

**Not laughing at you but performing with you: A
discourse analysis of the political performance of the
audience in the comments on the official *Have I got
News for you* Facebook page.**



Have I Got News for You cover illustration – source: BBC and Hat Trick Productions

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Abstract

Despite the vast and interdisciplinary area of study that is the research of audiences in relation to non-fictional political satire tv shows, little work has been done, from a television studies background, on the specific practices these fans undertake. Indeed, audience studies have come a long way from the demonisation of television to the blending of politics and entertainment, referred to as 'infotainment'. In its early stages, academics such as Neil Postman (2005a, 64; 2005b, 124) and Robert Putnam (1995, 8-10) believed that television was polluting public discourse, decreasing democratic vitality, and reducing citizens' social capital. However, recent academics have a more optimistic outlook on fans and audiences.

Fan theorists, in particular Stuart Hall (1980, 117-127), John Fiske (2010a, 129; 2010b 64) and Henry Jenkins (2013a, 278; 2013b, 1-2), see audience members as active social subjects that engage with practices in relation to media text, with a mixture of emotional responses and critical observation. Furthermore, Jenkins (2008b, 10-22) argues that since the advent of the internet and social media, producers (and other tv executives) invite audiences more fully into **participatory culture** more fully because they are encouraged to engage with media texts outside of simply watching the tv show. Additionally, since the rise in popularity of infotainment shows (e.g., *The Colbert Report* or *Have I Got News for You*), there has been a reconsideration of traditional and non-traditional democratic and political engagement streams.

Indeed, new media has become an important factor in political engagement. Joseph Kahne et al. (2014, 3-20) contend that social media sites have become lucrative arenas of political information and deliberation. While political engagement and debate have always existed, it is only since the turn of the 2000s that studies have been conducted on these acts and specifically concerning political satire tv shows. Liesbet van Zoonen (2007, 531-547) combined active audience engagement and **performing one's political self** in relation to fictional political satire tv shows to define four categories (*description, judgement, reflection, and fantasy*) on which this thesis takes its roots.

This research uses discourse analysis to demonstrate how political performances articulate concerning a specific case study. The thesis answered the following research question: **How can the audience discourse of Have I Got News for You's Facebook comments be understood as a performance of a 'political self'?**

The results underpin the importance of understanding this form of political participation and how these **political performances** go beyond fictional tv to enter non-fictional satire tv show arenas, such as *Have I Got News for You's* official Facebook page. Moreover, this research demonstrates that blending satire, comedy, and political information can aid civic engagement and political life. Additionally, this thesis found that the *Have I Got News for You* audience enters specific fan practices (e.g., dialogue and creative fan-made memes) to bolster their political engagement.

Finally, this research reinforces the idea that online fan practices in relation to tv shows can be considered political participation. It observed that political performances are not limited to four specific categories. However, specific tv shows (e.g., *Have I Got News for You*) and specific political matters/issues (e.g., the partygate scandal) can group like-minded politically involved citizens. Thus, even more, qualitative analytical research is needed in this area. It is conceivable that future researchers could undertake follow-up research with the same participants to understand whether this participation spreads effectively across different media texts.

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1. Introduction

In the late 1950s/early 1960s, 'satire' in academia was concerned with literary studies (e.g., Frye 1957, Elliott 1960, Highet 1962, Kernan 1965 and Paulson 2019) and defined as a high art that was supposedly only enjoyed by an educated few (Meijer Drees and de Leeuw 2015, 2). Meijer Drees and de Leeuw (2015, 2) argue that 'satire' research was grounded by the understanding of the triangle between text and the commonalities betwixt the author and the 'educated' reader (e.g., ethical values, humour, intellectual culture). The 1970s brought about deeper research into the complexities of satire, thus broadening its definition, and opening new pathways for academics and researchers in cartoons (e.g., Donald 1996), caricatures (e.g., Pierce 2008) and later television studies (e.g., Henry 2014). Two decades later, as Meijer Drees and Leeuw (2015, 2) show, the assumptions about satire as a sophisticated form of humour were entirely shattered and since the turn of the millennium, researchers and media specialists have focused on satire in all its forms (e.g., radio, television, cartoons, and literature).

The United Kingdom has a significant history of satire. Jamie Medhurst (n.d., accessed May 16, 2023), professor of media and communication, sketches out the history of comedy within the BBC in his article "Comedy and Satire". In 1948, the BBC had strict guidelines that prohibited humorous programmes from including any content about vulgar or suggestive subjects (e.g., jokes about lavatories, effeminate men, or prostitution). Despite this, the BBC produced shows that were enjoyed by large audiences and that ventured into different genres, sometimes pushing the boundaries of comedy. One of the examples that Medhurst (n.d.) discusses is *That Was the Week That Was* (1962), which he declares to be the catalyst for satirical television. The show intentionally lampooned political figures combining comedy and current affairs and had backing from the BBC. However, the show was only short-lived and was taken off the air in 1963, due to the BBC's intention to remain impartial for the upcoming 1964 election. Other shows subsequently followed suit in holding those in power to account and satirically condemning racism and bigotry (e.g., *Till Death Us Do Part*, 1965 and *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, 1969). The modern UK satire television landscape is now vast with an array of panel shows (e.g., *Have I Got News for You*, BBC One, 1990-present, *The Last Leg* Channel 4, 2012-present, and *Mock the Week*, BBC Two, 2005-2022), sitcoms (e.g., *The Thick of It*, BBC Four, 2005-2012 and *Yes Minister*, BBC Two, 1980-1988) and including feature-length films (e.g., *Ali G Indahouse* 2002, *Monty Python's Life of Brian* 1979).

Certainly, the UK's relationship with satire is longstanding, and today satirical television represents a significant portion of the programming schedule. One of the longest-running and most popular political satirical tv game shows in the UK is Harry Thompson and Jimmy Mulville's *Have I Got News for You* (*HIGNFY*) first aired in 1990, and which will be the case study of this thesis. The different episodes of the satirical game show feature a changing guest presenter, celebrity invited players and two recurring team captains (Paul Merton and Ian Hislop). The show invites three celebrity guests, one per team and a host each week, whose background is usually in politics, journalism, or comedy with a political bent. The two teams compete based on their knowledge of, and ability to,

comment on current events, news stories, and notable political figures (Coleman et al 2009). Furthermore, the teams often debate and rebut one another in a confrontational and informal discourse during the show (Coleman et al 2009). Despite attaining a Lifetime Achievement Award at the BAFTAs in 2011, and being still on air to date, with steady audience numbers, the show has been scrutinised for its mechanical and repetitive approach to current affairs and comedy (Heritage 2019).

Nonetheless, *HIGNFY* remains popular and a relevant source of infotainment, the blending of news and entertainment. Established media scholars such as Jonathan Gray, Jeffrey P. Jones and Ethan Thompson (2009a, IV-X) state that viewers understandably need a break from the 24/7 information-media cycle that surrounds them. And yet, a growing number of television audiences are still tirelessly keeping up with news and current events (Gray et al 2009a, IV-X). This form of audience engagement with television news and current affairs can be seen as a preparatory step for the viewing of topical entertainment shows (e.g., political satire) to fully grasp and understand their content. Indeed, Gray et al (2009a, X) claim that political satire tv now exists in a multitude of formats - for example, monologues, late-night shows, and game shows – whereby combining the reality of political news or debate with humour, can enlighten understanding of a political situation by slightly distorting the reality. Furthermore, Shawn Shimpach (2020, 1-2) argues that tv is an evolving medium due to technological advancements and industry shifts (e.g., deregulation, privatisation, and consolidation). He contends that these changes have brought about new questioning from media companies and academics alike (Shimpach 2020 1-3). Furthermore, Shimpach (2020, 97-98) contends that scholars have focused on theorising audiences and their engagement as going from ‘passive and susceptible’ to ‘active and creative’, and that the audience’s actions are accentuated by technological progress. As for *HIGNFY*, they have duly followed shifts in the industry and technology by creating a Facebook page in 2015, where they invite their audience to participate actively, and thus has opened questions about audience agency and power relations between media companies and fans.

This research draws on audience studies and fandom to explore these questions in combination with political performance in a public setting. My study builds upon the framework of Henry Jenkins’ **participatory culture** and **participatory politics**, to understand the complexities of the relationship between the tv industry (e.g., here Hat Trick Productions’ *HIGNFY*) and the audience and their engagement in relation to the media text (e.g., Facebook comments). Additionally, the study recognises the changes that tv has undergone through Jenkins’ concept of **convergence culture** (detailed in the theoretical framework). Furthermore, this research roots itself in a focus on **politics, civic engagement, performing citizenship** and **performing one’s political self**, defined by Liesbet van Zoonen (2007) as ‘how audiences discuss and engage with politics in a public setting’. Additionally, the study highlights the interdisciplinarity of audience research concerning infotainment and political satire tv shows. Thereafter, this thesis thoroughly describes how Liesbet van Zoonen's definition of **performing a political self** has been adapted and applied to my research. Finally, the research shows how these elements are articulated in the comment section of the official *HIGNFY* Facebook page and underlines

how fandom and political discussion share this online space. The following research question was asked to guide my study; **How can the audience discourse of *Have I Got News for You*'s Facebook comments be understood as a performance of a 'political self'?**

This study will begin by methodically mapping out a theoretical framework of **participatory culture, convergence culture** and **participatory politics**. Thereafter, the theoretical framework finds its footing in **political culture, civic engagement** and the **'political self'**. Subsequently the study details the adaptation of van Zoonen's (2007) **'political self'** in combination with an explanation of the methodology used, discourse analysis. Finally, the findings will be presented along with analytical remarks and a concluding comment.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Television, discourse, and participatory culture

Television as a medium has been both criticised and praised over the years for its ability to influence, engage and create opportunities for audience participation. In the 1980s, media theorist and critic, Neil Postman (2005a, 64), viewed television as the medium that would change public discourse for the worse in America. Postman argues that tv pollutes public discourse and traditional literacy by changing the way the audience understands important topics through ephemeral information streams or a 'peek-a-boo world', a false idea of context or 'pseudo-context', the combination of politics and tv, and the reduction of important societal topics to mere entertainment. Postman (2005b, 125) criticises the idea that commercial television became the main way for divulging political ideas by using the medium in political campaigns. Furthermore, he contends that audiences have become very accommodating to the philosophy of advertising. In other words, he argues that tv has become the main medium of public discourse and the overwhelming consumption of tv publicity has affected the audience's ability to think critically about the messages being passed along to them. In addition, he contends that television releases 'celebrities' from their area of expertise, thus, politicians can appear on tv at any time doing anything, and it is considered 'normal'. Postman (2005b, 132-134) argues that this has led to a decline in the public's understanding of who the best candidate is politically and is rather more about who the audience perceives has the best tv image. On the one hand, Neil Postman is correct in observing the blurring of politics and television, and more specifically entertainment because of the medium's dominance in public discourse, although on the other hand, his criticism gives very little agency to the audience.

More positive critical research on television has brought the defence of the benefits of television to the fore (Fiske 2010b, 64). Media scholar and cultural theorist, John Fiske (2010b, 64) defines television as a medium that is a vital part of social dynamics maintained by a constant production and reproduction of meanings, entertainment, and culture. He builds on Stuart Hall's (1980, 117-127) 'encoding/decoding' mode of communication, which sees audiences as active social subjects who construct meaning out of the signs and symbols that television offers (Fiske 2010a, 129). My interpretation aligns with Hall and Fiske in that audiences are media literate, can understand media more than Postman gives them credit for, and consequently, have the ability to think critically about the media they consume. Fiske (2010a, 144) contradicts Hall's idea of a dominant reading (e.g., dominant class reading, Marxist reading) concerning media texts. Fiske (2010a, 144) argues that the construction of meaning is more complex for each individual depending on their social and cultural context. Furthermore, Fiske (2010a, 134-35) argues that different sets of audiences can construct different meanings based on their culture, in what he calls 'subcultural readings'. He gives the example of different ethnic groups negotiating the show *Dallas* (1978) differently based on their culture. However, he does not completely disparage the idea of dominant readings. For example, feminists may not all

read a media text the same way, although, it is imprudent to say there is no such thing as a feminist reading. Furthermore, he contends that television allows people to enter new social circles and communities by talking about the media text that links them. This contradicts the notion of a passive audience that simply receives messages and conjures an active audience that is critically engaged.

Henry Jenkins in his book *Textual Poachers*, originally published in 1992, expands on audience agency by defining specific practices and how these fan communities are built. Jenkins (2013a, 278) criticises Fiske's idea of differentiating between semiotic productivity (construction of meaning at the moment of reception) and enunciative productivity (the expression of meaning) because he argues that the moment of meaning-making for fans often occurs in parallel to the expression. In his book, Jenkins (2013b, 1-2) defines a conception of fandom, specifically with regards to fictional television, that can be distinguished by at least five dimensions: mode of reception, specific practices, consumer activism, the aesthetic of fan productions, and alternative social circles. Firstly, the mode of reception refers to critical observation and the emotional attachment fans have for their media texts (e.g., watching shows multiple times to fully understand them). Secondly, Jenkins (2013a, 278) contends that fans take part in specific activities (e.g., fan fiction, sharing video tapes, and fan meet-ups). He argues that fandom often relies on the community construction of meta-texts that are more complex than the original and blur the lines between audience and producer. Thirdly, Jenkins (2013a, 279) disputes that fandom is a foundation for consumer activism. In other words, he contends that fans can often express their displeasure with how producers are treating their favourite shows through the practices that they take part in (e.g., creating alternative storylines in fan fiction). The fourth dimension focuses on the aesthetic of fan production. Jenkins (2013a, 280) states that fan practices question network copyright claims, as well as these fans' willingness to communicate with others through the sharing of videotapes or file sharing. Finally, Jenkins (2013a, 280) argues that fandom offers an alternative social sphere to that of reality, and asserts that audience agency can create specific fan practices that have a significant impact, in this case on the production of their favourite show, in the form of fan activism (e.g., saving a show from cancellation or seeking the integration of a more diverse cast) that reaches beyond their immediate social circle (e.g., family and friends). Consequently, he portrays **participatory culture** in a utopian way, where participation in civic life, or civic engagement, can be achieved through their shared relationship to media texts, here specifically, through tv programmes (e.g., consumption, production and community building).

Moreover, the digital age has brought about **convergence culture** through changing media flows, greater audience participation, and evolving industries and thus, media texts are less limited to their original medium (e.g., producers of tv shows also run their own Facebook pages as in the case of Hat Trick Production and *HIGNFY*). Jenkins (2008b, 10), 16 years after the original release of *Textual Poachers*, talks of 'convergence culture' defining the age of convergence as companies shifting from production in a single medium to decentralised production across an array of mediums aided and abetted by technological advancements, notably digitalisation. Jenkins (2008b, 19-22) seeks to explain the

changes in the era of convergence in the relationships between audiences, producers, and content through a multitude of examples from reality tv social media pages to transmedia storytelling, and even grassroots activism. Convergence culture takes the audience more fully into a participatory culture because producers encourage audiences to actively engage with the media texts (Jenkins 2008b, 21). He argues that knowledge is key to audience engagement, however, it is a debated matter. Jenkins gives the example of *Survivor* spoilers and *American Idol*: in the former, the producers are scared that the audience has become too good at predicting the unfolding events in *Survivor* and, in the latter, audiences believe that producers maintain too much control in the singing competition. While producers of the shows are actively inviting audiences to engage with the content, it is important to remind audiences that these producers hold influence over the different participatory aspects. In the context of the present case study, Hat Trick Productions runs the official Facebook page for *Have I Got News for You*. They thus exert an influence over what gets posted and ensure that the posts align with their political views, which consequently has an impact on the comments from the audience. In addition, Jenkins (2008a, 257) contends that, in his critical utopian view, participatory culture bolstered by the convergence of media in the age of digital communication can lead to social change through activism. Notably, Jenkins (2008a) references the group formerly known as the Harry Potter Alliance, now Fandom Forward, that has worked to spread awareness for gender equity, climate crisis and LGBTQIA+ equality. He argues that fandom has created a shift in civic engagement that has been propelled by digital media and technology, however, he contends that these spaces are not deregulated and that producers remain an influential force on the platforms.

From an educative and civic engagement perspective, Kahne et al. (2014, 4) define 'participatory politics' as "interactive, peer-based acts through which individuals and groups seek to exert both voice and influence on issues of public concern." (Kahne et al. 2014, 5). They are not saying that these practices are new, however, they assert that new media is creating spaces for political discussion and consequently increasing political participation in public life online (Kahne et al. 2014, 7-8). They use the framework of Jenkins' original thoughts on participatory culture to identify five practices of participatory politics: (1) Investigation, members of a community actively seeking information on public matters (e.g., from many sources and evaluating it);(2) Dialogue and feedback, a high degree of conversation between participants, as well as a practice of evaluating issues of public concern and on the decisions of politicians (e.g., discussing politics on social media with other participants); (3) Circulation, information sharing by a broader array of participants rather than a small group of elites (e.g., posting links to content that have political significance); (4) Production, creation of original content that allows for participants to speak freely on their perspectives (e.g., satirical internet memes on the state of politics); (5) Mobilization, participants rallying others towards a political cause (e.g., the proliferation of Change.org). More recently, Jenkins et al. (2016, 39) have also expanded on the idea of participatory culture to include the concept of participatory politics, to bridge the gap between participation in media and participation in politics. They argue that media has always been

implicitly political, but they are making a case for the use of culture for more explicitly political ends (Jenkins et al 2016, 39). In this sense, they are observing the point of contact between participatory culture and participatory politics.

Jenkins et al. (2016, 40) now define **participatory culture** as a range of communal activities and social engagements through which people collectively express themselves and learn. Furthermore, Jenkins et al. (2016, 52) contend that participatory political practices aforementioned have become commonplace for young people, however, these pathways may be limited by the difference between participating ‘in’ and ‘through’ media, by which the platform restricts the posts available on their website, and also access to these sites (Jenkins et al 2016, 52). In this sense, each site, platform or even page is controlled and regulated by a media entity. As mentioned previously, Hat Trick Productions run the official *HIGNFY* Facebook page. Furthermore, due to the heritage of the show (starting in the 1990s), the majority of the audience is less likely to be considered ‘young’ as envisioned by Jenkins et al. (2016, 52). Moreover, according to Statista (Dixon 2023), the majority demographic of Facebook users in the UK in 2023 is from the age groups of 25 to 34 (24.2% of the share of users) and 35 to 44 (18.9%). However, I believe that this audience, although older than that described by Jenkins, does indeed enter into various forms of political participation. Finally, Jenkins et al. (2016, 55) contend that participatory politics goes beyond ‘civic culture’ (forthcoming) to include attempts that encourage action around a specific concern.

2.2 Political culture, civic engagement, and the ‘political self’

Nina Eliasoph’s (1990) sociological study of the public sphere sought to reveal how people talk about politics and their opinions by interviewing people on the street, studying not just what they say but also how they say it. She raises questions on the relationship between talk and ‘public’ (e.g., what is ‘public’, what is the purpose of speaking in ‘public’ and what is appropriate). Eliasoph (1990) found that people present themselves in different ways (e.g., irreverent, intimidated and concerned). This in turn raises the question of how this ‘public self’ is constructed.

In *Talking Politics*, originally released in 1992, sociologist William A. Gamson (2002, 117) casts a theoretical light on how people make sense of matters of public concern. Gamson (2002, 117) understands that when everyday people explain the basis for their opinion on political or public concerns, they often frame it in different ways depending on their socioeconomic context and use media examples and real life to justify themselves. Gamson (2002, 118-124) identifies three resources: ‘media surround’, ‘experiential knowledge’, and ‘popular wisdom’. The first resource, ‘media surround’, refers to how politics are part of larger media discourse. Gamson (2002, 118-124) argues that people often make sense of political issues by referring to and comparing issues that they have come across in media texts (e.g., citing films, shows and advertisements). Furthermore, political scientists, Michael Delli Carpini and Bruce Williams (2002, 1-4) examined how television has a profound impact on citizens’

understanding of public matters and politics. They found that citizens use fictional and non-fictional characters, personalities, narratives, information and tales of good and bad, to construct their narratives about politics (Williams and Delli Carpini 2002). The second resource, 'experiential knowledge', indicates that people relate these problems to a personal story or to someone they know (Gamson 2002, 117). The final resource, 'popular wisdom', refers to how people use widely accepted beliefs to frame their stance on the political matter. Gamson (2002) argues that the presentation of one's political talk is guided by surrounding socioeconomic context, media consumption and generally accepted morals, however, Gamson's study focuses on varying social and political issues and his research was conducted in a real-world public sphere. People, specifically but not limited to the younger generation, are now engaging with politics online more frequently than by traditional means. This begs the question of how online political talk is framed, and if this resembles what people would have discussed if face to face.

In the discussion on participation in civic practices and civic life in general, or 'civic engagement', a controversial issue has been whether the intertwining of media and politics has led to a decline in 'democratic vitality'. Political scientist, Robert Putnam (1995) argues that television is sparking a decrease in social capital. He explains that as a powerful cultural tool, television is 'privatising' and 'individualising' people's lives and leisure times which in turn is affecting people's sense of community and civic engagement. I argue that here, Robert Putnam demonises television in the same vein as Neil Postman did in the 1980s. He is arguing that tv is causing the decline of community, however, many fan theorists such as Fiske and Jenkins would contend the contrary and argue that sharing fan productions (e.g., fan art and fan fiction) and other practices create important communities that expand beyond immediate family and friends. This brings up questions of whether communities, that can be found in abundance online, enter into civic life and activities. Indeed, instead of simply disparaging Putnam's view on the decline of social capital by tv, it can be seen as a catalyst for new civic engagement and the re-emergence of these communities through fan practices. Liesbet van Zoonen (2004, 46) argues that there is a three-dimensional equivalence between fan communities and political constituencies that maintains the appeal of television for rational deliberation (van Zoonen, 2004, 49). She argues that the participatory aspects of television have the innate ability to create fan communities that are like political constituencies by way of performance, activity, and emotional investment. Van Zoonen (2004, 43) draws parallels between the adherence to a political party and a fan community by their intermediate identification to the appeal of the candidate and/or party, and the personality and/or the programme through emotional, affective, moral, and aesthetic bonds. In this sense, van Zoonen (2004, 43) defines this as a performance or an appreciation of the performance of the candidate and/or party, which she argues is central to the construction of audiences. Additionally, van Zoonen (2004, 45) states that fan activities can be seen as an equivalence to civic and political activities. She argues that fans are intensely invested in their media texts and engage in strong dialogue and deliberation much like one would do around a political issue. Finally, van Zoonen (2004, 47-48) considers the involvement of emotion in the political process and fandom. Strong emotional and affective bonds between fans and

their media texts are widely accepted and most practices are characterised by a playful and emotional style of interaction (van Zoonen 2004, 47). However, van Zoonen (2004, 48) argues emotion in politics tends to be considered a non-rational form of civic engagement or a secondary strategy to engage voters. Van Zoonen (2004, 48-49) asserts that 'affective intelligence', where emotion can act as a spark for the acquisition, analysis, assessment and development of information, is commonly found in the political arena because it can encourage enthusiasm and/or anxiety on a particular political issue. Furthermore, van Zoonen (2004, 49) contends that the blending of entertainment and politics can be seen in a way that is inviting people into the political sphere through affective bonds. I contend that the community surrounding political satire tv shows, such as *HIGNFY*, can help audiences enter civic life and the political sphere. Indeed, I argue that the official Facebook page of *HIGNFY* has helped a thriving community to engage in dialogue and deliberation about political issues (e.g., the 'partygate' scandal). Furthermore, I assert that comedy and satire can be a tool for 'affective intelligence'.

