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# Trump-induced anxiety among Latina/os

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## Abstract

During the 2016 election, Donald Trump castigated unauthorized immigrants as “murderers and rapists.” During his presidency, he continued the use of this rhetoric, explicitly linking unauthorized migrants to threatening narratives. Here, we consider three questions: Did Donald Trump and his immigration positions serve as an “anxiety trigger” for Latina/os? Are individuals with contextually stigmatized attributes especially sensitive to Trump and his policy proposals? Is Spanish language itself, an attribute negatively stigmatized in the context of the immigration issue, sufficient to increase deportation anxiety? Utilizing survey experiments of Latina/os, we demonstrate that exposure to a Trump immigration cue is sufficient to increase anxiety about deportation. We also demonstrate that stigmatized attributes predict anxiety, but do not moderate the effect of the Trump cue. Lastly, we provide evidence that survey language affects anxiety among Latina/os. In Studies 1 ( $n = 736$ ) and 2 ( $n = 1,040$ ), we show that exposure to information about Trump’s immigration agenda significantly increases reports about deportation anxiety. In Study 3 ( $n = 1,734$ ), we show that the Trump exposure condition induces heightened anxiety but that Latina/o attributes (language proficiency and use, immigration status, assessed phenotype) and identity strength have an independent effect on deportation anxiety. In Study 4 ( $n = 775$ ), we randomized bilingual respondents into Spanish or English language survey protocols and found that comparable bilinguals exposed to Spanish language report higher levels of anxiety compared to English-language survey takers.

## Keywords

immigration, Latina/o politics, stigmatized outgroups

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In the 2016 presidential election, Donald Trump garnered attention with harsh rhetoric and position-taking on immigration issues. In office, his rhetoric toward unauthorized immigrants remained extreme, imbued with dehumanizing language, associating unauthorized immigrants with terrorism and crime, frequently invoking analogies to animals (cf. Hirschfeld Davis, 2018).

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Given that most unauthorized migrants are from Latin America, connection of the immigration issue to these threats implicates Latina/os generally (cf. Chavez, 2013; Santa Ana, 2013), so much so that Chavez (2013) labels this phenomenon “the Latino threat narrative,” a narrative implying Latina/os have become derogated because of the connection to the negative stereotypes of immigration. We argue that Latina/os may suffer from “Trump-induced anxiety,” the idea that Trump and his immigration policies have become an existential threat for Latina/os.

To assess this, we ask three questions. First, to what extent does exposure to information about Trump’s immigration policy preferences serve as an anxiety trigger about deportation? Second, do stigmatized attributes and ingroup identity strength held by Latina/os also affect feelings of anxiety or moderate effects of exposure to this information? Third, is exposure to Spanish language sufficient to trigger heightened deportation anxiety among Latina/o bilinguals? In three studies, we demonstrate that Trump exposure significantly increases anxiety about deportation among Latina/os. We also demonstrate that stigmatized attributes and identity strength significantly predict anxiety, but do not moderate the effect of exposure to Trump. Lastly, we provide evidence that survey language affects anxiety among Latina/os.<sup>1</sup>

## Trump-Induced Anxiety

The Latina/o community is variegated, a mixture of foreign-born, second, and third-plus generations. Among the first generation, there is variation in immigrant status: while most of this population is authorized, a significant portion is unauthorized. The prevalence of mixed-status households is widespread. As such, threats aimed at *immigrants* are likely to be felt by *citizens* (cf. Sampaio, 2015). This percolation of threat through Latino communities is nowhere better conveyed than with deportation threat, a theme Trump frequently espouses in public appearances and on Twitter.

Emerging evidence suggests that exposure to deportation threat has health implications. Nichols, LeBrón, and Pedraza (2018) show that Latina/os who believed immigration enforcement had become racialized and Latina/os who had a connection to a deportee were significantly more likely to report accessing mental health services and significantly less likely to rate their personal health as good (see also Vargas, Sanchez, & Juarez, 2017). Journalistic reports also documented Trump-related stress among Latina/o children (cf. Klivans, 2017), and in 2017, a book for Latina/o children titled *When a Bully is President/Cuando el Presidente es un Bulí* (Gonzalez, 2017), presented children with coping strategies in the face of demeaning rhetoric by the president.

To motivate the studies, we rely on work on stigmatized outgroups (Crocker & Major, 1989). Stigmatization occurs when an individual possesses “some attribute or characteristic that conveys a social identity that is devalued in a particular context” (Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998, p. 505). Stigmatized attributes associated with Latina/os include immigrant status, low English proficiency, early generation status, and darker phenotypes (Jones, Flores Victor, & Vannette, 2019). As Major and O’Brien (2005, p. 395) note, stigma “does not reside in the person but in social context.” When stigmatized characteristics of a group are made salient, outgroup discrimination and directed threats may increase, and when such attributes are not salient or can be concealed, threats by outgroups may be less likely. The perception of external threat is an attributive process in which individuals believe negative events to their group are “based on social identity or group membership” and judgment of, or policy aimed at, those with stigmatized attributes is “unjust or undeserved” (Major & Sawyer, 2009, p. 90).

If members of a stigmatized outgroup perceive their status as devalued, they may disengage from threatened domains, have negative expectancies toward outgroup members, see a reduction in cognitive functioning, or conceal contextually stigmatized attributes (cf. Schmader, Johns, & Devine, 2003; Seibt & Förster, 2004). In context, Latina/os

possessing attributes proximal to the “canonical immigrant”—first-generation noncitizen, low English proficiency, darker phenotype—may be more susceptible to threatening cues. This could imply that Trump-induced anxiety may be moderated by Latina/o attributes—those “closer” to the canonical immigrant may respond to threatening cues; those “further” may discount threatening cues, believing removal threat will not affect them.

Extant literature has demonstrated the role attributes play in judgment. Attributes can serve as an informational cue such that exposure induces change in affective responses toward immigrants or policy position-taking (cf. Igartua, Moral-Toranzo, & Fernández, 2011; Sniderman, Hagendoorn, & Prior, 2004). Brader, Valentino, and Suhay (2008) found that among White research participants who were exposed to a cue referencing Hispanic ethnicity, anxiety about immigrants and support for restrictionist policy increased. Additionally, Hansen, Dovidio, and Lee (2016) found that nonnative language cues were associated with increased immigrant bias among those high in social dominance orientation. With respect to phenotype, a number of studies have shown that darker skinned Latina/os are more likely to report experienced discrimination and lower quality of life (cf. Arce, Murguía, & Frisbie, 1987; Telzer & Vasquez, 2009). Taken together, stigmatized attributes have been shown to affect judgment toward Latina/os and Latina/o immigrants as well as self-assessment among Latina/os.

In contrast to attributes moderating the effect of threatening cues, it may be that Latina/os *generally* exhibit an increase in anxiety when exposed to threatening cues. In other words, simply being aware about discrimination facing one’s group can induce negative consequences for group members, for example, lowering self-esteem or increasing anxiety (cf. Crosby, 1982). Work by Taylor, Wright, Moghaddam, and Lalonde (1990) on the personal/group discrepancy, found that individuals consistently report that discrimination is a problem *for the group* more than the extent to which discrimination is a problem for them personally. Thus, if group members harbor beliefs that

discrimination is a major problem facing their group, even if they do not report self-victimization, then it may be the case that exposure to a threatening stimulus will induce heightened anxiety for all group identifiers because of the pervasive belief that “things are bad” for the group.

Indeed, we think this is an implication of the Latino threat narrative (Chavez, 2013), which suggests that invariant to one’s immigration status, harsh and demeaning stereotypes regarding immigration and Latina/os generally, bind together the Latina/o community in a context of threat (cf. Barreto, 2010), devaluing the meaning of Latina/o citizenship status (cf. Rocco, 2014), and marginalizing the group writ large (Chavez, 2013). Given the tethering of the negative implications of the immigration issue to Latina/os generally, it may be the case that the stigma of the Latino threat narrative heightens anxiety in the face of a threatening cue for Latina/os.

