

Political Dirty Tricks and Trickery of Justice and Development Party in Turkiye 2023 Election

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ABSTRACT

Dirty tricks” are a kind of political action or candidate takes to damage their opponents that may influence unethical, distasteful behaviors. The struggle between the government and the opposition in politics is done to serve the country, and a better future for the citizens, and it is a service race. Perfidy means that the struggle is not carried out on an open human scale but in secret and illegitimate ways. Although the tradition of the duel is a brave struggle face to face, in the Middle East and our country Turkiye, its equivalent is to trap someone from behind; in other words, it means dirty tricks. This approach should not be compared to the rear siege used in combat tactics.

This article was written to record the Political History of the cheats, perfidy, and dirty tricks used by the Justice and Development Party (AKP) and its Chairman, Recep Tayyip Erdo?an, to stay in power for over 20 years, between 2002 to 2023 in Turkey.

Key Words: Political History, Dirty Tricks in Politics, Populist Leaders, Democracy, Autocracy, Dictatorship, Populism

INTRODUCTION

The term populism is considered harmful nowadays. Populism means pluralism. The term populism suggests that a particular opinion lies outside the democratic spectrum. Democracy, however, comprises a large scale for many ideas but not in populism.

In the latest terminology in Political Science, populism and fascism are very tangential and have a meaning that evokes each other. In most populist approaches, specific political ideas are excluded and accused, and the opposition is tried to be crushed.

The crisis of democratic legitimacy central in Paolo Gerbaudo’s and Tony Milligan’s accounts of popular politics is evidenced in the intensification of protests since 2011 and democratic activities worldwide (Tambakaki, 2019). Citizenship has an institutional dimension that, to a degree, undermines, or at least compromises, the intention to transgress the limits of contemporary democracy. The ideal of free and equal citizenship is accepted by liberal democracy.

Here are some examples of dirty tricks to look out for when evaluating the ethics of a candidate (www.scu.edu/ethics/all-about-ethics/top-5-dirty-tricks-in-politics/):

a-Whisper Campaigns

Rumors and slanderous statements are quietly conveyed to damage reputations and dry up funding sources and support. If the candidate ignores the behind-the-back words, the campaign can be damaged.

b-Push Polling

Push polling is an unfair and unethical political device to communicate negative messages.

c-Unfair Competition

Practices that hamper the opponent's ability to compete pretty are unethical. You will sometimes see wealthy candidates hiring as many political consultants as are available, not for their services, but to keep them from working for the opponent. If a candidate condones the removal of posters or any behavior that stifles the opponent's message, they engage in unethical campaigning.

d-Interference with the Electoral Process

The most common and typical type is deliberately staged traffic jams on Election Day, and voter intimidation at the polls is unethical – and in many instances, illegal tactics designed to discourage voting.

e-The October Surprise

The infamous “October surprise” is the generic term for a damaging attack that comes out shortly before an election, giving the target of the attack little or no time to respond. If the attack is subject to denial or rational explanation, the interests of an informed electorate require that assertions be timed in such a way as to allow a response.

Politicians in Turkey have succeeded in adding items that no one had thought of. For example:

f-Using the Justice system has degenerated

To open lawsuits against the dissidents with unfounded denunciations and accusations, to influence the judiciary with threats, and to ban them from politics. Exile judges who are ashamed to do so.

g- Montage Films and Fake Posters

Showing the opposition in cooperation with terrorists with montage films.

h-Lie Openly Without Hesitation (Goebels Style) (Tuncer, 2023 and Tuncer, 2023).

Spreading their lies as if they were the opposition. To extract non-existent natural gas, to find non-existent oil, and to show that the non-produced domestic car has been produced. Convincing the public that all mistakes were made by the opposition, even though it has been in power for more than twenty years.

Political candidates and parties have used dirty tricks dating back to the early years of the American Republic (freakonomics.com/2007/11/the-complete-history).

In the 1828 election, President Andrew Jackson was accused of executing his men in war, adultery, and cannibalism by supporters of John Quincy Adams (politicaldictionary.com/words/dirty-tricks/). In the Watergate scandal, dirty tricks went from an insider term to a publicly known concept. Nixon and his administration orchestrated a break-in at the Democratic National Committee offices in June 1972—the Bush campaign employed advisor Lee Atwater, who created the template for future methods of dirty attacks. Atwater was the mind behind the “Revolving Doors” TV ad that tied Dukakis to a murder committed by furloughed convict Willie Horton. Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign deployed dirty tricks ranging from asking Russia to hack opponent Hillary Clinton's emails to using social media to spread rumors of Clinton's health.

This ad and rumors spread by Republicans about Kitty Dukakis burning an American flag during a protest flipped a Dukakis polling advantage into a Bush victory.

