Political design: A Solution-Oriented Approach to Political Science

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ABSTRACT

Post-behavioralist critiques are a crucial foundation for changes in previous apolitical political research. Politics should be an academic instrument and a response to humanity's challenges. Political design seeks to criticize the dominance of the logic of study that prioritizes analytical and objective methods. This study proposes political design as an alternative approach to Political Science, prioritizing creative and design thinking in addressing public problems. This paper identifies the shortcomings of conventional critical thinking approaches and introduces political design as a practical, solution-oriented method through a literature review method, specifically an integrative review. Politics has been redefined as an instrument for power solutions. This study highlights five core principles: promoting solutions for public problems, moving beyond theoretical frameworks to operational implementation, fostering innovation over ordinary resolutions, managing the interests of designers to protect public values, and grounding practice in the awareness of inherent power imbalances. The results present a synthesis of interdisciplinary literature that informs this new approach, while the conclusion discusses its potential contributions to Political Science.
Keywords: Political Design, Political Science Approach, Problem-Solving, Design Thinking in Politics, Innovative Political Praxis.

INTRODUCTION

David Easton (1969) criticized Political Science scholars through a revolutionary post-behavioral approach. Political learning and research should not only use rigid research disciplines and methodologies that adopt the exact sciences. Easton invited political scientists and their associations to play a more active role in finding solutions to contemporary social problems.

Easton (1969) explains the stressful situation facing humanity clearly:

Mankind today is working under the pressure of time. Time is no longer on our side. This in itself is a frightening new event in world affairs. An apocalyptic weapon, an equally devastating population explosion,

dangerous pollution of the environment, and, in the United States, severe internal dissension of racial and economic origin, all move in the same direction. They move toward increasing social conflict and deepening fears and anxieties about the future, not of a generation or of a nation, but of the human race itself.

Political Science is required to contribute to cross-border issues. One of the credos (number 4) concerns post-behavioral analysts regarding the existence of values that cannot be separated from political research. There is no neutrality in science, because knowledge is limited (Easton, 1969a).

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic reminds humanity of the stressful situation it is experiencing. The Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities called it 'a catastrophe taking an enormous toll on humanity, disrupting lives and livelihoods' (Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA), 2021).

Schwab and Malleret (2020) categorized the pandemic's impact as macro, micro, and individual. Macro impacts occur in economic, social, geopolitical, environmental, and technological fields. Micro impacts appear in business and industry. Meanwhile, individual impacts have emerged in the redefinition of humanity, mental health, well-being, and changes in individual priorities.

This multidimensional crisis has warned the Political Science of making valuable contributions. The response that arises from a crisis shows that the crisis factor is a driver of various political actions. The actions of the government and citizens in responding to emergencies are not merely a matter of research. Political scholars and associations must play an active role in developing solutions for these problems. This study seeks to explain the operationalization of a Political Science approach relevant to responding to situations as a driving determinant of political action.

Literature mapping focuses on explaining political science approaches. The mapping results help to show the academic weaknesses of the approaches. This approach forms the foundation for explaining political phenomena. The

use of this approach helps to analyze political actions. There is not much literature explaining the definition of this approach in Political Science. The search results revealed four explanations from van Dyke (in Johari, 1982), Johari (1982), Budiardjo (2008), and Marsh and Stoker (2010).

Marsh and Stoker (2010) used different general approaches to political science. In line with Marsh and Stoker, the approach used in this study is theoretical. It is a set of criteria (attitudes, understanding, and practices) for understanding political phenomena. An approach is a particular point of view used to analyze political actions or phenomena based on specific academic criteria or principles.

The theoretical approach to Political Science is essential in explaining why specific political actions occur. In other words, each approach attempts to explain the factors and/or motivations that encourage political actions. In short, the political science theoretical approach explains how power (motives or factors) works to direct political action, both individually and collectively.

The first is the philosophical or ideational approach. This approach relies on explaining that ideas and beliefs can guide the interpretation of a problem and direct the choice of political action. The philosophical approach attempts to explain political actions based on the ideas of great thinkers, such as Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, John Locke, and others. For example, Plato described the meaning and position of 'justice' as a guideline for achieving a good life at the individual, collective, and state levels (Parsons, 2017).

The second approach is the institutional approach. Its roots refer to the concept of 'institutions' as formal rules and organizations created to guide the political actions of individuals, collectives, and governments. The institutional approach focuses on the rules, norms, and values that govern political exchange. Hence, the essence of the institutional approach is that every political actor 'plays' according to the rules created to regulate interactions, both in cooperation and competition.

However, institutions not only limit the space for actors to move, but also provide space (incentives) because of the guarantee of rules and formal organization (Parsons, 2017). Rules guide actors to do what is best for them, the organization, and collective life (Marsh & Stoker, 2010).

