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The U.S. Presidential Election of 2016 Impacted Subjective Well-Being

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Abstract

This investigation examined predictors of changes over time in subjective well-being (SWB) after the 2016 United States presidential election. Two indicators of SWB - general happiness and life satisfaction - were assessed three weeks before the election, the week of the election, three weeks later, and six months later. Partisanship predicted both indicators of SWB, with Trump supporters experiencing improved SWB after the election, Clinton supporters experiencing worsened SWB after the election, and those who viewed both candidates as bad also experiencing worsened SWB after the election. The impact of the election on SWB decreased over time, with all participants returning to baseline life satisfaction six months after the election. Trump supporters and those who viewed both candidates as bad for the country also returned to baseline general happiness six months after the election. Clinton supporters, in contrast, remained below baseline levels of general happiness six months after the election. Moral and political values, and exposure to media inconsistent with those values, predicted lasting change in subjective well-being. National events can affect how people perceive the overall quality of their lives and these effects are exacerbated when moral and political values are involved.

Subjective well-being (SWB) reflects people's perceptions of the overall quality of their lives and is used in psychological and economic research to reflect the overall state of individuals and societies (Diener, Sandvik, Seidlitz, & Diener, 1993; Kahneman & Krueger, 2006). Two indicators of SWB are typically assessed: 1) reports of general happiness (i.e., the difference between positive and negative emotions) and 2) an assessment of overall life satisfaction. Evidence suggests that these two indicators of well-being are independent and provide distinct information about the overall state of individuals (Diener, Lucas, & Oishi, 2002). The validity of self-reported ratings of general happiness and life satisfaction is supported by convergence with other measures and indicators of well-being, including neurological indices, behavior, physiology, and observational reports (Davidson, 2004; Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005; Sandvik, Diener, & Seidlitz, 1993; Steptoe, Wardle, & Marmot, 2005).

Subjective well-being shows remarkable stability over time after national events, and even after major personal life events. The present investigation assessed several factors that could interact to create a situation in which national events have the potential to cause prolonged changes in SWB.

Subjective well-being over time

Although debate continues about the precise degree of stability and variability in SWB, evidence suggests that SWB is generally stable across time for individuals, and that SWB often returns rapidly to its typical level after events (Diener et al., 1999; Headey & Wearing, 1989; Lucas, 2007). Large cohort studies have revealed stability in people's ratings of general happiness and life satisfaction over time (Baird, Lucas, & Donnellan, 2010; Lucas & Donnellan, 2007). Further suggesting stability over time, SWB shows evidence of a strong genetic component and is moderately to strongly correlated with personality traits including

extraversion, neuroticism, and self-esteem (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999; Lykken & Tellegen, 1996; Steel, Schmidt, & Shultz, 2008). Even major life events, such as serious disability or large lottery wins, have little lasting impact on SWB (Brickman, Coates, & Janoff-Bulman, 1978; Suh, Diener, & Fujita, 1996). Despite this general tendency toward stability, major life events with broad implications for the future (unemployment, widowhood) can result in slightly lower subjective well-being years after the event (Lucas, Clark, Georgellis, & Diener, 2003; 2004). Further, individuals vary in their likelihood of experiencing negative life events and in their adaptation after events (Lucas, 2007).

Consistent with the findings of general stability in SWB, several studies have failed to find any impact of national elections on SWB, regardless of whether well-being was measured days after the election (Tsutsui, Kimball, & Ohtake, 2010) or months after (Dolan, Metcalfe, & Powdthavee, 2008; Dolan, Peasgood, & White, 2008). In three elections in the United Kingdom, there was no evidence that election results impacted life satisfaction, irrespective of how invested people were in the election (Dolan, Metcalfe, et al., 2008). One study revealed a medium, statistically significant, impact of an election on happiness immediately after the outcome was announced in a small group of partisans selected because they were unusually invested in the election (Wilson, Meyers, & Gilbert, 2003). This study focused on the U.S. Presidential election of 2000 (notable for extended controversy over the votes). Another study revealed that liberals reported lower life satisfaction than conservatives after a conservative won the presidency in that same 2000 U.S. Presidential election, although no measure of life satisfaction before the outcome was taken (Napier & Jost, 2008). As a result, it was not possible to assess if satisfaction changed as a result of the election or reflected stable differences based on political partisanship. Thus most studies to date have found that elections, and other national events, have no significant

impact on well-being, or have an impact that is limited to immediately after the election outcome among highly invested voters.

Predictors of SWB

In the present investigation, we examined the time course of reactions in the days, weeks, and months after the outcome of the 2016 United States presidential election. The candidates affiliated with the two major political parties were Hillary Clinton (Democrat) and Donald Trump (Republican). Most polls, including those based on exit polls with early voters, showed Clinton with a clear lead entering election day (Silver, 2016). The election outcome was announced in the evening of November 8th, with Trump emerging as the president-elect (pending Electoral College vote) and Clinton winning the popular vote.

