

## “Political engineering”: Continuity and novelty in political theory

### “Political engineering”: Kelanjutan dan kebaruan dalam teori politik

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#### Abstract

This article discusses the development of the study of “*political engineering*” and the theoretical discourse used to formulate the continuity and novelty of future studies. It begins by identifying previous studies that serve as the theoretical foundation, and a literature review method is employed to identify the similarities and differences among existing studies, which are then used to formulate new conceptions. The findings indicate that the perspective of “*political engineering*” has a strong basis and foundation to be developed as a major field of study in Political Science. This is not only due to the variety and development of studies in recent decades, but also because the needs for political science to transform into *applicable*, practical knowledge capable of addressing contemporary challenges are increasingly urgent. The conception of “*new political engineering*” focuses on behavior engineering, using psychological mechanisms referred to as hope and fear, directly targeting actors (with or through institutions) and no longer making political institutions the main object of study. Instead, it extends to campaign messages, marketing management, system functions, political institutions, policy products, and policymakers to explain and direct voter behavior.

**Keywords:** political engineering; political theory; voter behavior

#### Abstrak

Artikel ini membahas perkembangan studi “*political engineering*” serta diskursus teoretik yang digunakan untuk merumuskan kelanjutan dan kebaruan studi dimasa depan. Dimulai dengan mengidentifikasi kajian-kajian terdahulu yang menjadi pijakan teoretik, penelusuran dengan metode literatur review diarahkan untuk mencari persamaan dan perbedaan beberapa studi yang telah ada, untuk digunakan merumuskan konsepsi baru. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa perspektif “*political engineering*”, memiliki dasar dan pijakan yang kuat untuk dikembangkan sebagai kajian utama dalam studi Ilmu Politik. Tidak hanya karena varian dan perkembangan studinya pada beberapa dekade terakhir, kebutuhan ilmu politik bertransformasi menjadi pengetahuan yang *applicable*, praktis dan mampu menjawab tantangan zaman, juga semakin mendesak untuk dihadirkan. Konsepsi “*new political engineering*” fokus pada rekayasa perilaku, menggunakan mesin psikologi yang disebut dengan harapan dan ketakutan, langsung kepada aktor (dengan atau melalui institusi) dan tidak lagi menjadikan lembaga politik sebagai obyek kajian utama, melainkan meluas pada pesan kampanye, manajemen marketing, fungsi sistem, kelembagaan politik, produk kebijakan dan para pengambil kebijakan untuk menjelaskan dan mengarahkan perilaku pemilih.

**Kata kunci:** rekayasa politik; teori politik; perilaku pemilih

## Introduction

The terminology “*engineering*” in the discourse of political theory is used by several academics to explain that the behavior of political actors (individuals/groups) can indeed be shaped and directed to produce desired political actions or outcomes. Beginning with Sartori’s concept of *constitutional engineering* (1997), it was explained that the design of government institutions and electoral systems are driving factors in political development and democratization efforts. This was followed by MacIntyre (2018) in

“*The Power of Institutions*”, confirming that the supremacy of institutions (political and governmental architecture) influences the efficiency of policy-making in facing economic crises. Concurrently, through the *new-institutionalism* approach, Reilly (2002) used the term *political engineering* to explain the design of democratic institutions that can mitigate conflict in socially diverse countries (ethnicity, religion, and race) in the Pacific and Southeast Asia. Meanwhile, Norris’ study of *electoral engineering* (2004) further reinforced previous engineering studies. According to Norris, the engineering of electoral systems is the gateway to structuring political institutions that can direct actor behavior. These studies form the core discourse of the study of “*political engineering*.” Although there have been several recent studies on political engineering, most still refer to the terminology developed by Sartori, MacIntyre, Reilly, and Norris, which focus on “institutions” as the main object of study for actor behavior engineering (Ahmed 2013, Fraenkel 2015, Prasad 2015, Regalia 2018).