Furthermore, traditional forms of 'democratic vitality' have continually been brought into question by academics (e.g., Jones 2004 and van Zoonen 2007) due to the blending of politics and entertainment and they have identified a new wave of democratic possibilities (e.g., what audiences 'do' and how they 'do' it), concerning media, more specifically television. Jeffrey P. Jones (2004, 15) argues that democratic vitality encompasses voting, political affiliation, trust in leaders, political knowledge, and voluntary activism. Jones (2004, 15) offers an insight into the reshaping of civic engagement and the melding of politics and entertainment in the early 21st century, and more specifically in the US. Jones (2004, 15) defines this shift in citizenship through the choosing, attending to, processing, and engaging with a multitude of media texts about the formal political process and traditional political institutions, and how they conduct their day-to-day business. However, he explains that this engagement does not happen in a vacuum, but rather in conjunction with other forms of media engagement and in disparate social contexts. Jones (2004, 15) identifies the shift in concordance with Kevin G. Barnhurst's (1998, 201-218) definition of the 'media surround', where understanding of an issue for young media audiences comes through a variety of means (e.g., entertainment shows, pop songs, celebrities...). Jones (2004) argues that television in conversation takes three forms, people talk back to the television set, the television talks to them, and more importantly he contends people talk about television to other people. In this sense, the separation of information and entertainment is a 'misinterpretation' of how audiences understand media. Jones (2004) agrees with Delli Caprini and Williams (2002, 1-4) in that audiences rather retain all information they deem relevant to construct their view of public affairs and often share their opinions with others. In addition, sociologists, such as Nick Couldry (2006, 321-339) argue that a cultural studies approach of 'cultural citizenship', or rather 'culture' of citizenship, probes whether or not individuals speak as citizens, as audiences, as 'employees', or even at all concerning the consumption of media texts. Couldry (2006, 231-339) argues that individuals tend to have different definitions of matters that concern the public arena. Thus, his research focused on the disconnection or engagement with the public space or what he calls 'public connection'. Couldry (2006, 231-339) found

when testing individuals' 'public connection', people use media texts in a fragmented way. By this, he means people connect or disconnect to the public space with their media consumption, in particular television. Consequently, Couldry (2006, 231-339) asserts that discourse and practices from the public may look like they are part of 'public connection' but are not. However, he explains that even if people are not explicitly engaging in public matters, they still need space to express their acquired knowledge from media texts. In this sense, audience discourse can be complex and not all comments involve engagement on public or political issues.

Liesbet van Zoonen (2007, 531-547) explains that the audience sharing of their construction can be a performance of a 'political self'. She refers to Gamson (2002, 117) to demonstrate how audiences make sense of politics and how they frame the practices they undertake as a performance of their 'political self' and uses the three resources to understand how people make sense of politics: media discourse, experiential knowledge and common sense. The first resource is that politics are part of a larger media discourse or media surround. Van Zoonen (2007, 531-547) furthers this by stating that it is especially prevalent in explicitly political shows (e.g., political fiction and non-fiction, satire). Furthermore, other ways politics enter media discourse are when former politicians are involved in the development of shows, when politicians and journalists appear on these shows, and when politicians refer to popular culture in their speeches. Van Zoonen (2007, 531-547) exemplifies this by stating that Margaret Thatcher wrote a special sketch for the programme *Yes Minister*. In my case study, Boris Johnson has presented *HIGNFY* on several occasions. Secondly, van Zoonen (2007, 531-547) explains that political discussion in media often relies on 'experiential knowledge', or stories based on familiarity and the experiences of others. She states that television shows and films often use the depiction of reality to allow audiences to better relate to a scene. By extension, she explains that this enables parasocial interaction with a protagonist by allowing audiences to immerse themselves in the unfolding events. Finally, the third resource takes the shape of 'common sense', in which, van Zoonen (2007, 531-547) understands that the citizen is fully aware that their participation in political life may or may not have an impact on others but does not hinder their engagement. Thus, how people understand politics in contemporary Western societies comes from a range of intertextual media consumption and interaction and deliberation of the information in public spaces. Van Zoonen (2007, 533) and Eliasoph (1990) both understand that this political talk is precisely constructed when in a public setting, such as description, judgement, reflection, and fantasy for the former, and irreverent, intimidated and concerned for the latter. For this case study, I argue that *HIGNFY*'s Facebook page is a public space where audiences can perform their political self, and more specifically this research uses a framework of van Zoonen's (2007) categories, which are highlighted and defined in the methodology section (see 12-13).

The complexities of the blending of politics and entertainment also include the complexities and variety of the media texts. This case study focuses on non-fictional political satire (e.g., *HIGNFY*) which comes with its complications in the form of comedic and satirical debate and discourse. Thus, it is important to note how academics (e.g., Burwell and Boler 2008, 1-25) have approached the issue

concerning their case study. Catherine Burwell and Megan Boler (2008, 6-22) argue, from an English and media studies perspective, that fan practices not only overlap with political practices but also identify a merging of creative performance, cultural consumption and collective engagement that reshape the borders between affect and activism. In their study of *The Colbert Report*, they found that fans often use forms of irony and parody that contribute to their performance and confound their politically suggestive comments. Thus, they stated that irony is something that the audience 'makes happen' in a collective and complex way, much akin to fans of non-political entertainment. Furthermore, their study was also complicated by their underestimation of fans and their multifaceted and multi-purposed practices (Burwell and Boler 2008, 6-22). An important consideration when studying media audiences of a specific genre is how they repurpose the style and format of the media text. In the research by Burwell and Boler (2008, 6-22), which focuses on an entertainment show that uses forms of comedy (e.g., satire and irony) to challenge politicians, the political system, and other social issues, they argue that the fans' use of irony and parody in their comments complicates the political message they are trying to convey.

Before I evaluate the comments on the political satirical show, *HIGNFY*, it is pertinent to define satire. Literature and media academics, theorise satire as a "socio-cultural mode of performance that is medially charged and possesses the power to cross and to contest cultural boundaries in different communities and periods of time." (Drees and De Leeuw 2015, 1-2). In other words, satire can take many forms and is represented in all media (e.g., films and television, literature, cartoons, internet posts) that is not restricted by cultures, geographical boundaries, and time. Drees and De Leeuw (2015, 1-2) maintain that satire has been extensively studied throughout the years; firstly, as a literary form and aesthetic textual form that originated on the one hand from rituals and on the other hand from a small group of sophisticated male authors. This rooted satire as a high art literary form that was relatively unavailable to a wider population. Furthermore, there was an understanding that there was a form of connection between the author and the reader through knowledge, ethical values, and humour (Drees and De Leeuw 2015, 1-2). Robert C. Elliot (2019) defined satire for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* as an artistic form in which human failings are criticised by ridicule, derision, burlesque, irony, parody and caricature that can sometimes encourage social reform. However, Drees and De Leeuw (2019, 1-2) contend that satire's definition has subsequently been deconstructed due to the criticism of its accessibility, its targeting of specific cultures and women, and the addition of new media forms. For this study, satire in its wider context and assuming widespread accessibility can be seen in the posts from *HIGNFY* and from the audience in the comments.

Jonathan Gray et al. (2009, 16) argue that most democratic theorists have focused on news as the most important form of political discourse and deliberation because they see it as the primary source for rational democratic choices based on information. However, Gray et al, (2009, 16) contend that news is only one narrative in public life, as is limited to its extent. Furthermore, political satire and other forms of political comedy provide another important form of political narrative critique that allows

audiences to access democratic discourse and deliberation (Gray et al. 2009, 16). They recognise the power of satire which allows people to playfully critique, interrogate, and analyse those in power rather than remain subject to its outcomes (Gray et al. 2009, 16-17).

Furthermore, academics, such as Avi Santo (2009, 252) argue that the performance of a political self can also be framed based on the socio-cultural context of the show and the audience, however, other academics contend that it comes from the practice itself (van Zoonen 2010). In Gray, et al.'s anthology, Avi Santo uses an example of *The Boondocks*, "a successful transmediated brand with a loyal community emotionally invested in its controversial and satirical take on black cultural politics and political culture from a black American perspective." (Santo 2009, 252). He argues that the cartoon allows for community engagement and analysis of public matters (Santo 2009, 252). Through the show, Santo (2009, 253) contends that the audience engages with politics differently than the traditionally informed citizens (e.g., information from news streams). He argues that *The Boondocks*' fans privilege identity politics over oppositional partisanship and are generally interested in politics which demonstrate similar values to them and language that allows for greater accessibility. Ultimately, Santo (2009, 267) argues that the show creates an alternate space for political engagement and populist approaches to social issues. The study of *The Boondocks* relies on the creation of a community of citizens that engage with issues and politics (e.g., economic disparity) and perform citizenship (e.g., personal responsibility and accountability) within the boundaries of the show. Thus, if the audience is advocating for the same thing, then they are performing citizenship in the same way. In this sense, I argue that the performance of citizenship can be understood and framed in different ways depending on the show and the audience's sociocultural context. Furthermore, van Zoonen et al (2010, 21-22) contend that analysing citizenship can come from the practice and not the person. Performing citizenship is rooted in traditional practices, such as going to vote. Thus, citizens can be analysed through practices and routines, as well as acts and interactions (van Zoonen et al 2010, 21-22). This allows the analysis to move away temporarily from 'who is listening' to 'who is participating and how'. In van Zoonen et al.'s (2010, 21-22) case, YouTube videos responding to *Fitna*, ask how people claim their right to speak and perform their political and religious selves through their responses. They understood that the different video styles (e.g., tagging/jamming, cut-and-mix, and vlogs) each had a different type of performance (e.g., apology, satire and parody, cognitive appeal). Additionally, they take into consideration the context in which it is performed. I contend my research can understand how the audience of *HIGNFY* performs citizenship on the official Facebook page by understanding who is participating in the comment section and by what different forms of comments (e.g., description, judgement, reflection, and fantasy). However, this study's focus is not on the different forms of comments (e.g., photo, GIF, link) because the variation is minimal and most commenters use text to perform their citizenship, hence the discourse analysis approach. This does not mean that these other forms of comments were not of interest or overlooked, but rather that there was not a substantial sample to make a claim. In van Zoonen et al.'s (2010, 21-22) case study they frame the performance by the

audience as a 'global' citizenship because the anti-Islam video, *Fitna*, crossed multiple countries and cultures. However, my specific study concerns a decidedly British topic, consequently, the conception of citizenship in this study is interlocked with the boundaries of the UK and its political policy, making it a more 'traditional' outlook on citizenship in that sense.

In addition, political scientist, Marcus Shulzke's (2011, 1-2) study of fan action and political participation concerning *The Colbert Report* showed the complex nature of the relationship between the audience and the host. Here he argues that Stephen Colbert's audience helps spread his character, identity and content of the show. Furthermore, he contends that the fan practices of *The Colbert Report* can promote and parallel traditional means of political activism through encouragement, voting, attending events and cooperation. However, Colbert and Viacom remain the authoritarian limitation due to Colbert's claim to his character and Viacom being able to remove fan content from the internet (Shulzke 2011, 1-2). I argue that the performance of citizenship can be limited by the nature of this relationship. Van Zoonen's (2007, 530-535) study on IMDb argues that politics being part of a larger media discourse has understandably drawn politicians to be involved in these shows, using them to assert their political ideology and as a platform to reach audiences. Furthermore, she explains that the ideological judgement category can be influenced by the ideological messages of the show. Thus, when thinking of my case study it is important to keep in mind that certain performances of citizenship can be restricted and altered to confine to the regulations and ideologies that are set out by *HIGNFY* and Hat Trick Productions, who run the official Facebook page.

Finally, from an information science and media scholar perspective, Torgeir Uberg Naerland (2019, 12-14), found that five factors mobilise the connection from entertainment tv to the political sphere; (1) emotional investment can charge interest in political matters, (2) narratives can help make sense of and deepen interest in these political matters, (3) stimulating community building can motivate audiences to engage with political issues, (4) it may introduce audiences to issues they were not previously aware of, and (5) when acting in parallel with other political practices it can help solidify interest in political matters. However, Uberg Naerland (2019, 12-14) argues that the use of news remains the most important source for public connection to politics, at least in opposition to entertainment tv series. Consequently, he is agreeing with Gray et al. (2009b, IV-X) as they argue that news consumption can be seen as a preparatory step to enjoy and fully grasp political satire tv. Thus, it is important to note that most of the audience who engage with political satire do so in tandem with their news consumption.

In all, the academic debate surrounding audience engagement as citizenship concerning tv has been studied from a multitude of perspectives. Some argue for the negative tendencies of television (Postman 1980 and Putnam 1995) by demonising the blending of politics and entertainment and suggesting a decrease in traditional forms of civic engagement. Others contend that television has created new opportunities for civic life by arguing for the similarities between existing fan practices and more traditional political engagement (van Zoonen 2004, Kahne et al. 2014, and Jenkins et al.

2016). Some academics focus on what audiences 'do' and how they 'do' it with the media text (Jones 2004 and van Zoonen 2007), which itself can be understood in a multitude of ways (e.g., varying practices and the context of the show and audience). It is important to note that most academics who are optimistic about the political practices that are achieved with television combine it with a realistic approach to media control. Indeed, Jones (2004), van Zoonen (2007) and Jenkins et al. (2008b and 2016) all argue that the

platforms (e.g., websites, and social media pages) being used are not deregulated spaces, where audiences can comment on anything, but are rather spaces that are under some media entity's influence. This study can help me understand how the performance of a 'political self' is achieved in relation to *HIGNFY*, rooting itself in a framework based on van Zoonen's (2007) study of performing a 'political self' to guide my identification of the different performances. This research argues for the optimistic possibilities for civic engagement concerning non-fictional political satire tv shows, taking into consideration the context of the show (e.g., British politics and culture) and the influence that Hat Trick Productions has over the official Facebook page. This study is interested in the specific practice of dialogue and feedback in the comment section of the Facebook page and the performance of the 'political selves' that can be found in them. As evidenced by the literature above, the subjects of citizenship, civic engagement, media, and political participation have been studied from a variety of perspectives and thus make it an enticing topic on which to expand.

3. Methodology

The aim of this research is not to show how political content can affect an audience, nor to make assumptions on political opinion, but to analyse more accurately what the audience does with the political texts with regards to political satire tv shows like *HIGNFY*. Borrowing Liesbet van Zoonen's (2007, 533) four categories for performing citizenship (i.e., description, judgement, reflection, and fantasy), I intend to explore whether and how people perform their 'political self' in 200 comments in the section below 10 posts from the *HIGNFY* official Facebook page. To do so, this study employs a discourse analysis of the comments. As Deborah Schiffrin et al. (2015, 1) explain, discourse analysis has no one definition but all definitions have a shared focus on the specific use of 'language'. 'Language' in this context needs to be understood as both linguistic and non-linguistic instances, such as dialogue, speeches, comments, articles, and body language, which are understood differently by people in varying contexts and help them comprehend their social world (e.g., racial discourse, queer discourse, political discourse). John Wilson (2015, 788) argues that discourse can be seen as political. He explains that 'political discourse' can be defined by its use by political actors (e.g., speech, political interview, and political debate), but also by 'language' that refers to a political situation or is politically motivated (e.g., everyday political talk with family/friends). In this research, political discourse is understood as the latter. The focus is on everyday political talk by the public in the comments on the *HIGNFY* official Facebook page.

The selection of the case study itself is based on the show's longevity; *HIGNFY* has been running from the 1990s to the present day for a total of 64 seasons. In addition to its long runtime, the show has been critically acclaimed multiple times at the BAFTAs for the best entertainment programme, entertainment performance and has won a lifetime achievement award in 2011 (IMDb, 2023) and has gained attention from cultural studies scholars (see Basu 2015), making it one of the most notable political satire tv shows in the UK. As the show is set in the UK, much of the content tends to focus on British socio-political current affairs, however, some of the debates do take on global topics (e.g., 2022 FIFA world cup in Qatar, Trump Presidency in the US). My case study addresses the decidedly British topic of Prime Minister **Boris Johnson and his "partygate"-scandal during the COVID-19 pandemic in December 2021**. The time frame, December 8th to the 24th 2021, was selected to correlate with the PM's 'partygate' scandal. During this time the PM and his cabinet were discussed and comedically/satirically debated between the teams on the show. Before becoming prime minister, Boris Johnson had appeared on the show multiple times as a team participant and guest host, due to his status as a journalist and his parliamentary and mayoral positions. His previous appearances, however, did not prohibit the contestants from mocking him and satirically criticising and allegorizing his time in power in numerous episodes, airing when Johnson was Prime Minister, engaged in Brexit negotiations (Heritage 2019), or when he was managing other situations (e.g., COVID-19).

To strategically implement van Zoonen’s (2007) four distinguishable categories of performing a ‘political self’, a total of 200 comments under 10 posts spanning the period from December 8th to the 24th 2021 have been selected from the Facebook page. The first step in the selection criterium hereby was the identification of thematic vocabulary, which can be viewed as 'characteristic' of the events that took place from May 2020 to April 2021. Firstly, the selection criteria were guided by cross-examination of the themes and trends found in a varied array of sources (e.g., journalistic articles and Sue Gray's report) and the posts. The first source used to identify this thematic vocabulary stems from the report by the second parliamentary secretary, Sue Gray, which was released in May 2022 and details the investigation into the happenings surrounding the 'partygate' scandal (The Guardian, 2022a). The other sources used to reinforce the thematic vocabulary were journalistic articles that refer to the allegations of 'partygate'. The articles used were from established journalism sources, such as the BBC and the Guardian (BBC News 2022, The Guardian 2022b). The thematic vocabulary was then classified into four categories: breaking of Covid rules and regulations by politicians, lying by politicians, party references, and evidence. The complete categories and their translation to the respective selection criteria for the posts can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Themes and trends characterising 'partygate' and related discourse found on HIGNFY's official Facebook page posts.

Themes and trends from reports	Related discourse from posts
Breaking Covid rules and regulations by politicians	-15 other people -New Covid rules -Emergency COBRA meeting
Lying by politicians	-Politician lying - 'Mock rehearsal'
Party references	-Quiz -Points -Karaoke machine -Alcohol and food (i.e., wine and cheese) -Downing Street parties -Def Leppard -Sinead O'Connor -Stilton, Wensleydale and Brie
Evidence	-Leaked photos -Leaked footage -Pictures of work meetings -Boris Johnson's Baby

The next step in the sampling process was to observe the comments under each of the 10 posts to determine which comments were appropriate for analysis. Indeed, the selection criteria for the comments used the same categories of themes and trends found in the reports above. The categories were then employed in the comment section to identify relevant comments and to distinguish them from those that were irrelevant. However, this was a complicated task since the comments often expanded on one another and engaged with the posts by offering their ideological judgement, opinion, emotion, and reflection on the issues. Thus, to ensure the feasibility of this study and a manageable corpus size, I decided to limit the study to the first twenty relevant comments per post, giving me a total corpus of 200 comments. Furthermore, this is not a quantitative reflection of the civic performance of the audience of *HIGNFY*, but rather a qualitative selection that maps the variety of performances of a ‘political self’ resulting from political satire tv. Most comments used explicit vocabulary and language that can be easily identified with the themes in Table 1. The table below (Table 2) shows the already identified categories with the related discourse in the comment section.

Table 2. Themes and trends identified in posts and the related discourse in comments.

Themes and trends from posts	Related discourse from comments
Lying by politicians	-Misleading -Lying -Making excuses -Politician honesty
Breaking Covid rules and regulations by politicians	-Gatherings of more than 6 people -Social distancing -Breaking the law
Party references	-Quiz references -Karaoke references -Alcohol and food references
Evidence	-Leaked photos

To analyse the data, I will use van Zoonen’s (2007, 533) study on *Audience reactions to Hollywood politics* as a model, wherein she used comments concerning fictional political tv shows and films (e.g., *Mr Smith goes to Washington*, *Dave*, *The West Wing*, *Primary Colors*, *Wag the Dog*, *All the President’s Men*, *Yes, (Prime) Minister*) from IMDb, an internet movie database that collects reviews, comments and movie information. She argues that this selection of narrative political media texts was guided by popularity and visibility and covers a variety of genres and narratives. Van Zoonen (2007,

535-536) proceeded to analyse her corpus of 549 comments by using three consecutive coding steps. Firstly, the **open** coding phase groups the comments into organised categories; secondly, the **axial** coding phase seeks to understand whether and how these categories function in relation to the media texts, and finally, the **selective** coding phase focused on the analysis of the categories and their functions in terms of 'performing a political self'. Indeed, the first coding step was guided by what people **do** in the comments and what kind of performance is achieved. Van Zoonen (2007, 536) thereafter defines four categories identifying how audiences of political content express a 'political self' on a scale from a simple description of the events to the longing for a better political system. However, my research is focused on a particular real-world event that has been portrayed on a non-fictional satire gameshow and *HIGNFY*'s posts, consequently, the categories need to be understood as such. In Table 3, the categories have been identified and adapted accordingly to fit my research.

Table.3 Definitions of the four categories and their interpretation with regard to my study

Category name	Definition
<i>'Description, or the smart self'</i>	The description category involves the re-transcribing of the events by the commenter based on their perceived knowledge of politicians and the political process. In this case, these comments involve a double description of any of the defining events that took place during the 'partygate' scandal (e.g., party, quiz, karaoke, work meeting, breaking the covid rules, taking pictures as evidence, lying by politicians) and a description of how they understand politicians and the political process (e.g., all politicians lie, alcohol at work meetings is considered normal, the general public also broke the Covid rules).
<i>'Judgement, or the ideological self'</i>	The judgement category involves a particular ideological criticism and statement. For my study, this may include the description of any of the events that took place during the scandal, along with a particular statement that enters into the oppositional narrative of politics, such as the conservative party versus the labour party. Here the study assumes that any form of explicit criticism of either political party (Conservative or Labour) or affiliated politicians (e.g., calling Boris Johnson a clown, criticising the Labour party as poor opposition) can be deemed as an ideological statement.
<i>'Reflection, or the reasonable self'</i>	The reflection category of comments includes a reflective account of a moral, ethical, and political dilemma and a conclusion that the commenter comes up with. There are many dilemmas in this case study, including lying

	in a position of power, breaking the law and consuming alcohol at work (e.g., Boris Johnson lied, he should resign).
<i>'Emotional, or the longing self'</i>	The fantasy category follows the same reflective accounts as the previous type of comments; however, the conclusion involves a utopian or positive outlook on the larger political system (e.g., Boris Johnson lied, politicians should never lie). Due to the nature of the scandal, the fantasy category is less likely to arise, because when the news of the scandal broke the emotional toll of the Covid pandemic was very much at the forefront of everyone's mind, completely suppressing their ability to see a brighter future. However, emotional accounts are a repeated theme in the comments and thus can be seen as a distinct category. In this case study these comments explicitly state that the political issue is not comical or satirical because it is too close to the truth, or they question their emotional state (e.g., "I don't know whether to laugh, cry or be angry").

My study focuses on integrating the categories by focusing on the discourse used in the comment section and intends to answer the following research question (RQ) and sub-questions (SQ).

RQ: How can the audience discourse of *Have I Got News for You's* Facebook comments be understood as a performance of a 'political self'?

SQ.1: In what ways does the audience frame their 'political selves'?

The first subquestion aims to understand the articulation of the different political performances in the fan discourse concerning the show and political issues. In other words, it demonstrates how the categories of 'political performances' (e.g., description, judgment, reflection and emotional) are undertaken by the audience in the comment section of the official *HIGNFY* Facebook page regarding the show and the partygate scandal. Consequently, this subquestion will help define the parameters of this study and show how this audience engagement can be considered political participation.

SQ.2: What are the central themes for each category?

The second subquestion intends to comprehend how each political performance situates itself on a scale relating to political participation, from the lesser political form of engagement to the most. In doing so, this question helps investigate why categories, such as the description category, were more prolific than others. This subquestion bases itself on central themes relating to the main partygate scandal case study (e.g., lying by politicians, breaking Covid rules and regulations, party references and evidence). This

subquestion will allow my research to reflect on how the commenters present themselves, and consequently their 'political selves' regarding the media text, *HIGNFY*.