The institutional approach has received sharp criticism and has revised its theoretical explanations through the new institutionalism approach. This is a reaction to 'old institutionalism.' The old perspective views institutions as material structures or, in the materialist definition, constitutions, cabinets, parliaments, bureaucracies, courts, armies, federal or autonomous arrangements, and party systems. This perspective is too narrow to demonstrate that action does not occur in an institutional vacuum. New institutionalism states that institutions can direct political action in a broader sense (Lecours, 2005).[1]

The main difference between institutionalism and new institutionalism lies in the conceptualization of institutions. The latter views institutions more broadly than the former. March and Olsen (1989) conceptualize institutions as follows:

> *By "rules" we mean the routines, procedures, conventions, roles, strategies, organizational forms, and technologies around which political activity is constructed. We also mean the beliefs, paradigms, codes, cultures, and knowledge that surround, support, elaborate, and contradict those rules and routines...These routines may be procedural rules specifying a process that is to be followed under certain circumstances. They may be decision rules specifying how inputs are to be converted into outputs. They may be evaluation rules specifying criteria for assessing results.*

This definition conveys that political institutions cannot be strictly understood as formal institutions of the state or government. Institutions also

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[1] Peters (1999) does not want to use radical terms, such as, 'reaction' to indicate the difference between old and new institutionalism. He stated that the work of March and Olsen (1989), which initiated the new institutionalist movement, was intended to reaffirm some features of the old institutional analysis. March and Olsen also attempted to respond to the theoretical simplification of the behavioral approach to human political behavior related to institutions. In his latest work, (Peters, 2019) stated that the relationship between approaches must be seen as complementary rather than competitive in explaining political phenomena.

consist of complex (state and non-state organizations) and soft institutions (rules, norms, values, and procedures), both in terms of formal and informal institutions. This understanding then triggers the emergence of a different perspective to view political phenomena through more complex considerations based on complex facts.

The third phase of the new institutional approach follows Lowndes and Roberts (2013), who use three theoretical pillars to explain behavioral choices and political impacts: rules, practices, and narratives. The third pillar is a new institutional element. Narratives rely on the power of stories and ideas to frame the meaning of rules and the effectiveness of policy implementation. Meaning framing is carried out through explanations, dialogue, and policy implementations.

Some Political Science experts categorize philosophical approaches, institutionalism, and instrumentalism as traditionalist approaches. Although debatable, traditionalism's explanation is relevant to these three approaches. Traditionalism explains the important role of values in analysis. Johari (1982) called traditionalism a value-laden group of political researchers.

Table 1. Grouping Theoretical Approaches to Political Science

Approach Groups	Approaches
Traditional (value-laden)	• Philosophical/Ideational • Institutions and New Institutions • Historical • Legal
Modern (fact-laden)	• Behavior • Post-behavioral • Rational choice • Marxism • Constructivism • Feminism • Political Psychology
Future (digital system)	• Future politics

Sources: Johari (1982), Budiardjo (2008), Marsh and Stoker (2010), Susskind (2018).

As a critique of traditionalism that emphasizes the role of values in political analysis, a group of modern approaches emerged that studied actual political actions or empirical political practices. Johari (1982) calls this a group of fact-laden political-study approaches.

The first approach in modern groups is behavioral. This approach emphasizes empiricism in explaining political actions, which must be based on observations (Grigsby, 2012). The behavioral approach requires scientific investigation to explain causally interconnected political phenomena. Political action does not stand alone because it follows the thoughts and opinions of great thinkers and rules; certain political factors influence political action. Therefore, methodologically, supporters of the behavioral approach require objective research that is independent of the values believed (Simon et al., 2019).

Realizing the weakness of a behavioral approach that does not pay attention to values, Political Scientists have initiated a post-behavioral approach. The foundation of his thinking, namely, political scientific knowledge, cannot isolate itself from the situations and problems humans face. Political Science cannot be separated from the ethical responsibilities of science and citizens. This approach seeks to combine the elements of traditional approaches (particularly the idea of values) and behavior.

Political Science researchers are not just oriented towards scientific development. Simultaneously, Political Science must be able to answer essential questions about the problems that affect citizens' lives (Dooley & Patten, 2021). Easton (in Grigsby, 2012) provided examples of several issues facing humanity and requiring solutions, such as war, population growth, environmental degradation, and racial and ethnic conflicts. Current global problems, such as climate change, food security, and crises due to the COVID-19 pandemic, require risk mitigation for humanity.

Methodologically, proponents of the post-behavioral approach can complement each other in their use of data. Because of the awareness that facts

and values are interrelated, traditionalists contribute qualitative information and behavioralists contribute quantitative data (Roskin et al., 2016).