It has been reported that, in the Philippines, participants from different backgrounds were randomly selected, and the qualitative phenomenological approach was employed to explain the participants' lived experiences about elections in the country. The Political Discourse Analysis and Cognitive Analysis theories were the references used to analyze the study's semantic and conceptual metaphor. Results showed that the Political Discourse Analysis of politics is dirty (Manarpiis, 2022). The target domain of politics was interpreted as corruption, buying votes, dishonesty, betraying public trust; propaganda, dirty tactics; politicians surrounded by guns, goons, and golds; the messy world, dirty words; scandal, loss of integrity; and pork barrel. It has been concluded that politics has no positive connotation but negative interpretations.

Post-Truth Politics and Politicians

The term "post-truth politics" has become regularly used in recent years, gaining prominence in 2016 when Oxford Dictionaries declared that its word of the year was "post-truth." In that same year, "postfaktisch" (post-factual) was named word of the year by the German Language Society. The popularity of these terms coincided with the Trump-Clinton presidential campaign in the U.S., as well as with the Brexit referendum in the UK and the rise of right-wing populism in Germany. Former United States President Donald Trump famously made more than 30,000 false or misleading claims during the four years of his presidency. This is an average of more than 20 a day (theconversation.com/we-know-politicians-lie).

At the heart of "post-truth politics" is the assumption that public discourse, most notably that of politicians, has become so dishonest that we can no longer expect honesty.

Populist Politicians and Their Methods

There is a clear distinction between populism and fascism, and populist leaders introduce a graded conceptualization of populism to more precisely depict varying combinations of political strategies (Kaltwasser, 2017). Populism refers to the Latin word "Populus," which means "the people." Today, populism is understood to mean a particular style of politics. However, there is no precise or uniform definition. On the contrary, the term is considered imprecise and value-laden, as it is often used in public debates as a kind of "killer argument" to undermine opposing opinions. There is no single definition for the term, but there is no "unified" populism. Different political camps use it, be it from the left or the right, and can be charged with other additional ideologies. In the case of right-wing populism, these include radical nationalism and xenophobia (www.liberties.eu/en/stories/populism).

Populism might be one of the most contested concepts in political science today, as the fact that this observation has now become commonplace shows. Selective rationalism, leader-centrism, and normative bias are the main characteristics of populist policy (Rueda, 2021).

The most important support and assurance of populist politicians is an uneducated, morally eroded electorate that believes in lies because of these characters. After convincing this community, they want to maintain their power by polarizing and dividing the society to keep it on their side.

The Watergate scandal is perhaps one of the most important examples of dirty politics in world politics (O'Sullivan, 2018). Dirty Tricks were analyzed in detail, maybe for the first time by providing the first CIA.

The recently-released internal history of Watergate documents the backgrounds of the burglars, their associations with the Agency in unprecedented detail, and how the Nixon White House sought to implicate the CIA in the emerging scandal.

Lies, Sharp Turns in Discourse

U-turns in the diplomacy of President Erdoğan marked a maximum in 2022. The long-standing policy in relations with Saudi Arabia, Syria, Israel, and Egypt has been abandoned (www.sozcu.com.tr/2022/gundem/2022-erdoganin-u-donusu-yili). Notably, normalization steps were taken when the economic crisis deepened, and the elections were approaching with Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria, and Israel, with which relations have been broken for years. After events such as the Mavi Marmara crisis and the low chair scandal against Turkey's ambassador to Israel, normalization steps were taken this year with Israel, where relations came to a freezing point. All these problems were tensions artificially produced by Erdogan for domestic politics.

The Justice and Development Party, which came to the European Union with the goal of full membership, turned its back on the European Union with the latest Erdogan's exit.

One month after he stated on a live broadcast that it would not be right to open the Hagia Sophia Museum, he opened the museum by turning it into a mosque to support Islamic communities.

After the downing of a Russian Su-24 fighter jet on the Turkey-Syria border on November 24, 2015, President Erdoğan said, "We are not the ones who should apologize; they are the ones violating our airspace. Our pilots have fulfilled their duties. What is it? It violates the rules of engagement, and They have fulfilled this requirement." In a news report on June 27, 2016, it was stated that President Erdogan sent a letter to Russian President Vladimir Putin and expressed his deep sadness about the crashed Russian military plane (www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/turkiye/ne-dedi-ne-yapti-erdoganin-dis-politikadaki-tarihi-u-donusleri).

A few days after Erdoğan said that the American priest Branson and German Journalist Deniz Yücel could not be extradited as long as I was on duty, these two people, who were unfairly called terrorists, were deported to their countries upon the calls of Trump and Merkel. Deniz Yücel was sent to Germany on the day of the decision to continue her detention (www.youtube.com/watch?v=VaCgFsvXEhU).

There was much discussion about making a U-turn in a month, from saying that the Kurdish problem is my problem to that there is no such thing as a Kurdish problem in Turkey. He brought a new system and administration that would raise the interest rates a few years after he asked why the interest is the result of inflation and the fact that the dollar was based on 24 TL a year after he said, "You can wait a long time because the dollar will be 10 TL" has been a tragicomic approach.