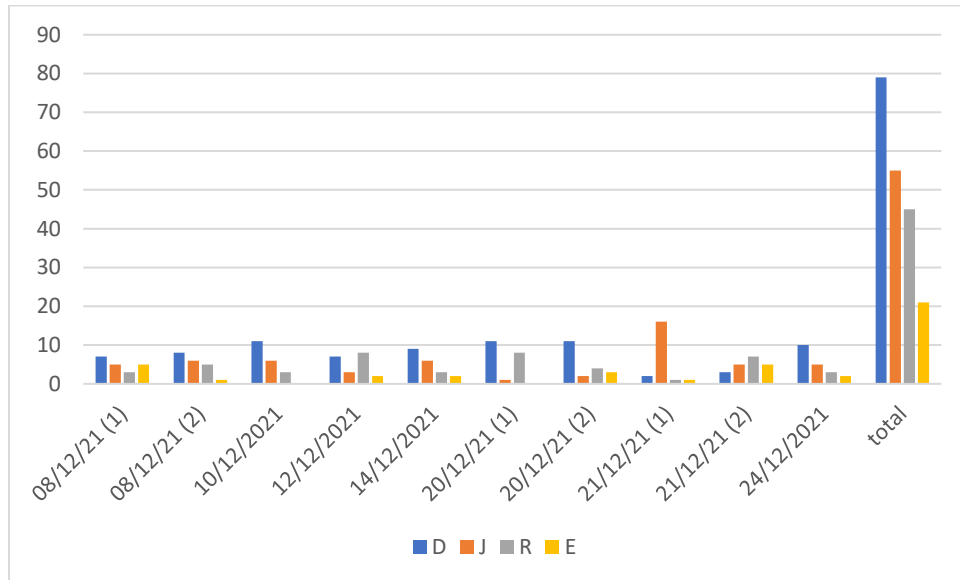
4. Analysis

4.1 In what ways does the audience frame their 'political selves'?

Each category defined in the methodology section was represented in the corpus of 200 comments on the official HIGNFY Facebook page. The **description** category represented most of the comments. Thus, 79 of the 200 comments comprised a description of the events based on the commenters' perceived knowledge and understanding of the political process and knowledge about politicians. This category which ranks lowest on the scale of performance of the political self in the system adapted from van Zoonen (see Method section, 12), was followed shortly by the category **judgement** with 55 comments that described the events but with a particular ideological bent that fits the popular oppositional narrative between the parties and their affiliated politicians (e.g., labour party vs conservative party). The third largest number of comments was categorized as, **reflection**, with 45 out of the 200 comments reflecting on the events as a set of moral dilemmas and coming up with their conclusion on what should happen next (e.g., Boris Johnson broke the Covid regulations, he should resign). The smallest number of comments comprising 21 posted messages was grouped under the **emotional** category. The audience explicitly stated that the matter of public concern (e.g., the partygate scandal) was not comedic and/or questioned their emotional state.

The **fantasy** category that van Zoonen identified in her case study of narrative political films and tv shows was not represented in my corpus. Indeed, I argue that this is due to the psychological and sociological effects and toll that the Covid-19 pandemic and related health regulations had on the public. According to Maryville University (Maryville University 2022), the Covid-19 pandemic reached 375 million people globally as of early 2022. They state that the effects of the pandemic touched a multitude of facets in the US and the world, including health, the economy and human behaviour. The Covid-19 pandemic had a serious impact on the population's health and healthcare systems across the globe with overcrowded emergency rooms and overworked front-line carers. Furthermore, Maryville University argues that the pandemic took its toll on the economy, by way of increases in low-income unemployment, increases in wealth inequality, and more corporate monopolies. Finally, Covid-19 changed the way people interact, amongst other social behaviours. Indeed, Maryville University argues that human interaction changed due to social-distancing and lockdown restrictions, additionally, the pandemic also saw a rise in drug and alcohol use and crime. Thus, the Covid-19 pandemic has hurt a multitude of elements that construct the world we live in. Therefore, the pandemic in combination with other impacted facets (e.g., economy, health, human behaviour) could put a strain on human optimism and reduce one's ability to perform their political selves as a **fantasy** in the confines of van Zoonen's definition (2007, 531) during my time frame of December 8th to the 24th 2021. An overview of the comments can be found in the graph below, which shows the number of comments in each category per post and the number of comments in each category in my total corpus.

Figure.4 Number of comments in each category (Description, Judgement, Reflection, Emotional) per post (organised by date published).



Description

Regarding the **description** category, it can be identified that most of these comments offer a two-way description of the scandal and the political system in the UK. This can be seen as a criticism of 'partygate' and the consequential actions taken by Boris Johnson and his government. However, these comments offer no ideological judgement and refrain from taking a stance on how to deal with the issue. Furthermore, it is often obvious that these comments describe how they understand and believe that the political system functions, by their 'perceived political knowledge'. The comments grouped under this category respect the following patterns:

- 1: “Nobody should be surprised by now the way this “government” works, they lay down the rules to be followed, and then proceed to flout them as and when it suits them.”

The first comment (1) follows the post of the 8th of December 2021. This description of the commenter's perceived political knowledge understands that "nobody should be surprised" by the way the government takes decisions, then proceeds to express how the governmental rulemaking process works, and finally how the government break their own rules. Furthermore, the commenter uses quotation marks around the word government, consequently, pointing out that it may be the wrong term to use and mocking the politicians involved in the process. As per my definition of the description, based on van Zoonen's (2007, 536) categories, the comment responds to one of the events of the

'partygate' scandal and explains their perceived political knowledge, but, the commenter refrains from entering any strong judgement, thus, can only be classed as our entry-level description category.

2: “Mock rehearsal = trumping up a lie in an attempt to turn away criticism.”

The second comment (2) is from the same post as comment (1), however, takes a different approach to the description category. The commenter also responds to one of the events that took place during the partygate scandal (e.g., the mock rehearsal) and uses this opportunity to present their perceived political knowledge. Indeed, the commenter assumes the definition of "mock rehearsal" must be different for the government considering their actions. Furthermore, this description contextualises that the term "mock rehearsal" was used as a defence by the government to describe the illegal gatherings. This evidences that the commenter constructs their view of public affairs through multiple sources (Jones 2004, 15, and Delli Caprini and Williams 2002) and seeks to share their acquired knowledge with others regardless of whether they believe it will be heard (Couldry 2006, 231-339).

3: “Just don’t follow the rules. Simple”

4: “I could count o[sic] one hand in our road how many abided by the rules”

5: “If you stayed at home and followed the rules then that’s your problem”

The next three comments (3,4 and 5) offer less by way of a two-way description, however, they still base their comments on their perceived political knowledge and perform their descriptive selves in relation to the post through 'experiential knowledge'. Van Zoonen (2007, 538) argues that the use of 'realism' in this category reflects experiential knowledge, in which commenters use their real-world experience and weigh it up to the scandal. Here the commenters reference their own 'rule breaking' or that of friends, family and neighbours, which was also a defining characteristic of the 'partygate' scandal.

6: “The only problem with paternity leave is that it wasn’t made retrospective.....I had to work like everyone else.....my wife just had to get on with it.....ffs.”

Comment (6) is from a post from the 10th of December 2021, that pokes fun at Boris Johnson's extended paternity leave to "avoid" questioning. The commenter here also engages in experiential knowledge by describing how his paternity leave was handled and expresses his frustration with the whole situation at the same time (i.e., "ffs").

7: “He’ll give us an answer once his focus groups tell him what answer he needs to give!”

Comment (7), also from the 10th of December 2021, describes how they understand the political body deals with such a scandal. Here they assume that Boris Johnson is waiting for his government to help him respond to the scandal. This commenter exercises their perceived political knowledge and subsequently performs their political selves through this description.

8: “I just want to know if Liz Truss recommended the cheese for the party. Not that bothered about the quiz, they never answer any questions they’re asked anyway.”

Comment (8), from the 14th of December 2021, criticizes the government's responses to the scandal by comparing them to the politicians' inability to answer quiz questions. This commenter performs their political self through a description of how politicians tend to strategically avoid answering any questions.

9: “That white powder being poured on Gove was not sugar.”

In the ninth comment, also from the 14th, alludes to the fact that Michael Gove admitted to taking drugs when he was a young journalist while simultaneously referring to the post about the Def Leopard song "Pour Some Sugar on Me" and the quiz characteristic of the scandal. Here the commenter is assuming that the Downing Street parties also involved drug use, thus, reinforcing their view of the gatherings as frantic parties. This performance of their political self comes in the form of a description of a hypothetical situation.

The **description** category, albeit, lowest on the scale of the categories was the most represented across my corpus. I argue this is due to the ease of simply transcribing the events, coupled with the audience's perceived political knowledge and not demonstrating any political affiliation in a public setting. The descriptions come in different forms depending on what aspect of the scandal the commenter is focusing on, although, often follow the theme of the post. Furthermore, many of these comments demonstrate experiential knowledge, as described by van Zoonen (2007, 538) and the audience's need to express their acquired knowledge from the text (Couldry 2006, 231-339). Additionally, this category demonstrates, following Kahne et al. (2014, 8) and Jenkins et al.'s (2016, 39) definition of political participation, a large amount of dialogue from the audience and circulation of information, even though it may only be speculation. Moreover, the acquisition of new information, and subsequently expressing it in these comments, is similar to a practice identified by Uberg Naerland (2019, 12-14), wherein a connection from entertainment tv to the political sphere can come from the introduction of the audience to new political issues from the show or other fans.

Judgement

In some cases, the description above included an **ideological judgement** that is conducive to the oppositional narrative of modern politics. Regarding the UK, most people align themselves with either the Conservative/Tory or the labour party. The judgement category works as a criticism of the actions taken by the government and is usually explicitly ideological or expresses a political stance. The comments in this category all follow the similar patterns below:

1: “We had Trump in the White House and Boris in number 10 with his Tory cronies backing him. Then Covid came along. It’s just a living nightmare. At least the USA got rid of Trump. When is it the Tories turn? (Please!)”

In the first comment from the first post on the 8th of December 2021, we can observe a clear ideological description of the state of politics. The commenter refers to Boris Johnson's government as "cronies", an often-derogatory term for a close friend. Furthermore, they compare the political landscape and the Covid pandemic to a "living nightmare". Finally, they inquire about the resignation of Boris Johnson and his government. The chosen discourse (i.e., "cronies" and "living nightmare") gives a clear stance against the conservative government, thus, the commenter is performing their political selves through an ideological judgement.

2: “And there are still people who think this clown is fit to run this country”

This second comment questions whether people still believe in Boris Johnson’s ability to lead the country. Furthermore, they refer to Boris Johnson as a “clown”, which is an explicit ideological attack on the former Prime Minister.

3: “So you’re saying the tories are revolting?”

4: “Are the Conservatives revolting?? Don’t bother, I already know the answer.[emoticon]”

In comments (3) and (4) from the post from the 14th of December 2021 use a play on words to characterise the conservative government as nauseating. Indeed, the post was referring to the MP revolt against the Prime Minister. Here the commenters, as well as of comments (1) and (2), perform their **ideological** selves through descriptive explicit written attacks on the government and affiliated politicians of the time, such as referring to the former Prime Minister as a clown, calling them nauseating or comparing their lives to a waking nightmare.

5: “Wally’s at number 10!”

6: “A veritable Wallyfest.”

7: “Plenty of Wallies there...”

Comments (5), (6) and (7) all come from the first post from the 21st of December 2021. This post consisted of a fake *Where's Wally?* image made by the producers of the show, in which they photoshopped Boris Johnson and his cabinet members and referenced the leaked photos of the gatherings. This post led to 16 out of my 20 selected comments calling Boris Johnson and his government ‘wallies’, meaning a silly or inept person, consequently explicitly attacking the government and positioning their ideologies against the conservative party. It becomes clearer that the level of political performance has increased from the **description** category due to the ideological stance taken by the commenters.

8: “I try to keep up with politics, but somehow I missed the point when this Tory government formed a coalition with the Monster Raving Loony Party.”

Reply - 9: “formed a coalition with the Labour Party more like. Worst opposition I can remember.”

Certain comments revealed a more complex participation from the fans of the show. In the dialogue between commenters (8) and (9) above, the conversation references a different form of satire. Here commenter (8) alleges a coalition between the Tory government and the Monster Raving Loony Party, a satirical party formed in 1982 by the musician David Sutch. This satirical party are known for their hyperbolic and extravagant policies. Thus, the commenter is criticising the conservative government by assuming that the decisions taken are ridiculous. Furthermore, the reply from commenter (9) is an example of a stance being taken against the labour government. Here the reply expounds on the original comment by referring to the supposed coalition and characterises them as the "worst opposition" they can recall. Most of the political performances in the **ideological** category positioned themselves against the conservative government, however, there were some exceptions. This can be because the conservative party is responsible for the illegal gatherings and subsequently was the target of criticism for their actions.

10: “Ah, our glorious leader Boris the Bovver boy is good at briefings, the way he can remove briefs is quite extraordinary. To some people, he is the epitome of Churchill, however, he acts more like the dog in the insurance advert, spending on [sic] day rolling in muck and filth”

The intertextual references did not stop there. In comment (10) Boris Johnson is compared to a bulldog called Churchill, who is the mascot for an insurance company in the UK. This commenter positions their ideological self by comparing the former Prime Minister to a dog that enjoys playing in the dirt.

Most notably these attacks were against the Tory government, although, some exceptions were present in my corpus. Additionally, the comments used several intertextual references establishing even further that the audience constructs their political selves through multiple media sources. Furthermore, this category reflects the audience's adherence to a political party. Van Zoonen (2004, 49) argues that television has an innate ability to bolster this adherence through emotional, affective, moral and aesthetic bonds. The **Ideological** performances reflect the commenters' upset at the situation (i.e., partygate gatherings) by criticising the intelligence, demeanour and looks of politicians and their party through explicit discourse. Additionally, **ideological** performances also exhibit how the audience constructs their understanding of public matters and politics through fictional and real information and stories of good and evil, as described by Williams and Delli Caprini (2002, 1-4).

Reflection

The **reflection** category in the comments involves the commenter seeing a set of moral dilemmas and attempting to solve them. These commenters refuse to enter any strong judgement or ideological positioning, much akin to the **description** category. Van Zoonen (2007, 540) argues that this is derived from these commenters seeing the human failings of politicians. Moreover, the 'partygate' scandal is a lucrative case study for moral dilemmas, such as lying in a position of power, misleading the country and/or government, consuming alcohol at work, and breaking the law. The comments follow similar patterns to those below:

1: “This is the man who only this week claimed that he was furious to learn that his staff had potentially broken the rules. He has lost all credibility and should resign immediately.”

Commentor (1) expresses their concern with how Boris Johnson handled his public speeches after news of his attendance at the gatherings broke. The commenter performs their **reflection** by identifying a moral predicament in which Boris Johnson lied about his attendance at the gatherings, purposefully mislead the public while still in power, and consequently should resign from his post. The commenter objectively presents themselves by observing how the former Prime minister has failed the country and comes up with what they believe is an appropriate response, in this case, immediate resignation.

2: The awful thing is that on [sic] 15th December 2020 Keir Starmer write [sic] to Boris Johnson calling on him to urgently convene COBRA to discuss the worsening Covid situation. Instead it appears the PM hosted that rule-breaking quiz. Unfit to lead the country, unfit for anything.”

Comment (2) refers to Boris Johnson purposefully missing a COBRA (Civil Contingencies Committee, used for emergency meetings concerning Covid-19) meeting to instead join a "rule-breaking quiz". This commenter identifies the importance and the urgency of the COBRA meeting called on the 15th of December 2020 by Keir Starmer, leader of the Labour Party. Furthermore, they realise the immoral situation of hosting a quiz during the health and safety restrictions of the pandemic. Finally, they conclude that Boris Johnson should be considered "unfit" for the role of Prime Minister. The commenter successfully performs their political self by reflecting on the moral dilemmas of not obeying the law and refusing to do an important job. The commenter attempts to remain objective, although, concluding that Johnson is "unfit for anything" comes across as a strong reaction.

3: Should we stop laughing at him, he’s using his incompetence to divert attention from really bad policies”

Comment (3) achieves **reflection** differently. They assume that Boris Johnson is using a strategy that involves comedy and mockery to distract from "really bad policies". Consequently, the commenter concludes that the audience should stop "laughing at him" and pay attention to his political policies. This political performance in the **reflection** category has changed because the conclusion is directed at the audience and the show. Here the commenter prefers to help the audience and show remain more critical of the politics than of the image of the politician.

4: “Now to be fair, the proliferation of wine at meetings does go a fair way to explain the decisions they’ve been making for the last several years...”

One of the main moral contentions during the scandal was the excess of alcohol at work. Indeed, Boris Johnson initially referred to the gatherings as "work meetings", however, was photographed drinking what appeared to be and later confirmed to be a bottle of wine. Subsequently, commenter (4) performs their political selves through a **reflection** on alcohol consumption in the workplace and concludes that it must be the reason for the controversial decisions in an objective manner.

5: “What Business allow their staff to consume wine during important meetings where important decisions are discusse [sic]. Consequence? Did we really decide to do that?? Must have been pickled!”

6: “How come I can’t have a bevvy during a meeting? The cabinet can, then why can’t the rest of us who are public servants? Double standards this. I’m going to request ale and cheese with every meeting now.”

A similar performance of their political self as in comment (4) can be seen in comments (5) and (6). Commentor (5) identifies how alcohol can have an impact on important decision-making and reflects on how those politicians may react in disbelief at their decisions after being inebriated. Commentor (6) relates the moral dilemma to their work situation. Indeed, they reflect on how they are unable to drink alcohol at work, although, politicians seem to be allowed. In both comments (5) and (6) they perform their political selves through **reflection** in an objective way that criticises alcohol at work and seemingly conclude that it may alter political decision-making or that it be allowed for a wider public.

7: “What we need is a voter’s revolt!”

Commentor (7) refers to the conservative party revolt mentioned earlier and concludes that the voters should be the ones revolting. Indeed, the moral dilemma here is more ambiguous because it is not explicitly mentioned, however, the Tory revolt was stimulated by Boris Johnson misleading his government. The response from commentor (7) seems extreme, however, remains a suggestion to the dilemma identified.

8: “As for Boris..... Edam well deserves what’s coming to him! [cheese emoticon]”

Commentor (8) is vaguer in their approach to their reflection and political performance. They use a play on words referring to the post and the accompanying party foods (e.g., cheese) at the gatherings, in this sense “Edam” replaced “He damn”. The moral dilemma is also ambiguous and refers to the partygate scandal as a whole and they conclude that Boris Johnson deserves the consequences or the punishment that he will receive.

9: “Given the ‘common sense’ they’ve shown so far, I can only assume they went for the Wensleydale.”

Comment (9) also criticises their choice of cheese at the gatherings. The commenter assumes they chose “Wensleydale” and based on their taste, believes that this is a lack of ‘common sense’. Commentor (9) performs their political selves through a comedic **reflection** on the cheese and concludes that the UK government lacks ‘common sense’ when it comes to other decisions. Although this comment is not explicitly a moral predicament, I argue that due to the link between eating party

snacks (e.g., cheese) and drinking wine at the so-called 'work meetings', it can still be considered a political performance in the **reflection** category.

10: “Appreciate the irony but his Xmas speech was plain cringe worthy. Perfect Christmas present this year would be him out of [sic] job in the New Year!”

Commentor (10) interprets Boris Johnson's Christmas speech to perform their political self. Here the commenter remarks that they appreciate the humour of the post, however, quickly shift to explain their perception of the speech made on Christmas Eve 2021. Here the post from the *HIGNFY* team refers to the speech by saying "We should love our neighbours as we love ourselves" and promptly refers to the leaked photos of the illegal gatherings that took place at Downing Street. The focal point of the speech was on a Brexit deal, hence why this commenter believes the statement is ironic. This commenter furthers their performance by reflecting on the irony of the speech and concluding that the perfect Christmas present would be Boris Johnson's resignation. In the comment there is less of a moral dilemma, however, there is a clear reflection on a political issue.

The **reflection** positions itself higher on my political performance scale due to its more intellectual approach. Indeed, this category sees objective reflection on moral and political issues as its performance rather than simply transcribing the events and/or criticising and attacking politicians' physical attributes. Furthermore, van Zoonen (2007, 541) argues that commenters who present themselves in **the reflection** category can be seen as reasonable and open-minded people. Here reflection functions similarly because the focus is pointed towards identifying and trying to solve a problem.

Emotional

As mentioned previously the **fantasy** category was changed to better reflect my case study, thus the final grouping on my scale is the **emotional** category. This performance of a political self is articulated through explicit discourse either questioning the commenters' emotional state or addressing the comedic/satirical value of the post and/or the political issue. This category of comments undertakes the following pattern:

1: “Dunno [sic] whether to laugh, cry or be angry... possibly all three.”

Comment (1) addresses their emotional state by questioning whether they simply enjoyed the post or need to be upset/angry at the political situation. This form of comment shows a degree of self-analysis and awareness of the effects the partygate scandal may trigger on society, thus, an

understanding of the impact of 'political misbehaviour' (e.g., drinking at work meetings, lying in a position of power, breaking the law).

2: “I can’t even laugh anymore, it just makes me so angry. The contempt they have for the people of this country [angry face emoticon]”

Commentor (2) also addresses their emotional state, however, they are more certain of how they feel. This comment was under the first post from the 8th of December 2021, wherein *HIGNFY* mention that the former Primer Minister will announce new Covid regulations to the public and then they insinuated that his cabinet will be given a separate set of rules. They express their anger at the fact that politicians broke the Covid rules and further this by stating that the government does not respect the rest of the population.

3: “Its [sic] not even amusing anymore!”

4: “Too close to the truth to be funny”

5: “This is not a gag. It’s actually going to happen.”

In comments (3), (4) and (5), the commenters all question the comedic value of the show. All three comments were found under the first post from the 8th of December 2021. Indeed, this post gathered five political performances that fit into the **emotional** category. Commentor (3) simply believes that the posts being made by the *HIGNFY* team are no longer funny, however, they do not explain why. Commentor (4) and (5) on the other hand combine their critical stance on the comedic value of the post with an explanation. They both describe the situation (e.g., a separate set of rules for the government) to be fact rather than fiction. These commenters also show a higher degree of understanding by explaining where their emotional outburst is rooted.

6: “We’re all laughing but actually, it’s really not funny. It’s disgusting. All of us who sat alone last Christmas are fuming about the Downing St Parties. We’re not laughing. We’re sickened.”

Commentor (6) perform their political selves by addressing the comedic value and relating their situation during Christmas over the pandemic to the population. Here the commenter describes the illegal gatherings as not funny, revolting, making them angry and even vile. The commenter uses 4 adjectives to emphasise how they feel about the illegal gatherings. Moreover, the use of experiential knowledge furthers their understanding of the political issue by making it familiar to themselves.

7: "This isn't even satire anymore. It's just a bleak factual statement. This government has made 'The Thick of it' look tame and probably put Armando Iannucci out of business. They're doing stuff that would make Malcolm Tuckers eyes spin like the barrels of a fruit machine."

Commentor (7) addresses the state of satire and the political issue. They use an intertextual reference to accentuate their upset. The comment refers to how the illegal gatherings should no longer be considered satire; they explain this by making a comparison between how world politics has become increasingly like the hyperbolic situations set out in Armando Iannucci's *The Thick of It*. Consequently, the creator would have nothing left to satirise and the show's main character would find it absurd. Gamson (2002, 118-124) argues that audiences often make sense of political issues by comparing them to other media texts. In this case, the commenter successfully compares the absurdity of modern politics to that of *The Thick of It* and accentuates their political selves at the same time.

8: "C'me [sic] on! Brie!! What about Brexit! You can [sic] think of three British cheeses for the government board?!!

