific psychological demands or needs did not exist before. Rather, it was psychology that had adapted to a new reality.

A female student from the LGBT collective explained a complex situation that occurred in the physics department (IFISC). At IFISC, after a teacher retaliation strike, students created a Facebook group to encourage anonymous reporting of abuse. The principal called the students to discuss the denunciations made on the group and said that it was wrong to publicly spread such reports without knowing if they were true. Moreover, they stated, following the code of ethics of USP, the administration cannot expose teachers and such cases are processed internally. If confirmed that a professor commits a wrongdoing the most they can do is to relocate them to another campus. Following the explanation, Marcos said that students should have started with a dialogue with the professors involved and the administration, instead of fighting them directly.

Isabelle then shared a personal experience. During the strike, students picketed inside a university building. A man shouted for the students to leave the space. However, Isabelle refused and remained seated. She told him that an individual's right cannot overlap a collective right. The man told her that then the girl from Rio should not have denounced the men's collective, referring to a recent gang rape case. Marcos exclaimed that in fact the man's logic made sense and laughed. Earlier, Isabelle had mentioned the use of jokes or derogatory comments by professors in the context of the classroom. For example, once in class, a professor had argued that women had fewer neurons insinuating they were less intelligent. Marcos questioned if perhaps the argument was real. Seconds later, he pointed to his iPad and said that he had found the same information in Wikipedia. A female student from the LGBT collective said that a professor in computer engineering would only recall the names of female students, would repeat that women's logic is different, and would get frustrated when a female student challenged him on his comments. As a result of his behaviour, female students isolated themselves in class and avoided participation because they felt deeply uncomfortable. Marcos asked: "Only because he

remembered their names they isolated themselves?"

The hour allocated to the meeting had passed, but the students continued a back-and-forth conversation with Marcos. Women's collective members had not spoken, they rather appeared paralyzed under the attacks of the student, and Isabelle had left the room enraged. I had scheduled an interview in the study room situated two minutes away from the classroom, but could not get myself to get up and leave. I pushed the interview for 10 minutes before heading out. When I arrived at the interview, I could not chase the event out of my head. I was raging and could not focus on the interview. I wondered: How did the other students feel? Are they going to discuss what just happened? How can I describe what had happened? Later, I asked Viviana (chapters 1 and 2) and Isabelle to comment on the event.

Viviana:

> [Isabelle] started talking about her own experience and it was nice until the guy intervened. There was a male student who questioned [the experiences] of other students. He was questioning not because he was curious but because he wanted to provoke students. He wanted to see how well prepared they were. He wanted students to lose their arguments. It started with one of the male students from the Elza Soares collective. Then, when female students started speaking about *machismo*, he went right to the point. He was more intolerant and did not understand.
>
> The meeting lost its main focus because female students kept trying to explain to him [their experiences]. Female students [from the women's collective] felt discouraged to share their experiences because he would keep asking them questions about it. The event was specifically [organized with the purpose] of speaking [about experiences of oppression]. It was the space where we would feel comfortable to talk about our experiences and no one would question them. Instead, it was very uncomfortable. [Isabelle] tried to explain by giving examples such as: "imagine if it were you in this situation." He did not understand and she left.
>
> We were in a difficult situation, the women from the women's collective as much as people from other collectives who understood the situation. Personally, I did not want to speak because at that point he was not open to understanding anything. You spoke. I was

> happy you spoke because I was in disbelief and did not want to talk. But it was bad, really bad because it is bad to realize people still think that way […].

Isabelle:

> If I had stayed, I would have repeated: "We are not here to engage in dialogue. We are here to speak and you are here to listen. If you want to form a student party you need to see and say: "we are failing here and here." If a black person comes to me to tell me that I am being racist, I am going to apologize. If the person were a friend of mine, I will try to understand to never repeat the same mistake. If not, I would find someone closer to me because I do not want to create further discomfort. I will apologize and try to never do it again.

Marco's intervention undermined the relevance of the meeting. By cross-examining each statement, he tried to prove that there was no such issue as racism, homophobia, and sexism. The ridiculing of students' experiences served to shame them and silence them.

Cross-examination and ridiculing are examples of discursive strategies used to diminish the impact of women's voices. In her essay "'Feminist theory is proper knowledge, but…': The status of feminist scholarship in the academy," feminist ethnographer Maria do Mar Pereira (2012) examines the treatment of feminist scholarship by non-feminist scholars. She argues that feminist scholarship's value is only acknowledged partially. Although recognized as generating knowledge, feminist work's critical intervention is negatively described. In her study, she looks at discursive strategies used in everyday interactions to separate the two aspects and diminish the value of feminist work. For instance, she describes discursive strategies used in the classroom, where non-feminist academics present feminist work to their students. One of her examples is when she attends a lecture in a British university (Pereira 2012, 292):

> While writing this article, I attended a lecture for an undergraduate course in a British university and listened to a non-feminist lecturer describe a range of theories put forward to explain a particular social process. At the very end, he mentioned feminist approaches. One PowerPoint slide summarized explanations proposed by feminists; the next had the title 'Maybe, but ...' and offered two points that framed those proposals as being easily

> dismissible and having limited applicability. Each point was introduced with a (sexist and heteronormative) joke that elicited much laughter from students.

In this example, Pereira points to two discursive strategies: adversative claims and humour. Throughout her essay, she explains how academics describe the contributions of feminist work only to rapidly add a "but" or another adversative conjunction to underline the limits and epistemic boundaries of feminist scholarship. Moreover, the use of humour in the classroom is an attempt to ridicule the feminist work.

Isabelle and Jéssica's desire to bring together collectives and *chapa* members to discuss issues affecting minority groups on campus shows an initiative to create a new public space. This was an attempt to bring to a public forum what the collectives share privately within their groups. Moreover, by bringing issues of gender, sexuality, and race to a public space, they were trying to push the boundaries of what are considered matters of concern on campus. The reaction from one student of the student government body exemplifies the difficulty of changing the gender status quo and the use of a power position to silence, ridicule, and thus undermine the message brought by the collectives. Nevertheless, following the meeting, Isabelle and Viviana both agreed that there was something positive that had happened at the event. They were able to gather the groups and started a conversation. Moreover, the other two male students from the *chapa* did not interrupt students, only intervening at the end of the meeting to show their support with the collectives and their interest in better understanding their struggles.

Discussion: Discursive Strategies and Matters of Concern

This chapter explored three examples of ways that women and minority groups on campus try to mobilize, in turn revealing several strategies other members of the campus utilize to undermine their voices. According to feminist anthropologist Lynne Phillips (2013, 80):

> […] We need to direct attention both to how spaces to which people are invited may be inhabited in innovative ways *and* to how the creation of new public spaces—what Miraftab (2004) calls 'invented' spaces of social mobilization—can shift the terms of state invitations. 'Invented' spaces are often marginalized, erased or criminalized—associated with 'uncivil' behaviour—but they also often harbour ways of imagining and speaking

'otherwise' to social change.

Feminist activists on campus attempt to occupy existing spaces and new ones to create social change. When the women's collective was created, there was no space for feminist activists in *espaços mistos* (mixed social spaces), i.e. open to men and women, such as student government, activist groups, collectives, and extracurricular activities. Members would participate in meetings of the student government but were not listened to. Therefore, they organized student demonstrations and campaigns to reach the student population. Initially, they reached out to women on campus and held women-only meetings, creating new public spaces. Today, they are invited to mixed meetings, such as student government assemblies, and are sometimes able to influence the decision-making process in these conventional settings. Nevertheless, their impact is always controlled by constant resistance. In the face of this resistance, feminist activists organize new alternative mixed spaces. For instance, the meeting of the collectives was intended to be an *espaço seguro* (safe space) to share the difficulties minorities face on campus. The closed-doors mixed meeting would offer a chance for student government representatives to engage with students of the collectives. While the meeting allowed a powerful exchange of ideas, it was constantly interrupted by Marcos, a student who questioned and cross-examined each claim made by the collectives' members.