In the midst of the supremacy of institutions in the study of “*political engineering*,” the last decade has seen a series of “new” political realities that political science has been unable to fully explain. Starting with Narendra Modi’s victory through the phenomenon of *tech-populism* in India, the British Exit (Brexit), and the surprising victory of Donald Trump in the presidential election over strong candidate Hillary Clinton. Few academics predicted that the majority of British citizens would vote to leave the European Union. Similarly, the election of controversial figures Trump and Modi overturned the predictions of many political analysts when explaining voter behavior in the United States and India. The condition, which Sartori once described as *undercomprehension* (1989), is occurring again today, where political science is seen as unable to explain the realities and control the outcomes of actor behavior. This opens further discourse on the development of the *applied side* of political science, especially to explain and to direct actor/voter behavior on a massive scale as seen in the cases of Brexit, Trump, and Modi.

Efforts to explain these three recent phenomena have been made by many researchers using various perspectives, including political communication, political marketing, and voting behavior. Some researchers use the perspective of political communication and *new media* as campaign channels (Pérez-Curiel & Limón-Naharro 1970, Lilleker & Koc-Michalska 2017, Sinha 2017, Forsberg 2018, Marshall & Drieschova 2018, Zhang 2018, Morini 2020, Rodrigues 2020, Costa 2021). Other studies explain from the perspective of political marketing (Gillies 2018, Pich et al. 2018, Brändle et al. 2021). Those who use the perspective of voting behavior (Green & McElwee 2019, Shook et al. 2020, Ardèvol-Abreu et al. 2024). These three perspectives can explain the realities of Brexit and the victories of Trump/Modi within their respective scopes of study but have limitations when positioned as determinants of massive behavioral changes within the terminology of “*engineering*”.

Against this background, this article aims to revisit the theoretical discourse of “*political engineering*” and contextualize it with current political realities. It begins by identifying previous studies that serve as theoretical foundations, with a literature review method directed at finding similarities and differences among existing studies for easier analysis. The categorization of these previous studies forms the basis for formulating the continuity and novelty of the study of “*political engineering*,” particularly when used to explain recent/new political phenomena.

## Research Method

The qualitative research method with literature review was chosen for this study. Literature search was conducted to examine the development of prominent political engineering studies with a focus on their important propositions. Study data were collected through documentation, including data from key reference books and journals on political engineering studies. This data was then analyzed using content analysis techniques (Kuckartz 2019). Each document was examined based on specific criteria and compiled into a comprehensive report that illustrates and explains the differentiation and development in political engineering theory.

## Results and Discussion

“Engineering” is a concept rooted in and developed from the tradition of the natural sciences. The term is often used to explain the application of scientific principles (technology) in efforts to solve everyday life problems. From the *engineering* perspective, science must originate from empirical reality, be *practical*, and be able to direct the object according to the desired goals. Based on this understanding, tracing the terminology of “engineering” in the study of political science can be done by re-identifying the development of approaches in political science studies as well as the existing theoretical discourse from the classical era to the present. This is because, as a “*science*,” political science has experienced rapid development with the expanding scope of study objects, necessitating the use of various paradigms (*multi-paradigm*). This includes the adoption of “*natural science*” terminology to label and study various political realities, such as the concept of “*political engineering*.”

From several political science literatures, *political engineering* is generally understood as a concept related to efforts to design, change, and engineer political systems/structures to produce a desired order/output of behavior. By focusing the study on “*institutions*,” political engineering studies have been conducted by several academics. Among the numerous literatures, there are four studies that serve as theoretical foundations and explicitly mention the term *engineering* in their explanations. These studies were conducted by Sartori (1997), MacIntyre (2001), Reilly (2002), MacIntyre (2018), Norris (2004). This article reviews their important propositions chronologically and substantively to identify the potential development and continuity of “political engineering” in the future.

### The engineering perspective in political science

Political science as a discipline evolved from philosophical thought that discussed ideas of the common good in social community life. Early political science studies operated in the ethical, normative, and prescriptive realms, later known as the “traditional approach” in political science. During this period, political science focused more on discussing “what should be,” “ideal order/best regime,” and seemed to be a summary of various thinkers’ ideas from Ancient Greece, Rome, to the medieval era. The object of political science began to shift to *realism*, starting with Machiavelli’s phenomenal work “*Il Principe*.” Subsequent works emerged from medieval thinkers such as “*Leviathan*” by Thomas Hobbes, “*Two Treatises of Government*” by John Locke, and “*The Spirit of Laws*” by Montesquieu, marking the emergence of the institutional approach in political science. With a focus on the objective reality of formal political institutions, this phase marked the beginning of the development of *comparative politics* studies.