Comment (8) focuses on a different political event, Brexit. The commenter performs their political selves through an emotional investment into the quality of the comedy of the show. They remark that the person who created the second post on the 21st of December 2021 missed out on a joke by forgetting about Brexit. Jenkins (2013a, 278) argues that fans of a show can be identified by their mode of reception amongst other dimensions. Consequently, the commenter displays a strong tie to the quality of the show/posts and can analyse the post with a mix of emotional attachment and critical observation. Furthermore, Uberg Naerland (2019, 12-14) states that this emotional investment can be a catalyst for political engagement and a factor that mobilises connection from entertainment tv to the political sphere.

9: *figure.5 Gif of Jim Parsons as Sheldon Cooper in The Big Bang Theory*



Comment (9) is a Gif from the show *The Big Bang Theory* stating that the humour in the post is poignant because it is truthful. This is somewhat the opposite of commenters (1) through (7) who showed their upset at the posts and the situation. I believe this could be due to the light-heartedness of this post. Indeed, this post reflects on the cheese selection available at the gatherings and playfully criticises how the government does not take their jobs seriously in the process. Commentor (9) performs their political selves by expressing their emotion of happiness at the post and the political situation.

10 “Ha ha ha this government ha ha. They have parties while everyone else has to obey their rules ha ha. Wine and ha ha cheese. Ha ha. A ha ha quiz! Ha ha 140 thousand dead from covid in the ha ha UK alone. Ha ha. Dying in hospital beds with no friends or ha ha family allowed. Ha ha. Ha ha ha ha ha ha. Ha.

Watch them get in again next GE. There’s the real punchline.”

Commentor (10) takes a different approach to performing their political self through emotion. They use irony and sarcasm by surrounding certain facts about the partygate scandal and the pandemic with what can only be assumed is 'fake' laughter. They conclude their emotional self by raising their concerns with the next general election and stating the 'real' joke will be the conservative government being re-elected. It is clear through this discourse and use of 'fake' laughter that this commenter displays their disdain for the original post. The second post from the 20th of December 2021 refers to a karaoke machine that was observed being taken to 10 Downing Street.

The **emotional** category, although less represented in my corpus, holds a strong political performance on my scale. It demonstrates, as previously mentioned, how fans read media texts (e.g., mode of reception) and how emotional investment can help bolster interest in the partygate scandal and

politics as a whole. Van Zoonen (2004, 47-48) contends that historically on the one hand 'emotion' has widely been accepted in relation to fan studies, wherein Jenkins (2013a, 278) argues that the mode of reception for most fans comes in the form of a combination of emotional investment and critical observation. On the other hand, van Zoonen states that 'emotion' in politics has generally been considered as non-rational. However, van Zoonen (2004, 48-49) argues that emotion can be a catalyst for the enthusiasm and/or anxiety one has for a particular subject (e.g., the partygate scandal and Covid-19). Furthermore, Uberg Naerland (2019 12-14) agrees that emotional investment can help support a connection between entertainment tv shows, such as *HIGNFY*, and the political sphere. This form of emotional connection to political issues is displayed in the discourse of the category above.

4.2 What are the central themes for each category?

The graph (*Figure.4*) above helps recognise that the description category represents most of the performances of one's political 'self' in the comments per post. However, three posts differ from this: the post from the 12th and both posts from the 21st of December 2021. This brings up questions of what changed for the most prominent category to decrease in relevance in the comments beneath these particular posts. This thesis argues that this decrease can be identified as a shift or change in the topic or central theme of the posts. Indeed, all of the posts relate to the 'partygate' scandal as per my selection criteria, however, within this case study I have recognised multiple different central themes: **lying by politicians, breaking Covid rules and regulations, party references, and evidence.**

The **description** category seemingly prevailed in most of the posts regardless of the central theme. It can be contended that this category was most dominant due to the ease of the form of the comments. Indeed, as seen above the comments all simply describe the events of partygate without entering into any strong ideological judgment or positioning themselves politically. The commenters, through their discourse, seem more at ease with simply sharing their new-found knowledge or what they already knew. Couldry (2006, 321-339) argues that this is in line with an approach to 'cultural citizenship' or 'culture' of citizenship. He questions whether audiences respond to media texts as citizens, fans, or at all. Couldry (2006, 321-339) contends that individuals engage with political issues in relation to media texts in fragmented ways, in which audiences connect or disconnect from public spaces (e.g., Facebook pages) based on their investment in the subject matter. However, he argues that no matter the level of political engagement, audiences still need a space to express their new and/or preexisting knowledge. Consequently, this category includes descriptions based on two types of knowledge (e.g., perceived political knowledge and experiential knowledge). It can be argued that a specific type of knowledge can only be applied to a particular theme. This can be seen as closeness or familiarity with the posts' theme for the commenter. In fact, van Zoonen (2007, 538) contends that for fictional political shows, it is the realism of the narrative that drives the use of experiential knowledge

in the comments. For this case study, all the posts' themes are based on reality because the show is founded on current real-world events. Consequently, experiential knowledge is not drawn from the realism of the narrative but rather I argue that it stems from the relatability of the situation to the commenters. In other words, the use of experiential knowledge is less prolific if the central theme is lying by politicians because the commenters are not likely to be politicians and consequently cannot relate this to a familiar situation. In this sense the central themes for the description category are **breaking covid rules and regulations**, **party references** and **evidence** because all these situations can be seen as familiar or close to the audience.

This form of participation can also be considered through **participatory politics** as defined by Kahne et al. (2014, 7-8) and Jenkins et al. (2016, 39). This form of audience engagement with political satire tv shows, such as *HIGNFY*, sees members of the community actively seeking information on public matters. Kahne et al. (2014, 7-8) define this as **Investigation**. Moreover, this category also encompasses forms of fan **production**, that are included in Kahne et al.'s definition of **participatory politics**.

Figure.6 Fan-made satirical meme of Boris Johnson from 20/12/2021 (2)



The **judgement** category was most prolific under only one of the posts, the first from the 21st of December 2021. I argue that this may be due to the shift in theme from post to post. The first post from the 21st is a satirically edited image, in which the conservative government members are placed

into a *Where's Wally?* cartoon (see appendix page 75). As mentioned previously, 16 out of my 20 selected comments from this post adhered to the **judgement** category by explicitly referring to the conservative government as inept or 'wallies'. Schulzke (2011, 1-2) argues that fan action and political participation in relation to political tv shows can create complex relationships between the audience and the show. While studying fan practices concerning *The Colbert Report*, he found that the show can help promote and encourage political participation through activism, events and cooperation. Furthermore, Schulzke (2011, 2) argues that the audience help spread Stephen Colbert's character, identity, and the content of the show. I contend that the **judgement** category reflects the ideology of the show, as the political performances seemingly follow the ideologies of the post. Furthermore, Santo (2009, 252) observed that certain shows (e.g., *The BoonDocks*) privilege identity politics over oppositional partisanship. In other words, the show can build a community of citizens through a demonstration of similar values and language that allows for greater accessibility. Although, I argue that *HIGNFY* plays into traditional oppositional narratives and partisanship (e.g., conservative vs labour), there is an attempt to build a community of citizens through similar ideologies, humour, and discourse. Additionally, Santo (2009, 252) contends the audience's sociocultural context frames their political performance. In this sense, the audience builds their ideological judgement through the show's use of language (e.g., *Where's Wally?* post), humour and ideological views and the larger surrounding world.

The **reflection** category was the most prominent under the post from the 12th (e.g., 8 out of 20) and the second post from the 21st (e.g., 7 out of 20) of December 2021. This political performance was also well represented in the first post from the 20th of December 2021, although was not the leading category. The post with a larger amount of '**reflection**' political performances tends to focus on the more moral and ethical dilemmas of the scandal. The post from the 12th references hosting a quiz rather than attending an important emergency COBRA meeting. The second post from the 21st talks about the propagation of alcohol and party paraphernalia at the so-called 'work meetings'. Finally, the first post from the 20th also criticises the proliferation of alcohol during work. Indeed, all three posts focus on moral/ethical issues that characterise the partygate scandal. Thus, the central themes linked are **lying by politicians, party references, and breaking Covid rules and regulations**.

Additionally, Gamson (2002, 117) argues that people use widely accepted beliefs to frame their political selves concerning a public issue. In this sense, 'popular wisdom' about the consumption of alcohol during work hours or breaking major health regulations is regarded as wrong. Consequently, the audience can easily reflect on this issue and come up with what they believe is an appropriate conclusion (e.g., Boris Johnson leaving his post). Moreover, one of the factors identified by Kahne et al. (2014, 7-8) to adhere to political participation is the practice of evaluating political issues and the decisions of politicians. The reflection category exemplifies this thinking critically on a moral or ethical issue. Additionally, these commenters present themselves as reasonable people who think critically about public matters (van Zoonen 2007, 541).

The **emotional** category was the least prominent in my corpus, however, still amassed a notable number of comments under the first post from the 8th and the second from the 21st of December 2021. The first post from the 8th denotes that Boris Johnson will hand a separate set of Covid rules to his government, insinuating that they are allowed to have illegal gatherings while the rest of the population is stuck at home. This post specifically relates to the carelessness of the partygate scandal, thus provoking a relatively larger number of emotional performances (e.g., 5 out of 20) from the commenters.

The post from the 21st brings into question the propagation of party foods and alcoholic drinks at work meetings. This led to a series of cheese-related gags and prompted emotional responses from the commenters. Burwell and Boler (2008, 5-6) contend that fans of non-fictional political comedy mimic the style of the show. Consequently, this explains the series of cheese-related jokes that mimicked that of the post. Furthermore, the emotional performances Kahne et al. (2014, 7-8) contend that political participation can be characterised by a high amount of dialogue between the participants. Consequently, the high number of reactions between the commenters from the second post on the 21st of December relates to this aspect of political participation.

5. Conclusion

This thesis has successfully answered my research question: How can the audience discourse of *Have I Got News for You*'s Facebook comments be understood as a performance of a 'political self'? The audience discourse in the comment section of the official HIGNFY Facebook page has shown multiple forms of performing a political self. The discourse surrounding the 'partygate' scandal observed that out of 200 sampled comments: 79 correlated to the description category, 55 related to the ideological judgement category, 45 were in the reflection category, and 21 were associated with the emotional category. All the comments represented were adapted based on my perspective of Liesbet van Zoonen's (2007) original scale.

The description category represented the most prominent form of political performance due to the ease with which the audience related this particular political issue (e.g., partygate) to their situation during Covid. The articulation of this category unveiled that the descriptive self relies heavily on the acquisition and sharing of new information/knowledge, whether based on the commenter's perceived political knowledge or their own experience. In this sense, the commenters in this category are simply spreading their knowledge regardless of their political stance and any political reflection, subsequently placing this performance as the least political.

The judgment category arose as explicit criticisms against the government, mainly the Conservative party. This category was the second most notable in my corpus, although only second on the scale due to the lack of political reflection. Furthermore, the most remarkable articulation of this category was through ideological attacks on physical attributes and demeanour of politicians. Indeed, this category was less concerned with deliberating on the political issue than simply demonstrating the commenter's stance. However, this form of political performance observed how the show (e.g., HIGNFY) can group like-minded people through the demonstration of similar values and the use of language.

The reflection category invoked the nuanced moral and ethical debate and dilemmas surrounding this scandal. This performance of a political self was the third highest category on my scale and the third most prominent in my corpus. The commenters use reflection and popular wisdom to guide their conclusions on political and moral issues. Consequently, they present themselves as more open-minded people capable of a deeper consideration of problems.

The emotional category was the highest on my scale of political performances, although the least represented in my corpus. The result of this category was due to the audience's mode of reception. In other words, this means that fans can analyse a show and political issues through a mixture of emotion and critical observation. Furthermore, emotion has been considered as a spark for political engagement through affective bonds and/or the pleasure/concern one feels towards the political matter.

This study has evidenced that political satire tv shows, such as *Have I Got News for You*, can create communities of politically engaged fans. Here political participation, as defined by Kahne et al. (2014, 7-8) and Jenkins et al. (2016, 40), was observed through the discourse of the audience in a 'public'

setting (e.g., Facebook pages). My research observed several forms of political participation, for example, searching and sharing information, creative acts/fan art (see figure.6) and a high degree of communication. Furthermore, this research added to the idea that the audience of non-fictional political satire tv shows presents their political selves in 'public', following Eliasoph (1990), Gamson (2002, 118-124) and van Zoonen (2007, 531-547). Additionally, intertextual references in the discourse and Gifs found in my corpus demonstrate that the political self does not happen in a vacuum but rather in conjuncture with other media streams (e.g., news shows).

This research was limited by the restriction of the categories. The perception of these political performances is guided by my definition, per van Zoonen, of the categories. However, it is imaginable that other political performances do exist. Furthermore, this research was a small sample of this Facebook group, let alone of responses to other political satire tv shows. Consequently, this study should be viewed as such.

The specificity of the case study could have also hindered my results. In this sense, these same commenters may not react in the same way to other political matters or even to different shows. Additionally, it is unclear from this study whether online political participation, such as that seen in my research, goes beyond the realm of the digital to more traditional political participation streams. However, the show allows the audience to have a space for creative fan practices that help engage them politically and invites them into a community of like-minded peers, in the sense that they seek political information, or are willing to share their ideas and opinions. I believe this thesis has added to the academic debate surrounding how specifically *Have I Got News for You* creates politically engaged citizens rather than decreases their social capital (Putnam 1995) regardless of the limitations above. Furthermore, it has shown how the blending of politics and entertainment can be a helpful tool in allowing audiences to express themselves, specifically in the form of their political performance. It would be interesting if further research took a more detailed analytical approach (e.g., interviews) to grasp a better idea of why this audience engages in such a political way. Furthermore, follow-up research with the same audience to understand whether they engage similarly with other political satire tv shows or political shows, in general, would also give a more rounded outcome to the debate.

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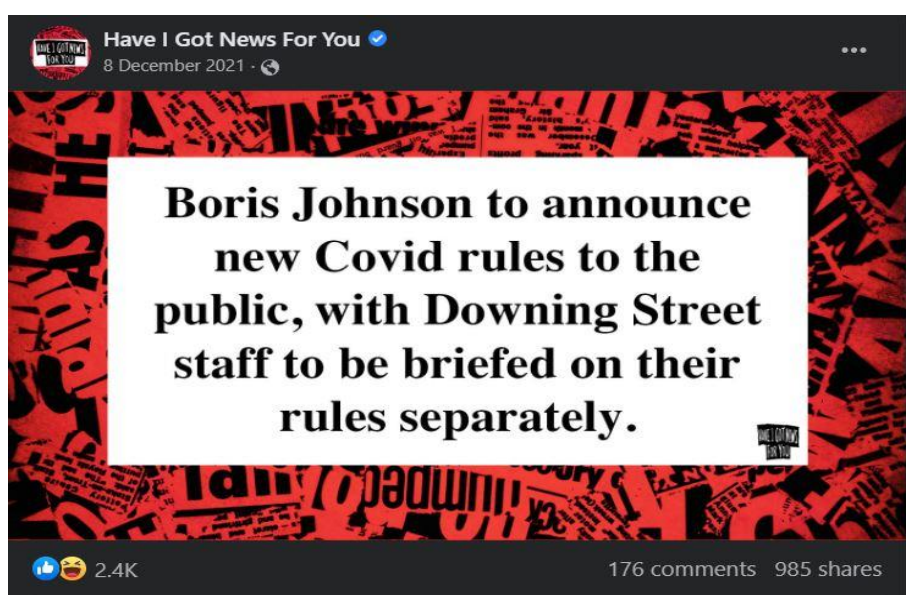
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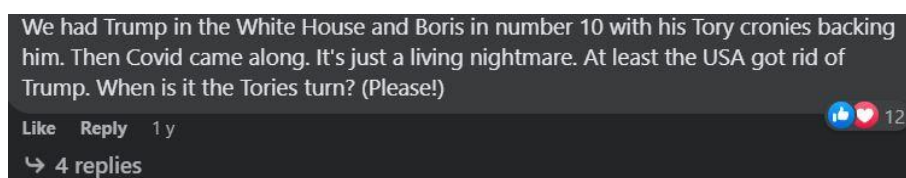
Appendix

All images of posts and comments were sourced from the official *Have I got News for You* Facebook page. Accessible online at <https://www.facebook.com/HaveIGotNewsForYou> [accessed 31/05/2023]. All images are anonymous, some comment images have been edited to keep anonymity.

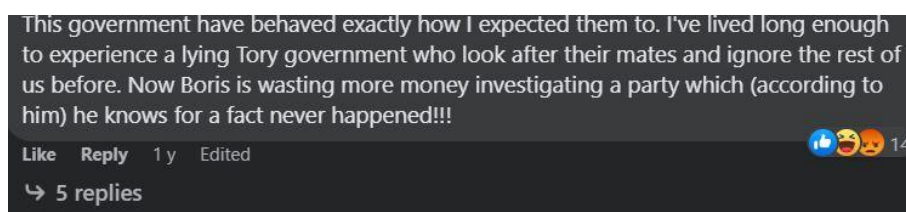
Post 08/12/2021 (1)



Comments 1 to 20 (post 08/12/2021 (1))




1: “Tory Cronies” is an often-derogatory term for a close friend – “living nightmare” the commentor believes that the situation is equal to a nightmarish state – Ideological Judgement.




2: “lying Tory government” – “behaved exactly how I expected them to” the commentor positions their ideological self by stating they are not surprised at their actions – Ideological Judgement.

Anybody worked out yet that Boris and his party friends have managed to get us to focus on these parties and totally forget the revelation yesterday that he interfered with the attempts to get people out of Afghanistan, apparently under the influence of his partner to rescue animals from a rescue centre (no evidence taliban would have harmed them) while people were left behind and some responsibility continued with their holiday-we have been had

Like Reply 1 y  21


3: “managed to get us to focus on these parties” – “interfered with the attempts to get people out of Afghanistan” – “we have been had” – the commentor expresses their perceived political knowledge – Description.

And there are still people who think this clown is fit to run this country

Like Reply 1 y  15

4: “clown” – “fit to run this country” – the commentor compared Boris Johnson to a clown and said he was unfit to be Prime Minister – Ideological Judgement.


Ah, our glorious leader Boris the Bover boy is good at briefings, the way he can remove briefs is quite extraordinary. To some people, he is the epitome of Churchill, however, he acts more like the dog in the insurance advert, spending on day rolling in muck and filth

Like Reply 1 y Edited  15

↳ 1 reply



5: “he acts more like the dog in the insurance advert, spending on day rolling in muck and filth” – comparing Boris Johnson to a dog – Ideological Judgement.

Rules for the peasants, so they don't apply to the untouchable politicians and their families.

Like Reply 1 y  11

6: “Rules for the peasants” – “don't apply to the untouchable politicians” – description of the post – Description.

I can't even laugh anymore, it just makes me so angry. The contempt they have for the people of this country 😡



Like Reply 1 y   13

7: “I can't even laugh anymore, it just makes me so angry” – “[angry face emoticon]” – reflection on the commentors state of anger – Emotional.

I wonder what song Bodger will sing at the karaoke at this year's secret party, It's my Lockdown and I'll Lie if I Want to?

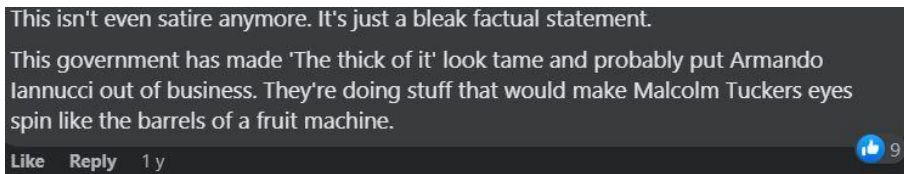
.
. .
. .

Allegedly 😏😏

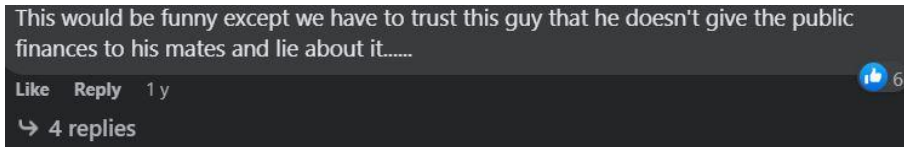
Like Reply 1 y   11

↳ 3 replies

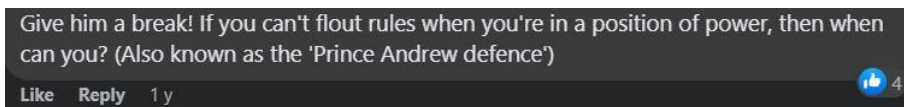
8: “It's my lockdown and I'll lie if I want to?” – “Allegedly” – comedic reflection on the fact Boris Johnson lied in a position of power – Reflection.



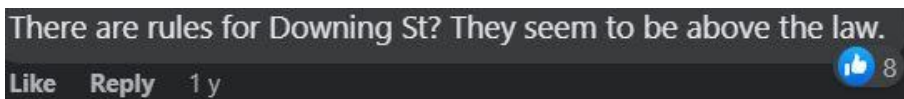
9: “This isn’t even satire anymore.” – “This government has made ‘The Thick of It’ look tame” questioning the satirical value of the post – Emotional.



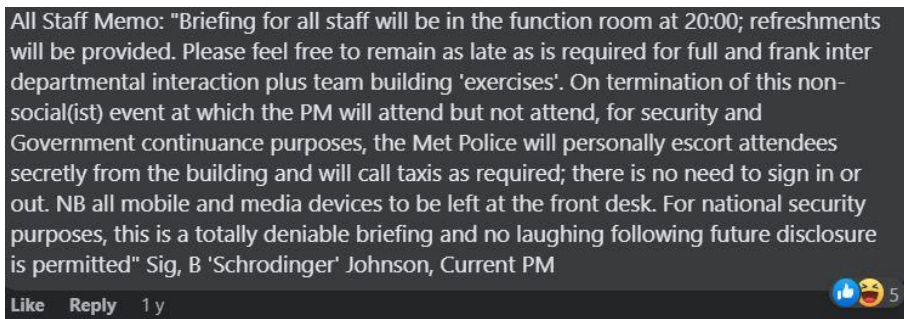
10: “we have to trust this guy that he doesn’t give the public finances to his mates and lie about it.....” – description of the fact that Boris Johnson lied in a position of power and could do it again – Description.



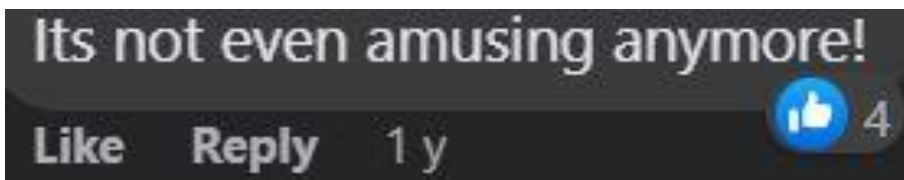
11: “(Also known as the ‘Prince Andrew defence’)” – anti-monarchy positioning – Ideological Judgement.



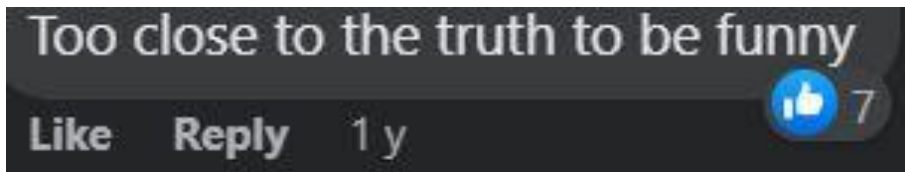
12: “They seem to be above the law.” – description of the events/post – Description.



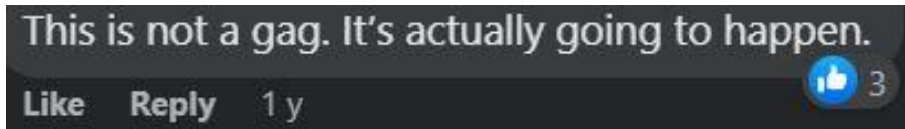
13: “All Staff Memo:” – description of what the commentator perceives a staff memo would look like with regards to the partygate scandal – Description.