Lastly, the role of ingroup identity may serve as an important moderator of anxiety. The role of identity formation in the face of discrimination and group threat has figured prominently in the literature on stigmatized groups. For example, Schmitt, Spears, and Branscombe (2003) examined the rejection–identification model. They showed that for international students who felt rejected by their host university, a sense of collective identity with other international students emerged. This identity in turn led to a boost in esteem, which mitigated the sting of rejection.

Alternatively, cultural inertia theory established by Zárte, Shaw, Marquez, and Biagas (2012) posits that resistance to cultural change affects perceptions of personal and group discrimination. In this model, perceptions of discrimination are a function of assimilation. Assimilated members of stigmatized groups may perceive lower levels of discrimination because they encounter less intergroup conflict (Quezada, Shaw, Zárte, Kimmelmeier, & Kühnen, 2012; Zárte & Shaw, 2010). Members of stigmatized groups who detach from identities deviating from the dominant culture and assimilate into the mainstream should demonstrate lower levels of

anxiety about discrimination, invariant to the presence of stigmatized attributes. In Study 3, we consider the role of ingroup identity, although we take a different tack from some of the studies referenced before. These studies consider the role threat plays in identity formation; here, we consider whether or not ingroup identity moderates the impact of threatening stimuli.

## Linguistic Frame-Shifting and Anxiety

In addition to assessing Trump-induced anxiety, this study is also concerned with the role of language in anxiety. Spanish language is an attribute that has become negatively stigmatized in the context of the immigration issue and many Latina/os in the United States are either Spanish-language dominant or bilingual. In particular, second-generation Latina/os exhibit very high rates of bilingualism (Krogstad & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2015) in part due to the close connection between them and first-generation Latina/os by way of mixed-status households. Prior studies have found evidence that among linguistic minority groups, individuals who have bilingual language skills may engage in a process sometimes referred to as “frame-shifting” (cf. Ramírez-Esparza, Gosling, Benet-Martínez, Potter, & Pennebaker, 2006; Schwartz et al., 2014), a process suggesting judgment may be influenced by language exposure.

While usage of alternative language does not inherently indicate membership of an ethnic minority group, maintenance of ethnic languages in societies with dominant languages becomes a symbolic carrier of ethnic self-identification (Auer, 2005). Further, Lanca, Alksnis, Roese, and Gardner (1994) suggest that preferred language choices are consistent with self-identification when there are dominant regional and national languages that differ from the group members’ native language. Herein, it is natural to ask if Spanish-language exposure in a survey about deportation and immigration is sufficient to increase anxiety. In the context of this study, when bilingual Latina/os are exposed to stimulus materials in Spanish language,

differences in treatment effects may be observed because respondents are anchoring on different references. Spanish language itself may induce anxiety because, in context, it is an attribute negatively connected to the immigration issue (Jones et al., 2019).

## Overview of Studies

In four studies reported in what follows, we assess the extent to which information prevalent in the current political context may induce anxiety about deportation among Latina/os. The climate surrounding the immigration issue in the early days of the Trump administration permits us to assess the degree to which exposure to Trump and his policies on immigration triggers anxiety, and to what extent anxiety is affected by attributes and language that, in context, may have become stigmatized. Based on the prior outlined findings, we propose and test the following hypotheses:

H1: Exposure to information about Trump’s immigration agenda will increase reports of deportation anxiety compared to nonexposure.

H2a: Exposure to the Trump informational cue will be moderated by Latina/o attributes. Latina/os possessing attributes closer to those of the “canonical” immigrant will show greater sensitivity to the cue compared to those having attributes less proximal.

H2b: In contrast to H2a, Latina/o attributes will not moderate the Trump cue exposure effects, but will instead have an independent effect on reported anxiety.

H3a: Exposure to the the Trump informational cue will be moderated by Latina/o identity strength.

H3b: In contrast to H3a, Latina/o identity strength will not moderate the Trump cue exposure effects, but will instead have an independent effect on reported anxiety.

H4: Bilingual participants exposed to the survey and cue in Spanish language will report greater

rates of deportation anxiety than comparable bilinguals exposed to English language.

If H1 and H2a hold, then stigmatized attributes condition the effect of information exposure. If H1 and H2b hold, then information exposure has similar effects for all Latina/os and attribute measures have a main effect on reported anxiety. If H1 and H3a hold, then identity strength conditions the effect of information exposure. If H1 and H3b hold, then information exposure has similar effects for all Latina/os and identity strength has a main effect on reported anxiety. If H1 does not hold, then our study gives no evidence that information exposure increased anxiety. Finally, if H4 holds, then there is evidence of an anxiety increase associated with survey language. We now turn to the studies.

## Study 1

We began Study 1 on January 23, 2017, fielding a purposively recruited, opt-in, survey utilizing a respondent-driven convenience sample, hereafter referred to as RDS. We screened respondents to only survey Latina/os, aged 18 or older residing in the United States. Respondents who opted into the survey were randomly assigned to one of two survey experiments, one dealing with discrimination and the second dealing with deportation anxiety. This paper focuses on this second experiment. The RDS was closed on March 19, 2017. After screening out ineligible participants, we ended up with  $n = 1,508$  Latina/o respondents to the survey, out of which  $n = 736$  were assigned to the Trump exposure experiment.

## Method

*Participants.* To distribute the survey, we relied on a network of Latina/o individuals to not only take the survey but also to distribute it to family, friends, and social networks. Individuals were ensured (and IRB approval required) no information would be collected on documented status and that all responses would be anonymous. Research participants could opt to take the study in English or in Spanish. Respondents indicating

bilingual ability were randomized into Spanish or English. This randomization is discussed in Study 4. In addition to the RDS, we also administered the survey to student participants from political science and psychology departments at a large Northern California university. From this pool, any subject identifying as Latina/o was passed into the RDS survey. We found no evidence that inclusion of these participants affected conclusions (apart from improving statistical power).

*Procedure.* Research participants were randomly assigned to a treatment condition where they were exposed to an image of Donald Trump and the immigration policy positions he took during the 2016 election campaign, or assigned to a condition where no Trump image/immigration positions were given. The supplemental material provides the actual treatment condition in English and Spanish. In advance of viewing the treatment, respondents were asked to, "Please pay close attention to the information on the next page as you will be asked questions about it."

This treatment cue realistically describes Trump's stated policy preferences. Further, it mimics the way news media outlets often convey Trump's immigration positions: use of an image as well as simplified bulleted points. Finding an exposure effect in this context should be difficult: immigration and deportation saturated the news media environment. Given this saturation, the real-world context should work against any exposure effect since Trump has been so closely tethered to immigration generally. We acknowledge that this treatment cannot distinguish Trump's image from his immigration policy preferences (since participants are exposed to both). While this is a limitation, it is important to stress that during the election cycle and during the study period, simultaneous media references to immigration policy and Donald Trump were ubiquitous. Further, Trump's constant use of Twitter to espouse these positions explicitly connected his image to these positions.

Following exposure, research participants were asked a series of questions about deportation and immigration policy preferences. In the control condition, participants were not exposed to images about Trump or information about his



policy positions but were instead directly asked about deportation and immigration policy. The dependent measures used in this study center on questions asked about deportation. Specifically, we asked, “Regardless of your own immigration or citizenship status, how much, if at all, do you worry that you personally could be deported?” (5 = *a great deal*, 4 = *a lot*, 3 = *a moderate amount*, 2 = *a little*, 1 = *not at all*).