Apart from Easton's post-behavioralism, a similar and relevant idea is the *phronetic* political science presented by Bent Flyvbjerg (2004). The main argument lies in the concept of phronesis (practical wisdom) to develop Political Science as a reflective analysis of the values and interests that bridge political theory and practice. Flyvbjerg (2004) conveys about the urgency of *phronesis*:

> *We need to redress the imbalance among the intellectual virtues. The goal is to help restore social and political science to its classical position as a practical, intellectual activity aimed at clarifying the problems, risks, and possibilities we face as humans and societies and at contributing to social and political praxis.*

Political Science needs to pay attention to the ability to utilize policy space (power) for solutions to human problems and find relevance to *phronesis* in politics.

The second approach is rational. Political Scientists continue to investigate phenomena or collective political actions outside the mainstream political world, such as states and governments. Instead, attention is focused on the individuals or groups behind politics, such as making rules, implementing them, and running the government and legislature. Individual political actions, such as participating in elections, protests, and digital petitions, do not escape the attention of rational choices.

According to Simon et al. (2018), the rational choice approach views politics as political actors (voters, elected officials, and government administrators) with particular interests that motivate them to act rationally in carrying out political actions. They worked rationally and chose the most efficient method to achieve their goals.

A well-known assumption is that political actors behave rationally, selfishly, or rationally to maximize their interests. Examples of model development are used as analysis tools for voting, lobbyists, bureaucrats,

politicians, and state behavior in the international system (Roskin et al., 2016; Heywood, 2019). In rational calculations, interests are the roots of actions that most clearly benefit someone because of their position (Parsons, 2017). The rational approach develops models to predict political behavior by knowing actors' interests (Roskin et al., 2016).

The next approach is Marxism. The essence of classical Marxism (Karl Marx's Marxism), namely the philosophy of history that explains the causes of capitalism's destruction and socialism's attempts to replace it, is based on a scientific analysis. The Marxist approach relies on the theory that Friedrich Engels called the 'materialist conception of history' or historical materialism. This theory explains that material or economic conditions ultimately shape law, politics, culture, and other aspects of social conditions (Heywood, 2019).

According to the Marxist view, politics is a struggle between certain social groups and classes (Marsh & Stoker, 2010). Therefore, class struggles rooted in material or economic conditions are key to analyzing society and politics. The working and capitalist classes (investors) compete for power and class glory. Subsequently, Marxism developed into three forms: classical Marxism, orthodox communism, and new Marxism (neo-Marxism).

Rooted in the Marxist approach, several critical political science approaches emerged, becoming a principal alternative to mainstream politics that prioritized formal studies. Feminism, critical theory, constructivism, green ideology, post-structuralism, and post-colonialism are among these critical approaches. The two main characteristics of a critical approach, namely 'critical' in a different way of understanding and explaining or seeking to challenge the politics of the status quo, by encouraging self-equality for the benefit of marginalized or oppressed groups (Barrow, 2024). A critical approach seeks to uncover the gaps and asymmetries that tend to go unnoticed by mainstream approaches. Second, the critical approach emphasizes the important role of consciousness in shaping political behavior (Heywood, 2019).

This is the first part of a critical approach, constructivism. This approach assesses whether politics is driven by meaning that cannot be separated from the actors for each action and its context. Thus, actors' views on the content (meaning) involved are reflected in their political actions (Marsh & Stoker, 2010). Essentially, each actor has an interpretation that cannot be separated from their interests.

According to Heywood (2019), the consequence of this perspective is that there is no political reality that is completely objective or independent of our understanding of reality. Political reality is the result of construction according to the actors' interests. Thus, political actors, acting as individuals or groups, attempt to 'construct' the world according to the aims of that construction.'

The second is a feminist approach. The main principle of this critical approach is that the characteristics of feminism strive for equality. Feminism critically views the world from a perspective based on sex, gender, and sexuality to advance freedom, equality, and inclusion of women. Like men, women are citizens with the right to determine the same path in life (Boryczka in Kurian (ed.), 2011). Feminism considers society to be characterized by gender inequality. For this reason, the male power structure can and must be reversed so that it is not dominant and equality emerges (Heywood, 2019).

As seen in the critical approach, politics is a process in feminist thought. Politics is the practice of power over others (Heywood, 2019). Politics is part of every individual's job to encourage equality. In practice or movement, feminism strongly advocates participation or involvement. Hence, 'every individual can be political' (Marsh & Stoker, 2010).

Political psychology is the next approach. This approach theorizes the impact and importance of personality in political action and practice. Specifically, political psychology focuses on individual-level analysis, especially for individual decision makers in the political process (McDermott in Kurian et al., 2011).

