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Boukes, M.; Droog, E.; Brugman, B.C.; Burgers, C.

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Chapter 19: Political Satire

Mark Boukes
University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Ellen Droog
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Britta C. Brugman, and Christian Burgers
University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

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Political Satire

Abstract: This chapter provides an overview on the current literature about political satire. The current chapter extends most previous literature reviews by providing a more comprehensive overview on this genre from the production of satire, via the content and its audience, to the effects that satire may have. Moreover, we highlight the information and opinion functions of satire as well as its entertainment function. First, we discuss the producers' side by focusing on the intentions and objectives with which political satire is actually being produced. Second, we describe important content features of political satire and the different forms in which it emerges across media (e.g., TV, online) and formats (e.g., satirical monologues, satirical imitation/parody). Third, we look at the audience of political satire and explore their characteristics. Fourth, we provide an overview of the different effects of political satire on its audience, such as on enjoyment, knowledge, attitudes, and behavior. We close the chapter with suggestions for future research regarding the satire genre.

Keywords: political satire, soft news, humor, political comedy, news genres

Political Satire

Political satire is a hybrid infotainment genre that combines comedy, news, and political opinion (Baym, 2005). Whereas most satire research has explored its potential effects on audiences (Becker, 2020), Holbert (2016, p. 172) argued to look at satire more comprehensively through the lens of “The Satire Triad:” thus, analysing (a) the producer of the message (i.e., the satirist), (b) the subject of the satire (i.e., the satirized), and (c) the receivers of the message (i.e., the satires, or satire audience) in equal measure. The current chapter covers all these elements as a tetrad rather than a triad: The production (satirist), content (satirized), consumption and effects (together: the satirees) of political satire. After that, we identify avenues for future research. Whereas there are many types of satire with major societal impact — think for example about the Muhammad cartoons controversies — the current chapter mainly concentrates on televised political satire.

Production of Political Satire

Of the three pillars in the Satire Triad, are the satirists themselves of which least is known. There is a clear lack of research on the actual production of satire—especially from the U.S. context, the country in which most effect studies have been conducted (Burgers & Brugman, 2021). Arguably, this is because when satirists are held accountable for a certain outcome, the primary reaction of satirists is to strategically say that they are just jokesters without further intentions: Hence, they may not be very willing to further reflect on their production habits and intentions in interviews with academics.

Most well-known for a denying reaction to the claim that satire would be important and influential is Jon Stewart, who consciously labelled *The Daily Show* (which he hosted from 1999–2015) as “fake news” and insisted that their only goal was “to make people laugh” (Baym, 2005, p. 260). Nevertheless, *The Daily Show* has been lauded with praise about its great societal impact on both the media and political agendas (see Hill & Holbert, 2017)—

clearly being more important than its host has claimed it to be. Research on the intentions and production mechanisms of U.S. satire is thus scarce, and mostly relies on secondary sources (e.g., interviews with journalists). Several studies have, however, emerged recently in the European context that conducted interview studies with actual satirists, who often openly admit to being inspired by the American formats, such as *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* (and later: *TDS with Trevor Noah*) but also *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver* (Koivukoski & Ödmark, 2020; Lichtenstein et al., 2021), which combine humor with a robust amount of in-depth political content and commentary.

When asked, European satirists indicate that their primary goal is to entertain their audiences (Koivukoski & Ödmark, 2020; Lichtenstein et al., 2021). Yet, they are aware that providing critical insights and humor do not necessarily oppose each other but can be mutually supportive—humor works best in a context of truth. Hence, they emphasize the need to provide background knowledge (Koivukoski & Ödmark, 2020) and an informational context to support their satirical jokes (Lichtenstein et al., 2021). When elaborating on their democratic role, European satirists agree that adding new perspectives to the public debate as an independent commentator (Lichtenstein et al., 2021) is their most important contribution, thereby hoping to be an “eye-opener” that creates “Aha! moments” among the audience (Ödmark & Harvard, 2021).

Although having similarities with the work of journalists, satirists draw clear boundaries by describing their work as including more interpretation, position taking and, obviously, humor (Koivukoski & Ödmark, 2020). Moreover, the satirists emphasize the clear critique, playful elements and a moral goal in the content they produce (Lichtenstein et al., 2021). A major difference from regular news production is satirists’ freedom to operate without journalistic codes of conduct on matters, such as objectivity, immediacy, and truthfulness (Borden & Tew, 2007). This allows satirists to more actively scrutinize the

arguments of powerful actors (Baym, 2005). This freedom also supports them to reveal the hypocrisy and deliberate omission of information in political rhetoric (Richmond & Porpora, 2019) in humorous ways.

