

## Development of Political Alienation Scale in Indonesia

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### Abstract

This research aims to develop a political alienation scale in Indonesia based on the theory of Finifter (1970). The research method includes exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and concurrent validity testing involving 894 respondents (752 women, M = 30.15 years, SD = 6.66 years). Content validity was assessed using Aiken's V index, with one item removed due to a value below .92. EFA revealed two factors (eigenvalue > 1) explaining 54.35% of the variance. After removing five items with low factor loadings, CFA demonstrated acceptable goodness of fit (CFI = .962; GFI = .987; RMSEA = .075). Concurrent validity was tested by correlating the scale with Finifter's instrument, showing significant correlations (r = .459 and .510). Results indicate that the instrument meets validity, reliability (CR > .80), and relevance for measuring political alienation in Indonesia. The dominance of female respondents highlights a limitation for future studies. This research supports monitoring political participation before elections, particularly in Indonesia's urban contexts.

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengembangkan skala alienasi politik di Indonesia berdasarkan teori Finifter (1970). Metode penelitian mencakup *exploratory factor analysis* (EFA), *confirmatory factor analysis* (CFA), dan pengujian validitas konkuren dengan melibatkan 894 responden (752 perempuan, M = 30,15 tahun, SD = 6,66 tahun). Validitas isi diukur menggunakan indeks *Aiken's V*, dengan satu item dihapus karena nilainya di bawah 0,92. EFA menghasilkan dua faktor (eigenvalue > 1) yang menjelaskan 54,35% varians. Setelah menghapus lima item dengan *factor loading* rendah, CFA menunjukkan *goodness of fit* yang dapat diterima (CFI = 0,962; GFI = 0,987; RMSEA = 0,075). Validitas konkuren diuji dengan mengkorelasikan skala ini dengan instrumen Finifter, yang menunjukkan korelasi signifikan (r = 0,459 dan 0,510). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa instrumen ini memenuhi syarat validitas, reliabilitas (CR > 0,80), dan relevan untuk mengukur alienasi politik di Indonesia. Dominasi responden perempuan menjadi catatan untuk penelitian lanjutan. Implikasi penelitian ini mendukung pemantauan partisipasi politik menjelang pemilu, terutama di konteks urban Indonesia.



## INTRODUCTION

The concept of political alienation emerged in the 1960s and 1970s when it was used to describe various activities of United States citizens that were contrary to government policies and indicated attitudes that went beyond mere disagreement or dissatisfaction with policies (Fox, 2021). Political alienation is defined as a powerful attitude of alienation from some aspect of the political system,

community, or even the environment and is relatively persistent based on negative attitudes about the existing political system (Citrin et al., 1975; Dermody et al., 2010; Finifter, 1970).

The form of alienation can lead to a dislike of existing political leaders and institutions, how political decisions are made, and the most popular form is not following the election process, or what we know as *golongan putih* or *golput* (abstention). Unfortunately, the measurement of political alienation still relies heavily on research by Finifter (1970) to explain the existing phenomenon. People do not understand, believe, or can change the existing situation with their political power and feel foreign to the existing process. Finifter (1970) explains four main characteristics of political alienation, including: (1) powerlessness in society is marked by people who begin to doubt whether they can change the existing socio-political conditions; (2) political meaninglessness, where individuals begin to think that existing political decisions and processes are increasingly strange and unpredictable; (3) perceived political normlessness means that the increasingly unclear norms or values adopted in the political system explain why society is increasingly convinced that norms and rules in politics are increasingly blurred and do not have clear boundaries, related to how individuals trust the elite and how the political process is achieved fairly; and (4) political isolation refers to rejecting political norms and goals widely held and shared in society.

Political alienation is indeed individual behavior, but the impact carried out by individuals in large numbers will undoubtedly have its problems and threats because there is no public support for political action. Support for sustainability and support for politics can be threatened by the public perception of political alienation. The absence of support for the sustainability of a country's political system is a serious problem. It is the same as destroying a country's political system because later, people who occupy political positions will not get the public's trust to carry out a sustainable process.