Following this, respondents were asked, “How much, if at all, do you worry that a family member could be deported?” and “How much, if at all, do you worry that a close friend could be deported?” These two questions had the same response options as the personal deportation question. Given our coding, high scores on any item were taken to imply greater anxiety about deportation. Further, given the wording of the items, our anxiety assessment measures fall more closely on the “personal” side of the “personal/group” discrepancy (Taylor et al., 1990), since the items asked respondents to anchor on themselves or on individuals they ostensibly would know well (family or friends).

### Results and Discussion

The total number of research participants exposed to the Trump cue was  $n = 343$ , and the number of those not receiving exposure was  $n = 393$ . In the supplemental material, we summarize the characteristics of the sample for several variables. To assess the effect of Trump exposure on deportation anxiety, we estimated OLS models treating the three deportation items as the dependent measures. An indicator variable was included in the model recording whether the subject received the Trump cue (1) or was not exposed to the cue (0). We found consistent evidence for a significant Trump exposure effect on reported anxiety. To visualize the exposure effect, Figure 1 plots the regression predictions from a model  $A = \beta_0 + \beta T + \epsilon$ , where  $A$  is reported anxiety,  $T$  is the Trump exposure indicator, and  $\epsilon$  is stochastic error. Standard errors were bootstrapped (using 1,000 replicates).

Figure 1 compares the average predicted deportation anxiety levels of individuals who were exposed to Trump’s immigration policies

(indicated by black triangles) to those of individuals who were not (indicated by grey circles) in the RDS sample. The lines extending from these points denote the 95% confidence intervals associated with the fitted (predicted) values. For each deportation item, there was a significant exposure effect; the predicted anxiety levels of individuals exposed to Trump’s immigration policies were higher compared to those of individuals who were not exposed, and their confidence intervals did not overlap. The difference in predicted anxiety levels between the treatment conditions was equivalent to the average treatment effect of Trump exposure (i.e.,  $\beta T$ ).

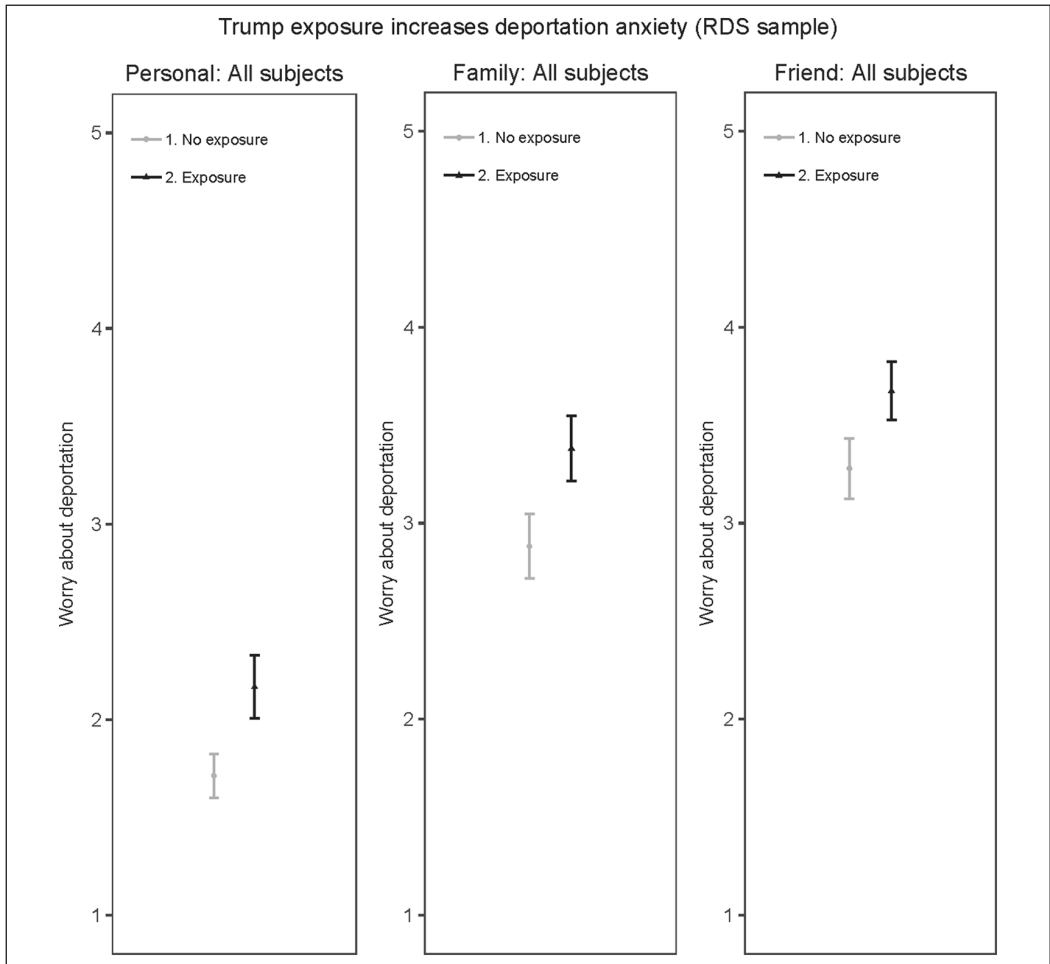
With respect to feelings of personal deportation anxiety, the estimated exposure effect was  $\hat{\beta} = 0.46$  ( $SE = 0.10$ ,  $p < .001$ ); for anxiety about family member deportation, the exposure effect was  $\hat{\beta} = 0.50$  ( $SE = 0.12$ ,  $p < .001$ ); and for anxiety about friend deportation, the exposure effect was  $\hat{\beta} = 0.40$  ( $SE = 0.11$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Further, note the differences in predicted anxiety across the three items. For the personal deportation item, research participants on average exhibited lower rates of anxiety compared to anxiety about family or friend deportation, although we observed a significant “bump” in anxiety associated with exposure, a bump equivalent to the estimated  $\beta T$  reported before.

That anxiety levels were higher for family or friend deportation is not surprising. A Latina/o may believe he or she is personally shielded from deportation but may have many more family members or friends at risk. Indeed, the presence of mixed-status households would imply that anxiety about family member deportation may be quite high. Not only is it high, but exposure to the Trump cue induces heightened anxiety.

In general, Study 1 provides evidence for the exposure hypothesis (H1); however, given the unique nature of the timing of the RDS study, we assessed if the treatment effect would be reproducible using a different sampling design.

### Study 2

Study 2 is identical in every way to Study 1 with one major exception: participant recruitment. The



**Figure 1.** Exposure effect estimates from RDS.

RDS was dependent upon respondent-sharing. We were concerned about any effects being driven by unique features of this sample. Recognizing this, on February 8, 2017, we began fielding the study using a sample purchased from the Tap Research panel via partnership with Qualtrics.