While thus not necessarily striving for *objectivity*, the idea of *factuality* is of great importance for satirists. European satirists take pride in providing factually correct, in-depth knowledge to their audiences (Koivukoski & Ödmark, 2020) and feel the ethical duty to not spread misinformation (Lichtenstein et al., 2021). The latter is interesting, as a decade ago, news satire was still labelled as a “fake news” genre (Tandoc et al., 2018)—not perse because it presented incorrect information, but because of its deviating journalistic format as mock news programs that often provide a parody of regular news shows (Egelhofer & Lecheler, 2019; Peifer & Lee, 2019). Satirists are explicit that, in contrast to factuality, living up to standards of *impartiality* would be detrimental to the comedy; so, satirized actors are for example not invited to respond to critique in the studio (Koivukoski & Ödmark, 2020).

In terms of power relationships, satire has often been described as generally “punching up,” which means that it mainly aims to criticize powerful actors in society (e.g., government, big business, mainstream media, etc.). However, satirical blogs such as *The Onion* also frequently target stereotypes of ordinary citizens in articles that cover culture and lifestyle-related topics (Brugman et al., 2023). Furthermore, Scandinavian satirists claim to also regularly make jokes that “punch inwards” by satirizing the habits and ideals of the middle class (Koivukoski & Ödmark, 2020, p. 742) or even preferring downward jabs, because only joking about the elites would be “boring and safe” (Ödmark & Harvard, 2021, p. 289). So, the idea that satire would only be “punching up” seems not to generalize.

Satire has witnessed a shift in being more open about its increased professionalization regarding journalistic principles. Originally presenting itself as a comedic outsider to the news, in many cases satire has become a quasi-insider to the journalistic community (Nicolai

et al., 2022). This is also exemplified by the editorial staff of many satire shows, which often represents a mix of comedians and people with a purely journalistic background (Koivukoski & Ödmark, 2020). Nevertheless, they all believe that satire complements traditional journalism but definitively cannot substitute it, because satire itself relies heavily on mainstream news (Lichtenstein et al., 2021).

Altogether, satirists have the primary intention to entertain their audience, but without being restricted by journalistic standards, they aim to simultaneously provide new perspectives to enrich public debate. However, the channels for which they produce the satire may create certain boundaries to their performance. Commercial TV, for instance, might be afraid that satire does not contribute enough to high ratings as it could be too overwhelming for its audience (Lichtenstein et al., 2021). Moreover, public broadcasters may require jokes that are more neutrally distributed across the political spectrum (Koivukoski & Ödmark, 2020). Besides the business model of their parent channels, overall media regulations in a country could influence satire production. More specifically, Bailey (2018) demonstrated how regulatory practices that should guarantee the impartiality of public service media in the UK lead to a less impactful type of satire compared to satire in the US where the First Amendment prioritizes the freedom of speech. Logically, processes of liberalization and democratization in post-authoritarian countries also stimulate satirical expression (Echeverria & Rodelo, 2021).

Whereas satire originally may be thought of as a divider and disruptor of political processes and public opinion, satirists increasingly realize that if a fixed order no longer exists in times of chaos, crises, post-truth politics, populism and polarization, it may be their duty to bring order and tell truth (Ödmark & Harvard, 2021) instead of approaching everything lightly with irony (Lichtenstein et al., 2021). European satirists, therefore, indicated to increasingly want to fulfil a role as “bridge builder” who allows for sensible dialogue between

political opposites (see Paletz, 1990, for the function of humor for building societal bridges). Moreover, satirists share an ethical concern that they *do not* want to create a negative image of politics (Lichtenstein et al., 2021)—which contrasts with views that satire would be purposefully creating a politically cynical audience (Hart & Hartelius, 2007). How this plays out in the U.S. context particularly, however, has not been researched yet probably due to a lack of access to the satire producers, whereas those in other parts of the world seem to have been more accessible.

