



Affect in Anticipation of the 2020 U.S. Presidential Election in a Sample of Latinx Adults Living on the U.S.–Mexico Border: A Daily Diary Study

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Donald Trump's election campaign in 2016 and subsequent presidential administration involved significant anti-Latinx rhetoric and coincided with an increase in hate crimes against people from racial/ethnic minority groups. The present study investigated Latinx Americans' psychological health surrounding the 2020 U.S. election and Trump's possible re-election, specifically focusing on anticipatory stress leading up to the election. One hundred ten Latinx participants (71% Mexican-American, 74% women, $M = 23.6$ years old) were included in the study, which occurred entirely online. We used a daily diary approach to measure participants' affect, anxiety, and depression during a 14-day period, starting 1 week before the election. Piecewise growth models were used to examine trajectories during three separate periods of time: before Election Day, after Election Day before the winner was announced, and after the winner was announced. Depression, anxiety, and negative affect increased in anticipation of Election Day among those who did not vote or intend to vote for Trump. Following Election Day but before Biden was announced the winner, negative outcomes decreased while positive affect increased. Then, following the announcement of Biden as a winner, positive affect returned to baseline and negative outcomes remained stable. Exploratory analyses identified additional trait measures that moderated anticipatory stress, including nativity and ethnic identity. The 2020 U.S. presidential election was a stressful period of time for Latinx Americans. Increases in negative psychological outcomes were evident in anticipation of the election, suggesting macrolevel events can impact individuals' health and well-being.

Public Significance Statement

Elections are stressful events and impact individuals' health and well-being, especially those negatively impacted by the outcome. We examined the impact of Donald Trump's potential re-election in the 2020 U.S. presidential election on Latinx Americans and found increases in anxiety, depression, and negative affect in anticipation of Election Day.

Keywords: Latinx, Mexican-American, elections, mental health, piecewise growth models

Supplemental materials: <https://doi.org/10.1037/lat0000238.supp>

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Elections can be stressful, particularly for those who are disproportionately impacted by the outcome and resulting policy changes (Williams & Medlock, 2017; Zeiders et al., 2020). The 2020 U.S. presidential election in particular was stressful for many, as the incumbent Donald Trump was up for re-election. Trump's campaign

rhetoric in 2016 heavily featured immigration and denigration toward Mexico and Mexican-Americans, including emphasis on building “a great wall” and making “Mexico pay for that wall” (Time, 2015). Following Trump’s election in 2016, hate crimes and hostility toward people from racial/ethnic minority groups, immigrants, and Muslim people increased significantly (G. Lopez, 2017), contributing to feelings of anxiety, stress, and fear among individuals targeted (Wray-Lake et al., 2018). Anti-immigration policies were additionally enacted, affecting the lives and livelihood of immigrants and their communities (Martin, 2017). Given the impact the election of Trump in 2016 had on the health and well-being of Latinx people in the U.S., including Mexican-Americans, the present study examined how the 2020 presidential election (and the possibility of Trump’s re-election) affected Latinx daily affect, specifically focusing on anticipatory processes leading up to the election. We also investigate in an exploratory fashion various individual traits that may have impacted the perceived personal relevance of the election and thus mental health-related outcomes during this period, including cultural values of familism and ethnic identity.

Impact of Elections and Policy on Individuals

Macrolevel factors impact the health, well-being, and development of individuals, as highlighted by the bioecological theory of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998) and other studies showing the influence of macrolevel factors on individuals’ well-being and mental health (Andoh-Arthur & Adjorlolo, 2021; Elia et al., 2020; Ottova et al., 2012). Biological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1977) conceptualizes factors of influence as ranging from the more proximal (microsystem: closest to the individual that the individual has direct contact with) to the more distal (macrosystem: cultural environment including economic, social, and political systems) and emphasizes interactions between levels as essential in understanding individual development. Thus, we conceptualize national elections as macrolevel events that influence stress and well-being among individuals.

Prior research has documented the activation of physiological stress responses during an election, including disturbances in both cortisol cycles (Hoyt et al., 2018; Stanton et al., 2010; Trawalter et al., 2012; Waismel-Manor et al., 2011; Zeiders

et al., 2020) and testosterone levels (Stanton et al., 2009; Trawalter et al., 2012). In some cases, this impact is contingent on whether one’s supported candidate is expected to win (Stanton et al., 2009, 2010). Other research has focused on psychological responses, showing complicated patterns of effects on affect and other psychological outcomes (Hoyt et al., 2018; Marx et al., 2009; Neupert et al., 2021; Roche & Jacobson, 2019; Scheibe et al., 2011; Waismel-Manor et al., 2011; Williams & Medlock, 2017; Williams & Mohammed, 2013; Zeiders et al., 2020), suggesting elections can be both exciting (positive) and stressful (negative) events that influence individuals’ psychology and physiology.

