# EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION ON SOCIAL IDENTITY IN LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE STUDENTS

SENIOR CAPSTONE PROJECT
Presented to
The Department of Anthropology
The Colorado College

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2017

Approved: _____

Date: 3 May 2017

**Abstract**

*Throughout the 2016 presidential election, our new president, Donald Trump, attacked every social group, but his own. I hypothesized this type of pointed rhetoric would influence individuals' self assurance. Through an anonymous questionnaire, I found that four in five Colorado College students indeed shifted in how they self-identify pre- and post-election. Despite students' fear, disillusionment and outrage resulting from Trump's attacks, however, several students still managed to find power within their more marginalized identities. Given the tumultuous nature of the election, my study is indicative of a broader national movement in terms of how college student's responded to the election*

**Honor Pledge**

*On my honor, I have neither given, nor received, any unauthorized aid on this senior capstone. Honor Code Upheld.*

Leslie Dinkin

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**Acknowledgements**

Many thanks to the Colorado College students who participated in my study; to Krista Fish, my thesis advisor, for all of her help over the last four years; and to my parents, my sisters and my brother for their support and encouragement all of my life.

## INTRODUCTION

Nearing the end of 2016, the United States was in a state of turmoil. Following Donald Trump's presidential victory, several news sites reported a large increase in hate crimes of vandalism, assault and intimidation targeting certain social, racial, and religious groups across the nation (CNN, 2016; ABC, 2016). President of the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), Richard Cohen said that the hate crimes have "been everywhere—in schools, in places of business like Walmart, on the street" (SPLC, 2016). In just ten days following the election on November 8th, the SPLC counted almost 900 harmful cases of "real-world" harassment in the United States through media reports and submissions to the #ReportHate page on the SPLC website (online harassment cases were not counted) (SPLC, 2016). This was a 450% increase in hate-related cases compared to the estimated 200 incidents occurring within the first two weeks of Barak Obama's election win in 2008, which one may have expected to have been elevated given the election of the first African-American president in the history of the United States (Jonsson, 2008; Jaeger, 2016). These post 2016 election incidents included anti-immigrant, anti-black, anti-Muslim, anti-LGBTQIA+, anti-women, anti-Semitic, anti-Trump, hate speech and crimes emphasizing white nationalism (SPLC, 2016). Clearly, this social conflict was widespread.

*Los Angeles Times* writer David Horsey termed the weeks after the election "a mourning period" (Horsey, 2016). With forty days left in Barak Obama's presidency, Michelle Obama told Oprah Winfrey, "We are feeling what not having hope feels like" (WITW, 2016). On November 8th 2016, Thomas L. Friedman, op-ed writer for the *New York Times* stated, "For the first time, I feel homeless in America"

(Friedman, 2016). Indeed, the aftermath of the 2016 presidential election was unlike any other election before it. Horsey affirmed:

> Back in 1980, there was disappointment among Democrats when Ronald Reagan won. In 2000, after the long Florida recount and the intrusion of the Supreme Court into the decision, there were plenty of upset people who thought Al Gore, not George W. Bush, deserved to be president. But the losing voters in those elections were not despondent. They were not breaking out in tears weeks later. They were not waking up each morning with feelings of dread about what was to come.

This despondence is a direct reaction to Trump's unpredictable temperament (Drezner, 2016), inflammatory language (Piggott, 2016) and personal attacks on individuals, as well as on entire social, racial and religious groups throughout the election process. For example, in his speech announcing his candidacy, Trump declared, "When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best. … They're sending people that have lots of problems… They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists" (Trump in Lee, 2015). In a statement to the press, the forty-fifth president called "…for a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States" (Trump, 2015). In an interview with ABC News, Trump spoke of Hillary Clinton and through extrapolation, all women in positions of power, "I just don't think she has a presidential look, and you need a presidential look" (Trump in Berenson, 2016). In November 2015, Trump retweeted a picture of false crime statistics that claimed that eighty-one percent of white murders were committed by African-Americans in 2015, thereby perpetuating a harmful stereotype (Piggott, 2016). In his speeches, statements and tweets, Donald Trump attacked essentially every social group, but his own— white, American, upper-class, Christian, heterosexual and male (Piggott, 2016). In response to these incidents, Charles Blow (2016), op-ed writer for the *New York Times* wrote:

> Trump is in fact the logical extension of toxic masculinity and ambient misogyny. He is the logical extension of rampant racism. He is the logical extension of wealth worship. He is the logical extension of pervasive anti-intellectualism. Trump is the logical extension of the worst of America.

Evident through the significant increase in hate crimes following the election, Donald Trump's method of conduct aroused people's inner hatred and made it okay to act upon it (Lieven, 2016). During the 2017 Golden Globes, in accepting her Cecil B. DeMille award, Meryl Streep stated of the new president, "this instinct to humiliate, when it's modeled by someone in the public platform, by someone powerful, it filters down into everybody's life, because it kind of gives permission for other people to do the same thing" (Streep in Izadi and Wang, 2017). Trump's behavior toward people who look and act different than him has damaged our civic-nationalist accord on discourse in our country and seemingly sparked a public resurgence of white supremacism (Lieven, 2016; Potok, 2017). Jared Taylor, a self-declared white nationalist and former editor of *American Renaissance*, a now discontinued openly racist journal, stated that "….overwhelmingly white Americans…" proved they were not "…obedient zombies…" by voting "…for America as a distinct nation with a distinct people who deserve a government devoted to [white] people" (Taylor in Potok, 2017). Richard Spencer, leader of racist "think tank", the National Policy Institute, declared that "Trump's victory was, at its root, a victory of identity politics" (Spencer in Potok, 2017). Indeed, Trump's victory was a victory for people who identify like Trump.

While white supremacists found power within Trump's hurtful and pointed rhetoric and demeanor, they were not the only ones. In response to his misogynistic performance as a presidential candidate, a world wide Women's March was organized to take place the day after Donald Trump's inauguration and was the biggest organized

protest in the history of the nation (Easley, 2017). Celebrities like Streep and Beyoncé have both publicly sworn to keep fighting against this growing hatred and uphold the truth. In a Facebook post, Beyoncé stated, "As #GlobalCitizens, we can make our voices heard and turn awareness into meaningful action and positive change" (Beyoncé in Spanos, 2017). Streep begged the audience of the Golden Globes, "I only ask the famously well-heeled Hollywood foreign press and all of us in our community, to join me in supporting the Committee to Protect Journalists, because we're going to need them going forward, and they'll need us to safeguard the truth" (Streep in Izadi and Wang, 2017). People opposed to Donald Trump were certainly not silent. After Trump accepted the presidential nomination from the Republican Party, Patrisse Cullors, cofounder of the Black Lives Matter movement stated:

> He pledged to fight for Americans, while threatening the vast majority of this country with imprisonment, deportation and a culture of abject fear…His doublespeak belies his true nature: a charlatan who will embolden racists and destroy communities of color. He is a disgrace. White people of conscience must forcefully reject this hatred immediately (Cullors in Givens, 2016).

With Winfrey, Michelle Obama elaborated, "Hope is necessary. It's a necessary concept… And Barack didn't just talk about hope because he thought it was a nice slogan to get votes. He and I and so many believed that … what else do you have if you don't have hope? What do you give your kids if you can't give them hope?" (WITW, 2016). In the days following November 8th 2016, many citizens reflected inward and questioned their own social identities. They asked: Who am I as an American? Who am I as a person of color, woman, Muslim, Jew, member of the LGBTQIA+ community, immigrant, a person of privilege… in Trump's America?

*Anthropology in an Election Year*

This research that studies the individual's lived experience and immediate reaction to the election is grounded in the discipline of anthropology. While this question can be explored through many lenses, an anthropological approach allows for the consideration of multiple dimensions of identity as well as an understanding of political culture's influence on such identities. As the 2016 presidential election was so recent, its impact has yet to be fully considered. Anthropology's holistic perspective permits a variety of methods which can be useful to better understand a Trump win's impact on the individual. This research intends to explore the immediate impact focusing on the country's youth, using Colorado College (CC), a liberal arts school in Colorado Springs, as its community of inquiry. Through an anonymous online questionnaire, I asked open-ended questions that sought reflections to changes in the saliency of individual's social identities pre- and post-election. This study will analyze any shifts as well as indications of fear, disillusionment, outrage or empowerment arising in individuals between the election and the inauguration. I draw from social identity theory, structural racism, postfeminism and girl power, interactionism and virtual social identity, group status threat, student development theory and *habitus* as frameworks for my study. Students feeling fear, disillusionment, outrage or empowerment were not confined to one social group or group of identities so within this thesis, I will address their responses and interpretations on nationality, race, class, privilege, femininity, sexual orientation, gender fluidity and religion. Before diving into my study, I will first discuss Colorado College as my study location, relevant political history and important anthropological and social theory to better frame my research.

*Why Colorado College?*

There are many reasons why I selected Colorado College (CC) as my study site. First, anthropologists love to travel the world— I certainly do— but there are benefits to studying one's own backyard (Kirschner & Martin, 1999). Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney (1984) wrote, "native anthropologists are in a far more advantageous position in understanding the emotive dimensions of behavior" (584). As a Colorado College student, I am already an insider. My familiar face may help students feel more comfortable answering personal questions openly and honestly. I also have access to CC events, the student list-serve and online Facebook pages set up specifically for students, all through which I can gather data. Second, students at Colorado College were only first or second time voters. We and generations younger will certainly feel the greatest brunt of this upcoming presidency. As we have lived almost half of our lives under our first African-American president, a Trump presidency will be an adjustment. Trump's use of hateful language is shocking; never before in *our* lives has such damaging hate speech come from such a powerful figure who is supposed to represent us. This type of demeanor is clearly not a thing of the past.

Third and most notably, since I have attended CC, our school has been committed to building a more inclusive campus. The Wellness Center, for example, "works to create an environment which nurtures the development of the whole person and empowers individuals to make healthy lifestyle choices" (CC, 2017). The center is devoted to intellectual, socio-cultural, spiritual, emotional, physical, environmental and career/financial wellness for all students (CC, 2017). In addition, the Butler Center, "…named for one of the earliest African American alums who invested in the future of

CC serves as the hub of diversity, inclusion, intercultural exchange, equity and empowerment for the entire Colorado College community" (CC, 2017). Both of these centers host dialogues and events throughout the school year to further their missions. Despite this commitment, in November 2015, some students at Colorado College engaged in posting anonymous messages that targeted people of color on Yik Yak, a location based social media site (Griffiths, 2015). The posts left many in the community hurt and outraged (Griffiths, 2015). In response to such events, CC required all of its incoming students, faculty and staff to read Claude Steele's *Whistling Vivaldi: How Stereotypes Affect Us and What We Can Do (Issues of Our Time)*. During the first day of orientation for the class of 2020, the school also prompted discussions about privilege and oppression and asked each student to discuss their own social identity in relation to others. In a campus-wide email sent out after the Yik Yak incident, president of Colorado College, Jill Tiefenthaler wrote, "Over this Block, we have had some difficult discussions about important topics. These are the kinds of conversations that make CC a better place and are the foundation of our learning community. We must all have the courage to continue to dialogue with each other" (Griffiths, 2015). Despite efforts to have open conversations on privilege and diversity, our school is still not immune to hatred.

Within a week of the 2016 presidential election and just over a year since the Yik Yak incident, offensive graffiti was written in residential dorms that targeted specific social groups on campus (Greenberg, 2016). The messages read: "Die Trannies," "#TrumpAmerica" and "Fuck Fags" (Greenberg, 2016). Clearly, Trump's inflammatory language influenced these offenders. Shortly following the incident, a Colorado College Facebook group Project Voice organized a demonstration on campus to protest the

silencing of marginalized groups on campus. Project Voice said that one of their main goals was "…to end the illusion that the people outside of CC are the only people we need to have conversations with…" (Greenberg, 2016). With this study, I intend to continue the conversation within CC in order to better understand the impact of an approaching Trump presidency on the individual and their perception of their social identities at this particular time.

*My role as a "Native" Anthropologist*

As a senior at CC, while pursuing my research, I will assume the role of a "native" anthropologist. Ohnuki-Tierney (1984) wrote, "If native anthropologists can gain enough distance between their personal selves and their collective selves—their cultures—they can make an important contribution to anthropology... The task is not an automatic or even easy one, however" (565). But it is one I will attempt and thus, I must discuss my personal bias.

The day after the election, November 9th 2016, I read an article written by Sarah Ruiz-Grossman for *the Huffington Post* titled *Dear Fellow White Women: We F**ked This Up* (Ruiz-Grossman, 2016). I felt stunned. *This was for me, a white woman.* But it was not. Instead, it was intended for white women who voted for Donald Trump or did not vote at all. Still, I could not shake the feeling of anxiousness that consumed my entire body. I was being blamed for something I did not do, simply because of who I am and what I look like. I felt uncomfortable and guilty to be a part of a social group that I have absolutely no ability to change or leave. Of course the novelty of these feelings come with a great amount of privilege. I am an able Colorado College student from a well-off

Jewish family who live in Los Angeles. I am a heterosexual cis-female. I grew up in a world of openness; my parents and teachers stressed appropriate dialogue in all environments and that a minimum level of decorum was always the standard. Pre-election, I identified most strongly with my whiteness and femaleness because these two social identities prompt daily reminders of both privilege and oppression. Post-election, my most salient identities shifted significantly. While being female and white increased in significance, so did being Jewish and American.

