THE SHAPING EFFECTS OF GRANDSTANDING IN THE MEDIA: EXPLORING PUBLIC

FIGURE JOE ROGAN'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO PUBLIC DIALOGUE ON THE COVID-19

HEALTH CRISIS

by

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Abstract

This research paper proposes a framework to examine grandstanding employed by public figures who influence how citizens form opinions and make decisions. This paper applies a case study approach to explore how comedian and YouTube personality, Joe Rogan, contributed to the conversation on the COVID-19 pandemic. More specifically, this paper analyzes how his deliberations are reflected in the media and what effects such contributions have on healthy public dialogue. A qualitative content analysis was performed to analyze a sample of Rogan's podcast transcripts on YouTube to detect instances of grandstanding, and a coding system was developed to categorize each video by its content. A quantitative analysis was also conducted to extend the study to examine media coverage and the effects of such behaviour on individuals. The findings provide insight into how Rogan fuels polarization and misinformation, and how such conduct stands in the way of the pursuit of truth. The results point to grandstanding as a successful strategy in status-seeking, gaining media traction, and making headlines. This study attempts to provide a clear indication of the threats of free-form discussion and exploratory dialogue on YouTube during COVID-19, as well as the effects of grandstanding in the media and beyond.

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Introduction

21st century online personalities have a tumultuous effect on the "elevated levels of ideological extremism in the United States" (Grubbs et al., 2020). This case study will (1) discuss theories of moral grandstanding, (2) how the theories illuminate the moral and political landscape, and (3) how such a fracture has accelerated the amplification effect of technology. By analyzing grandstanding on YouTube through "influencer" and self-identified intellectual Joe Rogan's videos on the COVID-19 pandemic, it becomes evident how YouTube has put Rogan on a digital pedestal, creating a space that further fuels polarization and the subsequent echo-chambers. Grandstanding theory helps explain how moral grandstanders behave and how they utilize YouTube to enhance their standing, later shifting to the psychological literature and the routes to social status (Tosi & Warmke, 2020).

YouTube's capacity to promote the "rapid-fire dissemination of information" reinforces existent concerns and allows for grandstanding to take many forms (Heim, 2018; para. 1). The aptitude of YouTube endorses fear as "increasing one's influence, rank or status is a common characteristic" of chaotic dialogue, which has vast effects on healthy public discourse (Tosi & Warmke, 2019). This paper argues that grandstanding contributes to significant problems for societal discourse as grandstanders seemingly address problems in a straightforward manner, but are really "ineffective" communication methods (Tosi & Warmke, 2020). That said, grandstanders often have reason not to resolve social problems at all, as doing so might eradicate opportunities to progress their personal interests.

Additionally, the extent to which grandstanding affects the media will be thoroughly analyzed. Joe Rogan, the most popular podcast producer and YouTube personality, has increasingly been reflected in contemporary media outlets that have a significantly superior

audience than his subscriber count. By grandstanding, Rogan has captured the most popular news agencies' attention, which further highlights the effect of grandstanding on the media and public discourse.

This study will also establish how grandstanding strategies and anti-expertise narratives play a significant role in the scarcity of information during the COVID-19 pandemic. Joe Rogan's podcast content on YouTube will be sampled and analyzed to determine how his inconsistencies reflect grandstanding attitudes. With an estimated "11 million listeners per episode," Rogan's comments have an immense influence on how his viewers behave, and subsequently how the media responds (Stecula and Motta, 2021). Thus, a sample of news articles engendered by Rogan's behaviour will be examined to better understand how such a significant public figure weighs into the conversation on the public health crisis.

By considering what happens in external media, how the news reports on and treats Rogan's behaviour, this study becomes a meta-analysis of news, where Rogan's grandstanding has created himself as the headline. With little previous research on grandstanding through media framing, an examination of media effects will be measured to recognize this shift in behaviour with respect to grandstanding during the COVID-19 pandemic. Analyzing various sources will help bring perspective to individual differences and the underlying motivations currently playing out both in the digital and analog world. By paying close attention to these themes, Rogan's attitudes, contradictions, and opinions will emerge as prime illustrations to understand his objectives and how he contributes to the COVID-19 narrative.

Literature Review

Moral Grandstanding

As illustrated by Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, human beings are naturally determined to pursue a superior position within their spheres of belonging. Grubbs et al. (2019) supported this notion and branded moral grandstanding as a theory in understanding our desires to pursue a higher status. More specifically, the study found that "moral grandstanding motivation [is] associated with status-seeking personality traits, as well as greater political and moral conflict in daily life" (Grubbs et al., 2019). There are two main avenues of status-seeking: dominance, which "refers to the tendency to seek social status by means of dominating or controlling opponents," often involving manipulation; and prestige, which "refers to the tendency to seek status through less caustic means" such as gaining respect among peers and is often "more inspirational in nature" (Grubbs et al., 2019).

Tosi and Warmke (2020) look at status-seeking through dominance and how they drive polarity. They define moral grandstanding as the "primary method in detecting why society is so politically and morally fractured" (Tosi & Warmke, 2020, p. 2). According to this definition, an individual who engages in moral grandstanding is "likely to use public discussion of morality and politics to impress others with their moral qualities" to boost their ranking (Grubbs et al., 2019). A key aspect of grandstanding, as outlined in the literature, is that involvement in a specific dialogue is motivated by the desire impress others. This type of discourse is a direct product of YouTube, one of the fastest growing platforms of the 21st century; the platform that allows for the development of grandstanding strategies (Grubbs et al., 2019). To understand the power of YouTube in reaching untapped audiences and fueling dialogue, it is imperative to understand the individuals that control the channel.

Alternative media personality, comedian, and self-identified intellectual Joe Rogan has become a monumental online figure through his extremely popular brand, which involves "rejecting mainstream norms and embracing controversial ideologies" (Baderi, 2020, para 6). Arman Baderi (2020) states that grandstanding is most easily identified on YouTube by observing self-identified "intellectual influencers," reinforcing the significance of grandstanding literature (para 6). Rogan's podcast "The Joe Rogan Experience," which inhabits YouTube, has helped confirm the grandstanding identification process, as the show embraces "hour-long, free-form, informal interviewing styles" (Baderi, 2020, para 2). Suggestive of shifts from traditional media gatekeepers to independent platform shows like Rogan's "signify a rejection of the trend toward soundbite consideration" – shorter clips of speech and more to the point discussions. (Baderi, 2020, para 2).

Grandstanding literature argues that such unstructured and off-the-record discussions, especially ones concealed in grandstanding strategies, are likely to lead to conflict around moral and political matters because of the loud, intimidating nature of the conversation (Resnick et al., 2019). Additionally, the literature helps reveal that Rogan is on YouTube to boost his status and monetize his platform, "lead[ing] people to adopt extreme and implausible claims," further diminishing societal dialogue (Resnick et al., 2019).

A primary result of grandstanding and anti-expertise sentiment is what is known as pseudo-intellectualism, which will be used as a descriptor throughout this paper – a corollary to anti-expertise – to point to the effects of both grandstanding and anti-expertise. Nevertheless, pseudo-intellectualism is used to illustrate certain situations caused by what was found throughout the coding process, rather than coding for pseudo-intellectualism itself.

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The following two sections will further dissect the theory of grandstanding and the many forms it can be employed to reach a definite objective.

Pseudo-Intellectualism

The traditional role of an intellectual is to help push the pursuit of knowledge forward (Karpova et al., 2016). Society has reached a point where we have turned away from traditional intellectuals and have focused our attention on self-proclaimed intellectuals who dominate the online domain. 21st century personalities that proclaim intellectualism have taken advantage of the abundance of accessible information and have started to exhibit claims that have no foundation in thorough scholarship (Karpova et al., 2016). Tom Nichols (2017) states that instead of relying on academic credentials, we have become a society focused on listening to pseudo-intellectuals online (p. 2). Humanity has reached a point where "ignorance is a virtue" as we continue to reject the advice of experts and turn to pseudo-intellectuals (Nichols, 2017, p.3). While the internet continues to provide individuals with more information, it also offers them a threatening illusion of knowledge (Turkle, 2011).

Joe Rogan was chosen as the topic of this case study as he embodies the pseudo-intellectual. YouTube emerges as the primary platform for Rogan to promote pseudo-intellectual ideologies as a method of grandstanding, which often dismisses truth as well as additional opinions. Nichols (2017) condemns the many forces trying to undermine the experts and blames both "higher education and the internet in fostering the explosion of media options for the anti-expertise and pseudo-intellectual sentiment" (p. 87). More specifically, platforms like YouTube are criticised for the quick-fire of information as the channel that encourages the anti-expertise movement (Nichols, 2017; p. 88). Pseudo-intellectuals like Rogan demonstrate that the rejection of advice from experts is to "proclaim independence and authority over those who understand the

facts" (Nichols, 2017; p. 88). The literature suggests that promoting pseudo-intellectualism is a way for one to protect their ego (Nichols, 2017).

Consequently, society has grown hostile to expertise, reinforcing why a toxic dialogue is present both online and offline. Tom Wolfe's (2015) *Beware the Rise of the Pseudo-Intellectual*, states that the "true enemy" of fundamental ideas is the pseudo-intellectual, "or anyone who describes themselves as an "intellectual," as it indicates the "pseudo" by the very act of such self-description" (Wolfe, 2015; para. 3). More critically, the literature helps to identify the difference between a self-declared intellectual and an individual with real intellectual credentials. The individuals of "intellectual achievement are people who increase the sum of human knowledge," while the self-labelled intellectuals are people who have limited knowledge in a given field (Wolfe, 2015; para 5). Thus, the self-identified intellectual is not qualified to deliver the facts and therefore, cannot label themselves a rational intellectual.

The literature highlights the role of cynicism in society and how grandstanders "use pretentious hubris to mask human vulnerabilities" – another practice of grandstanding (Wolfe, 2015; para 6). Wolfe (2015) uses the term "moral indignation" to understand toxic discourse and highlights philosopher Marshall McLuhan's (1971) declaration "that moral indignation is a standard strategy for endowing the idiot with dignity" (para 7). McLuhan's (1971) account through Wolfe's (2015) work applies to Rogan's behaviour on YouTube as he utilizes both strategies of grandstanding and moral indignation to touch his audience in such a way that reinforces his ignorance and inexperience. Similarly, Drenth et al. (2003) examines the origins of growing disapproval toward scientific successes in the media, where "three forms of hostility are distinguished: anti-science, para-science, and pseudo-science" (Drenth et al., 2003). Most notably, the concept of pseudo-science is predominantly prevalent among the three forms of

opposition (Drenth et al., 2003). Pseudo-science derives from "etymology which clarifies what characteristics pseudo-science has in addition to being non- or un-scientific" (Hansson, 2017, section 3.1).

Brain and Baigrie (1988) identified pseudo-science practices and suggested that "what is objectionable about these beliefs is that they masquerade as genuinely scientific ones" (p. 438). Brain and Baigrie (1988) assume that to be pseudo-scientific, a pursuit should fulfil the subsequent criteria: "1) it is not scientific, and 2) its major proponents try to create the impression that it is scientific" (Hansson, 1996, section 3.2). However, what precedes the pseudo-scientific criteria is vital to the apprehensions of the philosophy of science, which play a significant role in today's political and societal climate, where "the accelerated diffusion of information has led to the rise of contemporary charlatans" (Hansson, 1996; Heim, 2018).

Karl Popper (1962) examined falsification theories and adopted the view that pseudo-intellectualism is "the key to most of the problems in the philosophy of science" (p. 42) and proposed the Falsification Principle as a way of delineating science from non-science (McLeod, 2020, para 1). According to Popper (1962), science and fact would best be developed using "logical and deductive reasoning" (McLeod, 2020, para 1). He specified that "logical falsifiability produces problems [that] lead to major disasters," further suggestive of the threats of 21st century self-proclaimed intellectuals (pp. 1146-1147).

Gaslighting

Another principle form of grandstanding focuses on a type of emotional manipulation scientists call "gaslighting." This phenomenon focuses on power, control, and how the "gaslighter" behaves to emotionally manipulate their audience (Azarian, 2020). The spree of gaslighting has been accelerated by preceding politicians such as former President Donald

Trump, as well as those who often practiced persuasion and manipulation. Psychology literature strengthens the argument that Rogan exhibits gaslighting tendencies to attain power, aiming to influence public perception. Psychologist Bobby Azarian (2020) suggested that "through persistent lying, misdirection, and contradiction, the gaslighter attempts to delegitimize the victim's beliefs by confusing and destabilizing them" (Azarian, 2020; para. 1). Gaslighting can be applied to the grandstanding literature to conceptualize the theory further, as it is considered another way of boosting one's status (Tosi & Warmke, 2020). As Warmke (2019) notes, "grandstanders are a kind of social free rider, they get the benefits of being heard," while receiving the reaction they desire, "without contributing to any valuable discourse" (Tosi & Warmke, 2020).

