

ARTICULATIONS OF POWER: GUNS ON CAMPUS AND THE PROTESTS AGAINST THEM

ABSTRACT

When carrying concealed handguns on campus was legalised at The University of Texas (UT) at Austin in 2015, students and faculty positioned themselves in relation to the new law in very different ways, ranging from large demonstrations and the use of various types of rhetoric to non-vocal representations and deliberate silence. This essay examines an important transitional moment in the educational environment by focusing on the respective relationships and modes of expression—or articulations—of the affected parties regarding the issue of firearms on university premises, as these reflected opposing camps within the academic community. Drawing on interviews and quantitative research, and proposing a novel theoretical frame to understand the complex subject of guns, this essay examines the polemics, polarisation, and power dynamics around Campus Carry at UT Austin.

INTRODUCTION

Daily life at The University of Texas (UT) at Austin today resembles that of most other public university campuses around the United States, with students hurrying between classes, canvassing at tables on the Mall for their favourite causes, or hanging out and chatting at cafes and the main student centre. It is unlikely that one would spot the casual passerby with a concealed pistol tightly holstered inside their waistband, nor might one guess the degree of resistance among the academic community to Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11), which since 1 August 2016 has legally allowed firearms on most of the university premises (Somers and Phelps 2018).¹ A few faded signs continue to promote a ‘Gun-Free UT’, but the rest have been taken down (Isenberg and O’Hanlon

2018), and the media spotlight that once shone on the anti-gun protests has since moved on.² Those visible disruptions to campus life are in the past, yet in the post-implementation phase of Campus Carry, articulations of power remain.

When initially beginning fieldwork at UT Austin on the subject of Campus Carry in 2018, as part of an Academy of Finland mixed-methods research project conducted by the John Morton Center (University of Turku),³ I was struck by the different manners in which those on the two sides—namely, the proponents and opponents of the law—expressed themselves, or not. Despite the large student body (51,832 in Fall 2018) spread across a sprawling campus of forty acres, and the general perception of Texas as strongly pro-gun, those with a license-to-carry (LTC) were not easy to find; they were not visible,⁴ nor were they generally

interested in talking about their position. On the other hand, those who opposed Campus Carry were quite willing to share their opinions, concerns, experiences, and fears; faculty and student antigun activists who had galvanised a movement and garnered global attention had everything to gain by speaking out. In addition to these camps, the research project was also interested in examining the part played by the university itself, which as a key institutional player was in a tricky position, obliged by the state to support the law but also quite aware of public sentiment against it. Thus, interviews with administrators often walked a fine line of what could be said and what could not.

In practice, while these varying types of communication made the research tricky, if also somewhat uneven, they did not make it invalid. On the contrary, the dynamic itself appeared worthy of investigation and analysis. In order to parse the spoken and unspoken, or the ways in which the various actors expressed themselves, I decided to explore the idea of there being different ‘articulations’. Over time, as my work in the field progressed, my use of the concept deepened as well, evolving from a simple but multivalent word into an analytical frame for comprehending the complex dynamics surrounding firearms at UT Austin, particularly aspects of power and rhetoric expressed through institutional forces, gun owners, and protesters against the law. In this essay, therefore, I present the concept of ‘articulations’ as a novel means of understanding the various ways in which the different actors engaged with guns and their competing positions were expressed, and I operationalise the concept in specific aspects of the research. Indeed, it was through these aspects that different ‘articulations’ came into focus, opening new avenues for conceptualising the ideological and political topography of the university space and, accordingly, the potential impact of Campus Carry law there.

DEFINING ARTICULATIONS

To outline my conceptualisation of ‘articulations’, I will begin with an exegetical review of the word itself and then provide specific examples of how its various definitions can be applied to Campus Carry in the context of UT Austin. In brief, the Oxford English Dictionary (2008) defines the verb ‘to articulate’ as follows:

1. to set out in articles: to formulate in an article or article; to particularise, specify; to bring (a charge) against; to come to terms of agreement; to arrange by certain conditions;
2. to express distinctly: to pronounce distinctly; to express in words, esp. clearly and fluently, to express or convey, esp. through non-verbal means; to speak distinctly; to make visually distinct; or
3. to join or unite: to attach or unite (esp. a bone) by a joint; to be united by a joint.