Although already oriented towards objective, empirical reality, political science had not yet fully embraced the “*scientific*” tradition as natural sciences had. Entering the 19th century, Comte’s concept of “social physics” marked the beginning of the development of “positivism,” which influenced the emergence of the “*behavioralism*” approach in political science. This new approach adopted the methodology of natural sciences to understand political realities while criticizing *institutionalism* for failing to explain variations in actors’ behavior even within the same “institution.” *Behaviorists* tend to see actors’ behavior as the main object of political science studies, compared to institutions. The existence of institutions is a reflection of actors’ behavior built from interaction, negotiation, and conflict. At this point, political science was no longer unfamiliar with concepts or terminology from natural sciences and tended to be adaptive to developments in other fields (economics) with the emergence of the *rational-choice* approach. The *rational-choice* approach in political science adopts economic logic to explain and predict actors’ behavior. With the same focus on *behavior* and positivism, this approach sees the tendency of actors to optimize benefits and avoid losses.

The strong influence of positivism and the behavioral revolution in social and political sciences marginalized the traditional/*old institutionalism* approach. However, on the other hand, it spurred the revisionist group with the emergence of *new institutionalism*. Still believing in the importance of

“institutions” (*institution matter*), this new approach no longer views institutions in the form or “shape” of political organizations and formal procedures. Institutions are understood as a set of rules that can shape and direct individual behavior (independently), but at the same time, they are also social and historical products. Institutions are no longer “independent” variables; in certain conditions, they are bound to actors’ behavior (*agents*). By the 1980s, a critical approach developed alongside the spirit of *post-positivism*, often referred to as the *interpretivism* or *anti-foundationalism* approach.

### *Constitutional engineering*

Among the various approaches, the terminology of *engineering* found its space when political science entered the phase of *institutionalism*. One of the earliest academic works to use the term *engineering* was by Sartori (1967). The Italian scholar, a pioneer in comparative politics, explored the relationship between political engineering and the development of political institutions through the concept of *constitutional engineering*. This concept refers to the design of constitutions and political institutions, including the structure of government, electoral systems, the division of powers, and the design of political institutions. Sartori believed that through the design of *constitutional engineering*, it is possible to create a stable, effective, and responsive political system, which can also direct actors’ behavior.

As a foundational figure in comparative politics, Sartori criticized the normative approach for its inadequacy in understanding political concepts. His academic concerns were expressed in an article titled *Undercomprehension* (1989) before he wrote his seminal work, “*Comparative Constitutional Engineering: An Inquiry into Structures, Incentives, and Outcome*” (1997). In the comparative politics studies he developed, Sartori emphasized the importance of political science considering the political, social, and cultural contexts of a country. According to him, there is no single, universal model, and comparative studies will benefit the development of political science when they can summarize diverse models from many countries. In line with the development of *empiricism*, Sartori also encouraged political science to focus more on the diversity of social and political realities rather than on shallow and non-contextual “ideas.” Through empirical experiences in many places, *constitutional engineering* designs can be crafted more flexibly and adaptively to align with the desired behavioral outputs.

“*Constitutional engineering*” adopting Bentham’s machine analogy. Here, constitution is not meant as fundamental law regulating constitutional rights, but more as a pathway or guidance on how political planning and forms of government are formulated. Sartori then establishes electoral system engineering and forms of government as the best examples in explaining constitutional engineering. Determining the electoral system as a form of political engineering according to Sartori is the right decision, as for him, the electoral system is the most manipulative instrument in politics. Engineering the electoral system will influence the form of party systems and political representation schemes. Meanwhile, the design of government form engineering according to Sartori refers to presidential, parliamentary, and combinations of both forms of government. For Sartori, political engineering efforts in seeking the best government format can drive the political development scheme forward.

### *Political architecture*

While MacIntyre further elaborates on political architecture as a metaphorical depiction of the complexity and totality of political institutions shaping behavior in all aspects of human life, ranging from social interactions, economic exchanges, to international cooperation. Unlike Sartori and other scholars who focus on specific political institutions (such as electoral systems) to explain their influence on specific political phenomena (such as voting behavior and politician activities), MacIntyre takes a broader spectrum by explaining the entire political structure (national political architecture) formed as a result of the interaction between the national government’s constitutional structure and party systems. Furthermore, he analyzes how political architecture can centralize or disperse power, thereby affecting policy-making schemes and overall governance management.