Several potential predictors of subjective well-being were examined. People generally experience happiness after events they view as positive and unhappiness after events they view as negative (e.g., Carver, 2004; Frijda, 1987; Lench, Bench, Darbor, & Moore, 2015; Lench, Flores, & Bench, 2011; Roseman, 1996). Highly negative events, such as unemployment, have been shown to impact subjective well-being for an extended time after the event (Lucas et al., 2003; 2004). Therefore, we expected political partisanship, an indicator of the subjective value of the election, to predict changes in SWB after the election.

Moral foundations were also examined as predictors of subjective well-being. Moral Foundations Theory (MFT) was developed based on theory and evidence related to the evolution of morality (Graham et al., 2013). It posits that several moral values, which have been shown to exist across cultures and individuals, are central to moral decision making. These values are universal, but MFT also posits that individuals and cultures differ in the value they place on specific moral foundations and that conflicts arise when there is disagreement about the relative

value of foundations. Investigators have used the theory to understand and predict “culture wars” in the United States (Graham et al., 2011; Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009; Haidt & Graham, 2007; McAdams et al., 2008). Two of the moral foundations, fairness and harm, focus on protecting individual people and are referred to as “individualizing” foundations. Three of the moral foundations, in-group loyalty, authority, and purity, are focused on protection of the group and are referred to as “binding” foundations. Liberals and conservatives tend to differ in the priority given to these foundations, with liberals valuing individualizing over binding foundations and conservatives valuing the two equally (Graham et al., 2011; Haidt, 2012). Violations of an individual’s moral values have been shown to evoke intense negative emotion (Litz et al., 2009; Pargament, Magyar, Benore, & Mahoney, 2005).

The Trump campaign emphasized policies oriented toward prioritizing American safety and economic stability. Trump dubbed this approach to government “America First” (DeReal, 2016; United States Office of the Press Secretary, 2017). Many of his speeches received significant media attention for their provocative nature on issues of moral value to voters. One particular example widely covered by the press was Trump’s statements related to immigration policy. He placed a heavy emphasis on securing the nation’s borders to prevent illegal immigration, a policy proposal that received both praise and condemnation from politicians and media (Suls, 2017). As stated in a transcript of one Republican party debate, Trump stated “We have at least 11 million people in this country that came in illegally. They will go out” (Peters & Do, 2016). Consistent with these statements during his campaign, Trump began processes to restrict foreigner access to the United States shortly after his inauguration (The Whitehouse, 2017). Given the perceived relevancy of this and other moral issues in the election, we

hypothesized that differences in the value placed on individualizing versus binding moral foundations would predict changes in subjective well-being after the election.

Media exposure was also included as a predictor of subjective well-being after the election, with the expectation that it would interact with partisanship and moral foundations to predict responses after the election. Participants who perceived the election outcome as a positive event were expected to experience a boost in SWB as they watched more media about the election, and participants who perceived the election outcome as a negative event were expected to experience a decline in SWB as they watched more media about the election. Past studies have shown that reactions to a negative event can be prolonged by media exposure (Cantor, Mares, & Oliver, 1993; Pfefferbaum et al., 2001). For example, in a large sample of Americans polled after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, earlier and more frequent exposure to related television images predicted increased posttraumatic stress symptoms for up to three years after the attacks (Silver et al., 2013). Similarly, exposure to media content about the presidential election could result in people having a heightened and prolonged response to the outcome of the election. If supported, this finding would extend previous findings regarding the impact of media attention after national events to include events with moral implications without physical destruction.

Method

Participants

Data collection was planned for approximately 1,000 participants (500 community participants, 500 student participants). We slightly oversampled due to anticipated attrition over time. A total of 1,183 participants completed a survey about their anticipated responses to the outcome of the U.S. presidential election in 2016. Participants were excluded from analyses who indicated that the election of either candidate would be good for the country because this sample

was too small to include in comparisons ($n = 18$) or if they did not complete the second time point the week of the election. The final sample included 1,019 participants, with 455 participants recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk (Mturk), 196 undergraduate students enrolled in a large public Texas university, and 368 participants enrolled in a large public California university. Response rates were as follows: 1,019 at Times 1 and 2, 946 at Time 3, and 538 at Time 4. Participants were offered a payment (for Mturk) or course credit (for students) for every survey and Mturk participants received a bonus for completion of the first three surveys. The sample included 67% women, with an average age of 28.26 years ($SD = 12.35$). Approximately 80% of participants voted. Of those who voted, 63% voted for Clinton, 29% voted for Trump, and 8% voted for another candidate. This study was part of a larger investigation focused on decision making, and only methods and procedures relevant to the present investigation are reported here.

Procedures and Materials

Participants completed surveys at four time points: three weeks before the election, the week of the election, three weeks after the election, and six months after the election. At each time point, participants reported the extent to which they were generally feeling happy, angry, and scared, and their current life satisfaction. The general method for the larger investigation was preregistered before the study commenced, and the hypotheses and analyses for the present investigation were preregistered before analyses began at <https://osf.io/ph4xf/>. These analyses were updated based on the editorial review process but predictions remained consistent.