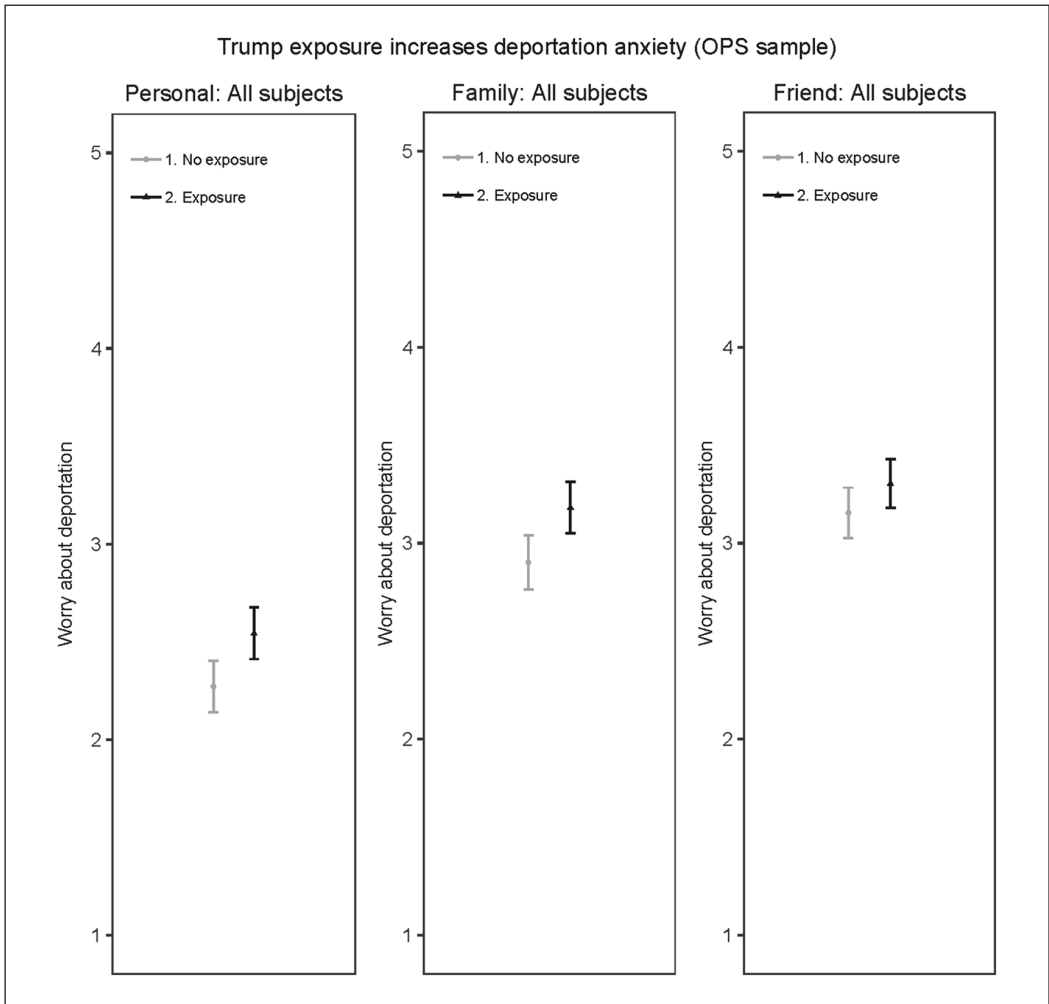
### Method

*Participants.* The online panel survey (hereafter, OPS) recruited research participants from an online opt-in panel based on quotas. To increase variance in language ability, we restricted the OPS

to have no more than 30% of participants who indicated they were comfortable with only English. To increase regional variability, we imposed a 50% cap on California participants for the first 1,000 participants. For the second set of 1,000 participants, we lowered this cap to 30%. In the OPS study, there were 1,040 eligible Latina/o research participants, of which 528 were assigned to the treatment condition and 512 were assigned to the control condition.

*Procedure.* Research participants in Study 2 followed the same protocol as participants in Study





**Figure 2.** Exposure effect estimates from Study 2.

1. The supplemental material gives additional details about the research participants in Study 2.

### Results and Discussion

As in Study 1, we estimated the treatment effect and plot  $\hat{A}$  and the 95% confidence intervals are shown in Figure 2. Three points are clear. First, the OPS—which is based on an entirely different sampling mechanism—largely reproduced the exposure effects found in Study 1. Second, the effect size is smaller in the OPS compared to the RDS. And third, baseline levels of personal

anxiety in the OPS were, on average, significantly higher than in the RDS ( $\Delta\bar{x} = .49$ ;  $t = 6.85$ ). This was likely due to the fact that we have more Spanish/bilingual takers in the OPS (a result we turn to in the next section).

With respect to the Trump cue effects, the estimated exposure effect was  $\hat{\beta} = 0.27$  ( $SE = 0.09$ ,  $p < .001$ ) for personal anxiety and  $\hat{\beta} = 0.28$  ( $SE = 0.10$ ,  $p < .001$ ) for family anxiety. The treatment effect for the anxiety about friend deportation item was not strong, having an estimated effect of  $\hat{\beta} = 0.15$  ( $SE = 0.09$ ,  $p = .09$ ). Thus, while the estimated effects were slightly

smaller in the OPS, the Trump effect was reproduced and persisted sharply for two items (personal, family) and weakly for the third (friend).

In general, Study 2 reproduced the exposure effects reported in Study 1. Given the saturation of media coverage of the immigration issue and its connection to Trump during the study period, finding *any* exposure effect would be difficult in that research participants not exposed to the experimental treatment *were* exposed to similar content via media coverage. That Trump exposure induced a “bump” in anxiety has important implications. Given the constant connection of Trump’s image to threatening policies, it suggests Latina/os, or many of them, have been subjected, on a near daily basis, to a constant source of existential threat.

One issue not yet addressed related to the role of stigmatized attributes. We next considered how (or if) Latina/o attributes moderated any exposure effects.

### Study 3

In Study 3, to assess the role of attributes and identity strength on deportation anxiety, we pooled the data from Studies 1 and 2. While Studies 1 and 2 both have relatively large numbers of research participants assigned to the experimental conditions, in order to be able to assess the relationship of attributes on outcomes we require large numbers of citizens (second and third-plus generation), naturalized citizens, as well as noncitizens. In addition, to assess language effects, we need sufficient numbers of English, Spanish, and bilingual survey takers. Further, pooling increases the cell sizes for each level of the skin color assessment task, for the English language proficiency (ELP) measure, and for the identity strength measure (all discussed in what follows).

### Method

*Participants.* For the pooled analysis, the total  $n$  in the models reported in what follows is 1,733 for the personal deportation item (851 were exposed

to the Trump cue and 882 received no informational cue); 1,734 for the family deportation item (851 received cue and 883 received no cue); and 1,732 for the friend deportation item (851 received cue and 881 received no cue).<sup>2</sup>

*Procedure.* For the pooled analysis, theoretical interest was the role of stigmatized attributes and identity strength. In both the RDS and OPS samples, we asked several questions to assess these variables. Each question was asked in the same relative position in the survey flow.

Specifically, respondents were asked questions about immigration policy (not analyzed here) and then asked to provide a self-assessment of their phenotype and language skill. Skin color assessment was done using the Massey and Martin (2003) New Immigrant Survey (NIS) Skin Color Scale. In our study, we embedded the NIS scale (which is shown in the supplemental material) in the survey and asked respondents to indicate the number that best corresponded to their assessed phenotype. Scale scores ranged from 1 (lightest) to 10 (darkest). The scale was recoded to range from .1 to .10. Mean placement on this scale for the pooled data was 0.34 ( $SD = 0.14$ ).<sup>3</sup>

ELP was assessed using three items drawn from the Marín and Gamba Bidimensional Acculturation Scale (BAS) for Hispanics (Marín & Gamba, 1996). The supplemental material gives the items used. The scale, which ranged from 1 to 5, was scored such that higher scores reflected *lower* English proficiency ( $\alpha = .91$ ). The scale was recoded to range from .2 to 1. Mean placement on this scale was 0.28 ( $SD = 0.14$ ).<sup>4</sup>

In addition to measuring phenotype and ELP, we also determined the subject’s immigration and citizenship status. From these questions, we could determine the subject’s generational status (first if foreign born; second if native born but at least one parent was foreign born; and third-plus if native born with native-born parents). In the pooled data, 191 respondents were first-generation noncitizens (11.0%), 322 were first-generation naturalized citizens (19.2%), 842 were second-generation citizens (48.6%), and 368 were third-plus generation (21.2%). With respect to

language, 768 (44.3%) took the study in English, 190 (11.0%) took the study in Spanish, and 776 (44.8%) indicated they were bilingual, of which 440 were assigned to English language and 336 were assigned to Spanish language.

