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## **Bibliometric and Critical Review of the Empirical Research on Political Deception**

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### **Abstract**

This article analyzes various perspectives on the issue of political deception to provide a comprehensive picture of how it works and affects society. It draws from 34 empirical studies conducted between 2000 and 2023, available in the Scopus electronic database. The results of all empirical studies show that political deception has common patterns, rhetorical tactics, social media effects, and psychological aspects. We found that the most popular research streams are the historical context of political deception; lying in political communication; the effects of lies on political processes; social and psychological aspects of deception; media and communication channels; voter behavior, public perception and decision-making, and deception detection; theoretical approaches; and concerns about transparency and reputation. These research streams, or cross-cutting themes, reflect the complex dimensions of political deception and provide an in-depth look into its practice and impact in a democratic context. All prior empirical studies delineate applying a multilevel analysis approach that opens up horizons of understanding, involving studies at the individual, group, and societal levels in examining various aspects of politicians' behavior. The results of those multilevel analyses cover psychological influences, political and cultural contexts, media and technology, political demands, voter behavior dynamics, long-term trends, and ethical implications and responsibilities. In summary, these 34 empirical studies contribute significantly to addressing the challenges of political deception in contemporary democracy and modern society.

### **Keywords**

Antecedents, Deception, Honesty, Politics, Streams

## **Introduction**

Political deception is a phenomenon that has been observed throughout history. It refers to the deliberate act of misleading or manipulating the public to further the interests of political leaders. This can take various forms, such as spreading false information, making misleading statements, or engaging in propaganda. The primary goal of political deception is to shape public opinion and perception to benefit those in power. Leaders can manipulate the narrative and control the discourse surrounding specific issues by disseminating false or misleading information. This can help them maintain or consolidate their power, advance policy agendas, or undermine opposition. No particular ideology or political system can limit the use of political deception. It can be employed by leaders from various backgrounds and across different political spectrums. Additionally, the rise of social media and the rapid dissemination of information in the digital age have created new challenges and opportunities for political deception.

Political deception, as a complex phenomenon, involves not only classic strategies such as distraction, creating false stories, or presenting fake information but also physical actions, image manipulation, and non-verbal strategies (Kronsted et al., 2023). Political deception will produce the effect of making people believe something is false, which leaders may find advantageous for people to believe (Galeotti, 2018). There are several reasons why political leaders may engage in deception. First, it allows them to control the flow of information and shape public opinion to align with their interests. Leaders can influence how people perceive events, policies, or individuals by presenting an inevitable reality. Second, leaders can use political deception to maintain or strengthen the population's support. By presenting themselves in a favorable light, leaders can garner public trust. Exaggerating their achievements also helps maintain a positive image. This can be particularly effective during election campaigns or in times of crisis. Third, political deception can divert attention away from sensitive or controversial issues. By creating distractions or focusing public discourse on less essential matters, leaders can avoid scrutiny or accountability for their actions. This tactic often shifts blame or creates scapegoats.

In understanding the complexities of political deception, views on the phenomenon reflect a significant polarization of opinion. Some view political deception as a severe threat that can undermine democracy, while others see it as an integral element in democratic politics. This clash of views arises particularly in democratic politics, where the fundamental principles of democracy require transparency and integrity. Edelman (2001) and Walzer (1973) argue that deception, secret policies, and manipulation are intrinsic elements of politics. On the other hand, Ramsay (2000) identifies political deception as a severe pathology that threatens the health of democratic systems.

Not all forms of political deception are intentional. Misinformation is a common trap in which perpetrators of disinformation can spread false information without malicious intent. Political propaganda, as a strategy of speaking or exaggerating to influence public opinion, also falls into political deception (Galeotti, 2015). Political deception does not always manifest in outright lies, such as discursive manipulation or misrepresentation. Providing exaggerated information or omitting details necessary for interested parties (Hansson & Kröger, 2021) are forms of deception that can creep in unbeknownst to many.

In the political arena, information is the primary currency. Politicians play a significant role in acquiring, manipulating, and disseminating information; this is to achieve their political goals (Vössing, 2021). Information is not only a tool; it is also a key in the decision-making and communication between the government and society. However, Levine (2014) reminds us that political deception is not merely about telling lies. It requires intent and awareness to mislead. In this context, honest communication is valued not only for the factual truth but also for the absence of any intent or awareness to mislead. Given its scope and complexity, political deception creates profound challenges in understanding politics and policy. Therefore, a critical approach and caution in accepting political information are essential, especially considering the wide range of fraudulent strategies and forms. Thus, critical analysis of empirical research must account for a framework that reflects a deep understanding of this complex phenomenon.

This article, which addresses the issue of political deception, is a bibliometric study that critically reviews 34 empirical studies published between 2000 and 2023 in the Scopus electronic database, renowned for its accurate and comprehensive documentation of high-quality social sciences academic literature (Falagas et al., 2008). This article represents an important step in exploring the complexity of political deception. It offers various perspectives based on previous research findings. An in-depth understanding of how deception manifests and permeates politics is crucial. It can occur through words, physical actions, or image manipulation, each enriching our knowledge of this complexity.

