# LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF POLITICS IS DIRTY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL ELECTIONS

# Linguistic Analysis of *Politics Is Dirty* in the Context of the Philippine National Elections

Noel B. Manarpiis*

For affiliations and correspondence, see the last page.

## Abstract

The paper tackled politics in the Philippines by scrutinizing the statement POLITICS IS DIRTY using both semantic and conceptual metaphor analyses in the context of the 2022 national elections in the Philippines. Fifty participants from different backgrounds were randomly selected for the study. The qualitative phenomenological approach was employed to explain the lived experiences of the participants about election in the country. The Political Discourse Analysis and Cognitive Analysis theories were the references used to be able to analyze the semantic and conceptual metaphor of the study. Results showed that the Political Discourse Analysis of POLITICS IS DIRTY generated five different negative phrases to describe the words politics and dirty. The Semantic Analysis of these two words also revealed their negative natural (physical) and moral connotations. Then, the conceptual metaphor analysis produced the source domain of dirty: taboo, impure, disagreeable, untouchable, needs washing, mess, and stinky. The target domain of politics was interpreted as corruption, buying votes, dishonesty, betraying public trust; propaganda, dirty tactics; politicians surrounded by guns, goons, golds; dirty world, dirty word; scandal, loss of integrity; and pork barrel. It is concluded that the word politics does not have any positive connotation but has varied negative interpretations.

**Keywords:** *semantic analysis, conceptual metaphor, Philippine politics, dirty politics*

## Introduction

Metaphor has always been thought of as exclusive to poetries or that belongs solely to the field of literature. While this figure of speech is more used as an artistic representation and symbol of two things not alike or not related to each other, it is also used in usual or daily conversations to express feelings or thoughts, or even perceptions.

According to traditional literary criticism, metaphor is distinguished from a simile. Their distinction can be seen when used in a sentence such as:

1. Carlo is like a lion. (simile)
2. Carlo is a lion. (metaphor)

In the first sentence, Carlo is being likened to a lion, thus indicating their similarity. In the second sentence, however, Carlo is being portrayed as the equivalent of a lion.

According to the linguistic dictionary of Richards and Schmidt (2010), metaphors are important means since they carry both semantic and cultural meanings. Those who are learning both a first and second language should take metaphor into consideration since every language has accumulated metaphors over time.

In Cognitive Linguistics, metaphors are interrelated to everyday speech that addresses speakers' or interlocutors' conceptual structure in language. Talmy (2006) describes cognitive linguistics as "the linguistic structuring of basic conceptual categories such as space and time, scenes and events, entities and processes, motion and location, and force and causation." He added basic categories of cognition such as attention and perspective, volition and intention, and expectation and affect. Cognitive linguistics is also into metaphoric mapping, which is the central discussion of this paper.

It is in Cognitive Linguistics that the notion of conceptual metaphor is derived. Lakoff and Johnson (2003) define it as the "understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (p.5). They asserted that it is in the notion of conceptual metaphor that one understands time in terms of space, or the path-is-a-journey metaphor, or the argument-is-war metaphor.

Take the example analysis of a case of two men who are best friends. Unfortunately, they had a heated argument out of their involvement to one woman who, they both love. At first, the two were just calm, but as the discussion became intensely deeper, they could not hold on to their emotions until their argument became worst that it resulted not only in word war, but in contention that dissolved their friendship.

It can be figured out in sentences what resulted in their

argument over a woman:

1. The two men had a *heated debate* that resulted in a *word war*.
2. Their *discussion became intensely deep* that they both had a *contention*.
3. Their *contention dissolved their friendship*.

The italicized words and phrases are connected to an intense feeling that is connected to ARGUMENT IS WAR. The words heated debate, word war, intensely deep discussion, and contention are the results of arguments. It follows that in unresolved arguments, there is a big chance of engaging in a state of war which, eventually, in the example, happened to the two when their contention dissolved their friendship.

ARGUMENT IS WAR includes two words that do not have anything to do with each other. Yet, this metaphorical concept can be understood if we look at the two words according to their notion of argument as one that can produce a heated debate, and war as one that is a result of an unresolved treaty. Going back to Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual metaphor, there is the source domain and the target domain. The source domain is the conceptual domain where metaphorical expressions are drawn which are required to understand the source domain. On the other hand, target domain is the conceptual domain that we try to understand (how does one understand the meaning of argument?) (Kovecses, 2010).