Taken simply, these three meanings suggest different modes of communication or action, ranging from the legal to the physical. As a theoretical frame, however, they can also delineate types of engagement employed by the various actors in the process of guns being allowed on campus. Comprehending the definitions in terms of institutional, social, and personal levels (cf. Social-Ecological Model; CDC 2020), one finds differing modes of communication intertwined with the power dynamics surrounding Campus Carry.

For example, the first definition, 1) ‘to set out in articles’, speaks to the specific legislative act to legalise guns on campus. This type of articulation was done in a straightforward manner by the Texas legislature in the form of Senate Bill (SB) 11, which public universities in the state were then obliged to obey. In the case of UT Austin, the administration determined and implemented their own policy after a two-step review process, determining

which areas would be off-limits to guns, if depositories would be made available for the storage of firearms, and any other number of specific practicalities. In other words, the state articulated the general principles of the law and the university subsequently arrived at a workable plan that articulated how Campus Carry would specifically work (Ruoppila 2021).

Another form of this level of articulation occurred as the supporters and opponents of Campus Carry presented their arguments for or against SB 11, defining and establishing their respective positions in the public forum of the university community and, more broadly, the media. The charges that they levelled against each other played out on the local stage, but were also often informed by ideological legacies surrounding the US gun debate at the national level. For instance, even as UT Austin supporters of the law allied themselves with and were supported by Students for Campus Carry, an organisation mobilised nationwide, it in turn leaned heavily on talking points from the National Rifle Association (NRA), including its strong rhetoric against gun control advocates. In contrast, even as opponents of the policy mobilised *ad hoc* responses to the situation, they formed alliances with other grassroots gun control organisations in the United States (e.g. the Million Mom March, Moms Demand Action, Everytown for Gun Safety), which included bringing charges against the structures that ratified and would implement the law. From my point of view, such institutional articulation provided a wealth of important information on Campus Carry, but in a reified way that for the most part only spoke to established positionalities. In practice, this was seen in interviews with administrators—or in interviews with students that never took place, as potential participants instead directed our team to a website or other resources—thereby

significantly limiting possibilities for ethnological engagement.

As fieldwork continued, it was much more rewarding to consider the Campus Carry issue in relation to the second definition of articulation, that is, 2) *how* the parties ‘express distinctly’ their respective stances. Approaching the subject through this lens revealed major differences. The proponents of Campus Carry typically relied on legalistic discourse (e.g. the constitutional right to bear arms) or the dogma of larger organisations, if not outright silence. When our research team⁵ asked the local representative of Students for Concealed Carry for an interview, the request was politely declined and we were instead referred to an archive of common arguments hosted on the organisation’s website. Only after extensive efforts did our research team find some LTC holders who were willing to be interviewed. Attending a debate on the Second Amendment revealed a cadre of students who were passionate about guns, yet only one undergraduate accepted our invitation to a focus group.

In contrast, those opposed to firearms on campus were more than happy to talk. Sharing very personal experiences or offering helpful context on the passing of the law and its implementation, they explicated their position in depth. Students, faculty, and staff outlined the level of polarisation on campus, often quite emotionally, and they employed various rhetorical strategies to communicate their concerns (Butters 2021a), including irony, reversals, and humour. The banners of the activists frequently played with words, for instance, proclaiming that they were ‘Armed with Reason’, while the name of the ‘Gun-Free UT’ group (primarily made up of faculty and graduate students across a range of disciplines) inverted the more common Second Amendment trope of US citizens being ‘free’ to have guns.