The literature confirms the intent of the gaslighter: to stir dialogue by providing their desired audience with information and then leaving it up to them to contest and develop conclusions for themselves (Tosi & Warmke, 2020). In other words, the gaslighter provokes the conversation and quickly departs, ultimately devaluing public dialogue. Through this kind of psychological manipulation, the gaslighter attempts to alter public opinion while convincing their audience that falsehood is the truth (Grubbs et al., 2019).

Preceding Propaganda and Framing Strategies

Drawing from historical research on propaganda techniques, the work of Edward Bernays (1928) emphasizes how the rise of mass communication focused its attention on how persuasion was used to control a public. Bernays (1928) provides a framework to understand modern day communication and grandstanding strategies practiced by society's most influential actors. *Propaganda* (1928) speaks to how audiences process information given to them by dominant actors throughout time, revealing the enormous shift in the last century. Suggestive of this shift,

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propaganda strategy has not changed significantly since it was first developed, but it has been amplified as communication technology has advanced (p. 59). The literature highlights the unwillingness of society to accept new beliefs and how the psychology of public persuasion was developed to erode this mentality and welcome new ideas by manipulating the human mind and positioning individuals with strong motivations at the forefront. The literature accentuates that these individuals are the ones who continue to ascend as dominant figures to sway civic perception (Bernays, 1928, p. 161).

The literature highlights a position of powerlessness where prevailing figures can manipulate public opinion (Havel & Wilson, 1985, pp. 23-96). However, with the emergence of new technologies and the subsequent platforms, society was bound to confront an abundance of different actors, all of which will affect their decisions as citizens (Bakir et al., 2018).

New forms of persuasion and influence manifest themselves within all spheres of society. Erving Goffman (1974) illuminates the shaping effects of mass media and influential actors on contemporary social platforms. *Frame Analysis* (1974) works to isolate how such shaping affects traditionalism and natural ways of being. The frames identified in the literature are "abstractions that work to organize or structure message meaning" (p. 20). These frames work alongside the individual using them to shape perception in a way that deliberately tells an audience how to think. In addition to strategically framing how individuals perceive material, Goffman's (1974) framing theory focuses on how information is presented in a way that restricts the audience from considering the alternative perspectives (Bernays, 1928).

The framing literature addresses framing theory as an inevitable communication strategy, one that has been taken to a new level where information absorption operates at the level of the subconscious (Bernays, 1928, p. 59). Goffman (1974) implies that as technology continues to

develop, the individuals that drive these machines are offered alternative avenues to persuade the minds of their audience.

Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw (1999) indicated that the media draws the public to specific topics and leaves it up to the figures who govern these platforms to present the information within a particular frame. Drawing from Goffman (1974), recognized as *second-level agenda setting*, McCombs, Shaw, and Weaver (1997) branded this theory to describe the "impact of the salience of characteristics of media coverage on audiences' interpretation of specific material" (Scheufele 1999, p.103). This theory is echoed by Tosi and Warmke (2020), who suggest that influential figures, particularly politicians, are notorious for using framing strategies to grandstand, because "they have strong incentives to do so" (p. 140).

Previous politically specific grandstanding studies have highlighted the power of public debates and their influence on public opinion (DeGregorio 1992; Kriner & Schikler 2014). The increased political salience of public debates led by politicians has highlighted why politicians use such public events to grandstand and send political messages (DeGregorio, 1992). Politicians naturally participate in grandstanding politics to win public commendation – "creating the perception of action by picking easy targets" (Michaux, 2010). Consequently, political grandstanding is imbued with the power to harm society. These problems are rarely addressed nor understood by society, permitting them to reoccur as part of "a cycle of collective societal suffering" (Kriner & Schikler, 2014).

As suggestive of the grandstanding literature, political grandstanding is societally hazardous as "politics present the ideal theater for narcissism to be expressed" through public reflections masked in vanity (Tosi and Warmke, 2020, p. 140). Examples of political grandstanding are found through historical leaders such as former U.S. Presidents, Bill Clinton

and Donald Trump, have utilized grandstanding strategies throughout their Presidential campaigns and terms. Tosi and Warmke (2020) suggest that politicians who grandstand have substantial motivations to do whatever it may be to develop better opportunities for themselves as public figures (Tosi & Warmke, 2020). Consequently, political grandstanding sets a precarious example for contemporary media personalities to grandstand on their respective platforms in an effort to mobilize their audience and advance their personal benefits. An element that the literature fails to address is the effect of grandstanding strategies on mainstream media outlets and beyond, which is why this research is undeniably vital to conduct.

The theory and previous research synthesized in this literature review measured grandstanding theory, pseudo-intellectualism, and gaslighting as means of control, and reflected on historical propaganda and communication strategies in a political climate. The emergent strategies are supported by the literature and present an opportunity for this study to be conducted through an intersectional approach, and thus, the research questions posed emerged. While the analysis consists of emergent coding, the preliminary coding categories work to identify grandstanding measured from the concepts discussed in the literature review.

Conceptual Framework

By conducting a longitudinal case study, grounded in grandstanding theory of Joe Rogan's commentary on the COVID-19 pandemic, and applying the tools of psychology and moral-decision making, it is hypothesized that Rogan is motivated by the drive for social status rather than expressing his authentic perspectives. By using grandstanding as a clarifying mechanism in foreseeing conflict, this study examines not only Rogan's podcast content on YouTube, but his effects on the media and healthy civic dialogue.

The focus of this case study centers on grandstanding theory, anti-expertise sentiments, and gaslighting strategies, and how these existing theories play a significant role in how the public thinks about the COVID-19 pandemic. Rogan is analyzed as a self-identified intellectual engaging in a public health debate, as are the effects his grandstanding and anti-expertise attitudes have on public perception. This study draws on the media uproar caused by Rogan's behaviour with respect to the pandemic and highlights the dangers of free-form online discussion that promotes uncertainty and hesitation in an already ambiguous communication environment. A primary qualitative content analysis of a sample of Rogan's videos within the last year was conducted to locate his contradictions which reflect grandstanding attitudes. A secondary quantitative analysis accompanies the video examination which focuses on a sample of news articles and citation coding to trace what the media is reporting. By focusing on Rogan's inconsistent discourse, the economics of grandstanding, and the platform itself, Rogan's intents are exposed, along with the effects of grandstanding in the media, and how such unrestricted behaviour works to devalue public moral dialogue.

The preliminary research questions of this study are the following:

1) Based on grandstanding theory, does Joe Rogan represent an archetype of grandstanding?

2) Is there a relationship between grandstanding and media citation?

Methodology

This case study implemented a mixed methods approach to conduct exploratory research. It was deemed necessary to employ a mixed methods approach as it "provide[s] a more complete understanding of the phenomenon under study" and answers the research questions most effectively (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2013, p. 5).

Most YouTube personalities cannot compare with Rogan's subscriber count and viewership, even after relocating to Spotify, where "The Joe Rogan Experience" podcast episodes are produced in full. Rogan's YouTube presence makes him one of the most recognized public figures as his focus remains to provide his audience with a breadth of guests and a wide range of opinions. The appeal of his content derives from his ability to deliver an entertaining variety of dialogue and diverse views on various topics, particularly with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic. While Rogan is active on various social media platforms, only YouTube was analyzed to determine how his inconsistencies and contradictions reflect grandstanding attitudes. It is through Rogan's podcast clips on YouTube that bare discussions that promote harmful pseudo-science narratives regarding the public health crisis.

The analysis aimed to determine how inconsistencies, anti-expertise, and gaslighting are products of grandstanding. This research first employed a qualitative content analysis to investigate Rogan's presence on YouTube, his effects on his audience, and how his communication strategies have evolved throughout the pandemic, allowing him to drive online and offline conversations into a hectic space. The purpose of the qualitative component is to locate Rogan's discrepancies and messages to expose his true intent. This research method provides an adequate framework with respect to how Rogan fuels chaotic discourse through grandstanding strategies. Most notably, by employing a qualitative approach, the theories

discussed in the literature will highlight Rogan's objective: to fuel the democratization of information, boost his status, and monetize his platform.

In addition to the qualitative content analysis, a quantitative investigation was conducted to investigate the effects of Rogan's grandstanding in the media. It was necessary to employ both qualitative and quantitative research methods, as this approach permits for a meta-analysis, which is beneficial in identifying grandstanding imbued within Rogan's content.

Data Collection

Rogan launched his podcast, "The Joe Rogan Experience" in 2009, which quickly made its way up the rankings. In 2015, it became world's highest earning podcast, "receiving millions of views per episode" (Eadicicco, 2015). Since December 2020, all episodes have been exclusively licensed to Spotify, yet episodes of the podcast are uploaded to YouTube under Rogan's account @PowerfulJRE. For the scope of this research, the first analysis will begin by looking at podcast content starting in January 2020, where the nature of the conversation shifted when COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic. The selected time frame for the first analysis (2020-2021) is due to Rogan's boost in popularity, viewership, and shift in discourse, all established on account of the pandemic.

All Rogan's podcast episodes follow a similar structure: a short introductory clip of his renowned logo, followed by approximately a 3-hour, free-form exposition with his featured guest(s). Since Rogan's podcast episodes run rather long, fans favour the clips on YouTube to participate in the discussion, as YouTube viewers value shorter clips of dialogue and more succinct discussions (Baderi, 2020, para 2). Though the discussions welcomed by YouTube are much shorter, they highlight more controversial segments.

Throughout the pandemic, Rogan's video structure remained consistent, however YouTube clips became slightly longer as discussion concerning COVID-19 incited lengthier conversations. Rogan's universe of podcast guests range from experts in epidemiology to self-deemed "credible" individuals who spew dangerous conspiracy theories and misinformation. The political and reliability spectrum where such individuals reside is imperative to note as the sampled videos considered each featured guest and where they lie. This spectrum is further investigated throughout this study, given the current state of the pandemic and the perils that surface when both Rogan and his guest(s) review health facts.

Within the selected time frame (2020-2021), Rogan has uploaded hundreds of videos to YouTube, however, given the magnitude of this research, 21 videos were sampled to make feasible connections. YouTube clips were chosen based on topic of discussion, title of the clip, or guest(s) featured. To accurately analyze Rogan's grandstanding effects on public dialogue surrounding the pandemic, episode titles and present keywords such as "COVID-19," "Pandemic," or "Vaccine" were sought upon when selecting clips to analyze.

The selected videos range from approximately 11 to 15 minutes in length, with a few selected videos analyzed in full (approximately 3-hours). The sampled clips expose Rogan's flexible views on the pandemic, as well as the motivations behind his behaviour. Nonetheless, the purpose of this analysis was to gain a sense of how someone as influential as Joe Rogan contributed to the COVID-19 dialogue and how he effected a major global challenge.

To accurately answer the second research question, a second analysis was conducted to examine the far-reaching effects of grandstanding, revealing how the news treats misinformation and responds to such behaviour. This meta-analysis approach is to illuminate how Rogan's

communication strategies have shifted in the pandemic, and how society must grasp the dangers of anti-expertise grandstanders who are given an abundance of problematic power.

To retrieve the articles for the second analysis, keyword searches were conducted using the academic database, Nexis Uni. The keywords consisted of "COVID-19," "Joe Rogan," and "Vaccines" between 2020 and 2021. A quantitative analysis was then conducted to account for the number of mentions in mainstream media during the selected time frame. This search resulted in 569 mentions of Rogan, and the sample of nine was selected due to saturation.

To better understand the effect of Rogan's grandstanding in the media, four additional searches were conducted for mentions of Rogan at notable points in time for reporting: Pre-COVID-19 (Jan 1 2015 (the year Rogan rose in fame) – Dec 31 2019), the initial emergence of COVID-19 (Jan 1 2020 – Feb 29 2020), during the heart of COVID-19 but pre-vaccines (Mar 1 2020 – Apr 22 2021), and the controversial post-vaccine period (Apr 23, 2021 – June 30, 2021). Expectantly, this search demonstrates the media's consistency in reporting on Rogan, and points to the possibility that grandstanding is what gives Rogan the credibility he desires.

The article analysis enabled the research to extend beyond the realm of YouTube into how such behaviours are reflected in mainstream media and ultimately through public discourse. Citation coding permitted for the analysis of what the media is presenting and how this can be traced back to the preliminary grandstanding codes from the podcast analysis. This approach permitted for the use of media citation as a social use of language as the point of analysis.

By looking at media narratives and examining modal verbs, the power of both Rogan and YouTube are underscored as the analysis attests to how Rogan's grandstanding sentiments have succeeded. By comparing the codes of grandstanding from the podcast analysis to how the media represents it through the citation analysis, sufficient connections were drawn.

Data Analysis

The transcripts for each selected video were collected to perform coding on the dialogue. In examining the transcripts, each video was analyzed for existent themes, patterns, guest appearance, communication tactics, and manipulative measures that suggest chaotic discourse. The construction of the codebook consisted of emergent coding, which discloses themes that indicate Rogan's moral language stimulates contagious banter, working to fracture society and fuel polarization. The coding process consisted of emergent coding with certain codes informed by the literature review, and was created based on frames that surfaced from the theory as well as the recognizable codes from the video transcripts.