The candidates and policies involved in the election play an important role in how they affect individuals (Waismel-Manor et al., 2011). Research suggests elections may have a particularly negative effect on individuals and communities who are direct targets of hostility during an election cycle (Williams & Medlock, 2017). Latinx people compose the largest growing ethnic/racial minority group in the United States, the majority of whom—about 60%—are Mexican-American (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). In his 2016 presidential campaign, Trump repeatedly referred to Mexican immigrants in a denigrating way, calling Mexican immigrants “criminals” and “rapists” and repeatedly saying he would “build a great wall” along the U.S.–Mexico border (Time, 2015). In one campaign speech, Trump described “criminal aliens” that “freely roam our streets, walk around, do whatever they want to do, crime all over the place,” and suggested policy solutions to restrict immigration, such as ending “catch and release” policies and increasing the number of border patrol agents on the border (Los Angeles Times, 2016). Some of these campaign promises came to fruition in the first 100 days of Trump’s term in the form of four anti-immigrant executive orders that included directives to extend the wall along the U.S.–Mexico border, expedite deportations, remove protections in “sanctuary cities,” and increase the number of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents along the border (Martin, 2017).

Unsurprisingly, research has shown that the anti-immigration rhetoric during the 2016 election cycle and other anti-immigration legislation and policies have had a negative effect on Latinx individuals and communities (Hatzenbuehler et al., 2017; Toomey et al., 2014; White et al.,

2014). Several studies focusing on the 2016 presidential election documented increased negative emotions among Latinx youth, including anxiety, stress, fear, anger, and immigration-related worries, along with physical symptoms including sleep disturbances, somatic symptoms, and changes in bedtime cortisol and diurnal cortisol slopes (DeJonckheere et al., 2018; Wray-Lake et al., 2018; Zeiders et al., 2020). Other research has focused on the impact of restrictive state-level anti-immigrant policies, suggesting that Latinx people in states with more exclusionary anti-immigrant policies report poor mental health at higher rates (Hatzenbuehler et al., 2017). For example, the Arizona state senate passed legislation in 2010 (Senate Bill 1070) requiring individuals to carry documentation at all times. As a result of this legislation, law enforcement officials were allowed to check the immigration status of anyone they suspected was undocumented, often resulting in racial profiling (Ayón & Becerra, 2013; Salas et al., 2013). Studies show that this kind of legislation and other immigration raids result in elevated fear, anxiety and other negatively valenced emotions, less use of public assistance or preventative health care, and lower birth weight among Latina mothers related to stress (Ayón & Becerra, 2013; Novak et al., 2017; Salas et al., 2013; Toomey et al., 2014; White et al., 2014; Wray-Lake et al., 2018). Thus, it is no surprise that Latinx individuals' perceptions of their quality of life and inclusion within American society decreased under Trump's presidency (Armenta et al., 2021; M. H. Lopez et al., 2018).

Anticipation of the 2020 Election as a Stressor

Anticipatory processes leading up to a stressful event additionally play an important role in individuals' health and well-being. When anticipating a stressful event, individuals prepare for the stressor, especially when the event is appraised as threatening or personally relevant (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Monat et al., 1972). This anticipatory stress can help mobilize a coping response following the stressor (Neupert & Bellintier, 2019), but may be detrimental when vigilance or anticipatory stress occurs chronically. For example, research focusing on vigilance in anticipation of race-related discrimination has found effects on cardiovascular

function, hypertension, obesity, sleep difficulty, depression, and anxiety, even when controlling for previous experiences of discrimination (Clark et al., 2006; Gordon et al., 2020; Hicken et al., 2013, 2014, 2018; Himmelstein et al., 2015; LaVeist et al., 2014; Lewis et al., 2019; Powell et al., 2016).

The Present Study and Hypotheses

The present study examines the effect of the 2020 U.S. presidential election on the psychological well-being of Latinx Americans in the U.S.–Mexico border region. We specifically examined the effect of the election on young adults, many of whom voted in this election for the first time, as it is an important stage of ethnic and political identity development (Johnson & Ferguson, 2018; V. Torres & Baxter Magolda, 2004; Walker & Iverson, 2015).