Based on this understanding, MacIntyre is interested in analyzing countries that are newly developing democratic systems (*developing democracies*), not countries that have reached advanced industrial democracy stages. He selects four countries in Southeast Asia: Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia as his main study objects, to strengthen and broaden his theoretical analysis of the impact of political institutional design on governance and policy-making mechanisms. MacIntyre’s study findings indicate that political institutional reforms in the four countries show different phenomena, considering the conditions before and after the reforms. There is a strong correlation between power distribution variables in policy-making and the potential emergence of governance problems. As in the case of Indonesia, the conditions before institutional reforms show that Indonesia had a high risk in governance due to political power centralized around President Soeharto. Conversely, after the reforms, there is a decrease in governance risks because political decision-making begins to disperse and not concentrate on one person/group. Similar trends and relationships are also found in Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines.

*Political engineering*

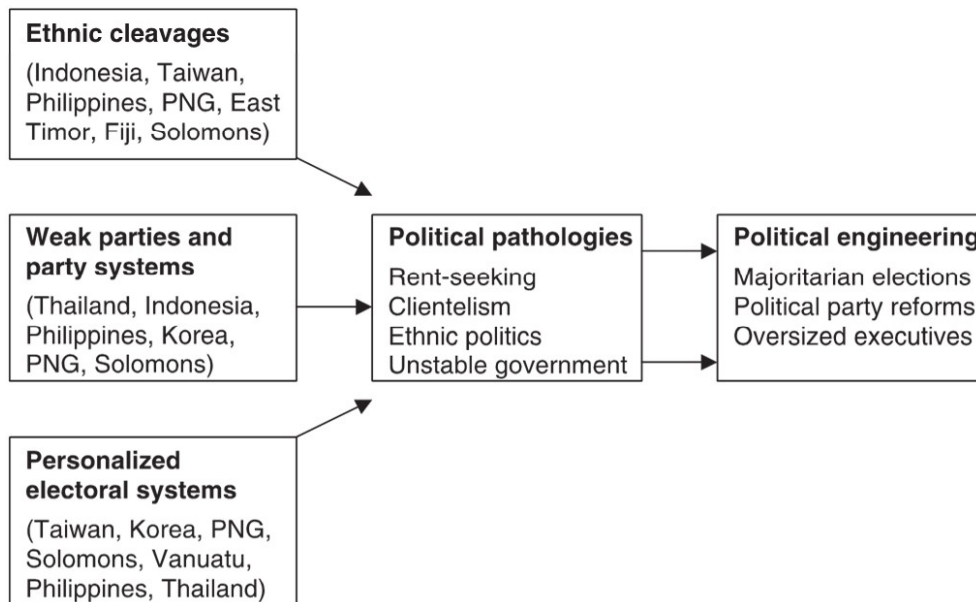
Focusing on the functioning of democracy as a form of *political engineering* in socially divided societies (due to ethnicity, geography, or economic status), Reilly selects the Asia-Pacific region as his study object. This decision distinguishes Reilly from other theorists who often discuss political engineering in the context of democratic transition in countries that have known democracy earlier and have homogeneous characteristics, such as in Europe and Latin America. Meanwhile, countries in the Asia-Pacific region have more complex social characteristics, ranging from ethnic diversity to population variations (largest and smallest populations), and many are in the process of political reform such as South Korea, Indonesia, and the Philippines. As a theoretical foundation in explaining his concepts of *political engineering* and democratization in the Asia-Pacific, Reilly also refers to Lijphart’s consociational democracy (Figure 1). The concept of democracy based on elite agreements as representations of social divisions, thus capable of realizing a more stable democracy even in plural and conflictual societies. Reilly’s ideas link Sartori’s study of *political engineering* with Lijphart’s concept of consociational democracy, aiming to find the best answer for realizing “new democracy” in the Asia-Pacific. An institutional political engineering to achieve stability and sustainability of democracy by reducing the negative risks of social division on democracy development.