The examples of interruption presented in this chapter show men's efforts to maintain gender status quo. Women face a constant challenge as they try to introduce new viewpoints and concerns into mixed social spaces. Such undercutting of women's discourse is seen from the very first attempts at organizing. According to Lagalisse (2013, 113), within the Zapatista solidarity collective in Montreal, "women's conversations in 'private' homes about 'personal' relationships embodied attempts to steer the movement in a feminist direction and to call male power into question." My conversation with Isabelle was interpreted similarly as a threat to male power on campus. Although we held the meeting behind closed doors, men felt entitled to put an end to or, at least, unsettle our discussion. When women attempt to move beyond women's only meetings and private discussions, as they either try to join "public" conversations in mixed spaces or create their own, they are met with similar resistance. When such resistance does not come in the form of aggression, it is expressed through discursive strategies. In the case of the Collectives' meeting, students drafted a very specific space with clear boundaries, stating the purpose of the

event and the outcome they expected. However, Marcos was able to slowly dismantle the discussion through a controlled and systematic use of laughter and questioning. He showed his engagement as playful and honestly curious, while ridiculing the experiences of the collectives' members and preventing any real discussion from taking place.

While women's voices are constantly monitored, women's concerns are dismissed as secondary by declaring them to be "personal" rather than matters of common concern. Although participants of the USP daycare event directed their presentation to the campus population, students ignored the speakers because they did not deem the topic to be a "matter of concern." The discussion around childcare education is seen as personal and beyond importance to the community. Nevertheless, participants were proud to occupy this space and hoped for a change to come from this encounter. The effort of the daycare mothers and teachers to move the conversation from their allocated space to a "public" space shows an attempt to redraw the boundaries of dominant public spheres and shows that multiple publics exist. Cole and Phillips (2013, 3) describe how the sustained efforts of feminist activists have been successful at shaping public conversations; how "issues can move out of what [Nancy Fraser (1990)] calls a 'subaltern counterpublic' to become a recognized public matter of concern, as has happened in the case of the issue of violence against women." On campus, this can mean, for instance, moving the discussion around access to daycare toward student government, defining the issue as a matter affecting all students. This discussion reminds us that the public:private relation is constantly shifting, as are the very meanings of "public" and "private."

At USP-SC, feminist activists participate in women-only groups, such as the women's collective and the Women in Engineering São Carlos Branch as well as different *espaços mistos*. In Latin America, feminists have prioritized a practice of "politics of presence" by occupying various spaces, such as social movements and political institutions, to ensure that women's concerns are taken into account in all spheres of society (Phillips and Cole 2009). Ethnographic research reveals and gives recognition to the spaces women occupy, and those they create, we can see that "publics are made, and they can be unmade" (Cole and Phillips 2013, 8).

Chapter 4: Inside the Classroom : "I really am *machista*, can't you see it?"

Engineering students at the University of São Paulo in São Carlos (USP-SC) spend much time in the classroom. Classes are usually from 8 am to 6 pm, with a few breaks in between. As part of their degree, students complete a *trabalho de conclusão de curso* (undergraduate thesis) and often take part in supervised research projects and academic extracurricular activities. Many aspects of the academic experience can affect female students, in particular, their relations with other students and professors. For instance, the discrepancy in the ratio of women/men students and women/men professors affects classroom gender dynamics. In 2016, in all engineering courses at the School of Engineering of São Carlos (EESC), less than 15% of admitted students were women. Moreover, the ratio varies according to the program. In environmental engineering, in the same year, 40% of students admitted were women, in aeronautical engineering only 5% of students admitted were women (see Appendix A for statistics). Furthermore, only 12.9% of EESC professors are women. The percentage of female professors by department varies between 0% and 27%. For example, the Aeronautical Engineering department has no female professors, while the highest percentage of female professors is of 27% at the Transportation Engineering Department (see Appendix B for statistics). In this chapter, I describe gender dynamics as reported by female engineering students.

Gender Relations Among Students

Through interviews with women and men engineers in Scotland, Wendy Faulkner (2005, 17) found that "many women experience a rapid loss of confidence on entering engineering degrees." According to Faulkner, the loss of confidence was due to (1) feeling not good enough in relation to other students, (2) lack of hands-on skills, and (3) feeling that they "stood out as female." In interviews with female engineering students at EESC, many students in courses in which the majority of students are male described a similar feeling of standing out as female. Students in programs with few women described *se fechar* (close up) or *passar desapercibida* (go unnoticed) as defence mechanisms. Today a professor at EESC, Aline[2] remembers when she was the only female student in her cohort of mechanical engineering at USP-SC, more than 15 years

[2] To maintain confidentiality, I will not disclose information on Aline's area of study and teaching.

ago:

> *Você se torna masculinizada* (You become masculinized). I don't know if it is survival. I say lots of bad words. At first, I was a little girl, very soft. Today, I am someone who jokes that I had two daughters as punishment. Now that I am masculine, I have two sweeties with their little skirts, who like to wear makeup. That question of the masculine universe is real. I stopped wearing makeup, stopped wearing jewelry because boys look at you. It is hard when you are the only [woman] in your class. You never go unnoticed. You stop following certain standards. But, that's ok too. Sadly, I don't know what else I can tell you. I grew up in a world of prejudice.

Confronted with the situation of being the only female student in her classroom, Aline attempted to imitate certain patterned behaviours in order to go unnoticed. According to Faulkner, women engineers are either seen as "real women" or "real engineers." As being a woman and being an engineer are perceived as mutually exclusive identities, women engineers face the predicament of navigating between the two. As a graduate student, Aline aspired to become an engineering professor but had to respond to attacks from established professors and colleagues. She remembers one of her male professors telling her: "You will never be a professor here [at USP]." When she asked why, he answered: "There is something missing between your legs," to which she responded, "Professor, mine is bigger than yours." To prove she could be a good engineer and professor, Aline felt she had to become masculinized, behaving like a man. Therefore, women engineers are not only faced with the choice to be seen as women or as engineers, but they also have to change their personality to convey masculinity.

Aline observes a change in female students' experience. According to her, the change is the result of increasing numbers of women in the classroom. However, the dynamics she described were not too far from the descriptions provided by current female students. Ana Marcela (chapter 1), a student in mechatronics engineering, is the only woman in her cohort of 60 students. When discussing her first impression on campus, she said that, being the only woman in the classroom, she felt she had to close off "to survive... alone in the middle of this jungle." Although her response to standing out was different from Aline's, she refers to a similar feeling of having to adapt and strategize to survive. To better understand Ana Marcela's initial reaction, I

asked her to tell me more about her experience in the classroom:

> It was complicated. At first, I was more closed off. It was my way to deal with it. I would close myself so not to give place for a joke I would not like. So, at first, I stayed distant from the cohort. I was apprehensive of their behaviour. In the first years, they are very immature […]. Today, I talk with people but I feel a tension. Everyone knows I am *feminista* (feminist) and I won't agree with the sort of comments they do, their posture. So when I am close by, I think there is some apprehension. I think it is better because it is both ways. Everyone knows that they can't do certain things around me. Nowadays, I deal much better. I like to meet women from other courses. At first, I was in that phase that I thought friendship with women was not nice. Today I miss having people who understand me. I was able to find that in other courses, collectives, and groups in which I participate. I can find women to talk to, to share time with, including some senior students. That helped, but I still feel uncomfortable. For example, because there are not many women [in the classroom], the professor feels comfortable making sexist jokes and everybody laughs. When I'm there, they know I'm there, there's a discomfort in the relationship. It's not the best thing possible.