Argument, being the target domain is the abstract one between the two. Since it is abstract, it needs an explanation that will make it concrete and understandable. Questions arise like how does one define an argument? What words can lead into understanding the word Argument? In between the abstract idea and the concrete one, there is the term "mapping." Its function is to describe the mental organization of information in domains, the underlying phenomenon that drives metaphorical usage in language (Kövecses, 2010). Mapping shows the source domain tracking onto and describing the aspects of the target domain. It draws out one's mental representations called image schemata in which people experience in life such as the language they use when engaging in a conversation, or their experiences of actions made during interlocution which establishes patterns of understanding and reasoning. Then, in the source domain can be found the domain of War. This is the conceptual domain from which metaphorical expressions are drawn. The source domain is concrete, meaning, it specifically explains the abstractness found in the target domain.

To be able to understand the source and the target domains, we must be able to understand mapping as a principle in conceptual metaphor that describes what is the mental interpretation of the target domain from the source domain. Mapping can be more understood as like a road map. As conceptual linguistics explains, it is like getting from Point A (source) to Point B (the target).

The present discussion is about the conceptual metaphor of POLITICS IS DIRTY, a maxim mostly heard in the Philippines, the land of the people whose involvement in political discussions is as frequent as breakfast in the morning. From the literatures that were gathered, no one has yet investigated the linguistic study of the conceptual metaphor of POLITICS IS DIRTY. Most of the academic and journal research mentioning this adage center their discussion on politics *per se* and does not analyze the metaphor linguistically.

The term conceptual metaphor as a figurative comparison refers to one idea (or conceptual domain) that is understood in connection with another (Nordquist, 2019). Conceptual metaphors are used as part of the common language and conceptual precepts shared by members of a culture. In the Philippines, one's concept of death is culturally related to words or phrases like "rest in peace," or simply, peace (Filipino, *namayapa*, where the root word is *payapa* translated to calm, or peaceful). The Filipinos can actually automatically connect this word to many other synonymous terms such as *sumakabilang-buhay* (literally, has gone to the other side), or *namatay* (direct translation of death).

The theory of conceptual metaphor explains that metaphor is not "a decorative device, peripheral to language and thought." Instead, it holds that conceptual metaphors are "central to thought, and therefore, to language. Lakoff and Turner (1989) identified five basic tenets of the conceptual metaphor theory:

**Metaphor structure thinking.** Lakoff argued that in the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR, "structures (at least in part) what one does and how people understand what they are doing when they argue.

**Metaphor structure knowledge.** In dealing with metaphors, people use their cognitive skills to analyze a concept such as KNOWLEDGE IS LIGHT.

**Metaphor is central to abstract language.** Forgacs,

et al (2015) explained that figures of speech such as metaphors are not intended to be understood literally, word-byword. Novel adjective-noun pairs are presented visually in three conditions: 1) Physical, easy to experience with the senses; 2) Abstract, difficult to experience with the senses; and, Novel, metaphorical expressions with a physical adjective, but a figurative meaning. In the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR, argument being the target domain is the abstract language.

**Metaphor is grounded in physical experience.** A change in the objects people interact with or in the environment where they are interacting is a physical experience. In metaphors, what is physical are the concrete experiences from the abstract concepts being presented such as in ARGUMENT IS WAR. In this concept, "war" is the source domain which can be experienced physically. What is detected by their five senses becomes their physical learning experience to understand an abstract concept.

**Metaphor is ideological.** Since one's understanding of a certain metaphor comes from the mind, then, conceptual metaphors such as KNOWLEDGE IS LIGHT is understood according to people's own belief or set of opinions of the meaning of the source domain to describe the target domain.

This research attempted to shed light on the meaning of POLITICS IS DIRTY as understood in the context of the Philippine national election 2022. What does this conceptual metaphor mean according to the Filipinos' experiences during election time?

**Research Questions**

Generally, the study wanted to analyze semantically and metaphorically the statement POLITICS IS DIRTY. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What does "Politics is Dirty" mean in the Philippine context using the Political Discourse Analysis?

    1.1. What is the participants' age range, social classification in terms of jobs, and status as voters?

    1.2. What is the initial reaction of the respondents to the question, "Is politics dirty in the Philippines?"

    1.3. What is the general concept of POLITICS IS DIRTY according to the respondents' past or present experiences?

    1.4. What experiences from the past elections will be repeated in the present condition of the Philippine National election 2022?