Time 1: Three weeks before the election. Participants were invited to participate through university subject pools or the Amazon Mturk system. Participants reported their current emotional state ("In general, how are you currently feeling?"), for three feeling states (happy,

angry, scared) on scales ranging from *not at all* (1) to *extremely* (9). There is debate regarding the best way to measure emotional responses to indicate SWB (Kahneman & Krueger, 2006), and the larger investigation included multiple feeling states. Analyses focused on reports of general feelings because 1) the measurement was consistent with scales used in past studies of SWB, 2) these were the first questions asked and occurred before questions specifically about the election, and 3) these reports were available at all time points. Consistent with past studies focused on SWB, general happiness was calculated by taking happiness ratings and subtracting out mean negative emotion ratings (Diener, Diener, & Diener, 1995; Kahneman & Krueger, 2006).

Participants then reported their current life satisfaction, “How satisfied are you feeling with your life, all things considered?” on a scale ranging from *not at all satisfied* (1) to *extremely satisfied* (9). This item for life satisfaction is similar to items used in multiple studies on SWB, including studies on reactions to election outcomes (Dolan, Metcalfe, et al., 2008; Lucas & Brent Donnellan, 2012).

Participants reported their political partisanship in response to the question, “When considering your political beliefs, do you usually think of yourself as liberal or conservative?” on a scale ranging from *strongly liberal* (1) to *strongly conservative* (7). They also responded to two questions about their overall dichotomous evaluation of the candidates, “If Hillary Clinton/Donald Trump is elected president, would you consider this to be bad for the country or good for the country?” Participants reported the number of hours they had spent watching coverage of the campaigns, their gender, age, and ethnicity/race.

Participants completed several individual difference measures, including items from the Moral Foundations Questionnaire focused on the relevance of moral foundations for decisions

(MFQ; Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2008). On the MFQ, participants report the degree to which they believe that different moral considerations should be incorporated in individual decisions. The MFQ includes four items that represent the degree to which people believe that decisions should be based on fairness or harm ($\alpha = .75$) and six items that represent the degree to which people believe decisions should be based on concerns about loyalty, authority, and sanctity ($\alpha = .80$). Based on past evidence that liberals and conservatives vary in the priority given to moral foundations, a difference score was created to represent the extent to which participants placed value on individualizing moral foundations versus binding moral foundations.

Time 2: The week of the election. Participants who completed the Time 1 survey were invited to complete the second survey, starting the evening (5 p.m.) of November 9 through November 12, 2016. Participants first reported their current feelings (happy, angry, scared) and their life satisfaction using the same prompts and scales as at Time 1. They also reported the number of hours they had spent watching media about the election outcome. Participants reported whether or not they voted. Those who voted reported who they voted for.

Time 3: Three weeks after the election. Participants who completed Time 1 were invited to complete the third survey, starting the evening (5 p.m.) of November 28 through December 2, 2016. Participants reported their current feelings, life satisfaction, and media exposure, using the same prompts and scales as at Time 1.

Time 4: Six months after the election. Participants who completed Time 1 were invited to complete the fourth survey, starting the evening (5 p.m.) of April 21 through May 1, 2017. Participants again reported their general feelings, life satisfaction, and media exposure.

Analytic Approach

A multilevel modeling approach was used to examine changes in subjective well-being over time (reflected in general happiness and life satisfaction) and predictors of SWB. All continuous predictors were mean centered before inclusion and categories were dummy coded (Hox, 2002; Shek & Ma, 2011). We used an autoregressive structure, as well-being measures taken closer in time were expected to be more highly correlated than those taken further apart. The variable for time was created with the Time 1 survey set as zero, and all other time points set with one month (an average of 30.4 days per month in a typical year) since the election as the standard time unit. Thus, Time 2 (released one day after the election) was .03 units; Time 3 (released 20 days after the election) was .66 units; Time 4 (released 164 days after the election) was 5.39 units. We expected that a model including cubic terms for time (e.g., Time, Time², Time³) would best capture changes in well-being scores over time, given that there were three time points captured after the election. This expectation was confirmed in the improved fit of growth models that included three time variables (see Supplemental materials for the unconditional, time, and quadratic models). Cubic terms for time were thus retained in all subsequent models. A simplified version of the Level 1 model, with *i* representing individuals and *j* representing the time point, is:

$$SWB_{ij} = \beta_{0ij} + \beta_{1ij}Time_{ij} + \beta_{2ij}Time_{ij}^2 + \beta_{3ij}Time_{ij}^3 + \epsilon_{ij}$$

Subsequent analyses included predictors of well-being scores that were collected about individuals (political partisanship, moral foundations) as well as at each time point (media exposure to election material). We screened demographic and geographic factors to determine if

they interacted with partisanship in predicting responses to the election; none emerged as a consistent or significant predictor and these factors were therefore not retained in the models.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

There are many ways to conceptualize people's election preferences. We examined voting preferences in two ways. First, we used participants' reports of their partisanship (i.e., "When considering your political beliefs, do you usually think of yourself as liberal or conservative" on a 7-point scale; Napier & Jost, 2008). Second, for the purposes of creating meaningful figures, we categorized participants according to candidate preference, that is, whether they judged that 1) the election of Trump would be good for the country and the election of Clinton would be bad for the country (Trump supporters, $n = 184$; 18.1%), 2) the election of Trump would be bad for the country and the election of Clinton would also be bad for the country ("both bad" group, $n = 313$; 30.7%), or 3) the election of Trump would be bad for the country and the election of Clinton would be good for the country (Clinton supporters, $n = 522$; 51.2%). Table 1 presents the correlations among primary study variables.