**Table 1** Main Themes of the Empirical Research on Political Deception

<b>Paper</b>	<b>Main Theme</b>
Aughey (2002)	Deceit in the Belfast Agreement and its impact on trust.
Dixon (2002)	Political skills, lying, and manipulation in the Northern Ireland peace process.
Kellner (2007)	Deception in the Bush administration "Bush speak".
Armstrong-Taylor (2012)	Politicians' likelihood of admitting scandals based on seat security.
Minozzi & Woon (2013)	Communicative competition and exaggeration in strategic communication.
Martin (2014)	Models for analyzing tactics in political lying.
McGranahan (2017)	Anthropological approach to lies in politics, with a focus on Donald Trump.
Swire-Thompson et al. (2017)	Cognitive processing of political information and support for candidates.
Aird et al. (2018)	Effects of fact-checks on voters' beliefs and support.
Galeotti & Zizzo (2018)	Voter priorities in assessing candidates.
Hahl et al. (2018)	The appeal of lying demagogues to voters during crises.
Hart et al. (2018)	Dark personalities and evaluation of political candidates.
Kenski et al. (2018)	Incivility and lying accusations in campaign tweets.
Celse & Chang (2019)	Exposure to political leaders and lying behavior.
De keersmaecker & Roets (2019)	Right-wing tolerance toward spreading misinformation.
Woon & Kanthak (2019)	Candidates' honesty in elections and strategic lying.
Hameleers (2020)	Populism, disinformation, and the construction of divides.
Janezic & Gallego (2020)	Truth-telling among politicians and its relation to re-election chances.
Schepisi et al. (2020)	Ideological priming and its influence on self-gain lies.
Simas & Murdoch (2020)	Gender and partisan biases in voters' reactions to dubious statements.
Swire-Thompson et al. (2020)	Persistence of feelings after acknowledging misinformation.
Croco et al. (2021)	Costs of lying when the norm of honesty is salient.

**Table 1** Main Themes of the Empirical Research on Political Deception (continued)

<b>Paper</b>	<b>Main Theme</b>
Hansson & Kröger (2021)	Untruthful communication and its impact on democratic representation.
Kurvers et al. (2021)	Strategic disinformation and social influence.
Gaber & Fisher (2022)	The concept of "strategic lying" in politics based on Brexit and the 2019 U.K. Election.
Hameleers & Minihold (2022)	Discourses of truthfulness and disinformation by politicians.
Hamlin et al. (2022)	Psychological factors underlying deception strategies.
Campos-Castillo & Shuster (2023)	Rhetorical strategies for discrediting sources.
Ceron & Carrara (2023)	Reputational theory of political falsehoods.
Connors (2023)	Partisan constraints on political value rhetoric.
Lang & Schudy (2023)	Transparency, promise of competition, and reputational concerns.
Mattes et al. (2023)	Verbal and demeanor cues in voters' judgments of politicians' honesty.
Prike et al. (2023)	Interaction between party affiliation, Brexit position, and misinformation.
Yarhi-Milo & Ribar (2023)	Voter attitudes toward leaders lying about the use of force.

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**Note:** Processed by Authors from the Scopus Database.

A bibliometric and critical review of the empirical research provides a detailed understanding. It reveals diverse views on political deception. Through this review, our article details how researchers interpret and respond to political deception while highlighting similarities and differences in their viewpoints. The insights from the literature enable this article to significantly contribute to our understanding of political deception's impact on politics and policy. This analysis aims to establish a solid framework for comprehending the dynamics of political deception. Thus, our efforts transcend academic inquiry, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of this complex political challenge.

## **Methodology**

We adopted Tranfield et al.'s (2003) systematic literature review framework to ensure a repeatable, transparent, and structured literature selection and review process. To ascertain transparency, we established a search protocol. It formulated the research question, set inclusion-exclusion criteria, defined the search strategy, and outlined the article

selection process. Following the steps taken by Choudhury (2023), Kähkönen et al. (2021), and Sharma & Dey (2022), we started our systematic review by coming up with two questions that fit with the main topic of our research: (1) How are co-authorship, keyword co-occurrence, a text-based map, and the most important scholars and articles used in the empirical research on political deception? (2) Which research streams are likely to receive the most attention in the empirical research on political deception?

We established six inclusion criteria to ensure a comprehensive review of research articles: (1) each selected publication, both articles and conference papers, should present empirical research that provides evidence related to political deception; (2) the research should include a political perspective, recognizing the potential influence of political deception in political dynamics; (3) the research should be conducted in a relevant political context or political environment; (4) only peer-reviewed publications were considered to ensure the reliability of research findings related to political deception; (5) the publication should be available in English; and (6) the research should be cross-disciplinary, bringing the discussion of political deception to the fore. The search included literature spanning from 2000 to 2023. The exclusion criteria encompassed publications outside of the realm of articles and conference papers, non-empirical studies, and those irrelevant to political deception.

We applied a four-stage structured literature review process. Each stage aimed to select relevant articles based on predefined criteria, focusing on understanding the link between deception and politics. (i) Database Search: We conducted a comprehensive Scopus database search. Search terms included variations of 'political deception' OR 'politics AND deception' OR 'deception in politics' OR 'deception AND politics'; (ii) Title, Keyword, and Abstract Filtering: Of the 790 documents identified initially as articles, book chapters, books, reviews, conference papers, notes, editorials, conference reviews, short surveys, and letters, 528 remained (495 articles and 33 conference papers). Title, keyword, and abstract screening resulted in the exclusion of 385 publications that did not meet the criteria for political deception; (iii) Full-Text Check: The remaining 110 publications underwent full-text screening, resulting in the exclusion of 76 studies that did not include a political perspective and were not in the article and conference paper categories; and (iv) Final Selection: After the full-text screening, the number of relevant articles was only 34 publications that emphasized the significance of understanding the relationship between deception and politics.