Finally, to assess ingroup identity strength, we asked respondents the following question (English version): “To what degree is being Hispanic or Latino an important part of how you see yourself?” (1 = *not at all important*, 2 = *slightly important*, 3 = *moderately important*, 4 = *very important*, 5 = *extremely important*), with higher scores indicating higher identity strength. This scale was recoded to range from 0 to 1. Mean placement on this scale was 0.82 ( $SD = 0.23$ ). The identity strength item was asked near the start of the survey flow and so it is unaffected by experimental condition. Given mean identity strength, it is obvious that Latina/o respondents report high ingroup identity.

### Results and Discussion

To account for attributes, we regressed the anxiety measures ( $A$ ) on the Trump treatment indicator ( $T$ ), as well as four theoretically relevant attribute measures and identity strength. The first is a factor-level variable recording the language the subject chose (or was assigned) to take the study in: English, bilingual assigned to English, bilingual assigned to Spanish, and Spanish. A factor-level variable recording immigration status (native-born third-plus generation, native-born second generation, naturalized citizen, noncitizen) was also included in the specification. Lastly, phenotype self-assessment, the ELP scale, and the identity strength item were included in the models.

Our expectation was that for research participants having attributes most likely to be stigmatized in the current context—darker skinned, low English proficiency, noncitizen—reports of deportation anxiety would be highest compared to Latina/o participants less proximal to the “canonical immigrant.” We also were interested in the extent to which these attributes as well as the identity strength measure moderated the Trump exposure effect. This expectation is the

basis of H2a and H3a. In addition to these attribute measures, we included a dummy variable indicating survey mode (1 = OPS, 0 = RDS).

Regression results are reported in Table 1. To arrive at this model, we first tested for any Attribute  $\times$  Exposure Cue interactions. Evidence for a significant interaction would suggest attribute measures moderate Trump exposure. In fact, we found *no* strong evidence that any of the indicators produced a significant interaction estimate. This suggests no support for H2a and H3a. In addition, we also assessed the possibility the attribute measures may interact with survey mode. We found evidence that the indicator variables for citizen/immigrant status were significantly different between the two samples for the personal anxiety item only, and so these interactions are reported in Table 1. Lastly, we found no evidence of any significant Attribute  $\times$  Attribute interactions or any Attributes  $\times$  Identity interactions across any of the dependent measures.

With respect to the Trump exposure effect, the regression estimates reported in Table 1 demonstrate that even after accounting for Latina/o attribute measures, the exposure effect persists for each of the deportation items, thus giving support for H1. Turning attention to the attribute measures, we first consider language-of-survey differences and immigrant/citizen differences in reported anxiety over the three dependent measures.

To visualize the effect sizes, consider Figure 3. The top three panels in the figure give the fitted values ( $\hat{A}$ ) for the language-of-survey factor. The four plot points correspond, in order, to respondents who opted to take the survey in English; bilingual respondents who were randomized into English, “Bil. (E)”; bilinguals randomized into Spanish, “Bil. (S)”; and respondents who took the study in Spanish. The darker line corresponds to predictions from the Trump exposure condition and the gray line corresponds to the nonexposure condition.

Two points are clear. First, there is a stark difference in anxiety levels associated with language. For those indicating they were most comfortable taking the survey in Spanish, reported anxiety is

**Table 1.** Trump exposure, Latina/o attributes, and anxiety.

Variable	Personal	Family	Friend
<b>Trump cue</b>			
Exposure cue	0.31 (0.06)	0.30 (0.07)	0.21 (0.07)
Survey mode	0.00 (0.13)	-0.28 (0.08)	-0.45 (0.07)
<b>Language use</b>			
Spanish	0.72 (0.14)	0.61 (0.14)	0.61 (0.13)
Bilingual (Spn.)	0.49 (0.10)	0.51 (0.10)	0.51 (0.10)
Bilingual (Eng.)	0.05 (0.08)	0.26 (0.10)	0.33 (0.09)
<b>Immigration status</b>			
Noncitizen	1.44 (0.20)	0.84 (0.15)	0.35 (0.14)
Naturalized	0.18 (0.15)	0.67 (0.12)	0.30 (0.11)
Second gen.	-0.01 (0.11)	0.75 (0.09)	0.29 (0.09)
Noncit.xOPS	-0.42 (0.25)	-	-
Nat.xOPS	0.65 (0.20)	-	-
Second Gen.xOPS	0.42 (0.15)	-	-
<b>Phenotype, ELP, and identity</b>			
Skin color	1.46 (0.24)	1.08 (0.26)	0.94 (0.25)
ELP scale	0.94 (0.27)	0.70 (0.27)	0.25 (0.26)
Latina/o identity	0.69 (0.15)	1.33 (0.17)	1.33 (0.18)
Constant	0.18 (0.16)	0.61 (0.17)	1.52 (0.18)
	$R^2 = .24$	$R^2 = .15$	$R^2 = .11$
	$n = 1,733$	$n = 1,734$	$n = 1,732$

*Note.* Entries are OLS estimates with bootstrapped standard errors (1,000 replicates). Data are pooled through RDS and OPS surveys. Spn. = Spanish; Eng. = English; gen. = generation; Noncit. = noncitizen; Nat. = naturalized.

significantly higher compared to respondents taking the survey in English. We do not assert that language of survey “caused” these anxiety differences—Spanish-language-dominant individuals may also vary on other attributes, notably citizenship status; however, the direction of the language result was consistent with expectations. In a context where language is stigmatized and is an attribute difficult to conceal, perceptions of threat were significantly higher compared to those of individuals who felt comfortable in taking the survey in English.

However, consider the bilingual respondents for whom language of survey was randomized. The results displayed in Figure 3 suggest exposure to Spanish language compared to English is associated with higher reported anxiety on all three dependent measures. In short, this is suggestive of the “linguistic shift” argument discussed earlier. In Study 4, we explore this result in more detail.

As noted, language and immigration/citizenship status were obviously interrelated: Latina/o noncitizen immigrants were far more likely to speak Spanish regularly than third-plus generational Latina/os. To assess the attribute of immigration status, consider the bottom panel of Figure 3. This plot gives the fitted values ( $\hat{A}$ ) from the regression models for: third-plus generation citizens (“3rd+ gen.”); second-generation citizens (“2nd gen.”); naturalized citizens (“Nat. cit.”); and noncitizens (“Noncit.”). With respect to personal deportation anxiety, a clear monotonic pattern was found. Third-plus generation citizens elicited the lowest levels of anxiety while immigrants exhibited extremely high levels of anxiety. In between, second-generation Latina/os displayed significantly higher anxiety levels compared to third-plus generation Latina/os, and naturalized citizens indicated even greater rates of personal deportation anxiety. That we found

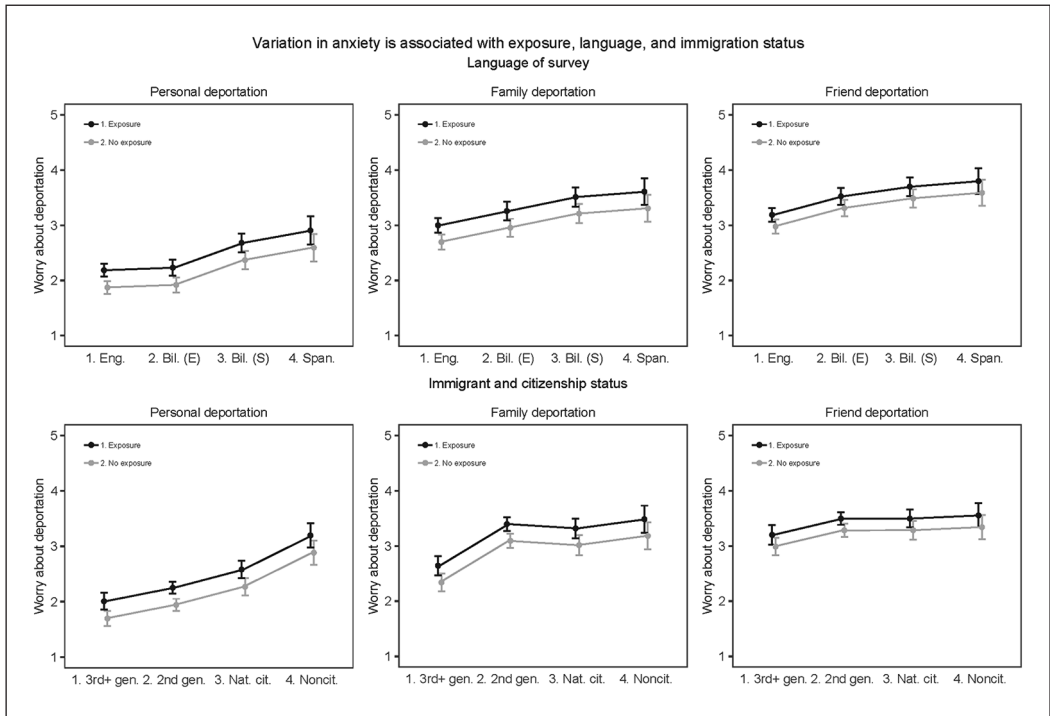


Figure 3. Language use and anxiety about deportation.