A deductive qualitative content analysis was first conducted to examine Rogan's video content. This method permitted for the breakdown of language, communication strategy, and topic of discussion to suggest behaviours of grandstanding, anti-expertise sentiments, and methods of gaslighting. Each pre-identified category partners with a variable to categorize the strength of a claim; variables are marked as "latent," communication in a subtle, indirect manner, or "overt," blatant, unconcealed communication.

Drawing from the literature review and Tosi and Warmke's (2020) grandstanding theory, the preliminary coding categories can be found in *Table 1* (see *Appendix B* for detailed grandstanding coding categories). The preliminary grandstanding codes are also described in detail in the subsequent section.

Table 1

Preliminary Codes: Grandstanding Theory

Category	Sub-Category
Grandstanding	Self-Promotion
	Excessive Displays of Emotion
	Piling On
	Ramping Up
	Trumping Up
	Calling Out

The codes in *Table 1* are previously informed by preceding studies to determine how individuals operate grandstanding tactics. These codes signify a framework to guide the podcast transcript coding process in identifying instances of grandstanding. After analyzing the transcripts with the preliminary grandstanding codes, it became evident that grandstanding practices were often located and concealed in thick discussion with guest(s) who have strong opinions of their own.

After identifying grandstanding imbedded in the transcripts with the above preliminary codes, it became essential to code for additional categories that will further help isolate the patterns and inconsistencies in Rogan's dialogue. Thus, the categories were extended to better analyze Rogan's content, as the grandstanding codes alone were not ample to assist in identifying communicative patterns. *Table 2* presents the categories and sub-categories produced based on fundamental expectations of Rogan's conduct which embody grandstanding.

Table 2

Preliminary Codes: Podcast Transcript Analysis

Category	Description	Sub Category
Gaslighting	A strategy of grandstanding where one psychologically manipulates the other, leaving them powerless and confused.	N/A

Diminishment	When one diminishes themselves and their argument in an ironical way, when they are simply deliberately practicing the virtue of humility.	N/A
Anti-Expertise	Rejecting the advice of experts is "to assert autonomy, a way for [individuals] to insulate their increasingly fragile egos from ever being told they're wrong" (Nichols, 2017).	Convenient use of expertise when it suits the argument.
		Resistance to intellectual authority.
Conspiracy Framework	Discussion around the belief that a powerful organization is responsible for a given event.	COVID-19 Conspiracy.
Inconsistencies	Discussion that contains variance, discrepancy, and contradiction, particularly from the point of view of truth, reason, or logic.	COVID -19 Vaccinations.
		Origin of COVID-19.
		Mask Use.
		Seriousness of the pandemic.

In addition to the qualitative content analysis based on the podcast transcripts, a quantitative analysis was performed to examine news coverage of Rogan and the frequency of reporting on him as an individual. Subsequently, a sample of nine out of the 569 articles were selected for a discourse analysis to analyze linguistic evidence of meaning. This part of the analysis drew connections between what the media focused on and the codes that emerged from the podcast transcripts. The nine sampled articles were a result of attaining saturation while performing the keyword search described in the preceding data collection section. This examination used citation as a social use of language and as the point of analysis while looking at the data quantitatively.

Table 3 displays the preliminary codes for the news citation analysis, which emerged after the podcast coding process was complete. The following codes highlight the importance of connecting the references in the sampled articles to latent and overt aspects of grandstanding from the podcast analysis.

Table 3

Preliminary Codes: News Citation Analysis

Category	Description
Citation	How news media is citing Rogan (i.e., quote, mention, paraphrase).
Sentiment	How serious the news responds to Rogan's claims.
Misinformation Indication	How the news reacts to misinformation.
Recognition of Fame	How the media addresses Rogan's fame and character.

The coding categories identified in *Table 3* that were used to analyze the sampled articles were based on previously identified grandstanding strategies (see *Appendix E*). To properly examine Rogan's effect on the media, the citation coding aimed to record instances of how the media reports on Rogan's assertions. Beyond Rogan discussing misinformation on his podcast, the emergent citation coding, guided by grandstanding theory, strived to identify patterns and other elements relating to grandstanding and how latent and overt claims are reflected in the media. Upon conducting the qualitative analysis of Rogan's videos and the quantitative analysis of news coverage, parallels were drawn with respect to the prevalence and impact of grandstanding and anti-expertise sentiments.

Results: Findings and Analysis

Throughout the process of analyzing Rogan's podcast transcripts on YouTube, as well as the sampled news articles from various international outlets, the following research questions guided the analysis:

RQ 1: Based on grandstanding theory, does Joe Rogan represent an archetype of grandstanding?

Researchers have located several techniques of grandstanding that have been effectively used in how certain individuals interact with a large audience (Tosi & Warmke, 2020). Various strategies of grandstanding, as outlined in the literature review, have suggested that certain communicative techniques can significantly influence a magnitude of people. These techniques were measured as a foundation to help conduct the grandstanding coding process. The effective techniques of emotional displays, piling on, ramping up, trumping up, and calling out were in evidence to varying degrees throughout the sampled videos. While examining the transcripts and looking for both latent and overt instances of each grandstanding sub-category, it was discovered that not all detected examples of each grandstanding sub-category identified with both latent and overt variables; some sub-categories were matched with only one latent or overt example. The video samples are labelled by number and are further detailed in *Appendix A.* The following tables exhibit the most principle identified example(s) from the data analyzed.

Self-Promotion. The grandstanding strategy of self-promotion was not often identified in the sampled videos. It is worth noting that within additional podcast episodes (outside of the COVID-19 time frame), there have been instances of discussion for the purpose of endorsing Rogan as an individual. While Rogan has used self-promotion in the past, the videos sampled did not present this strategy directly but did obliquely through moral talk. As described in the

grandstanding literature, one uses "moral talk for self-promotion," further demonstrating that "it is the thing you say in order to satisfy your desire for recognition" (Tosi & Warmke, 2020).

Excessive Displays of Emotion. The concept of expressing excessive emotion encourages individuals to embrace and adopt certain claims. As illustrated by Tosi and Warmke (2020), a grandstander will "exaggerate emotional displays in taking ideological positions" (Tosi & Warmke, 2020). The grandstander will promote ideas that are manifested in the ascendancy of emotion over reason within certain dialogue and expect that their audience will react on a more emotional, passionate level. The instances of excessive displays of emotion can be found in *Table 4* in *Appendix C.*

Throughout the sampled videos, various instances of emotional displays were distinguished by way of tone and character within the dialogue. Three of the sampled videos involved Rogan contributing to dialogue in a latent, sensitive manner, where paradoxically, he and his guest passionately expressed concern for the culture in 2021.

Video 3 is a prime example of latent emotional display as Rogan speaks to his concern for governmental power. He addresses a "fear-based, weird appeal to authoritarianism" where society is faced with disinformation and the call for a "czar of truth." This dialogue corresponds with the emotional grandstanding method as Rogan covertly argues that "the government has never been good at anything" and that humanity is in trouble. This conversation was held in a serious manner, yet still presented heavy sentiment through fear and mistrust as Rogan and actor Fahim Anwar, discuss the future in a post-COVID-19 world led by weak governing institutions.

In addition to an extreme wave of anxiety concerning the future, Rogan's emotional response to a federal attempt at dismantling disinformation and extremism was striking. While government institutions strive to distinguish between true and false information in an age where

misinformation is unfortunately prevalent, Rogan demonstrates his annoyance with such organizations as he expresses what will happen when people are forced to be censored. Interestingly, such sentiments are imitated by his audience, who share the same concern in today's governing institutions who "do everything for optics."

Three of the sampled videos also detected overt emotional displays. Throughout video 11, Rogan's sentiments seemed to suggest that his tone was employed to entice his audience to participate in the wrath. His tone was identified as being dismissal yet assertive, as he discusses the implementation of vaccine passports with fellow comedian, Dave Smith. Similarly in video 3, the two discuss their concerns with authority as they believe the federal government is wanting to gain additional control over individuals by way of the pandemic, specifically by instigating mandatory vaccine passports. The narrative that implementing vaccine passports is a way for "the government to keep a serious level of control" over citizens promotes fear within individuals concerned with a post-COVID-19 world. Additionally, by way of inspecting audience comments on video 11, Rogan's fans are also concerned with the implementation of such credentials as a way for the government to exploit their power. Rogan continues to promote this narrative – that no one should trust authority – and encourages his audience to react by way of his own emotional response.

Grandstanders exploit emotions as a strategic method for gaining respect and support of their argument. As evident from *Table 4* in *Appendix C,* both instances of latent and overt emotional displays appeared to encourage more engagement in the comments and thus emphasized the reciprocal emotional nature of the relationship between a grandstander and their audience. Emotional displays are looked at in grandstanding theory as separate events apart from general emotional language attached to all the grandstanding strategies.

Piling On. Piling on often occurs when someone contributes to public moral discourse to merely proclaim their argument with something that has already been said or something that does not add value to the conversation. When one grandstands by piling on, they either desire to get in on the action or simply want to disclose their inclusion to make themselves visible. The most commonly located instances of piling on within the sampled videos were detected when Rogan would either repeat his guests' previous remarks, or purely stating that he agrees. Grandstanders pile on in such cases to demonstrate they are on the correct side of an argument (see *Table 5* in *Appendix C* for cases of piling on). Piling on can be traced back to the grandstanding literature which interprets the strategy by exploring the psychological phenomenon of "belonging and group identity;" the goal of the grandstander is to make it apparent that they belong in the heart of a group (Tosi & Warmke, 2020). Eight of the sampled videos exhibit instances of piling on; six latent cases and two overt cases.

Latent instances were more likely to appear as this grandstanding strategy is often hidden within dialogue. For example, video 7 features American author, Jamie Metzl, sharing his views on the origins of COVID-19. While Metzl made rational and logical claims concerning the origin of the virus, Rogan repeatedly piled on to Metzl's claims, simply to assert himself and remind his audience of his presence. In addition to the latent claim in video 7 being nothing but a reminder of Rogan's existence, it also happened to be concerning his hesitation and cynicism in government institutions. That said, not only were the detected examples of latent piling on extremely irrelevant to the dialogue, but they were too, provoking engagement in the comments with respect to resenting the bodies that govern and regulate contemporary societies.

The overt instances of piling on were less frequently identified, but were powerful in nature. Video 11 is indicative of such behavior where Rogan's response to Dave Smith's vaccine

passport claims entirely diminished the exchange. In the pursuit of discussing COVID-19 lockdowns in New York, Rogan mocked Governor Andrew Cuomo and paralleled not wearing masks to eating cheesecake and gaining weight. He further deliberated the "down-home analogies" that Cuomo was making to enforce stricter lockdowns, which added nil value to the dialogue. Video 11 is a prime example of overt piling on where Rogan's contributions are nothing but a tactic in keeping himself at the forefront of the conversation.

   Ramping Up. Similar to piling on, which focuses on adding little value to an existing claim, ramping up is specific to escalating that assertion on a deeper, perhaps harmful level, where discussants try to "out-do each other in public discourse" (Tosi & Warmke, 2020). As conceptualized in the grandstanding literature, ramping up is deemed a "one-upmanship" (Tosi & Warmke, 2019). Grandstanding-driven ramping up makes public discourse look like "a moral arms race," where the threats of such grandstanding create a hostile environment for healthy conversation (Tosi & Warmke, 2020). This dynamic was detected when Rogan would insistently bolster his own claim, moving the conversation to an intense level of debate. It was perceived that Rogan employed grandstanding-driven ramping up as evident through his conversations within four of the sampled videos; 1 latent case and 3 overt cases. The key instances of ramping up can be located in *Table 6* in *Appendix C*.

   In a conversation with Fahim Anwar in video 3, Rogan considers the future without "tactile human experiences." The two discuss the "kinetic nature before COVID-19" as they ramp each other up by promoting fear and again, discouraging the audience from trusting authority. The latent ramping up case was detected through Rogan's skepticism in the government, often communicating in an irate, yet humorous fashion, to escalate the conversation and speak out over Anwar's opinion with respect to authority. Thus, ramping up was disguised

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by a humorous tone when Rogan addressed the abundance of misinformation on the internet and mocked the governments call for a committee to regulate misinformation – something that Anwar was uninformed of, yet Rogan made it abundantly clear that he did not stand by such a notion. In the pursuit of one-upping Anwar, Rogan's use of vulgar language and style of conversation silenced his opponent, cultivating intimidation that prevented the guest from having the chance to make a rebuttal. Even though ramping up was not used to its full extent given the fear placed upon his guest, it was still successful in escalating such claims, creating an adverse setting.

Video 8 embodies the overt case of ramping up, where Rogan and former CIA Operations Officer, Mike Baker, ferociously discuss the contending narratives of COVID-19. The coding process revealed that both Rogan and Baker exhibit extrovert qualities, which offers room for occurrences of ramping up. Their use of vulgar language stimulates each other's opinions on account of the pandemic, which both Rogan and Baker are "over" at this point. More specifically, both discussants are intensifying each other's opinions on mask effectiveness. As Baker notes that "[his] freedoms are not infringed by wearing a mask, [he] doesn't give a sh-t," Rogan responded by saying "yeah, it's not that big a deal."