Contents of Political Satire

Satirical content has been examined at, at least, three different levels of analysis: (a) the level of genre, (b) the level of individual outlets, and (c) the level of jokes. First, some researchers have investigated how the content of political satire compares to related genres, such as regular news (e.g., Baym, 2005; Brugman et al., 2022a, 2022b). The blurring of the traditional genre boundaries between entertaining, informative, and opinionative elements is a phenomenon also known as “discursive integration” (Baym, 2005). This phenomenon is made concrete by qualitative critical-cultural analyses showing that political satire is a hyper-realistic alternative to mainstream journalism (Berkowitz & Schwartz, 2016; Waisanen, 2011) as well as by quantitative content analyses demonstrating that political satire contains similar amounts of substantive information as traditional news (Fox et al., 2007).

Studies have also found some genre elements that distinguish the genre of political satire from other entertaining, informative, or opinionative genres (Brugman et al., 2022a, 2022b). For instance, political satire differs from traditional news in that it contains a higher percentage of “involved discourse”, which is a form of discourse that is characterized by linguistic features that emphasize personal involvement and interaction (Brugman et al., 2022a, 2022b). This type of research demonstrates the value of studying *content*

characteristics of political satire at the level of genre for identifying its unique position in the media landscape.

At the level of individual outlets, researchers have studied the diverse array of media and modalities through which political satire has been expressed. Political satire content can, for example, manifest through written satire (e.g., satirical news articles on websites such as *The Onion* in the US), printed or online satirical cartoons (e.g., as published in the French newspaper *Charlie Hebdo*), online user-generated satire (e.g., political memes or parody social media accounts such as “TheTweetOfGod”), satirical literature (e.g., novels such as *Catch 22*), video games (e.g., *Grand Theft Auto*), and visual art (e.g., Banksy).

Despite this diversity, the overwhelming majority of political satire research in the field of communication scholarship has focused on the content of *television* satire (Peifer & Lee, 2019). An often-used form of television satire is satirical news shows (e.g., *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah* in the US, *de Avondshow met Lubach* in the Netherlands, or the *Joe Show* in Egypt) which provide humorous news updates containing critiques of political, economic and/or social affairs (Tandoc et al., 2018). In addition, television satire can also be found in animated situation comedies which often portray satirical depictions of everyday life (e.g., *The Simpsons* or *South Park*) or in comedy television series or films that for example parody American politics and/or current affairs (e.g., *Veep* or Netflix’s *Don’t Look Up*).

In relation to television satire, previous research found that different satirical news shows are characterized by different comedy formats. Some shows, such as *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver* (US) or the *Weekly with Charlie Pickering* (Australia), are characterized by a long comedy format that consists of information-rich satirical monologues that offer in-depth analyses in support of their critiques on current affairs (Becker & Bode, 2017; Jennings et al., 2019). Other shows, such as *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah* (US) or *Die Heute Show* (Germany), contain multiple shorter satirical monologues in which only a

few minutes are devoted to a specific topic (Jennings et al., 2019). These short monologues are often restricted to a specific segment within a larger (satirical) program that consists of other (satirical) segments, such as political parody sketches (e.g., *Saturday Night Live* in the US), non-satirical celebrity interviews (e.g., *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah* in the US) and/or musical parodies (e.g., *Even Tot Hier* in the Netherlands).

Moving beyond these modality and format classifications for political satire, outlets can also be distinguished based on variations in its critical tone towards the satirized (i.e., the target of the political satire; Holbert, 2016). Satire scholars frequently draw a distinction between Horatian and Juvenalian satire (Holbert et al., 2011; Knight, 2004; LaMarre et al., 2014; Sander, 1971; Simpson, 2003). Horatian satire is a light form of satire that is optimistic and gentle in tone, and is used to deliver social commentary with a smile (e.g., Holbert et al., 2011). By contrast, Juvenalian satire is a harsher form of satire, that is more acidic, biting, and pessimistic in tone (e.g., Holbert et al., 2011), and “laughs with contempt at [humanity’s] pretensions and incongruities and base hypocrisies” (Sander, 1971, p. 235). Shows such as *The Daily Show* are considered examples of Horatian satire and shows such as *Full Frontal With Samantha Bee* of Juvenalian satire (Baym, 2005; Becker, 2012; Holbert et al., 2011; Kaye, 2020).