My inspiration for this research came from my newsfeed on Facebook. As the election results rolled in, I was not sitting in my home in Colorado Springs, but instead on a hotel terrace in Nafplio, Greece. I was taking a cross-listed English Philosophy course titled 'the Art of Living'. Just past seven in the morning on November 9th, my classmates crowded the balcony as all of our eyes settled on one computer screen. CNN reported that Donald Trump was 95% likely to win the presidency. It was late in America; too late to call my parents, my sisters and my friends who I knew were surely hurting back home. But— I still needed something— a peak, a lens, an understanding of the overwhelming wave of emotion headed non-stop for the USA. So I turned on my phone and switched on Facebook. My newsfeed was littered with statuses, which demonstrates both the urgency and immediacy of people's reactions. Some said to stay strong, some said to give Trump a chance, but most expressed major concern for not just the fate of our country as a whole but for the individual— for women, for people of color, for Muslims, for the LGBTQIA+ community, for 'outsiders.' Most statuses read— I identify as *this* and I am afraid because of *this.* The dichotomy between expressing who you are and then explaining your fear because of it intrigued me. Each status seemed to say that although I am scared,

I will not hide who I am— in fact, I am more proud than ever. Within their fear, many individuals found power, and I wanted to know more. As an anthropologist, I believed I had the tools and background to do so and so I started asking questions.

I want to approach this thesis absolutely transparently because it is important for readers to understand my bias, my background and my approach to holism. While holism is important, it is an impossible goal— I cannot see everything or talk to everyone thus, I must select and choose, emphasize and highlight (Ortner, 1984). Peacock asks, "If anthropology tries to see everything and everywhere, then does it have a distinctive focus?" (2001, 10). This thesis is focused on a single snapshot in relative time, which is the student's immediate reaction and lived experienced directly following the 2016 presidential election, in terms of fear, disillusionment, outrage and empowerment. I will prioritize what to include in my discussion using the students' responses as my guide. I remind my readers: I am not a bystander. I am an active participant. I voted in this election. And I voted for Hillary Clinton. Presently, I feel uncertain and scared. This uncertainty and fear, however, is exactly why I decided to pursue this research. Despite my bias and connectedness with both the election and the college, I will try to find distance.

## RELEVANT POLITICAL HISTORY

### *The 1972 and 1988 Presidential Election*

To fully discuss the social significance of the 2016 Presidential Election, we must first explore the role of social conflict in past presidential elections. Indeed, this conversation is not novel. Shirley Chisholm, for example, was the first African American

and second woman (Margaret Chase Smith was the first woman to run in 1964) to run for president in 1972 (Gibson and Abbott, 2016). During her campaign, Chisholm leveraged her multifaceted identity to gain support from voters with similar backgrounds, emphasizing her femaleness before female supporters and blackness before African-American supporters (Brown, 2008). Through employing a culturally diverse campaign, Chisholm also attempted to exceed historically and socially constructed identities through engaging the humanity in all voters (Brown, 2016). She wanted all Americans to be treated equally by both the law and the law of the land (Gibson and Abbott, 2016). Her slogan, “Unbought and Unbossed” both celebrated her outsider status and expressed her rejection of the current white masculine system (Brown, 2016).

Almost two decades later, civil rights activist, Jesse Jackson was the first African American man to run for president. In his presidential campaign titled the Rainbow Coalition, Jackson upcycled Chisholm’s tactics of inclusion (Jackson, 1984). Like Chisholm, Jackson appealed to marginalized groups highlighting the need for not just civil rights but civil equality. He stressed that the Rainbow was first and foremost a moral cause and second, a political campaign (Jackson, 1984). Jackson also acknowledged the importance in unifying all Americans, claiming that there was plenty of room for everyone in the Rainbow and political power should be shared. In a political article, Jackson exclaimed, "Brothers, make room for women on the stage - this is the Rainbow!" Or, "Blacks, make room for whites and for Hispanics and Indians - this is the Rainbow!" (Jackson, 1984, 73). He spoke directly to distinct social groups, encouraging all groups to include all groups.

Examining the results of both of Chisholm and Jackson campaigns, unification of all Americans is certainly more easily cheered than realized. Both campaigns received major backlash, even from groups with similar social backgrounds (Louie & Quinones, 1984; Gibson and Abbott, 2016). For instance, many African Americans resented Chisholm for her gender despite being African American herself. Chisholm affirmed, "To the black men— even some of those supposedly supporting me— sensitive about female domination, they were running me down as a bossy female, a would-be matriarch" (Chisholm, 1970, 74). This example demonstrates that sometimes sharing one social identity is not enough to properly 'fit-in.' Additionally, many feminists withheld their support in fear that Chisholm would lose the party's nomination and simultaneously, the feminist movement would lose its steam (Gibson and Abbott, 2016).

Similarly, in Jackson's campaign, the feminist movement backed a different candidate despite Jackson's push for equality among all social groups (Louie & Quinones, 1984). The feminist movement asserted that Jackson made claims that included supporting gay and lesbian rights to simply gain their vote (Louie & Quinones, 1984). Even with this backlash however, both campaigns achieved something unique in that they challenged traditional social boundaries. It seems we are still fighting a similar battle. In the words of Jack O'Dell, a prominent African-American member of the American Civil Rights Movement, "the contest over economic justice against the greed and militarism of the corporations is a contest that is not going to go away. Our nation is on the road to disaster" (O'Dell, 1988). This statement begs the question— where are we now?

*The 2008 Presidential Election*

Twenty years after Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition, Barak Obama, the first African-American president was elected into office. The 2008 presidential election marked the first time in United States history that American people were given a diverse choice for the two major party nominees (Belkhir, 2008). In the Democratic party, Obama served as the party's presidential nominee with Hillary Clinton coming in a close second in the primaries (Parlapiano & Yourish, 2016). In the Republican party, Sarah Palin served as the party's vice presidential nominee (Belkir, 2008). Jean Belkir (2008), associate professor of sociology wrote, "The path-breaking nominations of Barack Obama and Sarah Palin had already forced a shift in the definition of "presidential" (128). Indeed, the 'look' of an American president was changing— it seemed being both white and male were no longer are or at least less required. Belkir continued, "The very presence of Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin illustrate a celebration in progress in the long struggles against racism and sexism" (128). November 4th, 2008 was a huge moment for America; forty years after abolishing institutionalized racial discrimination and eighty years after women won the right to vote, finally an African-American and a woman competed for top political offices.

Despite the 2008 election's success in diversity, as a campaign strategy, Obama intentionally acted less 'black' and Clinton acted less 'female' (Belkir, 2008; Clayton, 2010). In order to gain a wider spread support, both candidates refrained from drawing too much attention to either their race or gender (Clayton, 2010). For example, unlike Jackson and Al Sharpton, an African-American civil rights activist and talk show host who ran in the democratic primaries in 2004, Obama never addressed his own race

directly during his campaign (Clayton, 2010). Instead of reminding Americans of slavery, lynching and the Ku Klux Klan, a white nationalist terrorist organization, as did Jackson and Sharpton, Obama ran as what critics describe as "a post-racial candidate" who promised to "bring us together" (Clayton, 2010).

During his campaign, Obama stated, "I don't see a White or Black America or a liberal or conservative America, just a united America" (Belkhir, 2008, 128). Critics hypothesize this type of sidestepping discussion of race was a tactic used to prevent the Bradley effect— a theory concerning discrepancies in polls and election outcomes, a result of white voters misleading pollsters into believing they are willing to vote for a black candidate when they are not (Hillygus, 2009). Thus to mitigate this phenomenon, Obama represented "a new style of African-American politician: post-civil rights era and not as polarizing to white voters" (Clayton, 2010, 20). Obama stepped away from Jackson and Sharpton's approach of enforcing racial guilt and instead focused on more positive ideas surrounding "change" (Southwell, 2010; Clayton, 2010). Despite this strategy's success among white and women voters, many members of the black community feared that the Obama presidency "might actually leave Black Americans less represented in Washington rather than more so" (Clayton, 2010, 38). Still, 96% of black voters voted for Obama (Kuhn, 2008). Additionally, the 2008 election encouraged the greatest racially and ethnically diverse electorate; nearly one in four voters were non-white, which was unprecedented (Lopez & Taylor, 2009).

Switching focus to gender, while Obama won the democratic nominee, Hillary Clinton broke political barriers, moving farther in the presidential race than any woman had done before (Caroll, 2009). More than thirty years after Shirley Chisholm's

campaign, in the democratic primaries, Clinton won 1,640 pledged delegates compared to Obama's 1,763 (Caroll, 2009; CNN, Election Center 2008). Unfortunately, the closeness of this race seemingly pitted gender and race against one another (Caroll, 2009). Susan J. Caroll, a political scientist states (2009), "At times during the campaign, the media raised the inevitable questions about which is worse or more deep seeded in American political life — sexism or racism" (3). Caroll also questioned— what she called the "not yet possible or imaginable in American politics"— the emergence of a woman of color (3-4).

At a joint fundraiser following the suspension of Clinton's campaign, Obama announced "because of what Hillary accomplished, my daughters ... look at themselves a little differently today. They're dreaming a little bigger and setting their sights a little higher" (Caroll, 2009, 4; Broder 2008). Caroll responded, "While I sincerely hope this is true, I fear that even at their young ages, the Obama children comprehend that their mother could not yet stand where their father stands" (4). Like Chisholm before her, Clinton was criticized heavily for her character. While presenting herself as a tough experienced candidate — "the Iron Lady approach"— the public perceived her as cold and hard hearted (Masciulli et al, 2009). In response, Clinton softened her approach in New Hampshire by showing more emotion (Masciulli et al, 2009, 226). The public, however, then questioned her qualifications to be commander in chief (Masciulli et al, 2009). Despite these gender discrepancies, Belkir still considers the 2008 presidential election "evidence that the United States is becoming a more race and gender tolerant country" (Belkir, 2008, 129). With far to go, both Clinton and Palin still carried liberal and conservative feminism to the foreground respectively (Belkhir, 2008). Yet, in 2008, Belkir could not have predicted what was to come. The 2016 presidential election seems

to suggest that, rather, the United States is becoming a less race and gender tolerant country. (Milligan, 2016).

*The 2016 Presidential Election*

In the 2016 presidential election, both candidates reached far beyond historical boundaries of presidential politics and like Chisholm, Jackson and Obama, approached the election somewhat as outsiders (Gibson and Abbott, 2016). Hillary Clinton, the first woman to be nominated by a major political party for president ran against Donald Trump, a billionaire businessman with no previous political experience. Evident in all three presidential debates, personal slogans and voter's response to each candidate, the 2016 election seemed to focus heavily on identity rather than policy (Rappeport, 2016). For example, Alan Rappeport, reporter for the *New York Times* stated, "the discussion between Donald J. Trump and Hillary Clinton remained skin deep" (Rappeport, 2016). Bryan Cranston, a PhD candidate in politics and history wrote, "Despite attempts to make it about policy, the final debate was all about character. Each candidate talked about why the other was unfit to serve as president" (Cranston, 2016). In contrast to Jackson's Rainbow Coalition, however, neither candidate endorsed an exactly moral movement. From Clinton calling "half" of Trump's supporters "deplorables" to the numerous hate crimes that have occurred since the election, it is clear we live in a socially divided country (Merica and Tatum, 2016). This becomes more obvious when we examine which groups voted for which candidate. In general terms, we found the majority of the urban against the majority of the rural and suburbia, the less educated against the highly

educated, white versus people of color and so on (Zurcher, 2016). Clearly, in their battle over the presidency, neither Trump nor Clinton represented a united United States.

In fact, Clinton and Trump seldom reached a level of civil discourse between each other. For instance, Trump claimed in a tweet that Clinton lacked "…the strength or the stamina…" to run the country (Trump in Gold and Johnson, 2016). Stated in the introduction, he also said in an ABC interview, "I just don't think she has a presidential look," which speaks directly against Belkir's hopeful new definition of "presidential" in 2008 (Trump in Gold and Johnson, 2016). In response to both of these statements, Trump received significant criticism for "trafficking in sexist stereotypes" (Gold and Johnson, 2016). GOP pollster Whit Ayres wrote, for women who "have had to put up with inappropriate suggestions about their appearance or stamina, it probably doesn't sit really well when they come out of the mouth of a presidential candidate" (Gold and Johnson, 2016). To retort, Clinton used Trump's insults against her to partially fuel her campaign. In the final debate, she criticized her opponent, "Donald thinks that belittling women makes him bigger. He goes after their dignity, their self-worth" (Clinton in Zitner, 2016). While these examples may be specific, they demonstrate the constant debate over morals, values and social identity that occurred during the entire election process of 2016.