Members of the undergraduate-led 'Cocks Not Glocks' group drew explicit connections between guns and sex, highlighting what they perceived to be an ethical double standard: according to Texas law, firearms which could be used to kill someone could now be carried around campus, even though openly doing the same with a dildo—classified as an 'obscene device'—constituted a crime.⁶ By distributing as many as 5000 dildos to students as part of their protest against Campus Carry, Cocks Not Glocks used visual displays and articulated their position in the comedic tradition of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, drawing attention to intertwinings of sex and politics while at the same time employing Bakhtin's 'carnavalesque' and humour 'to challenge privileged positions and reframe public and political discourse' (Graefer 2019: 4; Bakhtin 1984). As Majken **Sorensen** notes, 'humor's power is its ability to turn things upside down and present them in a new frame' (Sorenson 2008: 185), in order to simultaneously create a culture of resistance and create further visibility. Bolstered by photos of dildo-waving students, this articulation strategy worked well for Cocks Not Glocks, gaining the group and the Campus Carry debate international media attention (in fact, it was those very headlines that sparked interest at the John Morton Center and led to our research project). The amplification of Campus Carry into a *cause célèbre*, contextualised in the national debate on guns, even led to the activists being invited to the White House by then-President Barack Obama.

The presence of guns at the university created oppositional activist solidarity within the student body and with faculty and staff, as Campus Carry became an intersectional point around which different groups could unify and rally. Instead of adhering to an established party line, the articulations of this new community

could be raw and emotional. By no means were they only based on humour; they also built upon shared feelings of intense fear and vulnerability (Butters 2021b), as well as past histories of violent trauma. As an affective communicative milieu, these different dynamics played together to help individuals realise that they were not alone, and the discovery of their collective voice and courage to speak up acted as a positive feedback loop, building a broader movement and even greater engagement. Again, the use of non-verbal representations and visually powerful images—such as the juxtaposition of guns and dildos—communicated on a different level, which were easy for social media users to share.

The third definition of articulations, 3) 'to unite', comprises the manner in which Campus Carry represents various linkages, be they physical or mental, possessed by those with a licence to carry. If in military terminology an 'articulated weapon' is attached to something, like a machine gun mounted on an armoured vehicle, the same concept can be figuratively extended to the LTC holder as well, for whom the gun is a sort of appendage (cf. the expression 'side-arm'; L. *arma*, cf. PIE root *ar- 'to fit together' (Online Etymological Dictionary)). Here, there is literally an embodied aspect to the gun. The sense of connection with a gun can also be psychological; one may feel 'naked' without it. This very sentiment was expressed during a focus group with students supporting Campus Carry, in this case by a participant who arrived fifteen minutes late and apologised by explaining that he had forgotten his pistol at home and needed to go back and get it (Pro-Campus Carry focus group, 19 April 2018). Psychologically being 'connected' to the gun also extends to behaviour and ritual. For example, carrying demands a heightened sense of awareness, not only of the gun itself (for the

sake of safety), but of one's surroundings as well. For example, an interviewee explained that he planned his day around whether he would be carrying or not; if he intended to go to the gym, where it was impossible to properly store his firearm, he would leave it behind (Interview, faculty member, 17 April 2018). Understanding such linkages was critical when speaking to LTC holders about how they viewed shared space, and theoretically conceptualising them as a form of articulation helped me establish the research frame. Specifically, I found that the idea of a 'shared joint' (found in the third definition of articulation) underlined the ontological significance of the gun and its very different implications for the various parties. For the LTC holder, the presence of the gun as conjoined actant (Latour 1999) provided a sense of security, while for opponents of the law it was a source of fear (Butters 2021b: 53). On a physical level, this type of articulation—the fact that any research participant might actually be carrying—was also a reality that the research team had to keep in mind at all times.

ADVANCING ARTICULATIONS AS A THEORETICAL CONCEPT

In regard to firearms on campus, the various articulations described above not only involved communication but expressions of power on institutional, social, and personal levels; they offered varying degrees of accessibility for me as a researcher, from legalistic language and abstract data to shared lived experiences to direct engagement with people. As such, they can be understood in terms of Foucault's idea of the *dispositif*, 'a certain physical, non-discursive or intellectual, discursive way of ordering, having ordered things in a certain domain, which makes a certain action/understanding in that domain possible' (Callewaert 2017: 30; Foucault 1979).