One day after I said I would meet with the Vice President of the United States if the President came, Pence's first meeting was also a remarkable U-turn.

In the past, Erdogan and MHP leader Bahçeli, who insulted each other unspeakably, became the leaders of the alliance that did not leak. However, in politics, it is essential to maintain relations with a certain dignity. They should neither insult each other heavily nor become blurred enough to obscure different ideologies. Such inconsistent behaviors are frequently encountered in the history of leaders such as Hitler for the sake of political interest.

Although the agreements with the PKK, officially recognized as a terrorist group, called the "solution process," were organized by the ruling party and Erdoğan, propaganda was made as if the opposition parties had made and the opposition parties were declared terrorists.

Topics and facts/accurate on which Erdogan is openly wrong or lying (*Open Sources; TVs and Newspapers/ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f7L3dKWzedg>):

Unreal**Fact/True**

Before Erdogan, pins were not produced Needleand pin factory opened in 1950 (Erdogan was not yet born in 1950)

We built Isparta S.Demirel University in 1992 (10 years before the Erdo?an regime)

We built Van 100.Years University in 1992

We made Harran Urfa University in 1992

We made the Sivas University in 1973 (29 years before AKP and Erdo?an)

We built Zonguldak B. Ecevit Universitty in 1992

We built Afyonkarahisar Kocatepe University in 1992

We built Ankara, Esenbo?a, Airport in 1955 (Erdo?an was 1 yr old)

We made Ad?yaman Airport in 1998

We built Adnan Menderes Airport in ?zmir in 1987

We built Mu? Airport in 1992

Before 2002 no electricity in Turkey Home electricity in Tarsus/?çel on September 5, 1902

There was no washing machine First domestic washing machine was in 1959

There was no refrigerator before AKP The first household refrigerator was in 1960

There was no oven before us The first domestic oven was in 1963

We do not accept the Istanbul Convention Erdogan's cabinet spearheaded the Istanbul that protects women and LGBT+, and Turkey Convention.

Got out of the Convention

There was no MRI device before the AK Party MRI started to be used in 1989 (13 years before AKP)

Ambulances did not exist before AKP There is no period in the Republic of Türkiye without an Ambulance.

We built the Ankara-Istanbul Highway Ankara – Istanbul highway was made on 28 December 1984 (18 years before Erdogan)

*These are the primary lies (may be mistaken, hopefully). It has been said dozens of times more openly.

This can be easily obtained from open sources such as newspapers, magazines, and television news; it was well known that the government, whose serious crimes were documented in official records, would not leave the administration quickly.

1) State officials see themselves not as the protector of the state but as the party's servants and do not speak out against lawlessness.

- 2) Despite being a parliamentary candidate for the interior minister, his unlawful attempts to be responsible for election security. This is unconstitutional.
- 3) Erdogan unlawfully distributes citizenship to an unknown number of Syrian immigrants and imports voters.
- 4) Again, with the means of the State, by abusing his office, to have the votes of the opposition written to himself by having them shifted.
- 5) No legal action was taken against the testimonies of the witnesses, who stated that they were involved in the corruption with the Erdogan family, and an attempt was made to divert attention to this issue.
- 6) To abuse the religious feelings of the people, to openly use the official institution of Religious Affairs and Mosques for this purpose, even though it is illegal. This is also unconstitutional.
- 7) There is an unexplained increase in the number of voters of 2.5 million between 2018 and 2023. Some of them are immigrants who have been granted citizenship on the condition of voting for Erdogan. The critical issue is that those who died during this period are not dropped from the electoral list. Instead of these voters, it is focused on suspicion of adding illegal collective votes.

CONCLUSION

Uncivil campaigning techniques are increasingly relevant phenomena in politics. However, it remains unclear how they share an underlying component and how partisanship can influence their associations with democratic outcomes. It has introduced the concept of dirty campaigning, situated at the intersection of research on negative campaigning and political scandals. Dirty campaigning involves violations of social norms and liberal-democratic values between elite political actors in terms of style and practices, such as uncivil campaigning and deceitful campaign techniques (Reiter, 2022).

Political parties and populist politicians may use dirty campaigning to make electoral gains, which can contribute to a toxic political climate.

Populism is embedded in deep feelings of discontent not only with politics but also with social life. It has been demonstrated that populism is strongest supported by stigmatized groups who face difficulties finding a positive social identity (Spruyt, 2016).

The policy should be based on truth and accuracy. Only in this way will the long-term happiness and peace of the society be achieved.

The most important investment to be made to prevent the misuse of populism and to prevent lies and pollution in politics is the spread of excellent and well-established education. It should be ensured that people with a particular general culture, who have received a specific education, are in the majority in politics.

Plato said, “The most unhappy person is the person who, instead of being born a tyrant, has the misfortune of becoming a tyrant to a city by an ominous coincidence, instead of spending his life uninvolved in the affairs of the state. The most unhappy way of life is the political life of the tyrant.”

I want to end with a word from Socrates; “When argument fades, slander is the loser’s tool.”

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