Latina/o citizens reported high levels of personal deportation anxiety is an issue we return to later.

With respect to family and friend deportation anxiety, the fitted  $\hat{A}$  for these items is shown in the bottom middle and right panels of Figure 3. The monotonic pattern found for personal anxiety did not hold for these measures. In general, second-generation, naturalized, and noncitizen Latina/os exhibited similarly high levels of anxiety about family member and friend deportation. Third-plus generation Latina/os exhibited far lower rates of family member deportation anxiety and slightly lower rates of friend deportation anxiety (compared to first- or second-generation Latina/os). Again, we think the close proximity of second-generation Latina/os to first-generation friends or family members explains this result. This result is similar to the generational effects reported by (Jones et al., 2019) with respect to reports of discrimination.

Turning attention to the remaining two attribute measures, assessed phenotype and English proficiency, the results reported in Table 1 suggest both attributes are related to deportation anxiety, with assessed phenotype having a much stronger relationship across all of the deportation measures compared to the English proficiency measures.<sup>5</sup> The marginal effect for the phenotype measure ranges from  $\hat{\beta} = 0.94$  (0.25) for the friend deportation item to  $\hat{\beta} = 1.46$  (0.24) for the personal deportation item. Darker skinned Latina/o respondents reported significantly higher rates of anxiety compared to lighter skinned Latina/os, a result consistent with H2b. With respect to ELP, the relationship to anxiety was in the predicted direction—lower English proficiency was associated with higher reports of anxiety—but the effect size was not large. The marginal effect of ELP on personal deportation anxiety was  $\hat{\beta} = 0.94$  (0.27), and for the family deportation item was  $\hat{\beta} = 0.70$

(0.27). ELP was not significantly related to reported anxiety about friend deportation.

Lastly, ingroup identity strength seemed to be strongly predictive of each form of deportation anxiety, with the strongest relationship found for the family and friend items. The marginal effects were  $\hat{\beta} = 0.69$  (0.15),  $\hat{\beta} = 1.33$  (0.17), and  $\hat{\beta} = 1.33$  (0.18) for the personal, family, and friend deportation items. These results imply that in a context of threat that implicates Latina/os writ large, strong ingroup identifiers were on average more likely to report higher rates of deportation anxiety, a result consistent with H3b. In such an environment, it suggests strong identity may have made the threat context more vivid.

However, it is worth offering a fuller discussion of the identity strength result in light of our earlier discussion in terms of the Latino threat narrative and cultural inertia theory. Chavez's (2013) Latino threat narrative concept implies that Latinos as a group have been tethered to negative stereotypes associated with the immigration narrative, and that invariant to generational location or immigration status, Latina/os generally will be susceptible to heightened anxiety in the face of threat. In contrast, cultural inertia theory (Zárate et al., 2012) suggests that Latina/os who are less assimilated and possibly more likely to identify with the ingroup should feel threat to a greater extent than "assimilated" Latina/os. Empirically, our reading of cultural inertia theory would suggest that Latina/os who were early generation, Spanish-language dominant would report anxiety increases at rates substantially higher than later generation, English-language dominant Latinos.

Two points are worth noting. First, it is clear that most Latina/os reported extremely high ingroup identity strength. With respect to generational status, 88% of first-generation noncitizens reported identity strength as being "very" or "extremely" important; for first-generation naturalized citizens, 89% reported similar levels of identity strength. For second- and third-generation members, these estimates were 83% and 79%, respectively. With respect to language, 88% of survey respondents who chose to take the study in Spanish reported high levels of ingroup

identity. Yet, 79% of those who chose to take the study in English reported high levels of ingroup identity. With respect to noncitizen, Spanish speakers, 86% reported high levels of ingroup identity; however, reported identity strength is equally high for noncitizen, English speakers (84%). In other words, across the assimilation markers of generational status and language use, *all* Latina/os reported high levels of ingroup identity.

Second, while we offer evidence that Latina/o attributes are related to reported anxiety, there was *no* strong evidence that *only* attributes associated with the assimilation (language and immigration status) heightened anxiety. Further, we demonstrated that assessed phenotype, an attribute having no correlation with language use or immigration status, had a strong relationship to reported anxiety. In short, we think our results are inconsistent with predictions of cultural inertia theory, and more closely connected to Chavez's (2013) Latino threat narrative.

## Study 4

In Study 4, as part of the OPS and RDS designs, we incorporated an additional experimental condition to assess the role of language in deportation anxiety. Of interest was whether or not exposure to Spanish, a language that has become negatively tethered to the immigration debate, was sufficient to trigger higher reports of anxiety compared to those of individuals not exposed to Spanish.

### Method

*Participants.* To address this question, we conducted an experiment on Latina/os who indicated they were bilingual ( $n = 775$ ). Specifically, if a Latina/o said she/he was comfortable using English or Spanish, the respondent was randomly presented with the survey in Spanish or in English. To do this, the first question respondents were exposed to when they took the study was, "When it comes to reading, which language are you most comfortable using?" On the same screen and

**Table 2.** Trump exposure, language exposure, and anxiety.

Variable	Balance-adjusted estimates					
	Personal*	Family*	Friend*	Personal	Family	Friend
Exposure cue	0.21 (0.15)	0.30 (0.16)	0.17 (0.15)	0.31 (0.11)	0.36 (0.12)	0.23 (0.10)
Spanish exposure	0.44 (0.16)	0.26 (0.17)	0.18 (0.15)	0.54 (0.11)	0.32 (0.12)	0.23 (0.10)
Cue $\hat{\beta}$ Exposure	0.21 (0.23)	0.11 (0.23)	0.12 (0.21)			
Constant	2.06 (0.10)	3.00 (0.11)	3.31 (0.10)	2.02 (0.09)	2.97 (0.10)	3.28 (0.09)
	$R^2 = .04$	$R^2 = .02$	$R^2 = .01$	$R^2 = .04$	$R^2 = .02$	$R^2 = .01$
	$n = 775$	$n = 776$	$n = 776$	$n = 775$	$n = 776$	$n = 776$
Unadjusted estimates						
Exposure cue	0.17 (0.15)	0.25 (0.15)	0.16 (0.14)	0.28 (0.11)	0.32 (0.11)	0.21 (0.10)
Spanish exposure	0.54 (0.16)	0.32 (0.16)	0.20 (0.14)	0.66 (0.11)	0.40 (0.11)	0.27 (0.10)
Cue $\times$ Exposure	0.25 (0.22)	0.16 (0.23)	0.13 (0.21)			
Constant	1.97 (0.10)	2.94 (0.10)	3.28 (0.09)	1.91 (0.09)	2.90 (0.09)	3.26 (0.08)
	$R^2 = .05$	$R^2 = .02$	$R^2 = .01$	$R^2 = .05$	$R^2 = .02$	$R^2 = .01$
	$n = 775$	$n = 776$	$n = 776$	$n = 775$	$n = 776$	$n = 776$

*Note.* Entries are OLS estimates with weights derived from entropy balancing (top half) and estimates based on unadjusted data (bottom half). Models denoted with asterisk include a Trump Cue  $\times$  Language interaction. Data are pooled through RDS and OPS for the Trump exposure survey experiment.

immediately proceeding this, we included the Spanish translation, which is given in the supplemental material. (Response options were 1 = *English*, 2 = *Spanish*, 3 = *I am comfortable using either English or Spanish*.) Respondents who chose the third option were then randomly assigned into English- or Spanish-language conditions.