Although both Rogan and Baker seem to be aligned with their views on COVID-19, it is apparent that Rogan is practicing ramping up as each response to Baker's claims contains an assertion that makes him look like the smarter individual. Thus, such attitudes further stimulate a toxic environment for the discussants, as well as for the audience.

Trumping Up. According to Driver (2005) "grandstanders are likely to be moralizers, always searching for new features of the world to occasion a demonstration of their moral qualities" (Driver, 2005). This is what is referred to as trumping up – asserting that "there is a

moral problem when in fact there is none" (Tosi & Warmke, 2020). As illustrated by previous grandstanding studies, trumping up requires getting something wrong. Typically, this will involve discussing false information that promotes an intensified dialogue among discussants.

When status can be attained within a certain group through grandstanding, there are definite incentives. The easiest way for one to impress a group is to tell people what they want to hear and make it more appealing (Tosi & Warmke, 2021). In doing so, the grandstander "interferes in the "primary function" of public moral discourse" (Levy, 2020; Tosi & Warmke, 2020). The way in which this interference transpires is by "promoting an unhealthy cynicism about moral discourse" (Tosi & Warmke, 2020). That said, the instances of ramping up detected through the coding process appeared in two videos, both identified with an overt variable (see *Table 7* in *Appendix C*).

Resembling the coded case for excessive emotional displays and ramping up, the dialogue on the czar of truth was also coded as a principle trumping up example. Rogan's intent to promote distrust in the government for attempting to combat disinformation is an ardent case of encouraging doubt and distrust in higher institutions. Though the implementation of a "reality czar" does pose problems for society as many individuals believe it to be a violation of human rights, Rogan's way of handling the notion did more harm than good, suggestive of his audience's responses. While the modern world continues to tackle a chaotic information ecosystem that produces ill-advised principles, Rogan's opposition to solving the misinformation crisis was perceived and coded as a key instance of trumping up.

The subsequent illustration of trumping up was located in video 8, where Rogan and Mike Baker discuss competing narratives and the political reaction to the pandemic. The recorded case of trumping up encompasses Baker's rant regarding the political systems of the

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Russian and Chinese with intent to "tear the threads of [Americans'] belief from [our own] system." This conversation is a muddled wavering banter between Baker and Rogan discussing the reason for which society is so polarized is because of the political regimes overseas, which further encourages individuals to remain skeptic of the bodies that govern society, promoting additional corrupt dialogue where it is not necessary.

Trumping up indicates an intent to deceive, as the execution of the strategy itself suggests deception. Though the videos were coded for specific occasions of trumping up where dialogue was brought to a detrimental level, driven by the promotion of doubt among the audience, it is important to note that all instances dealing with Rogan's views on the pandemic – specifically vaccinations – can likely be classified as cases of trumping up as they are illustrations of amplification. The amplification that Rogan deploys ultimately deceives as amplifying one's claim is the morality of trumping up – trumping up to accentuate a point.

Calling Out. As evidenced by the literature, the act of calling someone out is a deliberate attempt to delegitimize the discussants' views to make them feel vulnerable (Tosi & Warkme, 2020). Thus, the purpose of this strategy is to make the grandstander feel powerful, giving them more of an opportunity to assert their claims. Interestingly, the act of calling out can also happen the other way around, where the discussant will call out the grandstander for a claim that may not be factual. In this case, it becomes difficult to identify and categorize grandstanding given the shifted nature of the dominant player within the conversation. However, with Rogan, multiple instances were detected where he was found to call out senseless claims that were raised by his opponent, or if his opponent was to disagree with him, he would openly discredit them. The significant identified cases of calling out are exhibited in *Table 8* in *Appendix C*.

Throughout the sampled videos, five were classified as calling out instances; four latent and one overt. Evidently, there was a prominent custom of latent calling out when Rogan believed a discussant did not share the same view as him, or if a discussant doubted his claims, he would be quick to respond in proving himself correct. Video 19 is representative of both latent and overt cases of calling out. Firstly, blogger Matthew Yglesias shares his enthusiasm toward the distribution of vaccines, yet Rogan exhibited hesitancy towards the injection and emanated the impression that he will not bear opinions that do not align with his own. As the discussion progresses, and the two discuss potential side effects to the vaccine, Yglesias stated that following his first vaccine, he felt surprisingly good. Immediately following Yglesias' statement, Rogan sharply interrupts him, disregards his personal experience, and states "there is a consequence to taking this" and "there is a reality to this particular vaccine that will make a lot of people feel like sh-t." This example was classified as latent calling out as Rogan deliberately disables Yglesias' personal opinion on the COVID-19 vaccine.

With respect to the overt illustration, Rogan stated that "80% of people who get the vaccine will get bad side effects because it was fast-tracked." After Yglesias questions that claim as it is an incorrect statistic, Rogan becomes visibly aggravated, and states "well that's what Bill Gates has said." He then proceeds by demanding his team to play the video of Gate's NBC interview where he shares this statistic. This case is particularly noteworthy as the act of calling out occurred backward: Yglesias first calls out that Rogan is incorrect, and Rogan comes back by calling out that Yglesias is wrong for ever accusing him to be wrong. Rogan's efforts to ensure he is the one to drive the dialogue and deliver the facts demonstrates his intent to delegitimize his guest's opinions regardless of the subject. If a guest is on the "wrong" side of an argument, Rogan will make that blatantly clear in an effort to assert his knowledge and dominance.

The first research question was integral to explore prior to investigating the effects of grandstanding on the media, as it set the foundation to thoroughly distinguish grandstanding behaviours. This question permitted the study to establish how Rogan operates each grandstanding strategy in either a latent or overt manner. These variables were central to measure the significance of a claim, which further highlighted the extent to which grandstanding is embedded in each discussion. Measured from the sampled videos, *Figure 1* displays the frequency of all grandstanding categories, highlighting the most commonly used method fixed within Rogan's dialogue.

Figure 1: Total Detected Grandstanding Codes

As evident from *Figure 1*, latent piling on was the most frequently used grandstanding strategy identified within the sampled data, as Rogan needs to be present at all times, even if his contributions devalue the dialogue. The second most frequently employed strategy was latent calling out, which illuminates Rogan's need to subtly proclaim his dominance. By concealing such communicative methods, Rogan can carry on with his dialogue as if nothing grandstanding-

like had occurred. More notably, given grandstanding's relationship to status-seeking incentives, the routes to social status described in the literature – dominance and prestige – become more prominent through analyzing Rogan's discourse and identifying what the dormant grandstanding strategies are. In the pursuit of climbing human social hierarchies, Rogan operates both status-seeking paths as he presents his audience with knowledge (prestige) while simultaneously harnesses fear to gain influence over others (dominance) (Brand & Mesoudi, 2019). Though the literature identifies both routes as independent avenues to social status, it is evident that Rogan expresses a dual consumption of both avenues, which is suggestive of his nature in gaining any influence within the realm of possibility (Brand & Mesoudi, 2019).

Grandstanding strategies account for much of the exaggeration present in public discourse (Tosi & Warmke, 2020). Based on the grandstanding analysis above, Rogan directly and indirectly exhibited all grandstanding tactics that were used as codes to categorize his content on YouTube. The sampled videos revealed consistent and significant use of these previously recognized and effective strategies of grandstanding, with substantial direct use of excessive displays of emotion, piling on, ramping up, trumping up, and calling out. That said, Rogan's videos revealed a constant use of grandstanding that uphold him to symbolize an archetype of grandstanding.

To further explore the phenomenon, the analysis was extended to address additional behavioural mechanisms to further consider how grandstanding is manifested in public moral discourse. The coding process revealed the emergent techniques of gaslighting, anti-expertise sentiments, conspiracy, and inconsistencies that were all expended to varying degrees throughout the sampled videos. To determine what effect grandstanding engenders on public discourse, the

active communicative methods outlined in *Table 2* will be scrutinized to further highlight the nature of Rogan's conversations throughout the pandemic.

Gaslighting. Gaslighting is an undertaking that is "rooted in social inequalities" and "executed through power-laden relationships" (Sweet, 2019). Considered as a form of manipulation, gaslighting is consequential when the gaslighter attempts to sway a victims' reality (Sweet, 2019). Although commonly used to understand intimate relationships and gendered stereotypes, gaslighting emerged as a key code in understanding power dynamics both between Rogan and his guest(s), and between Rogan and his audience; perhaps the most dangerous of the two. It is important to note that gaslighting is not part of grandstanding theory. Though similar to the ramping up by way of emotional manipulation, gaslighting is vital to highlight on its own as it is an expansive phenomenon with substantially more literature, while ramping up is a consolidation of gaslighting to fit into the theory of grandstanding.

Gaslighting offers a way for someone to control an individual by creating false narratives. When such misrepresentations are either repeated constantly or are hectically discussed – two elements employed by Rogan – victims often become confused. Throughout the coding process, gaslighting was most easily identified when a guest expressed anxious sentiments, as well as instances where the guest becomes visibly less confident; often strikingly uncomfortable with where the dialogue has gone. Similarly, and most critically, confusion, diversion, distraction and disinformation can be used to gaslight not only one individual, but an entire society. Throughout the sampled videos, there were 16 detected instances of gaslighting; 11 latent and 5 overt (see *Table 9* in *Appendix D*).

Throughout the sampled videos, elements of gaslighting were frequently and consistently displayed. When one employs gaslighting as a strategy to make themselves heard, typically

"lying is used in combination with persistent denial, misdirection and contradiction" (Lewandowsky, 2019). Video 8 symbolizes a crucial example of latent gaslighting where Rogan essentially twists the reality of contracting COVID-19, as he claims that the "super spreaders" are specifically those who are overweight and have "ignored their health." While this claim may contribute to the spread of the virus (seeing that unhealthy individuals likely have weaker immune systems), this instance of ill-advised, pseudo-scientific diversion from the truth is traced back latent gaslighting. Though this instance promotes misdirection to a lower, less serious extent, it was still measured as an illustration of latent gaslighting as Rogan states that "there is a reality to people who are getting sick from this" – an assertion that Rogan's audience will trust and embrace.

It is important to note that a dialogue may have multiple meanings and thus, several codes were associated with the same cases. That said, the following instance was recorded in both gaslighting and conspiracy coding categories.

The case that the coding revealed for overt gaslighting was identified in video 17, where Rogan and former *New York Times* reporter Alex Berenson, debated the origins of COVID-19 (Rodrigues, 2021). Berenson has been a reoccurring guest on Rogan's podcast as the two share similar views, particularly concerning the pandemic. In the pursuit of debunking where COVID-19 started, Rogan noted that he was deeply criticized for providing his audience with indication that the virus is perhaps not one that naturally transpired. He quickly moves on from previous disapprovals and proceeds to encourage individuals to investigate the origin of COVID-19. While Berenson nods and agrees with Rogan, Rogan continues to spew conspiracy which was identified as overt gaslighting as the deliberate act of promoting conspiracy confuses, diverts,

and manipulates realities. Thus, in this instance, the overt gaslighting technique was expended and made more apparent through conspiracy theories around the origin of the virus.

As evident in video 17, Rogan visibly acknowledged the quality of the conversation and its potential to entice his audience and attract external notice. Thus, such a serious conversation was shifted to a humorous exchange – one of the appealing components of his podcasts. This case of overt gaslighting is extremely harmful and stands in the way of eroding illogical narratives that lead individuals to adopt extreme claims. The coding process revealed that overt gaslighting encourages free-thinking and the culmination of independent conclusions on a given subject. It is such illustrations of overt gaslighting that erode brute facts and stimulates a dangerous reality.

Diminishment. The psychological phenomenon of the inferiority complex becomes vital to recognize in the pursuit of understanding false humility and egotistic tendencies (Gordon, 2018). The inferiority complex is often associated with narcissism as "the ways in which we decry our inferiority only to serve to call attention back to ourselves, where we hope others will recognize our true brilliance or lift us up to such a place" (Gordon, 2018). The diminishment code emerged through the association of Rogan and the inferiority complex, as one who has an inferiority complex cannot exhibit modesty, and will simply practice false humility. Rogan's false humility is what draws a clear distinction between him and the experts, as he portrays himself as the one with common sense (see *Table 10* in *Appendix D*).

By way of the coding process, both key occurrences of latent and overt diminishment transpired through video 13. The latent illustration reflected Rogan's false modesty as he tries to sound humble by practicing the virtue of (false) humility. In an episode with Andrew Santino, Rogan clarifies his controversial vaccine remarks by implicitly suggesting he said nothing

wrong. This instance was perceived as one by which Rogan was implying he is the one with common sense and his objective is to disclose such assertions with his audience.

Rogan's vaccine comments made international headlines as he expressed that he does not think young individuals need to get vaccinated: "if you're like 21 years old, and you say to me, should I get vaccinated? I'll go no," and "if you're a healthy person, and you're exercising all the time, and you're young, and you're eating well, like, I don't think you need to worry about this." Moreover, when asked by Santino about Rogan's experience being criticized by White House officials, Rogan mentioned that "Fauci disagreed with [him]." By way of the coding process, this instance was recognized as demonstrating false humility, proclaiming common sense, and in no way, an assertion that he was mistaken.