Because of the importance of anticipatory stress for mental and physical health, especially for individuals from racial/ethnic minorities that experience high daily stress burdens, we separately examined trajectories in affect and symptoms of anxiety and depression in anticipation of the election and following the election. To do this, we used a daily diary approach to repeatedly measure psychological outcomes for 14 days starting 1 week before Election Day. Daily diary and other intensive longitudinal methods are beneficial in that they allow for examination of within-person variation in outcomes (Ebner-Priemer & Trull, 2009; Trull & Ebner-Priemer, 2013), including across meaningful periods of time. This was particularly useful for examining separate periods of time before and after Election Day. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, mail-in ballots and early voting were much more prevalent across the nation. Because of this and other factors related to the pandemic, it took several days for the results of the election to be known and Joe Biden was not announced the winner by the majority of news outlets until Saturday morning, November 7, 4 days after Election Day. Thus, we examined how psychological outcomes fluctuated during three distinct periods: the week leading up to Election Day, the several days following Election Day before the results were known, and several days after the winner was announced. Because of the unique separation between Election Day and the resolution of the outcome, we did not have specific

a priori hypotheses for how outcomes would fluctuate during the second and third periods. However, based on the previous literature, we predicted an increase in negative outcomes (negative affect, depression, and anxiety) during the week leading up to Election Day.

Additionally, the impact of a stressor, including the anticipation of a stressor, is heavily dependent on one's appraisal of the stressor (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), which depends in part on the relevance of the stressor to one's important commitments, goals, and values (e.g., Lash et al., 1991). Thus, in an exploratory fashion, we examined variables that may contribute to perceived personal relevance of the election and thus exacerbate negative responses in anticipation of the election. For example, we examined the influence of nativity (whether someone was born in the United States or not) due to Trump's impact on immigration policy and continued encouragement of prejudice against immigrants and Mexicans. We additionally examined ethnic identity, including both commitment to and exploration of one's ethnic identity, which shapes individuals' responses to group-related threat in both positive and negative ways (Yip, 2018), and familism, the cultural emphasis on the family as the primary source of emotional and social support prevalent in Mexican culture (Sabogal et al., 1987; Steidel & Contreras, 2003). We did not have a priori hypotheses for how these variables might moderate anticipatory trajectories.

Method

Participants

One hundred ten participants (28 men, 81 women, and one trans/nonbinary person) who identified as Hispanic or Latina/o/x were recruited using the Psychology Department Sona system at the University of Texas at El Paso, a flyer in the campus-wide newsletter, and word of mouth (participants were encouraged to spread the word to others who might be interested). Recruitment began in early October 2020 and continued until the beginning of the study. Because of the lack of prior work in this area using piecewise models, we did not have an a priori anticipated effect size, and thus did not conduct a power analysis to determine sample size. Instead, we collected the largest possible

sample that was feasible within the constraints of time and money. To satisfy inclusion criteria, participants were required to (a) identify as Latina/o/x or Hispanic; (b) be 18 years of age or older; and (c) speak English fluently. The majority of the participants were Mexican-American and ranged in age from 18 to 51 years old ($M = 23.6$; see Table 1, for more demographic information). Participants received \$20 for participating in an onboarding session prior to the beginning of the daily diary period. Then, participants received \$40 for participating in the 2-week daily diary period. Participants received bonus compensation (\$10) for completing at least 85% of the daily diary surveys, resulting in a maximum of \$70 in compensation. Compensation was distributed via online Target gift cards following the daily diary period. Compliance was acceptable ($M = 88.6\%$ of total surveys completed, $\text{min} = 35.7\%$, $\text{max} = 100\%$). In other words, we received 12 out of 14 daily surveys on average from each participant. Missing data were not imputed, as multilevel models can handle missing data satisfactorily and do not require balanced data (Gelman & Hill, 2007).

Procedure

The entire study took place online and all surveys were administered using Qualtrics. The onboarding session was facilitated via Zoom, where the details of the study were described, informed consent was obtained, and participants completed the onboarding questionnaire. All onboarding sessions took place prior to the daily diary period (October 19, 2020–October 23, 2020). The daily diary period began 1 week prior to the election and ended 1 week following the election (October 28, 2020–November 10, 2020), during which participants were sent a daily survey link via email every day at 6:00 p.m. Mountain Time. Participants were instructed to complete that survey within 8 hr (i.e., before 2:00 a.m. the next day). Each daily survey took less than 10 min to complete.