*Procedure.* Unfortunately, we cannot determine if a respondent is truly bilingual or simply claiming to be bilingual.<sup>6</sup> To address the problem of potential non-compliance with the treatment (i.e., actually taking the study in Spanish), we preprocessed the data using an entropy balancing (EB) algorithm (Hainmueller, 2012; see Jones et al., 2019, for an application of this method). The supplemental material provides information about the EB procedure.

### Results and Discussion

We assessed the relationship between language assignment as well as Trump exposure on deportation anxiety for bilinguals by estimating the regression model  $A = \beta_0 + \beta T + \beta L + \beta T \times L + \epsilon$ ,

where  $T$  is the Trump cue exposure condition and  $L$  is the language exposure condition (1 = Spanish, 0 = English). In this model, the two treatments ( $T$  and  $L$ ) are interacted.<sup>7</sup>

Our expectation was that survey stimuli in Spanish language should evoke greater levels of anxiety compared to the English-language version. Our expectation for Trump exposure was the same as in Studies 1 and 2. The interaction was included to assess whether anxiety reports would multiplicatively increase with Trump exposure and Spanish-language exposure. This model is reported in the first three columns of the top half of Table 2.

Examining the  $T \times L$  interaction, there was no evidence the two treatments produced a significant interaction, implying they had independent effects on reported anxiety. Lacking evidence for this interaction, we report the treatment effects in the models in the last three columns of the top half of Table 2. The results in Table 2 show that both the Trump exposure treatment and the language treatment are associated with an increase in reported anxiety.



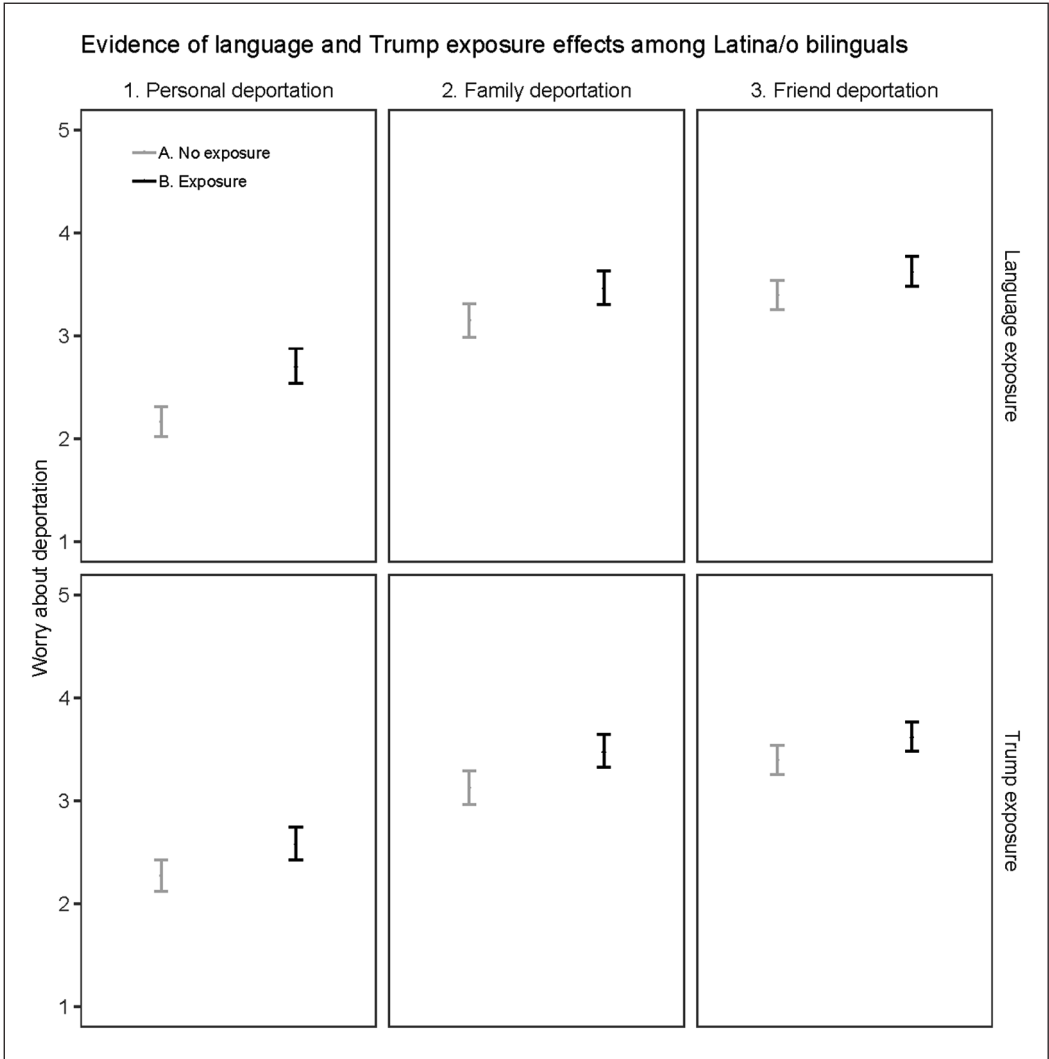


Figure 4. Language and Trump treatment effects among bilinguals.

For personal anxiety, the regression estimate for the language treatment was actually larger than the Trump exposure treatment, suggesting that while both treatments had an effect, Spanish language seemed sufficient to induce an anxiety increase, independent of Trump exposure. The effect sizes for the two treatments for the other anxiety items were similar. Figure 4 plots  $\hat{A}$  for

each treatment and for each item. The top panel gives the fitted values for the language exposure treatment; the bottom panel for the Trump exposure condition.

The Spanish-language effect was consistent with predictions made from the linguistic-frame-shifting literature and consistent with H4. In context, Spanish language itself, an attribute that

has become stigmatized in the immigration debate, seemed to heighten anxiety. Among comparable bilingual Latina/o respondents, exposure to the Spanish-language condition induced a significant increase in reported anxiety. It is also useful to note that the Spanish-language effect, after adjusting the data using EB, was actually *weaker* than the estimated effect from the unadjusted data.

To see this, consider the bottom half of Table 2, where the regression estimates are given using the unadjusted (and imbalanced) data. Comparing regression estimates for the Spanish-language treatment, the unadjusted data returned a much larger point estimate, a result due to confounders associated with noncompliance. That the EB-adjusted estimates produced a smaller but significant effect gave us confidence that we demonstrated evidence of linguistic frame-shifting.

Given this result, coupled with results reported in Study 3, it is natural to consider the role of identity strength. In Study 3, we demonstrated that ingroup identity was strongly related to feelings of anxiety. Here, we show that language itself induces an anxiety boost. To what extent can we say something about language is fostering feelings of increased group identity? The work of Schmitt et al. (2003) referenced earlier is useful. This work showed that under contexts of threat, individuals may engage in “identity strengthening.” If, as we theorized, Spanish language, an attribute that has been negatively connected to the immigration issue, increased anxiety about deportation, then to what extent does language foster increased ingroup identity?