After the world erupted with concern, Rogan responded to the criticism and walked back his comments by asserting that "[he] is not a doctor…[he] is not a respected source of information, even for [himself]." Though he may have been apologetic for his initial comments considering White House officials got involved, this was identified as an instance where Rogan was obligated to express what the world wanted to hear, rather than a genuine confession of his misconduct. More critically, this event highlights a cycle as discussing controversy is a frequent practice, where Rogan initially pursues debate and will later speak out, clarify his comments, and "apologize." Such clarifications and apologies are often not authentic, rather they are recognized as instances of diminishment and false humility.

Comparably, the overt example of diminishment emanates from Rogan's assertion that he does not filter nor plan his comments, but "[he] tries to be honest about what [he's] saying." This case was categorized as overt diminishment given Rogan's assertion that he does not plan his dialogue – it occurs in the moment. This case was identified in the diminishment coding category

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as Rogan diminishes himself as a public figure by stating his intentions, but also frankly asserts himself as an egotistic individual by claiming his morality. Again, this instance is a case of false humility as Rogan deceptively portrays himself as an authentic individual.

Anti-Expertise. The perils that surface from pseudo-science narratives spread by influential actors increases the likelihood of a more fractured society when it comes to retrieving information. The anti-expertise category was developed on account of self-identified intellectuals rejecting authentic experts and proclaiming themselves as the credible gate-keepers of information. The two sub-categories that emerged from anti-expertise sentiments are opposites, as one works to identify the use of experts when it is most convenient for one's argument, while the other was established on account of intense resistance to logical expertise (see *Table 11* in *Appendix D*).

The first of these two sub-categories, convenient use of expertise, was detected in three overt cases and is representative of an appropriate use of expertise. This sub-category was used to identify occasions of referencing expertise for a false claim and without indication to an actual statement. Similar to the key example for calling out illustrated above, video 19 exhibits an overt use of convenient false expertise in an interview with Matthew Yglesias, where Rogan stated that "80% of people who get the vaccine will get bad side effects because it was fast-tracked." When Yglesias shuts down the claim as he considers it incorrect, Rogan referenced Bill Gate's expertise and insisted to review the interview where Gates was asked about vaccine efficiency and side effects. By way of the interview, Gates did mention that the vaccine was fast tracked, but not that fast-tracking is the reason people do not want to take it. In fact, Gates stated that the "vaccines are safe" and that "responses are positive."

The second sub-category explains the contrary: resistance to intellectual authority. Examples in this sub-category were distinguished through both latent and overt variables. The latent instance of resisting intellectual authority demonstrates both Rogan's ignorance on how to properly stop the spread of COVID-19 that experts have been insistent on from the beginning of the pandemic (i.e., wearing masks, social distancing, vaccinations, etc.), and his reluctant attitude toward the experts. The overt instance of resisting intellectual authority is revealed in both video 8 and video 12 where first, Rogan finds humour in the fact that people believe science, and second, he passionately opposes his daughter getting vaccinated because "[the virus] is not statistically dangerous for children." Again, this demonstrates Rogan's ignorance and opposition to science as vaccinating children is to protect the weak and to help reach herd immunity, the point at which COVID-19 cannot spread easily.

Conspiracy. Cook et al. highlights the dangers of conspiratorial thinking given the current surge of pandemic-fueled conspiracy theories (Cook et al., 2020). Rogan is recognized as one of the few public figures who often gives air to controversial and problematic guests, such as Eddie Bravo, Alex Berenson, and Alex Jones, who are all prone to spew unfounded conspiracy (Rodrigues, 2021). Such conspiratorial ideas push the facts aside and give way for misinformation to unfold, which promotes hesitancy and uncertainty in an already ambiguous environment.

States of "uncertainty [are] aversive to the human mind" and thus, provoke less deliberate judgements (Larsen et al., 2020; Webster & Kruglanski, 1994). High levels of uncertainty "leave individuals inclined to the influence of unfamiliar sources," which vary in their degrees of reliability for making sense of an abstruse world (Larsen et al., 2020; Webster & Kruglanski, 1994). Conspiracy theories provide a "psychological appeal" which is associated with providing

certainty (Larsen et al., 2020; Douglas et al., 2017). Rogan's endorsement of COVID-19 related conspiracy frameworks is greatly associated with a psychological appeal to make sense of complex ideas. That said, he too, is an admirer of the potentiality of a 'sure' world (see *Table 12* in *Appendix D*).

In six of the sampled videos, there were numerous instances associated with conspiracy agendas; three latent and three overt. Both key examples are acquired from video 17 with Alex Berenson. As mentioned above, the conspiracy category shares cases from the data with the gaslighting category as content can have multiple meanings and therefore, can exist in various categories.

Alex Berenson, "a rabid opponent of vaccination programs," as well as the propagator of mask and lockdown ineffectiveness, joined Rogan in discreetly encouraging viewers to "want to know where this virus came from" (Bump, 2021). The two briefly discussed the possibility of the virus being a result of "a Chinese lab accident" and how individuals should be aware of that probability. The coding process revealed the overt case when Rogan addressed his previously criticized remarks for fostering the theory that "COVID-19 is not a virus that naturally occurs," suggesting that it either evolved from a lab accident or it was situated for another reason. This instance was identified as an overt case as Rogan laughed off being criticized and pointed to the fact that he referenced scientific evidence and reasons for why he would promote such a narrative.

Rogan's giving air to conspiracy is present in many podcast episodes. He is notorious for lending his platform to individuals like extremist and conspiracy theorist, Alex Jones, who's own podcast and YouTube channel were terminated due to his tremendously dangerous dialogue. Video 21 presents Alex Jones and comedian, Tim Dillon, discussing a range of problematic

matters, one being the threat of the COVID-19 vaccine. This episode is a prime illustration of Rogan giving Jones and Dillon the opportunity to promote inaccurate information with respect to the pandemic. For example, one of the various conspiracy theories that Jones has discussed on Rogan's channel was how "the COVID-19 vaccine was being used to weaken healthcare workers and the overall system" (Rodrigues, 2021). This narrative spread throughout Rogan's audience, likely contributing to the number of fans who do not want to get vaccinated. That said, entertaining radicals like Alex Jones pose immense threats to healthy dialogue and decision-making as these individuals continue to promote conspiratorial thinking and further influence Rogan to do the same.

Inconsistencies. In addition to the problems that arise from fueling extremist dialogue, those that ascend from inconsistent and contradictory views encourage a dangerous communication environment. Throughout the 21 videos that were sampled, an abundance of inconsistencies within the dialogue were located. The coding revealed four sub-categories of inconsistent discourse: COVID-19 vaccines, the origin of COVID-19, mask use, and seriousness of the pandemic. All four sub-categories were present in each sampled video with seriousness of the pandemic as the most prevalent inconsistent topic in each of the videos (see *Table 13* in *Appendix D*).

Inconsistent discourse is yet another extremely harmful undertaking, especially in the age of COVID-19 as society turns to public figures for advice, information, and news. When one bestows an erratic, varying pattern of opinions, the audience becomes uncertain of how to respond and act upon such matters. The coding process helped to reveal the source of Rogan's inconsistent discourse. His wide variety of guests are so dissimilar that it creates confusing and contradictory narratives for his audience, as well as for himself as he is confronted with a

profusion of opinions. For example, Rogan hosts real intellectual experts that help make sense of the pandemic, yet he also gives air to extremists who undo what the experts have promoted.

Perhaps the most threatening of all inconsistent claims can be traced back to Rogan's attitudes toward the COVID-19 vaccine. Over the course of the pandemic, Rogan has been asked by various guests whether he will be getting vaccinated, and as foreseen by the emergent coding, his response differed each time. For example, fellow comedian Jamar Neighbors, asked Rogan if he would get the vaccine to which Rogan responded blatantly: "No! I would if I felt like I needed it," clarifying it would be "good for some people." As expected, this was different than what Rogan has previously said in an interview with Dave Chappelle (video 15) where he asked Rogan: "the vaccine: are you taking it?" Rogan responded to Chappelle by saying "[he'll] take it if it works… if [he] feels that the doctors have all gotten their opinions behind it." These are only two specified cases among many inconsistent vaccine stances. All this wavering on whether Rogan is anti-vaccine speculated among his audience, as well as the media, which pushed Rogan to post an Instagram for his millions of followers which stated: "Now, I'm NOT anti-vaccine, and if a safe and effective COVID vaccine is created, I'll take it and encourage others to take it" – distinctive from his prior stance.

In addition to the detected inconsistent views on the vaccine, Rogan was found varying his opinions toward the origin of the virus. Related to the conspiracy cases discussed throughout the analysis, Rogan's erratic opinions on where COVID-19 originated from were plainly identified by the coding process. Mask use was also a significantly inconsistent discussion where Rogan would promote individuals to wear masks, and would subsequently shout that "it's not that big a deal" if one does not wear a mask. Lastly, the manner in which Rogan handles the pandemic as a whole was identified with the foremost contradictions. For example, in video 3,

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Rogan discloses that "[we] can't stop all life because a disease comes along and kills some of us," when later in video 9, he emphasizes that this virus is something to be afraid of. Again, as expected, video 12 displays another shift in Rogan's thinking when he compared COVID-19 to the common cold and laughed it off with his guest about the virus being "nothing" after both his children were infected.

As evident by the coding process, inconsistencies are particularly prevalent in Rogan's dialogue as they surface numerous times upon various subjects throughout the sampled videos. Such a constant shift in Rogan's thinking demonstrates his inflammatory, erratic nature, ignorance, and further reveals his fondness of amorphous dialogue. Inconsistent dialogue also suggests the effects of his guests on his own opinions, as each guest stipulates their own stance on COVID-19 related issues, which build upon Rogan's plethora of attitudes.

Though each code was pervasive throughout the sampled videos, *Figure 2* displays each individual podcast code and the common variable which helps to visualize the most frequently identified practice:

Figure 2: Total Detected Podcast Codes

Total Podcast Coding Categories Detected

As apparent from *Figure 2*, latent gaslighting was the most commonly used and most prominent communicative strategy throughout the sampled videos. This is reflective of the constant use of misdirection and deviation within Rogan's dialogue, as well as the recognition of such behaviours which attract external attention. This can be traced back to the gaslighting literature, as such behaviour remains a frequent practice that public figures utilize, whether that be an influencer, a celebrity, or a politician; an individual with a set agenda.

RQ 2: Is there a relationship between grandstanding and media citation?

The purpose of this research question is to highlight how Rogan's grandstanding is successful by focusing on how the media covers him. By extending the analysis and performing it quantitatively allows for a stronger interpretation of the data. Though the sample of articles chosen to explore how the media reports on Rogan were sampled within the COVID-19-time frame, it is important to note how much attention the media gives Rogan in general (disregarding COVID-19 limitations). When the keyword search for "Joe Rogan" was performed (without

"COVID-19" or "Vaccines") from 2015-2021 (the years in which Rogan rose to fame), the total number of mentions resulted in 10,000+ articles. Such a quantity demonstrates that even preceding the pandemic, Rogan's overall effect in media was significant and exhibits that grandstanding had an immense effect on the tens of thousands of mentions. More notably, when the search was narrowed to the selected time frame for this study, still exclusive of the keywords, "COVID-19" or "Vaccines," the search resulted in 7,070 total mentions. Again, this is representative of Rogan's continual presence in the media's reporting foregoing the pandemic.

Although general coverage in the media is vital to identify, this study is specific to news coverage during COVID-19 to better establish how grandstanding works in a specified time frame, one where humanity is in dire need of brute facts. That said, narrowing the time frame and focusing on one specific issue demonstrates public harm that derives from grandstanding during COVID-19. As mentioned above, the specified keyword search during 2020-2021 resulted in 569 total mentions of Rogan and thus, nine articles were sampled until saturation to measure the nature of reporting.

Though the discourse analysis was based on print media, it was still important to consider not only the effects of such claims on the way print media responds but also how TV media reacts to such situations. The different effects of reporting on TV and through print were measured as each piece of news was inspected for inflection and tone of coverage. Print media is typically more serious in the way they communicate, while on TV, a reporter can laugh off an issue in a way that may be dismissive. On TV, reporters have more freedom as well as the advantage of utilizing body language to communicate, while text does not. The element of possible dismissal was a concern for the sample, given the freedom of conduct on TV and thus,

print media was selected to further narrow the sample of articles and to draw from more sophisticated levels of reporting.

A discourse analysis on the sampled articles was performed to measure for linguistic evidence of meaning using the preliminary codes identified in *Table 3* (see *Appendix E* for exhaustive reporting table). As previously mentioned, through the discourse analysis, a social use of language was used as the point of analysis for selecting citations to analyze.