Measures

Onboarding

In the onboarding questionnaire, participants completed a number of trait measures, including measures of trait anxiety ($\alpha = .90$; generalized anxiety disorder–7; Spitzer et al., 2006), trait

Table 1
Demographic Descriptive Variables

Variable	Women (<i>n</i> = 81)	Men (<i>n</i> = 28)	All (<i>n</i> = 110)
Age (<i>M</i> ± <i>SD</i> , years)	24.1 ± 6.0	23.5 ± 7.1	23.6 ± 6.8
Ethnicity			
Mexican-American/Chicanx	74.1%	60.7%	71.0%
Colombian	2.5%	4.6%	2.7%
Argentinian	1.2%	0%	0.9%
Brazilian	1.2%	0%	0.9%
Mixed Latinx/Hispanic ethnicity	3.7%	0%	2.7%
Unspecified Latinx/Hispanic	17.3%	35.7%	21.8%
Depression symptoms			
Mild	39.5%	32.1%	37.3%
Moderate	14.8%	21.4%	16.4%
Moderately severe	3.7%	10.7%	5.4%
Severe	0%	0%	0%
Anxiety symptoms			
Mild	25.9%	28.6%	26.4%
Moderate	11.1%	14.3%	11.8%
Severe	2.5%	7.1%	4.6%
Nativity (% U.S.-born)	74.1%	89.3%	78.2%
Parents' nativity (% U.S.-born)	35.1%	46.4%	37.7%
Bilingual (% yes)	88.9%	71.4%	84.5%
Voting intention			
Biden	59.3%	57.7%	59.3%
Trump	16.0%	15.4%	15.7%
Other candidate	6.2%	0.0%	4.6%
Not voting	11.1%	11.5%	11.1%
Haven't decided	7.4%	15.4%	9.3%

Note. Demographic information not presented for trans/nonbinary participant (*n* = 1) because of potential to be identifying.

depression ($\alpha = .88$; Patient Health Questionnaire –9; Kroenke & Spitzer, 2002), ethnic identity, including subscales related to identity exploration and identity commitment ($\alpha = .89$; Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised; Phinney & Ong, 2007), and cultural values of familism ($\alpha = .89$; Mexican-American Cultural Values Scale [MACVS]; Knight et al., 2010). Three subscales of the MACVS were included: *familism support values* (sample items: “Family provides a sense of security because they will always be there for you”; “It is important to have close relationships with aunts/uncles, grandparents, and cousins”), *familism obligation values* (sample items: “Older kids should take care of an be role models for their younger brothers and sisters”; “Parents should be willing to make great sacrifices to make sure their children have a better life”), and values of the family as *referent* (sample items: “When it comes to important decisions, the family should ask for advice from close relatives”; “It is important to work hard and do one’s best because this work reflects on the family”).

Participants indicated which presidential candidate they were leaning toward voting for (Response options: Trump, Biden, Other candidate, Not voting, Haven’t decided) and whether they had already voted, either by mail or by early voting, since the onboarding questionnaire was administered 2 weeks before the election. All other measures, including several demographic variables (e.g., age, gender, nativity, and parents’ nativity), can be found in the Supplemental Material.

Daily Diary Period

In each daily diary survey, participants were asked to first rate the degree to which they felt 26 different emotions that day. We used items from the PANAS-X (Watson & Clark, 1994) to assess positive¹ and negative² affect and added three

¹ Positive affect items: active, alert, attentive, determined, enthusiastic, excited, inspired, interested, proud, strong.

² Negative affect items: afraid, scared, nervous, jittery, irritable, hostile, guilty, ashamed, upset, distressed.

items to assess anxiety (anxious, worried, restless) and three items to assess depression (depressed, sad, downhearted). Several other measures were administered that will not be discussed here. A complete list of all measures administered can be found in the Supplemental Material.

Analytic Approach

To examine trends in psychological outcomes (negative and positive affect, depression, and anxiety) during different periods of time within the study, we used multilevel piecewise growth models (Singer & Willett, 2003). To fit these models, we first determined three distinct stages or time periods over the course of the study: Stage 1 (days 1–6; before the election), Stage 2 (days 7–10; after the election but before the winner was announced), and Stage 3 (days 11–14; after Joe Biden was announced the winner). To estimate a separate trajectory for each stage, we created three unique time-varying predictors to include in the model, one for each stage: S1 coded Days 1–14 as {0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6}, S2 coded Days 1–14 as {0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 4, 4, 4}, and S3 coded Days 1–14 as {0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 1, 2, 3}. The model parameter associated with each time-varying predictor describes the trajectory in the outcome for each respective stage. Additionally, we estimated the initial intercept for Stage 1. For the random effects structure, we included participant as a random factor and let the intercept vary randomly by participant.³ Thus, the model (without covariates) is described in Wilkinson notation as:

$$\text{Outcome} \sim 1 + S1 + S2 + S3 + (1|SubID). \quad (1)$$

A separate model was estimated for each of the four outcomes (anxiety, depression, negative affect, positive affect). We first report the results of piecewise growth models with no covariates to estimate general trends across the whole sample. Then, we report the results for models that include voting intention as a moderator of the trajectory in each of the three stages to account for differences between those intending to vote for Trump and those not intending to vote for Trump.⁴ Last, to examine risk factors for increases in negative outcomes in anticipation of the election, we report the results of models exploring the effects of

trait measures (e.g., ethnic identity, nativity) on Stage 1 trajectory.⁵

Deidentified data and code for analysis can be found at <https://github.com/hivolperes/ElectionStudy>.

