



Constructing Masculinity Through Anti-Establishment Discourse in The Joe Rogan Experience: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026 - 06- 01 Revised: 2026 06-18 Accepted: 2026 06-30	<i>Podcasts are increasingly popular alternative media platforms and have transformed modern public discourse through their informal, lengthy, and ideologically driven conversations. In this context, masculinity has become a hot topic, particularly with respect to institutional authority, authenticity, and freedom of expression. This paper investigates the construction of masculinity in anti-establishment discourse in the Joe Rogan Experience with Mark Zuckerberg. The study adopts a qualitative research design and uses the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by Norman Fairclough which looks at discourse at the level of textual features, discursive practice and social practice. The data comprises selected utterances from the podcast episode that directly address masculinity, aggression, institutional culture, censorship and freedom of expression. Data were collected by purposive sampling and thematically analyzed based on research objectives.</i>
Keywords: Masculinity, Anti-Establishment Discourse, Critical Discourse Analysis.	<i>The findings reveal that masculinity is discursively constructed as a natural, positive, and socially valuable identity associated with strength, competitiveness, resilience, authenticity, and independence. The discourse frequently positions masculine traits as being constrained by contemporary institutional and corporate cultures, which are represented as excessively restrictive, politically regulated, and detached from authentic social values. Furthermore, anti-establishment discourse functions as a key ideological mechanism through which masculine identity is legitimized and defended. Institutions, including corporate environments and systems of content regulation, are frequently portrayed as limiting individual freedom and suppressing authentic expression. The podcast setting itself contributes to this construction by fostering an atmosphere of spontaneity, intimacy, and perceived authenticity that strengthens audience engagement with anti-establishment narratives.</i>
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By showing how long-form conversational media are crucial venues for negotiating masculine identities and institutional power in modern digital culture, this study adds to the expanding corpus of research on digital masculinity, podcast discourse, and alternative media.

1. Introduction

In recent years, podcasts have emerged as influential digital platforms that impact public opinion, identity formation, and ideological discussions. Unlike traditional broadcast media, podcasts often feature longer, more casual, and conversational exchanges that allow speakers to openly share their opinions, beliefs, and personal experiences. This conversational style has made podcasts key spaces for the ongoing construction and debate of social values, political views, and cultural identities. As alternative media reach global audiences, podcast content has become a crucial subject of study in discourse, media, and sociolinguistic research. Consequently, podcast conversations are now recognized not only as entertainment but also as ideological expressions reflecting broader social and cultural dynamics.

Among current podcast platforms, The Joe Rogan Experience stands out as one of the most influential and debated alternative media outlets. Hosted by Joe Rogan, the show is known for its casual conversational tone, lengthy interviews, and discussions on topics like politics, culture, gender, free speech, health, and distrust of institutions. The podcast often distances itself from mainstream media by endorsing sceptical views of political bodies, corporate structures, and dominant cultural stories. This stance has helped it gain popularity among listeners who feel mainstream institutions are out of touch with everyday life. As a result, the podcast offers valuable discourse material for studying how ideological meanings and social identities are shaped in today's digital communication.

Masculinity is one of the most prominent topics in contemporary podcast discussions. It has gained more visibility in digital media amid ongoing debates about gender roles, political correctness, emotional expression, and societal expectations of men today. Rather than being seen as a fixed biological trait, masculinity is now understood as a socially and discursively shaped concept influenced by language, interaction, and cultural beliefs. In alternative media, masculinity is often linked to traits like assertiveness, resilience, competitiveness, skepticism, independence, and opposition to institutional power. These ideas are especially evident in podcasts, where speakers frequently explore masculine identity through stories emphasizing authenticity, strength, and anti-establishment attitudes.