The discourse analysis revealed a common pattern in the way news outlets handle Rogan as a source of information for many individuals. News coverage uses a frightening tone, treating Rogan as a threatening source of false information. Each article considers Rogan a public enemy rather than a comedian who behaves irresponsibly and each outlet expresses a profound concern given Rogan's effect on the public and their decisions with respect to the COVID-19 vaccine.

As discussed throughout the analysis on the first research question, video 12 represents Rogan's controversial vaccine claims, where he explicitly stated that young individuals do not need to get vaccinated, nor should they worry about the virus. Despite the facts, Rogan went on to claim that vaccinating children is "crazy" and that "we are talking about something that is not statistically dangerous for children." Rogan continued to speak to his own children's experience with COVID-19, complaining that because he is "not going to inject [his] child with the vaccine," that he is being controversial. However, the fact that Rogan predicted his statements to be so provocative points to the case that he recognized he would attract attention from stating something so contentious.

Immediately following Rogan's vaccine remarks, global media outlets responded with apprehension. Each article blatantly speaks to the fact that Rogan's health advice does not just affect his home audience; if one person decides not to get the vaccine because Rogan said not to,

this decision affects the individual's family, the people they live with, and the people they see in their daily life – an element that Rogan's vaccination thesis does not discuss (Way, 2021). That said, the discourse analysis points to Rogan's inconsistencies and contradictions that generate this media storm and a chaotic reporting environment.
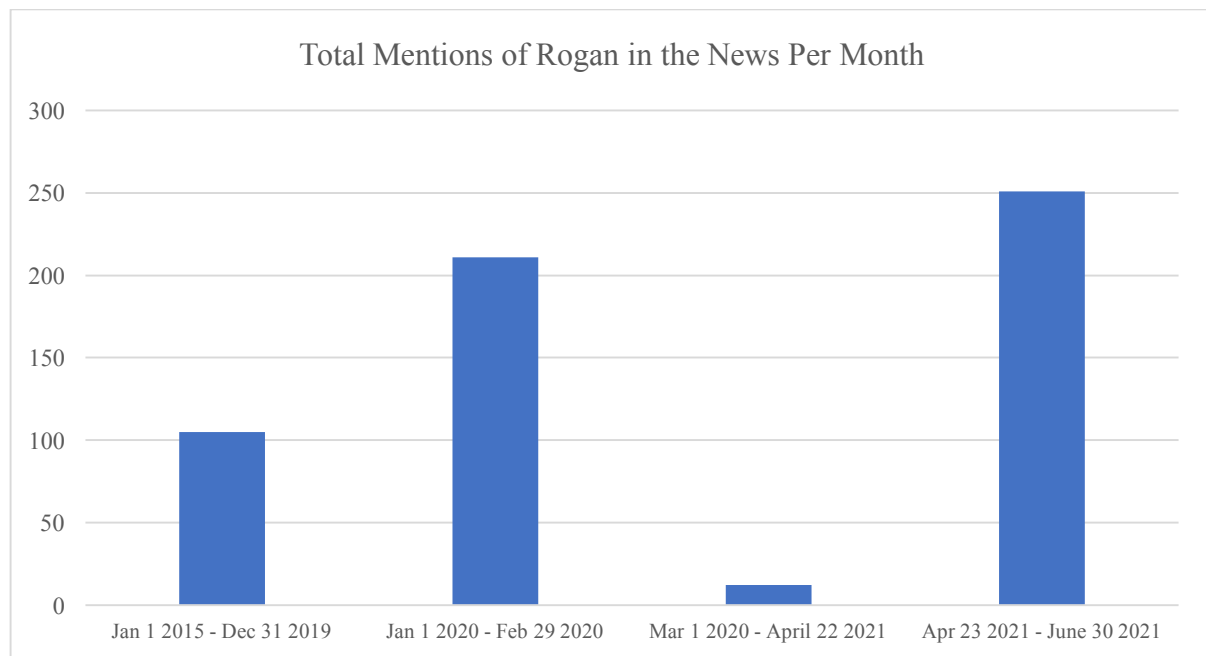
The discourse analysis also disclosed the existent codes identified in each sampled article which helps to identify parallels on how mainstream media is taking on grandstanding. Specifically, citation, sentiment, misinformation indication, and recognition of fame were all used to the same extent throughout the sampled articles, which exhibits the media's consistency in reporting on Rogan as a source of information and the claims he puts forth (see *Appendix E*).

The citation coding process demonstrates a possible connection between the references in the articles to latent and overt aspects of grandstanding. The news initially appears to cover the overt instances of grandstanding (dispelling misinformation), given the serious nature of his influence on individuals. However, it was discovered that Rogan's ethos has matured and grown through his latent grandstanding as his fame and character are consistently recounted, further pointing to the possible effects of latent grandstanding. Though the discourse analysis helped strengthen the notion that grandstanding is effective in making headlines by discussing provocative subjects, it also points to the possibility that grandstanding succeeds through coverage on Rogan as an influential individual as well.

Figure 3 represents the total number of mentions of Rogan in the news per month during four noteworthy points in time for reporting. January 1 2015 – December 31 2019 represents the number of mentions pre-COVID-19 (during Rogan's rise to fame); January 1 2020 – February 29 2020 represents the number of mentions two months preceding the declaration of the global pandemic; March 1 2020 – April 22 2021 represents the number of mentions during the heart of

COVID-19 but preceding his controversial vaccine claims; and April 23 2021 – June 30 2021

represents the number of mentions during the post-vaccine period, following Rogan's

controversial vaccine claims.

Figure 3: Total Mentions of Rogan in the News

As indicative from *Figure 3*, news coverage on Rogan significantly increased following

his controversial remarks regarding the COVID-19 vaccine. That said, the data points to the

increase in citation as a result of grandstanding. It is also telling of the probability that

grandstanding is an effective strategy in gaining media traction as the news stayed consistent in

their coverage on Rogan throughout the pandemic. Both the quantitative examination of total

mentions and the qualitative discourse analysis demonstrates the possibility of a striking

relationship between grandstanding and media citation: a connection that a grandstander desires.

Discussion

This section aims to interpret the findings and analysis discussed in the preceding section. With many of the previously determined grandstanding strategies detected throughout Rogan's videos comes the need to dissect the possible effects that such grandstanding tactics have on the media and ultimately on public dialogue and decision making.

As indicated in the grandstanding literature, "narcissistic individuals pursue external validation through various strategies," such as grandstanding (Zeigler-Hill et al, 2018). The analysis points to constant support for the notion that grandstanding motivation is associated with various narcissistic traits, which are known to be associated with status-seeking motives (Zeigler-Hill et al, 2018). The purpose of the analysis was to better understand the "intrapsychic processes and interpersonal behaviours" that depict a grandstander, though this section will focus on the external effects of such behaviours as evidenced by the media (Zeigler-Hill et al, 2018).

The analysis revealed that the most frequently used grandstanding strategy, as supported by the data, was latent piling on. As noted in the preceding section, when one grandstands by piling on, they speak out to register their presence on the right side of an argument. Typically, by piling on, one will either encourage irrelevant discussion or will draw dialogue out longer than necessary (Tosi & Warmke, 2020). The effects of such behaviour on public discourse are threatening as the grandstander is merely attempting to claim they "hold the value of the group" by vocally stating their views, even if doing so is repetitive of what others have already specified (Tosi & Warmke, 2020).

The rationale for piling on is associated with cases of public shaming, "where discussants share the common objective in taking down an enemy" (Crockett, 2017; Norlock, 2017). However, more specifically, and not exclusive to the effects of piling on in a latent manner, each

grandstanding strategy has more detrimental consequences on public dialogue. The sampled videos demonstrate Rogan's need to insert himself in each discussion, regardless of the topic, even if he has little to add. Such passionate conversations pressure the participants to pile on to one another's claims, which is also reflected through the audience, given how they respond to such dialogue.

Rogan is notorious for encouraging individuals to think for themselves. By promoting free-thinking, Rogan's latent grandstanding likely influences the audience as he encourages them to make independent decisions about a certain situation. This study has demonstrated the possibility that Rogan's latent grandstanding practices play a role in driving audience numbers. Since grandstanding tendencies are masked by his conversations and pushed by his encouragement toward free-thinking, Rogan is getting what he desires: attention.

Early in Rogan's career, he recognized the power and appeal of free-form discussion, which he adopted through his podcast. The dangers that surface from such unstructured discussion, specifically around the pandemic, perhaps play a significant role in vaccine hesitancy and refusal (Bump, 2021). Even though millions of individuals are safely vaccinated, according to a recent survey conducted, a quarter of Canadians, as well as a quarter of Americans do not want the COVID-19 vaccine (Maric, 2021). Unfortunately, Rogan's controversial vaccine comments had a possible influence on these statistics.

While hesitancy has many causes, too many for the scope of this research, vaccine uncertainty was classified as a product of Rogan's impact. His effect on his audience combines passionate judgements, unpredictable sentiments, and blatant misinformation. That said, society must learn to counter the influences of such actors who promote anti-expertise narratives and foster inconsistent discourse in an extremely uncertain world.

A significant factor that helps validate Rogan's influence, and ultimately vaccine hesitancy, is the rising lack of faith in the media and contemporary governing institutions. Over the past decade, trust in the media has greatly decreased which has provoked a large portion of the population to become free thinkers, make their own conclusions, and turn to figures who value similar ways of thinking. For example, Former President Donald Trump's rallies comprised of individuals who, like Rogan, reject mainstream media and conduct their own research in order to make decisions (Bump, 2021).

Additionally, such independent undertakings lead individuals to adopt extremist ideologies. This is not to say that skepticism in the media unsolicited – "one should have the right to consider information with caution," however, what typically happens is that "when one thinks for themselves, one believes in what they want to believe" (Bump, 2021). In turn, this is what justifies the magnitude of Rogan's audience – those who embody unconventionality and idiosyncrasy, the attention he receives with respect to the information he distributes, and what allows him to effectively monetize his platform. Though Rogan's podcast has advantages beyond this method, the last year has long-established that the disadvantages strongly offset any benefits (Bump, 2021).

Though the effects of grandstanding point to a significant influence among Rogan's audience, they also play a role in how he regularly makes headlines. Rogan's career began in stand-up comedy before he started working for the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) as an interviewer and commentator. Both his comedic background and his position as a UFC commentator contributed to his early fame and account for why he had been recognized by the media for years prior to the pandemic. Additionally, Rogan was the host of the popular reality

TV show *Fear Factor* in 2006, and three years later, he launched his podcast, which led him to podcast stardom – the trifecta of his livelihood (Arbuthnot, 2020).

Throughout Rogan's career, he has been "an advocate of health and nutritional supplements" which helps justify why he regularly promotes any solution to COVID-19 he sees fit, regardless of the science behind it (Bump, 2021). That said, it should come as no surprise when Rogan consistently promotes medication and natural remedies that he believes will "cure" the virus.

Throughout the sampled videos, as suggestive of the analysis, Rogan's anti-expertise and pseudo-scientific comments are part of "long-standing cynicism toward scientifically established health advice" (Serrels, 2021). For example, Rogan has questioned the use of masks and instead, promoted hydroxychloroquine – a drug used to treat autoimmune diseases like rheumatoid – as a COVID-19 medication on his show, which in fact, it has never been proven effective. Similarly, he has hosted various guests to discuss the use of Vitamin D in helping to ease COVID-19 symptoms. While this may be accurate as Vitamin D is proven a beneficial health solution, is not the cure for COVID-19, which is something Rogan fails to mention.

More notably, his promotional sentiments play a significant part in each established code identified through Rogan's dialogue. The perils that surface from such claims, whether scientifically proven or not, are conceivably destructive as individuals are then faced at a crossroads – to believe their idolized public figure or to believe science. Unfortunately, since Rogan's audience encompasses independent thinkers who have too, lost faith in both science and government institutions, are likely to trust and follow the advice that Rogan distributes.

Rogan, along with each guest he hosts, is benefitting by giving exposure to the most outrageous and radical views in the eager "search for subscription income" and his destructive

vaccine comments were most likely "a troll for new subscribers" (Flynn, 2021). By that means, he has captivated the media who frequently covers his behaviours. Throughout the discourse analysis on media citation, it was concluded that all outlets report in a similar fashion, even those from different geographies: employing direct quotes, responding seriously, and calling out his recklessness and lack of facts. However, the sampled articles still vary in terms of reporting style and where they derived from. Specific to this study, it was important to select articles from diverse outlets: certain articles were chosen based on general reporting; some focused on the economic concerns for Spotify as an entity following Rogan's vaccine claims; some concentrated on other public figures' response on the responsibility one has as a celebrity with a platform (i.e., White House officials and the Royal Family); and certain articles were selected based on journalistic practice (i.e., short-form journalism, opinion pieces, etc.). Having the sample of articles range in reporting style illuminated the shaping effects of such an individual on how the world responds to crisis (see *Appendix E*).

What the media fails to recognize is that while each outlet references the deleterious effects of Rogan's statements on health and vaccine related issues, they are simultaneously fueling his grandstanding by giving him any sort of reference. Thus, it becomes apparent that the reporting codes are unified with the grandstanding codes. Though not established until the coding process was complete, both analyses (podcast and citation) point to the overall premise that Rogan's dialogue throughout the pandemic has done more harm than one would believe. Additionally, the fusion of the codes suggests the ludicrous nature of such conversation and further indicates the dangers of unstructured, free-form discussion in an era that desperately calls for structure.