2. In terms of discussing using Cognitive Analysis (CA) of the conceptual metaphor of POLITICS IS DIRTY:

    2.1. What is the semantic analysis of POLITICS IS DIRTY?

    2.2. What is the conceptual metaphor analysis of POLITICS IS DIRTY based on the gathered information from the selected public?

# Methodology

### Research Design

The Qualitative Phenomenological approach was employed to explain the lived experiences of the participants about elections in the Philippines. In using this design, the researcher wanted to find out what experiences the participants have had as voters or participants in Philippine elections and why they say that in the Philippines, the election is a dirty undertaking. The following steps were followed in the tradition of conducting a phenomenological study as explained by Greening (2019):

### Bracketing

The researcher collected the participants' own perceptions and experiences about POLITICS IS DIRTY. This was done by collecting their written stories as first-hand experiencers of politics in the Philippines. The researcher concentrated on the personal accounts of the participants and described their life experiences in participating in the practice of suffrage, their participation in political rallies, and their perceptions as citizens about what politics is like in the Philippines. For this step, the researcher suspended his judgment and just focused on the experiences of the participants.

### Intuiting

The researcher in this part described the lived experiences of the respondents. He investigated the beliefs and opinions given by the participants based on their experience. In the end, he summarized the participants' common understanding of the term POLITICS IS DIRTY.

## Analyzing

In this process, the researcher analyzed the data and coded their experiences to be able to identify the themes of their lived experiences about politics in the Philippines.

## Describing

In this critical step of the research, the researcher comprehended and defined the phenomenon. He gave distinctions and critical descriptions of POLITICS IS DIRTY as a final approach to defining the conceptual metaphor being presented in the study.

These steps are aligned with the research objectives of the paper where Research Question No. 1 (a-d) belongs to Steps 1-2 which are Bracketing and Intuiting. Meanwhile, Research Question No. 2 (e-f) goes with Steps 3-4 which are Analyzing and Describing.

## Sampling Techniques and Participants

The voluntary response sampling technique was used in this study. This was done by placing the question on social media and the first 50 persons to volunteer was given the chance to participate and become the respondents. A total of 50 participants were asked the questions. The researcher used 50 since a qualitative design can have from 5 to 50 participants as adequate although samples of 20 to 30 were most common (Mason, 2010). The set of participants who voluntarily joined belong to different societal backgrounds.

## Instruments

The researcher used the interview schedule for the participants to answer. It contains four important questions pertaining to POLITICS IS DIRTY which the participants replied. The instrument was uploaded in the social media account and in Google Suite for social media users to see. The researcher also used six of the most used dictionaries around the world to compare the lemmata politics and dirty. These were Merriam-Webster, Oxford, Collin's, wordhippo.com, lexico.com, and googledictionary.com. Another instrument important in this research that the researcher employed was the word frequency counter to calculate the number of times a certain word pertaining to politics or dirty occurred from the answers given by the participants.

## Data Gathering Procedure

The data from the participants were gathered as follows: 1) The participants answered the questions posed in the interview schedules. Their answers were analyzed one by one, while the researcher paid attention to synonymous answers. These answers were placed in matrix form for easy analysis. Words referring to the topic that came out often were picked out and considered valuable for describing either "politics" or "dirty." These words were used to represent the Filipinos' understanding or perception of POLITICS IS DIRTY.

# Results and Discussion

The following results and their discussions are presented in this research. The lived experiences of the respondents and the reflection of these experiences were discussed here to lead the readers into realizing the meaning of POLITICS IS DIRTY using the Conceptual Metaphor Analysis that was introduced by Lakoff and Johnson. The discussions throughout are based on the Filipinos' experiences and view of politics in the context of Philippine National Election 2022. The Filipinos are politics-oriented and they acknowledge the truth in the statement POLITICS IS DIRTY.

The tables, pie charts and bar graphs represent the answers of the respondents of the study. The long sentences or paragraphs that were produced by the respondents were labeled by semantically analyzing the meaning of the words, sentences, or paragraphs given by the respondents. These were reduced to labels of equivalent word or phrase that answered the question in the study.

**The meaning of "Politics is Dirty" in the Philippine context (using the Political Discourse Analysis)**

**The participants' sex, age range, social classification in terms of jobs, and status as voters**

The respondents of the study showed more female than male participants. Figure 1 shows the shares of the pie between the two sexes.