Conversations concerning identity during the election period, however, were not all negative. Clinton's most popular slogan, "Stronger Together" somewhat mirrors Jackson's Rainbow Coalition in that it promotes unity and pushes for an alliance across social boundaries. Similar to Jackson, however, as the feminist movement questioned his motives, many people questioned both Clinton's motives and truthfulness, which critics believe heavily contributed to her loss in the election (Threatt, 2016). The former

secretary of state also attempted to use her female social identity toward her advantage. One of Clinton's top campaign slogans, "I'm with Her" emphasizes her femaleness and promotes an alliance among women. Comparable to Chisholm, this tactic received some pushback. Dan Cassino, an associate professor of Political Science who closely followed the election predicted Clinton experienced a similar phenomenon as Chisholm in the 2016 presidential election. Cassino states, "Americans just aren't ready for a woman President" (2016). He hypothesizes that men who feel threatened by a powerful wife for example may be more inclined to support unreasonable rationalizations for male dominance (Cassino, 2016). The gender pay gap, which exists under the pretenses that a woman's work is less valuable than a man's and affects all women regardless of their education, background or age is an obvious response to this phenomenon (Kelsey, 2015).

Unlike Chisholm, Jackson and Obama, Trump focused more so on defining boundaries of inclusion and exclusion in terms of social identities through tactics of oppression (Gabriel, 2016). For example, outlined in the introduction, Trump 'promised' to increase surveillance on Muslim-Americans, referred to Mexican immigrants as "rapists," and expressed interest in reviving the New York City policing program stop-and-frisk that a judge explicitly ruled discriminated against people of color and was in violation of their constitutional rights (Gabriel, 2016; Desmond-Harris, 2016). Anatol Lieven, an Orwell Prize-winning journalist and policy analyst asserts that Trump's broadcasted articulated hatred has created a public showground for white-racist sentiments (Lieven, 2016). Political scientist Kim Holmes states "because of the increasing radicalization of multiculturalism over the past few decades, Trump's supporters no longer feel they have to restrain themselves. In their minds they are just

doing to others what has been done to them" (Cherkaoui, 2016, 12). In addition, during his campaign, unlike most other presidential candidates, Trump never denounced his endorsement from David Duke, former leader of the Ku Klux Klan (Milligan, 2016).

Despite progress made toward social equality in the 1972, 1988 and 2008 presidential elections, the 2016 presidential election demonstrated many American's hesitance and fear of social change. Milligan, a political and foreign affairs writer stated (2016), "Talk of a "post-racial" society after Obama's two elections was probably always premature, experts say. But the current campaign between Republican Donald Trump and Democrat Hillary Clinton suggests race relations might actually be getting worse." In the 2016 presidential election, instead of moving forward, our country elected to move socially and racially backwards (Schafer, 2016). Donald Trump's campaign slogan, "Make America Great Again!" idealizes the past but which past exactly is left ambiguous. In an interview with the *New York Times*, Trump responded that the "…late forties and fifties…" was a time when our country got it right in terms of our defense footprint and trade (Trump in Krieg, 2016). He continued, "we were not pushed around, we were respected by everybody, we had just won a war, we were pretty much doing what we had to do" (Trump in Krieg, 2016). But indeed, we must remember what was also occurring during the 1940s and 50s. To illustrate, in 1940, only twenty-eight percent of women participated in the workforce (Acemoglu et al., 2002). In 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt ordered Japanese Americans into internment camps (Equal Justice Initiative). The first year in seventy with no reported lynchings was 1952 (Equal Justice Initiative). This is the America that our forty-fifth president considers "great"— a time when people of color could get arrested for not giving up their seat on the bus (Equal

Justice Initiative). Most startling of all perhaps, an article published in 1934 as part of a series on "Modern Leaders of Men," read, Adolf Hitler "…told people that he would make Germany "great" again. He blamed Jews, Socialists, Communists, and other for the troubles of the land. His blazing speeches gained followers for "cause"" (Hitler in Uncle Ray, 1934). Hitler's spoken tactic in creating and enforcing an Ultra-Nationalist movement bears an eerie resemblance to Donald Trump's campaign slogan as well as his entire campaign.

The racist and sexist undertones found throughout the 2016 presidential election provoke my research question: what is a Trump win's impact on the individual regarding their social identities? While political scientists and journalists have sufficiently documented and analyzed the immediate response to the election, we need to go beyond the national level of politics to look at how the election impacts social identity individually. Through an anthropological lens, we can decipher interwoven forces that may be influencing individual shifts in social identity and then analyze these shifts using anthropological and social theory (Peacock, 2001). Before further investigating this question however, I will explore social identity theory, *habitus*, structural racism, postfeminism and girl power, interactionism and virtual social identity, group status threat, and student development theory, all of which will frame my research and discussion.

**THEORY-**

*Social Identity Theory*

At present, most physical anthropologists have abandoned the concept of race as a valid research tool for investigating human biological diversity and instead favor population level approaches (Sauer, 1992). In the 1960s, Brace and Livingstone argued for the nonexistence of race. They found that the discordance of traits on the genetic level made for defining race based on more than one or two characteristics absolutely impossible (Sauer, 1992). Sociologist W.E.B Du Bois believed that racial differences were invented, and that the color line was the leading problem of the 20th century (Root, 2000). Anne Fausto-Sterling (1981), a leading expert in biology and gender development argued that the use and definition of race in medicine lacks any theoretical footing. Professor in philosophy, Michael Root affirmed, "we divided ourselves where nature did not" (Root, 2000, S630). Still professor of history, Julia E. Liss stated that while the concept of race has no theoretical background, "…the social and political meanings of "race" have not lost their currency" (Liss, 1998, 127). Thus, while our racial groups are socially constructed, our 'racial' "differences" still cause major social issues. Chisom and Washington (1997) define race as:

> A specious classification of human beings created by Europeans (whites) which assigns human worth and social status using 'white' as the model of humanity and the height of human achievement for the purpose of establishing and maintaining privilege and power (Lawrence and Keleher, 2004; Chisom and Washington, 1997, 30-31).

This statement is reinforced by the impermanence of each group's status, stability, permeability and legitimacy; "Their meaning can and does change over time and in

different social contexts" (Weber, 2010, 91 cited in Jones & Abes, 2013, 38; Hogg, 2016).

Pierre Bourdieu, a French sociologist believes both status and power are culturally and symbolically created and are reinforced through our structural institutions. He refers to this process as *habitus*, which "is not fixed or permanent, and can be changed under unexpected situations or over a long historical period" (Navarro, 2006, 16). For example, the Irish, despite their pale skin, at onetime were not included in the white race for immigration purposes (Ousley et al., 2009). Regardless of these facts, as we are all born into an already structured society with a history of discrimination and systems that reinforce this discrimination, these groups feel absolutely real to us. Consequently, we are psychologically attached to them and use them to group other individuals (Hogg, 2006; Stets & Burke, 2000; Howard, 2000). Defined groups based on race, gender, age, class, etc. reduce uncertainty; they provide a normative basis for who one is, how to behave and how to think (Hogg, 2006).

Where we find the most trouble within this social structure is that there is considerable evidence for favoring one's own group and discriminating against others (Hogg, 2006; Stets & Burke, 2000; Lüders et al., 2016). To put it simply, here we find the basis for privilege and oppression: for racism, sexism, xenophobia, ageism, classism, etc. (Jones & Abes, 2013). Sociologist Allan Johnson explains, "Privilege is always at someone else's expense and always exacts a cost," thereby creating a multiple of threatened identities (Johnson, 2006, 8; Jones & Abe, 2013, 39). Indeed, we find ourselves in a chain of reaction. Threatened identities produce negative emotions, which cause anxious uncertainty, the exact emotion social groups supposedly placate (Hogg,

2016). This instability then leads to a stronger pronouncement of one's group identity from both the privileged and the oppressed and the cycle continues (Lüders et al., 2016). Adrian Lüders and others acknowledge, "…that reactive in-group affirmation does not inevitably result in closed-mindedness and hostility towards others…," but this is commonly the case (Lüders et al., 2016, 42; Howard, 2000). Further, this closed-mindedness and hostility often results in the targeted group feeling a shared sense of victimhood, which can affect the way individuals respond in times of conflict (Lüders et al., 2016).

*Structural Racism*

Bourdieu studied how structural and school-level institutional practices contribute to the perpetuation in how each future generation understands race, gender and class stratification, an example of Bourdieu's *habitus* (Diamond et al., 2004; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Within these structures, privilege is passed on almost exclusively to the white and wealthy; thereby, reaffirming the disadvantages for both students of color and students from low income families (Diamond et al., 2004). Bourdieu describes *habitus* as "the way society becomes deposited in persons in the form of lasting dispositions, or trained capacities and structured propensities to think, feel and act in determinant ways, which then guide them" (Navarro, 2006, 16). For example, in a study on teacher performance, Farkas et al. (1990) found that teachers overall have lower expectations for academic achievement for less well-off students and students of color. Perhaps unintentionally, teachers guide their students in a "self-fulfilling prophesy" through which low expectations lessen students' self-academic image (Diamond et al., 2004).

Affected students will then devote less effort to school, followed by teachers giving them less challenging course work (Diamond et al., 2004). At very young ages, children are already well-versed in rules of privilege and oppression.

Structural racism does not stop with schools; other institutions such as the government also enforce rules of oppression and privilege. Lawrence and Keleher (2004) write, "Structural Racism lies underneath, all around and across society" (17). It encompasses our history, our culture, and enforces rules across the United States that legitimize and strengthen the perpetuation of racism (Lawrence and Keleher, 2004). Out of our forty-five presidents, forty-four have been of European descent, middle to upper class, white, mostly Protestant and male (Pew Forum 2009). Kristen Bialik and Jens Manuel Krogstad (2017) declare that the 115th congress to take office in January 2016 will be the most diverse in history. They then clarify that both the House and Senate will still be overwhelmingly white and male compared to the general population (Bialik and Krogstad, 2017). Yes, a record number of twenty-one women will serve in the Senate but twenty-one percent is considerably less than female's over fifty percent makeup in the overall American population. Indeed, women of color have far less of a role in government. For example, Kamala Harris, newly elected senator of California will be only the second black woman to have ever served in the Senate. Bonilla-Silva (1997) stated:

> In contrast to race relations in the Jim Crow period… racial practices that reproduce racial inequality in contemporary America (1) are increasingly covert, (2) are embedded in normal operations of institutions, (3) avoid direct racial terminology, and (4) are invisible to most Whites (476).

Rinku Sen, the president and executive director of the Applied Research Center, stated "Policies designed without racial justice goals can actually deepen the divide, while

creating the illusion that they've taken care of everyone" (2006). She continues, "Racial justice is about changing the rules of society." Unless we actively change our systems, these prejudices will be perpetuated generation after generation— especially when the ones perpetuating these systems might not even realize they are the ones who are doing it.

*Post Feminism and Girl Power*

Emerging in 1990's and popularized by the British pop band Spice Girls, preadolescent girls celebrated the band's lyrics, the "future is female" and girls "matter as much as boys" (Ivashkevich, 16, 2011; Bae, 2011). The Spice Girls through their songs, style and their official book *Girl Power!* encouraged their fans to "[take] control of their own lives, [fulfill] their dreams, and [rely] on their female friends, ideas that became emblematic for an entire generation of girls and young women" (Ivashkevich, 16, 2011). This type of girls-can-do-anything attitude, called girl power, was included in the 2001 edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which both acknowledges and demonstrates the term's widespread usage. The dictionary defined 'girl power' as "a self-reliant attitude among girls and young women manifested in ambition, assertiveness and individualism" (Ivashkevich, 16, 2011). As 2016 marked the twentieth anniversary of the Spice Girl's hit single "Wannabe", many current college-aged women grew up singing these songs as if they were their own anthems. Micheal Bae, however questions if girl power, which seems to focus heavily on style and consumerism rather than politics actually sends an antifeminist message that encourages the development of young post-feminists (2011). Bae asks, "Is [girl power] an aesthetic or political?" (Bae, 29, 2011).

Elaine Hall and Marnie Rodriguez suggest the United States entered a post-feminism era in the early 1990's, precisely parallel to the growth of girl power (2003). Defined as "the pastness of feminism," post-feminism implies that females live in a post-sexist era and the battle for gender equality is already won (Pomerantz et al., 2013). Judith Williamson remarks, "No one uses the word sexism any more. ... It has an old-fashioned, almost quaint ring about it" (Williamson in Pomerantz et al., 186, 2013). Beyoncé's 2011 hit single "Run the World (Girls)" plays into this post-feminist movement, promoting a false illusion that women *do* run the world (Pomerantz et al., 2013). Yet despite Beyoncé's girl power enthusiasm, as stated, out of forty-five American presidents, none have been female. Jessica Taft argues, "Girl Power constructs a world where social inequalities are nonexistent. As a result, girls are not presented with any conceptualization of the need for political change despite many ongoing structural inequalities that dramatically shape their lives" (Pomerantz et al., 190, 2013). Through declining to acknowledge sexism as a current issue, post-feminism delegitimizes the gender pay gap and the glass ceiling, which refers to the invisible barriers that block women from climbing the professional ladder. If the United States is beyond feminism, while women's work is still deemed less valuable than their male counterparts, then indeed the country is sending an interesting message (Pomerantz et al., 2013).

*Interactionism and Virtual Social Identity*

Judith A. Howard, professor of sociology asks the question, "How is identity "done"?" (Howard, 2000, 371). She responds, identity is "done" through interacting with other people, followed by these other people applying meaning to such interactions

(Howard, 2000). Whether subconscious or active, individuals tend to organize their identities hierarchically based on the the saliency of each identity and then present themselves accordingly. This hierarchy often changes depending on who the individual is interacting with (Howard, 2000). Thus, presenting and hiding one's social identities becomes almost strategic with resulting social benefits and consequences.