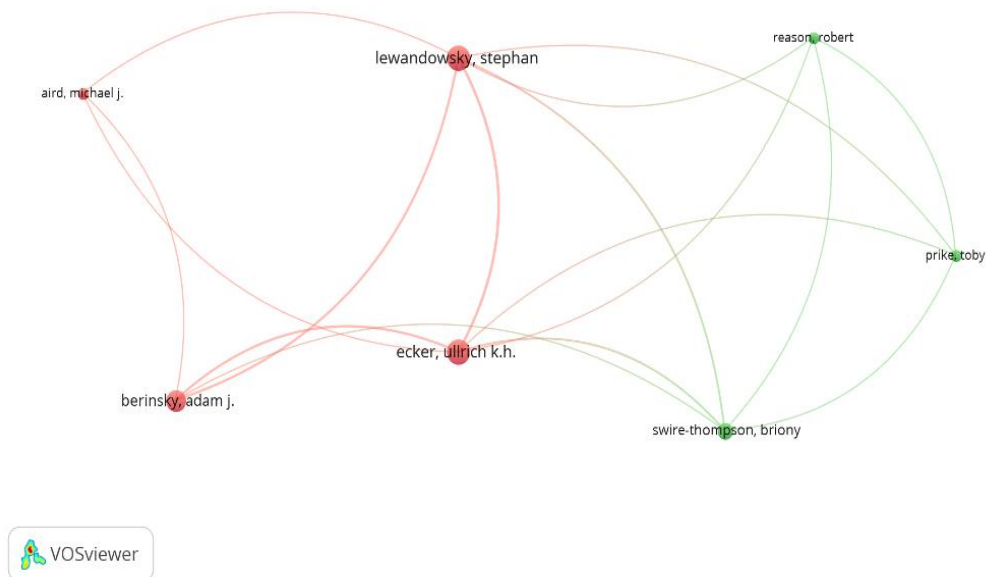
## **Results and Discussion**

In this section, we delve into the findings related to the two research questions outlined in the methodology. We discuss the principal bibliometric indicators used to identify relevant scholars and publications in empirical studies of political deception. These include prominent researchers and papers, co-authorship, keyword co-occurrence, and text-based mapping. The VOSviewer application handled these indicators by visualizing their intellectual

networks, making it easier to spot trends in bibliometric data (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). Next, we highlight the dominant research streams in the empirical study of political deception. We also look at some other interesting parts of the current state of research on political deception, the conceptualization of political deception, multidimensional evaluations of its dynamics and practices, triggering factors, potential areas for future research, and the primary limitations of our review. We want to offer a clear comprehension of the intricacies of political deception through a more engaging and immersive narrative.

### Co-Authorship

Co-authorship measures how frequently researchers collaborate with others in an academic work. The number of collaborations among authors can reflect the level of interaction and engagement within a specific research field. In our analysis, we set specific criteria: 1 as a minimum number of documents for each of the 73 authors in the thirty-four papers who met the established threshold. As a result, the analysis revealed seven names that stood out as prominent researchers in the field, as shown in Figure 1, highlighting their significant contributions through collaborative efforts. These researchers have demonstrated a noteworthy level of involvement and interaction within the academic community, as reflected in the substantial number of co-authored documents they have produced. This collaboration not only emphasizes the importance of collective knowledge-building but also highlights the collaborative nature of research in the realm of political deception.

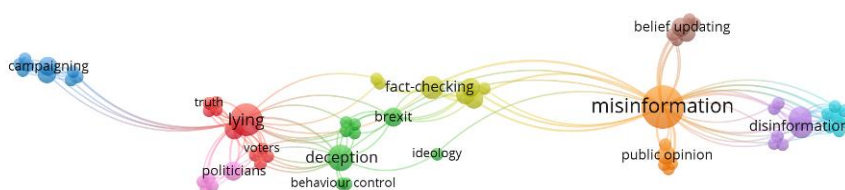


**Figure 1** Co-authorship in the Empirical Research on Political Deception

**Source:** Visualized and Analyzed Using the VOSviewer Software

### Keyword Co-Occurrence

We applied specific criteria for keyword co-occurrence analysis in the scientific literature to identify connections between frequently discussed topics or ideas. That criteria included requiring each keyword to appear at least twice out of the 116 terms identified, and the results showed that 18 keywords met the set threshold. This reflects that these 18 keywords consistently co-occur in the context of the scientific literature, highlighting the relationships and interrelationships between topics or concepts that have high relevance in research on political deception.



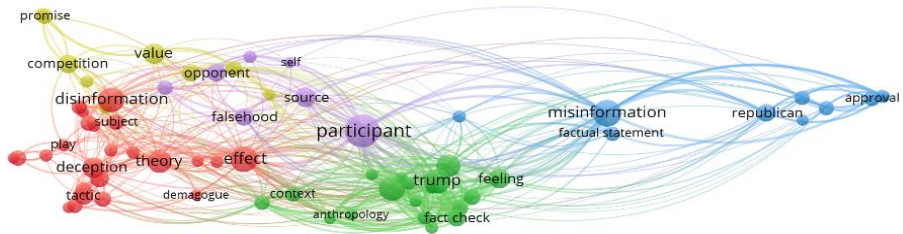
**Figure 2** Keyword Co-Occurrence in the Empirical Research on Political Deception

**Source:** Visualized and Analyzed Using the VOSviewer Software

### Text-Based Mapping

A map based on text data visually represents the relationships among keywords, topics, or concepts within a research field. This mapping technique helps to understand the structure and interconnections in the literature. Our analysis established specific criteria, requiring a minimum of three occurrences for each term out of 961 identified terms. Following these criteria, 119 terms met or exceeded the established threshold. Note that we excluded the term "part" from the analysis. We made this exclusion to enhance the precision and relevance of the visual representation by focusing on terms that demonstrate a more substantive presence and connection within the political deception literature. The resulting map provides valuable insights into the intricate web of relationships and thematic interplay within the empirical research field of political deception.





**Figure 3** A Map Based on Text Data in the Empirical Research on Political Deception

**Source:** Visualized and Analyzed Using the VOSviewer Software

### The Most Influential Scholars and Articles

The following table provides citation statistics for various researchers involved in empirical research on political deception. This data offers insights into the impact and visibility of each researcher's work within the field, measured by the number of citations received. It serves as a valuable reference to gauge the scholarly influence of individual studies and authors in the context of political deception research.