General Happiness after the Election

Building on the base cubic time model described in the analytic approach section, a multi-level model was used to examine the extent to which political partisanship affected changes in general happiness after the election. The first conditional model included partisanship as a predictor of overall change in general happiness. The results revealed that stronger conservatism was associated with increased general happiness after the election, $\beta = .52$ ($SE = .03$), $t(3478) = 16.20$, $p < .001$. Subsequent analyses revealed, however, that partisanship interacted with the time points, such that partisanship affected participants' general happiness at

each time point after the election. As Table 2 shows, partisanship was associated with changes in participants' general happiness in the week of the election, and with subsequent changes three weeks post-election, and six months post-election.

Figure 1 illustrates the changes in happiness over time based on candidate preferences. The corresponding multilevel model used to illustrate these changes included dummy coded variables for political preference (i.e., one variable represented with Trump supporter = 0, Clinton supporter = 1; one variable represented with Trump supporter = 0, both candidates viewed as negative = 1). As shown in Figure 1, Clinton supporters experienced a sharp decrease in general happiness in the week after the election, with relatively higher happiness three weeks after the election and six months after the election. Participants who viewed both candidates as bad had a similar, though less extreme, pattern of response. Trump supporters experienced a slight increase in happiness in the week after the election but a decrease in the weeks and months afterward.

We conducted a series of post hoc comparisons to follow up on the pattern depicted in Figure 1 by comparing reported general happiness at time points after the election to baseline general happiness measured before the election. Compared to before the election, Trump supporters experienced an increase in general happiness in the week after the election ($M_{T1} = 4.53$, $M_{T2} = 5.03$), $t(176) = 2.56$, $p = .011$, but this difference was not statistically significant three weeks later ($M_{T3} = 4.67$), $t(163) = -0.76$, $p = .447$, or six months later ($M_{T4} = 4.79$), $t(124) = 1.18$, $p = .242$. Participants who viewed both candidates as bad for the country experienced a decrease in general happiness in the week after the election ($M_{T1} = 3.68$, $M_{T2} = 1.14$, $t(303) = 10.09$, $p < .001$, and decreased general happiness three weeks later ($M_{T3} = 3.32$), $t(282) = 2.14$, $p = .033$, but no significant decrease six months later ($M_{T4} = 3.60$), $t(142) = 1.34$, $p = .184$. Clinton

supporters also experienced a decrease in general happiness in the week after the election ($M_{T1} = 4.08$, $M_{T2} = -1.03$), $t(508) = 25.98$, $p < .001$, and three weeks later ($M_{T3} = 3.17$), $t(477) = 6.95$, $p < .001$, and six months later ($M_{T4} = 3.96$), $t(262) = 4.00$, $p < .001$.

We further examined the relationship of general happiness to moral foundations and media exposure. This conditional model included moral foundations (i.e., value placed on individualizing foundations minus value on binding foundations) and number of hours spent viewing media about the election at each time point, as well as their interaction, as predictors of general happiness. Exploratory analyses revealed that media exposure interacted with partisanship, and therefore this interaction was also retained in the model (estimations of other predictors are similar if this interaction is removed). As shown in Table 2, more media exposure predicted declining happiness after the election. This relationship varied based on moral foundations and partisanship, with both independently impacting how participants responded. Specifically, the more participants valued individualizing over binding foundations, the stronger the relationship between more media exposure and declining happiness. Similarly, the more liberal participants were versus conservative, the more media exposure resulted in declining happiness. In other words, participants who were more strongly liberal and those who endorsed individualizing moral foundations of fairness and harm/care more, showed a stronger association between watching coverage of the election and a negative affective response. It is possible that this association is due to the fact that these participants were particularly likely to see information that was inconsistent with their values when they watched media coverage of the election.

Life Satisfaction after the Election

Building on the base cubic time model described in the analytic approach section, we used a multi-level model to examine changes in life satisfaction after the election. The first conditional model included partisanship as a predictor of overall change in life satisfaction. The results revealed a positive relationship between stronger conservatism and increased life satisfaction, $\beta = .24$ ($SE = .02$), $t(3266) = 13.11$, $p < .001$. In other words, stronger conservatism versus liberalism predicted an increase in life satisfaction after the election. Subsequent analyses revealed, however, that partisanship interacted with time points, such that partisanship affected participants' life satisfaction at each time point after the election. As shown in Table 3, partisanship predicted changes in participants' life satisfaction in the week of the election, subsequent changes three weeks post-election, and six months after the election outcome.

