**Title:**

*“Feminazis,” “libtards,” “snowflakes,” and “racists”: Trolling and the Spiral of Silence effect in women, LGBTQIA communities, and disability populations before and after the 2016 election*

**Author Information:**

**\*Both authors contributed equally to this article. Listed author order does not denote a hierarchy of contribution to this work.**

Candi S. Carter Olson, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Media and Society

Utah State University

Department of Journalism and Communication

Ag Research Bldg 317  
4805 Old Main Hill  
Logan, Utah 84322-4805

[Candi.carterolson@usu.edu](mailto:Candi.carterolson@usu.edu)

435-797-3253

Ph.D. received from the University of Pittsburgh

Biography: Candi Carter Olson is an assistant professor at Utah State University. Her research interests focus on women’s press clubs as agents of change, newswomen’s history, and women’s use of social media to build community and organize activist groups. She received a 2012-2013 American Association of University Women American Fellowship, a 2015-2016 Mountain West Center research grant, and the 2016 *American Journalism* Rising Scholar award. She has published in *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, Journalism History,* *Feminist Media Studies, Pennsylvania History* and *Media Report to Women,* and she has an article forthcoming in *American Journalism*. Carter Olson is also the 2017 Chair of the Association for Education in Mass Communication and Journalism’s Commission on the Status of Women.

Victoria LaPoe, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor

Ohio University, Athens

Scripps College of Communication

Schoonover Center

1 Ohio University

Athens, Ohio 45701-2979

[vlapoe@gmail.com](mailto:vlapoe@gmail.com)

740-856-0345

Ph.D. received from Louisiana State University

Biography: Victoria LaPoe is an assistant professor of audio, visual and digital media at Ohio University. She is co-author of the book, *Indian Country: Telling a Story in a Digital Age*, which evaluates how digital media are changing the rich cultural act of storytelling within Native communities. *Indian Country* contains interviews with more than 40 Native journalists around the country to understand how digital media possibly advances the distribution of storytelling within the American-Indian community. She is also co-author of *Oil and Water:* *Media Lessons from Hurricane Katrina and the Deepwater Horizon Disaster.* *Oil and Water* explores the visuals and narratives associated with both disasters. Victoria is the American Indian Editor for the Media Diversity Forum. She is a Native American Journalists lifetime member and a current board member for the Native American Journalists Association.

**Abstract:**

Using a mixed methods Qualtrics survey of 338 Twitter and Facebook users, the authors explore the effect that the 2016 election had on people’s political posts both before and after the election and whether or not people actually experienced harassment and threats during the election cycle. If trolling causes people—particularly women, LGBTQIA community members, and people who identify with a disability—to censor themselves because they feel their opinion is in the minority or that they will be attacked for speaking, then it would follow that trolling is changing our digital public sphere, which is affecting our political conversations.

**Keywords**

Spiral of Silence, Trolling, 2016 election, Social media harassment, doxxing