**Table 2** Detail of Citations of the Empirical Research on Political Deception

Paper	Total of Citations	Detail of Citations
Swire-Thompson et al. (2017)	215 Citations	42 (2023), 54 (2022), 45 (2021), 41 (2020), 16 (2019), 12 (2018), 5 (2017)
Hahl et al. (2018)	119 Citations	32 (2023), 31 (2022), 16 (2021), 21 (2020), 13 (2019), 6 (2018)
Dixon (2002)	93 Citations	2 (2023), 2 (2022), 1 (2021), 1 (2020), 3 (2019), 4 (2018), 6 (2017), 6 (2016), 2 (2015), 7 (2014), 9 (2013), 10 (2012), 6 (2011), 7 (2010), 4 (2009), 6 (2008), 4 (2007), 6 (2006), 1 (2005), 5 (2004), 1 (2003)
Swire-Thompson et al. (2020)	58 Citations	18 (2023), 19 (2022), 13 (2021), 7 (2020), 1 (2019)

**Table 2** Detail of Citations of the Empirical Research on Political Deception (continued)

<b>Paper</b>	<b>Total of Citations</b>	<b>Detail of Citations</b>
McGranahan (2017)	45 Citations	6 (2023), 8 (2022), 8 (2021), 8 (2020), 6 (2019), 8 (2018), 1 (2017)
Hameleers (2020)	34 Citations	14 (2023), 11 (2022), 7 (2021), 2 (2020)
Aird et al. (2018)	30 Citations	9 (2023), 5 (2022), 9 (2021), 6 (2020), 1 (2019)
Aughey (2002)	27 Citations	1 (2023), 1 (2022), 2 (2018), 1 (2017), 2 (2016), 1 (2015), 1 (2014), 2 (2012), 1 (2011), 5 (2010), 3 (2009), 3 (2008), 1 (2007), 3 (2004)
Kenski et al. (2018)	26 Citations	6 (2023), 4 (2022), 7 (2021), 5 (2020), 4 (2019)
Hameleers & Minihold (2022)	23 Citations	11 (2023), 11 (2022), 1 (2021)
Hart et al. (2018)	22 Citations	6 (2023), 2 (2022), 6 (2021), 5 (2020), 2 (2019), 1 (2018)
Gaber & Fisher (2022)	16 Citations	8 (2023), 6 (2022), 2 (2021)
De keersmaecker & Roets (2019)	13 Citations	1 (2023), 3 (2022), 3 (2021), 6 (2020)
Minozzi & Woon (2013)	10 Citations	3 (2023), 1 (2022), 1 (2020), 2 (2019), 2 (2018), 1 (2013)
Janezic & Gallego (2020)	10 Citations	5 (2023), 3 (2022), 2 (2021)
Schepisi et al. (2020)	9 Citations	3 (2023), 4 (2022), 2 (2021)
Kellner (2007)	8 Citations	2 (2023), 2 (2019), 2 (2015), 1 (2013), 1 (2008)
Armstrong-Taylor (2012)	6 Citations	4 (2023), 1 (2019), 1 (2018)
Celse & Chang (2019)	6 Citations	4 (2023), 2 (2022)
Ceron & Carrara (2023)	6 Citations	1 (2023), 5 (2022)
Woon & Kanthak (2019)	5 Citations	3 (2023), 1 (2022), 1 (2020)
Simas & Murdoch (2020)	5 Citations	2 (2023), 2 (2022), 1 (2021)
Hansson & Kröger (2021)	5 Citations	3 (2023), 2 (2022)
Kurvers et al. (2021)	5 Citations	3 (2023), 2 (2022)
Hamlin et al. (2022)	4 Citations	1 (2023), 1 (2022), 1 (2021), 1 (2020)
Galeotti & Zizzo (2018)	3 Citations	2 (2023), 1 (2022)
Croco et al. (2021)	2 Citations	1 (2023), 1 (2021)
Connors (2023)	2 Citations	2 (2023)

**Table 2** Detail of Citations of the Empirical Research on Political Deception (continued)

<b>Paper</b>	<b>Total of Citations</b>	<b>Detail of Citations</b>
Martin (2014)	1 Citation	1 (2017)
Campos-Castillo & Shuster (2023)	1 Citation	1 (2023)
Prike et al. (2023)	1 Citation	1 (2023)
Yarhi-Milo & Ribar (2023)	1 Citation	1 (2023)
Lang & Schudy (2023)	0 Citations	-
Mattes et al. (2023)	0 Citations	-

**Note:** Processed by Authors from the Scopus Database.

Identification of the most influential scholars and articles in the empirical research on political deception reflects how often other researchers cite a researcher or article. Scholars or frequently cited articles are considered to have a significant influence on the research field. Table 2 above presents a ranking of the ten leading researchers in empirical research on political deception based on the number of citations, from highest to lowest: Swire-Thompson et al. (2017) with 215 citations, Hahl et al. (2018) with 119 citations, Dixon (2002) with 93 citations, Swire-Thompson et al. (2020) with 58 citations, McGranahan (2017) with 45 citations, Hameleers (2020) with 34 citations, Aird et al. (2018) with 27 citations, Aughey (2002) with 27 citations, Kenski et al. (2018) with 26 citations, and Hameleers & Minihold (2022) with 23 citations. These researchers have made significant contributions to advancing our understanding of political deception. The high number of citations reflects their work's positive impact on stimulating further discussion and research in this area.

### **Research Streams in the Empirical Studies of Political Deception**

Findings from 34 empirical studies on political deception illustrate cross-cutting themes that provide deep insights into the phenomenon. These themes reflect common patterns and trends that cut across individual and collective studies and contribute significantly to our more profound understanding of political deception. The following table displays some of the identified cross-cutting themes, representing essential dimensions and crucial aspects of political deception.

