

U.S. POLITICS AS A LOSS REMINDER: AN ADAPTATION
OF THE HISTORICAL LOSS SCALE

by

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ABSTRACT

Historical loss, the degree to which American Indians (AIs) think about losses such as land, culture, and life, is a contributor to experiences of historical trauma and its negative impacts in AIs. The relationship between historical loss and political participation among AIs has not been examined. AIs have lower rates of political participation than other groups, and ample political participation among AIs is necessary to protect their sovereignty, values, and interests. Minority groups can become mobilized to political action through perceiving discrimination or injustices against them. Measures of historical loss contain items related to the discrimination and injustices that AIs have experienced. While the Historical Loss Scale (HLS) measures the frequency with which AIs think about historical loss, it is rather general and may not relate to U.S. politics or the U.S. government in all cases. Thus, an adaptation of the HLS is introduced called the U.S. Politics as a Loss Reminder Scale (USPLRS) that contextualizes historical losses within the context of U.S. politics. A primary goal of the study was to examine the factor structure, reliability, and validity of the USPLRS. Further, it is possible that by directly contextualizing historical loss within U.S. politics, there will be a positive relationship between the extent to which AIs report U.S. politics act as a reminder of historical losses, and their levels of political engagement. It is also possible that a frequency of general thoughts about historical loss measured by the HLS will also be associated with political engagement. To test these hypotheses, a sample of AI adults (n=877) completed a series of questionnaires including the HLS, USPLRS, and measures of political engagement during the November 2020 national election cycle. Results revealed a 3-factor structure of the USPLRS related to losses due to government mistreatment, death, and loss of respect. Scores on both the HLS and USPLRS were positively associated with political participation, with the USPLRS exhibiting unique predictability beyond the HLS.

INTRODUCTION

Historical Trauma and the Historical Loss Scale (HLS)

The experiences of American Indians (AIs) are shaped by the long-lasting effects of genocidal governmental policies, including colonization, violence, and genocide, which have resulted in the loss of land, language, and culture (Whitbeck et al., 2004). These experiences have contributed to historical trauma, which is defined as “the emotional and psychological injury both over the lifespan and across generations resulting from massive group trauma for a group of people who share an identity or circumstance” (John-Henderson & Ginty, 2020). The Historical Trauma Response (HTR) refers to several psychological and behavioral responses to these traumas such as depression, difficulties with emotional regulation, and suicidal ideation (Evans-Campbell, 2008; Gone et al., 2019). The degree to which AIs think about the loss of land, life, culture, and other aspects related to the past and present atrocities committed against their people is posited to be one contributor to current experiences of historical trauma (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998). This construct has been coined historical loss (HL) and although it is rooted in past experiences, it represents a current experience of ongoing thoughts related to these losses (Whitbeck, 2004). Thus, AIs do not need to have directly experienced these losses to experience HL. Rather, HL is simply the awareness that these losses have occurred, and this awareness alone can directly lead to negative experiences stemming from such losses (Armenta et al., 2016).

To measure HL, Whitbeck et al. (2004) developed and validated the Historical Loss Scale (HLS). The HLS assesses the frequency of thoughts related to losses resulting from European colonization and consists of 12 items measured on a 6-point scale (1-several times a day to 6-

never). The HLS was originally explained by a single latent factor that accounted for 58% of the variance. However, a later longitudinal study revealed a 3-factor structure, with subsets of items tapping into general loss, loss of people, and cultural mistreatment (Armenta et al., 2016). It is important to note that two items were excluded from the analysis because they were deemed inappropriate for adolescents. In the analyses, it was revealed that a single factor provided a poor fit of the data. Surprisingly, all items loaded strongly on to the first latent variable, but the residual variances formed additional factors. As noted by the authors, “These results suggest that all of the HLS items tap into a single global construct, but that subsets of items may tap into more specific components of HL. We thus categorized the items into three groups based on conceptual similarity” (Armenta et al., 2016). These factors include 4-items that tap into cultural loss, 2-items regarding the loss of people, and 4-items related to cultural mistreatment. Items conceptualized as cultural loss were those related to the loss of land, language, spiritual ways, and culture. The items associated with the loss of people contained one item regarding the loss of life due to the effects of alcoholism, and one item regarding loss due to early deaths. Items associated with cultural mistreatment were the loss of family ties, families, self-respect, and trust in whites (Armenta et al., 2016).

Most of the research utilizing the HLS has examined its relationship with mental health outcomes. Research has shown that thoughts about HL can be distressing for AIs, and thus, HL can be conceptualized as a stressor (Armenta et al., 2016). Overall, scores on the HLS have been associated with negative mental health outcomes such as increased anxiety, depression, thoughts of suicide, substance abuse, and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Tucker et al., 2016; Morgan & Freeman, 2009; Ehlers et al., 2022).

