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POLICE HARASSMENT AND LATINX MENTAL HEALTH: THE MODERATING
ROLE OF FAMILY SUPPORT AND NATIVITY

by

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A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School,
Marquette University,
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Science

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ABSTRACT
POLICE HARASSMENT AND LATINX MENTAL HEALTH: THE MODERATING
ROLE OF FAMILY SUPPORT AND NATIVITY

Veronica L. Heredia, B.A.

Marquette University, 2022

Relative to their population size, communities of color experience disproportionate occurrences of harassment (Wilson et. al., 2020). Reports on police killings from 2013 to 2018 display that Black individuals constituted 27.5% of those killed, despite making up only 13% of the population (Siegel, 2020). The U.S. Latinx population is similarly impacted, given reports that they also experience police targeting (Edwards et. al., 2019; Gaston et. al., 2021; Harris et. al., 2020; Zimmerman et. al., 2021). Empirical evidence has shown a positive association between police harassment exposure and depressive and posttraumatic stress symptoms in Latinx populations (Chin et. al., 2020; Del Toro et. al., 2019; Geller et. al., 2014; Tynes et. al., 2019). Previous research has found ascription to family support as a Latinx cultural value to mitigate depression symptoms and buffer negative outcomes of trauma exposure (Chavez-Korell et. al., 2014; Dixon De Silva et. al., 2020; Lorenzo-Blanco et. al., 2012; Perreira & Ornelas, 2013; Taylor et. al., 2022; Villareal et. al., 2019). With that said, nativity status may contribute to feelings of intragroup marginalization (Mata-Greve & Torres, 2019), which may influence ascription to family support. The present study sought to examine the association between police harassment and Latinx mental health, and whether nativity status and family support influence this relationship.

This study included 535 Latinx students recruited from a predominantly White, Midwestern university. Participants completed self-report questionnaire measures examining police harassment, family support, and depression and posttraumatic stress symptoms. The PROCESS macro was utilized to conduct moderation analyses. Statistically significant, positive relationships were found between police harassment and depression and trauma symptoms. Ascription to family support as a cultural value did not moderate the relationship between police harassment and depression symptoms, nor posttraumatic stress symptoms. Police harassment significantly predicted depression symptoms, but not posttraumatic stress symptoms. Mean family support for U.S.-born Latinx individuals was significantly lower than the mean for foreign-born Latinx individuals. Nativity did not moderate family support as a protect factor in the relationship between police harassment and depression symptoms, nor in the relationship between police harassment and posttraumatic stress symptoms.

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Police Harassment and Latinx Mental Health: The Moderating Role of Family Support and Nativity

Relative to their population size, communities of color experience disproportionate occurrences of police harassment (Wilson et. al., 2020). From 2013 to 2018, police killed 5,700 people within the United States; Black individuals constituted 27.5% of those killed, despite making up only 13% of the population (Siegel, 2020). The U.S. Latinx population is similarly impacted, given reports that they also experience police targeting (Harris et. al., 2020). Within the aforementioned time frame, police killed 1,142 Latinx men- a national rate which was intermediate to that of Black men and White men (Gaston et. al., 2021). This finding further corroborates reports that Latinx men are more likely to be killed by police than White men (Edwards et. al., 2019). Additionally, recent reports showcase the impact of police violence on the broader Latinx community. Reports on fatal police-resident encounters indicate odds of resident fatalities are significantly higher in majority Latinx than majority White communities (Zimmerman et. al., 2021). Given these reports, it is unsurprising that communities with an increased likelihood of police-related death experience heightened anxiety regarding the possibility of police-inflicted harassment (Bryant-Davis et. al., 2017; Graham et. al., 2020). Encouragingly, growing socio-political awareness of this form of systemic aggression has brought it to the forefront of academic discourse, leading to an influx in research examining the ramifications of police contact for Black communities. While focus on Black communities in this line of research is undoubtedly warranted, less academic attention has been extended to Latinx groups, despite being similarly impacted (Zimmerman et. al., 2021). This lack of academic extension has resulted in an inability to precisely gauge

how Latinx communities are impacted by police harassment. The current study sought to rectify and expand upon this gap within the empirical literature.

For the purposes of the current study, the implied definition of police harassment utilized by Eby and colleagues (2004) was applied: "...being singled-out...or treated differently [by police]...on the basis of race, sex, age, or other factors unrelated to the actual violation." (p. 820). Research has shown an association between police harassment and psychological consequences in Black individuals, including an increase in symptoms of depression and an increased risk of lifetime psychotic experiences (Bacak & Nowotny, 2020; Oh et. al., 2016). However, less is known regarding the role of police harassment on Latinx mental health. When Latinx individuals have been included in empirical research, exposure to police harassment has been associated with an increase in depressive and posttraumatic stress symptoms (Chin et. al., 2020; Del Toro et. al., 2019; Geller et. al., 2014; Tynes et. al., 2019). Given that few studies have investigated the psychological ramifications of police harassment, even less is known about potential protective factors for Latinx communities in this context.