When interacting with new people, individuals often use visible cues to categorize them (Clair et al., 2005). Visible social identities most often include gender, race and age. Invisible or nonvisible identities most often include religion, sexual orientation and illness (Clair et al., 2005). Clair et al. (2005) states, "In general, people take each other's social identities at face value based on cultural norms of expected behavior and assume membership in particular identities in the absence of visual or behavioral cues that would alert them otherwise" (81). This type of characterization of others, which often leads to assuming an individual's heterosexuality or able-bodiedness, can be described as their "virtual social identity" (Clair et al., 2005). "Virtual social identities" are problematic because they can lead to further stigmatization of an individual as well greater feelings of inauthenticity. This stigmatization and/or inauthenticity then forces the individual to choose to either "pass" as their "virtual social identity" in order to maintain privileges offered to them as part of the dominant group or "reveal" their actual social identity to relieve feelings of fabrication and insincerity (Clair et al, 2005; Gutierrez et al., 2010). Both processes induce stress and must be dealt with again and again when entering new environments (Gutierrez et al., 2010).

*Group Status Threat*

In every society, there are hierarchies in which individuals are ranked (Nagi, 1963). The rankings are determined through an individual's level of income, education and occupation as well as their sexuality, skin color, gender, religion, health, etc. (Nagi, 1963). Those who fit within similar categories tend to gravitate to one another, resulting in several competing social groups. These social groups are ranked along the same criteria as the individual. Positions in the hierarchy, however, are vulnerable. According to Bourdieu and the process of *habitus*, neither status nor power is stagnant and both will inevitably be threatened (Navarro, 2006). Giles and Evans (1984) suggest that no matter where a group ranks in the hierarchy, competition from above and below typically results in increased solidarity (1985). This response is elicited by both dominant and non-dominant groups (Giles and Evans, 1985). Giles and Evans (1985) propose that in the United States the greatest external threat to white dominance is from minority groups, most notably from African-Americans. Giles and Evans (1985) predict that relative to the majority, African-American's group size and robustness make them a greater competitive threat. The legitimacy and strength of each threat is determined by the individuals themselves. Giles and Evans (1985) stated, "Individuals who deem themselves to be powerless and overlooked by centers of authority are more likely to view others as potentially threatening" (52).

For example, Major et al. (2016) suggest that widespread white support for Donald Trump was partially a response to the United States' changing racial demographics. By continuously and constantly reminding his white supporters that by 2042, non-white racial groups will outnumber whites, he created distress for the

potentially declining status of White Americans as a social group (Major et al., 2016). Group status threat exemplifies the trouble found within social identity theory; when a group's status relative to other groups is unstable, the group feels threatened and begins to worry about their influence and position in the hierarchy, which eventually morphs into discrimination toward other groups. In their study, Major et al. (2016) found "Whites high in ethnic identification, the racial shift message indirectly predicted increased support for Trump and anti-immigrant policies" (7). Conversely, they found that Whites low in ethic identification were less positive toward Trump. Major et al.'s (2016) findings suggest that while racial diversity is threatening to only some, it is not to all. Still, increasing racial diversity does have an effect on voter preference and the saliency of one's ethnic identity heightens or moderates this effect (Major et al. 2016).

*Student Development Theory*

Student development theory is defined as "the organization of increasing complexity" (Jones & Abe, 2013, 20-21). King illustrated this theory using a kaleidoscope suggesting, "Each student represent a slightly different set of shapes, colors, and texture that constitute his or her own personal kaleidoscope, each with its own specific set of developmental attributes (King, 1994, 413; Jones & Abe, 2013, 21). Indeed, all college students experience developmental changes from their first year orientation to their college graduation (Davis, 2004). Thus, confidently answering Erik Erikson's, a well-know psychologist and psychoanalyst, central identity question "Who am I?" can be difficult (Jones & Abe, 2013, 1). Peacock (2001) states that this is one of the most well known questions in our culture. Within four years of college, answers to

this question inevitably shift and evolve (Jone & Abe, 2013, 56). Indeed, students typically experience some form of "identity crisis" or stress during their schooling.

In relation to this study, the American Psychological Association conducted through an online questionnaire revealed that 56% of millennials, aged 19-37, said the election was "a very or somewhat significant source of stress" (APA, 2016). Directly following the election, colleges and universities across the country offered coping mechanisms to help with election stress and anxiety as well as canceling classes and postponing exams (Mascarenhas, 2016). Amply, many college students felt impacted by this social anxiety as their social identities may not be fully formed or accepted by others or even the individuals themselves.

* * *

I will use these theories— social identity theory, *habitus*, structural racism, postfeminism and girl power, interactionism and virtual social identity, group status threat, and student development theory—as a framework for my research and discussion. They will help me assess the immediate impact of the Trump presidential victory on the individual and each of their social identities. In the following section, I discuss the methods I used for my research.

## METHODS

This study was conducted using an anonymous online questionnaire, distributed among currently enrolled students at Colorado College, a liberal arts school in Colorado Springs. The undergraduate enrollment at CC for the 2016-2017 academic year comprises 2,008 students from all 50 states and 58 foreign countries. In a 2014 diversity report,

66.3% students report as white, and 9%, 8.4%, 6.4%, 4.6%, 2.8% and 2.5% report as Hispanic, two or more races, international, Asian, African-American, and unknown, respectively (CC, 2014). By gender, 53.4% of students identify as female and 46.6% identify as male. The number of students who do not identify with either gender (non-binary) or identify as transgender or queer was not reported in the 2014 diversity report (CC, 2014).

I created the questionnaire in Survey Monkey Inc., an online questionnaire software and questionnaire tool with four open-ended questions listed in the Appendix. I had each question approved by the Institutional Review Board and the Butler Center before distribution of the questionnaire, which opened on December 1st, 2016 and closed on December 21st, 2016. I used a questionnaire as my main method of research because it allowed for the widest participation of Colorado College students from all class levels and social groups. For this thesis, which explores the individual's immediate reaction to the election, I needed to talk to the greatest number of students in the shortest amount of time. Although an online questionnaire is not the most common anthropological method and lacks some of the benefits that ethnography or interviews grant, a questionnaire is certainly useful when the immediacy of responses is necessary, which was imperative to this research. Additionally, since the questionnaire questions were open-ended, as an interview would, the questionnaire elicited thoughtful and thorough responses from most participants. To reach the college's community, I posted the questionnaire on Facebook pages dedicated to each class ('Welcome CC class of 2017!', 'Colorado College Class of 2018', 'Colorado College Class of 2019', 'Colorado College Class of 2020'), on the Wellness Center's biweekly email and on the all school student body list-serve. As an

incentive, I offered two twenty-five-dollar gift certificates in a raffle. In addition, on several afternoons in December, I walked around the student center and library with cookies encouraging students to take the questionnaire. There was no limit in how much a student could write.

I hypothesized that in response to Donald Trump's inflammatory language and personal attacks on the individual as well as social, racial and religious group as a whole, many students would feel threatened, insecure and afraid to express who they are post-election. These students, I imagined, would report a significant shift in their most "deviant" social identities, which, defined by a questionnaire participant, include any identifier that the forty-fifth president is not. These include non-male, non-white, non-Christian, non-wealthy, non-heterosexual, non-able, non-American identities. I hypothesized that students that fall within one, some or all of these categories would respond to my questionnaire questions with feelings of anxiousness, weakness, outrage and potentially defeat.

There are limitations to this methodology. As the questionnaire was optional, there is the possibility of participation bias. Perhaps students who feel more insecure about their social identities would be more inclined to take the questionnaire. For example, potentially I could see higher female, students of color and LGBTQIA+ community member participation than what the college's demographic would predict. Additionally, for a more holistic approach, other methods such at interviews or participant observation might have been useful in understanding the full impact of a Trump presidential victory on the individual.

**RESULTS**

Between December 1st 2016 and December 21st 2016, I questionnaireed 238 students out of Colorado College's total 2,008 students for the 2016-2017 academic year (CC, 2016). About 12% of the school's students participated in my questionnaire. Despite my effort to reach the entire CC community, there are certainly some inconsistencies present within my data. Out of all the students who took my questionnaire, 24.4% were first years, 22.3% were sophomores, 17.6% were juniors, and 35.7% were seniors. Lower junior participation compared to other years can possibly be explained by the fact that most students at CC go abroad their junior year as is consistent with other colleges. Despite the questionnaire's availability online, absence from campus probably impacted certain student's participation. Greater senior participation is potentially due to name recognition. As a senior, I am familiar with more seniors than any other class year. This familiarity may have influenced some participants more than others to take my questionnaire. Still, as all students fall within a college age range, I do not think these discrepancies will affect my results as an adequate representation of Colorado College. For the rest of my results and discussion, I categorized students as they defined themselves in the questionnaire. This was question was left open-ended with the following eight suggestions provided by the Butler Center as the 'The Big 8' in social identification: race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability, nationality and age. Some students included every identifier; some only included a couple.

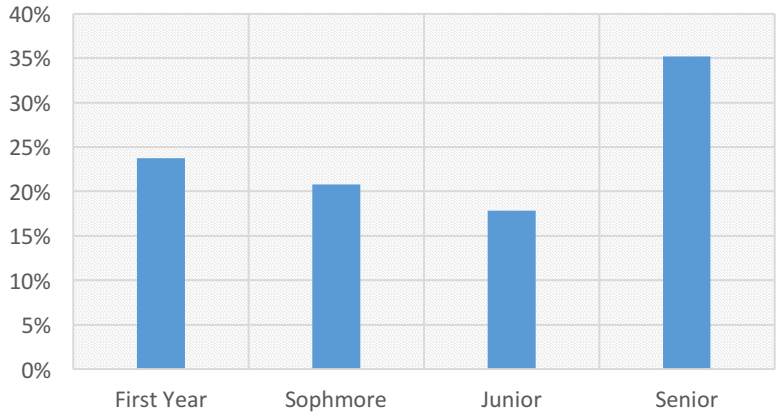


Figure 1: Class year distribution of Colorado College students taking 2016 social identity questionnaire

My racial and gender questionnaire demographic skew from Colorado College's recorded demographic significantly. About three fourths of questionnaire participants identified as white, 7.6% identified as Asian, 7.6% identified as Hispanic or Latino, 5.9% identified as two or more races and 3.4% identified as African-American. Through a chi-square analysis test, participant's racial demographics divergence from Colorado College's recorded racial demographics is statistically significant at an alpha level of .05 ($df = 4$, $p = 0.0376$). This means that my questionnaire was not entirely racially random— most notably, more white people at Colorado College took my questionnaire than expected (75.6%>66.3%). While I hypothesized that I would see greater minority group participation, student's whiteness and the responsibility that comes with it was a major reoccurring theme throughout many of the questionnaires, which may have swayed a higher participation from white students than other racial groups.

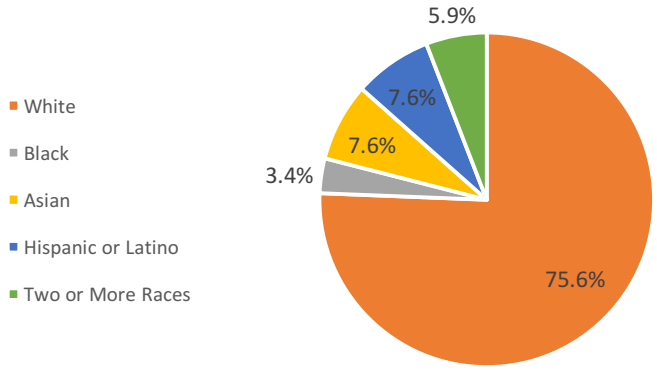


Figure 2: Racial distribution of Colorado College students taking 2016 social identity questionnaire

My questionnaire's gender demographics are not random either— specifically more females (65.0%>53.4%) and fewer males took my questionnaire than expected (29.0%<46.6%). Nine individuals who identified as transitioning or non-binary who typically use the pronouns they, them and theirs also took my questionnaire which made up 3.8% of participants, as well as four individuals who did not identify their gender, which made up 1.7% of participants. Through a chi-square analysis test, participant's gender demographics divergence from Colorado College's recorded gender demographics is statistically significant at an alpha level of .05 ($df = 1$, $p = 0.0$). This gender discrepancy aligns more closely with my previous hypotheses. As many women's rights such as the legality of abortion were threatened during the election, perhaps more women were motivated to take the questionnaire.