Political psychology borrows psychological concepts and theories from Political Science using two key statements. First, political processes and their impact are shaped, at least in part, by the preferences, choices, and actions of individuals and groups. Second, to explain these political preferences, choices, and actions, it is necessary to empirically study personal characteristics and relationships (t'Hart in Marsh and Stoker, 2010).

The subsequent development of a group of theoretical approaches to Political Science cannot be separated from technological developments, especially in information and communication technology. This disruptive change due to exponential technological developments has been labeled the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Industry 4.0). According to Schwab (2017), Industry 4.0 has brought about many significant changes in all sectors, especially the industrial, government, and community sectors. The revolution driven by new technological changes fundamentally changes the way we live, work, and relate to each other.

In the view of Schwab and the World Economic Forum (2016), the fourth industrial revolution is driven by a 'surprising confluence' of technological breakthroughs, such as artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, the Internet of Things (IoT), autonomous vehicles, 3D printing, nanotechnology, biotechnology, materials science, energy storage, and quantum computing. These technological breakthroughs have led to radical changes.

The disruptive changes described in the Industry 4.0 phase are of equal concern in developing theoretical approaches to political science. It is recognized that the relentless progress of science and technology is changing citizens' collective way of life and has profound political consequences. Thus, it is assumed that future politics will differ from the past. One influential factor is directing and controlling future collective life, not just relying on an explanation of the roles of the state, market, and society. Future politics works because of the influence of robust digital systems (Susskind, 2018).

Susskind (2018) added that political theory is important in orienting the role of technology. Political theory is well-suited for studying the interaction between technology and politics. Political theory contains wisdom, explains future difficulties, and helps us identify what is at stake (considered). Future Politics believes that technology has a fundamental impact on human conditions. Consequently, future politics differs from past explanations regarding four basic concepts: future power, liberty, democracy, and justice.

Political Science continues to evolve through critiques of traditional approaches that often fail to address the operational demands of real-world problems. The post-behavioralist critique (Easton, 1969) introduced a pivotal shift, arguing that Political Science should engage directly with the pressing issues of human existence, such as inequality, conflict, and environmental crises. While various approaches, from rational choice to Marxism, have explored different facets of political life, a gap persists in approaches that combine practical action with theoretical insight.

Recent developments have highlighted the rise of practice-based methods in governance, participatory design in policymaking, and human-centered innovation strategies that go beyond abstract theorizing. However, the literature remains limited in offering a comprehensive framework that redefines politics as a method for crafting and implementing solutions. This paper positions itself within this gap, proposing "political design" as an approach grounded in interdisciplinary integration, particularly between Political Science and design innovation literature.

Thus, this study aims to (1) conceptualize political design as a solution-oriented approach in political science and (2) formulate its theoretical and methodological framework by adapting design thinking principles from creative disciplines.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a post-positivist paradigm that recognizes the complexity of social and political realities, influenced by various subjective

factors. This paradigm critiques positivism, which tends to prioritize objective and empirical approaches in political science. Post-positivism creates room for exploring more reflective and normative alternatives in understanding political phenomena.

In terms of approach, this study employed a qualitative methodology featuring a literature review method, specifically an integrative review. This method was selected because it facilitates the exploration and synthesis of various concepts across different disciplines to construct a conceptual framework for Political Design as an innovative approach in political science. In this context, the study not only investigates the main concepts in political science but also integrates insights from creativity theory and design thinking to develop more actionable ideas for designing solutions to public problems.

This study employed a literature review method to synthesize political design ideas and practices by utilizing the theory and practice of design thinking in developing political design. In addition to highlighting theoretical concepts, this study uses relevant literature to establish an academic framework on political design (according to the definition explained by Snyder 2019). Of the three literature review approaches described by Snyder (2019), this study employs an integrative literature review approach, combining perspectives from political science and design innovation to develop the political design concept. Data for the review were obtained from academic books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and digital policy reports accessed through Google Scholar and the Brawijaya University Digital Library. Key search terms included "creative thinking," "design thinking," and "political innovation." The selected literature was reviewed and categorized to identify the theoretical underpinnings and practical applications of design thinking within political studies. The review followed Snyder's (2019) four-stage framework: defining objectives and audience, sourcing literature, analyzing insights, and synthesizing findings for presentations.

First, it establishes the research objectives and target audience for the study results. Based on these objectives, this study identifies an integrative review as an appropriate literature review approach. This study then formulates a literature search strategy using the search terms 'creative thinking and design thinking,' enabling appropriate literature inclusion and exclusion to be carried out.