Various studies have examined the capacity for ascription to traditional Latinx cultural values to buffer negative outcomes of trauma exposure and ameliorate depression symptoms. Commonly included in these studies is the cultural value of family support, which emphasizes strong ties to immediate and extended family members (Parsai et. al., 2009), as well as pride and obligation to the family (Santiago-Rivera, 2003). Given that Latinx populations broadly share similar cultural values and beliefs (Marin & Marin, 1991), there is reason to believe that the potential protective capabilities of family support could extend across various Latinx groups. Therefore, it is worth examining whether

ascription to family support is protective in the context of police harassment as well as the role of nativity status in modifying this relationship.

There is empirical evidence to suggest that nativity may contribute to feelings of intragroup marginalization, or feelings of rejection from one's own racial ethnic group (Mata-Greve & Torres, 2019). This is noteworthy, as it suggests that nativity may influence whether an individual identifies with or rejects Latinx cultural values. Experiences of police harassment has been associated with an increase in trauma symptoms (Bryant-Davis et. al., 2017; Chin et. al., 2020; Geller et. al., 2014; Tynes et. al., 2019). Given that family support has been theorized to buffer negative impacts of trauma exposure (Dixon De Silva et. al., 2020; Perreira & Ornelas, 2013), it stands to reason that it could mitigate the negative psychological outcomes of police harassment. The present study sought to examine the psychological ramifications of police harassment on Latinx mental health in relation to trauma and depressive symptoms. Additionally, we sought to explore the capacity for family support to buffer the negative ramifications of this form of harassment, and the potential implications of nativity on family support ascription.

Police Harassment and Psychological Distress

Black and Latinx individuals are disproportionately harassed and killed by police (Edwards et. al.; Gaston et. al., 2021; 2019; Harris et. al., 2020; Siegel, 2020; Wilson et. al., 2020; Zimmerman et. al., 2021). The perpetuation of this institutionalized violence has seen the rise of social activist groups denouncing police harassment- the most prolific being Black Lives Matter. The activism of the Black Lives Matter movement has contributed to increased awareness of excessive force by police, and its impact on Black

communities. This has been reflected in research, through a growing body of literature examining the psychological ramifications of police harassment on Black mental health. These studies have found police harassment experiences/exposure to be associated with an increase in depressive, trauma, and anxiety symptoms, as well as an increased risk for lifetime psychotic experiences (Bacak & Nowotny, 2020; Chin et. al., 2020; Del Toro, et. al., 2019; DeVlyder et. al., 2017; Geller et al., 2014; Oh et. al., 2016; Tynes et. al., 2019).

The Black Lives Matter movement has prompted solidarity across communities of color, and has emboldened them to decry their own experiences of police harassment. Throughout June of 2020, various protests condemning the death of George Floyd were held across Austin, Texas (Gamboa, 2020). These protests were also billed as demonstrations against the police shooting death of Mike Ramos, who was Afro-Latino (Gamboa, 2020). At weekly Black Lives Matter protests in Los Angeles County, protestors have the opportunity to speak the names of their loved ones lost to police killings (Arce et. al., 2020). On June 24th, 2020, many of the names spoken were of Latinx individuals (Arce et. al., 2020). Despite growing awareness of police harassment against Latinx communities, this awareness has sparsely been reflected in psychological research. Few studies have examined the psychological ramifications of police harassment for Latinx communities. Of the studies that do include Latinx individuals, findings have shown a significant positive association between police harassment and an increase in depressive and trauma symptoms (Alang et. al., 2021; Chin et. al., 2020; Del Toro et. al., 2019; Geller et. al., 2014; Jackson et. al., 2022; Tynes et. al., 2019).

Recent research has conceptualized police harassment as a stressor, and examined racial variation in its effects on mental health (Alang et. al., 2021). Using data

from the Survey of Health of Urban Residents in the United States, (n = 4, 389) researchers found that among those with negative experiences with police, Black and Latinx individuals had greater odds of depressed mood than White participants (Alang et. al., 2021). Similar results were found in a study conducted by Chin and colleagues (2020) who explored the relationship between dimensions of racial/ethnic discrimination and depression and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms in a sample of 500 Black and Latinx individuals (Chin et. al., 2020). Another study explored the effect of police contact on Black and Latino youth (n = 1, 401) (Del Toro et. al., 2019), specifically, whether police stops would predict an increase in depression and anxiety symptoms. Police stops were measured using an aggregate of items assessing self-report experiences of pedestrian stops by police, including whether or not the youth had been searched. The results found frequency of police stops to be predictive of increased depression and anxiety symptoms. Similar results were found by Geller and colleagues (2014), who surveyed young men (n = 1261, 30% Black, 35% Latinx) on their experiences of police encounters, and then assessed their subsequent mental health. Researchers asked the participants about their experiences with police, including whether they had been stopped, police conduct during the encounter, and whether they had been frisked or searched by police. Their results indicated that frequency of police stops was associated with higher levels of trauma, and more invasive stops were predictive of increases in trauma symptoms (Geller et. al., 2014).