Figure 1. *Percentage of participation between male and female*

The age of the participants varies and divided into 10 brackets. In the pie below, the majority of the participants belong to bracket 23-27. Figure 2 shows the result.
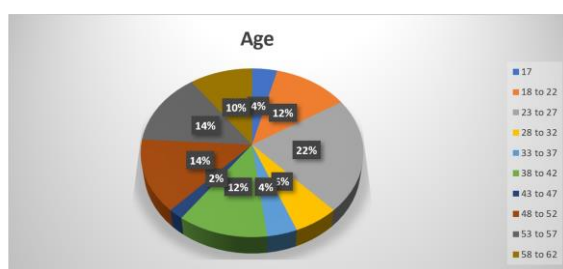


Figure 2. *Distribution of age of the participants*

The pie representation below shows the classification of job of the participants. The majority of the respondents are employed voters. Figure 3 below shows the results
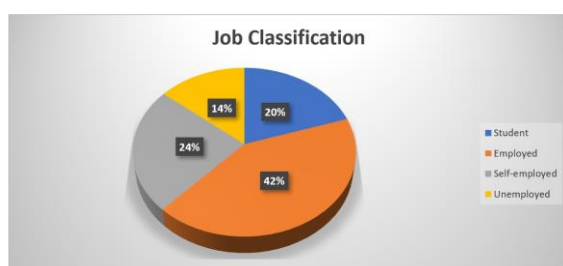


Figure 3. *Job classification of the participants of the study*

In the pie below, the registered and non-registered voters are separated into two slices, with 72 percent going to those who answered "Yes" they are registered voters of the country.



Figure 4. *Distribution of registered and non-registered voters*

**The initial reaction of the respondents to the question: "Is politics dirty in the Philippines?"**

The bar graph below shows that the "Yes" answer is towering over the few participants that said "No" or "Maybe."
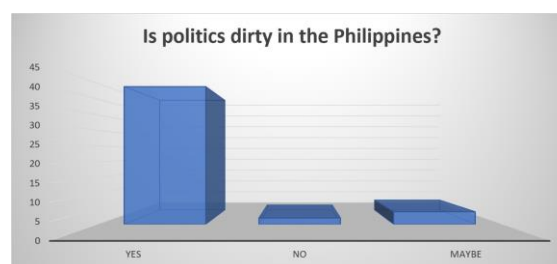


Figure 5. *Participants' belief about politics being dirty in the Philippines*

**The general concept of POLITICS IS DIRTY according to the respondents' past or present experiences**

The answers given by the participants were each semantically reduced to a phrase summing up the meaning of their beliefs about politics being dirty in the Philippines. Table 1 shows the labeling of the answers into the nearest semantic meaning of the sentences

Table 1. *Participants' general concept of "POLITICS IS DIRTY"*

| Respondents' Answers | Label |
|---|---|
| It's politics and money; election is a milking cow; Money talks; Vote-buying out of drug money | Dirty money |
| Election is always a disaster; Never peaceful; Violent elections | Election is never peaceful |
| Corruption; Self-service; Evil; Deceit; Manipulating election outcomes; Self-righteous politicians; Selfish; Fraud, thievery, exploitations | Immoral and self-serving |
| Evil politicians; Ran for office to gain power and authority; bureaucrat capitalists; traditional politicians; political opportunists; convicted leaders; | Questionable leaders |
| Partisan politics; Vote rigging; | Dirty Game |

The bar graph below shows the distribution of answers of the participants when asked about their general concept of POLITICS IS DIRTY in the country.
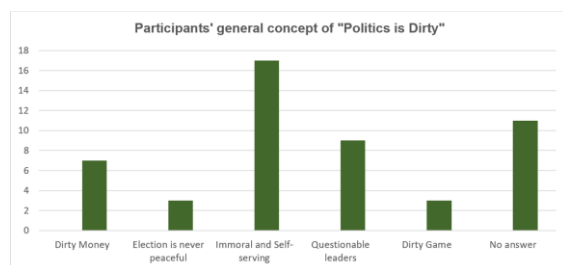


Figure 6. *Participants' general concept of politics being dirty in the Philippines*