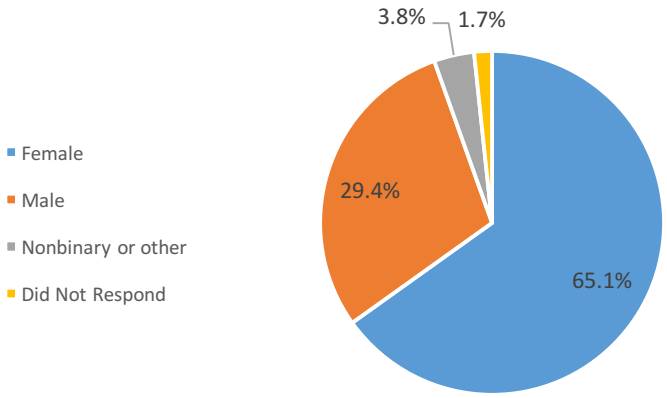


Figure 3: Gender distribution of Colorado College students taking 2016 social identity questionnaire

Though Colorado College does not have formal pre-existing records for the student body's make up for sexual orientation, 70.6%, 11.9%, 11.4%, 4.6% and 1.3% of questionnaire participants identified as heterosexual, bisexual, queer, pansexual and questioning respectively. One participant identified as asexual. As governmental censuses for those identifying as gay or lesbian range between 3.4% and 23% (GALLUP), it is difficult to accurately tell if my questionnaire demographics for sexual orientation are significant.

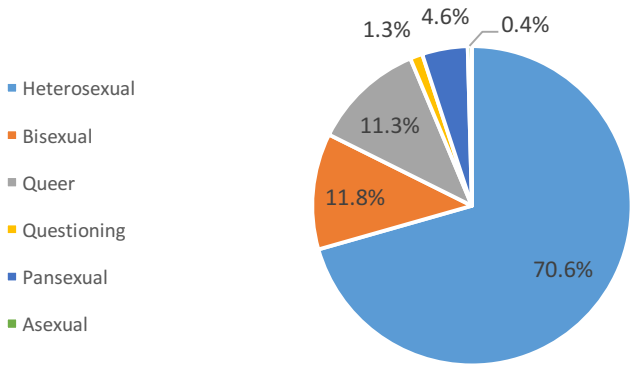


Figure 4: Sexual orientation distribution of Colorado College student taking 2016 social identity questionnaire

My questionnaire participant's social economic status (SES) demographics are as follows: 19.7% of participants identified as upper class, 24.4% identified as upper middle class, 20.6% identified as middle class, 5.9% identified as lower middle class, 6.7% identified as lower class and 22.7% of participants did not mention their SES as one of their identifiers. According to a *New York Times* article that assessed the economic diversity of Colorado College using data from students in the graduating class of 2013, the median family income of a CC student is $277,500, 78% of the student body come from the top twenty percent SES, and 24% of the student body come from the top one percent. (Cox and Quealy, 2017). Considering the high SES distribution of students at CC, it is surprising so many students identified as both middle and upper-middle class. Class lines, however, are blurry, complicated and often private among families; thus, discrepancies between social economic status of the entire CC student body and my questionnaire participants are reasonable.

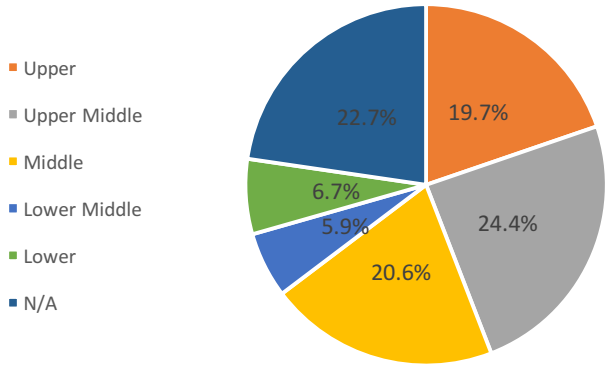


Figure 5: Social class distribution of Colorado College students taking 2016 social identity questionnaire

Student's religious preferences were certainly variable as well, perhaps resembling the current trend of students moving away from organized religion and the

traditional belief in God (Eagan et al., 2014). In total, 24.8% of students did not name a religion as one of their identifiers, 19.7% of students reported having no religious affiliation, 13.4% said they were atheist and 7.1% said they were agnostic. Thirteen percent of students reported being Jewish, but of these students, thirty-one percent reported being only culturally Jewish. Ten percent of student identified as Christian, 5.5% identified as Catholic, 2.5% identified as having mixed faith, and 1.7% of all students reported as Buddhist. Two questionnaire participants said they were Mormon. One participant identified as each of the following, Hindi, pagan and Ismaili.

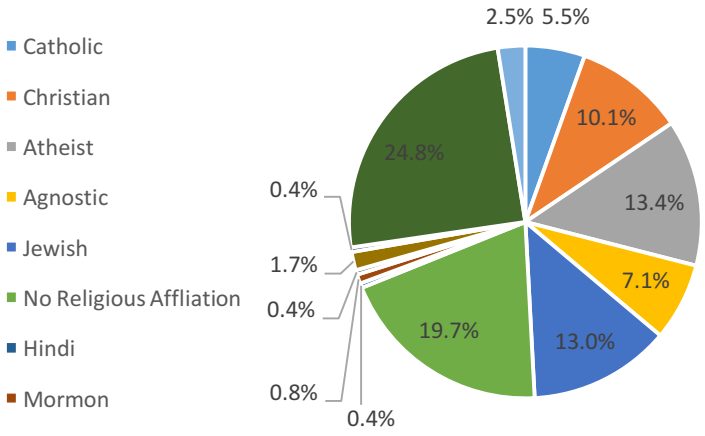


Figure 6: Religious distribution of Colorado College students taking 2016 social identity questionnaire

Besides a smaller number of international students, most questionnaire participants identified as American. Still, I will address nationality as a significant identifier and the impact the election had on it for students in my discussion. Additionally, while ability and age were also significant social identifiers for some, not enough participants defined themselves along these categories to make definitive percentage groups.

The third and forth questionnaire questions asked about shifts in one's identities pre- and post-election. These categories are not mutually exclusive as some participants experienced shifts in more than one of their significant social identifiers. A total of 79% of questionnaire participants indicated a shift in at least one aspect of their social identity. Fifty-two percent of women participants reported an increase in their awareness of their womanhood and/or femaleness. Twenty-four percent of males indicated an increase in awareness of their male identity. While 32% of white respondents reported an increase in awareness of their racial identity, 40% of students of color reported an increase in awareness of their racial identity. Fourteen percent of all participants reported an increase in their awareness of the privilege an individual's social identities might afford them. Ten percent of all participants indicated that this election made them more aware of their nationality. Fifty-four percent of those identifying on the LQBTQIA+ spectrum reported an increase of awareness of their sexual orientation. All participants identifying as transgender, non-binary or fluid indicated a concern for what lies ahead regarding their gender identity. Twelve percent of participants said that the election made them more aware of their SES. Six percent of participants recognized their age more strongly. Twenty-one percent of respondents indicated no change in their social identities pre or post election. I will review specific shifts in individual's social identities further in my discussion section

The last question of the questionnaire asked participants if they had experienced fear and/or insecurities concerning their social identities in the weeks following the election. 52.9% of participants indicated that they had experienced fear since Donald Trump was elected. Fifteen percent of participants indicated that they had not had first-

hand experiences with fear but had experienced it for others. Seven percent of participants said that they were somewhat fearful since the election. One percent reported that they were not fearful, but rather disappointed. Twenty-four percent of participants responded that they had experienced no fear or insecurities surrounding their social identities since the results of the election.

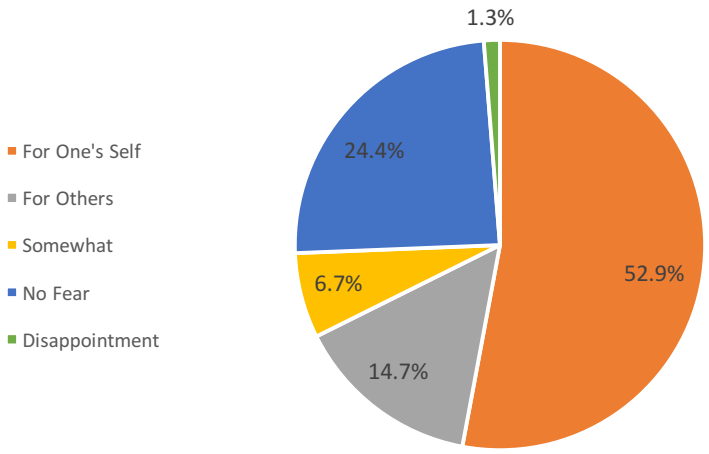


Figure 7: Indication of fear among Colorado College students taking 2016 social identity questionnaire

**DISCUSSION**

Demonstrated through the majority of questionnaire responses, the outcome of the election affected students from all social groups— upper and lower class, religious and non-religious, white people and people of color, people who identify as heterosexual or part of the LBGTQIA+ community, all genders. Indeed, to reiterate, in the days following November 8th 2016, many students reflected inward upon their own social identities. They asked: who am I as an American? Who am I as a person of color, woman, Jew, member of the LGBTQIA+ community, immigrant, a person of privilege… in Trump's America? More than fifty percent of all participants stated

that they felt fear after the election. While some students said they were afraid of our new president and what he stands for, others seemed more concerned for the half of the country who voted for him. The repetition throughout the questionnaires is telling— “I've never been so afraid…”, “I am afraid that I will not be respected…”, “I am afraid as a woman what will come…”, “I'm afraid of not being accepted…”, “I've never been more afraid to voice my queerness in certain spaces. Even my blackness.”, “I fear being associated with Trump…”, “I fear for my personal safety…”, “I fear for friends and family…”. Certainly, both the newness and the diversity of these fears echo the sizeable impact the outcome of the election had on students. Particularly, the majority of students noted that their views concerning nationalism, race, class, femininity, sexual orientation, gender fluidity, and religion no longer aligned with America’s greatest political power. Many expressed fear, disillusionment and outrage following the election.

In addition, and to my surprise, several students were empowered in the weeks following the election. These were the students I found most interesting. Despite the resurgence of the white nationalist movement, they still have found power within themselves to continue to fight for what they believe is right. To illustrate, one senior who identifies as white, working class, lesbian, able-bodied and female explained her emotional progression since the election:

> I've gone through a lot of emotions. Cycles of them. At first it was disbelief. Speechlessness. Fear. Fear for myself. Fear for my friends who are not citizens. Fear for my friends of color. Fear for other people like me. Fear for women. Fear for the fellow students on campus who have felt targeted by our peers or by their friends or families, whether implicitly or explicitly. I've felt anger. I've felt sadness. But I've also felt power. I felt power in owning my identities and speaking out and showing up. It's important that we do that. If we stay in and feel afraid, the things we are scared of are more likely to happen. Now I am hopeful. I am apprehensive, but we are strong.

This single quote embodies the sense of the discussion that follows. The majority of student responses, like this senior, fall within a combination of fear, disillusionment, outrage and for some, empowerment.

In total, 79% of all questionnaire participants reported a shift in the significance of at least one of their social identities pre- and post-election. In many cases, students identified more strongly with their more "deviant" social identities, which a female senior defined as "those that are in whatever way in minority and oppression". While I hypothesized that Trump's negative and pointed rhetoric during the election process might cause students to feel afraid of expressing who they are, with some exceptions, the majority of participants post-election actually identified more strongly with traits that made them different than the structurally upheld norm. The female senior (above) explained:

> My "deviant" personality traits... I hold fiercely. Specifically, being queer, and to a lesser extent female. Cliché as it is, respond to hate and threat with pride… Because of what happened with Trump, where he basically attacked so many not normal, AKA not white heterosexual cis male groups, people A, immediately want to protect their deviant groups through saying yes I am a member and I support this because they are being attacked. And B, I think that's where people go for safety because its where they have their closest communities who are always going to be in solidarity. Like I will always support someone who is queer.

It seems within these "deviant" groups, several students found both support and power. While group status threat predicts threatened groups will respond with discrimination, it seems that many students at Colorado College did just the opposite.

In other cases, several students identified more strongly with their privileged identities with a new understanding that privilege comes with certain responsibilities. A white, straight and female senior wrote:

> I feel united with my peers in a way I haven't before. Our Vietnam-era parents have been asking us "what is your movement?" Now we have it. We have to stick up for one another and create a world that is safe for everyone. That, at least, makes me feel empowered.

In an attempt to fully explore the Trump win's immediate impact on the individual in regards to their social identities, my attention focuses almost exclusively between the time of the election on November 8th, 2016 and the inauguration, January 20th, 2017. I will analyze responses to each social identity— nationalism, race, class, femininity, sexual orientation, gender fluidity, and religion —primarily as separate entities; however, intersectionality will certainly be addressed within each section. I will speak to the conservative minority at Colorado College, and group alliance and association as well. Themes of fear, disillusionment, outrage, empowerment, and the newness of these emotions for students, are woven throughout the discussion. I refer to each individual in terms of their how their identified themselves in the questionnaire as well as their class year, unless identifiers are indicated within their response directly following.

*Concerning Nationality*

Just under ten percent of all participants indicated that this election made them more aware of their nationality. As previously discussed, according to Bourdieu's definition of *habitus*, neither status nor power are permanent and will predictably change over time (Navarro, 2006). Thus, it is inevitable that what being American means will also shift over time. The most current shift in American-ness, however, shocked many students. As the 1972, 1988 and 2008 presidential elections, as well as others, projected the country forward in terms of social and racial equality, in the 2016 presidential election, we witnessed a regression. A white male senior wrote, "I think the idea of what

it means to be American has changed since the election. Our country is now associated with many terms that we would normally use against countries we consider to be backward (be it racist, sexist, not progressive, etc.)." Considering the numerous hate crimes that followed the election, it is difficult to reject the claim that many citizens in the US are promoting these exact behaviors.