Political Participation in Democracy

Political participation is a fundamental aspect of democracy (van Deth, 2021). It provides individuals with the opportunity to act collectively, promote change, and maintain important values and lifestyles (Marinetto, 2003). Political participation refers to behaviors such as voting, contacting public officials, engaging with political news, or discussion politics (Torney-Purta et al., 2003). Citizen involvement in the political realm promotes democratic governance and helps ensure the government is accountable to the people (Skelcher & Torfing, 2010). The democratic system is strengthened when all groups participate in politics, especially in the electoral system (Knight, 1994). Engaging in politics can also lead to social capital, which is the value and resources obtained from social networks (Putnam, 2000). Through political engagement, individuals can broaden and deepen their social networks, resulting in benefits for both individuals and the aggregate of the social network (Dodd, 2015). Social capital theorists posit that political engagement can promote community health, as well as individual well-being (Eriksson et al., 2009). For example, political participation has been associated with the creation of community conditions that promote health such as safe streets, updates to housing conditions, and improved sanitation systems (Sabo et al., 2017). Further, political participation in the form of voting has been positively associated with well-being (Ziersch et al., 2004). Given widespread benefits that can be obtained through robust political participation, it is important to understand aspects that encourage, or potentially deter individuals from engaging.

Racial Differences in Political Participation

Using surveys, researchers have begun to study differences in participation across racial and ethnic groups (Huyser et al., 2017). In general, these studies have revealed that minority groups typically participate less than non-Hispanic whites. Leighley (1999) notes that research on political participation among minority groups has largely focused on comparisons between Black, Hispanic, and Asian populations with very limited research on indigenous populations. Although research on political participation among AIs remains limited, findings suggest that AIs vote at significantly lower rates than other populations (Huyser et al. 2017; Brady et al., 1995). All segments of the population should have the same opportunity to engage in politics to maintain a truly democratic society (Plotke, 2002). Understanding the mechanisms behind the low participation rates of some groups is important to better the underrepresented groups and the democratic system in its entirety.

History of American Indian (AI) Political Participation

American Indians have a unique history as it relates to political participation. For example, AIs were not granted citizenship in the U.S. until 1924 (Peterson, 1957). However, this act was used as a mechanism to forcefully assimilate these populations as they were now recognized as citizens. Coinciding with the Indians Citizenship Act young AIs were forced to attend boarding schools. Peterson (1957) highlights that these policies were designed to destroy AI cultures and identities. These policies have had lasting impacts on AI communities, including political engagement. Despite obtaining citizenship, AIs faced various barriers in the law and were not granted a federally protected right to vote (Peterson, 1997). Instead, the right to vote

had to be fought for state by state until the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (Huysen et al., 2017). However, AIs were still discouraged from voting. Like other minority groups, particularly African Americans, AIs faced literacy tests, poll taxes, and voter intimidation once they were granted the right to vote (Peterson, 1957). Inaccessibility to voter registration is an issue throughout the United States and is of particular importance to AI communities (Huysen et al., 2017). Many AIs live in rural communities with large distances between houses, which makes door-to-door canvassing and other voter registration initiatives difficult to administer (McCool, 2007). Additionally, some states continue to perpetuate discriminatory voting practices that deter AIs from participating in politics (Huysen et al., 2017). For example, it has been found that voter identification laws disproportionately affect AI communities, such as policies that do not accept tribal IDs as a valid form of identification at polling stations (Koch, 2022, Huysen et al., 2017). Further, the history trauma experienced by AI populations has led to significant distrust in the national government, and may also contribute to a reluctance, or avoidance of participating in national politics (Horejsi et al., 1992). Finally, AIs tend to be of lower socioeconomic status (SES) than other populations, particularly non-Hispanic whites, and SES has been found to be an important predictor of political participation (Brady et al., 1995).

Current AI Political Population

Today, AIs account for around 2% of the US population. While the number may appear small, the population of AIs is typically concentrated in just a few states, which bolsters the impact and importance of their political participation (Conner, 2014; Witmer et al., 2014). The states that most AIs reside in also have relatively small populations, which makes their presence and participation even more meaningful. For example, in New Mexico, AIs make up more than

9% of the eligible voter population (Huysen et al., 2017). While the AI population is relatively small, the average age of the population is less than that of the national average. Specifically, the median age of AIs is 31 compared to the national average of 37, and as a result, the AI population is expected to grow significantly in the coming years and decades (Huysen et al., 2017). Thus, understanding motivations and antecedents of AI political participation may become increasingly important in the coming years to ensure values, traditions, and interests of these populations are protected.

Sovereignty

Before Europeans arrived in the America's, AIs had long established forms of government that ranged from theocracies to rather sophisticated democracies (Peterson, 1957). Thus, the interaction between the United States government and AIs has been considered a government-to-government relationship (Huysen et al, 2017). As a result of this government-to-government relationship, Peterson (1957) posits that AIs do not follow voting patterns typical of other American citizens. Rather than possessing strong party affiliations, AIs typically vote according to tribal issues, and generally support the candidate that will protect their land, sovereignty, and traditional ways (Peterson, 1957; Corntassel & Witmer, 1997). Sovereignty is a particularly important and interesting aspect of AI political participation and may explain differences in both motivations and actual behavior within the political realm. Typically, minority groups participate in politics to seek inclusion within the legal and socioeconomic framework of the system (Luna, 2000). On the other hand, AIs may participate to protect their sovereignty, and the rights associated with it (Kahn, 2013; Evans, 2011). Due to this motivation to vote to protect sovereignty, it is logical to assume that ample participation amongst AIs is

necessary to ensure that candidates voted into office, and policies passed into legislation are in line with this goal.