However, these distinctions between Horatian and Juvenalian satire are rather fluid and, admittedly, are difficult to draw. Hence, one should be cautious with classifying entire political satire outlets as either solely Horatian or Juvenalian in nature. After all, at the level of individual jokes, satirists often employ multiple different forms of rhetorical figures to express various degrees of criticism (LaMarre, et al., 2014; Sander, 1971; Simpson, 2003). Research, for example, shows that satirists can use different types of metaphorical jokes in a single satirical news fragment that either reflect mild (Horatian), moderate (somewhere between Horatian and Juvenalian) or harsh (Juvenalian) criticism on the satirized (Droog et

al., 2020). Other rhetorical figures, such as irony or exaggeration, also lend themselves well for expressing (various degrees of) criticism, because they are inherently evaluative (e.g., Burgers et al., 2011, 2016). The number of different (combinations of) rhetorical figures that satirists have at their disposal to humorously criticize the satirized is therefore also “nearly inexhaustible” (Sander, 1971, p. 5).

Consumption of Political Satire

The characteristics of political satire consumers are used to predict for whom political satire may have effects. This body of research largely draws from two theoretical frameworks often applied to explain media selection and consumption: uses and gratifications theory (Katz et al., 1974) and selective exposure mechanisms (Bennett & Iyengar, 2008).

Uses and gratifications assumes that people consume certain media at certain times based on certain needs they want to satisfy (Katz et al., 1974). In line with this theory, several surveys explored the gratifications that people seek to obtain from consuming political satire. Findings of these studies demonstrate that people perceive being entertained through humor as the most important gratification of consuming satire (Higgie, 2017; Young, 2013).

In addition to entertainment motivations, previous research revealed political motivations for consuming political satire. By making audiences laugh about news and politics, political satire can satisfy needs of individuals, such as wanting to form stronger bonds with politically like-minded people or reducing anxiety towards politics (Hmielowski et al., 2011). Individuals who consume political satire for these reasons can be said to have “affinity for political humor” (a concept developed in previous studies; e.g., Boukes, 2018; Hmielowski et al., 2011). Another pronounced type of motivation is that political satire allows audiences to learn about political news, which helps them to understand politics better (Higgie, 2017; Young, 2013). Many people feel that political satire conceptualizes current affairs in ways that offers them insightful perspectives on the world around them (Higgie,

2017; Young, 2013)—some even argue that political satire offers truths about politics that few other media offer (Young, 2013).

In light of these entertainment and political motivations, certain demographics seem to be associated with the consumption of political satire. First, studies suggest that especially younger adults consume political satire (e.g., Hmielowski et al., 2011). Secondly, men more likely make up the political satire audience than women (e.g., Young & Tisinger, 2006). Thirdly, a positive relationship has been found between political satire consumption and identifying politically as liberal (e.g., Young et al., 2019). These findings suggest that these people, particularly, find (some of) their psychological needs met by consuming satire (Young, 2019).

Unlike uses and gratifications theory (Katz et al., 1974), selective exposure theory assumes that media selections are not always active decisions but rather implicit decisions (Bennett & Iyengar, 2008). Selective exposure predicts that people (not always knowingly) favor media content that corresponds to their own views, feelings, and experiences and tend to avoid media content that conflicts with it (Bennett & Iyengar, 2008). Indeed, studies have provided empirical evidence for selective exposure in the context of political satire too, such that political satire was more likely consumed when it was attitude-consistent (Knobloch-Westerwick & Lavis, 2017; Stroud & Muddiman, 2013). These findings indicate how political identity is a strong, subconscious predictor of satire consumption as well.

Related to this partisan component are some additional characteristics of political satire audiences that previous research has identified. For instance, political satire consumption has been linked to higher levels of regular news consumption (Young & Tisinger, 2006), higher levels of political participation (Baumgartner & Lockerbie, 2018), and higher levels of political cynicism (Guggenheim et al., 2011). Important to note is that some of these conclusions are based on analyses with cross-national data, as correlational

relationships that could actually be interpreted in two ways: (a) as audience characteristics (are the already politically engaged/cynical people who are attracted to political satire as an alternative form of political expression), or (b) as effect (consumption of political satire can increase political engagement/cynicism; e.g., Baumgartner & Lockerbie, 2018; Guggenheim et al., 2011).

Effects of Political Satire

Given that political satire presents current affairs differently compared to regular journalism, various studies have focused on how the experience of consuming political satire differs from consuming regular news (e.g., Brugman & Burgers, 2021; Feldman & Borum Chattoo, 2019). After all, many viewers of political satire are also exposed to regular forms of news (e.g., Young & Tisinger, 2006). Thus, some viewers may watch satire to get a different perspective on news facts that they are often already aware of.