To illustrate the changes in life satisfaction over time, Figure 2 presents changes in life satisfaction based on candidate preferences. The corresponding multilevel model used dummy coded variables for political preference (i.e., one variable with Trump supporter = 0, Clinton supporter = 1; one variable with Trump supporter = 0, Both candidates negative = 1). As shown in Figure 2, Clinton supporters experienced a sharp decrease in life satisfaction in the week after the election, with relatively higher satisfaction weeks after the election and six months after the election. Participants who viewed both candidates as bad had a similar, though less extreme, pattern of response. Trump supporters experienced a slight increase in life satisfaction in the week after the election but a decrease in the weeks and months afterward.

We conducted a series of post hoc comparisons to follow up on the pattern depicted in Figure 2, comparing reported life satisfaction at time points after the election to the baseline measure before the election. Compared to before the election, Trump supporters experienced an

increase in life satisfaction in the week after the election ($M_{T1} = 6.45$, $M_{T2} = 6.92$), $t(183) = 4.68$, $p < .001$, and three weeks later ($M_{T3} = 6.72$), $t(168) = 2.45$, $p = .015$, but this difference was not statistically significant six months later, $t(125) = 0.77$, $p = .445$. Participants who viewed both candidates as bad for the country experienced a decrease in life satisfaction in the week after the election ($M_{T1} = 5.96$, $M_{T2} = 1.85$), $t(312) = 1.98$, $p = .048$, but this tendency was not significant three weeks later ($M_{T3} = 5.91$), $t(287) = 0.87$, $p = .387$, or six months later ($M_{T4} = 5.86$), $t(145) = 0.82$, $p = .412$. Clinton supporters also experienced a decrease in life satisfaction in the week after the election ($M_{T1} = 6.11$, $M_{T2} = 5.18$), $t(521) = 12.00$, $p < .001$, and three weeks later ($M_{T3} = 5.97$), $t(488) = 2.56$, $p = .011$, but this difference was not significant six months later ($M_{T4} = 6.09$), $t(265) = 0.31$, $p = .755$.

We further examined the relationship of life satisfaction to moral foundations and media exposure. This conditional model included moral foundations (i.e., value placed on individualizing foundations minus value placed on binding foundations) and number of hours spent viewing media about the election, as well as their interaction, as predictors of life satisfaction. Unlike the model for general happiness, exploratory analyses showed that media exposure did not interact with partisanship; therefore, this interaction was not included in the model. As shown in Table 3, more value placed on individualizing over binding moral foundations predicted declining life satisfaction after the election. This relationship varied with media exposure, with more media exposure resulting in a stronger negative relationship between moral foundations and life satisfaction. In other words, participants who were particularly likely to see information that was inconsistent with their values in media coverage of the election (i.e., those who endorse individualizing moral foundations of fairness and harm/care over binding foundations), were again more negatively affected by watching coverage of the election.

Discussion

Interest and investment in national measures of SWB are increasing but researchers and policy makers acknowledge limited understanding of the types of events that affect individual wellbeing (Powdthavee, 2010). Our findings reveal that the 2016 U.S. Presidential election impacted how people perceived the quality of their lives. This impact is remarkable given past research demonstrating the stability of subjective well-being (SWB) and past evidence that national events and elections typically have little impact on SWB (Dolan, Metcalfe, et al., 2008; Dolan, Peasgood, et al., 2008). In a seminal paper that is often referenced as evidence of the small impact of events on well-being, people who had become quadriplegic within the last year reported lower happiness than controls and lottery winners by a difference of about 17% of their scale (about 1 point on a 6-point scale; Brickman et al., 1978). Clinton supporters reported about a 24% decrease in happiness during the week after the election on the scale in the present investigation (about 2.17 points on a 9-point scale). While the time since event was variable in the Brickman et al. study, the impact of the election in the present investigation is notable given this past evidence regarding how quickly people adjust to even a catastrophic personal life event. The SWB of Clinton supporters had rebounded three weeks after the election, but remained lower than before the election and lower than the SWB of Trump supporters. Notably, the general happiness of Clinton supporters remained lower even six months after the election, although their life satisfaction returned to baseline levels.

Of course, it is possible that Clinton supporters were happier than usual at baseline measurement because they anticipated that their candidate would win the election. There are several theoretical and empirical reasons to think that this was not the case. First, research suggests that measures of subjective well-being tend to be stable over time and events, making it

unlikely that the anticipation of an election outcome would have affected responses. Supporting this, there was no difference in baseline happiness between Clinton supporters ($M = 6.13$, $SD = 1.53$) and Trump supporters ($M = 6.38$, $SD = 1.61$), $t(703) = 1.85$, $p = .07$. Second, the election was notable for the negative evaluations of, and lack of enthusiasm for, both major candidates (e.g., O'Connor, 2016). Supporting this, participants who were Clinton supporters gave an overall evaluation of 5.56 on a 7-point scale (with 4 being neutral) that the election of Clinton would be good for the country. Indeed, 14% gave a rating of “neutral” or lower, and only 19% “strongly agreed” that the election of Clinton would be good. While this represents a positive evaluation, it is far from the type of enthusiasm that would result in happiness as people anticipate the outcome of the election. It is also possible that the emotional terms used in this study did not capture the full gamut of emotional responses, such as disgust, joy, pride, and so forth. Future studies should include multiple emotion indicators to evaluate the impact of national events.