U.S. Politics as a Loss Reminder Scale (USPLRS)

The Historical Loss Scale (HLS) is a widely used tool for measuring historical loss among American Indians. However, there is a need for a scale that specifically measures the degree to which US politics may incite thoughts about historical loss. The current study thus introduces an adaptation of the original HLS called the U.S. Politics as a Loss Reminder Scale (USPLRS). The 12-item scale is identical to the original HLS with the following changes: First, each item is prefaced with US politics acting as a reminder of a loss. For example, rather than asking individuals how often they think about a loss (e.g., the loss of land), participants are asked the extent to which US politics reminds them of the loss (e.g., US politics reminds me of the loss of our land). The HLS has responses ranging from 1 = never to 6 = multiple times a day. The USPLRS has responses ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Since the USPLRS is based on level of agreement in relation to how U.S. politics act as loss reminders, we decided to place responses on a traditional 5-point Likert scale.

The USPLRS has potential to provide novel information above and beyond the HLS in several ways. First, by placing the items in the context of US politics, the USPLRS may help uncover unique associations between historical loss and political engagement. Further, the USPLRS may be more salient or relevant to individuals who are politically engaged. Rather than asking the frequency with which AIs think about losses, the USPLRS specifically acts how US politics act as a reminder of historical losses. Thus, the USPLRS may be a more sensitive measure of the impacts of historical trauma and loss in AI populations. Finally, evidence for the

reliability and validity of the USPLRS will provide evidence for the adaptability of the HLS to specific contexts. Thus, if the USPLRS is found to be valid and reliable, it may open the door to other adaptations of measures of historical losses in various contexts of interest.

There are two potential ways that scores on the USPLRS may affect AI political engagement. First, thoughts about HL have been conceptualized as a stressor (Walls & Whitbeck, 2012). Thus, if US politics act as a reminder of historical loss, AIs might seek to avoid the stressor by avoiding the reminder, and thus avoiding engagement in U.S. politics. For example, in their paper introducing the HLS, Whitbeck et al. (2004) found that nearly 1/3rd of respondents at least sometimes avoided places or people that reminded them of historical losses. Thus, for individuals who report that U.S. politics acts as a salient reminder of HL, they may simply avoid national politics and participation within it. However, previous research has found that perceived injustice or discrimination is a predictor of involvement in collective actions such as political participation (Oskooii, 2020; Hope & Jagers, 2014). For example, it was found that Black young adults who experience racial discrimination have higher levels of political participation (White-Johnson, 2012). Further, engaging in political acts such as voting can boost empowerment in oppressed and marginalized groups as they seek to make their voices heard in the political arena (Davis, 2010). AIs have a unique history of being subjected to discriminatory practices by the US government, and discrimination has continued through current times (Foxworth, 2022). Thus, if U.S. politics acts a reminder of historical losses and the injustices and discrimination associated with those losses, AIs may seek empowerment through participation in national politics. Finally, racial, and ethnic identity have been positively associated with political participation (Chong & Rogers, 2005; Sanchez, 2006). It is posited that perceptions of injustice

can motivate group members to become cohesive and collectively engaged in politics (Walker, 2014). Thus, the discrimination and injustices associated with historical losses, particularly in the realm of U.S. may motivate AIs to become politically active.

Overview and Current Study

Previous research has established the reliability and validity of using the HLS to measure historical loss in AIs (Whitbeck et al., 2004). However, the relationship between historical loss and political participation among AIs has not been studied. AIs have a unique history as it relates to participation in the national system through their experiences of violence, lack of voting rights, and lack of accessibility (Peterson, 1957). These factors have contributed to lower levels of participation among AIs. However, the AI adult population is growing rapidly, they represent a significant proportion of the eligible population in several states, and participation in politics can be used to protect important ways of AI life, particularly those related to sovereignty (Huysen et al., 2017; Kahn, 2013). Further, ample political participation across groups is representative of a truly democratic society, it can lead to improvements in community conditions, and has been related to benefits on the individual level (Eriksson et al., 2009; Ziersch et al., 2004).

The relationship between historical loss and political participation may be unexamined due to the generality of the HLS. Thus, the current study introduces an adaption of the HLS, called the USPLRS, which contextualizes historical losses within U.S. politics, and how U.S. politics can act as a reminder of these losses. The purpose of this study was to assess the factor structure of the USPLRS and explore its relationship with political engagement among AIs. First, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted on responses to the USPLRS to examine its factor structure. Next, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to examine the fit of

the factor structure. Research has shown that political participation among minority groups can be influenced by factors such as perceptions of discrimination and injustice (Bañales et al., 2020). Therefore, it is possible that the USPLRS, which assesses the extent to which U.S. politics acts as a reminder of historical losses, may be related to political engagement among AIs. To assess the functionality of the scale, we examined the relationship between scores on the USPLRS and levels of political engagement. We also examined the relationship between scores on the HLS and political participation in an exploratory fashion. By adapting the HLS to fit within specific context of the US politics, the current study introduces the possibility of a positive relationship between scores on the USPLRS and political engagement. In line with previous research regarding perceived injustices and discrimination in relation to political participation, it is hypothesized that scores on the USPLRS will be associated with increased political participation.