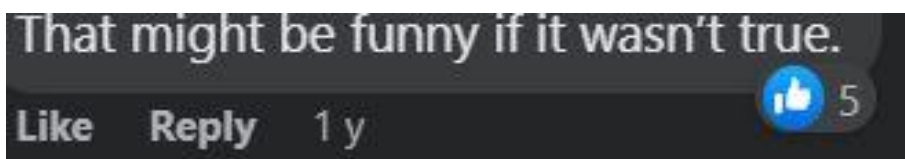
14: “Its not even amusing anymore!” – questioning of the comedic value of the situation/post – Emotional.



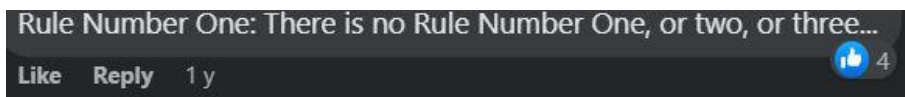
15: "Too close to the truth to be funny" - questioning of the comedic value of the situation/post – Emotional.



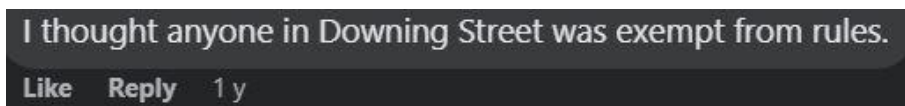
16: "This is not a gag. It's actually going to happen." - questioning of the comedic value of the situation/post – Emotional.



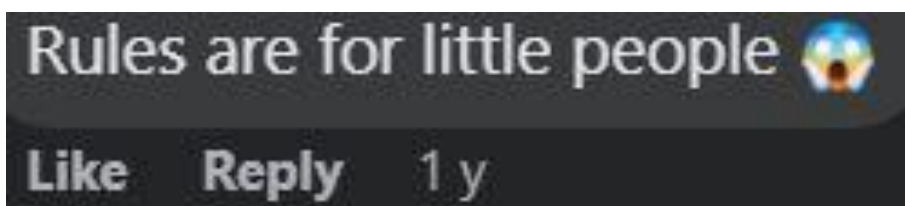
17: "That might be funny if it wasn't true." - questioning of the comedic value of the situation/post – Emotional.



18: "There is no Rule Number One, or two, or three..." – reflection on the political issue of having a separate set of rules for politicians – Reflection.



19: "I thought anyone in Downing Street was exempt from rules." – description of perceived political knowledge – Description.

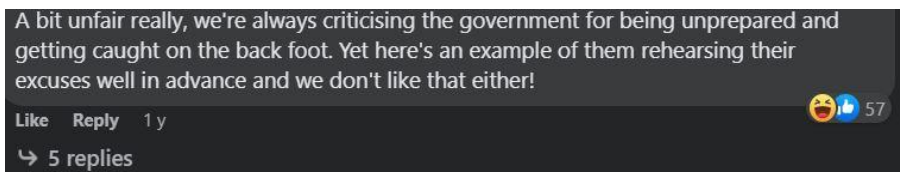


20: "Rules are for little people" – description of perceived political knowledge – Description.

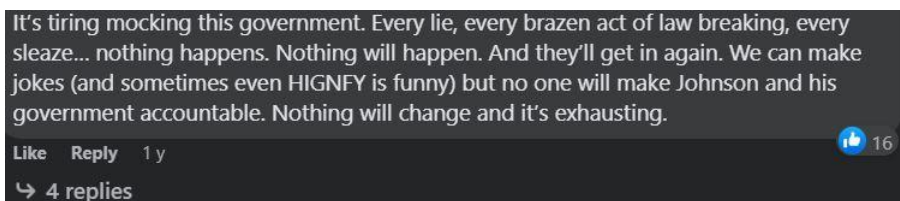
Post 08/12/2021 (2)



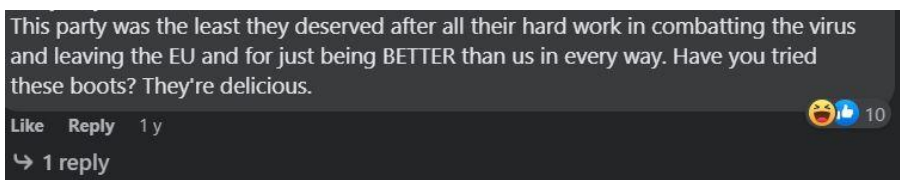
Comments 1 to 20 (post 08/12/2021 (2))




1: “Yet here’s an example of them rehearsing their excuses well in advance” – reflection of the dilemma that is lying by politicians – Reflection.



2: “every sleaze...” – calling the Tory government immoral/sordid – Ideological Judgement.




3: “This party” - “BETTER than us in every way” – ironic description of the conservative government – Ideological Judgement.

Just two points:
a) It is not a good idea to break any rules that you expect others to follow.
b) It is not wise to film yourself doing this.
How intelligent bare the people who supposedly run our country?
Like Reply 1 y  4


4: “a) it is not a good idea to break any rules” – reflection on the dilemma of breaking the covid rules – Reflection.

I see Carrie's mate has fallen on her sword along with a few crocodile tears of apparent remorse. I expect the blow was softened by a nice big pay out from the reptile fund in exchange for a non-disclosure agreement to allow Bozo to blame her for everything including misleading him - into thinking he could deny all and get away with it. Yes, the jury is in. Bozo clearly guilty of lying to everyone and then shamelessly talking about how furious he was, neglecting to add the bit about being caught out yet again.
Like Reply 1 y

5: “I expect the blow was softened by a nice big pay out” – “blame her for everything including misleading him” – description of perceived political knowledge – Description.

It's farcial people have been brainwashed into believing it would be worse under Labour really The conservites are riding rough shod over there own rules because they know no one will hold them to account . Stuff happens every one has a moan and just carries on .
Like Reply 1 y 
↳ 2 replies

6: “people have been brainwashed into believing it would be worse under Labour really The conservatives are riding rough shod over there own rules because they know no one will hold them to account.” – description of the political situation in comparison to how the Labour government might of handled it – Ideological Judgement.

What do you expect from a mock government who misleads this country time and time again. How long do we have to experience this inept government and PM any longer. There's only one person supposedly in charge of this mess and that's Johnson.
Like Reply 1 y Edited  3


7: “How long do we have to experience this inept government and PM any longer.” – questioning of the political party and calling them inept – Ideological Judgment.

Nobody should be surprised by now the way this "government" works, they lay down the rules to be followed, and then proceed to flout them as and when it suits them.
Like Reply 1 y

8: “the way this ‘government’ works” – description of perceived political knowledge – Description.

Just don't follow the rules. Simple.
Like Reply 1 y


9: “Just don't follow the rules.” – description of what to do with regards to the covid pandemic – Description.

I could count o one hand in our road how many abided by the rules
Like Reply 1 y  3


10: “I could count o[sic] one hand in our road how many abided by the rules” – description of experiential knowledge – Description.

If you stayed at home and followed rules then that's your problem
Like Reply 1 y



11: “If you stayed at home and followed the rules then that’s your problem” – description of experiential knowledge – Description.

A rehearsal for a party you weren't supposed to be having?
May as well have a rehearsal for the £350 million a week leaving the EU was supposed to save us, too.
Like Reply 1 y  25


12: “May as well have a rehearsal for the £350 million a week leaving the EU was supposed to save us, too.” – reflection on the cost of Brexit – Reflection.

Why is anybody surprised, it's a Johnson government, it's a case of "Its My Party And I'll Lie If I Want To"
Like Reply 1 y  16

13: “Why is anybody surprised, it’s a Johnson government” – description of what is allegedly causing the political issue – Ideological Judgement.

Genuinely, honestly, this new reboot of The Thick Of It just isn't funny.
Like Reply 1 y   17
↳ 2 replies

14: “this new reboot of The Thick Of It just isn’t funny.” – reflection on the closeness of the political situation to other political satire tv shows – Reflection.

How gullible do you have to be to believe anything 🤡 Johnson says 🤡
Like Reply 1 y  3

15: “How gullible do you have to be to believe anything” – reflecion on the dilemma that is lying in a position of power targeted at other audience members – Reflection.

Please everyone, don't you know, that even now , they are laughing their heads off re, how upset the obeying Plebs are. Super FUN. And for your next joke Boris ?
Like Reply 1 y

16: “they are laughing their heads off” – “And for your next joke Boris?” – criticism of how the conservative government is not taking their job seriously – Ideological Judgement.

Mock rehearsal = trumping up a lie in an attempt to turn away criticism.
Like Reply 1 y



17: “Mock rehearsal = trumping up a lie” – description and definition of perceived political meaning of the term mock rehearsal – Description.

Boris Johnson "furious" after finding out there really was a part and he hadn't been invited.
Like Reply 1 y

18: "Boris Johnson 'furious'" – description of perceived political knowledge of how Boris Johnson actually feels – Description.

Shows general disregard and all comedy has a basis in truth.
Like Reply 1 y

19: "all comedy has a basis in truth." – description of how satire reflects the actual political situation – Description.

Dunno whether to laugh, cry or be angry... possibly all three.
Like Reply 1 y   10


20: "Dunno whether to laugh, cry or be angry... possibly all three." – reflection on their emotional state – Emotional.

Post 10/12/2021



Have I Got News For You ✓
10 December 2021 · 🌐

PM denies he's avoiding scrutiny over Downing St parties, and will happily answer any questions after 36-month paternity leave.

  4.1K 173 comments 1K shares

Comments 1 to 20 (post 10/12/2021)

Heard the slimeball Gove talking his usual nonsense the other day saying how Bozo had shown leadership and had not smirked making the really tough decisions. Forgive me but is excuse making, privatisation, lying and hiding away leadership . As for the tough decisions, continuous obfuscation and dithering and delay until finally being FORCED to make a decision sounds a bit like shirking to me. Still, there is a plus side. Having Gove at your back like this is like a premier league football manager under some pressure having the total backing of the Chair and Directors. You know when you hear that they only have a week or even less before they resign or a&e sacked and replaced by whoever - or Gove, he hopes, in this case.

Like Reply 1 y

1: “slimeball Gove” – calling Michael Gove (conservative politician) a derogatory term – Ideological Judgement.

He needs to take a leaf from Pfizer's book and hide all the evidence for 76 years.

Like Reply 1 y

↳ 4 replies

2: “hide all the evidence for 76 years” – description of how Boris Johnson should potentially handle the situation – Description.

Aslong as those questions are general knowledge based and he can enter as part of a team

Like Reply 1 y

3: “Aslong as those questions are general knowledge based” – word play of a description of the quiz the government held during partygate – Description.

I listen to folk who really think he's an ok guy. I cannot get my head around that! His previous boss can't say one good word about him,his previous wives/ partners the same. He's deceitful, disrespectful, incompetent, unethical, immoral, corrupt, uncaring,embarrassing and an adulterous Prime Muppet. What on earth. We deserve better.

Like Reply 1 y


4: “He’s deceitful, disrespectful, incompetent, unethical, immoral, corrupt, uncaring, ambarassing and an adulterous Prime Muppet.” – Used 9 adjectives to describe and attack Boris Johnson – Ideological Judgement.

Why did he want the job in the first place ,it's the sort of job that highlights all your flaws and by golly he's plenty of those , it's the sort of job that always puts you in the public glare and gives you nowhere to hide and he's not the sort of person that can take much public scrutiny, it's the sort of job that requires a relentless work schedule and a highly developed attention to detail and he's a lazy git who lacks the gift of seeing things through and all his plans are just vague dreams without any detailed planning I can't see that he possess any quality that makes him suitable, worthy or deserving to govern us he's just a chancer that struck lucky.

Like Reply 1 y

↳ 1 reply

5: “it’s the sort of job that highlights all your flaws and by golly he’s plenty of those.” – “he’s a lazy git” – calling out that Boris Johson has many weaknesses and calling him an expletive – Ideological Judgement.

He'll give us an answer once his focus groups tell him what answer he needs to give!
Like Reply 1 y  13

6: “once his focus groups tell him what answer he needs to give!” – description of perceived political knowledge – Description.

How the hell can the prime minister take paternity leave?
Like Reply 1 y


7: “How the hell can the prime minister take paternity leave?” – rhetorical question on their political knowledge – Description.

its the same as his other days, just with a different title. His presence at work has no more effect than if an empty cardboard box was there instead...
Like Reply 1 y

8: “His presence at work has no more effect than if an empty cardboard box was there instead...” – comparing Boris Johnson to an object – Ideological Judgement.

If only we had been given some clue as to how incompetent and morally bankrupt this dolt Alexander Boris de Pfeffel Johnson truly is.....!!
Another “project fear” turning into Project Reality.
Like Reply 1 y


9: “incompetent and morally bankrupt” – two adjectives on the demeanour and attitude of Boris Johnson – Ideological Judgement.

She's already pregnant again I heard. Just to keep a distraction incubating for nine months. You never know what twaddle a new baby may need to cover.
Like Reply 1 y  2


10: “You never know what twaddle a new baby may need to cover.” – description of perceived political knowledge in relation to using a new born to avoid questioning – Description.

The only problem with paternity leave is that it wasn't made retrospective.....I had to work like everyone else.....my wife just had to get on with it.....ffs.
Like Reply 1 y

11: “I had to work like everyone else....my wife just had to get on with it” – description of experiential knowledge on paternity leave – Description.

Permanent leave would be better.
Like Reply 1 y Edited 

12: “Permanent leave would be better” – conclusion that Boris Johnson should leave his post permanently – Reflection.

Can he not just do a magic trip and f##\$ing disappear ?????
Like Reply 1 y 

13: “Can he just do a magic tri[sic]p and f###\$ing disappear?????” – questioning that Boris Johnson should leave his post – Reflection.

My understanding is that they are trying to close Parliament next Tuesday for Christmas instead of Thursday and that would mean no Prime Ministers questions on Wednesday!!! What a surprise!

Like Reply 1 y

14: “My understanding” – description of perceived political knowledge – Description.

For someone who's the complete opposite of Labour principles, he's so keen on producing labour when it comes to population growth!

Like Reply 1 y



15: “he’s so keen on producing labour when it comes to population growth!” – description of perceived knowledge on Boris Johnson’s habits – Description.

Maybe he knows we've cottoned on to him at last, and he'll slope off before the men with the handcuffs come for him.

Like Reply 1 y


16: “Maybe he knows we’ve cottoned on to him at last” – description of perceived political knowledge – Description.

That's not fair. Being prime minister he should get special treatment. Give him ten years of paternity leave.

Like Reply 1 y   9



17: “That’s not fair. Being prime minister he should get special treatment.” – description of perceived political knowledge with regard to the Prime Minister role – Description.

If only he would take 36 months off....

Like Reply 1 y  7



18: “If only he would take 36 months off...” – questioning the conclusion that Boris Johnson should take extended paternity leave – Reflection.

36 months, surely that will cut into all the time he has set aside for his other holidays

Like Reply 1 y   3

19: “surely that will cut into the time he has set aside for his other holidays” – description of their perceived knowledge of Boris Johnson holiday habits as prime minister – Description.

oh I do. I see him as a serious threat to everything I believe in. I have a serious dislike for the pos and wish him gone. He is a nasty, cynical, immoral individual who cares for nobody but himself and his rich cronies. He has done this country no favours and continues to ruin and privatise the healthcare services when he should be properly funding them instead of wasting our taxes elsewhere by handing out contracts to his mates. He is a liar, a philanderer, a cheat and a conman.

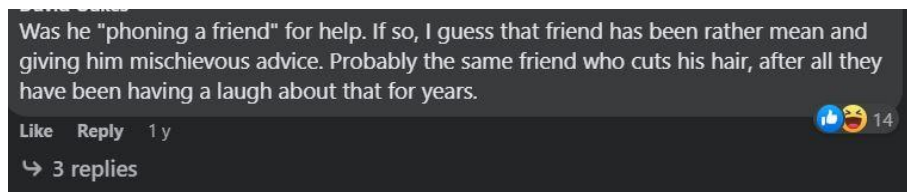
Like Reply 1 y Edited   3

20: “He is nasty, cynical, immoral individual who cares for nobody but himself and his rich cronies.” – three adjectives describing and attacking Johnson and the use of “cronies” – Ideological Judgement.

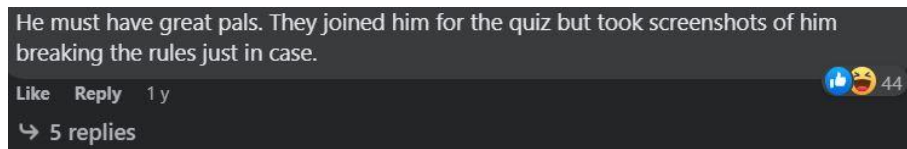
Post 12/12/2021



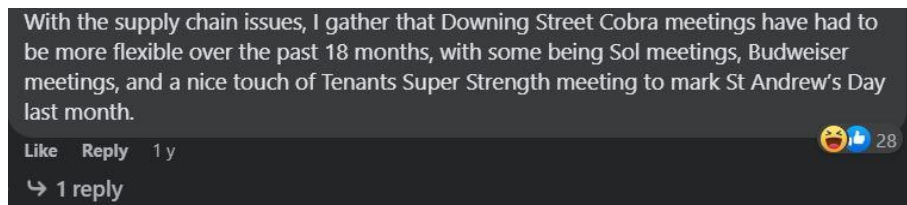
Comments 1 to 20 (post 12/12/2021)



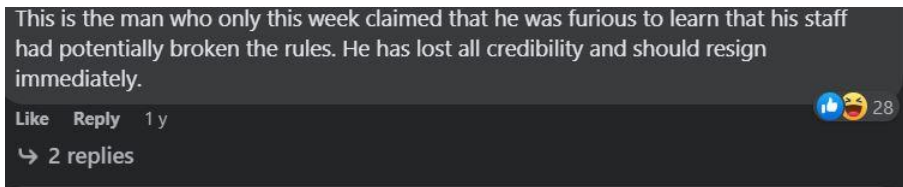
1: "Probably the same friend who cuts his hair, after all they have been having a laugh about that for years." – attack on Boris Johnson's physical appearance – Ideological Description.



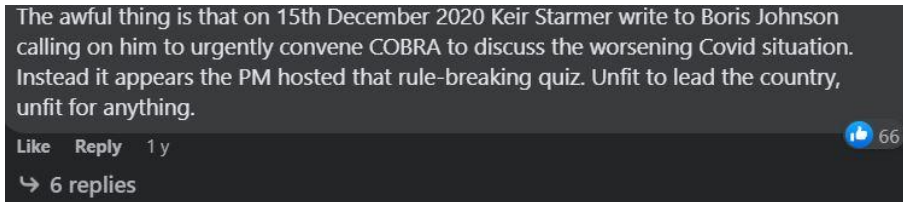
2: "They joined for the quiz but took screenshots of him breaking the rules just in case." – reflection on the dilemma of breaking covid rules and leaked photos of the gatherings – Reflection.



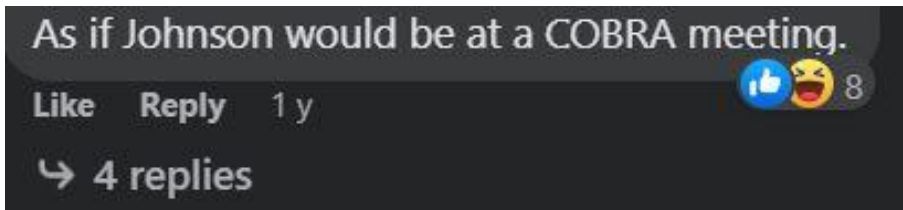
3: "I gather that Downing Street Cobra meetings have had to be more flexible over the past 18 months, with som being Sol meetings, Budweiser meetings" – comedic transcription of the types of beers they may have at the gatherings based on perceived knowledge of the meetings – Description.



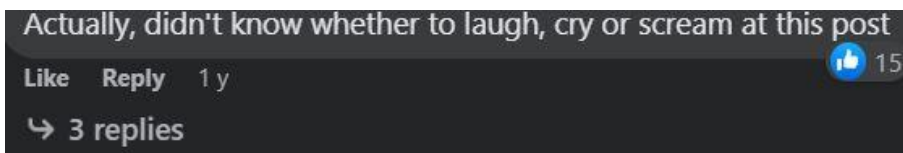
4: "He has lost all credibility and should resign immediately." – reflection on the dilemma of breaking the covid rules and concluding that Johnson should quit – Reflection.



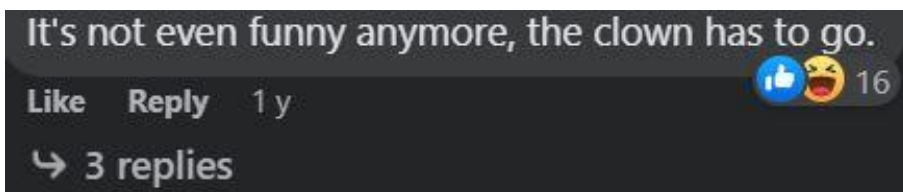
5: "Instead it appears the PM hosted that rule-breaking quiz. Unfit to lead the country, unfit for anything." – reflection on the dilemma of breaking the covid rules and concluding that Johnson should not be PM – Reflection.



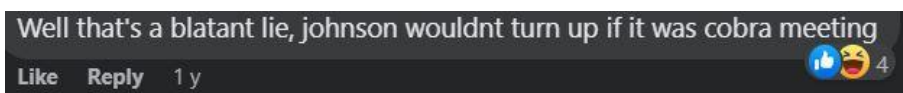
6: "As if Johnson would be at a COBRA meeting." – description of the disbelief at the situation – Description.



7: "didn't know whether to laugh, cry or scream at this post" – reflection on the commentors emotional state – Emotional.




8: "It's not even funny anymore" – reflection on the comedic value of the post and situation – Emotional (could verge on to ideological).



9: "johnson wouldn't turn up if it was cobra meeting" – description of their perceived political knowledge with regards to Johnson attendance to COBRA meetings – Description.

Oh let it lie won't you?!
Maybe, just maybe there was a party at Boris' house but nothing was broken and that stain on the rug was there before from when Donald spilled his Ribena when he lost at Kerplunk.

Like Reply 1 y  25

↳ 7 replies


10: “Maybe, just maybe there was a party at Boris’ house but nothing was broken” – description of an imagined party at Downing Street – Description.

It's important that Boris brushes up on his quizzing skills. He might be asked to host HIGNFY, or maybe an appearance on "Would I like to you".

Like Reply 1 y


11: “Boris brushes up on his quizzing skills. He might be asked to host HIGNFY, or maybe an appearance on ‘Would I like [sic] to you.’” – Reflection on the fact that Johnson hosted an illegal quiz and concluding that he might be invited to satirical tv shows – Reflection.

The question for this years quiz is, which Prime Minister spent years as a journalist ridiculing paternity leave and has now used it twice in 2 years?

Like Reply 1 y  13

12: “which Prime Minister spent years as a journalist ridiculing paternity leave and has now used it twice in 2 years?” – questioning and reflecting on the fact that Johnson used paternity leave as excuse to avoid questioning – Reflection.


And don't forget, his excuse was that the people in the picture were helping him with the technology....
The guy running the country needs TWO people to help him make a Zoom call.

Like Reply 1 y  31

↳ 4 replies

13: “The guy running the country needs TWO people to help him make a Zoom call.” – depiction of the photo leaked of the quiz – Description.

How many Christmas parties did they have ! It's reaching double figures already !
Where did that find the time when there was a full lockdown , pandemic, economic Armageddon going on ? At least in March we know he had time to make a baby , about the week he caught covid wasn't it ? I get confused that may be the March before , all years are blending into one big shitstorm these days !?

Like Reply 1 y 

14: “How many Christmas parties did they have ! it’s reaching double figures already !” – seeking information or knowledge on the political issue coupled with a description of political matters (lockdown, pandemic, economic crisis) – Description.