The Joe Rogan Experience episode featuring Mark Zuckerberg provides valuable insight into this topic. During the discussion, both participants address themes like "masculine energy," corporate culture, aggression, martial arts,

institutional pressures, and political correctness. Some comments portray modern institutions and workplace environments as overly restrictive, emotionally suppressive, or limiting to masculine expression. At the same time, masculinity is depicted through ideas of toughness, physical strength, confidence, and defiance against institutional demands. These patterns show that masculine identity is shaped not only by gendered language but also through ideological resistance to dominant institutional and cultural structures.

Previous research in Critical Discourse Analysis has largely focused on political speeches, news media, advertisements, and social media communication. However, podcast discourse, especially as a platform for constructing masculinity and anti-establishment ideas through extended conversational formats, has received relatively little attention. Most studies on masculinity in media tend to concentrate on films, television, or political contexts rather than alternative digital media like podcasts. This study aims to add to the ongoing conversation about digital discourse and masculinity by exploring how masculinity is shaped through anti-establishment narratives in podcast interactions. It specifically analyzes the linguistic and discursive methods employed in the selected Joe Rogan Experience episode featuring Mark Zuckerberg.

To address these research questions, this study employs Critical Discourse Analysis based on Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional framework, which examines discourse across textual features, discursive practices, and social practices. Using this approach, the study investigates how podcast discourse constructs and legitimizes masculinity within the broader contemporary contexts of institutional authority, digital media culture, and anti-establishment ideology.

Based on the discussion above, this study aims to investigate how masculinity is discursively constructed through anti-establishment discourse in The Joe Rogan Experience featuring Mark Zuckerberg. Specifically, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. How is masculinity represented and constructed in the podcast discourse of The Joe Rogan Experience featuring Mark Zuckerberg?
2. How does anti-establishment discourse function in constructing and legitimizing masculinity within the podcast interaction?

2. Literature Review

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) views language not merely as a communicative tool, but as a social practice closely connected to ideology, identity, and power relations within society (Norman Fairclough, 1995; Teun A. van Dijk, 2006). Through discourse, individuals create social realities, shape identities, and reinforce certain ideological stances that can become accepted in public communication. Recent research highlights that digital media discourse increasingly serves as a space where political divides, authenticity, and identity are negotiated through everyday interactions (Bozzi, 2025; KhosraviNik & Zia, 2024).

In alternative media like podcasts, discourse often expresses resistance to institutional power, mainstream journalism, and prevailing cultural norms, making these digital conversational platforms important subjects for modern CDA studies.

Recent advances in digital communication have turned podcasts into powerful ideological platforms where social values and identities are actively shaped and debated. Unlike traditional broadcast media, podcasts tend to promote informal, extended, and spontaneous dialogue, allowing speakers to share personal beliefs and ideological views more freely (Spinelli & Dann, 2019). Studies on podcast discourse show that this informal style often creates a sense of authenticity, honesty, and closeness between hosts and listeners (Llinares et al., 2018; Bozzi, 2025). This sense of authenticity helps podcast hosts gain influence as alternative public figures who question mainstream institutional narratives. It can be concluded that podcasts increasingly serve not only as entertainment but also as important discursive arenas where ideology, identity, and social roles are negotiated through conversation.

Within contemporary digital media, masculinity has become one of the most debated social identities, particularly in relation to changing gender expectations, political correctness, and institutional culture. Contemporary masculinity is increasingly understood not as a fixed biological attribute but as a socially and discursively constructed identity that is continuously produced and negotiated through social practices, language, and interaction (Connell, 2005; Kiesling, 2007). Hegemonic masculinity is often linked to traits like authority, competitiveness, emotional control, independence, and toughness, though these qualities continue to change across different sociocultural settings. Recent research on digital masculinity shows that online media increasingly frames masculinity through themes of authenticity, skepticism, stoicism, dominance, and resistance to institutional norms (Ging, 2019). These themes are particularly evident in podcast discourse, where speakers frequently negotiate masculine identity using directness, humor, confidence, and anti-establishment attitudes.