METHODS

Participants

The current study was approved by the Montana State University International Review Board. All participants provided informed consent prior to participation in the study. Qualtrics recruited a sample of 2754 participants living in the United States throughout November 2020, during the U.S. national election cycle. Qualtrics draws participants from managed research panels for groups that are more difficult to reach, which are developed through targeted recruiting. To be eligible for participation, participants had to currently live within the United States. Of interest to the current study was AI over the age of 18. Of the 2754 participants, a final sample of 877 self-identified American Indians over the age of 18 was obtained.

Measures

Demographics

Participants were asked to self-report basic demographic information including age, gender, and income.

Political and Community Involvement

This scale has been adapted from previous research, which includes items regarding engagement in all three types of civic engagement activities within the past month (Ballard et al., 2020). Of interest to the current study, are items related to political engagement, and thus, those are the only items included in analyses.

Standard Political Participation. Participants self-report their engagement in each activity within the past month with responses ranging from 1 = Never to 5 = Multiple times a day. Higher scores indicate more involvement in the activity of interest. 6 items were included which measured participation in activities such as expressing political opinions, reading political news, watching political news, discussing politics with friends and family, and participating in a political party, club, or organization (e.g., “Please rate how often you have participated in each activity in the past month: Participated in a political party, club, or organization”).

Historical Loss Scale (HLS)

The HLS is a 12-item self-report measure used to assess the frequency with which AIs think about historical losses. Participants respond on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = never to 6 = several times a day. Participants report their frequency of specific losses including the loss of land, traditional values, trust, culture, respect, and the loss of life (e.g., “Please rate how often you think about each type of loss: the loss of our land”).

U.S. Politics as a Loss Reminder Scale (USPLRS)

This questionnaire was adapted from the original Historical Loss Scale (HLS) developed by Whitbeck and colleagues (2004). The questionnaire is a 12-item self-report measure to assess the extent to which US politics acts as a reminder of loss on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Participants are asked to rate their agreement with 12 statements regarding the extent to which US politics reminds them of specific losses including the loss of land, traditional values, trust, culture, respect, and the loss of life (e.g., US politics remind me of the loss of our land).

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics for the variables of interest are presented in Table 1. Participants were between 18-84 years old ($M = 37.68$ years; $SD = 15.24$ years). 597 participants (70.1%) identified as female. Average family income was approximately \$42,000.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for variables of interest.

Variable	N	Mean (%)	Std. Deviation	Range
Age	877	37.82	15.17	18-84
Gender	852	70.1%(Female)	0.473	1-2
Income	850	\$41,929.41	\$35,694.95	\$5,000-\$150,000
Political Participation	877	15.73	5.47	6-30
HLS	877	44.40	20.28	12-72
USPLRS Factor 1	877	3.44	6.05	6-30
USPLRS Factor 2	877	3.21	3.13	3-15
USPLRS Factor 3	877	3.30	2.19	2-10
USPLRS Total	877	3.35	10.59	11-55

Bivariate Correlations

Bivariate correlations of the variables of interest are presented in Table 2. In line with previous research, income was associated with political participation ($r = .196$, $p < .001$) (Quintelier, 2007). However, neither age, nor gender were associated with political participation. Interestingly, scores on the HLS were positively associated with political participation ($r = .136$,

$p < .001$), suggesting individuals who think frequently about historical losses are more likely to participate in politics. The relationship between the USPLRS and political participation were examined following the factor analyses, and thus will be described following the presentation of those results.

Table 2. Bivariate correlations.

Variables	Age	Gender	Income	Political Participation	HLS	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Age								
Gender	-.019							
Income	.106**	.106**						
Pol. Part	-.068	-.049	.196**					
HLS	-.5	.096**	-.031	.136**				
Factor 1	.061	.129**	.026	.197**	.394**			
Factor 2	.035	.091**	.019	.160**	.397**	.804**		
Factor 3	.108**	.088*	.032	.161**	.366**	.772**	.751**	
USPLRS	.067*	.118**	.027	.193**	.418**	.968**	.909**	.869**
Total								

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed)

Factor Analyses

To examine the factor structure of the USPLRS and select items for a final scale, we conducted an exploratory (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). We used a random number generator to divide out total sample into a test sample ($N = 439$) and a confirmatory sample ($N = 438$). Descriptive statistics for the two samples are provided in Table 3(test sample) and Table 4(confirmatory sample).

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for test sample.

Variable	N	Mean (%)	Std. Deviation	Range
Age	439	37.96	15.86	18-84
Gender	425	68.2%(Female)	0.49	1-2
Income	424	\$42,724.06	\$36,283.58	\$5,000-\$150,000
Political Participation	439	15.66	5.34	6-30
HLS	439	43.97	20.66	12-72
USPLRS Factor 1	439	3.40	5.97	6-30
USPLRS Factor 2	439	3.17	3.12	3-15
USPLRS Factor 3	439	3.23	2.22	2-10
USPLRS Total	439	3.31	10.56	11-55

Table 4. Descriptive statistics for confirmatory sample.