Have we ever had a worse leader , maybe king john but perhaps that's going back a bit to far in recent history I can't think of anyone that compares to him in awfulness.

Like Reply 1 y

15: “Have we ever had a worse leader” – “ I can’t think of anyone that compares to him in awfulness” – explicit statements on being a ‘bad’ Prime Minister and being ‘awful’ – Ideological Judgement.

O'Connor definitely sang the best version of this Prince song, so much feeling, along with her rendition of Silent Night, both beautiful and haunting, a rare combination. Oh, I nearly forgot, the lead is about the Johnson but there's no talent there worthy of mention although, can you get an award for lying...? 🇬🇧🇺🇸

Like Reply 1 y

16: "can you get an award for lying...?" – reflection on the quiz question in the post and on lying by politicians – Reflection.

Should we stop laughing at him, he's using his incompetence to divert attention from really bad policies

Like Reply 1 y

↳ 2 replies

17: "he's using his incompetence to divert attention from really bad policies" – description based on perceived political knowledge in relation to bad policy making – Description.

Despite all the righteous indignation out there, naff all is going to change. Anyone who thinks otherwise probably believes in Santa also. Things will be better in 2021. Perhaps Boris will take ALL the paternity leave due to him. Should keep him out of the way for a few years.

Like Reply 1 y

↳ 2 replies

18: "Perhaps Boris will take ALL the paternity leave due to him. Should keep him out of the way for a few years." – reflection on the partygate scandal and concluding that Boris should leave his post for a few years – Reflection.

What's that song-- "Bring in the clowns" ???!

Like Reply 1 y

19: "'Bring in the clowns' ???!" – comedic remark stating that the song they sang at karaoke was about 'clowns' and insinuating that they are clowns as well – Ideological Judgment.

He cheats even on virtual Christmas quizzes! Two advisors to help him out

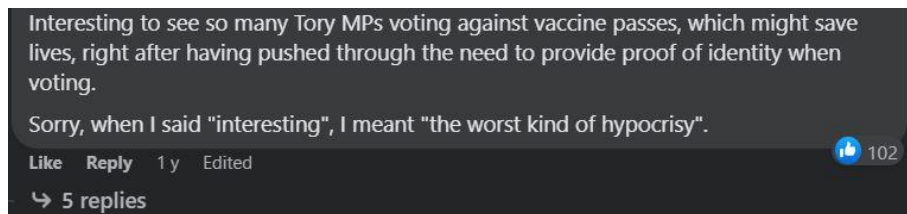
Like Reply 1 y

20: "He cheats even on virtual Christmas quizzes! Two advisors to help him out" – reflection on the fact that Johnson needed two advisors to help him with a Zoom call – Reflection.

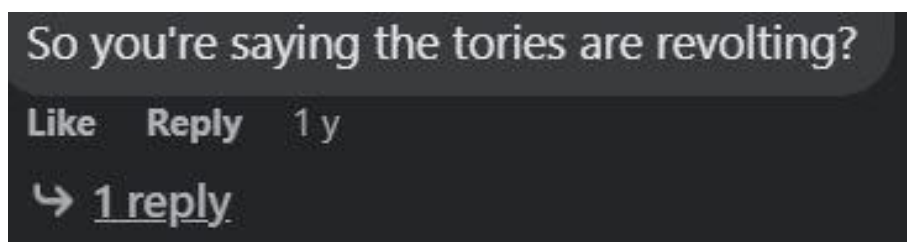
Post 14/12/2021



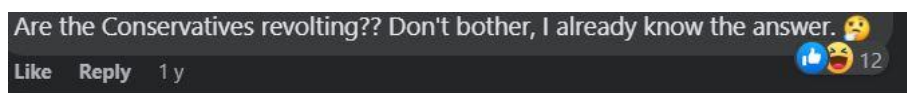
Comments 1 to 20 (post 14/12/2021)



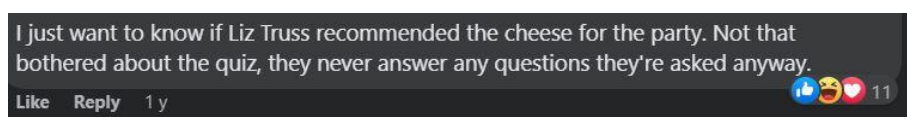
1: “Interesting to see so many Tory MP’s voting against vaccine passe, which might save lives, right after having pushed through the need to provide proof of identity when voting.” – Description of some of the Covid regulations that were decided upon – Description.



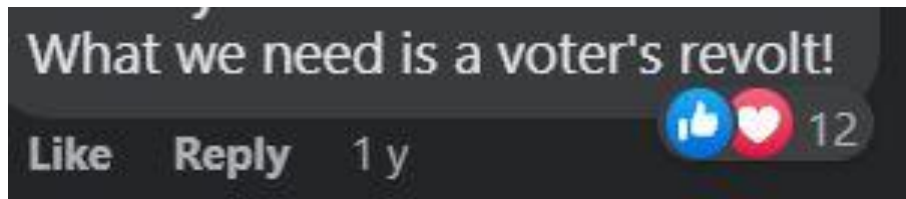
2: “tories are revolting?” – explicitly attacking the Tory government – Ideological Judgement.



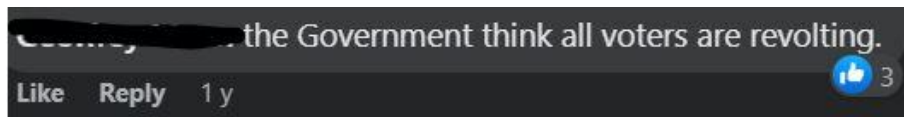
3: “Are the Conservatives revolting??” – explicitly attacking the Tory government – Ideological Judgement.



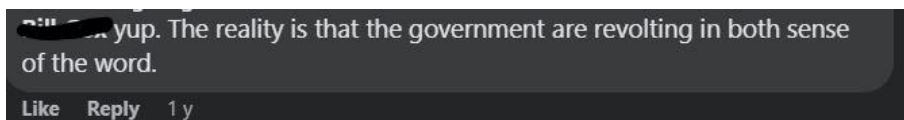
4: “Not that bothered about the quiz, they never answer questions they’re asked anyway.” – description of politicians avoiding questioning based on perceived political knowledge – Description.



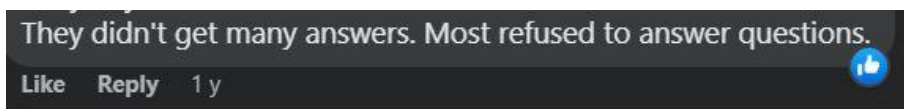
5: “What we need is a voter’s revolt!” – conclusion on the political situation – Reflection.



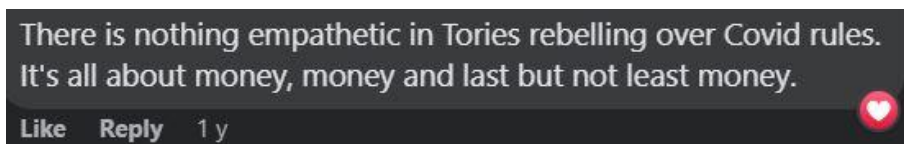
6: “the Government think all voters are revolting.” – assumption of what politicians think of voters based on their perceived political knowledge – Description.



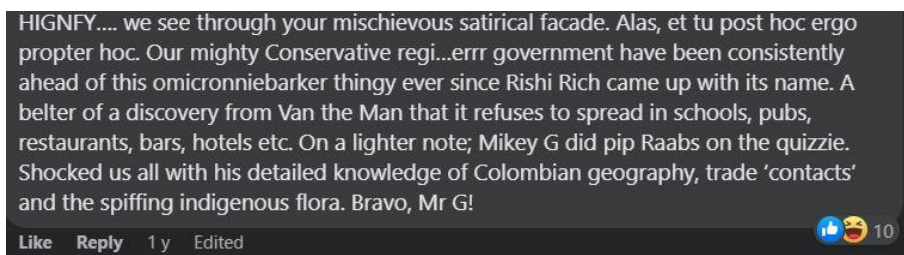
7: “The reality is that the government are revolting in both sense of the word.” – explicit attack on the government – Ideological Judgement.



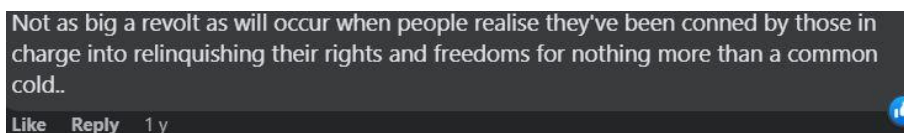
8: “Most refused to answer questions.” – description of the fact that the government was avoiding questioning – Description.



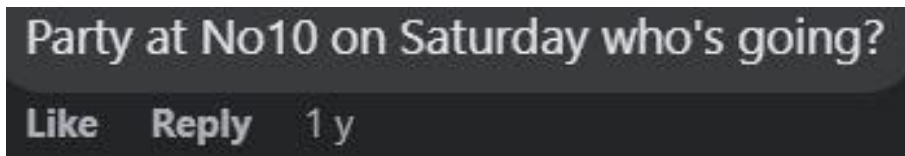
9: “It’s all about money, money and last but not least money.” – assumption that the conservative government are obsessed with money – Ideological Judgement.



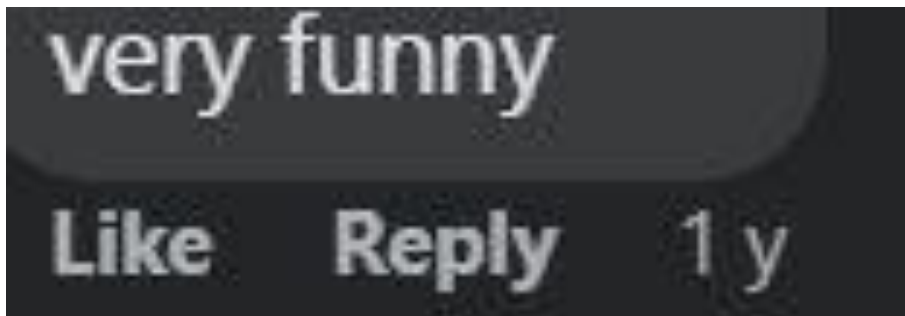
10: “A belter of a discovery from Van the Man that it refuses to spread in schools, pubs, restaurants, bars, hotels etc.” – an ironic satirical comment against the conservative government – Ideological Judgement.



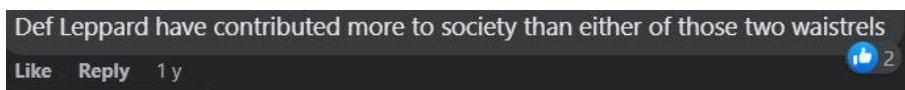
11: “Not as big a revolt as will occur when people realise they’ve been conned by those in charge into relinquishing their rights and freedoms for nothing more than a common cold..” – reflection on the conservative revolt and concluding that a citizens revolt will be larger – Reflection.



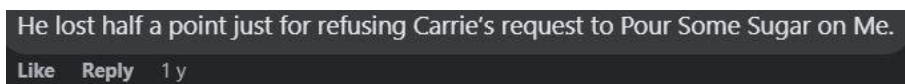
12: “Party at No10 on Saturday who’s going?” – seeking more information on the partygate scandal – Description.



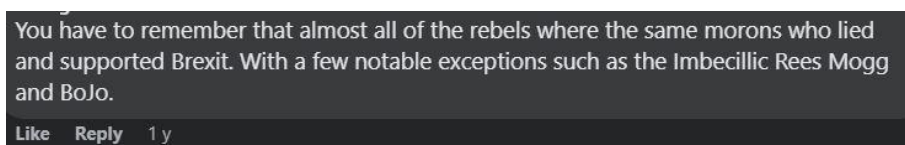
13: “very funny” – remark on the comedic value of the post – Emotional.



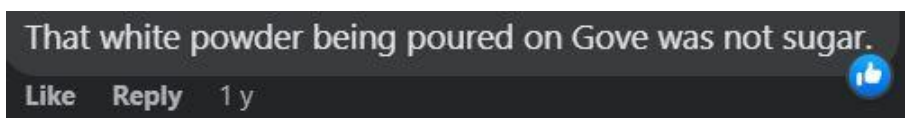
14: “Def Leppard have contributed more to society than either of those two waistrels” – explicit comment against Johnson and Gove – Ideological Judgement.



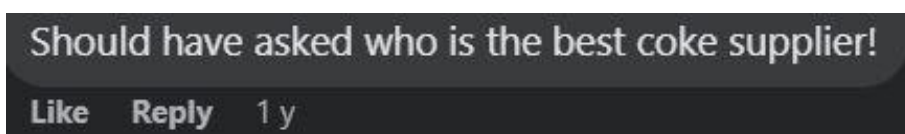
15: “He lost half a point just for refusing Carrie’s request to Pour Some Sugar on Me.” – imagined description of what the karaoke might have looked like – Description.



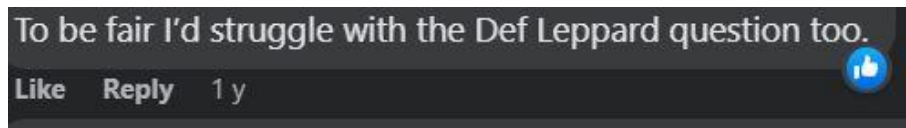
16: “morons” – “imbecilic” – explicit comment against Boris Johnson and Rees Mogg – Ideological Judgement.



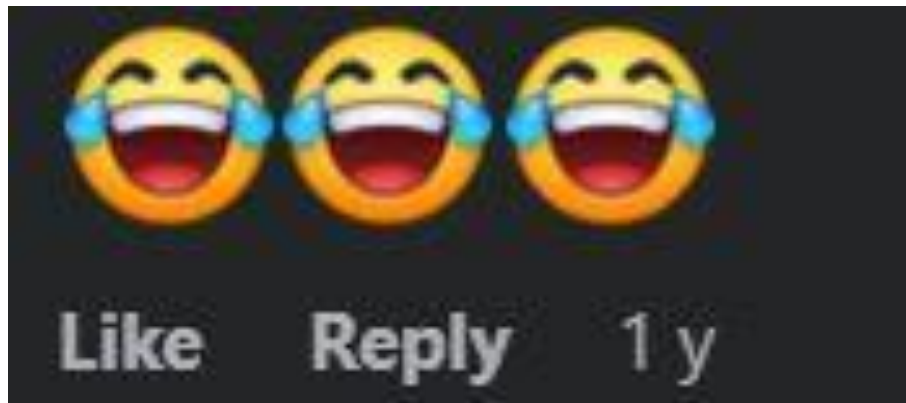
17: “That white powder being poured on Gove was not sugar.” – imagined description of what a gathering looked like – Description.



18: “Should have asked who is the best coke supplier!” - imagined description of what a gathering looked like – Description.



19: “I’d struggle with the Def Leppard question too.” – reflection on the quiz question that could have been asked and concluding with experiential knowledge – Reflection.

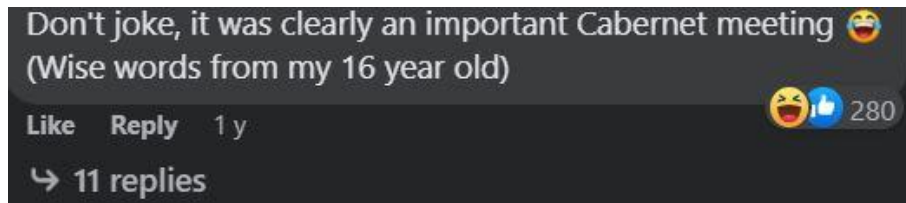


20: “laughing emoticon x3” – no words, however, clear that this commentor is reflecting on the comedic value of the post and finds it funny – Emotional.

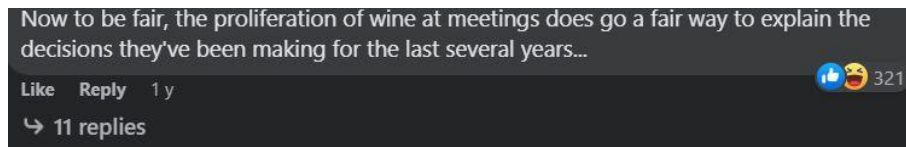
Post 20/12/2021 (1)



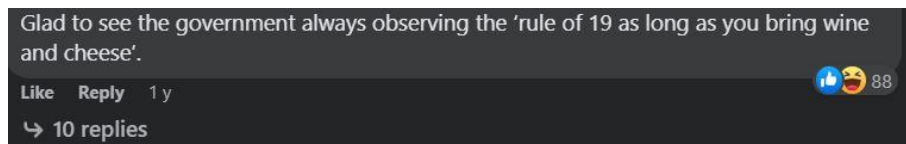
Comments 1 to 20 (post 20/12/2021 (1))



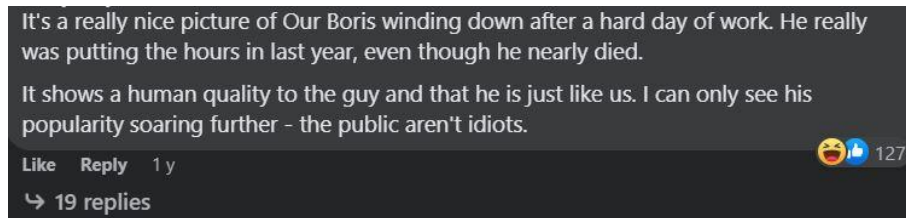
1: “it was clearly an important Cabernet meeting [laughing emoticon] (Wise words from my 16 year old)” – comedic observation on the gatherings and statement of experiential knowledge – Description.



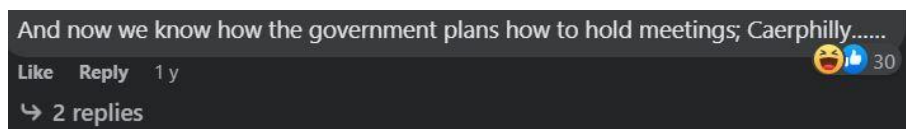
2: “the proliferation of wine at meetings does go a fair way to explain the decisions they’ve been making for the last several years” – reflection on the dilemma of having alcohol at work and its effects on politics – Reflection.



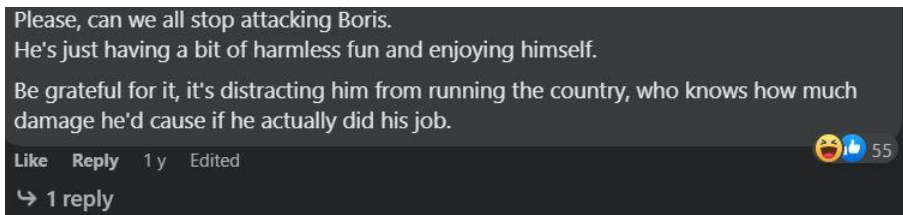
3: “the government always observing the ‘rule of 19 as long as you bring wine and cheese’.” – observation on the gatherings and party paraphernalia – Description.



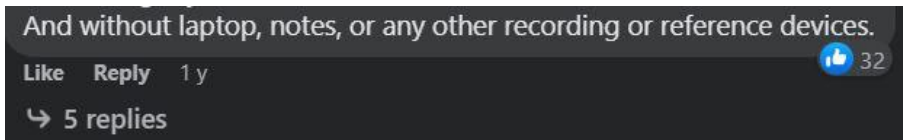
4: “it shows a human quality to the guy and that he is just like us. I can only see his popularity soaring further – the public aren’t idiots.” – ironic reflection on Boris Johnson’s qualities as a human and a politician – Ideological Judgement.



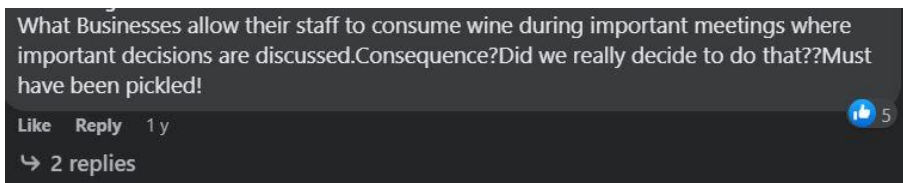
5: “And now we know how the government plans how to hold meetings; Caerphilly.....” – play on words to describe the work meetings and cheese related joke (e.g., Caerphilly = carefully) – Description.



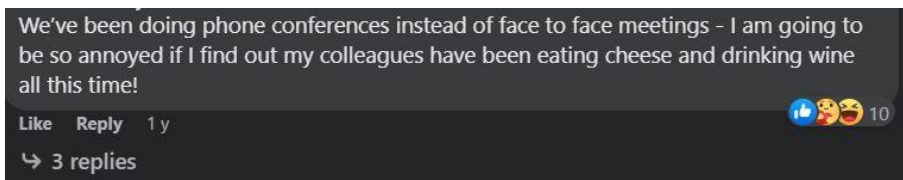
6: “Be grateful for it, it’s distracting him from running the country, who knows how much damage he’d cause if he actually did his job.” – description of the gatherings and its possible effects based on perceived political knowledge – Description.



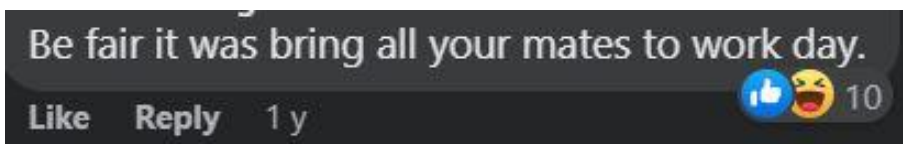
7: “And without a laptop, notes, or any other recording or reference devices.” – description of the missing work-related items at the so called ‘work meetings’ – Description.



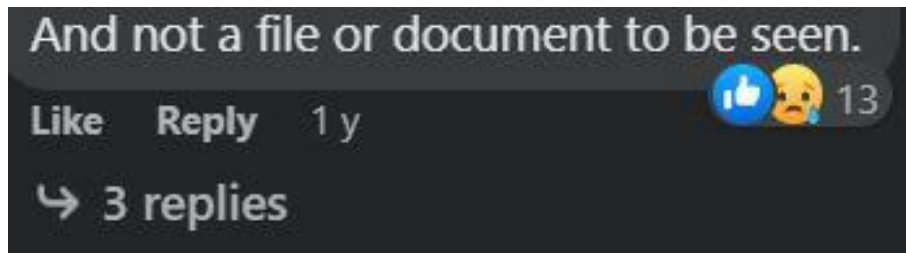
8: “What Businesses allow their staff to consume wine during important meetings where important decisions are discussed. Consequence? Did we really decide to do that?? Must have been pickled!” – questioning of the proliferation of alcohol at work meetings and the reflection on the consequences it may have – Reflection.



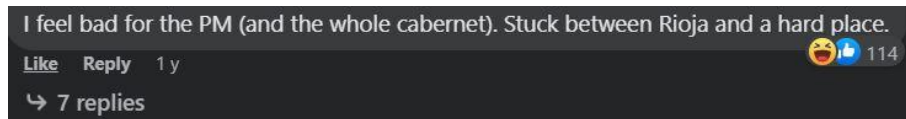
9: “We’ve been doing phone conferences instead of face to face meetings – I am going to be so annoyed if I found out my colleagues have been eating cheese and drinking wine all this time!” – description of experiential knowledge related to the gatherings/work meetings – Description.



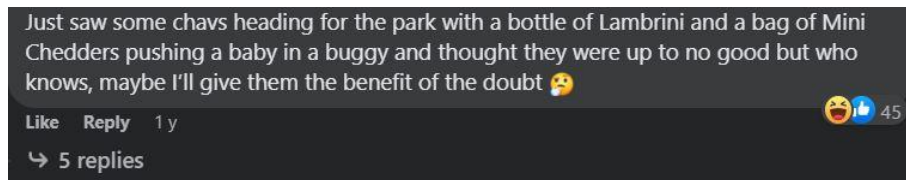
10: “Be fair it was bring all your mates to work day.” – description of the parties and the attendees – Description.



