ARMED WITH MORE THAN KNOWLEDGE: AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC EXPLORATION OF GUN CULTURE

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The purpose of this dissertation is to explore the author's experiences with campus concealed carry and gun culture. The author employs methods of autoethnography to highlight the ways in which her lived experiences interact with gun culture in the United States of America. Vignettes included in this work examine the author's: attendance at a campus-wide training on how to survive an active shooter; involvement in a concealed carry permit course; and experience with a student implying possession of a gun inside an academic classroom. Through the lens of intersectional feminism, the author deconstructs the ways in which gender, race, class, and ability impact her experiences and analyzes how these constructs are represented within gun culture. Significant findings discussed are: the culturally constructed idea of the ‘good guy with a gun’; the ways in which gun culture positions women as inherently vulnerable in order to support their claim that guns are empowering; the methods by which gun culture utilizes fear to encourage gun use; and the ways guns in academic spaces impact power structures. Future directions for research include further exploration of the implications of guns in college classrooms and examining the numbers of students who choose to practice concealed carry on campus.

Key words: Gun culture, Guns on Campus, Campus Concealed Carry, School Violence.