Ana Marcela described to me her adaptation process, as she negotiated her place in the classroom. At first, she closed off, but she later found a defence mechanism in identifying as a feminist and organizing with other women. In this case, the identity of feminist and belonging to a bigger movement serve as a protective shield. Certain students and professors are afraid of angering Ana Marcela, a boundary is established.

Like Ana Marcela, other female students reached out to other women in their cohort or program to create friendships and networks. Camila (chapter 1), computer engineering student, had completed a technical school program and an internship as a programmer before beginning her undergraduate degree. Although she had some experience in male-dominated environments like technical school and an internship, she was surprised to see there were only 4 female students in her 50-student cohort. Following this realization, she hoped to make close friendships with other female students to avoid feeling lonely:

C: It was scary, but at first we (female students of the cohort) thought that girls would be more united. Otherwise, we would feel *sozinha* (very alone) because there are really not many [girls in computer engineering]. It's one of the programs with few girls.

M: You mentioned that you hoped girls would *ficar juntas* (stick together). Did that happen?

C: It did. I think it did because we were few girls. It's different to have a woman as a friend [as opposed to a man]. You need to share your things, your intimacy. Because that's how it is! I thought it would be better. We thought it would be better to *ficar unidas* (remain united) because if not, it would be worse for all. We got very close. We are good friends.

Female students find several ways to create friendships and networks, such as through extracurricular activities, collectives, and group projects. To communicate with groups of friends, students often create women-only WhatsApp groups. Male students usually create groups that exclude female students. They use the groups to organize events or outings and share images and videos. Female students in different programs felt the need to create similar groups. Some created the groups in response to being excluded from the boys' groups, while others felt it was necessary to have space for women to speak among themselves. During my fieldwork, I was part of several WhatsApp and Facebook groups, including those of the *Coletivo de Mulheres do CAASO e da UFSCar* (women's collective), Women in Engineering (WIE), Aeronautical female students, and Computer Engineering female students.

Laura, a first-year computer engineering student, created a WhatsApp group during the *Intercursos*, a sports tournament between programs of a few local universities. During the inscriptions for the tournament, Laura approached an organizer to sign up for the female volleyball team. The organizer told Laura that there was no computer engineering female volleyball team because there were not enough women interested. In fact, there had never been one. Laura responded defiantly: "There will be one this year." She created a WhatsApp group, added female students from her program, and asked them to join the team. Although she was determined to find enough students to play, she did not expect what was coming. The messages started coming in and Laura was able to form a team: "I had a team to play and I even had a reserve team (twice the number of students needed to sign up to play)!" Many students were not interested in playing sports per se but *abraçaram a minha causa* (supported the cause). Laura

laughs, she remembers the day of the first game against the environmental engineering students' team: "We lost the game, but we had a full male student crowd cheering for us. So, when the game ended, it seemed like we had won." Laura's first intent was to create a WhatsApp group to recruit students for the game, but she wished it would continue afterward "to talk about anything, anything you are feeling, if you need help or to share course material."

A central question that arises when asking about women's experience in the classroom is the impact of numbers. How do numbers impact the experience of female students? In programs with the fewest women, some students argued that there were more problematic exchanges, such as jokes about women. Viviana (chapters 1, 2, and 3), civil engineering student, explains that: "in other programs that have fewer women than civil engineering, like mechanical engineering, male students would say: '4 new students entered this year, but they only count for two because they are not pretty.'" I was curious to know more about women's experience in the programs with more female students and professors. From 2012 to 2017, 40% to 65% of admitted students in environmental engineering were women. Beyond the increased representation of women in the program, environmental engineering students are often thought to have a greater concern for social issues. Luisa, an environmental engineering student I met volunteering in the Semente project, in which students prepare learning activities for children of public schools, explained why she thought environmental engineering and architecture student associations were more concerned about initiation activities:

> The other courses, because they have more men, don't think about the issue of exploiting *bixos* (new students). That is a woman's thing. […] But, [in environmental engineering] it isn't necessarily because of women. It's also a thing of people who are admitted, those who study environmental engineering are more concerned. It's intrinsic.

Generally, students in environmental engineering did not describe the feeling of loneliness and standing out between students in other programs. They often presented a picture of harmonious classroom dynamics and the development of strong friendships in the cohort as a whole. However, professors and students in other programs often refer to the number of female students in the classroom to undermine the students' capacity or criticize their behaviour. For example, in other programs, students refer to environmental engineering as "not real engineering." The link

between real woman and real engineer is made clear in the discourse of "not real engineering," the higher quantity of women is seen as diluting the value and content of engineering.

Adriana, a senior environmental engineering student, explained how the ratio of female students in her class affected the perception of the class by professors:

> In my program, it is about 50% women, 50% men. In my cohort, there were 70% women. It varies. From the first year, we heard some nonsense. A female professor, every time she entered the room, she brought some problem. You speak too much, [she would say]. And she associated that with the fact that there were more women in the classroom. She brought that up… From the first year, we heard that. There were some cases with professors, hard to say because it is a course with more women it becomes difficult for them to mistreat them because they are the majority. That brings comfort to us.

Most problems described by environmental engineering students were related to students from other programs and professors, not from students within the program. However, this idyllic picture was challenged when Adriana suddenly remembered something that had happened a few years ago:

> There was a problem, god, that one was heavy. I think it was the 2015 [cohort], one or two years ago. That cohort of *bixos* had a WhatsApp group named *Abate* (Slaughter), like meat [slaughter]. They talked about girls. They deleted gay guys from the group and they kept talking about girls on the WhatsApp. The SAPA, the academic secretary [of environmental engineering], *problematizar* (problematized) and questioned [the WhatsApp group]. Then, last year, we discovered that the cohort of 2011, which is a very good cohort that we praise a lot, had a Facebook group for [men] only. That disappointed us so much. Because I think it was one of the best cohorts of the program. That cohort that you could swear could never do something like that. Members of the *Levante* (a social movement) were in the group, the *feministos* (male feminists) were in the group. A girl from the cohort, Vitória, from the women's collective, discovered the group, read it all, and felt overthrown. She called the other girls from the cohort to talk. They agreed it was absurd. There was a specific attack against one of them, they said: "If they attack one of us, they attack all."

I met Vitória (chapters1 and 2) a few days after my conversation with Adriana. Vitória had now completed all her courses and was waiting for a call back for an internship. When I asked her about her relationship with students of her cohort, she responded that they were very united. Then, I asked her about the Facebook group. She explained that she was part of the environmental engineering student association at the time and they were discussing an activity to speak with female students about *violência* (violence) and *machismo.* They were debating about whether or not to include male students in the discussion. One of the reasons they wished to speak with male students was because they knew about the 2015 cohort WhatsApp group. Moreover, they had surveyed all cohorts to see if others also had created such groups. They found out all did, as Vitória explained to me:

> I thought in my cohort there would not be one, because of what I told you. We were all close friends, we were as united as is possible. That didn't make sense. Then, I discovered there was a group like that in my class. Only that it was a Facebook group, not a WhatsApp one. I was able to access the group through a friend of mine. I saw the whole content of this group of boys of my class. I was very worried because I dated a boy in my class, but he was not in the group. I asked him if he knew about the group because it is very important. I am dating him. That shows what you see of women. [He wasn't] but some of my closest friends were, even those in the student association, who were part of the discussions, and all boys of the class except the boy I date now, who I was already dating then. I think they did not add him precisely so that he would not tell me. And the homosexual boys, other than that, all men [were in the group]. I saw the content of the group, there were many *machista* jokes, including about girls in the class. There were many homophobic jokes too. It was very complicated. I was so disappointed with the boys.