Results

Multilevel Piecewise Growth Models

First, we fit four separate piecewise growth models (one for each outcome of interest) with no covariates to estimate overall trends in each of the four stages. As Figure 1 illustrates, depression and negative affect significantly increased in anticipation of the election (Stage 1; $b = 0.08$, 95% CIs [0.05, 0.11], $p < .001$, $f^2 = .02$, and $b = 0.06$, 95% CIs [0.04, 0.06], $p < .001$, $f^2 = .03$, respectively).⁶ Then in Stage 2, following the election but before the winner was announced, there were significant changes in all four outcomes. Anxiety, depression, and negative affect significantly decreased, $bs = -0.07$ to -0.15 , $ps < .001$, $f^2 = .01-.04$, while positive affect significantly increased, $b = 0.06$, 95% CIs [0.04, 0.06], $p < .001$, $f^2 = .03$. Finally, in Stage 3 (following the announcement of the winner), all outcomes remained stable except for positive affect, which significantly decreased, $b = -0.13$, 95% CIs [-0.18, -0.08], $p < .001$, $f^2 = .02$.

Voting Intention as a Moderator

To examine the effect of voting intention, we created a binary variable that coded for whether participants intended to (or had already) voted for Trump (1 = Intending to vote or voted for Trump, 0 = All other response options).⁷ As before, we fit four separate piecewise growth models (one for each outcome of interest) but included the binary voting intentions variable as a moderator of the

³ Only a random intercept was used as models would not converge when random slopes were included.

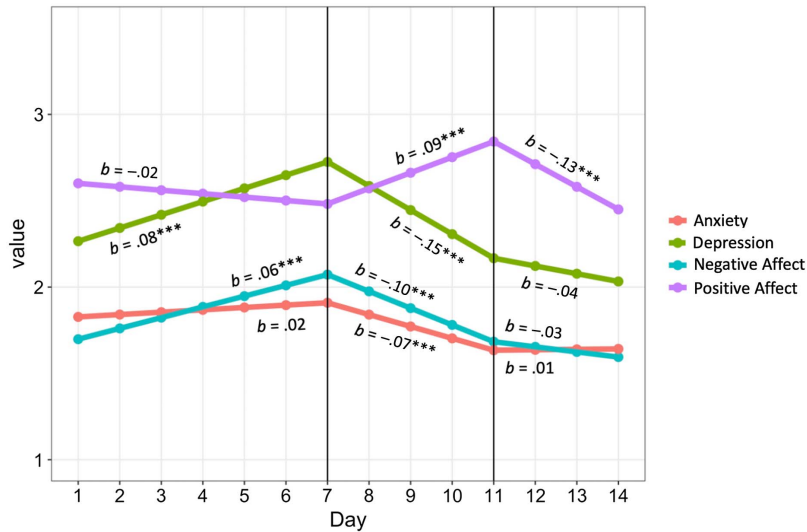
⁴ $\text{Outcome} \sim 1 + \text{VoteInt} + S1 * \text{VoteInt} + S2 * \text{VoteInt} + S3 * \text{VoteInt} + (1|\text{SubID})$.

⁵ $\text{Outcome} \sim 1 + S1 * \text{IndDiff} + S2 + S3 + (1|\text{SubID})$.

⁶ f^2 calculated using the marginal R^2 , which includes both fixed and random effects (Nakagawa et al., 2017). Marginal R^2 was calculated using the MuMIn package in R (Bartón, 2020).

⁷ We tested other coding schemes as well, including one that coded people intending to vote for Biden separately from all other categories. However, the coding scheme reported here showed the greatest contrast and was determined to be the most theoretically appropriate.

Figure 1
Estimated Trajectories From Multilevel Piecewise Growth Models With No Covariates