Not only did the analysis reveal the fusion of the grandstanding and reporting codes, but it disclosed the opportunity that Rogan may have used the pandemic and grandstanding strategies in combination to promote a higher stature and attentiveness to whoever exploits it.

Using the themes of grandstanding and anti-expertise to understand current conflict in public discourse around COVID-19 has allowed this study to touch on the various behavioural patterns that Joe Rogan exhibits. By examining inconsistencies and contradictions found in Rogan's dialogue, instances of grandstanding were matched with the identified patterns, themes, and theories described in the literature. By considering gaslighting, diminishment, anti-expertise, conspiratorial thinking, and inconsistent discourse as different techniques that derive from grandstanding theory, permits more room in understanding Rogan's possible motivations on his platform.

As exhibited in the grandstanding literature, one key factor an influencer typically has is being relatable and seemingly authentic to their audience, making Rogan an important subject to make a case for point. Both initial hypotheses and predictions were correct: firstly, that the research will highlight how self-identified intellectuals on YouTube foster a chaotic morally and politically divided landscape; and secondly, that the research would provide insight into how society must counter the negative influences of such anarchic conversations as we face a future where more individuals like Rogan are settling on YouTube to start new conversations.

Conclusion

This paper contributes to the considerations of how grandstanding theory can be utilized in creating or communicating representations through self-identified intellectuals on YouTube and was founded on a fundamental problem society faces daily: status seeking in public discourse masked in strategies of grandstanding in an already polarized environment.

This study was conducted to better understand the effects of grandstanding and suggests that once we better understand the phenomenon, we "will be less impressed by the grandstanding of others" (Tosi & Warmke, 2020). Thus, the grandstanding strategies highlighted throughout this paper become more important to identify, especially in the age of COVID-19, where facts are sporadic and difficult to locate. This study has detailed how such a powerful public figure like Joe Rogan chooses to contribute to the dialogue on the public health crisis and tells of his probable effects on the media and ultimately how citizens will make decisions.

The analysis points to the possibility that public discourse dominated by grandstanding is not a safe method of arriving at the truth. Drawing from previous grandstanding studies, Rogan was evidenced to embody an exemplar of grandstanding, which poses great threats to healthy public dialogue among his audience. This study further explored the shaping effects of grandstanding on the media and how Rogan's grandstanding attitudes are a promising effective method in making headlines; a grandstanders' fundamental objective. This study aims to demonstrate that grandstanding likely conflicts with truth-seeking, which suggests that society must establish customs that prevent grandstanding and promote behaviour that is more conductive in the quest for information (Tosi & Warmke, 2020).

This research is important and tremendously relevant to conduct to understand what effects these characters have on YouTube, societal discourse, and the way their audience behaves

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both online and offline. It was anticipated and now certain that the connections can be used as a lens not only for Rogan but to analyze any self-identified intellectual on YouTube.

Limitations

This study was limited in scope, as the sample size was reduced to COVID-19's lifespan. Since the study was limited to one specific topic, only COVID-19 related videos were measured for grandstanding. If it was not for the pandemic, the sample size would have been larger to measure more instances of grandstanding and thus, could have focused on non-COVID-19 discussions in Rogan's discourse (i.e., political narratives, conspiracy philosophies, and additional topics that promote exploratory dialogue which is what allures to his extensive audience).

Future Research

This study was an exploratory study that worked to shed light on a commonly known phenomenon, but with previously limited tangible experimental research. While this paper successfully explored grandstanding and its effects on the media and beyond, there is still more research to be studied to determine how society can counter the negative influences of behaviour exhibited by individuals who hold immense influence, as well as how individuals can best vocalize their moral and political beliefs in a fractured age.

This paper focused specifically on examining grandstanding and anti-expertise on YouTube, as well as the seeping effects in mainstream media during the COVID-19 pandemic. Future study may consider a larger sample size of videos over a longer period to analyze the various grandstanding strategies at play prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. It would also be beneficial to consider additional YouTube personalities – perhaps other members of Rogan's group known as the Intellectual Dark Web (IDW) – who have attained media attention by

behaving a certain way online. The IDW is a "loosely defined informal group of commentators" who were ejected from mainstream media and their former platforms by way of being controversial and opposing dominant narratives (Weiss & Winter, 2019). The group is referred to as "marginalized renegades" and consists of more self-identified intellectuals such as Jordan Peterson, Eric and Brett Weinstein, Sam Harris, Ben Shapiro, and of course, Joe Rogan.

Future studies would also value from exploring other social media platforms that continue to dominate the contemporary landscape and succeed in influencing individual decisions and choices. Drawing from the inferences of this study, future analyses should further examine the dangers of grandstanding and behaving with a motive to enhance one's status. Future research will further draw connections toward the fact that the more individuals who engage in public discourse to gain status by seeking prestige and exerting dominance, the less free our discourse will be, and the more opportunities there are for individuals to become dangerous free-thinkers.

Lastly, in the pursuit of knowledge, if all air is consumed by self-identified intellectuals and pseudo-thinkers, it has a tragic effect on scholarly work and authentic intellectuals. Future research would benefit from exploring the notion that such sentiments may take away from the audience that genuine intellectuals deserve. This research could focus on the anti-expertise movement and the YouTube algorithms that feed the audience a stream of pseudo-intellectuals. That said, research should focus on the relationship between Rogan's desire to be at the top and the machine of YouTube itself. This focus would highlight the mutually beneficial relationship between the self-identified intellectual who desires a higher status and the business of YouTube who use algorithms to push Rogan to the top for the benefit of YouTube's stakeholders.

Appendices

Appendix A – Video Samples

Video Samples for Data Collection

Video	Title	Date Posted	Guest	# of Views	JRE Podcast Episode #	Length of Clip	URL
1	Dr. Mark Gordon Weighs in on California COVID Lockdowns	01/21/21	Dr. Mark Gordon & Andrew Marr	478,513	#1589	7:45	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZlTSaEVlV0&ab_channel=PowerfulJRE
2	Joe on Dave Chappelle Getting COVID	01/29/21	Brendan Schaub	954,596	#1603	7:54	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B8CvmAMjNmU&ab_channel=PowerfulJREPowerfulJREVerified
3	What COVID Tells Us About the Future	02/08/21	Fahim Anwar	1,128,028	#1607	10:53	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hkTqdO0FDsM
4	Cody Garbrandt's COVID Battle	02/12/21	Cody Garbrandt	741,193	JRE MMA Show #100	15:40	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=su5iiYGLZLM&ab_channel=PowerfulJREPowerfulJREVerified
5	The Divisive Nature of Covid Policies	03/02/21	Ayaaan Hirsi Ali	607,487	#1613	9:59	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MSMKtl_Td0c&ab_channel=PowerfulJREPowerfulJREVerified
6	1 Year of Coronavirus-What Now?	03/05/21	Hamilton Morris	1,500,582	#1615	10:14	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZMKZxY1NPU&ab_channel=PowerfulJREPowerfulJREVerified
7	Jamie Metzl Questions the Origins of COVID-19	03/09/21	Jamie Metzl	1,646,745	#1616	15:29	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XIXKJXsiBFc&ab_channel=Powe8rfulJREPowerfulJ9REVerified

8	The Competing COVID Narratives	03/10/21	Mike Baker	941,378	#1617	11:35	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=082aqKV4U8Y&ab_channel=PowerfulJREPowerfulJREVerified
9	Eddie Bravo Talks Coronavirus Response	03/14/20	Eddie Bravo	1,832,740	Taken from JRE Fight Companion	14:00	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OavhQFEgtNM&ab_channel=PowerfulJREPowerfulJREVerified
10	Dan Crenshaw on Political Polarization of COVID	04/06/21	Dan Crenshaw	617,217	#1630	11:45	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aHsUgWfUcss&ab_channel=JREClipsJREClipsVerified
11	Dave Smith Passionately Opposes Vaccines Passports	04/23/21	Dave Smith	923,074	#1639	8:13	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x9c3w_QFfbE&ab_channel=PowerfulJREPowerfulJREVerified
12	Interview with Dave Smith	04/23/21	Dave Smith	N/A	#1639	N/A	Clip not available on YouTube however, this episode contains controversial vaccine statement
13	Joe Rogan Clarifies His Vaccine Comments	04/21/21	Andrew Santino	2,410,118	#1642	5:51	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PloZ-GB9tzA&ab_channel=PowerfulJREPowerfulJREVerified
14	Interview with Frank Von Hippel	09/23/21	Frank Von Hippel	128,000	#1540	16:46	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ve3ugHHToxQ&ab_channel=JREClipsJREClipsVerified
15	Donnell Rawlings & Dave Chappelle	11/19/20	Donnell Rawlings & Dave Chappelle	9,348,992	#1567	3:24:32	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C7t_LxpzYTg&ab_channel=PowerfulJREPowerfulJREVerified
16	Alex Berenson Feels	12/24/20	Alex Berenson	878,174	#1582	9:47	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-59f2EBCUA&ab_c

	COVID Measures Have Been an Overreaction					hannel=PowerfulJREPowerfulJREVerified
17	The COVID Relief Bill, Questioning Origins of Coronavirus	12/24/20	Alex Berenson	1,219,071	#1582	9:03	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cz6AO391KZM&ab_channel=PowerfulJREPowerfulJREVerified
18	The Shifting Nature of the Coronavirus	12/28/20	Michael Kosta	1,206,812	#1585	7:41	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R59mzw0iPTY&ab_channel=PowerfulJREPowerfulJREVerified
19	What Did Bill Gates Say About Vaccine Side Effects?	12/3/20	Maatthew Yglesias	2,667,242	#1573	11:14	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4usVIX5B6Rs&ab_channel=PowerfulJRE
20	The Safety & Efficacy of Potential COVID Vaccines	11/18/20	Nicholas Christakis	261,736	#1566	14:38	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sT80A5uPREo&ab_channel=PowerfulJREPowerfulJREVerified
21	Joe Rogan Experience #1555 – Alex Jones & Tim Dillon	10/27/20	Alex Jones & Tim Dillon	19, 385, 519	#1555	3:11:08	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jdVso9FSkmE&ab_channel=PowerfulJRE

Appendix B –Grandstanding Coding Categories

Preliminary Grandstanding Coding Categories

Category	Category Description	Sub-Category	Sub-Category Description
Grandstanding	Moral grandstanding is the act of signaling to others, using public moral discourse and with the aim of acquiring a general form of admiration or respect, that one is on the morally 'correct' side. In other words, to grandstand is to turn one's contribution to public discourse into a "vanity project" (Tosi & Warmke, 2020).	Self-Promotion	"The act of seeking to be viewed as competent by touting an individual's abilities and accomplishments" (Chen, 2016, p. 246).
		Excessive Displays of Emotion	"Where moral outrage gains purchase, the assumption is that the most outraged person has the greatest moral insight about the issue under discussion" (Tosi and Warmke, 2020).
		Piling On	Grandstanders pile on as a way of getting others to see them as "members of a morally respected group" (Tosi and Warmke, 2020).
		Ramping Up	When individuals actively contribute to polarization and make increasingly strong claims to outdo one another. Discussion transfers into a moral arms race" (Tosi and Warmke, 2020).
		Trumping Up	"One may try to show that one is morally respectable by trying to draw attention to features of the world that seem morally unproblematic to others" (Tosi and Warmke, 2020)
		Calling Out	Blaming and calling out individuals when the discussant does not agree. This works to change the charge of grandstanding.