Vitória decided to tell the girls in her class, as she could not pretend the group did not exist. Together, they would decide what action to take:

> Because of the spaces I had participated in about feminism, I knew that was what I had to do. I brought the girls together. I did not discuss the content exactly, so no one would feel

> bad personally. I told them, if someone wants to know, they can talk to me and I will show or I will tell what there is. I told them in general what there was and that all boys were in it. The girls were very upset, very disappointed. Many cried during the conversation, even I did. We were shaken to know that had happened. We called the boys to talk. We thought that if we called them to talk and tell them right away that we know about the group, they wouldn't come. We found our way. A girl said there was something important to talk about and we needed everyone to be together. We were able to gather almost the whole class that same evening. We all, girls and boys, sat together. "We know about the group and we are upset. We want to understand why you did it. Why did you disrespect us that way?" We said everything we wanted to say. It was the same stress [as earlier], everyone was crying and all.

During the entire meeting, male students kept repeating they were sorry but admitted they were not sure what to say. The meeting ended and they all went home. What happened next surprised Vitória. The next day, the male students called their female colleagues and asked them to meet them. Now, they said, it is our turn to speak. The girls agreed. As soon as they sat in the classroom, one of the boys took a text out of his bag. He started reading and passed the text along to another boy. Each took turns to read a section of the text. They talked about important events that the cohort had gone through together. They expressed how much they liked each other. They emphasized the stories they cherished the most. Then, each of them came forward to say: I was *machista* because I was in the group. They gave precise examples of the things they had said in the group to prove their point. And they repeated they were sorry again and again:

> It was very surprising, I never thought this would happen. I thought they would simply say that's ok, you are exaggerating, then create another group. I thought they would delete the old group. Almost all of them, I think only one or two boys did not say they were sorry and did not go to the conversation, but the majority went. And the majority was careful to explain. "I was *machista,* I recognize that. I will not do it again." Nonetheless, we told them that it was not only because we were friends, they had to respect all women, whatever relationship they had with her. In the end, the outcome was nice. It was a big disappointment at first, but in the end, it was nice.

Even the students who were out of the country, doing a study exchange, sent messages to the class saying how sorry they were. However, although Vitória and her classroom solved the issue in a way that was satisfying to all, this was not the case in the 2015 cohort. According to Vitória, the male students of the 2015 cohort had a strong position and were not open to dialogue. For instance, they did not admit they were *machista*. "They are younger. You would think, new generations should be more evolved, ahead of the older ones, but they are even more conservative than us," Vitória concludes. In the following section, I present examples of experiences with male professors as reported by female students in interviews. Although environmental engineering students felt more comfortable with their male colleagues, I did not observe in interviews any difference in behaviour from professors to students across programs. Moreover, throughout their undergraduate studies, most students will have classes with professors from various faculties and programs are not necessarily correspondent to one faculty only.

"The Most Complicated Are Professors"

During the first interview I conducted, with mechatronics engineering student Andrea (chapter 1), I noticed that the relationship between the female student and the male professor was complex. Some of the several factors influencing this relationship are age difference and position in the university hierarchy:

> A: Some things I noticed, […] guys will not respect you as engineer. They will be your friends, they will say everything is ok, will participate in groups with you, but you don't know, you are not enough, you do not have spatial vision like a guy.
> M: You saw that from professors or from students?
> A: [I noticed that] from professors and colleagues, maybe from professors a little more. They thought, my god, what a cutie, what is she doing in engineering?
> M: Did you see this in class or in group projects?
> A: Both. In class, I saw how in fact when a professor asked a question to a girl, it was always in a joking tone. You have to show that women know or something like that, a thing that left girls reticent to answer. It upsets some girls.

Although my first interview revealed many linguistic challenges, as I was not yet confident with the language and the more specific vocabulary, this exchange revealed some of the main issues related to the relationship between female students and male professors: (1) jokes and *machista* comments, (2) the objectification of the female student body, and (3) the invisibility of women as engineers. Throughout the other interviews, these aspects would become clear.

Following my conversation with Andrea, other students mentioned the problematic relationship between students and professors. Most of the time, when asked about their relationship with professors, female students spoke of male professors. To learn more about female professors, I had to ask them precisely (see the next section: *Aline, A Female Professor: "I had to become masculinized"*). After describing her experiences with peers, Ana Marcela proceeded to tell me about her relationship with professors:

> The most complicated are professors. Most professors are men. It happens a lot that they will make sexist jokes, *machista* comments. It happened recently that a professor made a joke. While he did, I kept looking at him. After class, he approached me to talk [about the joke]. But in my first year, as I did not identify myself enough [with feminism] I was quiet through much of what professors [said]. The professor says that a woman has to do laundry and cook.

Almost every time I asked about professors, students referred right away to the infamous jokes and *machista* comments. "There are always the jokes," one student responded immediately. And following this acknowledgment, students said they were used to hearing jokes and tried to not pay too much attention to them. Perhaps because of their constant repetition, one student would say, they did not notice them anymore as if they've become conditioned to ignoring them. For instance, when I asked for examples of jokes, some students had a difficult time to think of specific ones. Others were tired of the behaviour of professors and wanted to respond, but were scared to upset them. They were afraid of professors punishing the whole class. If they challenged the professor, he could give a harder exam or stop helping them. A professor's retaliation could make the other students resentful of the female student. Evelyn, an electrical engineering student (chapter 2), explained how the female student could be "marked":

> Classes can be intimidating at times. Professors are in a position of hierarchy. To bond with the class, they will tell a *machista* joke. I thought I am not going to respond because all attention will turn to me and I will be marked. That still happens, it's fairly common. A quiet moment and there is a *machista* comment or a *machista* joke. That's taken as normal by the class because of the class profile. Even if there are more women involved with feminism, who are not necessarily organized but they have the knowledge and are empowered, they do not want to make a comment because of the hierarchy between professor and student.

According to Evelyn, the uneasiness she experiences with *machista* jokes from professors is related to their position in the school hierarchy and the power they hold over students. It is easier to respond to a fellow student than to a professor, who has control over your academic life. Confronting a professor is often not an option for students. However, Aline, a professor, argues that increasingly students are better prepared to defend their position. This was not the case when she was a student. Then, it would have been unthinkable to confront a professor. Although more female students take steps to challenge professors, such actions have clear consequences. Even correcting a professor's calculations can be seen as defiance if coming from a female student. Then, pointing to the professor's behaviour can lead to serious consequences. On a small campus, it is difficult for students to act anonymously. Isabelle (chapter 3), another electrical engineering student, had several attempts at confronting professors on their comments:

> I already got into an argument with a professor who said woman's place is in the kitchen and washing clothes. A woman has to cook for a man, a woman has to be a dedicated wife. I hear that women have fewer neurons than men when one of the best students in the room is a girl. I do not know what he was talking about. I feel very belittled in the classroom. This is not just my feeling. Once I had an argument with a professor. When I questioned him in the middle of class, he made a joke he shouldn't have. I questioned him. He said: "I'm really a *machista*, can't you see?" The entire room started clapping because he shut the feminazi down. I could not stay put but I had no one to talk to. I posted on Facebook a great critique. A senior female student who was not close to me at the time, she commented on the post that this was exactly what she wanted to have done her entire time in the program.

> She wanted to tell people not to tell her that she was inferior because she was a woman. The entire time she felt that whatever she did was not enough. She would never be as good as a boy. I think that feeling exists among women. You feel it sometimes.

Moreover, taking action with the administration is not often taken seriously. A group of aeronautical female students gathered in the last few weeks of the semester of 2016 to speak out about the behavior of one particular professor. However, because the professor in question did not want to collaborate, they framed the intervention as a general demand to the administration. Furthermore, when I asked if they wanted to join the women's collective in their action, one student answered that at the moment they did not want to be related to the feminist cause because it might not be well received.