Variable	N	Mean (%)	Std. Deviation	Range
Age	438	38.13	15.10	18-84
Gender	428	70.8%(Female)	0.47	1-2
Income	427	\$41,475.41	\$36,489.77	\$5,000-\$150,000
Political Participation	438	15.59	5.46	6-30
HLS	438	44.64	20.29	12-72
USPLRS Factor 1	438	3.36	6.12	6-30
USPLRS Factor 2	438	3.15	3.13	3-15
USPLRS Factor 3	438	3.23	2.15	2-10
USPLRS Total	438	3.28	10.57	11-55

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

To examine the factor structure and to select items for the final scale, we first conducted an exploratory factor analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was .96, indicating a strong sample size for the factor analysis. A parallel analysis (PA) with Promax rotation was conducted. A parallel analysis (PA) allowed for us to determine the number of factors to retain based on the comparison between observed eigenvalues and eigenvalues of randomly generated data. Further, previous research has shown that the items on the HLS are correlated with one another, and thus a Promax rotation was conducted to allow for these correlations (Whitbeck et al., 2004; Armenta et al., 2016). First, we assessed the one-factor structure. The model was a good fit and explained 64% of the variance, with factor loadings ranging from .76 to .83. Previous research has shown that the HLS can be explained by a 3-factor

solution with factors relating to cultural loss, the loss of people, and cultural mistreatment (Armenta et al., 2016). The 3-factor structure may have increased predictive validity as specific losses can be assessed in relation to various outcomes. In line with a revealed 3-factor structure of the HLS, we sought to assess a possible 3-factor structure of the USPLRS. One item (Item 3: “U.S. politics reminds me of the loss of our traditional spiritual ways”) had cross loadings on multiple factors, and thus was excluded from further analyses. The analysis resulted in a 3-factor solution that explained 67% of the variance. Factor 1 had an eigenvalue of 3.36 accounting for 31% of the variance. Factor 2 had an eigenvalue of 2.21 and accounted for 19% of the variance. Factor 3 had an eigenvalue of 1.86 accounting for 17% of the variance. Factor loadings ranged from .40 to .96, indicating good item-to-factor fit, and are depicted in Table 5. Certain losses, and reminders of these losses may have differential predictive validity of political participation, and thus, we decided to retain the 3-factor structure over the single factor structure. The factors were named based on the items that had high loadings on each factor. Factor 1, labeled “Government Mistreatment” included general losses related to governmental policies and mistreatment (e.g., loss of land, loss of language, loss of culture, loss due to government relocation, loss of self-respect due to poor treatment from government, loss of trust due to broken treaties). Factor 2, labeled “Interpersonal Loss” included 3 items pertaining to interpersonal losses (e.g., loss of family ties due to boarding schools, losses from effects of alcoholism, loss of people through early death). Factor 3, labeled “Respect” included 2 items related to loss of respect (e.g., loss of respect by children for elders, loss of respect by children for traditional ways). A diagram of the factor analysis including factor loadings and correlations between factors is depicted in Figure 1.

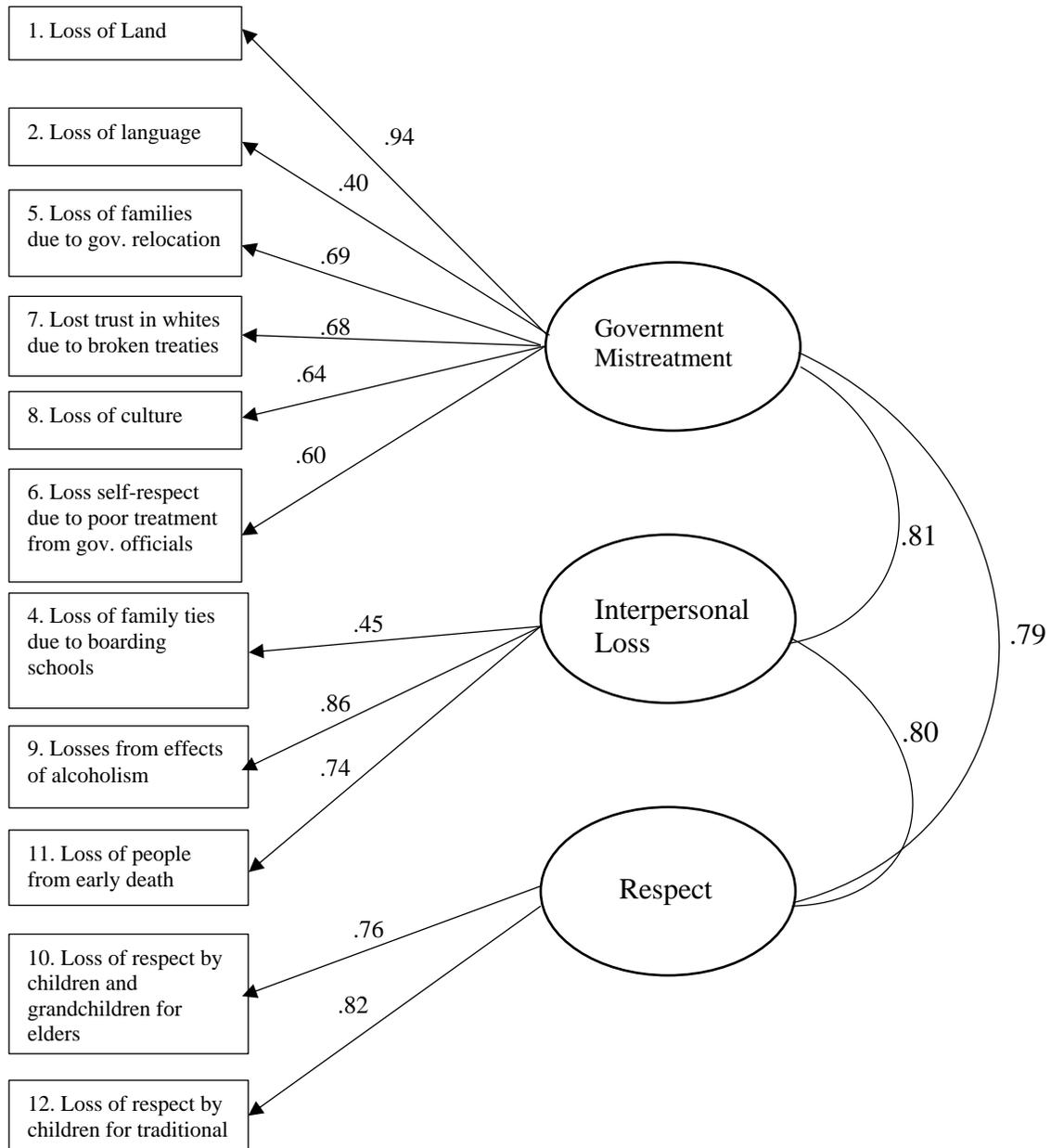
Table 5. Exploratory factor analysis.