Second, this study conducted a review by initially searching for and selecting appropriate literature using the Google Scholar search engine and the Brawijaya University digital library. Relevant articles and books pertaining to the research topic were then stored in a private digital storage. Next, the reviewers read, quoted, and classified statements from these articles and books according to the search terms. Third, the analysis stage abstracts various quotations from journals and books to develop a design approach to Political Science, along with its theoretical and practical framework as an academic idea of Political design. Fourth, the review-writing stage entails presenting and explaining the theory and practices of Political design. In this stage, this study aims to communicate the contributions of the review results.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Creativity And Design As Foundations

Creativity is the central concept of political design. Scholars outside of politics, especially Tina Seelig and John E. Arnold, have laid the foundation for an essential idea of creativity. Both academics play significant roles in studying and practicing creativity. Arnold (in von Thienen et al. 2018) explains creativity as a process that combines past experiences to give birth to new combinations or configurations that can better address human needs. Creativity, as a process, is real (can be seen and felt) and future-oriented.

Seelig (2012) presented another fairly representative definition of creativity. Creativity is not simply represented by the common phrase "thinking outside the box." Creativity includes "a complex set of skills,

attitudes, and actions, which are closely related to imagination, innovation, and entrepreneurship." In practice, creativity applies imagination through creative and original ideas to overcome global challenges.

In the political context, Beamer (1999) and Berk et al. (2013) attempted to interpret creativity based on the key political concept of power. Indirectly, the practice of power manifests in the process of utilizing policy space or accessing policymaking to produce solutions for public problems. Political leaders have greater access to the policy processes. However, non-political leaders can foster creativity in politics. For example, officials or teams with direct access to the leader are part of a group that supports the leader, or even a team of professionals working for the leader.

In general, creativity involves a vision of time, human needs or challenges, novelty, and concrete action, and it encompasses a creative process. This clarification demonstrates the suitability of the substance of the concept of creativity in both political and non-political contexts. Aside from being a definition and criterion, creativity is also an approach that serves as a lens for analyzing political phenomena. According to Berk et al. (2013), the basic idea of the creative approach in the political context is to reconstruct institutionalism or shift the perspective of an approach that emphasizes institutions as the power guiding political actions or decisions (policies). The three mentioned terms are considered representative, even though they are risky: 'mangle' or human creativity, surprising assemblages, and political possibilities.

The following credo of political creativity is to treat context, history, culture, and values not merely as guides to action, but as information that can guide the improvisation and transformation of political actors. Furthermore, the creativity approach views power as a social practice, not tied to formal institutions but as something that can be negotiated (Berk et al., 2013).

In addition to the work of Berk et al. (2013) and Beamer (1999), the work of John E. Arnold and Robert H. McKim's creativity theory can serve as a

foundation for political design. Both scholars emphasized the importance of agency and structure in encouraging creativity. Arnold (in von Thienen et al. 2018) explains 'A theory of the creative mindset', which explains human creative actions in designing solutions. Arnold's creative mindset is characterized by problem sensitivity, fluency, flexibility, originality, daringness, drive, and confidence. These seven characteristics explain the success of creative actions that originate within the designer or problem solver. As a mindset, creativity depends on a creator's capacity to collaborate and carry out these seven characteristics.

Meanwhile, McKim (in von Thienen et al. 2018) complements Arnold's ideas by explaining factors outside the creators that encourage creative action. Creators or designers must consider human needs when creating to solve problems. McKim's theory of human needs (von Thienen et al. 2019) explains that creativity as a design response to human needs can be both rational and felt. Human needs include physical, emotional, and intellectual.

Physical needs encompass the body's well-being and its ability to achieve desired goals. Emotional needs involve experiencing positive or appropriate emotions and expressing personal motives. Intellectual needs pertain to understanding concepts and conforming to McKim's abstract ideals (von Thienen et al. 2019).

McKim von Thienen et al. (2019) also emphasized the human needs framework, which suggests that all physical and intellectual needs can manifest in a person through emotional tendencies, leading them to feel attracted to or repelled by something. Although these needs are divided into three categories, physical, emotional, and intellectual needs are not entirely separate.

These two theories provide a foundation for political design, suggesting that political action aimed at finding creative solutions to public issues relies not only on the abilities of individual political designers. In developing solutions, political design takes into account the interrelated human, physical,

emotional, and intellectual needs. Therefore, the creative mindset in political design does not operate in isolation but always prioritizes human needs.

Design Thinking For Solution-Oriented Politics

Design thinking provides a methodological backbone for political design. Plattner et al. (2009) and von Thienen et al. (2018) define it as a human-centered approach to innovation. This framework promotes empathy, collaboration, iterative experimentation, and ethical considerations. This approach aligns with Flyvbjerg's (2004) notion of *phronetic* political science, which emphasizes practical wisdom and moral engagement.