Throughout the interviews with female students, I collected many accounts of professors' *machista* jokes in the classroom. Some of the comments are about women's bodies, others questioned the professional capacities of women. Here are a few examples:

> Professors say the [male] engineer will have a meeting with the [female] architect. The engineer man always knows it all and the [female] architect knows nothing. There's a lot of competition between engineering and architecture. [Professors say:] You will go to a meeting with the female architect, she will say nonsense and you, the [male] engineer will have to make calculations. He diminishes her. A professor told me: "You are a woman engineer imagine you washing dishes, it must be awesome." A professor in the last few days used an example of a dumb blond. It wasn't necessary (Viviana, Civil Engineering).

> A professor says he will only remember names of girls because he is not obliged to remember the guys' names. "I will keep an eye on this row because there are more girls." Something like that. At first, I wouldn't notice those little things. I see now that many professors, older ones, they feel the need to make jokes in that way. It's not a harmless little joke. It's about women's beauty or asking: "Is your husband going to pay the bills when you get married?" Those are totally unnecessary things to say. Nowadays, I notice these things and debate them, I say it when something really bothers me (Viviana, Civil Engineering).

I specifically remember a professor that made women feel constrained in the classroom. Students noticed that he, in fact, looked at women in a different way, and almost harassed women. I don't remember if this professor made jokes, maybe he did, but what bothered students the most was how he looked at women. People inside the classroom were embarrassed to sit because of the way the teacher's eyes lingered on the women in the room. Not only did women notice, but the men in the classroom did too. It's a very complicated thing because we say all the time that we are here to graduate and to occupy a space that was denied for a long time and today it is still like that. Still, it is reaffirmed in a subjective and unconscious way that we are simply a body, for the pleasure of men (Frederica, Environmental Engineering).

There is also this professor in material engineering who gives oral tests. He was never disrespectful to anyone, never treated anyone badly in the classroom. Only that the students made comments: "You will take the test? Wear shorts and you will get a higher grade." Last semester, two girls took the test, it was a cold day and they wore sweatpants. They didn't do so good and the rest of the class did. The girls were really worried. A guy came and said: "Next time, you will have to come in shorts to get a higher note." I went up to him and I told him his comment was very *machista*. You think girls don't have the intellectual capacity to do a test on their own and so we need to offer our body to earn a grade. It was not the professor's fault but the guys inferred that he thought that way about the girls. I do not know if it's true but I did not think it was cool either (Flávia, Material Engineering).

There are also examples. If it's about a car, some tool, the example will be with a boy. If it is a washing machine, clothing, if it is something feminine, then a girl will be in the example. You always have this segregation. It is difficult for the teacher to give an example of some domestic activity with a man. It is pretty hard (Rebeca, Electrical Engineering).

A professor in material engineering says many bad jokes. We study floors, so ceramics. I remember once he said: "Now, we are going to study *louça*. Who knows the difference

between floor and tile? Girls must know for sure." He insinuated that we were more familiar with house cleaning. I think that's something boring to say. Or we are studying a guy who created something, for instance, Newton who is very important. He will say: "Newton must have nothing good to do at the time, there were no women to have sex with." As if we were a distraction and because of that he could invent so many amazing things. I don't like those comments. Many guys laugh and think it is funny. They will say: "That professor is cool, he makes lots of funny jokes!" I don't think it's nice, no (Flávia, Material Engineering).

The examples of male professors' comments and jokes in the classroom point to the constant reproduction of *machista* culture. The behaviour of professors, who are in a hierarchical position of power, has an impact beyond the classroom. The ideas they share with their students normalize the treatment of women as sexual objects and as unfitted for the engineering profession. Because male professors are not held accountable for their behaviour, they show that such actions are acceptable within the engineering community.

Aline, A Female Professor: "I had to become masculinized"

When I asked students about their relations with professors, they first and foremost spoke about male professors—problematizing their behaviour. To follow that question, I asked about their relationships with female professors. Students spoke about female professors' concern for the students and more attention to the class material. Often, female students felt more comfortable in their classroom and did not feel threatened. Nevertheless, they did not idealize the female professor. They argued that there were good and bad female professors in an academic sense. They also talked about the sexism that female professors confronted from colleagues, students, and in the academy generally. Female professors could also reproduce *machismo*, they said. I will argue in this section that the *machismo* expressed by female professors is more a parody and a performance that allows them to be accepted into the "boys club" of engineering academics.

It is much better [to have a female professor], I feel more comfortable. Even then, there is a *reprodução* (reproduction) of *machismo* with women teachers, but it is much better when it

> is a woman. It is really hard to be a woman professor in the areas of science, mathematics, and physics. I've never had a female professor from my department of electronics, only from the physics and mathematics institutes. It's much better, I feel more comfortable. Now, I have a female professor and I have the feeling that everyone feels more comfortable because she is a woman. It goes both ways. Because she is a woman, she does not have the same hierarchy and we can speak in class and waste time. When it's a man, he enters the room and he is respected. I feel that when a professor is a woman, she is more concerned about students. I don't know if it is a gender characteristic but the [female professors] I had, they were more concerned. [They'd ask]: "Do you understand, are you able to follow?" They don't just distribute course material without caring (Evelyn, Electrical Engineering).
>
> It's much better to have a class with a woman professor. It's not that all men professors are bad, but now and then they give you some trouble. You hear some little joke, you see the professor staring at you, and he gets close to you. I don't feel that risk with a woman. I do have men professors who are exceptional. I don't know how they are outside of class, but in class they gave you the material, they focused on that, did nothing *ofensivo* (offensive). The good side of having a woman professor is that I feel *segura* (safer), they are more trustworthy, I am not afraid to go to her office to review my exam. I had a male professor who I was afraid to go see to review my exam. I never went alone (Isabelle, Electrical Engineering).

Students' relations with professors could impact their academic performance, in their ability to reach out to professors for help. During my fieldwork, I met one female professor. She is the only professor I interviewed. I decided that it was important for me to interview her because of her deep connection with students and her history at USP-SC, as an undergraduate and graduate student.

Many students insisted that I should meet Aline, an engineering professor, because she openly shared many examples of her experience in engineering as a student and a professor. She was also supportive of students, male and female, regarding personal issues that affected their academic performance, such as financial struggle, mental and physical health, and family situations. Aline was also present at the MACACO event about daycare, intervening during the

event. She is outspoken about the right of students to have access to daycare, as she argues it is another step in reaching gender equality on campus. I contacted Aline through e-mail and she happily agreed to meet me in her office. I conducted the interview in her office, with the door wide open. We talked about her relationship with female students.

> M: Many girls come see you to talk, is this because they see you as an example?
> A: I wouldn't say an example. I would say the only exhaust valve, the only person they can talk to. Many don't come to me, but many do. Perhaps it's because I don't believe in a rigid evaluation, I believe in the potential of growth. I use the classroom in a different way. They see an opening. Some boys come too. Maybe because I am a mother, I don't know. They tell me that. There is a website where they evaluate professors, I am the mother. So, I don't know. Even then, the girls have confronted me: "You can't talk like that, you have to talk this way because what you are saying is a prejudice. You are thinking wrongly." I must repeat: "I won't say this again." I say many jokes, even bad ones. "You can't make a joke like this," they tell me. "Ok, I won't say again," I say. I allow people to critique me, I have that *abertura* (openness).

Aline recognizes that, although she is a support for female students, certain jokes and comments are *machista*. Throughout the years, she has been confronted by students for her attitude but also has become more aware of the comments and jokes she would make.