Through such ordering, the strategic orientation of the *dispositif* is committed to 'maintaining the *articulation* of forces and knowledge' (Callewaert 2017: 44, italics added). However, Campus Carry at UT Austin involved not one articulation or ordering, but many. The reality in the field presented an evolving complex of heterogeneous and oppositional intents, with the different sides alternatively seeking to preserve the existing order and power structures (e.g. the university defining what behaviours to allow), disrupt them (e.g. activists protesting against the law and suing the university), or walk various types of middle lines. These afforded access to knowledge in a variety of ways—or not. With multiple *dispositifs* in play, my work thus required an understanding of *how* they were differentiated and expressed, and a better tool to analyse the various levels on which their forces were exerted. Thus, my conceptualisation of articulation in terms of definitions was driven by an actual research need.

In the process of exploring the term 'articulation' and how it might be applied in a novel manner (as outlined above) to shed light on the Campus Carry situation, I was surprised to also learn of a fourth definition already in use in the field of rhetoric as a theoretical concept applied to the national gun debate. In this context, it comprises 4) 'the way in which discourse is used to make connections, establish associations, or build links between different things—different events, different social movements, different ideas, different people, and so on' (Jasinski 2001: 65), but then signifies the construction of relationships across categories, such as applying aspects of a successful argument in one context to a completely different one. In gun studies, such an articulation is found in the work of Ruth Rosen (1993), who sought to connect gun control to a health problem, situating it as a 'cure' for a societal ill, in order

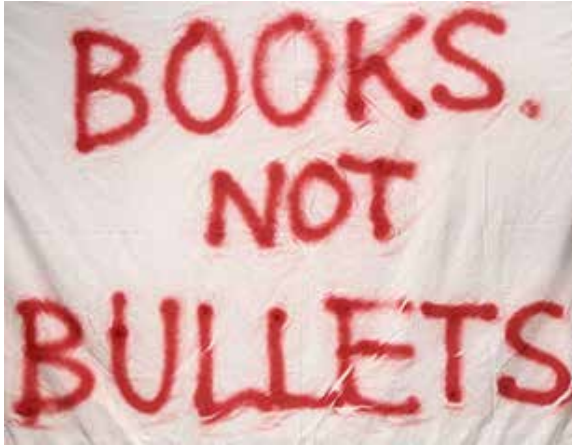


Image 1. Banner in a classroom during a Gun-Free UT workshop on the first day of Campus Carry implementation. Photo by Tamir Kalifa, *The Texas Tribune* (Walters 2016).

to shift the debate out of the arena of public policy; both socially and politically, she argued, the ramifications of moving the discourse can be seen as quite significant.

As soon as I added this interpretation of articulation to my model, I realised that a comparable type of rhetorical shift had also taken place at UT Austin, when the activist group 'Gun-Free UT' pivoted from policy in their discussion of Campus Carry to instead identify guns in the classroom as an education problem (see Image 1).

In this case, the articulation had two aspects. On one hand, students were claiming that fear of guns in the classroom made it hard for them to focus on their studies; on the other, instructors cited infringement of their First Amendment rights—namely, freedom of speech—because of needing to change the content of their lectures, particularly when teaching on provocative subjects, lest they become the target of an armed student (in interviews, they shared experiences of violent reactions and outbursts in the class before the law went into effect). Three professors therefore

filed a lawsuit against the university's gun policy, arguing that it had a 'chilling effect' on their ability to teach (Watkins 2016).

There was no arguing that opponents of Campus Carry were profoundly impacted by the law on a personal level. This was clear in interviews that became quite emotional. As an integral part of their experiences, affect comprised an important component of their argumentation (Butters 2021b). Yet, without delegitimising the feelings of the students and instructors, it can be argued that the use of the term 'chilling effect' also reflected a conscious rhetorical strategy on their part. In interviews, certain tropes came up again and again, almost like talking points that had proven successful (being picked up by the media, for instance) were now being repeated for similar effect. On the legal level, however, the strategy to shift the predominant criterion from policy to education did not result in the law being changed. The Texas district court and then the US Court of Appeals dismissed the professors' lawsuit, finding their argument of fear to be too subjective (Roll 2017; U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit 2018).