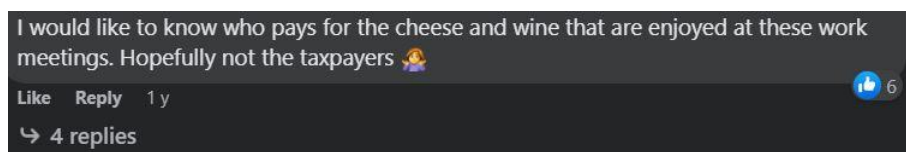
11: “And not a file or document to be seen.” – description of the missing work-related items at the so called ‘work meetings’ – Description.



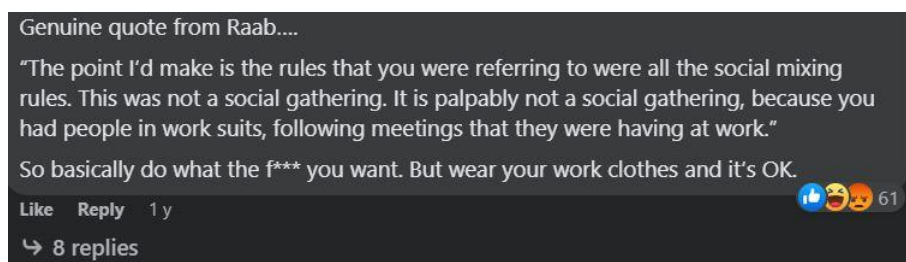
12: “I feel bad for the PM (and the whole cabernet). Stuck between Rioja and a hard place.” – wine related joke describing the party paraphernalia – Description.



13: “thought they were up to no good but who knows, maybe I’ll give them the benefit of the doubt” – ironic reflection on the proliferation of alcohol at work – Reflection.



14: “I would like to know who pays for the cheese and wine that are enjoyed at these work meetings. Hopefully not the taxpayers [emoticon]” – reflection on the money being spent on the party paraphernalia and conclusion – Reflection.



15: “So basically do what the f*** you want. But wear your work clothes and it’s OK.” – angry reflection on the gatherings and conclusion that anyone can do as they please – Reflection.

How come I can't have a bevvy during a meeting? The cabinet can, then why can't the rest of us who are public servants? Double standards this. I'm going to request ale and cheese with every meeting now.

Like Reply 1 y

👍 🤔 🤔 18

↳ 4 replies

16: "The cabinet can, then why can't the rest of us who are public servants? Double standards this." – questioning why there was alcohol at work and reflecting on why they can't in their situation – Reflection.

It's laughable, but so utterly shameful. How many people did the right thing during the last year, however heartbreaking it was, to find our leaders were just laughing at us? We turned down family members at my mother-in-law's funeral. To think we just had to have cheese and wine there and called it a business meeting, and everyone could have made it. 🤔

Like Reply 1 y

👍 🤔 🤔 18

↳ 1 reply

17: "we turned down family members at my mother-in-law's funeral." – reflection on how politician broke the Covid rules and conclusion on what they should have done regarding their situation – Reflection.

So it was either a party or they were drinking on the job. Neither should be acceptable

Like Reply 1 y

👍 🤔 40

↳ 4 replies

18: "So it was either a party or they were drinking on the job. Neither should be acceptable" – questioning of the parties and scandal in general and concluding that the whole situation is unacceptable – Reflection.

If it was a work meeting why was his wife there? Has she some official role?

Like Reply 1 y

👍 8

↳ 2 replies

19: "If it was a work meeting why was his wife there? Has she some official role?" – commenter seeking new information/knowledge – Description.

I was wondering how most of the life changing decisions affecting a mere 66 million of us were made. Good to know.

Like Reply 1 y

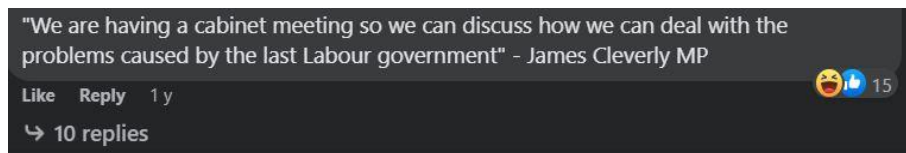
↳ 1 reply

20: "I was wondering how most of the life changing decisions affecting a mere 66 million of us were made. Good to know." – description of the work meetings and possible effects – Description.

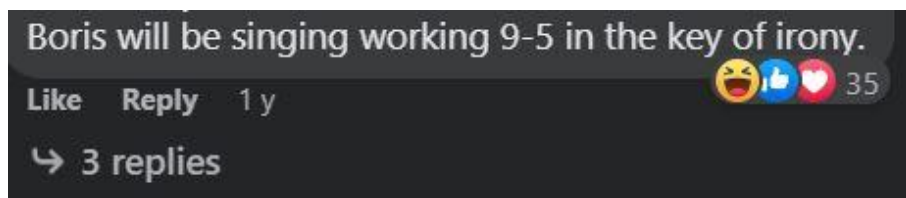
Post 20/12/2021 (2)



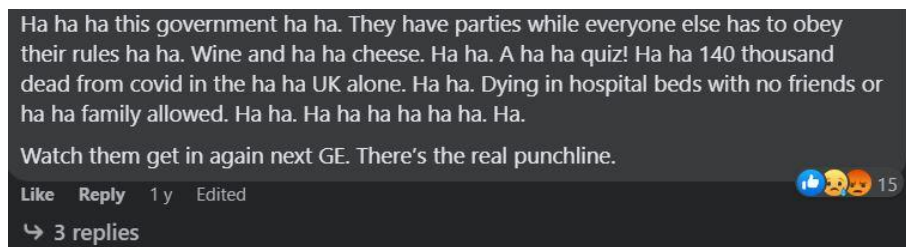
Comments 1 to 20 (post 20/12/2021 (2))



1: “ ‘We are having a cabinet meeting so we can discuss how we can deal with the problems caused by the last labour government’ – James Cleverly MP” – transcription of an MP statement that is against the Labour Party – Ideological Judgement.



2: “Boris will be singing working 9-5 in the key of irony.” – description of a possible karaoke song for Boris Johnson – description.



3: “Dying in hospital beds with no friends or ha ha family allowed.” – ironic laughter used to punctuate real facts about the pandemic – Emotional.

All jokes aside, how do they get away with such corruption? 🤔🤔

Like Reply 1 y

4: “All jokes aside, how do they away with such corruption? [angry face emoticon x2]” – reflection on the dilemma of lying and corruption from politicians – Reflection.

I'm sure any one of them could belt out 'little lies' by Fleetwood Mac... 🤔🎄

Like Reply 1 y

5: “ ‘little lies’ by Fleetwood Mac ...” – reflection on the dilemma of lying by using a play on word with a Fleetwood Mac song – Reflection.

Irony and satire are impossible these days. So sad... 😂

Like Reply 1 y

6: “Irony and satire are impossible these days. So sad...” – questioning the satirical and comedic value of the show/post – Emotional.

It'll be Secret Santa time at No10 to share out the lucrative PPE contracts and the possibility of winning the star prize of a drive up to Barnard Castle (since Dom won't be doing it this year)

Like Reply 1 y

7: “It’ll be secret Santa time at No10 to share out the lucrative PPE contracts and the possibility of sinning the star prize of a drive up to Barnard Castle (since Dom won’t be doing it this year)” – description of an imagined secret Santa party at Downing Street – Description.

Wearing a suit ... so what's the problem? 👍

Like Reply 1 y

8: “Wearing a suit ... so what’s the problem?” – description of the what the dress code at the parties and seeking further information – Description.

The real party will begin once everyone is locked down. 👍

Like Reply 1 y

9: “The real party will begin once everyone is locked down.” – description of the scandal – Description.

Boxes of wine needed to keep up the pretence it's a business meeting. 😂

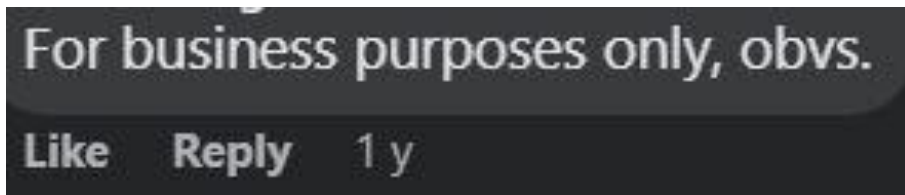
Like Reply 1 y

10: “Boxes of wine needed to keep up the pretence it’s a business meeting.” – description of the party paraphernalia – Description.

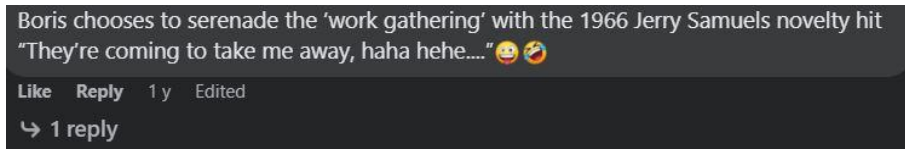
You will know they mean business if they break open the cheese and wine... 🤔

Like Reply 1 y

11: “You know they mean business if they break open the cheese and wine... [rolling eyes emoticon]” – description of the party paraphernalia – Description.



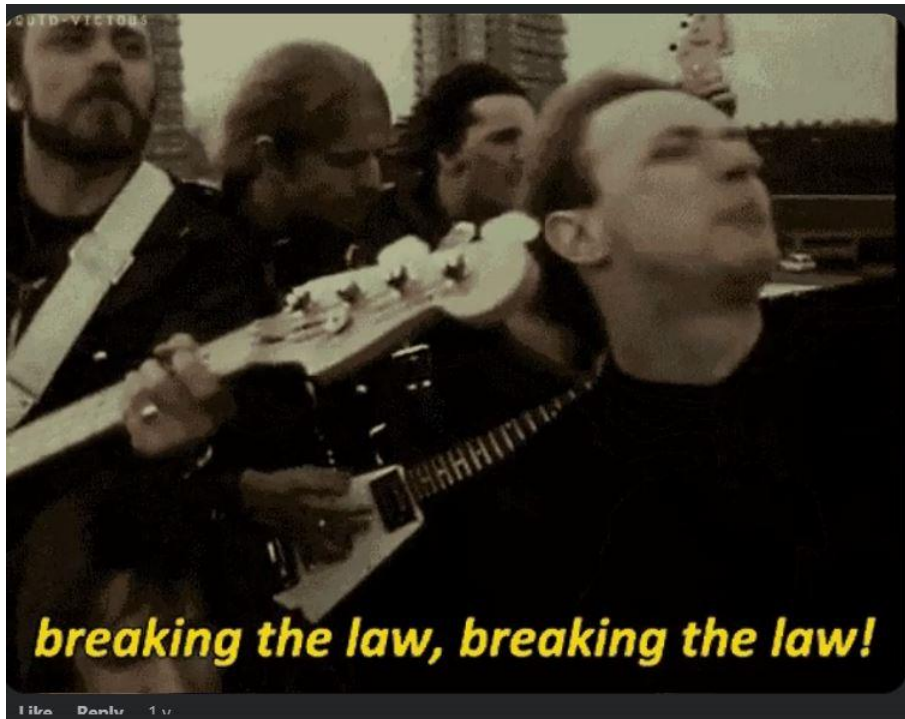
12: “For business purposes only, obvs.” – statement referring to the alcohol and cheese at work meetings – Description.



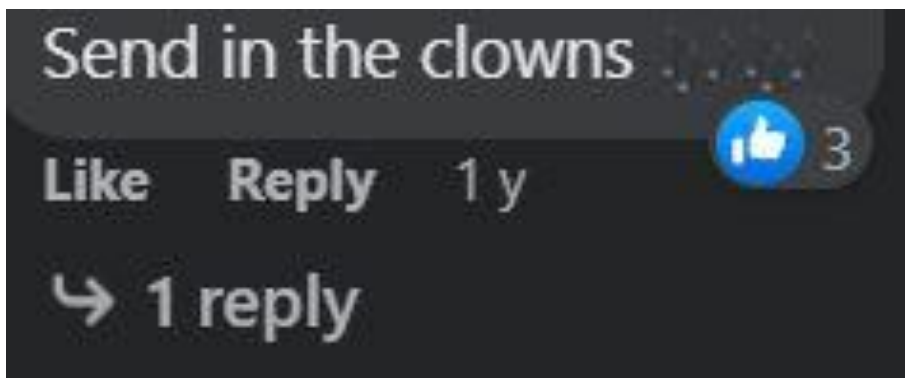
13: “Boris chooses to serenade the ‘work gathering’ with the 1966 Jerry Samuels novelty hit ‘They’re coming to take me away, haha hehe...’ [laughing emoticon x2]” – imagined description of a chosen song for Boris’ karaoke – Description.



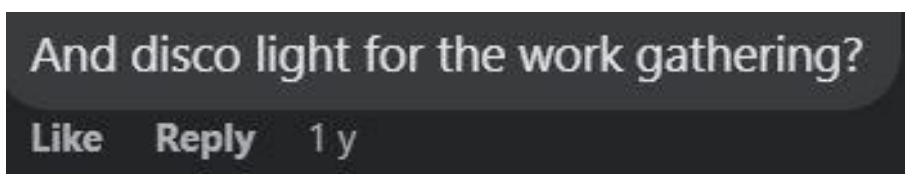
14: fan made image of Boris Johnson “Let’s party I’m in charge” – description of the parties decided upon by Boris Johnson – Description.



15: intertextual Gif of a song “Breaking the law, breaking the law!” – the lyrics reference the fact that the government broke the rules and the law – Reflection.



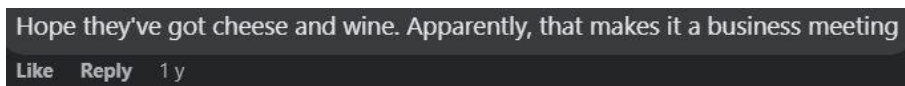
16: “clowns” – explicit attack calling the government ‘clowns’ – Ideological Judgement.



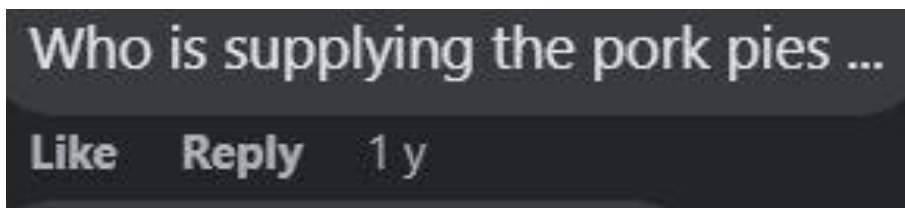
17: “And disco light for the work gathering?” – description and seeking further information on the parties – Description.



18: Gif of a monkey yawning and text “Booooring” – statement on the comedic value of the show – Emotional.



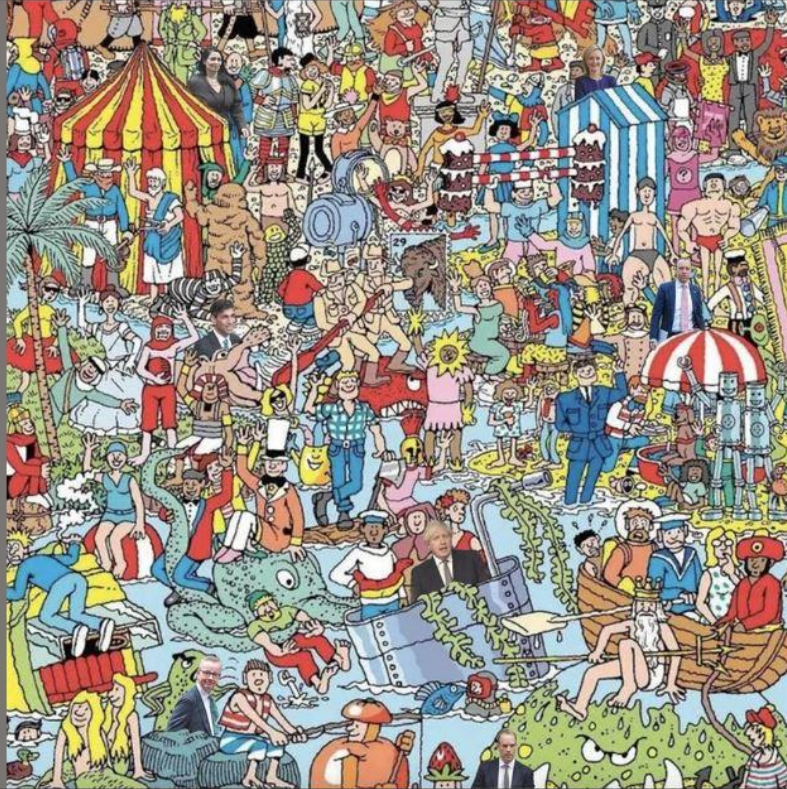
19: “Hope they’ve got cheese and wine. Apparently, that makes it a business meeting” – description of the parties – Description.



20: “Who is supplying the pork pies ...” – ‘cockney rhyming’ slang for a reflection on lying by politicians (e.g., pork pies = lies) – Reflection.

Post 21/12/2021 (1)

Several members of the cabinet deny involvement as image of yet another 'work meeting' appears online:



🤔👍 9.2K

244 comments 2.8K shares

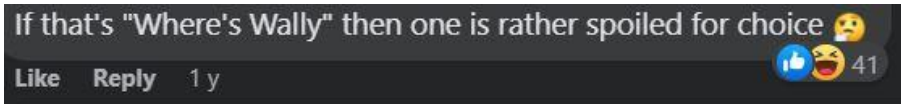
Comment 1 to 20 (post 21/12/2021 (1))

I have a feeling HIGNFY is gonna milk this for decades. 🤔👍👍👍
Like Reply 1 y 18
↳ 7 replies

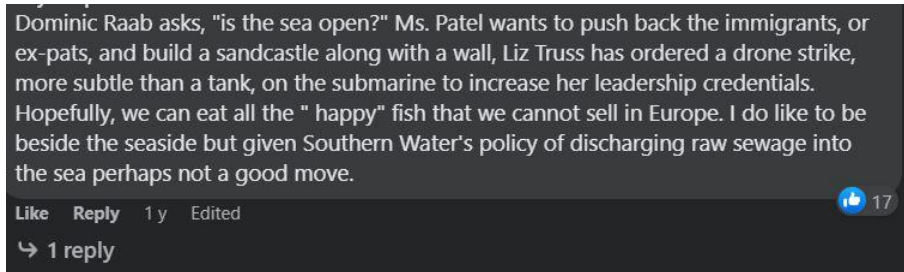
1: “I have a feeling HIGNFY is gonna milk this for decades. [laughing emoticon]” – reflection on the comedic value of the show – Emotional.

I must admit it took me a moment or two to find him...there's Wally, right in the middle, of the picture? Wait, there's more, I can see another one to his left and a little higher up! And I've found another one at the bottom as well. There are so many of them!
Like Reply 1 y Edited 2
↳ 1 reply

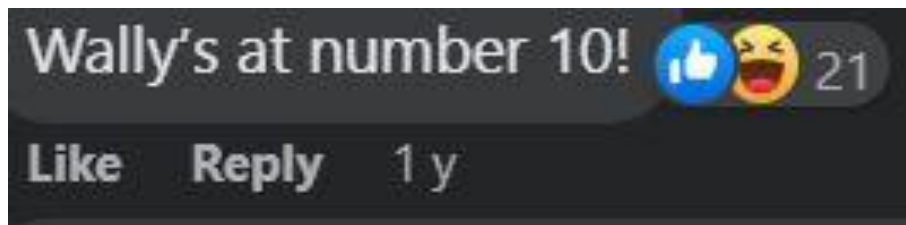
2: “there’s Wally, right in the middle, of the picture?” – explicitly calling the government inept – Ideological Judgment.



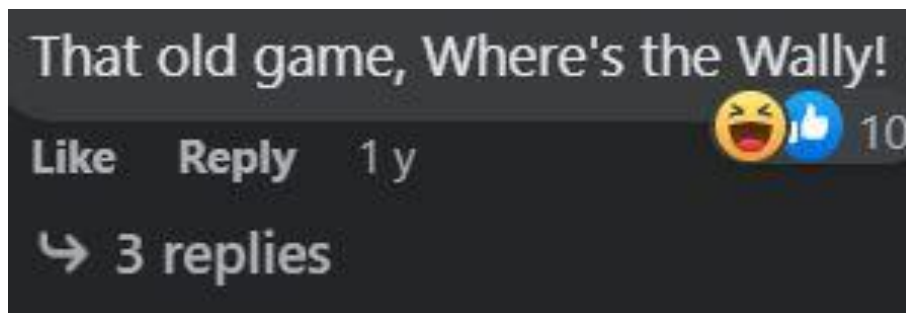
3: “one is rather spoiled for choice [hesitant emoticon]” - explicitly calling the government inept – Ideological Judgment.



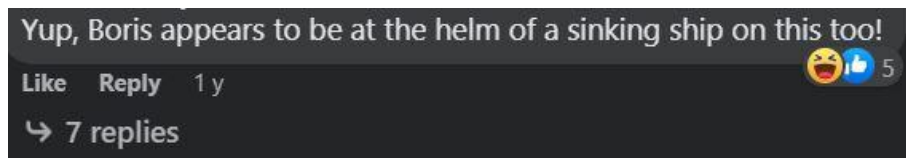
4: “Dominic Raab asks, ‘is the sea open?’ Ms. Patel wants to push back the immigrants, or ex-pats, and build a sandcastle along with a wall” – imagined description of the *Where’s Wally?* post – Description.



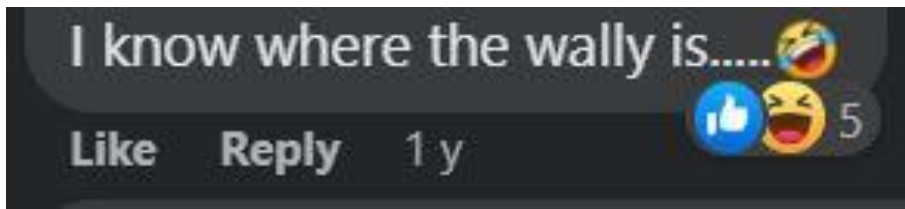
5: “Wally’s at number 10!” explicitly calling the government inept – Ideological Judgment.



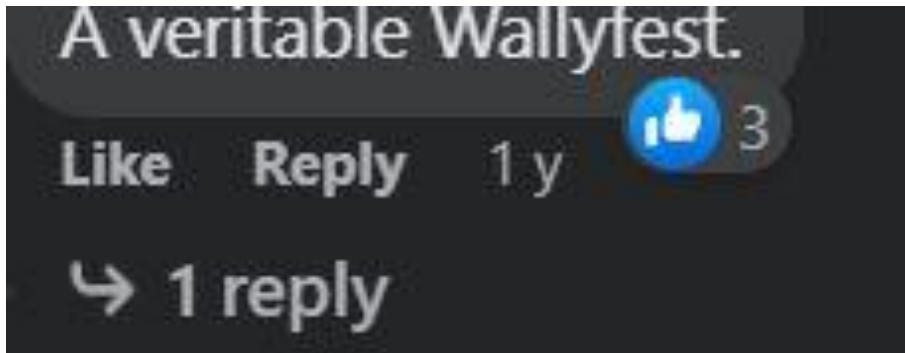
6: “Where’s the Wally!” explicitly calling the government inept – Ideological Judgment.



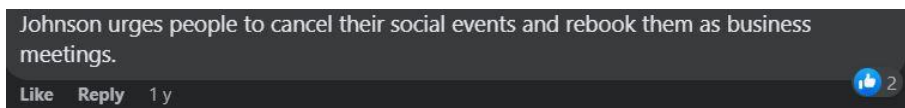
7: “Boris appears to be at the helm of sinking ship on this too!” – reflection on how Johnson is running the country – Reflection.