> A: I started to understand that perhaps I was myself *machista.* The first year I taught, […], I had 5 girls and they did not pay attention at all, at all. I was upset. If the 5 were not paying attention, there were 10 boys who did not pay attention […]. I remember I went to talk to [the girls]: "You are girls in engineering, you have to dedicate yourselves, you have to show them you are great, that you are better than them. Because after it will be hard for you in an interview." Today, I see that perhaps it was my *preconceito* (prejudice) because I did not say the same to the boys. [The girls] are graduating now. Talking with Diana, talking with other students, I started doing my own evaluation. I still have a lot of prejudice but I have to be open to listening, to understand that this is a problem. I am from another generation, you are 15 years younger than me!

[…]

M: What kind of jokes do you make?

A: There was one instance. The whole cohort failed the class. It's a production engineering class and there are many girls. I always give the class to them. They failed the class and I said they had two options. I could fail them and that would give me too much work or I give them another exam. I set a date for the exam. A girl comes to see me crying. She is a beautiful silicone girl, with breasts this big. She was crying (Aline imitates the voice of the student, with a dramatic tone): "Professor, on that day my boyfriend comes back from a study exchange!" (Aline takes a deep breath and says with her own voice, in a firm way:) "My dear god!", then came the *machista* joke, "*Segura essa piriquita, você da no outro dia,* (Calm down, you can give (sex) another day), now you are going to do the exam that you failed!" Ai! I couldn't have talked to her like that! I saw the moment I spoke, my god, what have I done? But she irritated me because she had failed and she didn't want to retake the exam because her boyfriend was coming home. She was crying there, her hair a mess. If she wasn't… if she were normal, it would be ok, but I judged her. She had those boobs, a cleavage, wearing makeup, I judged her. I remember when I said that, she stopped crying. "It's ok professor," she said. She left. See the harm I must have done to this girl. It was a *machista* joke. I didn't know. I am so sorry to have said that. It's funny when I tell it this way. She didn't need to do it either, she failed, and she was in the wrong. I was irritated too. I am so sorry to have said that. With time I learnt what was appropriate to say, what wasn't. The whole issue is that I believe that I am available to learn, I am open, are others?

Aline's behaviour was in line with her parody of masculinity. As part of becoming masculinized to be accepted into the boys' club, she had to perform the same as them. Although students recognized that female professors were able to reproduce *machista* dynamics, they felt comfortable to confront them or to accept or to better accept such comments or jokes from them. Aline spoke in public about gender inequality and supported female student mothers, and she was able to perceive her own prejudice. More than a prejudice, her performance was a survival tool, a way to fit in. It was also informed by her own experience as a woman and her beliefs of how women could perform to get ahead. She walked a fine line between being a full member of the engineering club, often challenged by co-workers, but also occupying a central role in the

department, and being an outspoken advocate for women's rights. Moreover, she explained her frustration when seeing female students not taking their studies seriously enough. After all, she knew how hard women had to work to achieve a successful career.

We continued talking about jokes, I exposed my belief (informed by students' discourses) that jokes affected female students in a very real way. I explained that I wanted to look into jokes as seriously problematic. "I have to disagree with you," she said.

> There is also another side. The issue of the daycare is the following. If a girl gets pregnant, it is clear in all society, her opportunity has vanished. The weight of a pregnancy is only placed on the girl. The mother of the guy says it wasn't him. But the girl's chances are over. I am going to tell you, it will be hard. Many students tell me that when they go to the social assistance office to ask for a spot in the daycare, the social worker says: "Give [your child] to your mother to take care. Do you want to keep studying? Give [your child] to your mother to raise." So, [the girls] say: "Next to your jokes, [Aline], that is heavy."

Without a doubt, Aline is the most incredible example of navigating the murky waters of female engineer identity. After many years of practice, she is now able to please her colleagues with her "masculine" personality and funny jokes. She is recognized for her work and also fights for women's rights on campus and helps students through personal and academic difficulties. Nonetheless, Aline receives criticism from colleagues (who believe, without any proof, that her professional success is due to favouritism because she is a woman) or male students (who I have heard) say she is power-driven. New generations of female students, who have the ambition of challenging the rigid boundaries they can inhabit, see in Aline an example.

Discussion: Processes of Change

The classroom should be the most professional space on campus, where discussions centre around course material and where each student is given an equal chance to participate and develop their abilities. However, female students' experiences reveal that their professional identity is not recognized. On the contrary, student and professors produce comments and jokes in which women are portrayed as sexual objects or incapable professionals. Their role as future engineers is masked by constant repetition of examples of male engineers, while they are used to

entertain colleagues and professors. Faulkner (2011) describes the situation of erasing women's professional identity as the invisibility of women as engineers. Faulkner (2011, 281) argues that: "being seen to be professionally capable is a key element in what it takes to gain membership in any occupational community of practice." Moreover, she states that the invisibility of women as engineers is not restricted to the workplace, but begins to take place as early as in university. This is evidenced by male engineering students' behaviour vis-à-vis their female colleagues. For instance, they are surprised to see women's achievements, especially when female students' performance might be higher than theirs. Moreover, the work of female engineering students might also become invisible and appropriated by faculty members or fellow colleagues. Beyond being invisible, women also face constant doubt from colleagues and professors. Such doubts about women's capacity are constant and have clear consequences, such as grades, research opportunities, and recommendations.

Despite the difficulties that women encounter in the classroom, several aspects of their experiences point to positive changes. As Aline explains, numbers of female students have been increasing in recent years. Although the increase is slow, it already proves to have changed classroom dynamics. While Aline and Ana Marcela, both the only female students of their cohorts, felt isolated and "stood out" as women, female students in a cohort with at least a couple of women felt more confident. For example, Camila, a computer engineering student, was in a cohort of only three more women and was able to form close friendships through which she could share her feelings. Other students decided to create women-only WhatsApp groups as a networking strategy to share class material, general concerns, and create events. Moreover, female students in classrooms with a larger number of female and male students did not feel isolated or as though they "stood out." Often, they did not seek out friendships with other women on purpose and were not as concerned about gender dynamics in their cohorts. The increasing number of female students, adding to the work of the women's collective and increased awareness of gender issues, is in part helpful in gender relations with male students. For instance, when female environmental engineering students found out about a Facebook group in which fellow classmates shared misogynistic content about them, they confronted the students directly and received an apology. This situation points to the roles both male and female students play in bringing about change.

The number of female students in each cohort also had an impact on the relationship with

professors and fellow students. In cohorts in which there are few female students, professors felt more comfortable in making sexist jokes or comments, while they hesitate to do so in classrooms with more women. Even the presence of one woman in the classroom created unease for certain professors. For instance, Ana Marcela does not confront professors directly but looks at them in the eye when they make a sexist joke. More and more, female students are starting to confront professors on their behaviour, although they continue to fear repercussions. Aline remembers that when she was a student, confronting a professor was not even a possibility. But even then, students find other ways to voice their concern. A group of aeronautical engineering students was upset after a professor made a comment about the clothes of a female student. They decided to draft a letter to the dean, in which they would speak about certain situations they witnessed without denouncing a specific professor. To come up with this decision, they discussed in their women-only WhatsApp group, exchanging ideas of possible actions. Moreover, the relationship between professors and students is impacted by the gender of the professors. Female students feel more comfortable with female professors and they might reach out to female professors for help regarding their studies and personal situations. Two student mothers told me about female professors who helped them balance motherhood and their studies, including managing course load, securing financial support, and finding a daycare. Another student told me about finding psychological support through a reference by a female professor.