Nor did Gun-Free UT's critique of the university administration for prioritising political and budgetary exigencies over its primary mandate (namely, education) succeed in wresting control of the conceptual narrative around Campus Carry. Ultimately, the legal and legislative frames—reflecting the first type of articulation in the definitional model of 'setting articles in place'—proved resistant to the rhetorical forms of articulation that sought to move the locus of discourse. In fact, UT Austin did not have much choice in the matter. As a public institution receiving funding from the state, it was obliged to follow the new law, with potential financial and more severe repercussions if it did not. The author of the

Campus Carry bill, State Senator Brian Birdwell (R-Granbury), left no room for doubt on this point: ‘The Legislature will very appropriately be watching to make sure that our legislative intent is properly followed. And if not, I assume there will be consequences associated with that’ (Houston Chronicle 2015). In one interview, a professor explained this threat in terms of GOP legislators being able to use UT Austin’s refusal to impose Campus Carry in order to gain greater control of the institution, a liberal flagship in the public university system of Texas, and recast it more in the mould of right-leaning Texas A&M University (Interview, faculty member, 24 April 2018; see also *The Texas Tribune* video interview with Lt. Governor Dan Patrick in Smith 2015). In this sense of articulation as a form of institutional power, Campus Carry reflects a desire for spatial and ideological conquest of the academy, a legal storming of the ivory tower, by conservative forces in the state.

AMPLIFIED AND SILENT ARTICULATIONS

Examining the debate at Campus Carry in terms of articulations also revealed paradoxes in how the opposing sides expressed themselves. These were manifest in amplification and silence, respectively, that fell under the second part of my definitional model: ‘to pronounce distinctly; to express in words, esp. clearly and fluently, to express or convey, esp. through non-verbal means; to speak distinctly; to make visually distinct’.

The paradox of amplification emerged from precisely the group that claimed a chilling effect, which limited their ability to communicate; ironically, it was that fear of guns that led them to speak out. They did this in a way that was clear, distinct, and powerful. Amplification was very important for the opponents of Campus Carry at UT Austin to get their message out

as far and wide as possible. In practice, the articulations of the Cocks Not Glocks activists quite literally involved volume. As one student proudly boasted, ‘We wanted attention. I can get us attention. So yeah, I stood up there for twelve hours and yelled’ (Interview, undergraduate student, 4 April 2018). This same attitude was reflected on social media and in the activists’ participation in various documentaries on the movement (Raval and Spiro 2018; Webbe 2020). Even if the activists tended to teach in the humanities, and were most often women, their movement caught on among other demographic segments and grew even stronger, being amplified far beyond campus, both online (through memes and videos, for example) and in demonstrations with other organisations (e.g. March for Our Lives).

In contrast, supporters of Campus Carry and members of Students for Concealed Carry tended to be the opposite of vocal. Their articulation was even opaque. This is evident in an anecdote shared by a graduate student participant who attended a Gun-Free UT rally: ‘There was one guy and we didn’t talk to him. We didn’t totally understand who he was or what they were doing, because there wasn’t enough of them to explain what they were. I think only after the fact, when *The Daily Texan* interviewed him, did we realize that that was the pro-gun group’ (Interview, graduate student, 24 April 2018). A website and an infrequently updated Facebook page controlled what Students for Concealed Carry sought to disseminate. They may have had a core community and various activities which were not publicly advertised, but the fact that our research team was unable to interview any representatives of the group meant that it was impossible to know. The resulting lacuna in our research, therefore, was directly due to a practised *modus operandi* of silence.