The relationship between masculinity and anti-establishment discourse has become more prominent within alternative media culture. Anti-establishment discourse refers to communication that challenges or opposes dominant institutions like governments, corporations, mainstream media, and elite-controlled systems (Teun A. van Dijk, 2006). This discourse often uses polarization tactics that create symbolic divides between “ordinary people” and institutional elites. Recent studies suggest that alternative digital media platforms often promote scepticism toward institutional authority and mainstream information systems, creating discursive spaces where alternative viewpoints and critiques of dominant institutions can flourish (Bennett & Livingston, 2018). In many podcast conversations, opposition to political correctness, institutional authority, and corporate culture is linked to ideas of masculine independence and authenticity, thereby connecting anti-establishment views with the construction of masculine

identity.

These discursive patterns are especially evident in The Joe Rogan Experience, a highly influential alternative media podcast in today's digital culture. Hosted by Joe Rogan, the show regularly discusses topics like free speech, distrust of institutions, masculinity, media critique, and political polarization. Recent research suggests the podcast fosters ideological engagement through authentic conversation, anti-mainstream stances, and emotionally charged discourse (Bozzi, 2025). The episode with Mark Zuckerberg is particularly notable, as it repeatedly explores themes such as "masculine energy," aggression, political correctness, and corporate culture. In this dialogue, masculinity is portrayed through stories of strength, resilience, and opposition to socially restrictive institutional settings. These consistent discursive patterns highlight how masculine identity is shaped through anti-establishment discourse in contemporary podcast communication.

Although recent research has increasingly examined digital discourse, podcast communication, and masculinity in online environments, several conceptual and analytical gaps remain in the literature. Most Critical Discourse Analysis studies have focused on political speeches, news media, advertisements, and social media as sites of ideological construction (Norman Fairclough, 1995; Teun A. van Dijk, 2006), with relatively little attention paid to long-form podcast conversations as dynamic spaces for negotiating masculinity and ideological identity. Research on digital masculinity often centres on visual social media platforms, online communities, and manosphere culture (Ging, 2019), with comparatively limited attention given to how masculinity is constructed through extended and spontaneous dialogue in podcast interactions.

Additionally, studies on alternative media and anti-establishment ideology tend to focus on political polarization, misinformation, or institutional distrust (Bennett & Livingston, 2020; Sullivan, 2024), rarely addressing how anti-establishment discourse serves as a linguistic and ideological tool in constructing masculine identity. Regarding The Joe Rogan Experience, prior work mainly discusses political controversy, platform impact, and audience culture (Bozzi, 2025), with little critical examination of how the podcast's conversational discourse builds masculinity through resistance to institutional authority, political correctness, and dominant cultural norms. This study aims to fill these gaps by analysing how masculinity is discursively constructed through anti-establishment narratives in the Joe Rogan episode featuring Mark Zuckerberg, using Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis framework.

3. Method

This study utilized a qualitative research design grounded in Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework. A qualitative approach was chosen as the study focused on interpreting meanings, ideologies, and identity constructions within podcast discourse. The primary goal was to explore how

masculinity is constructed through anti-establishment discourse in The Joe Rogan Experience episode featuring Mark Zuckerberg. The research specifically examined the linguistic and discursive techniques used to portray masculinity, institutional critique, authenticity, and opposition to dominant cultural norms.

The main data for this study came from Episode #2255 of The Joe Rogan Experience featuring Mark Zuckerberg, released in January 2025. The data included spoken words, conversational segments, and interactional exchanges discussing topics such as masculinity, aggression, corporate culture, political correctness, and institutional authority. The researcher served as the primary instrument, responsible for selecting relevant data, interpreting meanings, identifying discourse patterns, and linking textual insights to broader sociocultural contexts. Additionally, the podcast video and its transcript were used as supplementary tools to verify utterances, understand contextual meanings, and ensure accuracy during data analysis.

The data collection involved several steps. First, the researcher repeatedly watched the podcast episode to grasp the overall context, interaction patterns, and key themes in the conversation. Second, the episode transcript was reviewed to identify relevant utterances and discourse segments. Third, selected excerpts related to masculinity and anti-establishment discourse were categorized based on recurring themes and discursive patterns.