Researchers have also investigated the psychological impact of simply witnessing police harassment for Black and Latino youth. A study conducted by Jackson and colleagues (2022) examined the mental well-being of urban-born youth (N = 1,488) after

witnessing police stops. In their study, officer intrusiveness was included as a feature of police stops, and measures of depression, anxiety, and happiness were included as youth mental health outcomes. Amongst this sample, the majority of youths who had witnessed police stops were Black (48.86%) and Latinx (26.41%). Results indicated that officer intrusiveness was associated with significant increases in depression and significant decreases in happiness (Jackson et. Al., 2022). Additionally, the negative association between officer intrusiveness and youth happiness was significantly stronger among Black and Latinx youth (Jackson et. Al., 2022). In a similar vein, Tynes and colleagues (2019) investigated how viewing race-related traumatic events online impacts Black and Latinx youth mental health (n = 302). Witnessing traumatic events online was assessed using self-report items in which youth indicated the frequency with which they had seen videos or images of individuals from their ethnic group being beaten, arrested, or detained by police. They found frequent experiences of witnessing traumatic events online to be associated with higher levels of depressive and PTSD symptoms (Tynes et. al., 2019). Given the clear body of empirical evidence displaying both the prevalence of police harassment perpetrated against the Latinx community, and its resulting psychological decrements, it is imperative to investigate potential protective factors for this population.

Family Support and Nativity Differences

Numerous scholars have examined the protective capabilities of family support against psychopathology development for Latinx communities. Various empirical studies have shown family support to be associated with lower levels of depressive symptomatology (Chavez-Korell et. al., 2014; Lorenzo-Blanco et. al., 2012; Taylor et. al.,

2022; Villareal et. al., 2019) as well as protective against trauma following high-stress life experiences (Dixon De Silva et. al., 2020; Perreira & Ornelas, 2013). Most recently, a study conducted by Taylor and colleagues (2022) examined the mental health of Latinx children in migrant farmworker families, and assessed whether family support alleviated the negative effects of acculturative stressors on mental health- mainly, depression and anxiety symptoms. Ultimately, the results of their study produced evidence to suggest that more perceived familial support was associated with lower depressive and anxiety symptomatology. Additionally, family support has displayed buffering capabilities against bicultural stress, and racial/ethnic discrimination for Latinx youth (Ayón et. al., 2010; Piña-Watson et. al., 2013). Most recently, family support has been shown to buffer the relationship between racial/ethnic discrimination and suicide-related thoughts and behaviors in Latinx undergraduates (Walker et. al., 2022).

When examining family support as a protective factor for Latinx individuals, it is important to take into account the potential influence of nativity status. As discussed previously, nativity can contribute to feelings of intragroup marginalization (Mata-Greve & Torres, 2019). As such, it stands to reason that nativity may impact ascription to family support as a cultural value, thereby affecting its protective capabilities. That is, foreign-born Latinx individuals who adhere to traditional cultural values, including family support, may be more apt to reap the buffering benefits than their U.S.-born counterparts. Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that nativity status may impact ascription to Latinx cultural values, in such a way that immigrants are more likely to identify with them than their U.S.-born counterparts (Polo & Lopez, 2009; Ramírez et. al., 2020; Vega & Gil, 1998). A study conducted by Polo & Lopez (2009) examined the relationship between

nativity and internalizing distress among Mexican American youth and found that nativity status uniquely predicted increased Mexican cultural orientation (Polo & Lopez, 2009). Overall, the empirical research would suggest that ascription of traditional Latinx cultural values may be related to a foreign-born nativity status.

Furthermore, past research has found nativity status to be a significant moderator of the relationship between family support and key health behaviors. For instance, nativity status diminished the relationship between family support and HIV testing; the researchers postulated that foreign-born emerging adults were more likely to adhere to cultural family values, thereby reducing the chances of seeking familial support for HIV testing (Ramírez-Ortiz, et. al., 2020). Additionally, low levels of family support was found to be associated with increased odds of marijuana use among immigrant and U.S.-born Cuban adolescents, but particularly for the foreign-born youth (Vega & Gil, 1998). These studies display the ways in which nativity can influence adherence to traditional cultural values in Latinx populations.

Given the protective qualities of family support, and nativity differences in ascriptions to cultural values, it is necessary to evaluate how these protective capabilities may differ between U.S-born and foreign-born Latinx individuals. To our knowledge, no study has examined family support as a protective factor for Latinx individuals in the context of police harassment. Additionally, to our knowledge no study has examined nativity status and cultural values in the context of police harassment.

Purpose of the Study

The current study examined the association between police harassment and Latinx mental health, and whether nativity status and family support influence this relationship.

The present study sought to answer the following questions: (1) Will police harassment be associated with higher levels of depression and PTSD symptoms among Latinx adults? (2) Does family support moderate the relationship between police harassment and psychological distress? (3) Is nativity associated with ascription to family support? And (4) Does nativity enhance/diminish family support as a protective factor? We formed the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1 states that police harassment will be positively associated with higher levels of psychological distress, namely depression and PTSD symptoms.

Hypothesis 2 states that ascription to family support as a cultural value will moderate the relationship between police harassment and psychological distress, namely depression and PTSD symptoms, in such a way that higher family support will weaken the relationship between police harassment and psychological distress.

Hypothesis 3 states that nativity will be related to family support, in such a way that foreign-born Latinx individuals will identify more family support than U.S. born Latinx individuals.

Hypothesis 4 states that nativity will moderate family support as a protective factor in such a way that for U.S. born individuals, nativity will diminish family support as a protective factor, and for foreign-born individuals, nativity will enhance family support as a protective factor.