The impact of the election, combined with the finding that media exposure and moral values predicted changes in subjective well-being after the election, is suggestive of the type of events that change how people perceive the overall quality of their lives. Past work has demonstrated the importance of attention and salience in determining how long an emotional response to an event lasts. Events that capture attention, are varied, and are surprising have a longer impact on emotions than more mundane events (e.g., Wilson & Gilbert, 2008). The 2016 election appeared to have many of these features, given the pre-election polls that suggested a different outcome was very likely and the amount of media attention to the outcome of the election. Most polls indicated that Hillary Clinton was likely to be elected president (Andrews,

Katz, & Patel, 2016). Several publications reacted to Trump's victory as a "historic upset" (e.g. Levinson & Alberta, 2016).

We also posit that the salience of moral issues in this particular election made it more likely that people would attend to, and be impacted by, the event. Individuals, groups, and societies vary in their endorsement of moral foundations (Graham et al., 2013). No theory or evidence indicates that any one moral foundation is "better" or more correct than any other foundation. There is evidence, however, that these foundations represent automatic intuitions about the world around us (Graham et al., 2011). As such, moral intuitions are experienced as compelling and inherently valuable to the individuals that hold them. The inability to accommodate to and justify life events perceived to violate these moral intuitions carries a heavy emotional toll (Litz et al., 2009; Pargament et al., 2005). Because moral issues were the focus of much of rhetoric and media attention in the campaign, the election outcome potentially communicated that one's personal values either were shared by the country or rejected by the country. We do not have direct evidence of this process, but hashtags and movements claiming "#notmypresident" and "#notmyamerica" in the weeks since the election suggest that people feel the election has implications for the relationship between themselves and the country. Reports from the Pew Research Center (6/22/16) found that partisans viewed the other party and its supporters as threats, and felt separated from the "coldness" of the other party (Doherty & Kiley, 2016). Across the United States, there have been protests and marches related to the election of Trump, policies of the administration, and specific events (Healy & Peters, 2016).

Past studies have revealed that SWB is generally stable, but that personal events, including widowhood, divorce, and unemployment, can modify SWB. These events potentially also provide information to the individual about their fit with and likelihood of success in a given

society. Viewed through this lens, the election outcome, because of its implications for the fit between the values of the individual and the values of the country, could be perceived as having implications for the future of individuals in the country and would be expected to impact their assessment of the overall quality of their lives. Future studies should evaluate whether other events that convey moral values related to individualizing moral foundations, such as policies that have implications for human rights and the degree to which a country is inclusive, might be particularly likely to impact SWB among some individuals.

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Table 1

Correlations among Study Variables

	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.
1. Partisanship	-.04	.20***	-.02	-.06	-.06	-.14**	.06	.49***	.19***	.14**	.14***	.35***	.17***	.18***
2. Individualiz. MF	-	.13***	.15***	.13***	.09**	.07	.10**	.04	.03	-.04	-.06*	-.02	-.02	-.03
3. Binding MF	-	-	.004	.03	.04	-.09*	.03	.08**	.05	.11*	.15***	.13***	.12***	.17***
4. T1 Media	-	-	-	.44***	.51***	.53***	.05	-.06*	-.05	-.02	-.05	-.05	-.01	.01
5. T2 Media	-	-	-	-	.36***	.40***	-.01	-.14***	-.06	.001	-.08**	-.11***	-.06	-.01
6. T3 Media	-	-	-	-	-	.40***	.01	-.11**	-.06	-.03	-.02	-.05	-.02	.01
7. T4 Media	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.00	-.18***	-.14**	-.05	-.06	-.11**	-.05	-.04
8. T1 Happiness	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.25***	.41***	.51***	.52***	.34***	.39***	.47***
9. T2 Happiness	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.40***	.30***	.19***	.61***	.30***	.25***
10. T3 Happiness	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.53***	.39***	.45***	.66***	.43***
11. T4 Happiness	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.48***	.45***	.53***	.64***
12. T1 Life Sat.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.52***	.67***	.70***
13. T2 Life Sat.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.58***	.54***
14. T3 Life Sat.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.70***
15. T4 Life Sat.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note. MF represents moral foundations. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 2