The data were analysed using Fairclough's three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis framework, which includes textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice. During textual analysis, linguistic features such as word choice, modality, pronouns, evaluative language, and rhetorical techniques were examined. The discursive practice stage focused on conversational interaction, performance of authenticity, and audience positioning within the podcast discourse. Finally, in the social practice stage, findings were interpreted in relation to broader sociocultural issues involving masculinity, distrust of institutions, and alternative media culture in today's digital society.

3. Result

Constructing Masculinity as Natural and Positive Energy

The discourse in The Joe Rogan Experience frequently constructs masculinity as a natural, socially valuable, and necessary form of identity. This construction is particularly visible in the statement, *"It's like you want feminine energy. You want masculine energy. I think that you're going to have parts of society that have more of one or the other"* (Excerpt 1). At the textual level, the repeated modal pattern "you want" functions as a lexical marker of necessity and desirability, positioning masculinity as something naturally needed within society. The lexical choice masculine energy is also significant because it frames masculinity not merely as a gender category, but as a productive social force contributing to social balance and functionality. According to Norman Fairclough (1995), vocabulary choices reflect

particular representations of social reality. In this context, masculinity is represented positively and legitimately rather than as a problematic identity.

This positive construction of masculinity is reinforced in other excerpts. In Excerpt 5, aggression is described as having “really positive” merits, while Excerpt 15 explicitly states that “*masculine energy is good*.” These lexical choices collectively normalize masculinity through positive evaluative language associated with strength, functionality, and legitimacy. The discourse therefore challenges narratives that primarily associate masculinity with toxicity or social harm. Recent studies on digital masculinity similarly indicate that alternative media environments increasingly reconstruct masculinity through narratives of authenticity, normalization, and resistance toward anti-masculine cultural discourse (Ging, 2019). Thus, the podcast discourse reflects broader contemporary attempts to restore masculinity as a socially acceptable and culturally valued identity.

Within the podcast interaction, masculinity is negotiated through conversational informality and authenticity performance. The relaxed conversational style between Mark Zuckerberg and Joe Rogan enables discussions surrounding masculinity to appear natural and experience-based rather than ideological or confrontational. Podcast discourse, unlike institutional or academic discourse, often relies on personal reflection, anecdotal language, and casual interaction, which strengthen perceptions of authenticity among audiences. According to Spinelli and Dann (2019), podcast communication frequently creates intimacy and ideological alignment through informal conversational styles. In this case, the normalization of masculinity is produced not through formal argumentation, but through seemingly ordinary and relatable conversation.

At the broader sociocultural level, the discourse reflects contemporary tensions surrounding masculinity, political correctness, and institutional gender discourse. In recent years, public discussions concerning toxic masculinity and gender equality have increasingly challenged traditional masculine norms within media and institutional environments. Within this context, the repeated emphasis on “masculine energy” implicitly resists institutional narratives that frame masculinity negatively. Anti-establishment discourse therefore functions as a mechanism for reconstructing masculinity as natural, socially beneficial, and unfairly criticized within contemporary culture. This aligns with R. W. Connell’s (2005) concept of hegemonic masculinity, particularly the association of masculinity with socially valued characteristics such as authority, resilience, and confidence. Consequently, in relation to the research questions, the discourse demonstrates how masculinity is represented as a legitimate and necessary social identity (RQ1), while anti-establishment positioning functions to challenge institutional narratives perceived as suppressing or delegitimizing masculine expression (RQ2).

a. Institutional Culture as Anti-Masculine

The podcast discourse also constructs institutional and corporate culture as increasingly restrictive toward masculine expression. This representation is particularly visible in the statement, *"I do think the corporate culture sort of had swung toward being this somewhat more neutered thing"* (Excerpt 2). At the textual level, the lexical choice *neutered* carries strong ideological implications because it metaphorically associates institutional culture with the removal or weakening of masculine characteristics. The term originally refers to the removal of reproductive capability, but within this discourse it symbolically represents the suppression of masculine energy, assertiveness, and aggression. According to Norman Fairclough (1995), vocabulary choices are never neutral because they shape how social realities are represented and interpreted. In this context, corporate culture is discursively framed as weakening or limiting authentic masculine identity.