Method

Participants

The objective and hypotheses of the current project were accomplished using secondary data analysis from a broader community assessment of Latinx mental health needs. Participants were 535 Latinx individuals who averaged 37.32 years of age ($SD = 15.27$, range = 18-87). The majority of our sample were women (65.8%, $n = 352$) and born outside of the United States (54.4%, $n = 291$). Regarding cultural background, most participants reported being of Mexican descent (i.e., Mexican, Mexican-American, Chicana/o; 74.7%, $n = 400$). Individuals identifying as Puerto Rican (16.1%, $n = 86$), Cuban (1.9%, $n = 10$), and Central and South American (4.1%, $n = 22$) were also included. Individuals reporting as “other” (2.2%, $n = 12$) made up a small portion of our sample. Participants were mainly foreign-born (54.4%; 44.7% U.S. born). Most of the sample indicated Mexico as their place of birth (57.2%, $n = 306$), followed by Central and South American countries (4.1%, $n = 22$), Puerto Rico (16.1%, $n = 86$), and Cuba (1.9%, $n = 10$). This data was initially collected as part of a mental health needs assessment in the Latinx community.

Measures

Police Harassment. The Police Contact Scale was used to assess exposure to police harassment (Landers et. al., 2011). This 23-item scale includes 4 subscales relating to specific contacts with police; these include: benign, hassled, assistance, and misconduct. For the purpose of this study, the subscale “hassled” was used. Participants indicated the frequency of occurrence within the last 2 years using a 5-point Likert scale

from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*daily*). Items such as “Friend/loved one told of someone followed or watched by police”, “Friend/loved one hassled by police” and “Friend/loved one told of someone hassled by police”. Higher scores entail greater frequency of occurrence. This subscale has been assessed for and has demonstrated high internal consistency, ($\alpha = .87$) (Landers et. al., 2011). For the present study, a reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of .907.

Family Support. The Mexican American Cultural Values Scale (MACVS) was used to assess ascription to family support (Knight et al., 2010). This 50-item scale includes 9 subscales; 3 of which include familism-support, familism-obligation, and familism-referent. The familism-support subscale will be used to assess ascription to familial support. Using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*completely*), participants responded to items such as: “Parents should teach their children that the family always comes first”, “Family provides a sense of security because they will always be there for you”, and “It is always important to be united as a family”. Higher scores entail greater ascription to these cultural values. Previous application of these subscales with Latinx populations has shown good internal consistency ($\alpha = .86$) (Umaña-Taylor, et. al., 2011). The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for the present study was .869.

Depression symptoms. A brief version of the Center for Epidemiological Studies—Depression scale (BCES-D; Kohout et. al., 1993) was used to measure depression symptoms. This 10-item version has been shown to display good convergent and divergent validity (Miller et. al., 2008). Participants were asked to assess the frequency with which they experienced each item within the past week on a 4-point

Likert scale ranging from 0 (*rarely or none of the time*) to 3 (*most or all of the time*).

Participants responded to items such as “I felt depressed”, “I felt everything I did was an effort”, and “I felt lonely”. Scores are summed from 0 to 30 with a score of 10 or greater indicating a clinical level of depressive symptomatology (Andersen et. al., 1994). This measure has been used among various Latinx samples previously and displayed good internal consistency ($\alpha = .73$ [95% CI = 0.70–0.76]) (Grzywacz, et. al., 2010; Grzywacz, et. al., 2006). This measure was selected for this study due to its wide usage, as well as its recurrent applications with Latinx populations (Driscoll & Torres, 2013; Torres, 2010). The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for the present study was .789.

PTSD Symptoms. The PTSD Symptoms Scale-Self-Report (PSS-SR; Foa et. al., 1993) is a measure designed to assess the frequency of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms. A 14-item modified version (Boney-McCoy & Finkelhor, 1996) was utilized for the present study. Using this 14-item self-report measure, participants indicated the frequency with which they experienced symptoms within the last week using a 4-point Likert scale from 1 (*never*) to 4 (*very often*). Participants responded to items such as “Felt like something bad that happened to you in the past was happening all over again?”, “Found it hard to fall or stay asleep?”, and “Felt irritable or had outbursts of anger?” Scores are averaged, with higher scores indicating greater number of symptoms experienced. This measure has been previously used with Latinx populations and has displayed good internal consistency ($\alpha = .92$) (Torres & Taknint, 2015). For the present study, the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was .936.

Results

Data Screening

Prior to analyses, variables of interest (i.e., police harassment, family support, depression symptoms, and PTSD symptoms) were screened by inspecting univariate statistics for accuracy of input. This entailed examining if values for continuous variables were within range, whether means and standard deviations were plausible, and the presence of any out-of-range values for discrete variables. This inspection found no abnormalities in these properties. Next, missing values were identified. Analysis of missing data revealed that no variable was missing 9% or more of the data. Next, variables were screened for outliers. As no significant outliers were identified, no data was omitted or winsorized. All variables of interest were assessed for normality following the guidelines suggested by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007). Skewness and kurtosis values were obtained. To determine if a variable violated normality, thus qualifying for transformation, skewness and kurtosis values were divided by their standard error. Data were considered significantly kurtotic or skewed if the obtained z-score was greater than ± 3 . Variables that were skewed higher than a z-score of 1.96 were examined for the potential of data transformation. Police harassment, family support, and depression were all significantly kurtotic.