8: “I know where the wally is [laughing emoticon]” explicitly calling the government inept – Ideological Judgment.



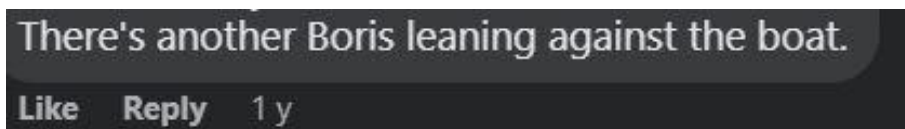
9: “Wallyfest.” explicitly calling the government inept – Ideological Judgment.



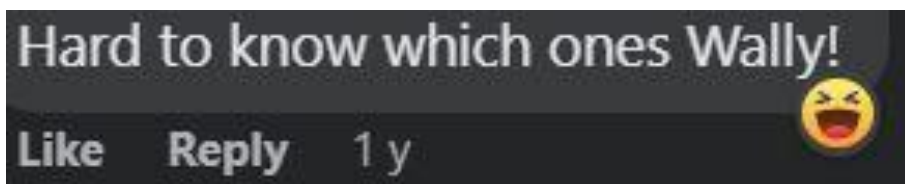
10: “Johnson urges people to cancel their social events and rebook them as business meetings.” – description of perceived political knowledge – Description.



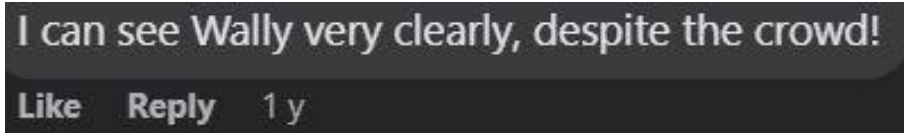
11: “Plenty of Wallies there...” explicitly calling the government inept – Ideological Judgment.



12: “There’s another Boris leaning against the boat.” – referring to Johnson as a nude king - Ideological Judgment.



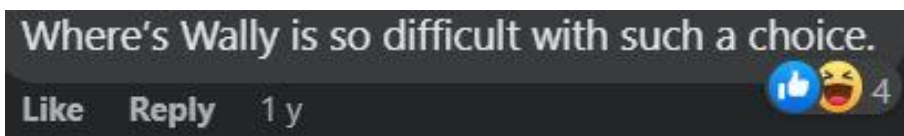
13: “Hard to know which ones Wally!” explicitly calling the government inept – Ideological Judgment.



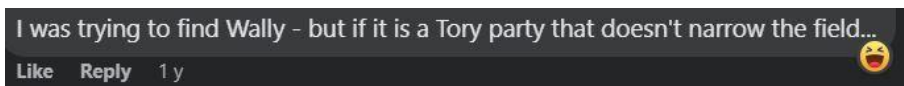
14: “I can see wally very clearly” explicitly calling the government inept – Ideological Judgment.



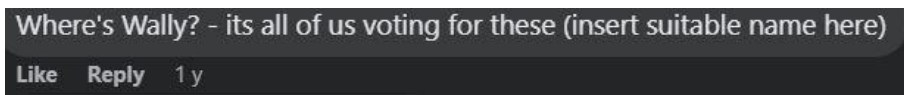
15: “I can see lots of Wallies here [eyes emoticon]” explicitly calling the government inept – Ideological Judgment.



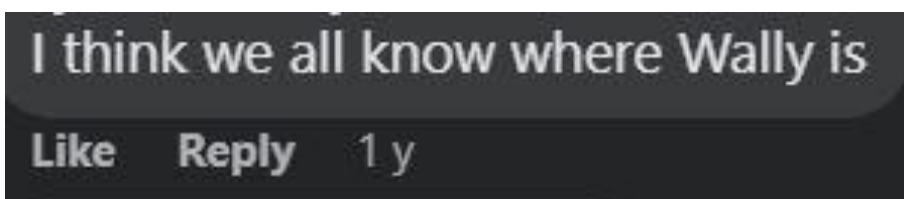
16: “Where’s Wally is so difficult with such a choice.” explicitly calling the government inept – Ideological Judgment.



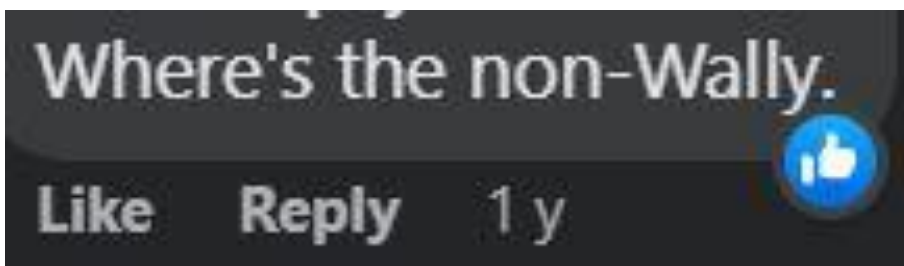
17: “but if it is a Tory party that doesn’t narrow the field...” explicitly calling the government inept – Ideological Judgment.



18: “Where’s Wally? – its all of us voting for these (insert suitable name here)” – explicitly calling all Tory voters inept – Ideological Judgement.



19: “ I think we all know where wally is” explicitly calling the government inept – Ideological Judgment.

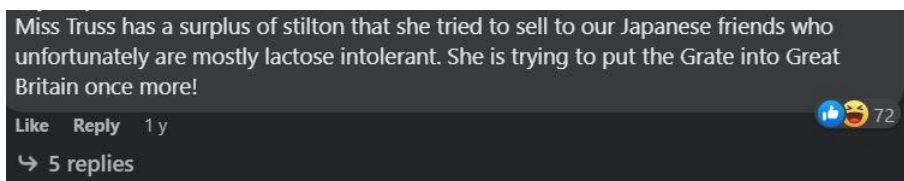


20: “Where’s the non-Wally.” explicitly calling the government inept – Ideological Judgment.

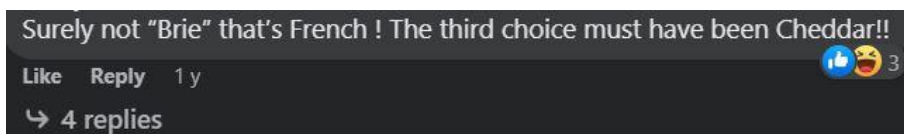
Post 21/12/2021 (2)



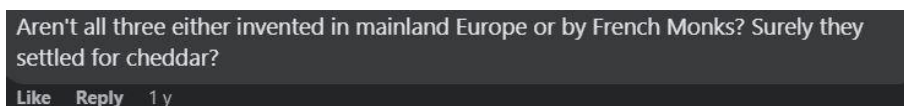
Comments 1 to 20 (post 21/12/2021 (2))



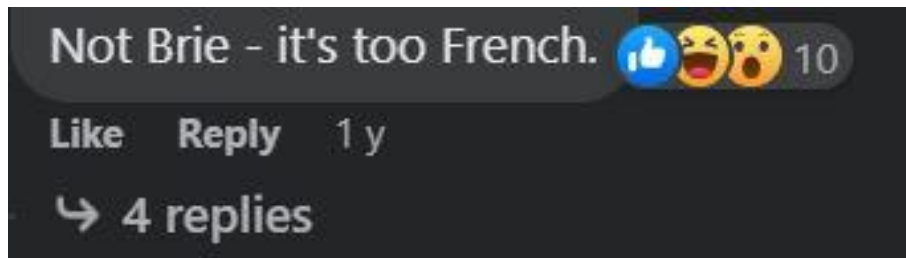
1: “Miss Truss has a surplus of stilton that she tried to sell to our Japanese friends” – description of perceived political knowledge – Description.



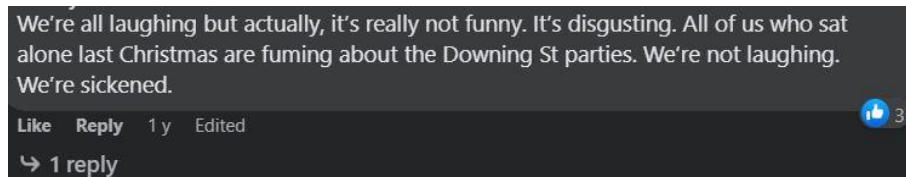
2: “Surely not ‘Brie’ that’s French ! The third choice must have been Cheddar!!” – reflection on the joke and conclusion in relation to Brexit – Reflection.



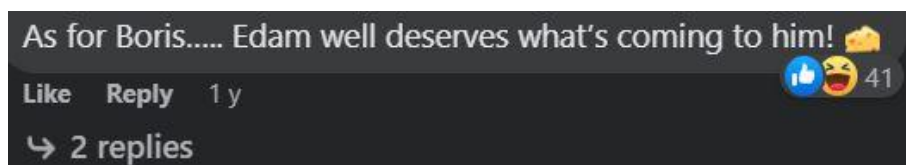
3: “Aren’t all three either invented in mainland Europe or by French monks? Surely they settled for cheddar?” - reflection on the joke and conclusion in relation to Brexit – Reflection.



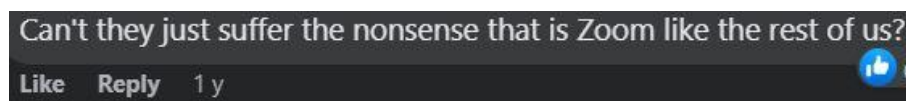
4: “Not Brie – It’s too French.” – conclusion in relation to Brexit – Reflection.



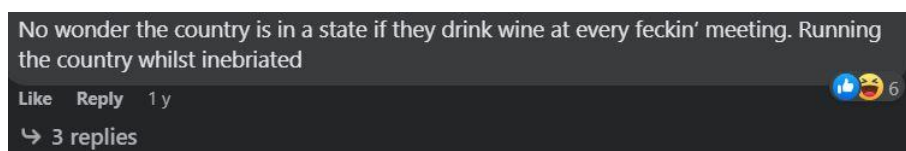
5: “it’s disgusting.” – questioning the comedic value of the post and reflecting on the implications of the situation and express their upset – Emotional.



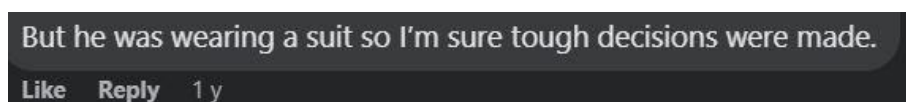
6: “As for Boris Edam well deserves what’s coming to him! [cheese emoticon]” – reflection and play on words on the situation regarding Johnson – Reflection.



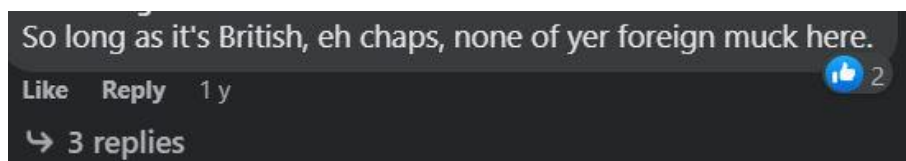
7: “Can’t they just suffer the nonsense that is Zoom like the rest of us?” – reflection on the gatherings and concluding that they should just use online meetings – Reflection.



8: “Running the country whilst inebriated” – reflection on the proliferation of alcohol at work – Reflection.



9: “I’m sure tough decisions were made.” – ironic description of the work meetings – Description.



10: “none of yer foreign muck here.” – imagined description of the Tory government’s reaction to foreign cheese – Ideological Judgement.

It won't be Brie. It will offend the bigoted brexshitters of this UK government.

Like Reply 1 y

11: “It will offend the bigoted brexshitters of this UK government” – explicit use of language to attack the government – Ideological Judgement.

Given the 'common sense' they've shown so far, I can only assume they went for the Wensleydale.

Like Reply 1 y



↳ 3 replies

12: “I can only assume they went for the Wensleydale.” – reflection and conclusion on the joke/cheese selection – Reflection.

You have got it all wrong with these french wines. You all seem to forgotten that Trussed Up got us a fabulous trade deal with the auzzies. It shiraz from here on in, at bargain prices, along with sheeps cheese.

As this deal has stitched up our farmers, and undercut them, wensleydale and cheddar is off. Its far more effective to ship around the world at those prices.

Get those bargains now....

Like Reply 1 y

13: “As this deal has stitched up our farmers, and undercut them, wensleydale and cheddar is off. It's far more effective to ship around the world at those prices.” – description based on perceived political knowledge – Description.

Best series of cheese related gags on this thread that I've ever seen.....

Like Reply 1 y Edited

14: “Best series of cheese related gags on this thread that I've seen.....” – reflection on the comedic value of the other comments – Emotional.

They're probably all too racist to have real Brie, unless it was that Somerset stuff...

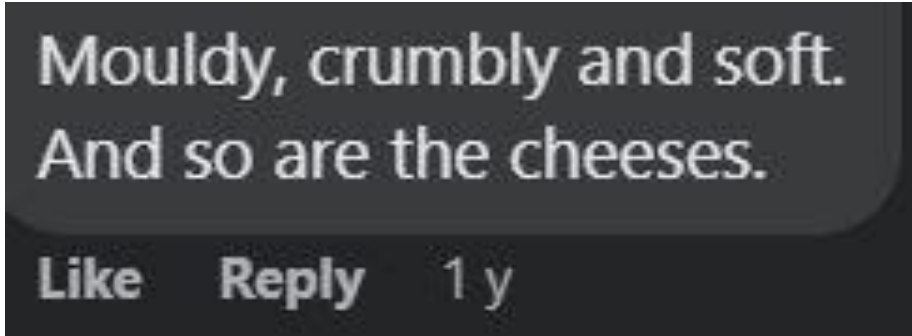
Like Reply 1 y

15: “They're probably all too racist to have real Brie” – explicit language calling out the government for being racist – Ideological Judgement.

C'me on! Brie!! What about Brexit! You can think of three British cheeses for the government board?!!

Like Reply 1 y

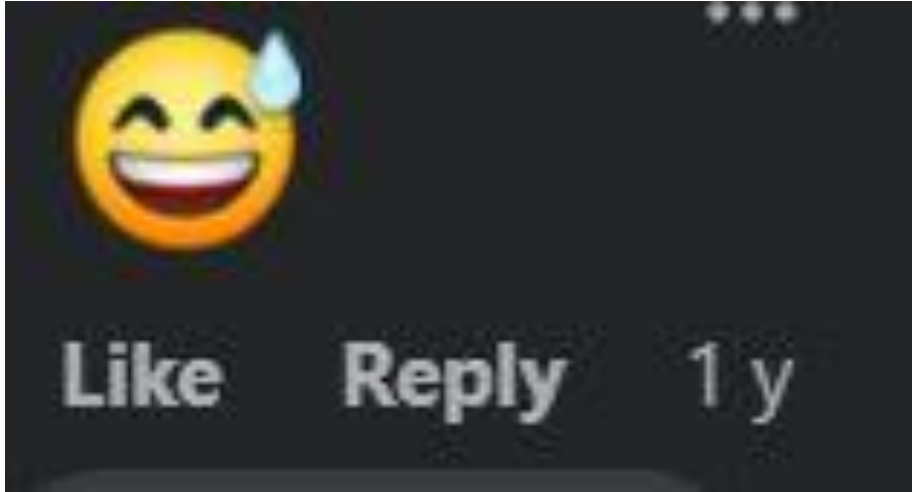
16: “You can [sic] think of three British cheese for the government board?!!” – reflection on a missed joke opportunity – Emotional.



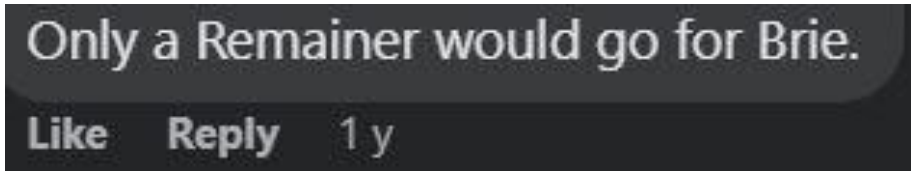
17: "Mouldy, crumbly and soft. And so are the cheeses." – explicit language against the government – Ideological Judgement.



18: intertextual Gif with text that reads "It's funny because it's true" – reflection on the comedic value of the post in relation to the political matter – Emotional.



19: "[laughing emoticon]" - reflection on the comedic value of the post – Emotional.

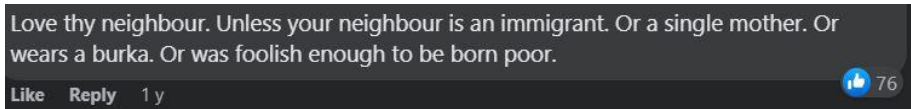


20: “Only a Remainder would go for Brie.” – explicit language use to show what the government might think of Brie – Ideological Judgement.

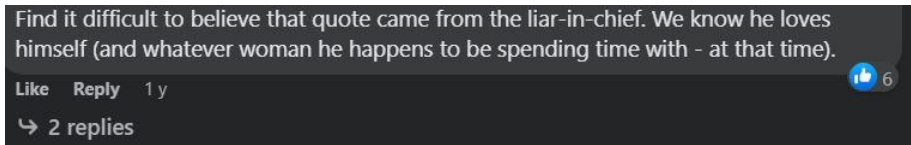
Post 24/12/2021



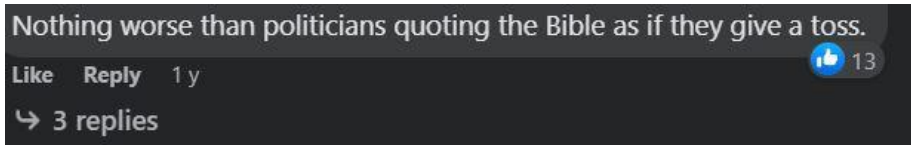
Comments 1 to 20 (post 24/12/2021)



1: “Unless your neighbour is an immigrant.” – imagined description of what Johnson meant from his speech – Ideological Judgement.




2: “Find it difficult to believe that quote came from the liar-in-chief.” – reflection on lying by politicians – Reflection.




3: “Nothing worse than politicians quoting the Bible as if they give a toss.” – description of Johnson’s speech and post – Description.

Appreciate the irony but his Xmas speech was plain cringe worthy. Perfect Christmas present this year would be him out of job in the New Year!

Like Reply 1 y  7


4: “Perfect Christmas present this year would be him out of job in the New Year!” – reflection and conclusion that Johnson’s should be fired – Reflection.

Or live across the channel in the EU

Like Reply 1 y Edited  2


5: “Or live across the channel in the EU” – imagined description of what Johnson meant from his speech – Ideological Judgement.

love your neighbour - do not vote conservative

Like Reply 1 y Edited  10


6: “do not vote conservative” – explicit statement that shows political affiliation – Ideological Judgment.

Numatic have released a new vacuum to sit alongside Henry, James, Basil, and Hetty. This is the Moral vacuum. It's called Boris. With fully extendable nose.


Like Reply 1 y  3

7: “This is the Moral vacuum. It’s called Boris. With fully extendable nose.” – reflection on moral dilemmas and lying by politicians – Reflection.

WOW! That was predictable. All the Labour-voting snowflakes suddenly crawling out of the woodwork!

Like Reply 1 y 

8: “All the Labour-voting snowflakes” – explicit statement that shows political affiliation – Ideological Judgement.

It'd be funny if it wasn't the sad truth. I hope he has some more parties this current strain is extremely virulent...! 

Like Reply 1 y

9: “It’d be funny if it wasn’t the sad truth.” – reflection on the political matter and explicit emotional statement (e.g., ‘sad’) – Emotional.

Or trying to flee war or persecution...

Like Reply 1 y

10: “Or trying to flee war or persecution...” – imagined description of how Johnson’s speech could have gone – Description.

Also not if there poor cos we ain't going to help them

Like Reply 1 y

11: "Also not if there poor" - imagined description of how Johnson's speech could have gone – Description.

Does Bojo think he is ruling by Divine Right because even his own party is wanting him out ?

Like Reply 1 y



12: "Does Bojo think he is ruling by Divine Right because even his own party is wanting him out?" – seeking extra information – Description.

If Boris quotes from the Bible does he burst into flames?

Like Reply 1 y

↳ 1 reply

13: "If Boris quotes from the Bible does he burst into flames?" - seeking extra information – Description.

"work meetings"

Like Reply 1 y

14: "work meetings" – ironic description of the meaning of work meetings – Description.

Or trying to cross the English Channel.

Or use food banks

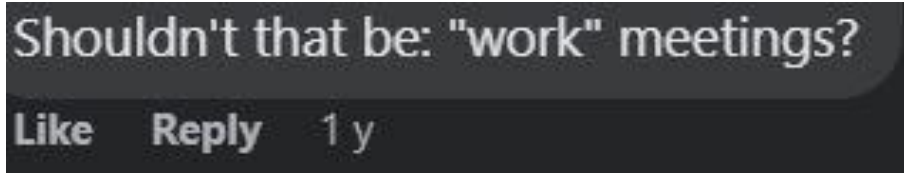
Or are northerners.

Or are Labour supporters.

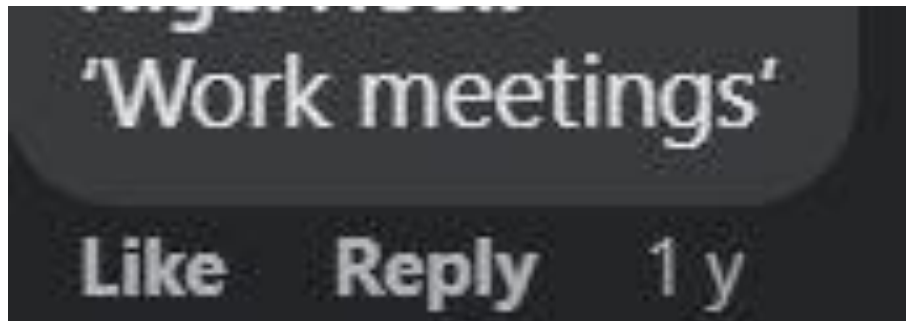
Or <insert own example here>

Like Reply 1 y Edited

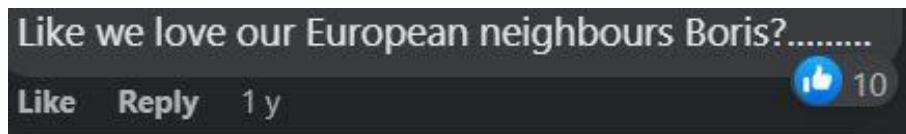
15: "Or trying to cross the English Channel." - imagined description of how Johnson's speech could have gone – Description.



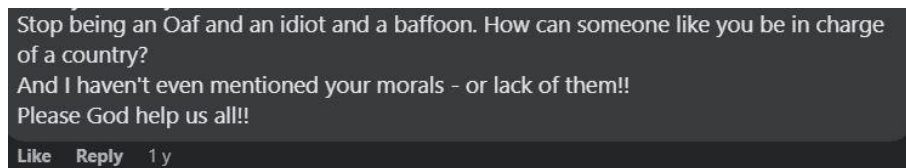
16: 'work' meetings?" - ironic questioning of the meaning of work meetings – Description.



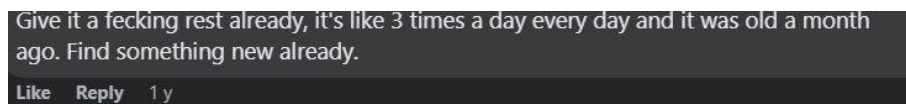
17: “ ‘work meetings’” - ironic description of the meaning of work meetings – Description.



18: “Like we love our European neighbours Boris?.....” – seeking further political information – Description.



19: “Stop being an Oaf and an idiot and a baffoon.” – explicit language against Boris Johnson – Ideological Judgement.



20: “Find something new already.” – questioning of the comedic value of the posts and show – Emotional.