**The experiences from the past elections will be repeated in the present condition of the National Election 2022**

The respondents believe that in the 2022 national election, vote buying will still be present. Figure 8 shows the results.
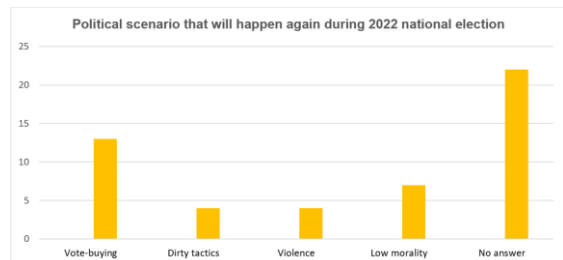


Figure 7. *Participants' belief about politics being dirty in the Philippines*

Summing up Question 1, majority of those who answered where females. The age of the majority of participants belong to bracket 23-27. Most of them are employed, and are registered voters. Majority believes that politics is dirty in the Philippines. Their general concept of POLITICS IS DIRTY are as follows: dirty money, no peaceful election, immoral and self-serving, questionable leaders, and a dirty game. The respondents also believed that in 2022 National Election, the political scenario will still have the following: vote-buying, dirty tactics, violence, low morality, and other political tricks.

Based on the experiences of the respondents, corruption and vote-buying are the most unforgettable experiences that the Filipinos always encounter every election. According to them, it is either they know someone who had received money in return for a vote. They said that in the coming 2022 national election, the same dirty tactics will still happen because participants are being paid in exchange for their attendance in rallies and political activities.

According to Section 21 of the Philippine Omnibus Election Code, vote buying is defined as "any person who gives, offers or promises money or anything of value, gives or promises any office or employment, franchise or grant, public or private, or makes or offers to make an expenditure, directly or indirectly, or cause an expenditure to be made to any person, association, corporation, entity, or community in order to induce anyone or the public, in general, to vote for or against any candidate or withhold his vote in the election, or to vote for or against any aspirant for the nomination or choice of a candidate in a convention or similar process of a political party." Those who will be found guilty of this election offense shall be punished with imprisonment of not less than a year but not more than six years and shall not be subject to probation. Also, the violator shall be sentenced to suffer disqualification to hold public office and deprivation of the right of suffrage.

In the context of Section 21, the words "give, offer, promise money or anything of value" are synonymous to vote-buying. According to the experiences related by the participants, they accept the money given to them either because they need it or they believe the money they receive came from their own taxes. This information led them to believe that politics is a dirty game in the Philippines.

Hicken, Leider, Ravanilla and Yang (2013) stressed that vote-buying and vote-selling obstruct the democratic process and yet, it remains prevalent in many developing countries, the Philippines included. According to these researchers, quoting National Democratic Institute (Where we work: Philippines), this country of 7,165 islands have historically been marred fraud, intimidation, and political violence. In their research, they estimated that about 30 percent of Filipinos were offered money by a politician or local leader during the 2010 election campaign.

The incumbent President Rodrigo Roa Duterte for his part made use of social media to help his successful campaign for the presidency in 2015. However, according to the report of Etter (2017), Duterte has

turned Facebook into a weapon. She mentioned in her report that those who were with the "Punisher," (Duterte's moniker) that fought dirty to see him win were brought inside the Malacañang Palace. Using Facebook, his cohorts began taking down their opponents including Senator Leila De Lima who is considered Duterte's staunch critic. From then on, social media trolls – those who intentionally antagonizes others online by posting inflammatory, irrelevant, or offensive comments or other disruptive content (Merriam-Webster) – have become widespread. These trolls according to Pradeep (2021, April 16) are called professional trolls who make coordinated efforts to spread online "disinformation" which are deliberately deceptive and misleading. Thus, electronic dirty political tactic has become rampant in the country from that time up to the present. Bengali and Harper (2019, November 19) reported that the Philippines has been called "patient zero in the global disinformation epidemic." The report mentions hundreds of active troll farms. These trolls who are usually college students and recent graduates are paid $1,000 per month just to launch multiple fake Facebook pages "designed to look like they were created by actual voters or grass-roots groups.

**The conceptual metaphor of POLITICS IS DIRTY using Cognitive Analysis (CA)**

**The semantic analysis of POLITICS IS DIRTY**

Goddard (2013) defines semantic analysis as the process of relating syntactic structures, from the levels of phrases, clauses, sentences, and paragraphs, to the level of the writing as a whole, to their language-independent meanings. Simply put, it is the process of drawing meaning from text. Linguists are one in saying that lexical semantics plays an important role in analyzing semantics of a phrase, sentence, or even paragraph.