Police harassment, depression, and trauma were all significantly positively skewed. As such, most responses fell into the lower half of the distribution. Additionally, family support was significantly negatively skewed, meaning that most responses fell into the higher half of the distribution. Consequently, transformed, as well as non-transformed

variables were used in the main analyses. Finally, a correlation matrix was generated to assess for multicollinearity. Results for the correlation matrix can be found in Table 1.

Preliminary Analyses

Following data screening, descriptive statistics were generated for each variable to examine basic demographic data, as well as mean scores. Regarding the mean score for police harassment, responses to these items fell into the lower half of the distribution, indicating infrequent experiences of police harassment. Regarding family support, the mean report fell into the upper half of the distribution, indicating higher endorsement of family support. Regarding depression symptoms, participants reported a mean score which falls just beneath what the scale denotes as clinically significant depression (BCES-D score > 10 ; Kohout et. al., 1993). Regarding trauma, the mean report was 11.33; based on the range of possible scores (0-56), this mean value fell into the lower half of the distribution, indicating a low degree of posttraumatic stress symptoms.

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 predicted that police harassment would be significantly positively associated with higher levels of psychological distress. To test this, a Pearson product-moment correlation was conducted to determine the nature of these relationships. Results of this analysis found statistically significant, positive relationships between police harassment and depression symptoms ($r(519) = .275, p < .001$), as well as police harassment and trauma symptoms ($r(488) = .393, p < .001$), indicating support for Hypothesis 1. Results of this analysis can be found in Table 1.

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 consisted of two components and predicted that ascription to family support as a cultural value would moderate the relationship between police harassment and psychological distress namely, depression and posttraumatic stress symptoms, in such a way that higher family support would weaken the relationship between police harassment and psychological distress. To test this, the PROCESS macro SPSS add-on was used to conduct the moderator analysis for both transformed and non-transformed variables. PROCESS conducts observed-variable mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis. Of note, PROCESS provides additional information on moderation analyses, and does not require the centering of continuous variables. Because there were minimal differences noted, reported below are the findings from the non-transformed data to facilitate interpretation. In all moderation analyses, age and gender were included as covariates.

Hypothesis 2a. The first analysis examined family support as a moderator between police harassment and depression for non-transformed data. The variables accounted for 10% of the variance in depression symptoms, $F(5,492) = 10.99$, $R^2 = .10$, $p < .001$. Police harassment significantly predicted depression symptoms, but family support did not. Additionally, gender significantly predicted depression symptoms, but age did not. The interaction term was not significant and did not add significant variance, $R^2 \text{ change} = .002$, $F(1, 492) = .13$, $p = .72$). Ascription to family support as a cultural value did not moderate the relationship between police harassment and depression symptoms. Full results can be found in Table 2; full results for transformed data can be found in Table 3.

Hypothesis 2b. The second analysis examined family support as a moderator between police harassment and posttraumatic stress symptoms for non-transformed data. The variables accounted for 21% of the variance in posttraumatic stress symptoms, $F(5, 465) = 25.01$, $R^2 = .21$, $p < .001$. Police harassment did not predict posttraumatic stress symptoms, nor did family support. Both gender and age significantly predicted posttraumatic stress symptoms. The interaction term was not significant, and did not add significant variance, R^2 change = .0006, $F(1, 465) = .38$, $p = .54$). Ascription to family support as a cultural value did not moderate the relationship between police harassment and posttraumatic stress symptoms. Full results for non-transformed data can be found in Table 4; full results for transformed data can be found in Table 5.

Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 predicted that nativity would be related to family support, in such a way that foreign-born Latinx individuals would identify more family support than U.S.-born Latinx individuals. To test this, an independent samples t-test comparing the mean scores of family support for foreign-born and U.S. born Latinx individuals was performed. Results of this analysis found a significant difference: mean family support for U.S. born individuals was significantly lower than the mean for foreign-born Latinx individuals. Full results of this analysis can be found in Table 6.

Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 consisted of two components and predicted that nativity would moderate family support as a protective factor, in such a way that for U.S. born individuals, nativity would diminish family support as a protective factor, and for foreign-born individuals, nativity would enhance family support as a protective factor. To

test this, PROCESS was used to conduct a moderated moderation analysis, in which a three-way interaction between police harassment, family support, and nativity was probed. These analyses were performed for both transformed and non-transformed variables; analyses for both did not appear significantly dissimilar.

Hypothesis 4a. The first analysis examined nativity as a moderator for family support in the relationship between police harassment and depression for non-transformed data. The variables accounted for 11% of the variance in depression symptoms, $F(9,484) = 6.62$, $R^2 = .11$, $p < .001$. Police harassment did not significantly predict depression symptoms, nor did family support or nativity. Gender significantly predicted depression symptoms, but age did not. The interaction term was not significant and did not add significant variance, R^2 change = .003, $F(1, 484) = 1.85$, $p = .17$. Nativity did not moderate family support as a protective factor in the relationship between police harassment and depression symptoms. Full results can be found in Table 7; full results for transformed data can be found in Table 8.