		<b>Mass Level</b>	
		Cross-cutting Cleavages	Segmented
<b>Elite Level</b>	Cooperation	Depoliticized Democracy	<i>Consociational Democracy</i>
	Competition	Centripetal Democracy	Centrifugal Democracy

**Figure 1.**  
Lijphart’s typology of democracy  
Source: Andeweg (2000)

In his study, Reilly constructs a causal scheme connecting the social and political conditions of several countries in the Asia-Pacific with various political pathologies experienced in the effort to build democracy. There are several groups of countries with social and political conditions that create room for instability, ranging from ethnic diversity, weak political parties and party systems, to electoral

systems influenced by personal figures. These conditions lead to political pathologies such as rent-seeking practices, clientelism, ethnic politics, and government instability due to political conflict. The actor behaviors that cause problems in democratization efforts are directed through institutional engineering (political engineering) by designing electoral systems, party systems, and forms/structures of government (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.**  
Reilly's political engineering model  
Source: Andeweg (2000)

From this causal scheme, Reilly draws four separate conclusions about political engineering in the Asia-Pacific: first, stability, predictability, and orderliness are important themes driving political engineering in the Asia-Pacific. Second, although some political engineering efforts produce something positive and are considered successful, issues and unexpected risks arise in the process. Third, the best approach in the case of political engineering is the majoritarian electoral system and the centripetal approach as typified by Lijphart's typology. Fourth, as the final result of Reilly's study, the emergence of the "Asia-Pacific Model" in the practice of electoral democracy is evident. It is a distinctive institutional engineering practice of democracy in the Asia-Pacific region and differs from conditions in other parts of the world. Although the trend is increasingly aligning with the Anglo-American tradition with a two-party political model and becoming more pragmatic, it guarantees future political stability, thus promoting effective governance and sustainable political development.

### *Electoral engineering*

Meanwhile, Pippa Norris takes a different approach from the previous scholars, adopting a cultural modernization approach referring to Inglehart and Dalton. This approach asserts that there have been social changes characterized by increased prosperity, growth in the service sector, and widespread access to education. These changes are believed to drive increased public participation in policy formulation, while simultaneously weakening the influence of traditional organizations such as churches, political parties, labor unions, and conventional participation in general elections. Norris's use of *rational-choice institutionalism* is expected to yield three engineering outcomes: first, the determination of the electoral threshold will influence the behavior of political parties in using "bridging" or "binding" strategies; second, the electoral structure (whether choosing parties, individuals, or both) will determine the extent to which political parties adopt diversity or homogeneity from the candidate list; third, the electoral structure will also affect the emphasis on program-based campaigns or particularistic campaigns.

Meanwhile, according to Norris, cultural modernization theory contributes certain propositions that emphasize behavioral patterns and cultural attitudes are greatly influenced by the level of societal development. An example of expected engineering is the formation of a party system capable of encouraging political parties to work more effectively, thus contributing positively to democracy, such as engineering the simplification of political choices, organizing campaigns, unifying interests, providing debate channels, selecting candidates, structuring parliament, acting as policy thinkers, and organizing governance.

From her study, Norris asserts that the *rational-choice institutionalism* approach to electoral engineering has a significant impact. It not only provides theoretical understanding of political engineering studies, but is also important for those focusing on public policy studies and issues regarding constitutional reform. Because electoral system engineering is the initial step (entry point) before restructuring other political institutions. This is exemplified by the phenomenon of waves of constitutional reform in the early 1990s in democratic countries, which began with debates on electoral systems rather than other constitutional issues.

These four studies form the basis for subsequent research with a *political engineering* perspective (Salih 2005, Ahmed 2013, Fraenkel 2015, Prasad 2015), used the concept of electoral institutional engineering to explain phenomena in several Southeast Asian and African countries. Meanwhile, Regalia (2018) analyzed electoral institutional reforms that impacted the party system in Italy. There are also a few scholars who interpret *political engineering* as the utilization of computer technology in political practices (*political engineering and computational politics*), such as Solo (2018), and the use of machines in marketing studies (*marketing engineering*) by Lilien et al (2017). Although these last two studies use the term *engineering*, they cannot be included in the political engineering perspective as defined by earlier scholars like Sartori, MacIntyre, Reilly, and Norris. Solo and Lillen’s studies use the term *engineering* to describe the machines and technological devices used to assist political activities (*as tools*).