Political design integrates these principles to propose a political analysis and action framework. Unlike traditional Political Science methodologies, which often conclude at critique, political design advances toward actionable strategies. This study distinguishes itself from previous literature by operationalizing theoretical insights into tools and principles applicable to political decision-making and policy innovation.

Definitions

Design thinking refers to the efforts of John E. Arnold, who has developed it since the 1950s. Arnold held a series of essential seminars and lectures as a foundation for design thinking, entitled 'Creative Engineering' at Stanford University (in von Thienen et al. 2018). In its development, design thinking is not just taught to students; it is also used in creative work, especially in business and industry.

Plattner et al. (2009), (d.school, 2010b), and Kelley and Kelley (2013) presented a relatively easy-to-understand definition of design thinking, which von Thienen et al. (2018) summarized as follows: "Design thinking is an approach to creative problem solving that is widely recognized as a valuable route to human-centered innovation." Design thinking is a way for problem-solving innovation to emerge, which considers humans as the central point.

Other academics have explained the meaning of design thinking through several important interrelated points. Design thinking is synonymous

with problem solving. Most experts characterize design thinking as an approach, methodology, and problem-solving framework (Dorst, 2011; Boller and Fletcher, 2020; Nubani, 2020; Pakarinen, 2023). Design thinking emphasizes problem solving by fostering creativity and innovative output (Dorst, 2011; von Thienen et al., 2018; von Thienen et al., 2019; Lewrick et al., 2020; Uebernickel et al., 2020; Badke-Schaub, in Eriksson, 2022; Lewrick, 2023; Pakarinen, 2023).

Design thinking places designers as central actors in problem-solving (Tim Brown in Lewrick et al., 2020; Nubani, 2020; Badke-Schaub in Eriksson, 2022; Cross, 2023). Designers do not work alone; the design-thinking process also requires the participation of people, users, or beneficiaries (Boller and Fletcher, 2020; Uebernickel et al., 2020; Nubani, 2020; Badke-Schaub in Eriksson, 2022).

Humans are recognized as human-centered in design thinking. They are the target and focal point of consideration for the processes and goals of design activities aimed at solving problems with innovative outcomes. McKim conveyed the emphasis on human needs in von Thienen et al. 2019, which can be comprehended by positioning humans at the core of the design thinking approach, methodology, and framework. Likewise, Plattner et al. (2009) and Kelley and Kelley (2013) define design thinking (von Thienen et al., 2018). Nubani (2020) describes humans as focused on understanding and fulfilling human needs across nearly all fields. In this study, political science interprets human-centered design thinking as the ethical value of humans that must be taken into account in both the theory and practice of political design.

Design thinking is also a meaningful, iterative process for developing innovative solutions to complex and challenging problems (Uebernickel et al., 2020; Pakarinen, 2023; Kumar and Kurni, 2023). This indicates that design thinking, as a problem-solving process, does not conclude until the best solution is identified.

Finally, design thinking is an open problem-solving activity. First, it is open to past practice and problems. Second, it is openly conducted by the public (Dorst, 2011). In addition to participation, openness is an important aspect that must be considered in design thinking.

In a political context, design thinking is associated with public policy. Dorst (2011) calls design thinking a problem-solving activity that promotes policy innovation. It is important to note that political design finds its relevance. Problem-solving in a political context is closely related to policy as a solution to public issues. Design thinking encourages the publication of policy innovations to address public problems.

Principles

Apart from its definition, political design must understand and consider the principles of design thinking as an academic foundation. In this case, the principles are the basic ideas that explain design thinking in solving problems. Meanwhile, political design refers to these principles of design thinking, explaining how to address public problems. Table 1 maps 16 design thinking principles that are relevant for developing solutions to public challenges.

This study categorizes the principles of design thinking presented by scholars into two groups. First, basic ideas are operational in nature, encouraging design thinking to function by considering the established principles of problem-solving.

Table 2. Principles of Design Thinking

Operational principles	Human principles
1. Empathy 2. Failure and early evaluation 3. Autonomy 4. Interdisciplinary 5. Optimistic & curious (Kumar & Kurni, 2022; Plattner et al., 2009; Stickdorn et al., 2018) 6. People first (Uebernickel et al., 2020; Stickdorn et al., 2018; Kumar and Kurni, 2023) 7. Collaborate and co-create (Alston	1. Human values (emotional needs) (McKim in von Thienen et al., 2018) 2. Human dignity and human rights (Buchanan, 2001) 3. Ethical principles (Siipi and Kangasniemi in Pakarinen et al., 2023)

& DeKerchove, 2023)