Hypothesis 4b. The second analysis examined nativity as a moderator for family support in the relationship between police harassment and posttraumatic stress symptoms for non-transformed data. The variables accounted for 22% of the variance in posttraumatic stress symptoms, $F(9,456) = 14.43$, $R^2 = .22$, $p < .001$. Police harassment did not significantly predict posttraumatic stress symptoms, nor did family support or nativity. Both gender and age significantly predicted posttraumatic stress symptoms. The interaction term was not significant and did not add significant variance, R^2 change = .0003, $F(1, 456) = .18$, $p = .67$). Nativity did not moderate family support as a protective factor in the relationship between police harassment and posttraumatic stress symptoms.

Full results can be found in Table 9; full results for transformed data can be found in Table 10.

Discussion

Communities of color experience disproportionate occurrences of police harassment relative to their population size (Wilson et. al., 2020). Regarding Latinx populations, Latinx men are more likely to be killed by police than White men, and reports on fatal police-resident encounters indicate odds of resident fatalities are significantly higher in Latinx communities than majority White communities (Edwards et. al., 2019; Zimmerman et. al., 2021). Research regarding psychological outcomes of police harassment has found it to be associated with an increase in depression, trauma, and anxiety symptoms, as well as an increased risk for lifetime psychotic experiences for Black populations (Bacak & Nowotny, 2020; Chin et. al., 2020; Del Toro, et. al., 2019; DeVyllder et. al., 2017; Geller et al., 2014; Oh et. al., 2016; Tynes et. al., 2019). With that being said, psychological ramifications of police encounters on Latinx mental health have scarcely been examined, resulting in an inability to gauge precisely how Latinx communities are impacted by police harassment. There is empirical evidence to suggest that ascription to the Latinx cultural value of family support has the capacity to buffer the negative outcomes of trauma exposure, as well as alleviate symptoms of depression (Chavez-Korell et. al., 2014; Dixon De Silva et. al., 2020; Lorenzo-Blanco et. al., 2012; Perreira & Ornelas, 2013; Villareal et. al., 2019). However, this capability seems variable depending on nativity (Polo & Lopez, 2009; Ramírez et. al., 2020; Vega & Gil, 1998). To our knowledge, neither factor has been examined as a moderator in the context of police harassment and psychological distress in Latinx populations. Given this absence, the present study sought to gain insight into the association between police harassment and

Latinx mental health, and whether family support buffered this relationship. Additionally, the present study explored whether nativity would impact family support as a moderator.

The first aim of the study sought to examine whether police harassment would be associated with higher levels of depression and PTSD symptoms among Latinx adults. Hypothesis 1 predicted that police harassment would be significantly positively associated with higher levels of psychological distress. Results of analyses revealed that police harassment was in fact associated with higher levels of depression and trauma symptoms. This is unsurprising, given the breadth of empirical evidence displaying a positive association between police harassment and psychological decrements in Black and Latinx communities (Bacak & Nowotny, 2020; Chin et. al., 2020; Del Toro, et. al., 2019; DeVlyder et. al., 2017; Geller et al., 2014; Oh et. al., 2016; Tynes et. al., 2019). Additionally, more recent reports have found police contact to be associated with depressed mood and generalized anxiety in Black adults (Alang et. al., 2022) and anticipatory stress relating to police brutality associated with more symptoms of anxiety, depression, and PTSD among minority youth (Webb et. al., 2022).

The second aim of this study was to examine whether family support moderated the relationship between police harassment and psychological distress. Hypothesis 2 stated that ascription to family support as a cultural value would moderate the relationship between police harassment and psychological distress- namely, depression and posttraumatic stress symptoms, in such a way that higher family support would weaken the relationship between police harassment and psychological distress. Ultimately, family support did not moderate the relationship between police harassment and psychological distress. This is unexpected, given the empirical evidence displaying the protective

capabilities of family support for Latinx individuals under various contexts, including trauma exposure, bicultural stress, and perceived discrimination (Ayón et. al., 2010; Dixon De Silva et. al., 2020; Perreira & Ornelas, 2013; Piña-Watson et. al., 2013). With that being said, differences in family support could account for these discrepant results. The original study which bred the familism-support scale found a high degree of family support within their sample (Knight et. al., 2010). The mean value of family support within our sample was not as high in comparison. It is worth considering whether family support is the most appropriate buffer for the consequences of police harassment. In a study conducted by Scott and colleagues, researchers investigated coping responses in Black families' preparation-for-bias messages, as well as the proactive coping responses Black youth use in specific racially discriminatory situations, like police harassment (Scott et. al., 2020). Ultimately, they found that parents primarily endorsed active avoidance in their messaging, and youth primarily endorsed reflective engagement in their experiences of discriminatory situations (Scott et. al., 2020). One could theorize that behavioral and cognitive coping strategies may be most appropriate in addressing the consequences of structural inequities like police harassment, rather than emotion-focused coping strategies that are typically observed in family support.