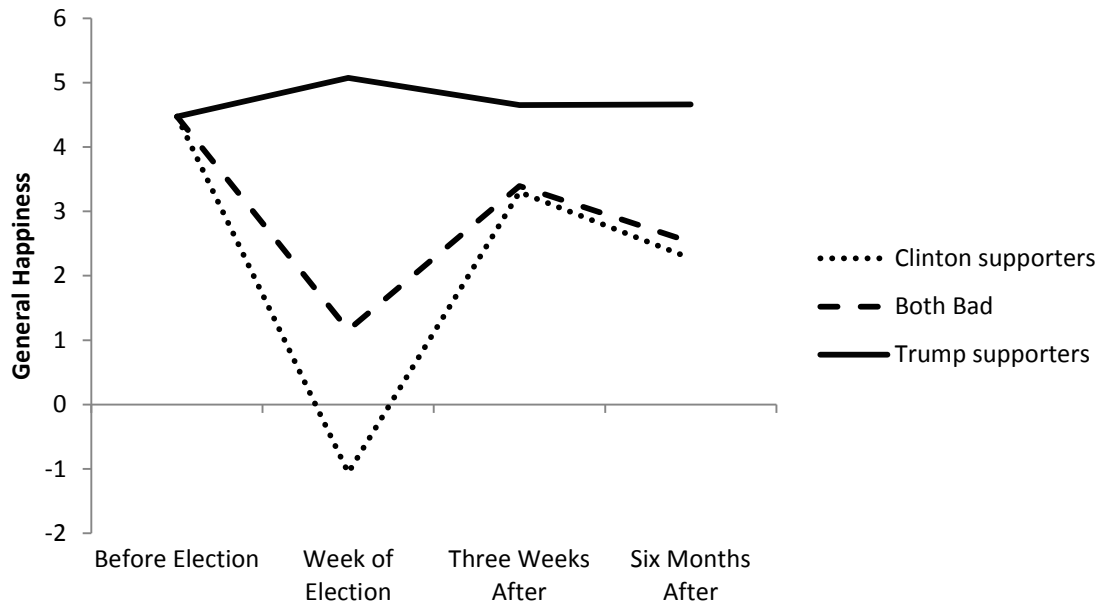
Conditional Multilevel Models with General Happiness

	Time and Partisanship		Media and Moral Foundations	
	Coefficient (SE)	t value	Coefficient (SE)	t value
Intercept	4.03 (0.10)	41.23***	4.32 (0.16)	27.71***
Time	-114.99 (4.83)	-23.82***	-125.31 (6.18)	-20.27***
Time*Time	194.14 (8.04)	24.15***	210.86 (10.21)	20.65***
Time*Time*Time	-32.06 (1.33)	-24.18***	-34.81 (1.68)	-20.68***
Partisan	0.08 (0.06)	1.42	0.11 (0.08)	1.33
Partisan*Time	43.27 (2.81)	15.41***	41.45 (3.47)	11.96***
Partisan*Time*Time	-72.94 (4.67)	-15.61***	-69.94 (5.73)	-12.20***
Partisan*Time*Time*Time	12.04 (0.77)	15.63***	11.55 (0.94)	12.23***
Media			-0.03 (0.01)	-2.45*
Partisan*Media			0.02 (0.01)	3.59***
Moral Foundations			0.06 (0.05)	1.04
MF*Media			-0.02 (0.01)	-2.82**

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Figure 1

Multilevel model with General Happiness Predicted by Time since Election and Political Preference



Note. Sample sizes varied across time points due to attrition and missing data. Clinton supporters at Time 1 $n = 514$; Time 2 $n = 517$; Time 3 $n = 486$; Time 4 $n = 264$. Both bad group at Time 1 $n = 307$, Time 2 $n = 309$, Time 3 $n = 286$; Time 4 $n = 145$. Trump supporters at Time 1 $n = 179$, Time 2 $n = 181$, Time 3 $n = 168$, Time 4 $n = 126$.

Table 3

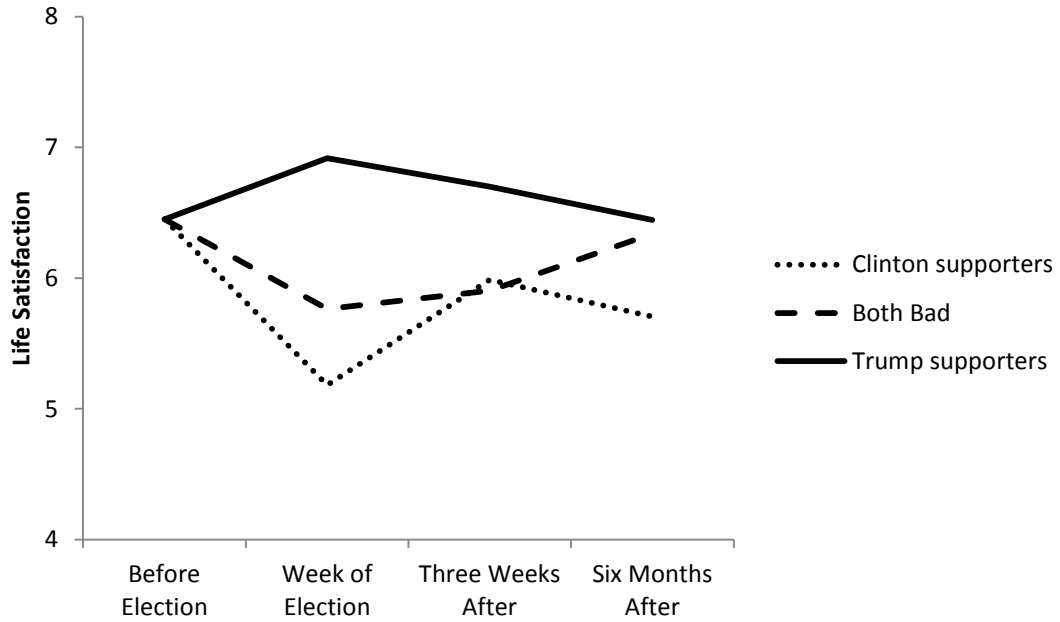
Conditional Multilevel Models with Life Satisfaction