### Exploring “new political engineering”

When theoretical frameworks and previous studies fail to explain current realities, it becomes a moment for political science to develop new perspectives (*novelty*). This is marked by three political contestation phenomena at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century that illustrate a “behavioral revolution” (Brexit, the victories of Trump and Modi), challenging political science, particularly the study of *political engineering*. As Sartori criticized normative/traditional approaches for failing to develop contextual, flexible, and adaptive political concepts, calling this *undercomprehension*, the study of *political engineering* faces a similar situation when it cannot explain the phenomenon of massive vote shifts in electoral contests.

Through this article, the author offers a new perspective in the study of *political engineering*. It is still aligned with the old credo of *political engineering*, that political science has the practical ability to design and build political order while directing actor behavior for specific interests. However, it is different since the new *political engineering* study aims to explain and design the behavioral output of voters in a political contest (*voters engineering*).

In more detail, this new position consists of several aspects. First, it expands the locus of *political engineering* studies to no longer focus on institutional aspects but rather shift to *behavior*. Second, it identifies new “engine” schemes that can direct behavior, different from the old *political engineering* schemes. Third, it formulates the direction of behavior engineering by considering the new position of institutions/organizations in relation to actor engineering. Fourth, it identifies new engineering objects in electoral contests (Table 1).

**Table 1.**  
Differences in the scope of political engineering studies

Political engineering continuity & novelty					
	Concept	Locus	Engine	Path	Object
<b>Sartori (1989)</b>	Constitutional Engineering	Institution	Reward and Punishment	System/structure --> actor (individual/group)	Electoral system & Form of government
<b>MacIntyre (2001 &amp; 2018)</b>	Political Architecture	Institution	Dispersal of decision-making power	System/structure --> actor (individual/group)	Pattern of Governance, Governmental decision making
<b>Reilly (2002)</b>	Political Engineering	Institution	Formal power-sharing rules	System/structure --> actor (individual/group)	Electoral system, political party, political system & Form of government
<b>Norris (2004)</b>	Electoral Engineering	Institution	Formal Rules (electoral)	System/structure--> actor (individual/group)	Electoral system

Source: Created and modified by the author

*Locus*

Previous studies conducted by Sartori, MacIntyre, Norris, and Reilly have made institutions the locus of study. They believed that certain institutional designs could shape and direct actor behavior. Essentially, actors are part of the structure, so their mindset and behavior are heavily influenced by the surrounding structure. Thus, changes in actor behavior are the result or *side effect* of institutional changes. In contrast, the locus of study in “*new political engineering*” is directly to behavior, replacing institutions as the main factor of engineering.

With the locus of study directly focusing on “behavior,” it does not mean that institutions/systems are no longer important in the study of voter engineering. The position of “institutions” is understood in the perspective of *new institutionalism*, no longer becoming determinant variables but rather inherent according to the needs of voter engineering. Institutions can serve as instruments and spaces, explaining behavioral changes as well as acting as actors producing political messages. The “electoral system,” which has always been the main topic of discussion in old *political engineering* studies, from Sartori to Norris, is shifting to become the space or arena of voter engineering.

*Engine*

Previous *political engineering* studies utilized engines in the form of incentives and punishments (*reward and punishment*) manifested in rules. Sartori referred to it as *constitutionalism* in the form of electoral systems and state forms, MacIntyre with political architecture in power allocation, while Reilly and Norris emphasized it as rules in electoral systems and power-sharing schemes. Meanwhile, in engineering voting behavior, “*new political engineering*” employs psychological engines called hope and fear. Actor/voters behavior is propelled by providing a depiction of the outcome of the attitudes and behaviors they choose, which can be positive with the attainment of hopes/expectations, or negative in the form of fear due to unmet expectations, or *strategic voting* schemes.

In “*Comparative Constitutional Engineering*,” Sartori asserts that “reward and punishment” act as engines that are fundamental forces shaping behavior and political orders. Constitutional engineering, like deliberate institutional design, aims to achieve desired outcomes. Meanwhile, MacIntyre explains that the configuration of national political institutions affects the quality of governance. By analyzing the



impact of power distribution on the effectiveness and flexibility of policy-making, MacIntyre articulates his concept of the “power concentration paradox.” The more decision-making power is dispersed among various actors, the more difficult it becomes to change the status quo, whereas more centralized power encourages policy flexibility.