Various studies have tried to uncover what constitutes the different experience of consuming political satire and regular news. These studies have approached political satire from two different theoretical lenses. The first theoretical lens focused on satire's relation to hedonic and eudaimonic entertainment. The second connected satire to different forms of message processing.

First, political satire has been connected to hedonic and eudaimonic entertainment experiences (e.g., Brugman & Burgers, 2021; Möller & Boukes, 2022). According to Oliver and Raney (2011), people may consume entertainment media for enjoyment or for appreciation. Enjoyment is connected to hedonic entertainment experiences, and focuses on pleasure seeking (Oliver & Raney, 2011). By containing humor and funny bits, political satire may tap into enjoyment (Brugman & Burgers, 2021; Möller & Boukes, 2022). By contrast, appreciation is connected to eudaimonic entertainment experiences, which focus on truth-seeking and meaningfulness (Oliver & Raney, 2011). By presenting a critical view on current

events and political actors, political satire may also increase appreciation. For instance, Brugman and Burgers (2021) found that satire (*vs.* regular news) increased appreciation among audience members who found the satire funny but decreased appreciation among those who did not. Möller and Boukes (2022) demonstrated that the social context in which satire is consumed can also moderate the effects on entertainment experiences. They revealed that, when a satire video was consumed on *YouTube* and accompanied by positive (*vs.* negative) user comments, viewers experienced more enjoyment and appreciation.

A second perspective relates satire to processing. Although the studies described below depart from different theoretical perspectives, the differential susceptibility to media effects model (DSMM; Valkenburg & Peter, 2013) provides a useful framework to bring them together. One of the core predictions of the DSMM is that media effects (e.g., knowledge; persuasion) may be preceded by cognitive, emotional and excitative responses and that this differs according to personal characteristics (Valkenburg & Peter, 2013). Cognitive responses refer to elaboration during processing. For political satire, two seemingly contradictory cognitive responses have been observed (Boukes et al., 2015). On the one hand, viewers of political satire may simply discount the message's content because satire contains humor (e.g., Burgers & Brugman, 2021; Nabi et al., 2007) and thus, the humorous element can prevent satire from being taken seriously. On the other hand, the humor in political satire may stimulate more effortful processing in that comprehending the humor takes up recipients' cognitive resources. As a result, audience members may lack cognitive resources to counterargue the political satire. Thus, political satire may simultaneously boost more effortful but less critical message processing (Becker & Anderson, 2019; Nabi et al., 2007).

Next to cognitive responses, satire may also evoke emotional responses (Boukes & LaMarre, 2023). Through humor, these can include positive affective responses including happiness and hope (Burgers & Brugman, 2021; Droog et al., 2022; Feldman & Borum

Chattoo, 2019). Through its social criticism, satire may also increase negative emotions in its audience members such as worry, anger, or sadness (e.g., Droog et al., 2022; Lee & Kwak, 2014). However, empirical evidence for these effects of political satire has been mixed, with some studies also showing that—through its humor function—political satire can evoke fewer negative emotions among audiences compared to viewers of regular news (Skurka et al., 2018, 2019).

Finally, political satire may be connected to excitative responses that focus on aspects of arousal. While the connection between satire and arousal has not yet received much attention in the literature (Becker, 2020), a first study conducted by Droog et al. (2022) showed that political satire reduced physiological experiences of arousal. One explanation for this finding could be that participants in the Droog et al. (2022) study may have discounted the satirical message because of its humorous elements (in line with findings by Burgers & Brugman, 2021, and Nabi et al., 2007), which could have reduced their arousal. However, in other contexts, humor has also been shown to increase arousal (e.g., Eisend, 2009), which is why more research on this topic is needed.

Besides entertainment experiences, effect research on political satire has primarily zoomed in on learning and persuasion outcomes. Regarding learning, a meta-analysis revealed that satire could boost learning about social and political news topics for viewers who did not watch regular news (Burgers & Brugman, 2021). In addition, no differences have been found in learning between audience members of political satire and regular news. This indicates that regular news does not outperform its entertainment counterpart of political satire on learning. For persuasion, Burgers and Brugman's meta-analysis (2021) only found a small effect indicating that satire could be more persuasive than regular news. As a caveat, please note that this small effect was only marginally significant (i.e., p-value between 0.05 and 0.10). This means that – even though satire was found to be slightly more persuasive than

regular news – this overall effect was relatively minor in size. More importantly, Burgers and Brugman (2021) found heterogeneity in their tests for effects of satire versus regular news on learning and persuasion. This indicates that these effects differed between studies and populations. Thus, rather than asking *whether* political satire can boost learning or persuasion, their results suggest that research should focus *for whom* and *under which conditions* political satire could impact learning and persuasion. In other words, focusing on moderators and mediators of satire effects are important next steps.