The statement POLITICS IS DIRTY is easily understood in the Philippine context of an election since Filipinos belong to a free and democratic country. However, even if they have first-hand experiences of voting, joining rallies, *miting de avance* - final day campaign of politicians culminating in a show of force, teachers involved in the voting process, among other significant political activities, the Filipinos still have their personal beliefs about what indeed is the image of politics in the Philippines. The phrase can be analyzed

In formal semantics, the phrase POLITICS IS DIRTY denotes the state of politics as perceived by many. It is

a natural language since this is how humans communicate. There is order in the sentence, and the grammatical construction can be explained. Fundamentally, one may ask, "What do you know about politics for you to say that it is dirty?" The assumption is to know the truth condition of the phrase POLITICS IS DIRTY by looking at the three main words of the phrase – Politics (noun), is (copula), and dirty (predicative adjective). To understand the phrase further, it is better if the phrase is analyzed or a grammar analysis is performed.

In analyzing the grammar of POLITICS IS DIRTY, the phrase is simply evaluated as:
**Subject:** POLITICS (Noun)
**Linking Verb:** IS (copula)
**Adjective Complement:** DIRTY
**Grammar Structure:** S-LV-AdjC

Since the statement is a metaphor, the following questions have to be answered:

1. Does the phrase compare two things?
The answer is yes – Politics is being compared to a dirt (n.). To put it more comprehensibly, politics is being modified as one that is dirty.
2. Is the phrase a metaphor?
The answer is yes, since the preposition "as" or "like" is absent.
3. a. What is the object being discussed? The object that is being discussed is Politics.
   b. What is the object being compared to? The object being compared to is the word dirty.
4. Denotation of politics – the art or science of government; political affairs or business
   Connotation of politics – election, government, congress, senate, immoral, dirty
5. Denotation of Dirty - murky, unclean, filthy, muddy, foul, etc.
   Connotation of Dirty – harmful, being sick, not taking a bath, etc.
6. How does this develop meaning in the text?
   a. What are the qualities of the source domain "dirty?"
   b. How do this change the perspective of politics being the target domain?
   c. What theme in the text does the comparison relate to?

**Analysis**

1. In considering the physical or natural aspect of the human being, being dirty can be harmful. Being dirty can make one sick. When one is dirty, he/she needs to bathe. So, the effect of being dirty is becoming sick

with certain medical conditions.

There is also the moral consideration of dirty. When is a person morally dirty? Morally wrong acts may include murder, theft, rape, lying, and breaking promises. This is what moral turpitude means: when a person gravely violates the norm as set by society. Morality is dictated by society – following rules of law, being honest, being polite, and being clean in thoughts and in words.

2. The word "dirty" as the source in the phrase POLITICS IS DIRTY can be compared to bacteria "that can make one sick," or morally speaking, "one that violates the rule of morality in the society."

3. Looking at the phrase, it can be surmised that the idea behind POLITICS IS DIRTY is that politics by itself is harmful and can inflict moral turpitude. The participants that were randomly interviewed say that politics is dirty in the Philippines because of reasons such as vote-buying, fraud, deceptions, troll farming, black propaganda, and greed for power. Their first-hand experiences as voters and active involvement in political activities made them say so.

Summarizing the metaphor POLITICS IS DIRTY, a semantic meaning can now be drawn. That is:

In using the metaphor to portray or describe politics in the Philippines, one may consider the physical and moral aspects of the word DIRTY. Physically, a dirt is harmful to one's health. Morally, a dirt is harmful to one's soul. In the context of Politics is dirty, it is like saying "If you are involved in politics, you will have to play their dirty game." These dirty games come in the form of vote-buying, fraud, deceptions, troll farming, black propaganda, and greed for power. These dirty games require physical participation and yet, those who are involved in these illegal acts can be tarnished morally if they allow themselves to go with the system.