In his studies in the Asia-Pacific region, Reilly emphasizes the importance of engineering formal power-sharing to ensure stability and conflict management in socially and politically divided countries. Critical of the consociational democracy model of Lijphart, Reilly suggests that social and political diversity be united through the “machine” of power-sharing via formal electoral incentives. This builds political stability by reducing the potential for communal divisions. Consistent with Reilly, in the concept of *electoral engineering*, Norris also discusses how the design of the electoral system has a significant impact on political parties, the behavior of political actors, and citizens in general elections.

In *voters engineering*, building hope for the future conditions and the benefits to be gained becomes an effective “engine” in motivating voters. Similarly, threats to undesirable future conditions can prompt active or passive behavior among voters. One practice of “hope and fear” in voter engineering is the production of persuasive campaign messages, propaganda, and *falsehoods*. For example, the “hope and fear” narrative exposed by Modi in India was able to stir anti-establishment sentiments and, in turn, garner significant support for the Bharatiya Janata Party.

#### *Pathways and directions of engineering*

The next difference lies in the pathways or schemes of engineering conducted. In previous studies, engineering actor behavior was carried out through institutional systems or structures specifically designed and consciously aimed at altering behavior. MacIntyre even asserted that institutional supremacy within an institutional formation could directly influence governance. Meanwhile, Sartori, Reilly, and Norris agreed that engineering the institutional electoral system serves as the entry point for political engineering, resulting in side effects of behavioral changes. Overall, these four scholars place political institutions, both formal and informal, as key variables in the study of political engineering. They emphasize on how deliberate institutional designs can influence the behavior of political actors, the dynamics of party systems, conflict management, and the broader quality of governance. Institutions are seen as the “rules of the game” that can be engineered to achieve specific political and social goals.

On the other hand, “*new political engineering*” provides direct intervention to actors/voters that produce desired behavioral changes with or without going through institutions. Because the target of its engineering is actor behavior, *new political engineering* does not require intervention through institutional channels. Moreover, with the changing social and political landscape through the development of IT and social media, personal and massive interventions become highly feasible.

#### *Object of study*

Since the locus of study in previous *political engineering* was political institutions, the objects studied in old *political engineering* included political institutions such as electoral systems, party systems, and forms of government. Meanwhile, studies in *new political engineering* focus on engineering the behavior of actors/voters, thus its object of study includes various aspects that occur during the electoral process (both behavioral and institutional aspects), including messaging and campaign management, behavioral outputs, systems, institutions/rules, *rule-makers* in the electoral process, and others.

From the behavioral aspect, the contributions of various perspectives such as political communication, political marketing, and studies on voting behavior can be used to examine campaign messages, political marketing schemes, and behavioral outputs in elections. Meanwhile, the existence of institutions in the form of electoral systems, rules, and policy-makers can be analyzed using the perspective of *old political engineering*. Therefore, the emergence of *new political engineering* still has a connection with previous studies.

## Conclusion

The literature review conducted in this article indicates that the perspective of “*political engineering*” has a strong foundation to be developed as a primary focus in the study of Political Science. This is not only because of the variations and developments in its studies over the past decades, but also because the needs of political science have transformed into discipline that is applicable, practical, and capable of addressing contemporary challenges. Through this article, the author delineates various literature on “*political engineering*” from several academics, as a basis for formulating the conception of “*new political engineering*”. Especially with the changing social and political landscape due to digital transformation, it opens up various possibilities for the emergence of new realities that can no longer be interpreted using old perspectives. *Old political engineering* studies, summarized in a series of concepts ranging from *constitutional engineering*, *political architecture*, *political engineering*, and *electoral engineering*, make institutions the locus of political engineering. To realize the desired behavior and political order, theorists of *old political engineering* use “structural engines” in the form of institutional designs, norms/rules with “reward-punishment” mechanisms. Thus, the path of engineering always begins with “institutions”, to then direct actor behavior.

Unlike the old perspective, the concept of “*new political engineering*” focuses on behavior engineering, utilizing psychological engines known as hope and fear, directly targeting actors (with or through institutions), and the objects studied are no longer political institutions but campaign messages, marketing management, system functions, political institutions, policy products, and policymakers. This study believe that there is still much to be supplemented and perfected regarding the perspective of “*new political engineering*”. Especially the possibility of contributions from various approaches often used to analyze actor behavior in electoral contests, such as political communication, political marketing, and voting behavior. Therefore, this article is expected to serve as an entry point for studies and research focusing on discussing the continuity and novelty of the “*political engineering*” perspective.

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