Our data provide an assessment of how ingroup identity strength is related to language randomization among bilinguals. To assess this, we regressed our measure of ingroup identity strength on a language randomization indicator (1 = Spanish, 0 = English) using weights created by the EB procedure. The results are suggestive that language was weakly associated with an increase in reported identity.

The regression estimate for the language exposure treatment was  $\hat{\beta} = 0.10$  ( $SE = 0.06$ ,  $p = .09$ ), implying mean identity strength was

higher in the Spanish-language condition compared to the English language one. Given nearly all Latina/o respondents reported high rates of ingroup identity, the measure was at its ceiling. Given that our design was implemented in the early months of the Trump presidency, if Latina/os were engaging in identity strengthening, our measure may have picked up an already existing identity boost. Thus, demonstrating a moderate relationship between survey language exposure and identity strength is probably a lower bound estimate of how Latina/os engage in identity strengthening under contexts of threat.

## General Discussion

This paper had three main points. First, we found evidence for a significant Trump exposure effect on Latina/o anxiety. Second, we showed that Latina/o attributes and identity strength were strongly related to reported anxiety. And third, we demonstrated that among comparable bilinguals, exposure to Spanish language seemed sufficient to boost reports of deportation anxiety.

With respect to the first point, in the turbulent context of the first months of the Trump presidency, anxiety among Latina/os was high due to a context of heightened immigration enforcement and harsh anti-immigrant rhetoric. We demonstrated that for Latina/os exposed to a Trump immigration cue, this exposure induced a significant increase in reported anxiety about deportation. This result was reproducible with two independent and methodologically distinct samples and held even after controlling for stigmatized attributes.

Over the course of the Trump presidency, Latina/os have been exposed, repeatedly, to Trump’s immigration agenda. This exposure seemed to induce an anxiety increase. And while the effect size for the Trump exposure cue was (generally) smaller than the effects of the Latina/o attribute measures, it is useful to speculate about what “smaller” means in the context of the Trump presidency. A “dose” of Trump in the context of our study implies exposure to the Trump cue.

In reality, exposure to the “Trump cue” likely occurred frequently, given the prevalence and saliency of the immigration issue. If exposure induced anxiety, and exposure occurred with high frequency, then Latina/os, or many of them, likely endured tremendous stress in a context inducing existential threat. In short, we think the experimental results have clear real-world implications. Indeed, work cited earlier shows that deleterious mental and physical health effects have emerged over the Trump presidency for Latina/os (cf. Nichols et al., 2018; see also Araújo & Borrell, 2006). In this light, our results show that these negative outcomes may have begun immediately in his presidency.

With respect to the second contribution—demonstrating the connection of Latina/o attributes to reports of anxiety—several points emerged. One disturbing result was demonstrating that anxiety levels, even for personal deportation, were high among *U.S. citizens*, particularly second-generation Latinos and naturalized citizens. That individuals ostensibly shielded from being deported exhibited anxiety is disconcerting, but speaks to the real-world context. As ICE raids began to increase during the early part of the Trump presidency, it was widely reported that *citizens* as well as unauthorized migrants were being detained (Woodruff, 2017).

In historical context, forced removal of U.S. citizens of Mexican origin has precedent. Both in the Depression era of the 1930s and during the 1954 Operation Wetback, several thousands of U.S. citizens of Mexican origin were forcibly removed (cf. Molina, 2014). That Donald Trump praised (without explicitly naming) Operation Wetback (Defrancesco Soto, 2015) underscores this palpable existential threat. Moreover, given the prevalence of mixed-status households, some citizen respondents in our study likely reside with at-risk family members. Thus, expression of personal anxiety is a reflection of generalized anxiety: if a family member goes, they too may have to go.

Also, Latina/os, invariant to immigration status, may possess stigmatized attributes such as ELP or darker phenotypes. Given the connection

between such attributes, Hispanic identity, and unauthorized immigration, it may not matter that one is ostensibly “protected” from harsh policies (as in the case of citizens); simply possessing the stigmatized attributes induces stress and anxiety and from that, the negative psychological outcomes of anxiety emerge.

With respect to the third contribution—finding evidence of linguistic frame-shifting—some points are worth elaborating. Our results suggested that among comparable bilingual Latina/os, exposure to language heightened reported anxiety. As suggestive by our analysis, it may be the case that language itself made one more aware of one’s Latina/o identity. In a political context where Latina/o identity has been negatively associated with immigration, and in a context where the president has used language to castigate Latina/os, language itself may have raised both awareness of identity and the threat associated with it. In turn, this induced higher reports of anxiety than was the case for comparable bilinguals *not* exposed to the threatening cue. Future work is needed to further assess this connection to Latina/o identity.

## Conclusion

The election of Donald Trump resulted in a confluence of two streams: the mixing of overt, nativist, anti-immigrant rhetoric with policies designed to animate this rhetoric and bring it to fruition. A climate of threat emerged in the Trump presidency, threat that when mapped onto Trump’s rhetoric induced heightened anxiety for Latina/os in the US. We found that deportation anxiety among Latina/os was high overall and increased with immigration status, second-generation status, phenotype, ELP attributes, and identity strength. In addition, the study provided evidence that exposure to threatening cues induced an increase in the anxiety of Latina/os above baseline anxiety levels. Exposure to information about Trump’s immigration policy significantly increased anxiety levels for citizens and noncitizens, for English-only, bilingual, and Spanish-only speakers, and for all skin colors.

In larger context, the Trump immigration era marks another (and major) step in the direction of what Sampaio (2015) calls “masculine protection” immigration policies. Such policies are exclusively punitive, restrictionist, and nativist resulting in the marginalization of the group most directly affected by them: Latina/os. Exposure to such constant stressors suggests that Latina/os have endured and are continuing to endure a context conducive to anxiety and fear. Given the connection of Latina/os to the immigration issue, policies of the Trump presidency have effects not isolated to immigrants, but instead radiate outward, reaching deeply into Latina/o communities.

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### Supplemental material

Supplemental material for this article is available online.

### Notes

1. This study has University of California, Davis IRB approval (978953-1 and 1038667-1) and was preregistered with the Open Science Framework.
2. Sample size differences are due to a small amount of missing data.
3. Mean scores and frequencies for all variables were identical across the three dependent measures.
4. The NIS Skin Color Scale and the ELP scale were recoded in this way so the scale would fall within the unit interval, thus making the regression coefficients reported in what follows comparable to the treatment indicator, since these variables are on a common scale. For the NIS scale, rescaling was done by dividing the original scale by 10 (the maximum scale value), and for the ELP scale, rescaling was done by dividing through by 5 (the maximum scale value). Since rescaling is done by dividing through by a constant, the rescaled variables are isomorphic to the original scale, but the

regression coefficients are now aliased to a common scale.

5. The sizes of the regression estimates are comparable in magnitude because the associated explanatory variables were rescaled to fall in the unit interval.
6. In most laboratory-based studies of linguistic frame-shifting, research participants are first assessed and screened for bilingual proficiency (cf. Schwartz et al., 2014). This kind of assessment is impossible in our design and so we were concerned about noncompliance among bilinguals who were exposed to the Spanish-language condition. Noncompliance would occur if the subject indicated bilingual skill but was unable to take the survey in the assigned language. In our studies, some bilinguals assigned to Spanish dropped out once they became aware the survey would be in Spanish. This noncompliance occurred immediately: nearly all noncompliers broke off after the first two Spanish-language items. Noncompliance poses a challenge. Suppose all third-plus generation Latinos dropped out of the Spanish-language condition but none dropped out of the English-language condition. The result would be a treatment group consisting of early generation Latina/os. Since this group, on average, reports higher anxiety levels, we could infer a significant language effect that was instead due to noncompliance.
7. Note that because the attribute measures are used in the balancing algorithm, we do not also include them in the regression model as this would “doubly adjust” the estimates (see supplemental material). The regression model is estimated by applying the EB weights.

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