USPLRS item	Factor loading		
	1	2	3
Factor 1: Government Mistreatment			
1. U.S. politics remind me of the loss of our land.	.94	-.04	-.08
2. U.S. politics remind me of the loss of our language	.40	.27	.14
5. U.S. politics remind me of how we lost families from the reservation to government relocation.	.69	.16	.01
6. U.S. politics remind me of how we lost self-respect from poor treatment by government officials	.60	.11	.17
7. U.S. politics remind me of how we lost trust in whites because of broken treaties.	.68	.10	.03
8. U.S. politics remind me of the loss of our culture.	.64.	-.04	.23
Factor 2: Interpersonal Loss			
4. U.S. politics remind me of how we lost family ties because of boarding schools.	.10	.45	.24
9. U.S. politics remind me of the losses from the effects of alcoholism on our people.	-.03	.86	.04
11. U.S. politics remind me of the loss of our people through early death.	.12	.74	-.03

Factor 3: Respect

10. U.S. politics remind me of the loss of respect by our children and grandchildren for elders	.01	.08	.76
12. US politics remind me of the loss of respect by our children for traditional ways.	.05	.00	.82

Figure 1. Factor analysis diagram.



Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

A CFA was conducted to test the fit of the 3-factor solution identified in the EFA. Results indicate a 3-factor solution with item loadings ranging from 0.76 to 0.87. Model fit indices are presented in Table 6. Absolute fit indices included the chi-square statistic ($\chi^2 = 44.57$, $df = 25$, $p < .0094$), RMSEA = 0.062, and SRMR = 0.024. Due to large samples often resulting in significant chi-square values (Babyak & Green, 2010), we used the relative chi-square approach (χ^2 / df) suggested by Wheaton et al., (1977). The relative chi-square was 2.78, which falls in the acceptable cutoff range of 2.0 to 5.0 (McDonald & Ho, 2002). Incremental fit indices suggest the model fits the data well (CFI = 0.981 and TLI = 0.975). The minimum correlation of possible factor scores is also high, indicating that the factors are well-defined and distinct from each other. Finally, each factor demonstrated high internal validity. The internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients which were 0.94, 0.84, and 0.84 for each respective factor. These values suggest that items within each factor are tapping into the same construct.

Table 6. Model fit indices for CFA.

Fit Index	Value	Cutoff for good fit	Good/Poor fit
Chi-square (df = 41)	114.090	Nonsignificant p-value	Poor (p < .001)
Relative chi-square (χ^2/df)	2.78	$2.0 < (\chi^2/df) < 5.0$	Good
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	.062	$.05 < (RMSEA) < .08$	Good
Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)	0.024	< .05	Good
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.981	> .90	Good
Tucker-Lewis Index	0.974	> .90	Good

Correlation Analyses of USPLRS and Political Participation

Of interest to the current study, was the relationship between scores on the USPLRS and political engagement among AI adults. To examine this relationship, we performed correlation analyses of each individual factor in relation to political engagement, as well global scores on the scale and political engagement. Factor 1 was positively associated with political engagement ($r = .197, p < .001$), suggesting that individuals who reported U.S. politics reminds them of general losses related to government mistreatment were more likely to engage in U.S. politics. Factor 2 was also positively associated with political engagement ($r = .160, p < .001$), suggesting that individuals who reported US politics reminds them of losses related to death were more likely to engage in US. politics. Factor 3 was positively associated to political engagement ($r = .161,$

$p < .001$) suggesting that individuals who reported U.S. politics reminds them of losses related to the loss of respect were more likely to engage in U.S. politics. Finally, total scores on the scale were positively associated with political engagement ($r = .193, p < .001$) suggesting that individuals who reported that US politics reminds them of each type of loss were more likely to engage in US politics.