The consequences of the current political alienation process can already be seen, namely the decline in public trust in political parties. A survey from Indopol, reported by CNN Indonesia ("*Survei Indopol*," 2022) and Ramadhan (2022), stated that 35% of citizens no longer trust political parties. The public also sees the inability of political parties to accommodate citizens' aspirations as the leading cause of the public not trusting political parties 26.64%. Followed by political parties that have lost their ideology and integrity, damaging the government system to the point that the public believes that political parties do not contribute to development. Meanwhile, the reason for those who still believe is that they see the role of political parties as assisting, not in political activities. This kind of distrust supports the belief of some people to isolate and distance themselves from political affairs, either as actors or as targets of political party campaigns. Moreover, the public decides to be active in political action, and what they voice has no impact whatsoever (Bell et al., 2024).

After we discussed how abstaining from voting in the election can be linked to political alienation toward the existing political system, unfortunately, the measuring instrument that discusses political alienation is quite old. Finifter (1970) compiled the political alienation instrument based on qualitative interview guidelines. In addition, he did not explain the four dimensions: political powerlessness, political meaninglessness, perceived political normlessness, and political isolation. These four dimensions then, in the process, change into two dimensions, form a quadrant, and place a person in the proposed quadrant. However, the instrument does not explain how the four dimensions originally became only two. Thus, a deeper question arises: how much do people feel political alienation in their daily activities so adequate instrument development is needed to capture this phenomenon, especially in the run-up to election years?

## **METHODS**

This research aims to construct a political alienation instrument based on the theory put forward by Finifter (1970). The procedures carried out in this research include: (1) construction of items in each dimension of political alienation; (2) determination of population and sample; (3) exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to determine the collection of structures of political alienation measuring instruments; (4) confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) for property analysis psychometrics of the political alienation measuring instrument; and (5) testing concurrent validity by correlating the constructed political alienation measuring instrument with the political alienation measuring instrument by Finifter (1970) as a criterion that is considered relevant. In the first procedure, the measuring instrument is compiled based on the theory put forward by Finifter (1970), where alienation is divided into four dimensions: political powerlessness, political meaninglessness, perceived political normlessness, and political isolation. Each dimension will be represented by four items spread throughout the instrument. Measurements are made using a Likert scale with a range of choices from 1 to 5, where the smaller the number is considered less appropriate, and the larger the number is considered very appropriate. The following procedure that is passed is the expert test. The expert test is intended to measure the content validity of the items that have been created. This content validity is shown through Aiken's V index of each item obtained through the formula  $V = S / [n(c-1)]$ .

The next step is determining the research sample. The research sample has the criteria of having been a previous voter. This research will use the convenience sampling method with several additional criteria. The first criterion is the right to vote in the upcoming or previous elections. This criterion distinguishes those still new voters in the previous election from those who have often voted in the election process. This is because those who have voted more often but cannot feel the benefits of the votes they cast are likely to affect the level of political alienation they feel. In addition, in the previous period's new elections, they were likely able to construct political alienation due to the access to information they received, which led to apathy in voting in the next election (Adams et al., 2006; Southwell, 2008).

The number of samples successfully obtained was 895, with one respondent unwilling to participate, so they were not included in the analysis. After data from 894 respondents were obtained (752 women,  $M = 30.15$  years,  $SD = 6.66$  years), an EFA was conducted. EFA is used to explore the set of items related to a construct (Goretzko et al., 2024). This stage aims to test the factorial validity of the political alienation instrument. The number of factors formed is based on the eigenvalue above 1 with orthogonal rotation based on varimax. Orthogonal rotation was chosen because each factor cannot correlate with each other. The orthogonal rotation method chosen is varimax. Varimax was chosen to maximize the spread of loading values in factors. Therefore, varimax tries to load a small number of variables with high loading values on each factor, resulting in a more interpretable group of factors. This process hypothesizes a factor model that explains how the latent variable of political alienation is measured through manifest indicators (Goretzko et al., 2024).

This factor model hypothesis was then confirmed with CFA. CFA is intended to estimate the value of factors loading each item as a measure of the convergent validity of the measuring instrument. In addition to the factor loading, convergent validity in this research was also determined based on the average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). In addition, the suitability of the measuring instrument model is also seen based on the goodness of fit value. The goodness of fit value used in this research is the chi-square value. The chi-square in CFA tests whether the model covariance is the same as the population covariance matrix (Bentler, 2007). However, the chi-square is very sensitive to the number of samples, so the larger the sample size, the

less likely the researcher will accept the model. This is a problem in the context of CFA because the hypothesis to be supported is the null hypothesis, which states that there is no difference between the observed covariance matrix and the matrix that can be produced by the model (Gatignon, 2010).