There are different possible explanations

for the public silence of Campus Carry supporters. Even though Texas has a strong gun culture, it is not as pronounced in the State Capitol area, and even less so at UT Austin. Knowing that they are in the minority, those who support the law tend not to advertise their stance. For example, in a representative survey of UT Austin undergraduates conducted by our research team, only 8% of supporters of Campus Carry said that they talked about it with any level of frequency. In addition, roughly one-third felt that they could not openly share their opinions on the issue (36%) or that they needed to justify their position (33%). This sentiment was surely pronounced during the period of intense activism and media coverage. According to one instructor who himself carried, 'Not everyone who has opinions is comfortable expressing them on a social media page, so we might not be getting an accurate reflection of the full range of attitudes. But the same could be said of a physical meeting. Some people may not speak up' (Interview, faculty member, 23 April 2018). The reticence to explicitly position oneself may also be tied to social desirability bias and sensitivities around being identified as a gun owner. The so-called 'reporting gap' of individuals not admitting to gun ownership has been seen, for example, in previous quantitative research and statistics gathering on the subject (Kleck 1997; Wertz et al. 2018). Such a culture of privacy may be tied to fears of theft or the state coming to take one's guns away, but it also reflects a lack of any need to discuss gun ownership. Simply put, those who do not want to talk about their position do not have to. With the law on their side, supporters of Campus Carry need not engage in debate at all; indeed, from their point of view, there is little to be gained from doing so. Finally, the silent ('non-verbal') form of articulation reflects the legalities and practice of concealment itself. The

weapon cannot be visible or its presence openly known, for that would break the law.

There were exceptions to the pattern of amplification and silence by the two sides, however. In some cases, it was the supporters who were outspoken and the opponents who were muted. For instance, as the Cocks Not Glocks protests gained more and more attention, large numbers of gun rights proponents rallied against them in online posts. The initial article written by *Breitbart News* on the dildo rally attracted more than 1300 comments (Price 2016), many of which consisted of attacks against the activists—including *ad hominem* insults based on race, gender, sexual orientation, and religious identity—with some physical threats even. Yet, being largely anonymous, this mode of communication was not physically manifest on campus. As an undergraduate activist in the Cocks Not Glocks group recalled, 'Everyone is too cowardly to actually come up to us. They all hide behind their computers. The more direct attacks were pretty dark' (Interview, undergraduate student, 27 March 2018). Comments involving threats of violence and rape did have a strong impact on some of the activists, who dropped out of the movement or became less vocal about the issue. At the same time, a chilling effect was noticeable in the classroom. In these ways, the amplification of the debate in the public space resulted in some individuals being more silent.

Staff members also perceived an implicit imposition of silence by the university itself. For instance, one employee curtly noted that her position was quite precarious compared with tenured faculty, 'You can do so little as far as vocalising dissent' (Interview, staff member, 16 April 2018). Articulations by this particular segment of the community were not welcome, as they went against the administration's preferred muting of the Campus Carry issue

(or non-issue, from its perspective; on this, see Ruoppila and Butters 2020). There are examples of the university's strategy for maintaining a low profile on the presence of guns, such as incoming students not being briefed on concealed carry policy during orientation. LTC holders are simply expected to know what protocols to follow on the basis of their training, even when official signs (intentionally lacking any visual depictions of guns) may be less than clear. In response to public objections that LTC holders' knowledge and training might be inadequate, a university administrator admitted, 'We kind of backed out of that and said "That's not our problem. If you feel the training is insufficient, you need to talk to your state representatives and get them to change the law"' (Interview, university administrator, 26 April 2018).

At the same time, during the period of implementation, Texas politicians who support gun rights tended to be very vocal regarding their position. They had to be explicit to play effectively to their conservative base, of course, but there was another reason as well: the Political Victory Fund of the National Rifle Association (NRA-PVF) would translate their campaign platforms and voting record in office into 'scorecards' that would then be distributed to their constituents. For this reason, politicians in Texas had—and still have—a vested interest in presenting Campus Carry as a success, not something needing reform. One year after implementation of the law, for example, the Governor of Texas Greg Abbott posted on Twitter that it had not had any negative impact: 'Concealed carry poses no danger on Texas college campuses. The dire consequences never happened. @NRA #guns #txlege' (@GregAbbott_TX 2017). It could also be added that Abbott's post was a retweet of a *Fox News* (2016) article, with a photo of a sidearm being publicly displayed—despite that being in

clear disregard of the legal stipulations against showing a concealed weapon. Indeed, the most extreme form of articulation by gun supporters involves their deliberate choice to make guns visible ('expressing through non-verbal means'), even when to do so would be against the law. When a master's student posed for a photo during an interview with *The New York Times*, lifting his shirt to reveal a .45 tucked in his trousers (Philipps 2016), he was contacted by the Dean of Students and faced possible disciplinary action; according to Texas concealed carry statutes, he should have also lost his licence-to-carry. Other examples of the brazen attitude of gun owners can be found in their attendance at demonstrations with assault rifles and carbines (which are legal to openly carry without a licence), which have sometimes crossed campus lines and ventured into illegality (Image 2).