**Table 3** Cross-cutting Themes of the Empirical Research on Political Deception

Streams	Research Substance
1. Historical Context of Political Deception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An analysis of political lying in political agreements and its impact on public trust (Aughey, 2002).</li> <li>• Political skills, lying, and manipulation in the Northern Ireland peace process (Dixon, 2002).</li> <li>• Deception in the Bush administration "Bush speak" (Kellner, 2007).</li> </ul>
2. Lying in Political Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicative competition and exaggeration in strategic communication (Minozzi &amp; Woon, 2013).</li> <li>• Models for analyzing political lying tactics (Martin, 2014).</li> <li>• Incivility and lying accusations in campaign tweets (Kenski et al., 2018).</li> <li>• Exposure to political leaders and lying behaviors (Celse &amp; Chang, 2019).</li> <li>• Candidates' honesty in elections and strategic lying (Woon &amp; Kanthak, 2019).</li> <li>• Discourses of truthfulness and disinformation by politicians (Hameleers &amp; Minihold, 2022).</li> <li>• Rhetorical strategies for discrediting sources (Campos-Castillo &amp; Shuster, 2023).</li> </ul>
3. The Effects of Lies on Political Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Politicians' likelihood of admitting scandals is based on seat security (Armstrong-Taylor, 2012).</li> <li>• Cognitive processing of political information and candidate support (Swire-Thompson et al., 2017).</li> <li>• Fact-checks' effects on voters' beliefs and support (Aird et al., 2018).</li> <li>• Voter priorities in assessing candidates (Galeotti &amp; Zizzo, 2018).</li> <li>• The appeal of lying demagogues to voters during crises (Hahl et al., 2018).</li> <li>• Dark personalities and political candidate evaluations (Hart et al., 2018).</li> <li>• Truth-telling among politicians and its relationship to re-election chances (Janezic &amp; Gallego, 2020).</li> <li>• Ideological priming and its influence on self-gain lies</li> </ul>

**Table 3** Cross-cutting Themes of the Empirical Research on Political Deception (continued)

Streams	Research Substance
	<p>(Schepisi et al., 2020).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Untruthful communication impacts democratic representation (Hansson &amp; Kröger, 2021).</li> <li>• Strategic disinformation and social influence (Kurvers et al., 2021).</li> <li>• Dynamics of "political-strategic lying" on Brexit and the 2019 U.K. election (Gaber &amp; Fisher, 2022).</li> </ul>
<p>4. Social and Psychological Aspects of Deception</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An anthropological approach to lies in politics, with a focus on Donald Trump (McGranahan, 2017).</li> <li>• Psychological factors underlie deception strategies (Hamlin et al., 2022).</li> </ul>
<p>5. Media and Communication Channels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incivility and lying accusations in campaign tweets (Kenski et al., 2018).</li> <li>• Populism, disinformation, and the construction of divides (Hameleers, 2020).</li> <li>• Rhetorical strategies for discrediting sources (Campos-Castillo &amp; Shuster, 2023).</li> </ul>
<p>6. Voter Behavior, Public Perception and Decision-Making, and Deception Detection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Right-wing tolerance toward spreading misinformation (De keersmaecker &amp; Roets, 2019).</li> <li>• Gender and partisan biases in voters' reactions to dubious statements (Simas &amp; Murdoch, 2020).</li> <li>• Persistence of feelings after acknowledging misinformation (Swire-Thompson et al., 2020).</li> <li>• Partisan constraints on political value rhetoric (Connors, 2023).</li> <li>• Verbal and demeanor cues influence voters' judgments of politicians' honesty (Mattes et al., 2023).</li> <li>• Interaction between party affiliation, Brexit position, and misinformation (Prike et al., 2023).</li> <li>• Voter attitudes toward leaders who lie about the use of force (Yarhi-Milo &amp; Ribar, 2023).</li> </ul>
<p>7. Theoretical Approaches</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Costs of lying when the norm of honesty is salient (Croco et al., 2021).</li> <li>• The concept of "strategic lying" in politics is based on</li> </ul>

**Table 3** Cross-cutting Themes of the Empirical Research on Political Deception (continued)

Streams	Research Substance
	on the context of Brexit and the 2019 election (Gaber & Fisher, 2022).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discourses of truthfulness and disinformation by politicians (Hameleers &amp; Minihold, 2022).</li> <li>• Reputational theory of political falsehoods (Ceron &amp; Carrara, 2023).</li> <li>• Partisan constraints on political value rhetoric (Connors, 2023).</li> </ul>
8. Transparency and Reputational Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reputational theory of political falsehoods (Ceron &amp; Carrara, 2023).</li> <li>• Transparency, promise competition, and reputational concerns (Lang &amp; Schudy, 2023).</li> </ul>

**Note:** Processed by Authors from Primary Data.

Researchers who are only in one column often have a more specific research focus on one particular aspect of the theme they are exploring. Meanwhile, researchers are included in more than one column because their focus covers several aspects of the theme and is relevant to the categories. This reflects the complexity and interconnectedness of topics in research on political deception. Consequently, some studies show an undeniable overlap between these themes.

There were several cross-cutting themes, such as the historical context of political deception; lying in political communication; the effects of lies on political processes; social and psychological aspects of deception; media and communication channels; voter behavior, public perception and decision-making, and deception detection; theoretical approaches; and transparency and reputational concerns. These have been identified as the research streams garnering the most attention in the empirical study of political deception. These streams reflect the complex dimensions of political deception and provide a thorough examination of its practice and impact in a democratic context. Further investigation into these research streams will enhance our comprehension of the dynamics of political deception, laying the groundwork for more efficient solutions to the challenges in today's political landscape.

### **State-of-the-Art of the Empirical Research on Political Deception**

Over the past few decades, the study of political deception has evolved into a dynamic and multidisciplinary area, reflecting the complex interactions between politicians, the public, and the media. Existing empirical research has investigated various aspects of

political deception. This includes the psychological underpinnings of lying strategies. It also encompasses the social implications of misinformation. Recent reviews of empirical research on political deception are characterized by a nuanced understanding of the mechanisms behind deceptive practices and their far-reaching consequences.