For this reason, additional information is needed for the goodness of fit. An additional measure of goodness of fit used in this research is CFI, where the CFI value analyzes the model's fit by examining the differences between the data and the hypothesized model while also adjusting for the sample size effect, which is a shortcoming of the chi-square test (Gatignon, 2010). The next additional factor of goodness of fit used is GFI, which tests how well the proposed model fits the data compared to the null or model without factors as the basic model (Goretzko et al., 2024). Another additional form of the goodness of fit used is RMSEA, which tests the error of the fit estimate or accuracy by replacing the "absolute fit" hypothesis in the chi-square model with an estimate of the appropriateness or approximate fit (Goretzko et al., 2024). The required goodness of fit index value is an insignificant chi-square value where this value indicates absolute fit. The required value for the additional fit index CFI and GFI is above .95, which indicates acceptable model fit, or above .97, which indicates good fit (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003). Meanwhile, for RMSEA, the required value is less than .08, which indicates a good model fit, or less than .05, which indicates an ideal model fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1992).

## RESULTS

### Content Validity Analysis

Based on the table Aiken's V, at the set p-value of  $p < .05$ , and the number of raters is 3, the minimum Aiken's V index that is considered sufficient is .92. The next stage will not include items that get an Aiken's V index below .92. There is 1 item dropped, namely item normlessness 3, with an Aiken's V index of .75. Based on Aiken's V index, the number of items that can be used is 15 items, with details of four items for the powerlessness dimension, four for the meaninglessness dimension, three for the normlessness dimension, and four for the isolation dimension.

### Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

The EFA results show a KMO test value of .935. As this value is above .50, it can be concluded that the number of samples is sufficient to carry out the analysis. Bartlett's test of the sphericity obtained is also significant with a chi-square value of 6316.66 and  $p < .001$ , so it can be concluded that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix, so it is suitable for EFA. The EFA analysis in this research produced two factors with eigenvalues above one, where both factors show the total variance explained by 54.35%. The first-factor value contributed 46.16%, and the second-factor contributed 8.19%. Items that are considered valid are items that have a factor value loading above .40. Based on the factor value EFA loading, no item has a factor value loading below .40, so no items are dropped from the EFA analysis results, and all items will be included in the CFA analysis.

Table 1.  
Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalue		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.924	46.159	46.159
2	1.228	8.187	54.346

Table 2.  
Factor Loadings for the EFA

Item Number	Item Description	Factor		Mean	SD
		1	2		
P1	I do not believe that the people's voice can influence government policy. <i>Saya tidak meyakini bahwa suara rakyat mampu memengaruhi kebijakan pemerintah.</i>	.417		3.14	1.304
N1	I feel that council members have failed to realize the people's aspirations. <i>Saya merasa anggota dewan gagal mewujudkan aspirasi rakyat.</i>		.837	3.44	1.278
N2	I feel that politicians are people who take advantage of adversity (opportunists). <i>Saya merasa bahwa politisi adalah orang yang mengambil kesempatan dalam kesempitan (oportunis).</i>		.850	3.43	1.256
P2	Political activities involving the people are useless. <i>Kegiatan politik yang melibatkan rakyat tidak ada gunanya.</i>	.567		2.77	1.324
M1	I feel that politics is only influenced by parties' interests without clear direction. <i>Saya merasa politik hanya dipengaruhi oleh kepentingan partai yang tidak jelas arahnya.</i>		.740	3.31	1.333
I1	Government policies will not change my life. <i>Kebijakan pemerintah tidak akan mengubah hidup saya.</i>	.725		3.18	1.383
I2	I feel that the presidential candidate's vision and mission campaign are very unimportant. <i>Saya merasa kampanye visi misi calon presiden sangat tidak penting.</i>	.623		2.62	1.333
P3	In my opinion, the people cannot influence government policy. <i>Menurut saya, rakyat tidak dapat memengaruhi kebijakan pemerintah.</i>	.676		2.98	1.339
M2	In my opinion, poverty cannot be resolved through political policies. <i>Menurut saya kemiskinan tidak dapat diselesaikan melalui kebijakan politik.</i>	.697		3.34	1.404
N4	In my opinion, the main goal of politics is to benefit the party, not the people. <i>Menurut saya tujuan utama politik adalah demi keuntungan partai, bukan rakyat.</i>	.567	.542	3.57	1.322