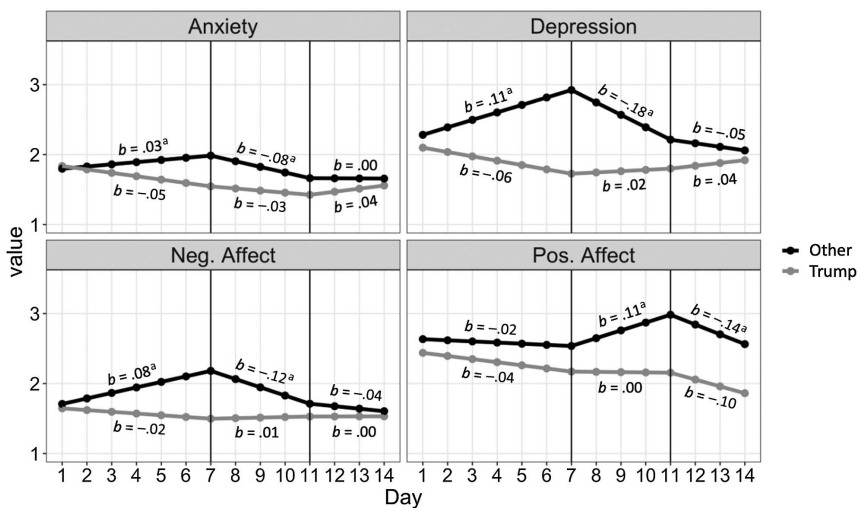


Note. See the online article for the color version of this figure.
 *** $p < .001$.

trajectory in each stage. In anticipation of the election (Stage 1), Trump supporters and non-Trump supporters differed significantly in their trajectories for anxiety, depression, and negative

affect, $bs = -.08$ to $-.17$, $ps < .028$. As Figure 2 illustrates, Trump supporters did not demonstrate any significant change in any of the outcomes, whereas non-Trump supporters reported

Figure 2
Estimated Trajectories From Multilevel Piecewise Growth Models Separated by Voting Intention



Note. Neg. affect = negative affect; Pos. affect = positive affect. CI = confidence interval.
^a indicates estimates with 95% CIs that do not cross 0.

significant increases in anxiety, $b = 0.03$, 95% CIs [0.00, 0.06], depression, $b = 0.11$, 95% CIs [0.08, 0.14], and negative affect, $b = 0.08$, 95% CIs [0.06, 0.10] (see footnote 7).

In Stage 2, following the election but before the winner was announced, Trump supporters again differed significantly from non-Trump supporters, this time for depression, $b = 0.20$, $p < .001$, negative affect, $b = 0.13$, $p = .002$, and positive affect, $b = -0.12$, $p = .008$. Trump supporters did not report any significant changes in any of the outcomes, whereas non-Trump supporters reported decreasing depression, $b = -0.18$, 95% CIs [-0.22, -0.13], negative affect, $b = -0.12$, 95% CIs [-0.15, -0.09], as well as increasing positive affect, $b = 0.11$, 95% CIs [0.07, 0.15]. Finally, in Stage 3, following the announcement of the winner, we found no significant differences in trajectories between Trump and non-Trump supporters. Thus, support for different presidential candidates affected outcomes in primarily the first two stages, although the outcomes affected differed across stage.

Individual Trait Measures as Moderators

In an exploratory manner, we tested a number of individual traits and attitudes as moderators of the trajectories of negative outcomes (depression, anxiety, and negative affect) prior to the election, where we see the greatest increases in negative outcomes. Specifically, we tested the moderating role of nativity, ethnic identity (exploration and commitment subscales separately), and three subscales of familism (support, obligation, referent) on Stage 1 trajectory (see Table 2, for correlations). Of these variables, all had some moderating effect, although not all on the same outcomes (see Table 3). Nativity significantly moderated Stage 1 trajectory for anxiety, such that

non-U.S.-born participants had steeper positive trajectories than U.S.-born participants, $b = -0.08$, 95% CIs [-0.13, -0.04], $p < .001$. Trajectory in negative affect was significantly moderated by both exploration of ethnic identity, $b = 0.02$, 95% CIs [0.00, 0.03], $p = .033$, and commitment to ethnic identity, $b = 0.02$, 95% CIs [0.00, 0.03], $p = .026$, such that higher levels of commitment and exploration were related to steeper positive trajectories in anticipation of the election. Commitment to one's ethnic identity additionally moderated trajectories for depression, $b = 0.03$, 95% CIs [0.00, 0.05], $p = .019$. Last, familism (but only the support subscale) significantly moderated anxiety, $b = 0.03$, 95% CIs [0.01, 0.05], $p = .004$, such that higher levels of familism support values were related to steeper positive trajectories.

Discussion

Elections are stressful events, especially for vulnerable communities that are impacted by potential policy changes (Williams & Medlock, 2017). The present study examined the impact of the 2020 U.S. presidential election on Latinx young adults living on the U.S.–Mexico border. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and related factors, the election results were not known for several days following the election, in contrast to the previous elections. Thus, we examined how psychological outcomes fluctuated during three distinct periods of time surrounding the election: the week leading up to Election Day, the several days following Election Day before the results were known, and several days following the announcement of Joe Biden as the winner.