While some students believe it is necessary to support our country, others feel disconnected and misrepresented by our new president and his followers. A female senior wrote about her newfound disillusionment with the USA, "I'm embarrassed to be American and now have a more thorough understanding of the bigotry in our country. As a result, I feel estranged from my nationality." Many other students expressed similar feelings of estrangement. A first year American who lived internationally stated, "I have started to reject the United States in my mind because there are so many things about it that make me angry and I have other countries which I can, to some extent, identify with. This is probably escapism, but it's also a way of saying this is not me." What does it mean for so many students to feel distance between the country they grew up in and the country they now live in? What does it mean for so many students to feel like they no longer reside in a country that represents them? With students finding relief in "escapism," clearly we are in the midst of a politically tumultuous period. Still, other students spoke of the growing importance to stand by the country. An African-American female junior wrote, "It was a difficult conclusion to come to, but no matter what happens in this country... I am American and I love my country." A white female first year felt similarly; "I feel now it is more time than ever to show everlasting compassion and love for the hate happening in our nation. I am proud to be an American and yet

horrified at what my fellow Americans have to say." Within their fear, both of these student found power.

Both sides to this argument— whether choosing to support or distance one's self from the country—conflict with social identity theory. According to this theory, defined groups reduce uncertainty through providing normative guidelines for how to think and behave (Hogg, 2006). If individuals disagree with such guideless, however, these social identities, such as being American might actually induce more uncertainty. In their questionnaire responses, students reported feeling angry, frustrated and embarrassed for what a Trump presidency means for the country's reputation as a whole as well as its individual citizens. One student compared their American-ness to a tattoo they can never wash off. Vann R. Newkirk II, a political staff writer at *The Atlantic* wrote "It was the half of America, a half that if not bigoted itself seemed mighty fine with being bigotry-adjacent. *This is who we are*" (Newkik II, 2016). But is this who we are *all* are? Are we defined by our neighbors? Newkirk II continues (2016):

> It's fair to wonder if the forces and fighters arrayed against bigotry will ever share in a total victory. Perhaps the well is just too deep, and America will always return to what it has been, regardless of how far it is stretched and progressed. It's fair to wonder if the Trump coalition's Great America will involve returning to some time or era to which not all of us can safely return.

As previously discussed, in an interview with *the New York Times*, Trump romanticizes the forties and fifties (Krieg, 2016). Indeed, as Newkirk warns, many of us could not safely return to this era.

Even before the election results were in, in the first three months of 2016, a record number of 1,158 citizens became expatriates (Wood, 2016). While the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act, which was enacted in 2010 and requires foreign financial

institutions to report their foreign assets held by United States account holders, is most likely the main cause for individuals renouncing their citizenship, there are eighteen times the number of renouncers so far than there were in 2008 (Wood, 2016). In addition, eighteen months before the election, Ireland, Canada and New Zealand informally invited frustrated Americans to relocate into their countries. In fact, New Zealand's immigration office's website reads, "If you're like many people who move to New Zealand from the USA, you're probably looking for a relaxed pace of life, in an unspoiled country where people are friendly and look out for each other" (New Zealand Now: Moving from the USA, 2016). While no students have renounced this citizenship or committed to move yet, more than a couple have talked about it. A senior heterosexual male wrote, "If I go abroad next year, I'm curious which situations and how frequently I will just say I am Canadian." Many more are still coming to terms with their seemingly unfamiliar nationality. One junior, who identifies as Asian and white, male, straight, and upper-middle class stated, "National identity has become more significant, because I must now reconcile my ideas of what it means to be American with many others who feel very differently, and also must figure out a way to present that to non-Americans in a way they might understand."

*Concerning Race, Class and Privilege*

While about one third of white student participants indicated an increase in awareness of their racial identity, forty percent of student participants of color indicated an increase in awareness of their racial identity. Despite a higher percentage however, on average, students of color seemed far less surprised by the election outcome than white

students. In an interview with the *New York Times*, Tunette Powell, an African-American PhD student as UCLA stated:

> We talk a lot about Donald Trump because he is the person in front of us, but start looking at all the people who believe in these ideas and they are sitting in our classrooms, they are in our courtrooms, and they are pastors of our churches… I feel like Donald Trump is not a big bad wolf. He's existed for a long time (Powell in Alcindor, 2016).

Yamiche Alcindor, reporter for the *New York Times*, responded to Powell's "numbing familiarity"; "what the rest of America was now being exposed to are words and thoughts [African-Americans] have heard their whole lives" (Alcindor, 2016). The day after the election, Joseph Milord of *Elite Daily* wrote, "Black Americans who know their history already know what this feels like" (Milord, 2016). Indeed, novelty and ignorance comes with a great amount of privilege.

Surveyed African-American students at CC shared a similar sentiment as both Powell and Milord. A senior who identifies as black, male, non-religious, lower-middle class and straight but fluid stated, "My race puts me at risk but that is nothing new." A junior who identifies as black, female, middle class, heterosexual and Christian expressed, "With the election of Trump perhaps there is a heightened sense of urgency but regardless of who'd been put into office these identities place me a position of danger simply because of the nature of this country." The Black Lives Matter movement, which was created in 2012 following the death of Trayvon Martin and George Zimmerman's acquittal, is a "a call to action and a response to the virulent anti-Black racism that permeates our society" (Black Lives Matter, 2017). In response to Trump's win, Black Lives Matter issued a statement that their mission will stay the same:

> Our mandate has not changed: organize and end all state-sanctioned violence until all Black Lives Matter. What is true today — and has been

> true since the seizure of this land — is that when black people and women build power, white people become resentful. Last week, that resentment manifested itself in the election of a white supremacist to the highest office in American government. (Morrison, 2016)

The statement concluded, “The work will be harder, but the work is the same.”

Considered in the introduction and the 2016 Presidential Election section, Lieven asserts that many citizens will imitate Trump’s public declarations of hatred (Lieven, 2016). Several students voiced similar concern. When asked if this junior (above) had experienced fear or insecurities post-election, she responded, “Yes because I think the election of Trump gave people the power they needed to express their true hatred. And I think that puts people like me in danger.” A first year student responded to the same question; “Yes, I believe that people have taken cues from our president-elect and want to mimic behaviors of our president-elect which is threatening.”

Students in other racial minority groups voiced fear and concern regarding their racial identities post-election as well. A first year student who identifies as biracial, Hispanic/Latina/Mexican, bisexual, female and Christian stated, “I'm afraid to speak Spanish with my family in public because I feel like someone will say something about it.” Another first year student who identifies as female, white, and Asian expressed:

> I still feel that my identity as a woman is extremely significant but I felt more connected to those secondary identities for me like being Chinese and also American. I was worried for Chinese immigrants and the perpetuation of a model minority myth and I was also ashamed of being American and living in a country that won't accept half of who I am.

Post-election, both of these students indicated that they no longer feel fully accepted in their own country, which can be both troubling and stressful, making answer Erik Erikson’s central identity question “Who am I?” even more difficult to answer, especially for young people.

In some cases, students found power and expressed resistance within their racial identity. One male, middle class, heterosexual and Chinese sophomore swore to stand by who he is no matter what happens once Trump is in office:

> The election shows how fragile and how progressiveness, human right movement can be pushed back so easily. The rise of what Donald Trump represents is expected to happen when considering America's history, it shows the need to have a strong identity. Who I am is I am Asian, and I am Chinese, I won't try to be white, I can't assimilate to a white attitude.

There is an interesting dichotomy between social groups both reducing and inducing uncertainty during this election (Hogg, 2006). While social identity theory predicts that having a normative basis for who one is and how to think should reduce uncertainty, Donald Trump's attacks on entire social groups caused many students anxiety in how to present one's identities. Still, as defined by Patricia King, students should celebrate their "own personal kaleidoscope," which is exactly how this sophomore responded to the election through answering the question "Who am I?" (King, 1994, 413). Despite this sophomore's fear of what our new president represents, he announces who he is with absolute certainty.

As for white students, about a third of white questionnaire participants indicated an increase in their awareness of what being white truly means in this country. Indeed, this election influenced many students to reflect racially inward with many responses demonstrating intensified feelings of guilt and responsibility. For example, a female junior stated:

> I think all parts of my identity have felt amplified. The many privileges I have - white, American, upper-middle class, straight - have been thrown in my face even more strongly than they used to be. I am so aware of my privilege and how simultaneously unfair and powerful it feels. I think my whiteness and straightness more than anything else feel like bigger privileges than before. I guess that must mean that I didn't realize the

> extent of the oppression until these election results made it even more clear than it had been before.

A white male junior agreed, “Far and away my whiteness is now the most significant to me. It classifies me into a group of people, united by their lack of melanin, who have largely revealed their personal prejudices against ‘others’.” Another male junior stated, “I'm incredibly worried for the future of our country and the world. I find myself feeling thankful for being a privileged white male. And then I feel guilty for feeling that way. I just wish none of this ever happened. Rational thinking has left the building, and I'm terrified for what comes next.” Preserved through structural racism, a pale completion is still seen as “the model of humanity” (Lawrence and Keleher, 2004; Chisom and Washington, 1997, 30-31). With no scientific backing, however, the value of whiteness and the privilege that accompanies soars beyond common sense (Sauer, 1992). Walter Ben Michaels, author of *Our America: Nativism, Modernism and Pluralism,* stated in an interview with Ellen C. Berrey, “Our commitment to race is the most powerful form of false consciousness that functions in America today” (2007). Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. advised that "nothing in the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity" (Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in Price, 2012, 185). Nevertheless—Alcoff states, “Race may be a social construction without biological validity, yet it is real and powerful enough to alter the fundamental shape of all our lives” (Alcoff, 1998, 8). Yes, we have had one African-American president but this does not mean our country is beyond racism or is now in a post-racial era. In fact, the Kaiser Family Foundation’s questionnaire of Americans on race published in 2015 revealed that 35% of African Americans and 26% of Hispanics have experienced certain types of racial discrimination including being denied the right to vote, buy a house or a job compared to only 11% of

Whites (DiJulio et al., 2015). Alcoff states, “Part of white privilege has been precisely whites' ability to ignore the ways white racial identity has benefitted them” (Alcoff, 1998, 8). Judith Katz, author of *White Awareness: Handbook for Anti-Racism Training* would agree. She argues that the very first task in antiracism is for white people to realize they are indeed white (Alcoff, 1998). Alcoff expands, ‘that is, that their experience, perceptions, and economic position have been profoundly affected by being constituted as white” (Alcoff, 1988, 8).

In addition to the significant increased awareness of race, about one in every 10 participants found that the election made them more aware of their socioeconomic status. As the majority of students at Colorado College come from a high SES, many white students reflected on their class combined with their white privilege and what this means in this country. With money comes higher education, a significant divider among voters during the 2016 presidential election. David Frum of *the Atlantic* suggests, “The angriest and most pessimistic people in America are the people we used to call Middle Americans. Middle-class and middle-aged; not rich and not poor; people who are irked when asked to press 1 for English, and who wonder how *white male* became an accusation rather than a description” (Frum, 2016). Several students at CC, however, wrote about the need to fight this stereotype through awareness and action. One junior stated:

> I now feel the need to constantly be paying attention to make sure that my social identities are not in any way blinding me nor hurting others. As a white, upper class, heterosexual male, my most important job is to be an ally of those who have been and still are oppressed. As well as take action to change the system that has allowed these injustices to happen.

This junior speaks directly against systems that perpetuate structural racism. He, along

with many students, reported feeling a greater obligation to use their white privilege in order to disrupt current social structures post-election, an example of empowerment. As long as these racially structured systems are kept in place, students fear others will continue to be blinded into believing these social and racial "norms" our society has created are normal. This junior continued, "After this election I think it is extremely important for all privileged people to get some perspective before making decisions or saying things. I think that others who feel afraid or insecure after the election need our love and support more than ever now."

Like this junior (above), many other CC students have pledged to serve as allies to the greater community. A white female senior wrote, "I think a lot about what my whiteness means, unpacking it further, understanding that I actively benefit from the oppression of my neighbors and working actively to dismantle those structures." For some students, the intersectionality between their social identities came to a head post-election. A first year who identifies as white, upper-class, queer, gender-fluid and trans-male wrote:

> I'm much more conscious (though I like to think I was, before, too) of being white, upper-class, able-bodied, male-passing, and familiar enough with protestant Christianity to hold my own in a conversation -- if I wish to, I am able to blend into the most privileged groups under a Trump admin. That is a huge privilege that I am trying to figure out how to use to others' benefit. It is reassuring to know that if I want to just look like any old boring white guy, I could, and I would probably be at least superficially safe. It is also terrifying to realize that I even have to think that way, and even more terrifying that a lot of people have no such privilege.

To continue this conversation among students, Colorado College offers a cross-listed Race, Ethnicity, and Migration, Feminist and Gender Studies course titled 'Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack: Critical Whiteness Studies,' which "teaches students how to

conduct transdisciplinary studies of whiteness as a historical, social, cultural, and political racialized category" (CC, 2017). In addition, A CC student group called Conversations on Whiteness "[strives] to develop productive white allyship and make CC a space aware of and defiant to white supremacist beliefs and traditions" (Smith, 2017). The group hosts meetings almost every Monday during the academic year.