The third aim of this study was to examine whether nativity was associated with ascription to family support. Hypothesis 3 predicted that nativity would be related to family support, in such a way that foreign-born Latinx individuals would identify more family support than U.S.- born Latinx individuals. Analyses revealed that for the current sample, foreign-born Latinx individuals did indeed identify more family support than U.S.-born Latinx individuals. This is an anticipated result, given longstanding theoretical

conjecture that has postulated the potential loss of traditional cultural ideals as a result of acculturation (Almeida et. al., 2009; Gil et. al., 1994; Perez & Cruess, 2014).

Additionally, past empirical studies have reflected these findings by producing evidence to suggest that immigrants are more likely to identify with traditional Latinx cultural values than their U.S.-born counterparts (Noyola et. al., 2020; Polo & Lopez, 2009; Ramírez et. al., 2020; Vega & Gil, 1998). One could theorize that for a Latinx individual, immigrating to a country with a longstanding history of eurocentrism and xenophobia could lead one to find solace in traditional cultural ideals, rather than adopting the majority view. Still, it could be the case that adherence to these traditional values lessens with each generation partly due to the sheer dominance and pervasiveness of the broader U.S. culture. Additionally, factors such as physical distance from country-of-origin relatives and language barriers between U.S. and foreign-born family members could further limit the transmittance of traditional cultural values.

The fourth aim of this study was to examine whether nativity enhances/diminishes family support as a protective factor. Hypothesis 4 predicted that nativity would moderate family support as a protective factor, in such a way that for U.S. born individuals, nativity would diminish family support as a protective factor, and for foreign-born individuals, nativity would enhance family support as a protective factor. Analyses revealed that nativity did not moderate family support as a protective factor for either foreign or U.S.-born Latinx individuals. This was unexpected, given aforementioned empirical evidence displaying data to suggest ascription to cultural values may be dependent on nativity (Noyola et. al., 2020; Polo & Lopez, 2009; Ramírez et. al., 2020; Vega & Gil, 1998). With that being said, recent studies have found family support ascription to not

significantly differ amongst Latinx youth based on nativity status (Crockett et. al., 2022, Zhao et. al., 2022). In fact, youth familism values were positively associated with maternal familism values (Crockett et. al., 2022). These findings suggest that parental ascription to cultural values may function as a stronger predictor than nativity status for Latinx populations. Overall, it would be prudent to consider more meaningful cultural constructs, rather than proxy indicators such as nativity. To elaborate, one cannot decidedly ascertain degree of cultural value ascription through nativity status or acculturation. As such, measures specifically targeting this construct would be most useful.

Limitations

The present study had various limitations. The majority of the sample identified as women (65.8%) and were born outside of the United States (54.4%). Additionally, most of the sample reported being of Mexican descent (74.4%). As such, results of the present study cannot be generalized to the broader population of Latinx individuals. Additionally, this sample was drawn from a population of Latinx individuals living within the Midwest. As such, these results cannot be representative of the experiences of the wider U.S. Latinx population. Furthermore, it is necessary to highlight the constraints of the present correlational and cross-sectional study design. Mainly, that it does not facilitate the establishment of a causal relationship between police harassment and psychological distress, nor nativity and family support ascription. Additionally, participants were administered measures with a self-report style of response, which is limited given the implications of recall bias.

Implications & Future Directions

The current study contributes to the growing body of literature showcasing the association between police harassment and psychological decrements in ethnic minority populations. Specifically, this study focuses on this association within the Latinx community, a population which has scarcely been examined within the field of policing impact on minority mental health. Given reports that Latinx individuals are both targeted and more likely to be killed by police than White Americans, (Edwards et. al. 2019; Harris et. al., 2020; Zimmerman et. al., 2021) future research should continue to examine this form of systemic aggression and its psychological impact on Latinx populations. Additionally, while family support was not protective for the sample in this study, these findings do not negate past research which has demonstrated its buffering capabilities. More research is needed to evaluate the role of family support for Latinx adults, and whether its protective capabilities can extend to systemic inequities such as police harassment. It would also be prudent to extend the scope of these studies to other cultural values such as religiosity, which has also demonstrated protective capabilities for Latinx populations (Revens et. al., 2021).

There are various practical and theoretical implications of this study. The continuation of this line of research could inform culturally competent treatment interventions for Latinx individuals who have been impacted by police harassment. To accomplish this, researchers could continue to examine the potential protective capabilities of cultural values. Alternatively, researchers could shift their scope to cognitive and behavioral forms of coping, as discussed by Scott and colleagues (2020). Applications of these findings could contribute to culturally informed treatment interventions via the incorporation of reflective engagement in cognitive behavioral

therapy. Additionally, clinicians could be advised to abstain from treatment modalities which encourage active avoidance, a form of coping which has been associated with an increase in internalizing problems and posttraumatic stress symptoms in Latinx populations (Gudiño et. al., 2018). It is also necessary to note that this study contributes to the increasing body of evidence showcasing the psychological ramifications of police harassment for ethnic minority populations. As such, the results of this present study could be used to inform legislative policing reforms. Additionally, these results could be used to inform the reconfiguration of the social determinants of health (SDOH) framework. While the framework identifies various social factors that contribute to racial health disparities, it has yet to incorporate their bedrock- structural inequality (Yearby, 2020).