8. Working iteratively (Stickdorn et al., 2018; Kumar and Kurni, 2023)
9. Has divergent and convergent phases (Stickdorn et al., 2018)
10. Ambiguity rule (Kumar & Kurni, 2022)
11. Tangible (Brown, 2009 in Uebernickel & Brenner, 2020; Kumar & Kurni, 2022)
12. Experimental/testing (Plattner et al., 2009)
13. Visual and inclusive (Alston & DeKerchove, 2023)

Source: Author's preparation, 2024

To achieve the goal of implementing design thinking, designers must apply at least 13 principles. The principles that should be used are empathy, early failure and evaluation, autonomy, interdisciplinarity, optimism, and curiosity (Plattner et al., 2009)

Other principles, namely, people first (Uebernickel et al., 2020; Stickdorn et al., 2018 in Eriksson, 2022; Kumar and Kurni, 2023), collaboration and co-creation (Alston & DeKerchove, 2023), working iteratively (Stickdorn et al., 2018 in Eriksson, 2022; Kumar and Kurni, 2023), and having divergent and convergent phases (Stickdorn et al., 2018 in Eriksson, 2022; Kumar and Kurni, 2023), ambiguity rules (Kumar & Kurni, 2022), tangible (Brown, 2009 in Uebernickel and Brenner, 2015; Kumar & Kurni, 2022), experimental (Meinel et al., 2009), and visual and inclusive (Alston & DeKerchove, 2023).

Another group of principles seeks to meet humans' emotional needs. Design thinking becomes meaningful because the process and output are oriented toward human needs that are not entirely rational. These basic ideas guide design thinking in solving problems that consider human values (McKim in von Thienen et al., 2019), human dignity and human rights (Buchanan, 2001), and ethical principles (Siipi & Kangasniemi, 2023). Political design combines operational and emotional design thinking principles to address public problems.

Political Science's focus on human issues drives it to seek solutions to global challenges such as war, population growth, environmental degradation, and racial and ethnic conflicts (Easton, 1969a). Meanwhile, Flyvbjerg (2004) advocated for the revitalization of Political Science to encompass practical and intellectual efforts aimed at clarifying the problems, risks, and possibilities confronting humanity. Political Science has also played a role in social and political praxis.

Political design recalls the ideas of Easton and Flyvbjerg by adopting more detailed and operational design thinking principles. In essence, politics does not function solely based on rational incentives to achieve or maintain power. Instead, politics serves as a tool for power solutions.

Political Science can incorporate the operational principles of design thinking to become more attuned to public issues and foster the discovery of innovative ideas and practices to address them.

Political design as an Approach

Critical thinking is a crucial foundation for political research. Critical thinking skills distinguish Political Science students from mere information absorbers and filters. Critical thinking aids in preparing valid and relevant information for the analysis and production of political knowledge using information filters (Schmidt, 2019).

Critical thinking is a valuable learning skill that can be divided into logical and scientific reasoning. It provides logical consistency, assisting in drawing conclusions and gaining new understanding. In scientific reasoning, critical thinking involves using tests and experiments to support claims (Patterson, 2020).

Paul and Elder (2020) divided critical thinking into three dimensions: analytical, evaluative, and creative. Identifying strengths and weaknesses is the focal point of the analytical and evaluative dimensions. The creative dimension transforms the analysis of strengths and weaknesses into a more effective form.

Schmidt (2018) conveyed how critical thinkers operate. First, they define the problem, examine the evidence, and analyze the assumptions that lead to a conclusion. They then question the arguments, causal theories, evidence, generalizations, and simple correlations. In their work, critical thinkers always strive to be open to the arguments of all parties and to assess all arguments, including their own critically.

Critical thinking principles and methods are essential in political design. Critical power, openness, and the application of logical and scientific approaches to solving public problems are urgently needed. However, political science scholars still place too much emphasis on scientific and academic values, which hinders their understanding of public issues. They have not proposed more practical solutions for addressing public problems.

Therefore, political design suggests that political science should not be restricted to critical thinking. It encourages scholars to utilize creative and design thinking to understand, explain, and develop innovative solutions to public problems.

Thus, political design, as a solution-oriented approach in political science, encompasses several principles. The first is a solution. In line with the general definition of solutions, political design advocates for discovering and developing methods to address public problems. Political design acts as a remedy for the challenges faced by citizens.

Political design posits that politics is an instrument for resolving power issues. Politics serves as a response to the problems faced by the public. It is important to note that political design focuses more on the political issues encountered by citizens, such as inequality in public services for people with disabilities, the poor, and other marginalized groups. Another example is the issue of fairness in elections, including the problems of vote buying and other forms of electoral fraud.