*Concerning Femininity*

Over half of all female participants indicated that they were more conscious of their femaleness post-election. With several women expressing their unawareness to the extent that sexism exists in our country, it seems the election prompted a new wave of young (primarily white) feminists. A senior who identifies as white, upper middle class, female and queer asked:

> How much do people hate women? I didn't realize that having a woman president was very important to me— it's not like it's something I personally aspire to or have been super concerned with. But it just symbolized this huge force of sexism that is so much more present than I thought it was.

This senior was one of many with concerns that a female president has still not been elected. In fact, many reported that they were tricked into believing that they would finally see a female president, let alone that the US was ready for it. This senior's sense of disillusionment is theoretically due to post-feminist ideas, the girl power movement introduced to current college-aged students as children and white privilege's compensation. Having grown up in a world with the Spice Girls where the "future is female" and girls can have it all, the realization that sexism does still exist and carries weight is logically shocking to many students. A white, straight, female first year

expressed similar distress and outrage, “I have developed more insecurity because it is so frustrating that after all of these years a woman still hasn't been elected for president. I think it is hard for women to be viewed as serious figures in leadership roles because of this.”

With only twenty-one female senators in the most diverse congress ever, it should come at no surprise that many female students would doubt their future potential in the profession world (Bialik and Krogstad, 2017). One Russian sophomore stated, “For the first time, I actually believe that being a woman may prevent me from reaching the goals that I may set out for myself; I feel like I may not get the same kinds of opportunities as my male peers might.” As many college-aged students are currently in the process of solidifying their answer’s to Erik Eriksons central identity question “Who am I?”, this type of ‘less-than’ thinking can be dangerous, potentially perpetuating self-fulfilling prophesies (Jones & Abe, 2013, 1). If females think they are less-than, they might perform less-than, eventually settling for subordinate roles in the workforce. A white and Hispanic female wrote, “I have worried that in some ways my status as a woman is going to be walked back and that I will have to continue to suffer sexual harassment, condescension and doubt rather than moving forward and being respected as an equal in professional settings.” Considering the different criteria that Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump were held to during the election process, this student’s fears may continue to be realized. Even Clinton acknowledged the disparity stating there was “a different standard for Trump than for me” when asked why the media was still focused on her email investigation rather than Trump’s many “scams… frauds… [and] questionable relationships” (Trump in Davidson, 2016). Despite Trump’s demeanor towards women

and his infamous self-titled "locker-room banter" where he was recorded with Billy Bush stating "Grab them by the pussy. You can do anything," he still managed to secure the election (Trump in Fahrenthold, 2016). As president, will this man further set the tone for how others treat women in the workforce? Reminiscent of the numerous hate crimes following the election, it begs the question— if the president can do it and get away with it, why can't I? In addition, if Clinton were a man, would she have won the election?

Beyond their participation in the professional world, the election caused many female students to question their safety and the future of women's health, clearly demonstrating their fear. A sophomore wrote:

> I feel like my identity as a woman is seriously threatened by this election. I have never felt so uncomfortable in my own skin as I did waking up on November 9th. I am terrified of how those that voted for Trump must view the female body and what that might mean for my safety and my ability to be successful in the future.

This sophomore was one of a surge of students concerned for the safety of their own body. Another sophomore stated, "While I was comfortable being a girl before and never worried before the election, Trump's misogynist comments made me feel uncomfortable. It was hard to believe that the spokesperson for our country would be so open about his belief that he can do whatever he would like to women. I actually felt scared for a change." A first year expressed similar fear; "The election definitely heightened my sense of female-ness. This is the first time that I've felt like my body is actually on the line. I mean control of my body both legally and socially. And my body being defined as female." Each women's emphasis of the novelty of her feelings demonstrates the extent to which the election has influenced their outlook on their own bodies' security. The fact

that so many people could ignore the president's publicly broadcasted lack of respect for women has left many students worried for the future.

If females make up more than fifty percent of the country's population, why do so many women feel as if they are treated like second-class citizens? Many students articulated their concerns for the future of women's rights, specifically for abortion rights and availability of healthcare for individual's mental health. A first year who identifies as white, upper middle class, female and heterosexual stated, "As a woman, I'm worried that some of the laws that give women more say over their own lives, such as laws that protect abortion rights, will be revoked. I am a firm pro-choice supporter." A sophomore who defined herself as, "a cisgender, white, heterosexual female, born and raised in the United States… from a lower-middle class background… [with] mental health issues which I consider to affect my ability status" wrote, "I am more aware of my womanhood and how it is still a potential target of violence by misogyny, and I am concerned about the lack of healthcare that I will be able to receive under a Trump presidency." For those who have experienced sexual assault, the election results for many were all-consuming. One senior voiced her explicit fear; "I am a woman and I am afraid. I've experienced assault to various degrees and I feel that nothing will be done to change institutionalized negligence of incidents. We are entering a very scary period of time." With at least thirteen women claiming that President Trump had forcibly kissed or inappropriately touched them without their consent, some students are frightened of the potential normalization of sexual aggression (Pagones, 2017). The white and Hispanic student (above) explained how this election has impacted her daily, "I feel that my womanhood has come under complete attack from the moment the results were announced, and this

feeling has not waned. Every day suddenly feels like a struggle to assert myself as a capable, rights-bearing human, and I want nothing more than to help every woman get ahead both through assistance and by example." For this woman, everyday now feels like a battle.

*Concerning Sexual Orientation*

Almost a third of student participants identified as part of the LGBTQIA+ community. Of these students, over half said their sexual orientation grew in importance during and after the election. Despite the Supreme Court's ruling in favor of same-sex marriage nationwide in 2015 and Trump announcing that he is "fine with that" on "60 Minutes", the biggest cause of stress for these students incorporated coming out and being out-ed (Trump in De Vogue and Diamond, 2015). Potentially exacerbated by the constant negative LGBTQIA+ rhetoric during the election and then returning home for Thanksgiving, both of these students (below) emphasized the newness of these feelings. A white female senior wrote, "I attempted to come out to my family, which was stressful. I don't know if they picked up on it and I was too chicken to just say 'I'm queer'." A first year biracial female stated, "I am so afraid to be bisexual now. I'm afraid to tell people, but I'm more afraid of someone finding out later and hating me." Two participants spoke of the distance that grows between one's self at school, which they defined as a "liberal bubble" and one's self at home. This distance, they explained, causes them to feel dissociated from their families, which manifests into anxiety whenever they leave from the college campus. One female, who feels she cannot be herself around her family spoke of participating in self-deprecating behaviors right before holiday breaks like

drinking too much to ease some of these anxieties. A sophomore who identifies as white-passing, lower middle class, non-binary and graysexual shared a comparable uncomfortableness with their family; "Previously harbored prejudices against people are more open and volatile when related topics and individuals are brought up. My family (more extended family than immediate) is more divided on issues and I no longer feel safe expressing who I am around them." As many college-age students, according to student development theory, are in process of figuring out who they are, indeed, not feeling accepted by one's own family can be a significant source of stress and can contribute to a student's failure to thrive (Jones & Abe, 2013).

A number of students voiced ample concern over Mike Pence, current Vice President of the United States and his association with conversion therapy, a discredited physcotherapy method used to assist individual's in changing their sexual preferences (Stack, 2016). While Pence reportedly denied his support for this practice, in his 2000 congressional campaign, he listed his opposition for same-sex marriage and advocated that "resources should be directed toward those institutions which provide assistance to those seeking to change their sexual behavior" (Pence in Stack, 2016). In response, Rea Carey, the executive director of the National L.G.B.T.Q stated, "That is very specific language — some might call it a dog whistle — that has been used for decades to very thinly cloak deeply homophobic beliefs. Particularly the phrase 'seeking to change their sexual behavior,' to me, is code for conversion therapy" (Carey in Stack, 2016). Regardless of his exact stance on this matter however, the Vice President is obviously in contention with the LGBTQIA+ community, leaving many students in deliberation over how to present their sexuality after the election. One senior wrote:

> After the election I went through an initial fear- wow, if I'm perceived as being attracted to woman, Mike Pence might want to send me to conversion therapy! At first I thought that gave more reason for not publicly engaging with this part of my identity. But upon reconsideration that feels kind of false and selfish for me to do so- there are many queer people who don't have the privilege of ignoring that they are queer. So I think it actually makes sexuality more important to me and more important for me to actively engage in the queer community.

Post-election, this student confronted the choice between passing as her "virtual social identity" or revealing her authentic social identity (Clair et al., 2005; Gutierrez et al., 2010). Considering both sides, she opted to stay visible within the LGBTQIA+ community, which demonstrate feelings of both empowerment and resistance.

Other students, however, selected post-election to continue to pass as their "virtual social identity," actively keeping their nonvisible social identities invisible. In fear of stigmatization and possibly vocal or physical violence, one junior who identifies as white, upper class, female, lesbian and non-religious stated, "I am afraid of kissing my girlfriend in public." Another student who identifies as bisexual, biracial, lower-middle class and Christian wrote, "I'm afraid of not being accepted in church. I was going to come out to my family but I'm not going to now unless there's no other option. I don't want the people I love to hate me or think cruel things about me." Clair et al. (2005) state, "concealing personal information to avoid stigma, [however] interferes with one's authentic self-presentation" (89). Therefore, for these students, passing as one's "virtual social identity" may not be a viable long-term option for one's mental health. Clair et al. explain (2005), "they are likely to expend energy and to experience increased stress in every new social relationship… that requires a decision to pass or reveal" (89).

*Concerning Gender Fluidity and Transgender Individuals*

All nine participants who identified as either gender fluid or transgender indicated a rise in the significance of their gender identity post-election. Similar to students in the LGBTQIA+ community, many gender fluid and transgender students are also in process of figuring how to publicly present their less accepted social identities. Indeed, the group's biggest concern is their personal safety. A sophomore who identifies as white passing and mixed, lower class, agender, polysexual, not religious, and able-bodied wrote:

> I have no idea how I'm going to express my identities that matter to me, especially of being non-binary. I don't know if I should closet myself for my own safety. I've been experimenting with it since the election and it's led to me being really unhappy, but I don't know where the line is between protecting myself physically and protecting myself mentally.

This student walks directly between "passing" and "revealing" their less visible social identities (Clair et al., 2005). For this student, being non-binary clearly falls high in their hierarchy of significant social identities; thus, hiding one's social identities might eventually become more detrimental than "revealing" might be (Howard, 2000). Still, according to interactionism, how one "does" identity depends entirely on the people the individual interacts with. While staying closeted to some, this individual may choose to "reveal" themself to others. With risk of both violent and verbal discrimination, making this choice is undeniably stressful. A first year who identified as "White, upper-class, able-bodied, mixed-western-European heritage many-generations American, trans-male, sort of genderfluid (???), oh so queer, living with several mental illnesses… Unitarian Universalist, feminist leftist socialist, introvert, gentle lover of people" who is also grappling with how to present themself stated, "I am much more aware of being

genderfluid, because I am much less comfortable recognizing that truth and expressing it. I'm also more urgently working on legal name and gender change, to protect myself legally speaking in the future." Even if this student legally changes their gender however, while they may be protected under the law, they will still be subject to transphobic harassment. According to the 2015 National Transgender Discrimination Survey, published in 2016 with 28,000 respondents, 26% of trans people lost a job due to bias, half were harassed at work, 20% were evicted or denied housing, and a total 78% of trans students reported being harassed or assaulted (James et al., 2015; Grant et al., 2015). These high percentages expectantly prompt fear within trans and non-binary community and perhaps influences further closeted-ness.

When asked if this first year (above) had experienced fear or insecurity surrounding their social identities since the election, they responded:

> Yes. Fuck yes. The question almost brings tears to my eyes. I am so scared. More than 2/3 of trans college students experience sexual violence. Trans murders in 2016 were higher than any other year ever recorded. I'm sort-of-out, and people tend to respond violently most often when they are surprised by someone's transness, and I'm terrified that someone who thought I was cis will notice I'm trans and will hurt me. Whether that be a drunk boy at a party or some random guy in a public bathroom downtown. I'm scared to wear eyeliner. I'm scared to wear any pants that accentuate my feminine hips. I'm scared to wear earrings. I'm scared to grow my hair out. I am trans-male, but I am not very masculine. But actively choosing to leave behind the safety of looking cis-male is desperately frightening. Though emotionally crippling to restrict myself to not being noticed.

A senior who identifies as white, upper class, transgender non-binary and queer voiced, "I immediately stopped feeling safe as a transgender person in any public space." While Donald Trump's exact stance on transgender rights is still unclear, many transgender-rights activists are worried the new presidential administration will weaken the Obama's administration's efforts to allow transgender students to use the bathrooms they would

prefer in public schools (Press, 2016). Chandi Moore, costar in *I Am Cait* and a trans woman of color stated, "We are worried because he has Mike Pence as his VP who is against trans people in every aspect… it is crucial that we continue to stay strong through it all" (Press, 2016). Tiq Milan, a trans man of color and acclaimed writer, speaker and advocate told LGBTQNation, "We're scared that this administration will not only attempt to roll back the progress we've made in terms of policies and protections but they will allow the hateful rhetoric that routinely turns into violence go unchecked" (Press, 2016). For many, this fear is absolutely debilitating, even on the Colorado College campus, the so-called "liberal bubble". A white, male, upper-middle class and gay senior stated, "The hateful words written in the Pride [Living Learning Community] bathroom were hard to read and made me much more worried about our campus. I think many places I assumed to be safe were not or are not anymore." In a letter to the campus community, President Tiefenthaler, wrote "at a liberal arts college, we can and should disagree on a wide range of issues but bigotry and hatred cannot be part of our intellectual community" (Greenberg, 2016). Certainly, there is work to be done.