One of the leading research areas focuses on political communication and the tactics used by politicians to convey information. Scholars have examined the rhetorical strategies used to spread misinformation, considering factors such as language, presentation, and narrative construction. Additionally, the rise of social media and its impact on the spread of false information has been a focal point, with researchers investigating how digital platforms facilitate the spread of misleading narratives and influence public perception.

The psychological dimensions of political deception are also a significant focus. Certain studies focus on exploring the cognitive processes underlying lying, a specific variant of political deception. They also examine how individuals assess and respond to dishonesty. This dimension also includes research on voters' ability to detect lies, the resilience of misinformation in shaping attitudes, and the psychological factors that influence politicians' deception strategies.

In addition, the field recognizes the social implications of political deception, including its impact on democratic processes and public trust. Research has explored the consequences of deceptive practices on political engagement, voter behavior, and the erosion of trust in institutions. The interactions between political deception, populism, and disinformation have been the subject of rapidly growing attention, opening up new avenues of exploration into the broader challenges faced by the democratic order.

### **Conceptualization of Political Deception**

When analyzing the results of 34 empirical studies detailing the practice and dynamics of political deception, conceptualizing the phenomenon is critical to understanding its complexity and impact in the political sphere. These studies, which include contributions from a range of renowned researchers, have provided a holistic picture of political deception as an entity that involves complex internal and external dynamics.

Research by Kenski et al. (2018) and Martin (2014) has helped shape a more precise definition and boundaries of political deception, mainly variants of political lies. When analyzing this definition, they emphasize the unique political context, distinguishing political lies from other types of deception. Meanwhile, researchers exploring the psychological dimensions of political lies are Hahl et al. (2018) and Hamlin et al. (2022). Their research deepens our understanding of the personality tendencies, psychological motivations, and considerations that drive politicians to engage in lying practices.

Studies involving political and cultural contexts include contributions from researchers such as Armstrong-Taylor (2012), Hameleers (2020), and Janezic & Gallego

(2020), who provide an in-depth understanding of how these factors interact, shape, and influence political lying practices. Meanwhile, in discussing the dynamics of political communication, research from Campos-Castillo & Shuster (2023), Gaber & Fisher (2022), and Swire-Thompson et al. (2017) provides an understanding of how political lies can be a deliberate communication strategy to influence public opinion and gain political support.

Studies exploring the social and political consequences of political lies include contributions from researchers such as Aird et al. (2018), Celse & Chang (2019), and Hameleers & Minihold (2022). They help shape our understanding of the impact of lying practices on democratic stability, public trust, and voter behavior. In addition, the research of Connors (2023) and Lang & Schudy (2023) addresses the differences and interactions between political lies and political honesty. They contribute insights into how honesty can serve as a foundation or contrast to the practice of political lies.

Longitudinal studies by Hameleers & Minihold (2022) and Kurvers et al. (2021) help us to understand change and evolution in a historical context. Their research offers a broader picture of the long-term trends and factors that influence changes in political lying practices. In identifying the factors driving and inhibiting the practice of political lies, research by Prike et al. (2023) and Yarhi-Milo & Ribar (2023) provides an understanding of what drives politicians to lie or vice versa.

**Table 4** Conceptual Variations of Political Deception

<b>Conceptualization</b>	<b>Representative Research</b>
Definition and Scope	Kenski et al. (2018), Martin (2014)
Psychological Dimension	Hahl et al. (2018), Hamlin et al. (2022)
Political and Cultural Context	Armstrong-Taylor (2012), Hameleers (2020), Janezic & Gallego (2020)
Dynamics of Political Communication	Campos-Castillo & Shuster (2023), Gaber & Fisher (2022), Swire-Thompson et al. (2017)
Social and Political Consequences	Aird et al. (2018), Celse & Chang (2019), Hameleers & Minihold (2022)
Differences with Political Veracity	Connors (2023), Lang & Schudy (2023)
Evolution and Change in Historical Context	Hameleers & Minihold (2022), Kurvers et al. (2021)
Enabling and Constraining Factors	Prike et al. (2023), Yarhi-Milo & Ribar (2023)

**Note:** Processed by Authors from Primary Data.



By engaging the contributions of such diverse researchers, the conceptualization of political deception opens up a deep and informed discussion of its complex nature. Involving internal and external elements, this conceptualization becomes an essential guide to understanding, analyzing, and responding to the challenges of political deception in the contemporary democratic context.

### **Multilevel Analysis of the Practice and Dynamics of Political Deception**

To explore the practice and dynamics of political deception, a multilevel analysis of the results of 34 empirical studies provides a comprehensive and in-depth framework. These studies foster a comprehensive understanding of political deception analysis at various levels, encompassing the individual, group, and overall political context.

**Table 5** Multilevel Analysis of the Practice and Dynamics of Political Deception

<b>Levels</b>	<b>Representative Research</b>
The Practice of Political Deception	Campos-Castillo & Shuster (2023), Martin (2014), Woon & Kanthak (2019)
Psychological Dimension	Hahl et al. (2018), Hamlin et al. (2022)
Technology and Social Media Influences	Gaber & Fisher (2022), Swire-Thompson et al. (2017)
Cultural Influences and Political Context	Hameleers (2020), Janezic & Gallego (2020)
Social and Political Consequences	Aird et al. (2018), Celse & Chang (2019), Hameleers & Minihold (2022)
Temporal Comparison	Hameleers & Minihold (2022), Kurvers et al. (2021)
Ethical Implications and Responsibilities	Prike et al. (2023), Yarhi-Milo & Ribar (2023)

**Note:** Processed by Authors from Primary Data.

Research by Campos-Castillo & Shuster (2023) , Martin (2014) , and Woon & Kanthak (2019) describes the practice of political lies from a multilevel analysis perspective. They discuss rhetorical strategies, framing, and the use of social media as part of political communication practices involving lies. Hahl et al. (2018) and Hamlin et al. (2022) offer a multilevel analysis of the psychological aspects of political lying, facilitating the integration of psychological factors into a multilevel analysis framework to comprehend the motivations and personality tendencies motivating politicians to lie.