To compare Research Problem 1 to Research Problem 2, the following are drawn:

Table 2. *"POLITICS IS DIRTY" comparison of meaning*

| *"Politics is Dirty" Using Political Discourse Analysis* | *"Politics is Dirty" Using Semantic Analysis* |
|---|---|
| • Dirty money <br> • Election is never peaceful <br> • Immoral and self-serving <br> • Questionable leaders <br> • Dirty Game | • Politics is compared to illegal money. <br> • The center of the sentence POLITICS IS DIRTY points towards "dirt" <br> • Politics connotes the government institution; but also, immorality, dirt <br> • Dirt or dirty is implied to words such as harmful, being sick <br> • In terms of morality, "dirty" connotes unclean spirit; illegal business, anything illegal. |

## The conceptual metaphor analysis of POLITICS IS DIRTY based on the gathered information from the selected public
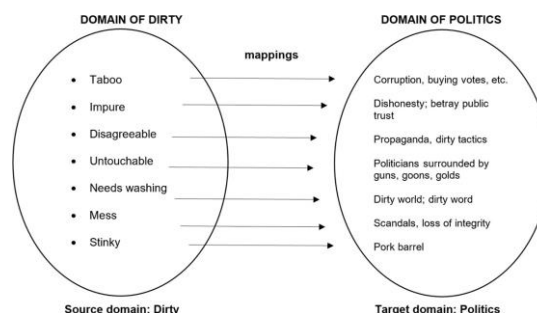


Figure 8. *Conceptual metaphor analysis of POLITICS IS DIRTY in the context of the Philippine National Election 2022*

Analyzing the conceptual metaphor of POLITICS IS DIRTY, the following terms coming from the domain of dirty are interpreted as being connected to the domain of politics.

**Taboo**

It describes an activity that is prohibited, completely unacceptable and therefore, forbidden. For example, talking about sex in public (and some moralists say, even in private) is taboo. Therefore, it is a dirty subject. In politics, activities such as corruption, vote-buying, fraud, deception, among others are considered immoral and unacceptable in the society.

As a Catholic country, the Filipinos are conservative in many ways. One of these is never to talk taboo subjects in public. That is why many was simply shocked when President Rodrigo Duterte bragged about his "impressively turgid penis" in public speech (yahoo news, 2019, April 8). This happened during a campaign rally held at the Puerto Princesa City Coliseum in Palawan. In another instance, Regencia (2018, February 12) reported how he ordered the soldiers to shoot female communist rebels in their private parts as punishment for fighting the government.

**Impure**

If a person is impure, then that person is filled with

dirty thoughts. To conceal oneself and save her/him from the scrutiny of the public, she/he has to portray a good image that is acceptable in the society. Given that facts, this person is not being true to herself/himself. She/he presents herself/himself falsely in public, so therefore, she/he is committing dishonesty. In the Philippines, the Civil Service Commission is responsible for the policies, plans, and programs concerning all civil service employees. According to the commission, government employees who misrepresent education, experience, training, and eligibility qualifications to qualify for a particular position will be charged with serious dishonesty (2021, April 19). In 2011, former Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was arrested on charges of election fraud during the 2007 election.

### Disagreeable.

The denotation of this word is not pleasant or not enjoyable. People who are disagreeable are those who are annoying, self-serving, and usually promotes dirty tactics for her/his own sake only. The Strait Times (2021, December 8) reports that the son of former dictator Ferdinand Marcos who is his namesake is running for president in the May 2022 election, yet, a group (and as of this writing, four other groups) are barring him from running because he has been convicted for tax evasion. The Philippine law perpetually bans a political hopeful from running in any government position if that person is found guilty of tax evasion. Marcos, Jr.'s mother Imelda Marcos was also convicted of graft and was sentenced to prison for funneling $200 million to Swiss foundations (Malasig, 2018, November 9). However, at the age of 89, and sentenced to a jail term of six to 11 years for each count which is equivalent to a minimum of 42 years in prison, she is still not being arrested and incarcerated.

### Untouchable

In India, castes are untouchables because they represent the lowest members of the societal hierarchy. However, in the Philippine political context, the word untouchable also has the connotation of somebody or someone who makes herself/himself exclusive. In the domain of politics, there is that image of a politician being surrounded by bodyguards. Clan politics is ordinary in the Philippines. There are a number of politicians whose brothers, sisters, sons and daughters are also holding significant positions in the government such as mayor, vice mayor, governor, vice governor, provincial representative or even town or city councilor. Recently, according to McCarthy

(2021, November 28), two of the most famous names in Philippine politics have formed alliance and are now frontrunners in the May 2022 national elections. These are Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr., son of the infamous Philippine dictator Ferdinand E. Marcos, Sr., and Sara Z. Duterte, the independent daughter of Pres. Rodrigo R. Duterte. The former is running for the highest position in the land which was once held by his ousted father. At present, Sarah Duterte is the incumbent Mayor of Davao City. They are just two significant examples of clan politics who are untouchables because of their prominence.