Regression Analysis

We conducted a hierarchical regression analysis to examine the unique contributions of the USPLRS and HLS in predicting political participation, while controlling for age, gender, and income. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 7. Each step of the hierarchical regression explained more variance in political participation than the previous step. In step 1 of the regression, we included our demographic variables (e.g., age, gender, and income). The overall model was significant $F(3, 846) = 14.801, p < .001$, and accounted for 4.7% of the variance. In step 2, the addition of HLS scores resulted in a significant model $F(4, 845) = 15.888, p < .001$, and accounted for an additional 1.9% of the variance. Finally, in step 3, the addition of scores on the USPLRS resulted in a model that was significant $F(5, 844) = 18.404, p < .001$, and accounted for an additional 2.7% of variance. After controlling for the covariates, we found that the USPLRS significantly predicted political participation ($\beta = .097, p < .001$), while the HLS did not ($\beta = .018, p = .072$). These results suggest that the USPLRS has a unique predictive ability beyond the HLS in the relationship between historical loss and political participation in AIs.

Table 7. Hierarchical regression analyses for political participation.

Dependent Variable:	Political Participation			
	β	F	R^2	ΔR^2
Independent Variables				
Model 1: Demographic Variables		14.801**	.047	
Age	-.033**			
Gender	-.333			
Income	.355**			
Model 2: Addition of HLS		15.888**	.066	.019
Age	-.030*			
Gender	-.489			
Income	.359**			
HLS	.038**			
Model 3: Addition of USPLRS		18.404**	.093	.027
Age	-.036**			
Gender	-.673			
Income	.347**			
HLS	.018			
USPLRS	.097**			

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The current study aimed to introduce and validate a novel adaptation of the original HLS called the USPLRS. The USPLRS measures the extent to which U.S. politics acts as a reminder of historical losses. The goal of the current study was to assess psychometric properties of the USPLRS including factor structure, reliability, validity, and functionality. The results of the current study provide evidence for both the reliability and validity of the USPLRS.

An EFA was conducted to examine the factor structure of USPLRS. This analysis first revealed a one factor structure that was a good fit, explaining 64% of the variance. In line with previous research which assessed a 3-factor structure of the HLS, we also examined a 3-factor structure of the USPLRS (Armenta et al., 2016). The 3-factor structure was strong, explaining 67% of the variance. Item 3 was removed due to high cross-loadings across all factors. The 3 factors were named based on the items that had high loadings on each factor: Factor 1(Government Mistreatment), Factor 2(Interpersonal Loss), and Factor 3(Respect). We elected to retain this 3-factor structure under the notion that losses related to government mistreatment, interpersonal loss, and respect may have differential predictive validity in relation to political participation and other potential outcomes. The CFA supported the 3-factor structure with sufficient absolute (RMSEA = 0.062; SRMR = 0.024) and incremental fit indices (TLI = 0.974; CFI = 0.981). The USPLRS exhibited strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha ranging from .84 to .92 for each factor. The results of this study provide evidence for the reliability and validity of the USPLRS in the extent to which U.S. politics act as a historical loss reminder. The 3-factor structure also suggests that losses related to government mistreatment, interpersonal losses, and respect are distinct from one another.

The predictive validity of the scale was examined regarding its relationship to political engagement. Scores on Factor 1 (Government Mistreatment) were positively associated with political participation ($r = .197, p < .001$). Scores on Factor 2 (Interpersonal Loss) were positively associated with political participation ($r = .160, p < .001$). Scores on Factor 3 (Respect) were positively associated with political participation ($r = .161, p < .001$). Finally, global scores on the USPLRS were positively associated with political participation ($r = .193, p < .001$). The results suggest that the individual factors, as well as the total USPLRS are not only effective measures of U.S. politics as a reminder of historical losses, but that these reminders are associated with increased political engagement.

To our knowledge, the current study was also the first to examine the relationship between the HLS and political participation. It was revealed that scores on the HLS were positively associated with political participation ($r = .136, p < .001$). As shown in Table 2, it was revealed that scores on the HLS were positively associated with scores on Factor 1 ($r = .394, p < .001$), Factor 2 ($r = .397, p < .001$), Factor 3 ($r = .366, p < .001$), and total scores on the USPLRS ($r = .418, p < .001$). The positive associations between the HLS and USPLRS are not surprising given the overlap of the context of items on both scales. Further, data was collected in November 2020 during the U.S. national election cycle. Thus, if U.S. politics were salient during this time, and reminded individuals of historical losses, it is likely they also had more frequent thoughts about historical losses. Alternatively, if individuals were having frequent thoughts about historical losses during this time, it may also be likely that U.S. politics could trigger a reminder of these losses. Interestingly, and important to the current study, the USPLRS ($\beta = .097, p < .001$) exhibited unique and significant predictability of political participation beyond the HLS (β

= .018, $p = .072$). Thus, the USPLRS may provide a more salient and relevant measure of historical loss in the context of U.S. politics than the original HLS and may be used as a more sensitive tool in predicting political participation among AIs.