*Concerning Religion*

A very limited number of participants said their religion grew in significance post-election. Considering that almost a forth of students did not mention religion as one of their social identifiers, a fifth wrote that they had no religious affiliation and another fifth identified as agnostic or atheist, this small percentage of students is unsurprising. In fact, according to the Cooperative Institutional Research Program at UCLA that performed a nationwide study on the America freshman in the fall of 2015, the Class of

2018 cared less about their religious identity then any other class of freshman in the past surveyed forty years (Eagan et al., 2016). The study suggested that some students might separate spirituality from religion, which could partly explain the all-time low recording (Eagan et al., 2016). Still, many student participants reported a preference for logic over both religion and spirituality. A senior who identified as white, Jew(ish), middle class, womanish, pansexual, atheist, and able bodied wrote, "I try to converse with and understand the beliefs of people who are religious, but my lack of belief in a god or organized religion shapes my thirst for logic, how I perceive others and how I perceive the world." A white upper-class, straight, atheist, Jewish male stated "I'm scared of and opposed to legislation based on religion."

Both of these students view their Jewish-ness as part of their culture rather than part of their religion, which aligns with the findings in a study performed by The Pew Center titled *A Portrait on Jewish Americans* published in 2013. The Pew Center found that ninety percent of American Jews who were born before World War II identify themselves as religiously Jewish. Almost a third of Jewish millennials, however, identified as religiously unaffiliated— despite referring to themselves as Jewish (Demby, 2013). Still, the majority of Jewish Americans reported "that remembering the Holocaust and living ethically were central to their sense of Jewishness" (Demby, 2013). Perhaps, young American-Jews tend to gravitate toward this aspect of their identity in honor of their grandparents, many of which are holocaust survivors. In addition, anti-Semitic and Holocaust denial-ist groups exist in almost every state (SPLC, 2016). In the ten days following the election, almost twelve percent of the Southern Poverty Law Center's reported 867 hate crimes were anti-Semitic. According to the SPLC, "Swastikas have

been scrawled in public spaces, schools, driveways, and on people's cars and garage doors" (SPLC, 2016). Many Jews who had never experienced such discrimination before were shocked. In Albuquerque, New Mexico, for example, "a woman caught a stranger trying to take the 'I'm With Her' bumper sticker off of her car. When confronted, the perpetrator asked her if she was a Jew because she "looked like one." "Get ready for your next exodus lady," he told her, "because we're about to clean out this country"" (SPLC, 2016).

The lack of many Muslim student participants must also be noted. As Donald Trump has promised to increase surveillance on specifically Muslim-Americans and implement a ban on Muslim immigration, indeed, many Muslim-Americans identify even more strongly with their religion post-election (Gabriel, 2016; Parvini et al., 2017). In a brief address at St. Anselm College in New Hampshire in June, 2016, Trump stated of American-Muslims, "They have to work with us. They have to cooperate with law enforcement and turn in the people who they know are bad. They know it. And they have to do it, and they have to do it forthwith." Trump continued, "…when people know what's going on and they don't tell us, and we have an attack, and people die, these people have to have consequences. Big consequences" (Trump in Bouie, 2016). Throughout the speech, the president made absolutely no distinction between Muslims and Islamic terrorists, exercising the two terms almost interchangeably (Bouie, 2016). The *Los Angeles Times* surveyed Muslim-Americans across the country in a study similar to this one to find out what the Trump's presidency means to them. Tina Hossain from California stated, "I mostly worry for my future children, though, who may grow up in an America I hardly recognize – one where I have to warn them to remember their second-

class status, which may endanger their lives and opportunities for advancement. The fact that this is something I have to consider is unacceptable and shameful" (Hossain in Parvini et al., 2017). Joseph Azam from New York wrote, "Death threats on social media are not new, feeling an oncoming existential crisis is" (Azam in Parvini et al., 2017). Again, we see the novelty of these feelings.

A Muslim ban is a possible outcome of group status threat. Through enforcing an in-group, out-group mentality, Trump has influenced many white Americans to identify more strongly with their 'whiteness' in matters concerning race and foreign policy (Major et al., 2016). Major et al. state (2016), "To the extent that their ethnic identity as White becomes an important part of their self-concept, it is likely to guide White Americans' political preferences in the future, especially on policies and issues closely related to group status threat, such as those related to immigration and tolerance of diversity" (8). Resulting from Trump's "misogynistic, xenophobic and racist rhetoric," when Americans think of diversity, they are conditioned to think of threat (Landler, 2017). When Americans think of Muslims, they are conditioned to think of terrorists. Eight days before the inauguration, the human-rights advocacy group declared that Trump could "cause tremendous harm to vulnerable communities, contravene the United States' core human rights obligations, or both" (Landler, 2017).

*Concerning the Conservative Minority*

While many Colorado College students celebrate the school's liberal and open-mindedness, some students feel alienated by the student's overwhelming like-mindedness. While only six participants identified as conservative, all six expressed a

similar grievance— CC students act so open-minded when in fact, they are close-minded to any other beliefs that do not swing left. One first year who identifies as white, middle class, bisexual and nonreligious remarked, "As a conservative, I am less able to speak about my opinions due to the hostile environment in my classes and intolerant attitudes of my classmates… Letting on to my political leanings could cost me my grades, friends, and in some cases personal safety." Another first year who identifies as white, upper class, male, straight and Catholic stated, "I rarely tell anyone at CC about my political views, out of fear of social repercussions. I try to hide my religion to some degree as well, because I am afraid of stereotypes and the possible impact on my social life here at CC." There is strange dichotomy between CC's self-declared liberalness and these students' fears to express their own opinions.

In social identity theory, there is extensive evidence for favoring one's own group and discriminating against others, which can create a us-against-them atmosphere (Hogg, 2006; Stets & Burke, 2000; Lüders et al., 2016). Is CC a safe space for only those who think the same? A white female student expressed a similar experience of social exclusion from other students:

> I do not feel I can tell anyone my true thoughts. And I don't. My own friends have told me they stopped talking to their friends who didn't vote for Hillary. I don't like Trump either, but I don't even feel safe saying anything other than what people want to hear. The left wing friends I have on campus exhibit behavior that suggests great minds can only think alike. If you don't think alike, you must be a biggot (sic). They do not seem to believe that great minds can disagree.

For a school that takes prides in being able to have "difficult discussions," these students' social insecurity arising from having different beliefs than the majority must be addressed (Griffiths, 2015). After the Yik Yak incident, as previously mentioned, Tiefenthaler

wrote in school-wide email, “We must all have the courage to continue to dialogue with each other” (Griffiths, 2015). That being said, we must also have the courage to listen to people with beliefs that might differ from our own.

*Concerning Group Alliance and Association*

After the election, most women felt closer to their fellow females. One student explained, “the election has given me a sense of solidarity with other women and I've been happy with how open women are being about their experiences.” Other students, however, were disappointed by women as a social group, specifically the 53% of white women who voted for Donald Trump. One student voiced,

> The election has caused me to take serious stock of the fact that my white femaleness aligns me with the women across the country who voted against womanhood, and that I must fight even more aggressively for the civil rights of people of color based on this position. I am white, and therefore I MUST listen to, support and step aside for women of color in order to live in the America I want to live in.

A junior wrote, “I am completely embarrassed by the results of the white women who voted this election. I am not proud to be a white woman even in a time where I should be proud and fight/defend for my rights as a woman. There is such a huge divide amongst white women and some have been brain washed by this election while some have maintained their feminist beliefs and maintained the drive to fight for women's rights.” These two statements directly conflict with social identity theory that predicts a psychologically attachment to our born social groups (Hogg, 2006; Stets & Burke, 2000). Instead of aligning with those who identify similarly, both women find error in other white women’s way and as a result, are now distancing themselves from them. In their

defiance, both women abandon their foundation in how to think and behave provided for them through their social identities (Hogg, 2006).

White female students were not the only ones who wanted to disassociate themselves from their visually apparent social groups. A junior who identified as Black, lower class, female, and Christian with no disabilities did not want her racial identity to define her political beliefs either. She stated, "I think that just because I'm black people assumed that I voted against Trump. I feel racial animosity." In fact, according to BBC News, 8% of African-American voters did back Donald Trump (BBC News, US Election 2016).

Many white male students also voiced concerns that their social identities would align them with the alt-right movement. A first year who identifies as white, lower class, straight, male and Jewish stated, "I fear being associated with Trump and Trump supporters because I am a straight white male. Perhaps those identities prevent me from feeling fear in regards to my minority statuses." A white male senior who was raised catholic wrote:

> The reality is that my social identity by definition has been furthered in a positive way, however a way that I do not desire. This election could be defined as the last hoo-rah of the white male, which is a shame. White CIS gender males have been a top society in the US for generations, and thus the furthering of that position is backward. Its pushing the top further from the bottom instead of pulling the bottom up.

This senior's statement embodies the perils of group status threat that arises when one's groups status is vulnerable (Major et al., 2016). Group status threat predicts that the threatened group will protect their influence and position in the hierarchy through the discrimination toward other groups, a tactic Donald Trump often used during the election

process. His promise to increase surveillance on Muslim-Americans is an example of such (Gabriel, 2016).

*Conclusion*

With this study, I attempted to illuminate the pre-inaugural lived experience of the individual liberal arts college student in the first few weeks after the election. My community of inquiry was mostly liberal, educated and college-aged, which resulted in a like-minded and perhaps one-sided discussion. This affirmation of identity for not just one self but for others as well seems to echo the previous presidential administration. In the 2015 State of the Union address, Barak Obama stated, "For all our blind spots and shortcomings, we are a people with the strength and generosity of spirit to bridge divides, to unite in common effort, to help our neighbors, whether down the street or on the other side of the world" (Rothman, 2016). Joshua Rothman, archive editor for *the New Yorker* responded, "As individual voters, we can do very little to reform our broken political system, or to change the apocalyptic tenor of today's political campaigns. But, as neighbors and friends, we can redeem politics through ordinary human decency" (Rothman, 2016). But in light of the 2016 presidential election— if our political debates go beyond fiscal and foreign policy and instead determine our worth as people based on our social identities— what we look like, who we love and what we believe in for example, does Obama's and Rothman's statements still hold true? In this country, are we people who build bridges? Can we trust our neighbors? Even if they voted for a man who proposes building walls (Porter, 2017)?

Indeed, the weeks after the election were tumultuous. As a country, in response to Donald Trump's presidential victory, we saw an increase in vandalism, assault and intimidation. We saw a public resurgence of the white supremacist movement. We saw a divided nation, which *the Washington Post* termed as "two Americas" (Wan et al., 2016). But— in the week after the election, we also saw the biggest protest in our nation's history on January 21st, 2017 with more than three million people marching at the Women's March on Washington all over the world. We saw people across the nation donating millions of dollars to activist organizations like Planned Parenthood, which in the six weeks following the election experienced forty times its normal donation rate (McIntyre, 2017). Matt House, a spokesman for Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, told CNN that the Senate received almost 1.5 million calls per day from citizens in the weeks following the inauguration, demonstrating people's resistance (Killough, 2017).

In this thesis, I found that despite the fear and outrage resulting from Trump's attacks on individuals as well as on entire social, racial and religious groups, some students managed to still find strength and power. These students encouraged solidarity and allyship through marching, donating and listening while maintaining, and even celebrating, ownership of their more "deviant" social identities. I also found many students with more privilege identities feeling a greater sense of responsibility to fight the current political and social system. In addition, the novelty of emotions— fear, disillusionment, outrage and empowerment illustrate just how strange and unique the election truly was.

Given the unusual nature of the election, my study of Colorado College could be indicative of a broader national movement in terms of how people responded to the

election. It would be interesting to continue these studies beyond the microcosm of Colorado College to better understand the social impact of a Trump presidency on the nation. To further understand the election's social impact on the individual, other communities should certainly be explored. Donald Trump will be president for at least four years and within these four years, anthropological investigation is imperative. This study serves as a single snap shot in time and as our forty-fifth president is unpredictable, individual's reactions to his actions will constantly be fluctuating (Drezner, 2016). These studies, which tell us more about the individual and their lived experience than political polls do, help us better understand political culture's influence on the individual. Further studies should include other holistic methods such as ethnography and participant observation, which will help researchers achieve a fuller understanding of a Trump presidency's impact on our country.

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## Appendix

Questionnaire Questions:

Q1: Class Year (First Year, Sophomore, Junior, Senior)

Q2: What are your social identities? (examples: race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability, nationality, age, or as you define them)

Q3: Pre election, what social identities were most significant to you? Why?

Q4: Post election, what social identities are most significant to you? Have certain aspects of your social identities become more or less significant?

Q5: After this election, have you experienced fear/insecurity regarding your social identities or how you are perceived in society?