While racially motivated police harassment continues to persist, it is imperative to continue to examine how minority communities are psychologically impacted, and what factors may be protective for them in these contexts. Continued examinations may inform culturally competent treatment interventions for Latinx individuals who have been impacted by police harassment, as well as further highlighting the need for broader reform in policing.

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APPENDIX A

Table 1.

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Study Variables.

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. Police Harassment	8.13	3.31	--	-.130**	.275**	.393**
2. Family Support	4.06	.87	--	--	-.112**	-.162**
3. Depression	9.65	6.03	--	--	--	.758**
4. Trauma	11.33	9.20	--	--	--	--

Note. ** = $p < .01$

Table 2.

Regression Examining Family Support as a Moderator between Police Harassment and Depression Symptoms for Non-Transformed Data.

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	95% CI
Police Harassment	.59*	.28	.04 – 1.14
Family Support	-.19	.71	-1.57 – 1.20
Gender	1.23*	.56	.13 – 2.33
Age	-.04	.02	-.07 – .00
Police Harassment X Family Support	-.03	.08	-.18 – .12
<i>R</i> ²	.10		

Note. * $p < .05$

Table 3.

Regression Examining Family Support as a Moderator between Police Harassment and Depression Symptoms for Transformed Data.

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	95% CI
Police Harassment	1.56*	.63	.31 – 2.80
Family Support	-.75	1.55	-3.79 – 2.29
Gender	.21*	.10	.02 – .40
Age	-.01	.00	-.01 – .00
Police Harassment X Family Support	1.35	1.71	-2.02 – 4.72
<i>R</i> ²	.10		

Note. * $p < .05$

Table 4.

Regression Examining Family Support as a Moderator between Police Harassment and Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms for Non-Transformed Data.

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	95% CI
Police Harassment	.76	.40	-.02 – 1.56
Family Support	-1.19	1.02	-3.20 – .81
Gender	1.67*	.82	.06 – 3.30
Age	-.12*	.03	-.17 – -.07
Police Harassment X Family Support	.07	.11	-.15 – .28
<i>R</i> ²	.21		

Note. * $p < .05$

Table 5.

Regression Examining Family Support as a Moderator between Police Harassment and Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms for Transformed Data.

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	95% CI
Police Harassment	4.09	.87	2.37 – 5.81
Family Support	.99	2.14	-3.21 – 5.19
Gender	.28*	.14	.02 – .55
Age	-.02*	.004	-.03 – -.01
Police Harassment X Family Support	-.19	2.36	-4.83 – 4.46
<i>R</i> ²	.21		

Note. * $p < .05$

Table 6.

Independent Samples T-Test Examining Mean Differences in Family Support between Foreign-Born and U.S. born Latinx Individuals.

Measure	Foreign-Born		U.S. Born		<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				
Family Support	4.34	.68	3.71	.97	525	-8.67	<.001	-.76

Table 7.

Moderated Moderation Analysis Examining Nativity as a Moderator for Family Support in the Relationship between Police Harassment and Depression Symptoms for Non-Transformed Data.

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	95% CI
Police Harassment	-1.22	1.27	-3.71 – 1.27
Family Support	-1.74	2.63	-6.90 – 3.42
Nativity	-11.32	9.01	-29.02 – 6.39
Gender	1.26*	.56	.15 – 2.36
Age	-.03	.02	-.07 – .01
Police Harassment X Family Support X Nativity	-.36	.27	-.89 – .16
<i>R</i> ²	.11		

Note. * $p < .05$

Table 8.

Moderated Moderation Analysis Examining Nativity as a Moderator for Family Support in the Relationship between Police Harassment and Depression Symptoms for Transformed Data.

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	95% CI
Police Harassment	.96	2.06	-3.08 – 5.00
Family Support	-.93	5.27	-11.27 – 9.42
Nativity	-.45	1.17	-2.75 – 1.86
Gender	.21*	.10	.02 – .40
Age	-.005	.003	-.01 – .002
Police Harassment X Family Support X Nativity	1.58	4.37	-7.00 – 10.15
<i>R</i> ²	.10		

Note. * $p < .05$

Table 9.

Moderated Moderation Analysis Examining Nativity as a Moderator for Family Support in the Relationship between Police Harassment and Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms for Non-Transformed Data.

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	95% CI
Police Harassment	-.16	1.85	-3.79 – 3.47
Family Support	-1.62	3.80	-9.09 – 5.85
Nativity	-8.13	13.15	-33.97 – 17.71
Gender	1.69*	.83	.06 – 3.32
Age	-.10*	.03	-.15 – -.04
Police Harassment X Family Support X Nativity	-.17	.39	-.94 – .60
<i>R</i> ²	.22		

Note. * $p < .05$

Table 10.

Moderated Moderation Analysis Examining Nativity as a Moderator for Family Support in the Relationship between Police Harassment and Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms for Transformed Data.

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	95% CI
Police Harassment	2.13	2.81	-3.40 – 7.66
Family Support	-2.61	7.26	-16.87 – 11.64
Nativity	-1.47	1.62	-4.64 – 1.71
Gender	.28*	.14	.01 – .54
Age	-.01*	.004	-.02 – -.005
Police Harassment X Family Support X Nativity	-1.27	6.09	-13.23 – 10.69
<i>R</i> ²	.22		

Note. * $p < .05$