Appendix C: Grandstanding Coding Results

Table 4
Grandstanding: Excessive Displays of Emotion

Sub-Category	Variable	Description	Example from Data
Excessive Displays of Emotion	Latent	Video 3: Joe Rogan and actor/writer Fahim Anwar discuss what COVID-19 tells us about the future	"Create a czar of truth the f-king government to decide what's real and what's not to just to dispel disinformation so you can pull this up czar of truth this is something that CNN has talked about a lot of these like f-king weirdo networks have talked about like do you understand these f-king people understand what happens when you start censoring people"
	Overt	Video 11: Joe Rogan and Dave Smith discuss the implementation of vaccine passports	"Logically it makes no sense um morally it makes no sense but it is an unbelievable opportunity for the government to really keep a serious. you know, level more of control"

Table 5
Grandstanding: Piling On

Sub-Category	Variable	Description	Example from Data
Piling On	Latent	Video 7: Discussion with Jamie Metzl on the origins of COVID-19	"It's just so strange to see scientific inquiry and analysis pushed and manipulated by politics"
	Overt	Video 11: Discussion with Dave Smith on the implementation of vaccine passports	"Cuomo was saying if you we gotta lock down because you didn't wear your masks, you ate the cheesecake you're gonna get fat, remember that he was using these f-king down-home analogies. Like oh and I'll tell you what I can't stand which just like makes my blood boil is when they use your basic freedoms as a negotiating tool like they're like well if you do x y and z then maybe we'll let you have restaurants"

Table 6
Grandstanding: Ramping Up

Sub-Category	Variable	Description	Example from Data

Ramping Up	Latent	Video 3: Discussion with Fahim Anwar on what COVID-19 tells us about the future	"The government's never been good at anything they've never been good at anything not one f-king thing"
	Overt	Video 8: Discussion with Mike Baker on the competing narratives of COVID-19	"Thank G-d trump wasn't pro-vaccine we would be f-ked because you know he was pro so many other therapeutics and they're like hydroxychloroquine is racist you know like yeah thank god he didn't say anything about ivermectin or vitamin d or quercetin or any of the other things that we've been or zinc"

Table 7

Grandstanding: Trumping Up

Sub-Category	Variable	Description	Example from Data
Trumping Up	Overt	Video 3: Discussion with Fahim Anwar on what COVID-19 tells us about the future	"Creating a czar of truth the f-king government to decide what's real and what's not to just to dispel disinformation so you can pull this up czar of truth this is something that CNN has talked about a lot of these like f-king weirdo networks have talked about like do you understand what happens when you start censoring people"
	Overt	Video 8: Discussion with Mike Bake on the Competing COVID Narratives	"It's the political nature of this country and again going back to what we were talking about earlier with the Russians and the Chinese they see that and they just keep they keep sticking right and the more they do the more they tear the threads of our belief from the system and the more polarized we get the more yelling that goes on and the more f-king people believe when they read social media and they don't bother to say well who wrote this right is this actually a scientific piece of work or is this just and what's the origin of it what's the outlet right and half the time the outlet is overseas someplace and then you got to dig into it it's like an asset tracing exercise who owns that company right then you find out it's owned by some you know Russian entity that's got an operation out of Cyprus or whatever"

Table 8

Grandstanding: Calling Out

Sub-Category	Variable	Description	Example from Data
Calling Out	Latent	Video 19: Discussion with Matthew Yglesias on what Bill Gates said about the vaccine	"There is a consequence to taking this" and "there is a reality to taking this particular vaccine that will make a lot of people feel like sh-t."
	Overt	Video 19: Discussion with Matthew Yglesias on what Bill Gates said about the vaccine	Rogan claimed that "80% of people don't want the vaccine because it was fast-tracked and they are nervous about potential side effects." Michael Yglesias quickly responded saying "that's not what I heard." Rogan then respond saying "…well that's what bill gates has said Bill Gates…we can look it up and play it for you."

Table 9

Gaslighting

Variable	Description	Example from Data
Latent	Video 8: Joe Rogan and Mike Baker discuss the reality of catching COVID-19	"You want to talk about the super spreaders it's people that have ignored their health and those people need help and they need support and they need love but there's a reality to the people that are getting sick from this"
Overt	Video 17: Discussion with Alex Berenson on the COVID-19 relief bill & the origins of the virus	"We were criticized on the podcast because I had Brett Weinstein who's an evolutionary biologist who discussed all the scientific reasons why there's evidence that indicates that this is not a virus that naturally occurs" "Just by coincidence there happens to be a level four lab in Wuhan what are the odds right like you would think that people would want to put those two together but it was something from the beginning that this group think was established that you are not to question that and there was a whole article written about I'm promoting this dangerous conspiracy theory that the that this came from a lab that's been disproven but it hasn't been it has not been disproven" "crazy coincidence yeah but we're not allowed to talk about that yeah if you talk about it you're a trump supporter"

Table 10

Diminishment

Variable	Description	Example from Data
Latent	Video 13: Joe Rogan clarifies his controversial vaccine comments with Andrew Santino	"Well the White House commented on what I said about vaccines… Fauci disagreed with me"
Overt	Video 13: Joe Rogan clarifies his controversial vaccine comments with Andrew Santino	"These are not like planned statements let's be real clear when I say something stupid I'm not thinking about what I'm going to say before I say it I'm just saying it, right, I don't have an off air an on-air voice. I have me…I'm not a respected source of information but at least I try to be honest about what I'm saying"

Table 11

Anti-Expertise

Sub-Category	Variable	Description	Example from Data

Convenient use of expertise	Overt	Video 19: Joe Rogan and Matthew Yglesias discuss what Bill Gates had to say about COVID-19 vaccines	"Well that's what bill gates has said" "It's on my Instagram there's an interview with bill gates where he's talking about I believe this is the Moderna vaccine the Pfizer vaccine has a very similar effect because it's um the way this uh MRNA vaccine works they've taken the common cold vaccine and added this to it your body develops these proteins to fight off but you get sick"
Resistance to intellectual authority	Latent	Video 18: Joe Rogan and Michael Kosta discuss the shifting nature of COVID-19	"The problem is this virus is weird yeah and I don't think there's a real way that you can contain it"
	Overt	Video 8: Joe Rogan and Mike Baker discuss COVID-19 narratives Video 12: Joe Rogan and Dave Smith discuss COVID-19 vaccines	"That's one of the funniest narratives "believe science"" "I'm not injecting my daughter with something to f-king virtue signal" "We're talking about something that is not statistically dangerous for children. But yet people still want you to get your child vaccinated, which is crazy to me."

Table 12

Conspiracy

Variable	Description	Example from Data
Latent	Video 17: Joe Rogan and Alex Berenson discuss the COVID-19 relief bill	"We should all want to know where this virus came from I don't care whether you're republican or democrat liberal conservative I don't care what country you live in you should want to know if this is the result of a Chinese lab accident"
Overt	Video 17: Joe Rogan and Alex Berenson discuss the COVID-19 relief bill	"We were criticized on the podcast because I had Brett Weinstein who's an evolutionary biologist who discussed all the reasons scientific reasons why it's there's evidence that indicates that this is not a virus that naturally occurs"

Table 13

Inconsistencies

Sub-Category	Variable	Description	Example from Data
COVID-19 Vaccines	Latent	Video 19: Joe Rogan and	"Yeah if that is all it is it's just you have severe chills and you feel like sh-t for a couple days that is way better than getting the coronavirus"

		Matthew Yglesias discuss vaccines	
	Overt	Video 12: Joe Rogan and Dave Smith discuss vaccines	"If you're like 21 years old, and you say to me, should I get vaccinated? I'll go no. Are you healthy? Are you a healthy person? Like, look, don't do anything stupid, but you should take care of yourself. You should -- if you're a healthy person, and you're exercising all the time, and you're young, and you're eating well, like, I don't think you need to worry about this." "There's a consequence of taking this" "Would you take a vaccine yeah for sure if it works yeah if it's been proven that it works and I talk to doctors and they explain what the science is and how it works then I talk to people that have taken it and they say you know what the side effects are because um with the covid vaccine I think the side effects are you feel like [__] for a couple days who can't deal with feeling like [__] for a couple years you can't lose two days yeah um yeah I would definitely do it if uh I thought it was safe"
Origin of COVID-19	Latent	Video 9: Joe Rogan and Eddie Bravo discuss COVID-19 response	"We were making viruses well they like avian flu that was bird agriculture right swine flu that was Pig agriculture when they Jam all these animals together occasionally one of those f-king bugs would jump"
	Overt	Video 14: Interview with physicist, Frank Von Hippel	"There is more evidence that it comes out of a lab in Wuhan. That it somehow or another when they were doing these -because you know there is a level 4 lab in Wuhan. Bret Weinstein, who is also a biologist, was on my podcast, he was explaining -- I'm not, I would butcher it if I went into detail about it -- but he was explaining all the indicators that point to the fact that this was a virus that was used for research. And that they were using it to, you know, to learn more about or come up with strategies to defeat coronaviruses. And that same lab that's in Wuhan, in 1998 -- or not, excuse me, 2018 -- just two years ago, was cited for safety violations"
Mask Use	Overt	Video 8: Rogan discussing masks as nonsense	"My freedoms aren't infringed by wearing a mask I don't give a f-k it's not that big a deal"
Seriousness of Pandemic	Latent	Video 9: Joe Rogan and Eddie Bravo	"This disease is a good example it's not something that we shouldn't be afraid of we should we should definitely be afraid we should be afraid of something that could come down the pipe that's more deadly"

	Overt	Video 3: Joe Rogan and Fahim Anwar	"We have to recognize that we're all going to die and you can't stop all life because a disease comes along and kills some of us"
		Video 12: Joe Rogan and Dave Smith	"Both my children got the virus. It was nothing. I mean, I hate to say that if someone's children died from this. I'm very sorry that that happened. I'm not in any way diminishing that. But I'm saying the personal experience that my children had with COVID was nothing. One of the kids had a headache. The other one didn't feel good for a couple of days. And I mean not feel good, like, no big deal. No coughing, no achey, no like in agony. There was none of that. It was very mild. It was akin to them getting a cold."

Article Samples for Data Collection					
Media Outlet	**Byline**	**Article Title**	**Salient Words**	**Journalistic Practice**	**Key Citations**
Asian News International (ASI)	ANI	Prince Harry slams Joe Rogan for spreading COVID-19 vaccine misinformation	Vaccines, COVID-19, Joe Rogan, Infectious Disease, Social Media, Podcasting	News	"If you have a platform, with a platform comes responsibility" "Just stay out of it. The issue in today's world with misinformation endemic, you've got to be careful about what comes out of your mouth"
Business Insider	Jake Lahut	Biden officials call out Joe Rogan over vaccine comments: 'Did Joe Rogan become a medical doctor while we weren't looking?'	Vaccines, COVID-19, Joe Rogan, Health Department, Prevention & Wellness, Public Health, US President, Celebrities, Podcasting	News	Rogan as "the podcast mogul" "You have to put a bit of societal responsibility in your choices" "I'm not sure that taking scientific and medical advice from Joe Rogan is perhaps the most productive way for people to get their information"
The New York Times	Wajahat Ali	Please Vaccinate Your Teenager to Protect My Four-Year-Old; Guest Essay	Vaccines, COVID-19, Joe Rogan, Death Rates, Children	Opinion	"It's so disturbing to hear people like Joe Rogan telling young people they don't need vaccines"
The Globe and Mail	John Heinzl	STARS AND DOGS	Vaccines, COVID-19, Joe Rogan, Public Health, Social Media, Conspiracy Theory, Infectious Disease, Hate	Globe investor	"It's been a rough week for Spotify Technology. First, the audio-streaming service faced a backlash after its popular podcaster, Joe Rogan, advised young, healthy people not to get vaccinated"

					"Spotify's stock tumbled after the company's first-quarter monthly active user count missed expectations and its second-quarter forecast also fell short of Wall Street estimates" "…millions of listeners exposed to his amateur public-health advice"
			Speech, Company Revenues		
The National Post	National Post Staff	'Canada's f—d': Joe Rogan criticizes our COVID-19 lockdowns	Vaccines, Infectious Disease, Joe Rogan, Podcasting	News	"Rogan has taken aim at lockdown measures implemented across Canada" "The podcast host and comedian said he didn't understand why Canadian officials think lockdown measures are a "solution"" "In addition, Rogan came under fire from top White House officials after he suggested that young Americans did not need the vaccine"
The Toronto Sun	N/A	Joe Rogan urges young fans not to get COVID-19 vaccine	Vaccines, COVID-19, Celebrities, Anti-Vaccine Movement, Public Health	Celebrity	"Funnyman Joe Rogan has controversially urged young fans not to get vaccinated against COVID-19"

CNET News	Mark Serrels	Joe Rogan and COVID vaccine misinformation: What he said and why he's wrong	Vaccines, COVID-19, Adolescents, Self-care, Public Health, Viral videos, Podcasting	News	"Joe Rogan has been accused of spreading misinformation on COVID-19 the past" "The popular, controversy-loving podcaster" "Joe Rogan is Gweneth Paltrow's Goop for men"
Business Insider	Grace Dean	Joe Rogan said on his podcast that healthy young people should avoid COVID-19 vaccines. Spotify reportedly has no plans to remove the episode	Vaccines, COVID-19, Children, Anti-Vaccine Movement, Prevention & Wellness, Public Health, Vulnerable health populations	News	"Joe Rogan spread misinformation about COVID-19 in young people during a recent Spotify podcast" "…contradicting healthcare guidance" "Spotify has exclusive rights to Rogan's podcast… Rogan invited far-right conspiracy theorist Alex Jones, two years after Jones was kicked off Spotify for "repeated violations…" Spotify has since removed this episode, along with 41 others by Rogan, but won't remove this one"
CNN	Kerry Flynn	Joe Rogan spread anti-vaccine misinformation. Spotify's CEO is standing behind him	Anti-Vaccine movement, COVID Coronavirus, Vaccines, Company earnings, Pandemic, Public health	CNN Business	"Rogan broadcast his anti-vaccine message at a point in the Covid-19 pandemic in which more younger people are getting hospitalized from the virus and remain at risk for spreading it" "Joe Rogan is wrong. I'm hoping

					he was just trolling for new subscribers, but he has a pretty big platform and that's really destructive" "The young are the reservoirs of this virus… they are really powering the spread so the only way to put this virus down once and for all is to immunize"

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