Meanwhile, the studies of Gaber & Fisher (2022) and Swire-Thompson et al. (2017) bring a multilevel analysis dimension to understanding the influence of technology and social

media on political lies. They deepen our understanding of how digital platforms can shape and accelerate the spread of misinformation. Hameleers (2020) and Janezic & Gallego (2020) offer a multilevel analysis perspective on the impact of culture and politics, demonstrating the ability to analyze cultural norms and political situations at various levels to comprehend the formation and evolution of political lies.

Furthermore, the studies of Aird et al. (2018), Celse & Chang (2019), and Hameleers & Minihold (2022) apply multilevel analysis to understand the social and political consequences of political lies. They explore the analysis of this practice's impact, ranging from the individual level to the broader societal and political context. Longitudinal studies by Hameleers & Minihold (2022) and Kurvers et al. (2021) allow for temporal comparative analysis, helping to identify long-term trends, patterns of change, and factors that influence the persistence or mitigation of the practice of political lying over time.

Prike et al. (2023) and Yarhi-Milo & Ribar (2023) used a multilevel analytical framework to look at the factors that may encourage or discourage politicians from telling lies for political reasons, from the point of view of political ethics and their responsibility. As presented in the previous section, multilevel analysis was also used to investigate the interplay among various themes.

As a result, the 34 existing empirical studies can provide an understanding of the interrelationships and overlaps between political deception practices and public perceptions of responses to misinformation, disinformation, and political lying. Applying a multilevel approach to understanding the practice and dynamics of political deception contributes to a deeper and more integrated understanding. By incorporating factors from multiple levels, these empirical studies provide a holistic picture of the complexity of this phenomenon and create a foundation for more effective responses to the challenge of political deception at the level of society and other political entities.

### **Antecedents of Political Deception**

To understand the factors that shape and influence political deception, an analysis of the results of 34 empirical studies provides a bridge to detail the antecedents of this behavior. These studies reflect the contributions of several prominent researchers who play an essential role in deciphering the elements underlying the emergence of political deception.

Hahl et al. (2018) and Hamlin et al. (2022) present in-depth research on the psychological dimensions of political lies. They examine politicians' thinking and identify personality tendencies and psychological considerations as key drivers in the decision to engage in political lies. Meanwhile, the contributions of Armstrong-Taylor (2012), Hameleers (2020), and Janezic & Gallego (2020) emphasize the role of politics and culture. By investigating the link between politics, cultural norms, and the emergence of political lies, this research opens up insights into the external factors that influence politicians' behavior.

In highlighting the antecedents of political deception, the studies of Campos-Castillo & Shuster (2023), Gaber & Fisher (2022), and Swire-Thompson et al. (2017) detail the impact of media and technology. They reveal how modern technology and media can drive political deception through deliberate communication strategies. While research by Aird et al. (2018) and Celse & Chang (2019) explores the political factors that drive lies. Factors such as pressure to win elections and the need to maintain electability come into focus, providing insight into how political demands can motivate politicians' behavior.

The studies by Ceron & Carrara (2023) and Connors (2023) investigate voter responses and behaviors as antecedents of political lies. They explore how voters' attitudes towards politicians' honesty can shape incentives or restrictions against political lies. Meanwhile, research by Hameleers & Minihold (2022) and Kurvers et al. (2021) involves a longitudinal dimension to understand the change and evolution of political lies over time. These study discusses the factors that influence long-term trends and changes in the practice of political lies.

In the context of figuring out what the ethical implications and responsibilities are, Prike et al. (2023) and Yarhi-Milo & Ribar (2023) provide insights into the factors that may encourage or inhibit the practice of political deception from the perspective of political ethics and politicians' responsibilities. All these findings together form a holistic understanding of the practice of political deception and provide a foundation for more effective responses to the challenge.

**Table 6** Antecedents of Political Deception

<b>Antecedents</b>	<b>Representative Research</b>
Psychological Influences	Hahl et al. (2018), Hamlin et al. (2022)
Political and Cultural Context	Armstrong-Taylor (2012), Hameleers (2020), Janezic & Gallego (2020)
Media and Technology Influences	Campos-Castillo & Shuster (2023), Gaber & Fisher (2022), Swire-Thompson et al. (2017)
Political Demands and Electability	Aird et al. (2018), Celse & Chang (2019)
Voter Behavior Dynamics	Ceron & Carrara (2023), Connors (2023)
Long-term Trends and Changes	Hameleers & Minihold (2022), Kurvers et al. (2021)
Ethical Implications and Responsibilities	Prike et al. (2023), Yarhi-Milo & Ribar (2023)

**Note:** Processed by Authors from Primary Data.

By including contributions from these researchers, analyzing the antecedents of political deception opens the door to a deeper understanding of the factors that drive this

behavior. The existing empirical studies establish a foundation for ongoing discussions on comprehending and addressing political deception through an in-depth analysis of the variables that shape politicians' actions.

## **Conclusion**

This article underscores that political deception, a historical complexity, is not a new phenomenon that has captured the attention of many researchers. Political deception reflects the application of various political communication strategies that have evolved throughout history, including outright lying, sophisticated physical and image manipulation tactics, and misleading non-verbal strategies. Recent research on political deception has revealed an in-depth look at the phenomenon, exploring aspects ranging from rhetorical strategies to social media influences on psychological dimensions. By examining 34 empirical studies, we present factual findings that reflect common patterns and strategic trends in political deception.