Second, political design seeks to achieve an operational level rather than a theoretical approach to problems. The concept of political design goes

beyond merely analyzing and understanding public issues; it aims to function at the level of finding solutions. Political design begins with public problems as challenges to be resolved, not just comprehended and explained. Therefore, political design advocates for a shift of roles from academia to designer. Political scholars not only strive to empathize with and understand these problems but also move toward implementing changes to solve them operationally.

Third, political designers do not only seek ordinary solutions; they innovate. Addressing public problems also demands enhanced benefit values compared to earlier solutions, such as efficiency and effectiveness, human values, and other public benefit considerations. The main ideas of creative and design thinking that are thoughtfully adopted encourage creative problem-solving and serve as a primary route to discovering innovation (Von Thienen et al., 2018a). Political design advocates innovative solutions to public problems. In other words, political design encourages the development of political innovation in various ways.

Political designs can help foster innovation to enhance the quality of political participation and democracy. Additionally, political design facilitates the emergence of inclusive political education innovations, policy innovations, the recognition of disability rights, and other political innovations.

Can there be no political influence? This is perhaps a fundamental question, considering that political phenomena cannot be separated from the contestation of interests. Therefore, the fourth principle avoids the naiveté of political design, and the interests of designers cannot be disregarded.

However, these interests can still be managed. Political designers direct their efforts toward fulfilling the hope of achieving public value with every innovative breakthrough in addressing public problems. Political design supports resolving public issues that align with the interests of citizens, including positive discrimination for marginalized groups.

Based on these explanations, among the spectrum of political science approaches, Political Design can be categorized as part of a critical and solution-oriented approach rooted in post-behavioralism and *phronetic* political science. This approach rejects the dichotomy between theory and practice that has dominated political science. If post-behavioralism emphasizes the importance of political scientists' involvement in finding real solutions to public problems (Easton, 1969a), and phronetic political science (Flyvbjerg, 2004a) emphasizes practical wisdom in political decision-making, then Political Design advances this notion by offering a design-based approach to crafting innovative political solutions.

Compared to traditional and modern approaches in political science, Political Design aligns more closely with critical approaches like constructivism, critical theory, and feminism, as it is attuned to the imbalance of power and the importance of values in political analysis. However, unlike the critical approach, which primarily engages in deconstruction and normative analysis of political phenomena, Political Design actively seeks to create concrete solutions to the problems faced by society.

In addition, this approach includes elements that align with the public policy strategy grounded in design thinking and creative problem-solving. In this context, Political Design shares principles with the policy innovation approach, but with a broader scope that encompasses not only government policies but also political strategies involving both state and non-state actors in facilitating change.

Therefore, Political Design can be seen as an interdisciplinary and transformative approach that merges the analytical elements of political science with the creative methods of design studies. This approach not only explores politics as a phenomenon to be understood and explained but also as a realm for intervention through innovative design-based solutions.

Finally, to demonstrate how political design can be applied in analyzing and addressing public problems, this study examines one case: a design-based

approach to tackling political disinformation during elections. Political disinformation poses a significant challenge in contemporary democratic systems, particularly in the digital era. Conventional methods for addressing disinformation are often reactive, such as imposing strict regulations on social media platforms or conducting digital literacy campaigns that may not always be effective. In this context, Political Design provides a design-based solution by employing a design thinking approach to understand the actors, motivations, and patterns of disinformation dissemination.

For instance, during the 2024 election in Indonesia, the spread of political hoaxes increased significantly, particularly through closed messaging applications. The Political Design approach proposes a human-centered intervention model with several steps:

The first is empathy towards citizens. Instead of simply focusing on regulation, this approach examines how voters receive, believe in, and spread false information. The second involves a broader definition of the problem: not only suppressing the spread of hoaxes but also finding ways to encourage citizen involvement in verifying information. The third emphasizes creative ideation: developing a gamification-based solution on social media platforms that incentivizes users to collectively identify hoaxes. The fourth entails the prototype and testing of the solution, specifically testing an AI-based warning system in WhatsApp groups that can flag potential misinformation before it becomes viral. The fifth focuses on implementation and refinement, engaging civil society and digital influencers to support the information verification ecosystem.

This design-based approach is more effective than traditional regulatory approaches because it involves users creating solutions and increasing citizens' digital resilience to disinformation.

CONCLUSION

Political design represents a reorientation of Political Science from abstract critique towards problem-solving and innovation. Drawing from critical political science, it incorporates creative and design thinking to respond to societal challenges with inclusive, ethical, and practical solutions. This approach holds the potential to reshape democratic governance, enabling scholars and practitioners not only to understand but also to transform political realities. This framework invites future research to expand its applications and assess its effectiveness in various political contexts.

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