### Needs washing

When a thing is dirty, it needs washing. Likewise, in politics, politicians, according to worldview enters a dirty world. In addition, politicians are expected to play clean being role models, but if they start cursing their opponents in public, it raises many eyebrows and the voting public might think otherwise. Ralph and Ralph (2018) in their book Taboos and bad language in the mouths of politicians and advertisers made it clear that image matters, especially to politicians. If they will not watch out with the words they use, then they are putting themselves in danger. The incumbent President Duterte is famous for being an outrageous president because he does not watch his words. This is why in social media he earned the call "Dudirty" because of the foul words that he utters without being mindful of anything. Trimble (2019, December 19) listed nine of these most controversial quotes: "Hitler massacred 3 million Jews… there's 3 million drug addicts. There are. I'd be happy to slaughter them." (During a September 2016 press conference). Germany did not like what he uttered.
"Son of a whore, I will curse you in that forum." (in reference to then US President Barak Obama)
"Just because you're a journalist you are not exempted from assassination, if you're a son of a bitch." (June 2016 in reaction to a journalist's death).
"Give me salt and vinegar and I'll eat his liver." (April 2017, in reference to Muslim militants and terrorists).
"I was so angry because she was raped, that's one thing. But she was so beautiful, the mayor should have been first. What a waste." (Referring to an Australian missionary who was assaulted and killed by prisoners in 1989).
"I was separated from my wife. I'm not impotent. What am I supposed to do? Let this hang forever? When I take Viagra, it stands up." (Comment made in May 2016 referring to his genitalia).
"I wanted to call him: Pope, son of a whore, go home. Do not visit us again." (May 2016, after Pope Francis visited Manila).

"Please don't order me around. … Or would you rather that I declare martial law?" (August 2016, to the Supreme Court Chief Justice

## Messy

Dirt is a mess that should be polished, scoured, or vacuumed. In politics, the image of politician matters. If she/he is messing up, or in other words, mishandling her/his position as a leader, it can create scandal and the loss of her/his integrity. According to Radics (2001), corruption is one of the most salient issues affecting the Philippines. Zhuang (updated 2021) found Philippine politics entertaining where politicians do a lot of tricks just to stay in power. He mentioned things like politicians marrying showbiz personalities, the presence of archetypal politicians called *trapo*, the pork barrel scam among many other circus-like affairs going around in the country.

## Stinky

A dirty thing, a person, or an animal can be stinky if it did not clean itself. Among the animals, one thinks of pigs who are smelly because of their natural habitat which is the mud. The term pork barrel is connected to being dirty because of the controversies behind managing pork barrel funds in the Philippines. The term pork barrel is used to mean funds allocated to the politicians of Congress and the Philippine Senate. It became a controversial subject during the time of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (Cabacungan, 2013, August 22)

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the term POLITICS IS DIRTY is true according to the respondents of this study. Based on the answers of the respondents, majority believe that the politics they experience in the Philippines is full of irregularities, mostly courtesy of the politicians. It also appeared that there are politicians who run and win government positions even if they have questionable reputations. Also, the Philippine election is never peaceful and always full of recurring deceits such as vote-buying. In totality, according to the participants, POLITICS IS DIRTY can be summed up in one negative word – immoral or immorality.

Thus, this research recommends the following ideas to the Filipino people: (1) That morality starts at home and continues in school; therefore, it is the duty of parents and the school to emphasize good manners and right conduct from K-12 to college, if this is the only

way that the Philippines will rise up from the immoralities surrounding its society; (2) That in choosing the next leaders of the country, the Filipinos will not base their votes on personalities or big names in politics, but consider those whose morality and values are intact; (3) That the Filipinos will think of the country's welfare and future when voting for their representatives, and not think of their candidate's win out of ego and self-satisfaction; and finally, (4) That the Filipinos will open their eyes to the decadence in their society, made possible by the very candidates they have catapulted to power. The Philippine Constitution needs overhaul; not that the form of government be changed, which this researcher thinks is not the solution. Rather, immorality in government comes when those who are in power have stayed too long in their office. It has been proven that a head of state becomes a dictator when he is allowed by the people to stay in power for a long time. Therefore, constitutionalists may study if it is practicable for elected government officials to run for a second term and after that, they will be banned from public office after their second term is finished.

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## Affiliations and Corresponding Information

**Noel Manarpiis, PhD**
Cavite State University – Philippines