The identified cross-cutting themes, such as the historical context of political deception; lying in political communication; the effects of lies on political processes; social and psychological aspects of deception; media and communication channels; voter behavior, public perception and decision-making, and deception detection; theoretical approaches; and transparency and reputational concerns, represent the research streams that have gained the most attention in empirical research on political deception. In conceptualizing political deception, Kenski et al. (2018) and Martin (2014) help shape a more precise definition and boundaries of political lies. These studies emphasize the unique political context, distinguishing political lies from other types of deception. On the psychological dimension, Hahl et al. (2018) and Hamlin et al. (2022) delve into the cognitive processes underlying political lies, providing deep insights into politicians' motivations and psychological reasoning.

All prior empirical studies reflect a multilevel analysis approach that broadens understanding horizons to include studies at the individual, group, and political levels. This method looks at things such as political lying practices (Campos-Castillo & Shuster, 2023; Martin, 2014; Woon & Kanthak, 2019), psychological dimensions (Hahl et al., 2018; Hamlin et al., 2022), media and technology influences (Gaber & Fisher, 2022; Swire-Thompson et al., 2017), cultural influences and political context (Hameleers, 2020; Janezic & Gallego, 2020), social and political consequences (Aird et al., 2018; Celse & Chang, 2019; Hameleers & Minihold, 2022), temporal comparisons (Hameleers & Minihold, 2022; Kurvers et al., 2021), and ethical implications and responsibility (Prike et al., 2023; Yarhi-Milo & Ribar, 2023).

Many studies have looked at the antecedents of political deception, including psychological influences (Hahl et al., 2018; Hamlin et al., 2022), the political and cultural context (Armstrong-Taylor, 2012; Hameleers, 2020; Janezic & Gallego, 2020), media and technology (Campos-Castillo & Shuster, 2023; Gaber & Fisher, 2022; Swire-Thompson et al.,

2017), political and electability demands (Aird et al., 2018; Celse & Chang, 2019), voter behavior dynamics (Ceron & Carrara, 2023; Connors, 2023), long-term trends and changes (Hameleers & Minihold, 2022; Kurvers et al., 2021), and ethical and responsibility implications (Prike et al., 2023; Yarhi-Milo & Ribar, 2023).

By combining the results of these various studies, we gain a holistic and integrated understanding of political deception, opening the door for more effective responses to this challenge in contemporary democratic contexts. This article serves as a first step to dive into the dynamics of political deception while raising questions and challenges that need further examination in future research. The use of the Scopus database and the restriction to a specific publication period limit the scope of the analysis, despite the significant contribution this study makes. Therefore, further critical analysis of the empirical research results is required to better understand the complex challenges politics and policy face concerning political deception.

### **Limitations**

In this bibliometric and critical review, we must acknowledge several limitations. The first limitation is our difficulty in strictly separating the substance and scope of political deception from political lies due to the confusion in defining the meaning of the two concepts, as we found in 34 existing empirical studies. Sure, researchers such as Hansson & Kröger (2021), Kronsted et al. (2023), and Levine (2014) formulate political lies as one variant of political deception, while others view the two concepts as having similar substance. These limitations create the complexities necessary to consistently understand the phenomenon of political deception in a broader political context.

The limited number of articles that explicitly and specifically address political deception as a single issue is also a cause; therefore, in this review, we compile articles that examine the issue of misinformation, disinformation, and political lies. In other words, the number of articles that solely concentrate on political deception without incorporating other concepts is surprisingly low. This limitation creates a situation where merging issues related to political deception and similar concepts becomes inevitable. The majority of the articles in this review discuss political lies, which are conceptually classified as a type of political deception.

The second limitation concerns using Scopus as the central database to search for relevant articles. Although it is considered a highly selective database, focusing on certified publications with proven high quality and impact, this selection still has limitations. Although reputable, Scopus only includes some potentially relevant articles compared to other scientific databases, such as Google Scholar.

The restriction on the publication period from 2000 to 2023 is a third limitation. While limiting the period may provide a focus on more contemporary literature, it also has the

potential to overlook essential contributions that may have emerged before 2000. This choice limits historical coverage and ignores potential trends or patterns that may have occurred before the chosen period. As a result, this review may only reflect findings or trends that partially define the set period.

### **Point of Departure for Future Research**

Research on political deception is on the verge of exploring new areas, building on recent reviews. Several lines of exploration are essential starting points for future research.

1. **Technological Influence:** As communication technology evolves, understanding the role of new platforms, artificial intelligence, and deepfake technology in political deception will be crucial. Future research could investigate the implications of these technologies for the authenticity of political discourse and public perception.
2. **Cultural and Inter-Cultural Perspectives:** Examining how cultural factors influence perceptions of and tolerance for political deception is worth further exploration. Comparative studies across cultural and political contexts can provide valuable insights into deception practices and societal acceptance variations.
3. **Ethical Considerations:** Future research should explore the ethical dimensions of political deception, addressing questions related to the moral responsibility of politicians, the media, and society in mitigating the impact of deceptive practices. Understanding the ethical limits of political communication is vital for strengthening a healthier democratic discourse.
4. **Interventions and Mitigation Strategies:** Researching effective interventions and mitigation strategies to tackle political deception is necessary. This could include developing educational programs, media literacy initiatives, and policy recommendations to increase transparency and accountability in political communication.
5. **Longitudinal Studies:** Conducting longitudinal studies to track the development of political deception over time can provide valuable insights into trends, patterns, and shifts in public attitudes and political strategies. Long-term observations can help researchers identify factors contributing to the persistence or mitigation of political deception practices.

The current review of empirical research on political deception reflects a comprehensive understanding of its complex nature. The starting point for future research involves the advanced exploration of new issues, technological influences, cultural dimensions, ethical considerations, and practical strategies to address the challenges created by the practice of political deception in contemporary democracies.

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