For moderators, previous research has focused on recipient characteristics and satire characteristics. In terms of recipient characteristics, political satire can be more persuasive for college students compared to the general population (Burgers & Brugman, 2021). After all, previous research demonstrated that, young adults are more narratively absorbed in the content of political satire and therefore process it less critically (Boukes et al., 2015). In terms of satire characteristics, political satire in which specific political or social issues were targeted (i.e., issue-focused satire) leads to more learning than political satire that targets individual political actors or institutions (i.e., person-focused satire). By contrast, person-focused satire is more persuasive than issue-focused satire (Burgers & Brugman, 2021): This latter finding is illustrated by Becker (2021), who showed that exposure to a sketch from *Saturday Night Live* (SNL) in which the hosts and guests in the political talk show *The View* were parodied, caused the perception that *The View* itself was less informative and less appropriate as a source for political news. For mediators, previous research has mainly focused on entertainment experiences, and for instance demonstrated how changes in hedonic or eudaimonic entertainment experiences (Feldman & Borum Chattoo, 2019; Möller & Boukes, 2022), cognitive responses (Nabi et al., 2007) or emotional responses (Droog et al., 2022; Lee & Kwak, 2014; Skurka et al., 2019) can impact the persuasiveness of satire.

The effects discussed so far have mainly focused on changes in individual viewers under experimental circumstances. Some research demonstrates that political satire can also affect macro-level variables, such as voting decisions (Boukes & Hameleers, 2020) or political and media agendas. Boukes (2019) looked at episodes in which Dutch satirist Arjen Lubach focused on the European Union-United States trade agreement Transatlantic Trade Investment and Partnership (TTIP). This research found that these satirical episodes impacted the salience of TTIP on the short-term public agenda and long-term political agenda. In such ways, political satire can not only affect individual viewers, but also larger journalistic and political discussions on social issues.

Political Satire: The Way Ahead

Research on political satire has come a long way in the last two decades. Nevertheless, various avenues for future research remain. A first question zooms in on the cultural diversity of the political satire landscape. While satire has been produced and consumed across the globe (Baym & Jones, 2013), most current research has been conducted in the United States. Burgers and Brugman (2021) reported that 88.6% of effect-oriented satire studies included in their meta-analysis were conducted in the United States. Future research could thus zoom in on how political satire has been produced differently across the globe and whether cultural differences in production, content, viewership and effects can be observed.

A second question zooms in on the real-life effects of political satire. Most current effect studies on political satire are controlled experiments conducted in the (online) lab, and these could be complemented by more field studies demonstrating when, under which conditions and for whom satire could also have effects in natural environments (see Boukes & Hameleers, 2020 for such a study).

Third, future research could focus more on how differences in content and form of satire affect viewer perceptions and media effects (see Holbert et al., 2011 for such a study).

Finally, most of the satire literature still concentrates on the satire audience as a rather passive audience that only consumes, interprets, and is then influenced by the satirical message.

However, online environments allow the satire audience to become more (inter)active (Boukes et al., 2022; Brugman et al., 2023) and shape the social context in which satire is viewed (Möller & Boukes, 2022). However, little is known about the type of activity that both triggers such interactive engagement and is triggered by the interactive engagement with political satire.

An important final note to make is that political satire is not monolithic but appears in many different formats or sub-genres: ranging from humoristic news quizzes (e.g., *Have I Got News for You*), to parody (e.g., *Saturday Night Live*) and satirical news programs (e.g., *The Daily Show*) to investigative comedy (e.g., *Last Week Tonight*). Arguably, differences exist between the production, content and therefore also the effects of these satire shows. Research that (theoretically) disentangles their differences, however, still hardly exists. It is therefore difficult to know how much empirical findings regarding one type of satire generalize towards another satire sub-genre. Nevertheless, political satire has matured into an important entertainment genre and an important news genre, thereby blurring the boundaries between classical media genres and having an undeniable impact on its audience—and beyond.

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