Item Number	Item Description	Factor		Mean	SD
		1	2		
I3	In my opinion, political activities such as elections are merely formalities. <i>Menurut pendapat saya, kegiatan politik seperti pemilu hanya formalitas belaka.</i>	.666	.448	3.23	1.382
I4	In my opinion, the political process is only in the hands of politicians. <i>Menurut saya jalannya proses politik hanya ada ditangan politisi.</i>	.658	.430	3.35	1.309
M3	Even if the political system is improved, the people's lives will not improve. <i>Bahkan jika sistem politik diperbaiki, kehidupan rakyat tidak akan lebih baik.</i>	.771		3.00	1.368
P4	I can only comment on political events in the media. <i>Saya hanya bisa mengomentari peristiwa politik yang ada di media.</i>	.430		3.41	1.256
M4	Decisions taken by the government are taken carelessly so that the goals or expected results cannot be predicted. <i>Keputusan yang diambil oleh pemerintah diambil secara sembarangan sehingga tidak bisa diprediksi tujuan ataupun hasil yang diharapkan.</i>	.512	.409	3.00	1.333

### Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

CFA results obtained factor values loading. The items ranged from .516 to .818. The chi-square value was  $\chi^2 = 619.464$ ,  $df = 89$ , and  $p < .001$ . This value does not indicate absolute fit, so it is necessary to see the additional goodness of fit value (CFI, GFI, and RMSEA). The CFI value obtained was .915, GFI was .968, and RMSEA was .082. The additional goodness of fit value does not indicate an acceptable fit where the CFI value is still below .95 and the RMSEA value is still above .08. To increase the goodness of fit value, the item with the factor value loading below .60, the items Powerlessness 1, Powerlessness 2, Powerlessness 4, Isolation 1, and Isolation 2 were removed from the analysis. After these items were eliminated, seven items were left in the first factor and three in the second factor, leaving 10 items. After the items with a factor loading below .50 are not included in the analysis, the additional goodness of fit obtained is .962 for CFI, .987 for GFI, and .075 for RMSEA. Based on the additional goodness of fit, the construct of the political alienation measuring instrument is classified as an acceptable fit.

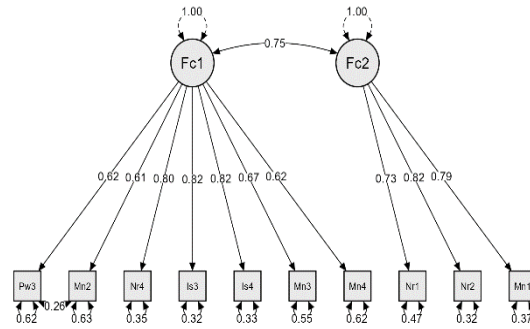


Figure 1.  
CFA Model of Political Alienation

Discriminant validity is achieved when the AVE is equal to or greater than .50 and lower than the CR (Almén et al., 2018). The AVE value generated from the first factor is .511, and from the second factor is .615. The CR generated by the first factor is .878, and the second factor is .827. These results indicate that the discriminant validity of the measuring instrument has been achieved. In addition, a CR value above .70 also indicates good reliability (Almén et al., 2018).

**Concurrent Validity**

Concurrent validity was tested by correlating the results of political alienation measurements using the constructed political alienation scale with the results of political alienation measurements using the political alienation scale by Finifter (1970). The political alienation scale constructed in this research has similarities with the political alienation scale created by Finifter (1970). The scale in this research was created based on the theory of political alienation proposed by Finifter (1970), where alienation consists of four dimensions: political powerlessness, political meaninglessness, perceived political normlessness, and political isolation. In its development, the Finifter political alienation scale is grouped into two dimensions: political powerlessness and perceived political normlessness. This result aligns with the number of factors formed based on the EFA process on the political alienation scale constructed for this research, where the items are grouped into two factors.

On this basis, the first factor on the political alienation scale constructed in this research will be linked to the political dimension, namely powerlessness from the scale created by Finifter (1970). The second factor of the political alienation scale constructed in this research will be connected to the perceived powerlessness dimension, namely political normlessness from the scale created by Finifter (1970). The following are the correlation results of the two measuring instruments.