Conclusion

This research's primary goal is to investigate the question of the "problem of women" in engineering through a framework that considers gender norms and relations as the major determinant for the exclusion of women within the field. This thesis asked: What are the processes through which the visibility and invisibility of female engineering students are performed and established? To answer this question, the thesis focused on the everyday experience of women as they navigate through gender expectations in the university context. By using a framework of study that considers gender norms and gender relations in the field of engineering as barriers to the inclusion of women, it was possible to see that women were not the "problem." Female students demonstrated a deep interest in the program, motivation to join innovative projects, and a desire to build a career in the field. However, they were often unmotivated by constant aggressions, the questioning of their ability to perform, and isolation from the group. The concept of the (in)visibility paradox (Faulkner 2011), used in studies of women in engineering to describe the visibility of female engineers as women and their invisibility as engineers, allows us to observe how women's roles are managed and women are disciplined, and thus to see their exclusion as an active process. Moreover, the focus on the visibility of women revealed the agency of female students to negotiate their own space on campus as they responded to the imposed restrictions.

To begin with, I argue that women are perceived as "matter out of place" (Douglas 1969) given that they do not conform to the male engineer identity. Women are identified as outsiders from the very beginning of their university experience. As they enter the campus, their names are singled out by senior students and they are soon intercepted to join initiation activities in which they become objects of attention. In the classroom, professors and students make jokes that reinforce stereotypical gender differences that undermine the roles of potential participation of women in the field. Their status as outsiders is established to ensure their exclusion from the community of engineers. Therefore, the identity of female students is constantly negotiated and performed in contexts of exclusion. To draw the boundaries of belonging, women's visibility as women and invisibility as engineers are performed through mechanisms of *machismo*, feminicide, and rape culture.

Initiation activities are clear examples of early rituals to establish women's place on campus and solidifying male bonding. As soon as they enter university, women are identified as sexually available, a characteristic directly related to being perceived as "real women" (Faulkner 2011). For example, the role of female students as sexual objects on campus was performed through the *Miss Bixete* contest. The concept of feminicide allows us to better understand the symbolic function of *Miss Bixete* as a communication tool (Segato 2010). On the one hand, the use of women's bodies for the male gaze sends a clear message to female participants and all women on campus about their role as sexual objects. On the other hand, the event gathering hundreds of male students creates a bonding effect that reinforces the gender identity of the engineer as masculine. Moreover, the participation in *Miss Bixete* had real consequences for female participants, who are often subsequently isolated from the cohort due to their participation (however reluctantly) in the event.

University parties further reveal the context of rape culture on campus. Big parties often include open bars with unlimited alcoholic beverages, without the supervision of students' intoxication levels. Feminist activists and other students have denounced *assédio* (harassment) during university parties and the use of women as objects to attract the participation and engagement of male students. I present what is known as the biggest party of the year, the inter-university competition Tusca, as an example of the party culture on campus. Following Sanday's (2007) study of fraternity gang rape, I argue that rape serves to increase male bonding through the use of women as objects. Moreover, by engaging in rape culture, men prove their membership and assert compulsory heterosexuality. Here, women are *made* visible as sexual objects, dehumanized and stripped from their contribution as equal and professional members of the engineering community.

While initiation activities and university parties reinforce the image of women as sexually available objects, classroom dynamics reveal the erasure of their contribution as engineering students. Often, women are presented as less intelligent than men, a distraction, or sexual objects in the context of their work as engineers. Such ideas are expressed through the uttering of *machista* jokes and comments which often highlight women as sexual objects and their inability to perform as engineers. Jokes and sexual references are normalized in the classroom, often used by professors to make the class laugh. Moreover, female students have difficulty being taken seriously in group projects or in the classroom.

Female students on campus often attempt to speak about the difficulties they face. Based on ethnographic data, the third chapter explored three cases of women who voiced specific concerns and made their demands public. On the one hand, these cases show the desire of students to redefine women's role on campus and to acquire more recognition through the creation of new public spaces. On the other hand, they are vivid examples of the silencing and managing of women's voices to avoid such a challenge to the gender status quo. The first example describes a situation where my interview with a female student was repeatedly interrupted by students banging on the wall of the study room. The response to our conversation on the female experience on campus exemplifies the managing of women's voices through attempts to interrupt and ultimately silence them, even in spaces considered "private." The second example describes a presentation against the closing of the USP-SC daycare centre. Although no student made a concrete attempt to contest the event, the general ambiance of the room, where students were playing pool, selling party tickets, listening to loud music, and talking loudly, conveyed the general disinterest of the wider campus population, not recognizing the event topic as a "matter of concern." Moreover, the noise created by the surrounding students served to mute the conversation from other students who would pass by. Finally, the last example shows the constant confrontation feminist activists face on campus. In an event that encouraged dialogue between minorities on campus and representatives of the student government, a male student proceeded to discredit individual students' accounts of experiences of abuse and discrimination. These interruptions and attacks prevented the event from taking the shape desired by the organizers and made participants reluctant to share their experiences. Such examples reaffirm ideas that women's issues are not "matters of concern" and show the difficulties that women face when entering mixed spaces.

Negotiating (In)visibility

As a consequence of the strict gender norms that prevail in the field of engineering, men, for the only fact of being men, are seen as engineers taken at face value. However, women, for the only fact of being women, can rarely be seen as engineers. While women can study engineering, graduate, and later work, the space that women occupy on campus is contained, calculated, and bounded by clear frontiers. Moving out of their allotted space creates confusion, anger, and fear among the wider campus population. While the (in)visibility of female students

partly results from the system of exclusion and managing of women's role on campus, women exhibit agency in responding to the conditions they face. In fact, female students constantly negotiate their role on campus, balancing contradictory expectations of the "real woman" vs. the "real engineer." They might conform to one or the other identity to gain recognition from their peers or attempt to challenge gender expectations as a whole. For instance, they might try to "go unnoticed" to avoid undesired attention or become "masculinized" to be accepted as engineers.

To counter visibility as sexual objects, some female students choose to "go unnoticed." They remain at the back of the class and avoid talking to colleagues. In that way, they can be on the outskirts, while achieving their goal of studying in engineering. Moreover, this strategy makes them feel safe because they do not receive the attention of male colleagues and professors. Ana Marcela recounted her first year at USP and her gradual isolation from the cohort. When Ana Marcela arrived on campus, she soon realized university was not what she had expected. Being the only woman of her cohort, she felt lonely and afraid. She was aware of the treatment of female students in *Miss Bixete*, which gave her a bad first impression of campus life. At first, without leaving, she attempted to disappear, to become unnoticeable. While she was successful, she began to feel isolated, unheard, and unappreciated. Therefore, she started to create connections with female students of other cohorts and programs.

While Ana Marcela tried to "go unnoticed," other female students try to become "masculinized." By taking off all makeup, wearing sporty clothes, making jokes with the boys, and speaking loudly, some students can conceal their femininity. This is the case of Aline, who recounted her transformative experience. Throughout the years, she became more assertive and aggressive, using masculine language and not hesitating to take her place among her peers. In a way, her performance was not only of masculinity but also a parody of *machismo.* To be able to defend herself, to survive, she responded with similar comments to her colleagues. Beyond, what Aline calls, becoming masculinized, she continuously fights for the recognition of her work and the better treatment of female students and professors in the Faculty. In front of her colleagues, she has to defend the merits of her work when she receives excellence grants and prizes. In front of her students, she has to inspire respect as an engineer. As a mother, she fights for the right to the university daycare, for students, workers, and professors. She particularly sees the challenge female students face when becoming mothers, with almost no support given from the university. She gives advice to her students to help them cope with motherhood and academic pressure. She

is also attentive to the financial needs of her students, both male and female, and ensures that paid student research opportunities are fairly distributed among deserving students. Student research projects are intended for students with financial needs but are often not distributed in accordance with this criterion. She does not only fight for her students, but she also fights together with her students. She joins their initiatives and puts herself out there without fear of repercussions. For instance, during the daycare presentation, she intervened to state that the daycare fight was about gender equality. She searches for dialogue with female students to better understand their opinions and their experience. She pushes them to work harder and to become aware of their position within the field. She expects a lot from them, because she had to work a lot herself. While Aline describes her adaptation in engineering as resulting in becoming masculinized, her story reveals the complexity of the female engineering identity. This new gender identity is developed through a constant negotiation between adapting to the field and demanding to be recognized as full members and contributing to transforming the field.