	Time and Partisanship		Media and Moral Foundations	
	Coefficient (SE)	t value	Coefficient (SE)	t value
Intercept	6.13 (0.05)	132.82***	6.23 (0.08)	79.06***
Time	-15.65 (1.99)	-7.86***	-15.45 (3.04)	-5.09***
Time*Time	26.50 (3.31)	8.00***	26.18 (5.02)	5.22***
Time*Time*Time	-4.38 (0.55)	-8.01***	-4.33 (0.83)	-5.23***
Partisan	0.13 (0.03)	4.90***	0.10 (0.04)	2.54*
Partisan*Time	9.02 (1.16)	7.81***	8.46 (1.70)	4.98***
Partisan*Time*Time	-15.22 (1.92)	-7.91***	-14.30 (2.81)	-5.09***
Partisan*Time*Time*Time	2.51 (0.32)	7.92***	2.36 (0.46)	5.10***
Media			-0.14 (0.03)	-2.26*
Moral Foundations			-0.01 (0.01)	-1.20
MF*Media			-0.01 (0.00)	-2.26*

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Figure 2

Multilevel model with Life Satisfaction Predicted by Time since Election and Political Preference



Note. Sample sizes varied across time points due to attrition and missing data. Clinton supporters at Time 1 $n = 522$; Time 2 $n = 522$; Time 3 $n = 489$; Time 4 $n = 266$. Both bad group at Time 1 $n = 313$, Time 2 $n = 313$, Time 3 $n = 288$; Time 4 $n = 146$. Trump supporters at Time 1 $n = 184$, Time 2 $n = 184$, Time 3 $n = 169$, Time 4 $n = 126$.

Supplemental Materials

Table A

Demographic and Descriptive Characteristics of Samples

	Clinton supporters	Both bad	Trump supporters
Age	28.64 (11.92)	25.59 (11.08)	31.74 (14.51)
Female	69%	66%	61%
Caucasian	42%	54%	92%
from California sample	46%	38%	5%
from Texas sample	8%	28%	37%
from MTurk sample	46%	35%	58%
Individualizing vs. binding MF*	.48 (1.54)	.33 (1.37)	.26 (.94)
Political partisanship*	2.60 (1.25)	3.80 (1.58)	5.42 (1.29)

Note. *Values represent means and standard deviations

Table B

Unconditional, Time, and Cubic Time Model for General Happiness

Parameter	Unconditional Model		Time Model		Cubic Time Model	
	Estimate (SE)	<i>t</i> value	Estimate (SE)	<i>t</i> value	Estimate (SE)	<i>t</i> value
Intercept	2.89 (0.08)	36.64***	2.64 (0.08)	31.86***	4.03 (0.11)	37.54***
Time			0.25 (0.03)	8.61***	-116.11 (4.35)	-26.67***
Time*Time					195.98 (7.25)	27.04***
Time*Time* Time					-32.36 (1.20)	-27.07***

Note. -2 Log Likelihood = 18757.63 for Unconditional Mean Model; -2 Log Likelihood = 18684.26 for Time Model; -2 Log Likelihood = 18002.16 for Cubic Time Model. *** $p < .001$.

Table C

Unconditional, Time, and Cubic Time Model for Life Satisfaction

Parameter	<u>Unconditional Model</u>		<u>Time Model</u>		<u>Cubic Time Model</u>	
	Estimate (SE)	<i>t</i> value	Estimate (SE)	<i>t</i> value	Estimate (SE)	<i>t</i> value
Intercept	5.98 (0.05)	126.15***	5.94 (0.05)	122.66***	6.13 (0.06)	109.14***
Time			0.04 (0.01)	3.53***	-15.81 (1.78)	-8.87***
Time*Time					26.77 (2.97)	9.02***
Time*Time*					-4.42 (0.49)	-9.04***
Time						

Note. -2 Log Likelihood = 12872.47 for Unconditional Mean Model; -2 Log Likelihood = 12860.03 for Time Model; -2 Log Likelihood = 12771.31 for Cubic Time Model. *** $p < .001$