Table 3.  
Correlation Coefficient Concurrent Validity

Component		Factor 1	Factor 2
Political Powerlessness	Coefficient	.459	-
	Sig.	.000	-
Perceived Political Normlessness	Coefficient	-	.510
	Sig.	-	.000

The political alienation scale constructed in this research is significantly correlated with the political alienation scale created by Finifter (1970), which has a significance value below .05 and a moderate correlation coefficient. This indicates that the political alienation scale constructed in this research measures the same thing.

## DISCUSSION

In general, the results of the EFA and CFA analysis show that the instruments that have been prepared can meet the statistical rules of good instruments. In addition, concurrent validity testing with the political alienation measuring instrument prepared by Finifter (1970) revealed that the narrowing of four dimensions into two dimensions also occurs in the instruments we have prepared. However, this provides a statistical explanation of what happens to the existing dimensions. The narrowing also has a high correlation between factors one and two with the political dimension: powerlessness and perceived political normlessness. In addition to getting an explanation of the narrowing of the two dimensions compiled by Finifter (1970), we found that the instruments compiled were still relevant and appropriate for measuring the same thing.

In line with the research results, the instrument compiled and constructed based on Finifter (1970) is stated to be in accordance with the existing theoretical construct, even becoming simpler and more complete with a psychometric analysis of the political alienation variable when studied in the Indonesian context. This is also reinforced by conducting a concurrent validity analysis of the long-existing instrument, so we can conclude that the tool we have produced is very adequate.

Among the many opinions regarding political alienation, deciding to return to the roots of research on political alienation compiled by Finifter (1970) shows the ability of the instrument to describe political alienation behavior; even research conducted still uses the same research basis. Moreover, in 2024, the winner of the election was still affiliated with the previous president, who considered that the government that was still related to the previous government tended to carry out authoritarian governance (Loxton, 2015) so that this instrument could later predict the behavior of political alienation that the Indonesian people experience and choose.

In addition to the instrument, the political alienation that is compiled also still has the same fundamental questions as those raised by Aberbach (1969), who questioned the target of political alienation. Thus, research on political alienation behavior will continue to develop and always exist as long as society lives in a democratic political system. The decline in voting behavior from one election to the next is based on despair towards the existing political system, not on apathy towards the political system itself, so the emphasis on the system and political figures is significant to be revealed in existing research.

In addition, Indonesian people who are mostly in rural areas can feel the indirect impact of political actions carried out by political figures, such as difficulty in obtaining fertilizer, limited access to subsidized fertilizer, increasing prices of basic necessities, and government assistance that cannot improve their standard of living. Thus, it is very unlikely that they will not vote for ideological reasons (Miller & Listhaug, 1993). People in rural areas usually believe leaders are representations of spiritual figures or are related to those spiritual figures (Suter, 2013). In addition, those in small towns will usually be more active in political behavior because the impact they will feel will be closer (McDonnell, 2020). So, they likely leave the election because they feel alienated from political figures. Data also supports this: the decline in the number of voters from year to year is in big cities, one of which is Surabaya, where in big cities, people's understanding of behavior based on ideology is stronger (Manumoyoso, 2024). So, political behavior is based on ideology; usually, if they do not vote, it is based on politics (Adams et al., 2006).

However, there are still some notes, namely, the results of this data were obtained from respondents who were dominated by women. Grasso and Smith (2022) state that the participation of men and women is relatively different in political action. Women are more active in petition activities, boycotts, and social actions. Meanwhile, men are more active in practical political activities and are

more skeptical about responding to general elections. So, the need for a balance between the number of men and women in further research is still very much expected. In addition, this research only reveals political alienation. Suppose it will be developed in research on the decline in the voter rate in elections. In that case, it is necessary to ensure that the reasons for the decline are based on ideology or political alienation.

## **CONCLUSION**

The results of the EFA and CFA analysis show that the instruments that have been prepared can meet the statistical rules of good instruments. Concurrent validity testing shows similarities with the political alienation scale by Finifter (1970), where four dimensions were narrowed down into two dimensions: powerlessness and perceived normlessness. Thus, this instrument was relevant and adequate to measure Indonesian citizens' political alienation before the election. The limitation of this research is that the respondents were predominantly women. Therefore, future research is expected to find a balance between men and women. Also, this research only examines political alienation. Future research is expected to study the decline in the voter rate in elections based on ideology or political alienation.

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