Previous research has shown that experiences of discrimination and perceptions of injustice can lead to political mobilization of minority groups (Oskooii, 2020). When individuals experience discrimination or reflect on social inequality they may become more motivated to take action to improve their circumstances (Bañales et al., 2020). Further a perception that one's community has been, or is currently being stigmatized or neglected, may encourage individuals to engage to address issues and improve their surroundings (Sampson & Raudenbush, 2004). On the other hand, perceptions of injustice and experiences of discrimination can lead to a sense of exclusion from the political process. This can lead to a sense of powerlessness to create change, and ultimately result in disengagement (Oskooii, 2020). In the case of the current study, the former explanation is supported. Thus, loss reminders related to U.S. politics may be conceptualized as a perception of discrimination and/or injustice, which in this case, was associated with greater engagement. As mentioned, AIs have a unique motivation to engage in politics to protect their sovereignty (Kahn, 2013). It may be that AIs who are reminded of historical losses in the context of U.S. politics are motivated to engage in political activities as means of protecting their sovereignty.

Further, previous research has suggested thoughts about historical loss can be conceptualized as a stressor (Whitbeck et al, 2004). These studies have shown that at times, individuals seek avoidance of the stressor of historical by avoiding people and places that act as a reminder of the loss (Whitbeck et al., 2004). In the case of the current study, it seems individuals

sought alternative coping strategies other than avoidance. U.S. politics acted as loss reminders which may have triggered stress, and a way to cope with this stress was to engage in the political realm. Thus, AIs in the current sample may be seeking active coping strategies to address the issues and create changes within U.S. politics to right the wrongs, and consequently cope with the stress of politics acting as loss reminders. Research has shown that focus on efficacy, coping, and sense of control can attenuate some the negative effects of stress and trauma (Bonanno, 2005). Thus, findings of the USPLRS can be used to create interventions to address specific loss reminders that AIs experience in the context of US politics. Specifically, interventions can focus on the improving AIs sense of efficacy and control in engaging in the political realm.

IMPLICATIONS

The USPLRS provides a novel perspective on the impact of historical loss and trauma by placing the items of the HLS in the context of U.S. politics acting as a reminder of losses. Thus, the scale can be used to discover novel associations between historical loss, political engagement, and other outcomes. Given the positive associations between scores on the USPLRS and political engagement, the scale could be used to identify AIs that are more or less likely to engage in politics. From there, interventions can be created to target individuals who are likely to engage in politics and provide them with ample opportunities for participation. Alternatively, individuals that are less likely to participate can be targeted to increase levels of motivation to participate. Political efficacy has been shown to be an important predictor of political participation (McDonnell, 2020). Thus, interventions and campaigns can be created that recognize the power of U.S. politics in acting as a reminder of historical losses, while encouraging a sense of efficacy among AIs to actively participate and exercise their ability to “right the wrongs” of past and present.

LIMITATIONS

There are several limitations of the current study. First, the data collected was cross-sectional, and thus, causation cannot be established. Future research would benefit from the use of longitudinal designs to examine the relationships between historical loss, historical loss reminders, and political engagement. Additionally, the data was collected in November 2020 during the national election cycle. It is likely that during an election cycle, individuals were simply more engaged in politics relative to other times, which could have influenced the results. Further, notions that U.S. politics acting as a loss reminder can be conceptualized as a perception of injustice/discrimination are speculative as this relationship was not directly measured in the current study. Finally, forms of political engagement were not specified in terms of local and tribal politics and national politics. Thus, the results may have partially been due to AIs participating in local and tribal politics, rather than U.S. politics.

Despite these limitations, the results suggest that the USPLRS is a reliable and valid instrument for measuring the extent to which U.S. politics act as reminder of historical losses. Interestingly, the results suggest that loss reminders in the context of U.S. politics are associated with greater political participation among AI adults.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

These findings suggest that a connection of political issues to historical injustices may be a salient way to promote political engagement among AIs. Future research would benefit from examining this connection among other historically marginalized groups. It would also be beneficial to examine the relationship between historical losses and other forms of civic engagement, such as community service, and social movement activities. As mentioned, future research would benefit from longitudinal studies to establish a causal relationship between historical losses, the extent to which U.S. politics act as a reminder of these losses, and political participation. Further, a more in-depth assessment of the predictive validity of each factor of the USPLRS could provide a more comprehensive understanding of which losses are most salient, and how this saliency relates to a motivation to engage in politics. The results of the current study also provide evidence for the adaptability of the original HLS. Future research could benefit from adapting the HLS and USPLRS to different contexts. For example, other variables such as mass media exposure may act as a reminder of losses, which may influence a range of outcomes. Future research would also benefit from examining the relationship between historical losses and engagement in local, and tribal politics. Finally, future research would benefit from directly examining the extent to which historical losses as perceived as experiences of discrimination and how these experiences influence a sense of racial and ethnic identity.

CONCLUSIONS

The current study provides evidence for the reliability and validity of an adaption of the original Historical Loss Scale (HLS) titled the U.S. Politics as a Loss Reminder (Scale). An analysis of the factor structure of the USPLRS revealed three distinct factors associated with losses related to government mistreatment, death, and respect. In a sample of AI adults, thoughts about historical losses and the extent to which U.S. politics act as a reminder of these losses, was positively associated with political participation. Importantly, the USPLRS exhibited unique predictability of political participation beyond the original HLS.

To our knowledge, the results provide the first evidence of historical losses, U.S. politics as a reminder of these losses, and their associations with political participation in AI adults. The results have important implications for the creation of interventions and campaigns to promote political participation among AI populations, a population with traditionally lower levels of political participation (Huyser et al., 2017). The findings also provide a framework for future research in this area.

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