Image 2. Open Carry supporter with a pistol-caliber carbine. San Antonio Garage, UT Austin. Photograph: Matt Valentine (2015).

While such incidents are the rare exceptions and LTC holders at UT Austin navigate day-to-day campus life in a silent and completely inconspicuous manner, almost entirely adhering to the letter of the law (in our survey of undergraduates, only two admitted that they ‘stretch the rules and take it [their concealed handgun] where it is not allowed’), it should again be stressed that the gun itself is a type of articulation; per the third definition, it is a physical extension of the holder. Whether one likes guns on campuses or not, their presence forces a type of situational awareness, a reality experienced directly by our research team. Even though none of us ever witnessed anyone visibly carrying on university premises when in the field, we never lost sight of the fact that some around us were.

CONCLUSIONS

To understand the complexity of Campus Carry at UT Austin, both before and after its implementation, it is necessary not only to identify the various positionalities in relation to the issue but also to parse the ways in which they may be expressed. This essay has attempted to do that by using the concept of articulation as an interpretive and theoretical lens to reveal intersecting networks of power and agendas—represented by the state of Texas, the university, activists, and LTC holders, in particular—during a historic moment in which guns entered the campus space. These play out on various levels, as reiterated below:

Type of articulation	Sphere of articulation	Examples
‘to set out in articles’	institutional: government, legal system, university	Campus Carry law, university policy, lawsuit
‘to express distinctly’	social: activism, educational context (in the classroom), media (mass media, social media)	humour, amplification (vocal), silence (non-vocal)
‘to join or unite’	physical and psychological: conjoined actant, personal identity	the act of carrying, gun as expression of power (whether seen or unseen)
‘to make connections, establish associations, or build links between different things’ (i.e. to shift discourse)	rhetoric: activism, education, political discourse, media	attempts to move discourse from policy to health or education

The various definitions and uses of the word, from legislatively setting forth to making one’s position known and signalling linkages

(physical, psychological, behavioural, and so forth), also reflected the various types of data our team collected, from official documents to

interviews using rhetoric and affect as strategies to oppose the new law. In some instances, these articulations were formal; in others, they emerged organically during fieldwork, being revealed as multiple and often diametrically opposed aspects (e.g. the vocal or silent nature of the supporters and opponents, depending on their respective needs; explicit rules and implicit assumptions; and the seen and the unseen).

In conclusion, the broad range of power dynamics and modes of expression encountered when researching the complex subject of guns demanded the type of analytical tool that the concept of articulations provides. I have sought to illustrate how it can be operationalised by applying it to examples that arose in the field, but I believe the model could be extended beyond Campus Carry to the national debate on firearms in the United States or even more broadly to other areas of research.

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NOTES

- 1 Passed on 1 August 2015, Senate Bill 11 represented a success for GOP legislators in Texas, who had tried passing a similar law multiple times before. <https://capitol.texas.gov/Bill-Lookup/History.aspx?LegSess=86R&Bill=SB11>.
- 2 In fall 2018, The University of Texas at Austin began enforcing its policy against signs in windows facing externally onto campus.
- 3 The fieldwork at UT Austin conducted in the spring semesters of 2018 and 2019 included more than two dozen interviews with faculty, students, and staff, two focus groups with students, and a representative survey of UT Austin undergraduates (n = 1204). Thanks are due to the Department of American Studies at UT Austin for hosting the research project, and to the Academy of Finland (grant 310568) for its support.
- 4 Since 1995, residents of Texas who are 21 years old (or 20, if in the military) and complete the required training can obtain a licence to carry a registered firearm concealed on their person in most public areas.
- 5 The Campus Carry research team, based at the John Morton Center for North American Studies (JMC) at the University of Turku, was led by Prof. Benita Heiskanen.
- 6 In 1973, the Texas legislature passed Section 43.21 of the Penal Code 9 (1973).

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