As expected, depression, anxiety, and negative affect increased prior to the election, specifically among non-Trump supporters. Then, following Election Day, negative outcomes decreased while

Table 2
Correlations Among Trait Measures

Variable	Eth. id (exp.)	Eth. id (commit.)	Familism (support)	Familism (obligation)	Familism (referent)
Eth. id (exp.)	—				
Eth. id (commit.)	.69	—			
Familism (support)	.06	.12	—		
Familism (obligation)	.05	.08	.67	—	
Familism (referent)	.04	.09	.72	.69	—

Note. Eth. id = ethnic identity; exp. = experience; commit. = commitment.

Table 3*Estimates of Moderating Effect of Trait Measures on Stage 1 Trajectory*

Variable	Nativity		Eth. id (exp.)		Eth. id (commit.)		Familism (support)		Familism (obligation)		Familism (referent)	
	<i>b</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>p</i>
Anxiety	-0.08	<.001	0.01	.269	0.01	.157	0.03	.004	0.01	.442	0.01	.376
Depression	-0.03	.257	0.02	.059	0.03	.019	0.02	.156	0.01	.338	0.01	.497
Negative affect	-0.03	.139	0.02	.033	0.02	.026	0.02	.054	0.01	.225	0.00	.632

Note. *b* is the estimate of the interaction between trait measures and Stage 1 trajectory from multilevel piecewise growth models that include trait measures as a moderator of Stage 1 trajectory. Eth. id = ethnic identity; exp. = experience; commit. = commitment. Bold indicates significant effect.

positive affect increased. Finally, following the announcement of Biden as the winner, positive affect decreased to baseline while trajectories for depression, anxiety, and negative affect remained flat. Because of the small representation of Trump supporters in our sample, these results are primarily driven by non-Trump supporters who differed significantly from Trump supporters. These findings are consistent with previous work demonstrating the negative impact of elections, particularly those with a heavy anti-immigrant, anti-Latino rhetoric, and behavior, on Latinxs' psychological and physiological well-being (DeJonckheere et al., 2018; Hatzenbuehler et al., 2017; Toomey et al., 2014; White et al., 2014; Zeiders et al., 2020), and that support for particular candidates moderates the effect of the election. However, the decrease in negative outcomes immediately following the election suggests Election Day itself was anticipated as the stressor, not the announcement of the winner perse, and that once this stressor was past, negative outcomes returned to baseline despite continued uncertainty of the election results.

Because of the uniqueness of this election, we do not know of other work that separates anticipation of Election Day and anticipation of the announcement of the winner, which typically occur closer together in time. However, some work has shown changes in positive and negative affect immediately before and after casting one's vote in the 2009 national election in Israel, suggesting the act of voting itself is both exciting and stressful (Waismel-Manor et al., 2011). Future research should seek to disentangle how individuals' appraisal of Election Day as a macrolevel event is distinct from individual behaviors such as the act of voting, and the independent effect each has on psychological outcomes.

Individuals' appraisal of a stressor is important in determining both the consequence of the stressor and how one mobilizes resources to cope in anticipation of the stressor (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Thus, in an exploratory fashion, we additionally investigated individual traits that may influence the personal significance and meaning of the election and thus the impact of the election on negative psychological outcomes. Several factors appear to moderate trajectories of negative outcomes in anticipation of the election. For example, non-U.S.-born participants had steeper positive trajectories in anxiety than U.S.-born participants in anticipation of the election. This may be due to a number of factors, including the prospective impact of a continued Trump presidency on immigration policy, which may affect one's ability to cross the border to work or visit family, continued encouragement of prejudice against immigrants and Mexicans, and an inability to vote (unless they are naturalized U.S. citizens, which we did not measure). Being unable to vote in an election with implications for one's quality of life may be particularly anxiety-inducing and should be examined in future research.

Ethnic identity and familism (specifically, familism values related to support) additionally moderated negative outcomes, such that individuals with stronger ethnic identity experienced steeper increases in negative affect (both commitment and exploration subscales) and depression (only the commitment subscale) and individuals with stronger familism support values experienced steeper increases in anxiety. In the past research, these two factors have typically been seen as protective for both mental and physical health (Ai et al., 2014; Campos et al., 2014; de Heer et al., 2011; Love et al., 2006). For example, ethnic identity—and especially strong commitment to

one's identity—is typically protective, including when individuals face the stress of ethnic/racial discrimination (Mossakowski, 2003; Romero et al., 2014; Stein et al., 2014; Yip et al., 2019), although some research has documented exacerbation of negative outcomes in response to discrimination among those high in ethnic identity, especially the exploration subscale (Smeekes, 2015; L. Torres & Ong, 2010). Familism has additionally been linked to positive physical and psychological outcomes (Santiago et al., 2016; Valdivieso-Mora et al., 2016). In the present study, however, rather than being protective, these factors seem to exacerbate anticipatory stress and contribute to steeper increases in negative outcomes during the week leading up to Election Day. One possibility is that individuals with stronger ethnic identity and values of familism feel more tied to their ethnic group and anticipate possible negative consequences not just for themselves but for other members of their ethnic group, including their family members. Anticipatory stress regarding the outcome of the election may thus be heightened, as the stakes for oneself and one's loved ones is perceived to be higher. However, given the exploratory nature of these analyses, further work should seek to replicate and expand this work before strong conclusions can be made.