Creating Change

Throughout the years, women's individual and group efforts to challenge gender norms have created positive change and such changes required the creation of new spaces and networks. The women's collective has worked since 2009 to challenge *machismo* on campus. The first action of the collective was to denounce the objectification of women's bodies at the *Miss Bixete* contest. After years of pressuring the university to cancel the event, their demonstration received media attention, leading to the ban of the event on campus. Moreover, through dialogue with student associations and the student government body, collective members were able to change images of party posters that used women's bodies to promote events. Their constant attention to the representation of women on campus had long-term effects, beginning to change the culture surrounding party promotion. Today, although it is rare to find a poster on campus sexualizing women, the collective rapidly singles out any such attempt. Furthermore, the collective has provided a space for women to organize and gather together weekly. In fact, members meet to discuss personal experiences, share information, and to raise their concern for certain situations on campus. Many students reach out to the collective after living traumatic experiences, such as domestic violence or sexual assault. Although the group cannot always find clear solutions to reported problems, they support students by referring them to external services and welcoming

them to the group. Through a wide range of actions in both women-only and mixed spaces, the collective expanded discussions and widen the range of issues treated as "matters of public concern" on campus.

Many female students are not activists but create change through participation in other women-only groups and through their presence in mixed spaces. For example, in 2016, electrical engineering students founded Women in Engineering of São Carlos, a branch of the IEEE São Carlos (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) to create networks among women engineers. Some of their initiatives are to invite women engineers to speak on campus, to visit high schools to promote engineering among girls and to create an online network of female graduate students and current students. Moreover, students have created WhatsApp groups to provide a network of students in their program. The groups are open to sharing any concern, request, or inquiry, such as coursework, issues with professors or students, or social gatherings. These initiatives are often a response to the exclusion of women from man-only groups and to the difficulty of creating female student networks. Moreover, female students also join mixed groups and initiatives on campus, such as extracurriculars. Some of the women I interviewed participated in groups such as *Semente*, an initiative to introduce technology to elementary school children from low-income neighbourhoods, Warthog, a group that develops robots, Formula, a group that builds race cars, *Empresa Junior*, a student junior enterprise, and Enactus, a group that develops several projects to encourage the creation of small businesses in low-income neighbourhoods. The participation in extracurriculars is important because through their work in these less academic spaces women can show their more hands-on skills and leadership qualities while participating in and expanding a larger network of engineers.

The changes I observed on campus reflect the increase of women students and professors. To build diversity and equality requires the increased presence of women (Cole and Phillips 2013). With the presence of women students in the classroom, male professors begin to hesitate when making certain jokes. A professor might say to himself: "I will not tell this joke because there are women in the room." Moreover, some students told me that they went to talk to professors after they had made inappropriate comments in the classroom. For instance, aeronautical engineering female students approached their professors to discuss *machista* comments made in the classroom. They drafted a letter to submit to the dean with specific examples of situations witnessed. Furthermore, the increase in female students seems to impact

male to female students relationships. When environmental engineering female students discovered that male students had created a Facebook group with misogynistic content directed toward female students in their cohort, they confronted the male students about their behaviour. The male students then apologized and deleted the group. Most female students told me that they entered into dialogue with friends to talk about sexism. Finally, having women professors increases *representatividade* (diversity) and helps increase support for female students. Female students feel comfortable with female professors, are likely to meet their female professors in their office to review an evaluation or to ask questions on course material, and might go to see female professors when struggling academically or personally. Student mothers received close mentoring from female professors who are mothers, who helped them make decisions on course load and childcare to pursue their education.

During my fieldwork, I participated in the meetings of the women's collective. At the beginning of the semester, when new students were joining, members would present the history of the group and its main objectives. Many new students were first-year students and were learning this history for the first time. When older members would mention *Miss Bixete* or some other event that used to take place on campus, the reaction was bittersweet. A first-year student would ask what *Miss Bixete* was and the answer would leave her in disbelief. "That happened for real?", they would ask. Those were short-lived moments that made us feel better, somehow. The banning of a several decades-old established rite of passage represented the changes that had happened. Although the fights of today seemed impossible, students talked of creating change for future generations. They hoped that new female engineering students wouldn't face the same obstacles as they had.

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APPENDIX A: 2016 EESC COHORT STATISTICS[3]

2016 EESC COHORT BY SEX AND BY PROGRAM OF STUDY

PROGRAM	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL STUDENTS
Aeronautical Engineering	38 (95%)	2 (5%)	40
Environmental Engineering	24 (60%)	16 (40%)	40
Civil Engineering	48 (80%)	12 (20%)	60
Materials Engineering	39 (78%)	11 (22%)	50
Electrical Engineering	135 (90.6%)	14 (9.4%)	149
Engineering (Other)	133 (88.7%)	17 (11.3%)	150
TOTAL STUDENTS	**417 (85.3%)**	**72 (14.7%)**	489

2016 EESC COHORT BY RACE AND BY PROGRAM OF STUDY

PROGRAM	WHITE	NON-WHITE (black, *pardo*, indigenous)	TOTAL STUDENTS
Aeronautical Engineering	34 (85%)	6 (15%)	40
Environmental Engineering	31 (77.5%)	9 (22.5%)	40
Civil Engineering	54 (90%)	6 (10%)	60
Materials Engineering	48 (96%)	2 (4%)	50
Electrical Engineering	121 (81.2%)	28 (18.8%)	149
Engineering (Other)	137 (91.3%)	13 (8.7%)	150
TOTAL STUDENTS	**425 (87%)**	**64 (13%)**	489

2016 EESC COHORT BY EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND AND BY PROGRAM OF STUDY

PROGRAM	Having completed all High School studies in private institutions	Having completed all or part of High School studies in public institutions	TOTAL
Aeronautical Engineering	21 (52.5%)	19 (47.5%)	40
Environmental Engineering	29 (72.5%)	11 (27.5%)	40
Civil Engineering	54 (90%)	6 (10%)	60
Materials Engineering	40 (80%)	10 (20%)	50
Electrical Engineering	111 (74.5%)	38 (25.5%)	149
Engineering (Other)	134 (89.3%)	16 (10.7%)	150
TOTAL	**389 (79.5%)**	**100 (20.5%)**	489

[3] I have produced the following statistics from data retrieved from the FUVEST (2016) website.

APPENDIX B: STATISTICS ON PROFESSORS

EESC 2016 PROFESSORS BY SEX AND BY DEPARTMENT

DEPARTMENT	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Aeronautical Engineering (Aeronautica)	9 (100%)	0 (0%)	9
Structural Engineering (Estruturas)	24 (92.3%)	2 (13%)	26
Materials Engineering (Materiais)	15 (83.3%)	3 (16.6%)	18
Transportation Engineering (Transportes)	8 (72.7%)	3 (27.2%)	11
Electrical and Computer Engineering (Elétrica e de Computação)	44 (86.2%)	7 (13.7%)	51
Mechanical Engineering (Mecanica)	31 (91.1%)	3 (8.9%)	34
Production Engineering (Produção)	24 (92.3%)	2 (13%)	26
Geotechnical Engineering (Geotecnia)	8 (80%)	2 (20%)	10
Hydraulics and Sanitary Engineering (Hidraulica e Saneamento)	20 (80%)	5 (20%)	25
Total	**183 (87.1%)**	**27 (12.9%)**	210

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