Limitations

One limitation of the present study was that recruitment was restricted to Latinx people who speak English fluently. More than 40 million people in the U.S. speak Spanish at home and almost 16 million people speak English less than “very well” (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). Thus, recruitment criteria may have unintentionally excluded some Latinx people who do not perceive themselves as speaking English well, which hinders the generalizability of the study to predominantly Spanish-speaking Latinx people. Notably, the vast majority of our participants were bilingual in English and Spanish (89% for women and 71% for men) and thus Spanish speakers were not completely excluded. However, future studies should include study questionnaires and materials in the language that is preferred by the participant and should aim to recruit a diverse sample with varying language proficiency and fluency.

Despite the Latinx population comprising a large portion of the U.S. population, they continue

to be an understudied population in research. Therefore, a strength of this study is that we were able to recruit a 100% Latinx sample, which resides along the U.S.–Mexico border, and report on their reactions toward the 2020 presidential election. Nevertheless, our sample did not fully capture the heterogeneity of the Latinx community, which is composed of a number of different cultural traditions and national origins. Cuban Americans, for example, are significantly more likely to report that Mr. Trump should run for reelection in 2024 in comparison to Mexican-Americans (Korgstad et al., 2022). Thus, an additional limitation of this study is that we were unable to report on potential interethnic differences in reactions toward the U.S. presidential election, due to the vast majority of our sample identifying as Mexican. Those potential differences between Latinx groups in reactions toward U.S. presidential elections remain a research topic for future research.

Conclusion

Macrolevel events, such as national political elections, can be stressful and impact individuals' health and well-being, especially those who are particularly negatively impacted. The 2020 U.S. presidential election provided an important opportunity to examine how these types of events affect Latinx Americans, a quickly growing group in the United States that is impacted by prejudice, anti-immigrant legislation, and other policies that are determined at the federal level. The present study specifically examined how Latinx Americans' psychological health (depression, anxiety, negative affect, and positive affect) fluctuated over the course of 14 days surrounding the 2020 election. We find that Latinx non-Trump supporters experienced a significant increase in negative outcomes in anticipation of Election Day and that nativity, ethnic identity, and familism serve as psychological anchors that moderate these anticipatory processes.

Resumen

La campaña electoral de Donald Trump en 2016 y su posterior administración presidencial implicaron una importante retórica antilatinx y coincidieron con un aumento de los delitos de odio contra personas de grupos minoritarios raciales/étnicos. Mediante el

presente estudio se investigó la salud psicológica de los latinoamericanos en torno a las elecciones estadounidenses de 2020 y la posible reelección de Trump, centrándose específicamente en el estrés anticipatorio previo a las elecciones. En el estudio se incluyeron a 110 participantes latinxs (71% mexicano-estadounidenses, 74% mujeres, $M = 23.6$ años) y se realizó íntegramente en línea. Se utilizó un método de diario para medir el afecto, la ansiedad y la depresión de los participantes durante un periodo de 14 días a partir de una semana antes de las elecciones. Se utilizaron modelos de crecimiento por intervalos para examinar las trayectorias durante tres periodos de tiempo distintos: antes del día de las elecciones, después del día de las elecciones antes de que se anunciara el ganador y después de que se anunciara el ganador. La depresión, la ansiedad y el afecto negativo aumentaron en anticipación del día de las elecciones entre quienes no votaron ni tenían la intención de votar por Trump. Tras la jornada electoral, pero antes de que Biden fuera proclamado vencedor, los resultados negativos disminuyeron, mientras que el afecto positivo aumentó. Luego, tras el anuncio de Biden como ganador, el afecto positivo volvió a la línea de base y los resultados negativos se mantuvieron estables. Los análisis exploratorios identificaron otros rasgos que moderaban el estrés anticipatorio, como la nacionalidad y la identidad étnica. Las elecciones presidenciales estadounidenses de 2020 fueron un período estresante para los latinoamericanos. Los aumentos en los resultados psicológicos negativos fueron evidentes en anticipación de las elecciones, lo que sugiere que los eventos a nivel macro pueden afectar la salud y el bienestar de las personas.

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Received May 16, 2022

Revision received April 18, 2023

Accepted May 5, 2023 ■