This construction is reinforced in Excerpt 3, where masculinity is represented as unfairly criticized within institutional discourse: *"It's one thing to say we want to be welcoming and make a good environment for everyone, and I think it's another to basically say that masculinity is bad."* Similarly, Excerpt 13 explicitly states that *"corporate culture was really trying to get away from masculine energy."* These excerpts collectively construct institutions as ideologically opposed to masculinity. The repeated lexical association between institutional culture and the suppression of masculine energy contributes to the representation of masculinity as marginalized within contemporary corporate environments.

At the level of discursive practice, the conversation reflects how podcast discourse enables criticism of institutional culture through informal and seemingly authentic interaction. Unlike formal media interviews, the conversational environment of The Joe Rogan Experience allows speakers to express dissatisfaction toward dominant institutional norms using casual and emotionally resonant language. The relaxed interaction between Mark Zuckerberg and Joe Rogan contributes to the perception that such criticism reflects personal honesty rather than ideological agenda. According to recent studies on podcast communication, conversational informality frequently strengthens audience identification because speakers appear more authentic and less institutionally constrained (Spinelli & Dann, 2019; Sullivan, 2024). As a result, anti-institutional criticism becomes normalized through ordinary conversational discourse.

The discourse also reflects broader anti-establishment ideology within alternative media culture. Institutions and corporate environments are implicitly represented as excessive, restrictive, and overly influenced by political correctness. This construction aligns with broader contemporary narratives suggesting that modern institutions increasingly suppress traditional masculine values in favor of socially regulated behavior. Recent studies on digital masculinity indicate that alternative media discourse often frames masculinity as being threatened or delegitimized by institutional and cultural systems associated with political

correctness and inclusivity (Ging, 2019). Within this context, masculinity is reconstructed as an authentic identity resisting institutional control and ideological regulation.

At the level of social practice, the discourse reflects broader sociocultural tensions concerning gender norms, institutional authority, and contemporary workplace culture. Public debates surrounding toxic masculinity and inclusivity have increasingly influenced institutional policies and corporate communication practices in recent years. However, within the podcast interaction, these developments are represented as contributing to the weakening of masculine identity and social authenticity. Through anti-establishment discourse, the speakers position masculinity as a socially legitimate identity unfairly restricted by dominant institutional norms. Therefore, in relation to the research questions, the excerpts demonstrate how masculinity is represented as marginalized yet authentic within institutional environments (RQ1), while anti-establishment discourse functions to challenge and resist institutional narratives perceived as suppressing masculine expression (RQ2).

b. Aggression, Physicality, and Masculine Authenticity

Another prominent discourse pattern in the podcast interaction is the construction of masculinity through aggression, physicality, and male bonding. This representation is particularly visible in the statement, *"I think having a culture that celebrates the aggression a bit more has its own merits that are really positive"* (Excerpt 5). At the textual level, the lexical choice celebrates gives aggression a positive evaluative meaning rather than representing it as dangerous or socially problematic.

Similarly, the phrase really positive strengthens the normalization of aggression by explicitly associating it with beneficial social value. According to Norman Fairclough (1995), evaluative vocabulary contributes to ideological representation because it shapes how particular behaviors and identities are socially interpreted. In this context, aggression is reconstructed not as harmful masculinity, but as a productive and legitimate masculine characteristic.

The normalization of masculine aggression is reinforced through discussions surrounding martial arts and physical competition. In Excerpt 6, Mark Zuckerberg states, "I didn't really feel that until I got involved in martial arts, which I think is still a much more masculine culture." Likewise, Excerpt 7 asserts that *"You have to be at least somewhat aggressive"* in order to succeed in martial arts.

These statements construct masculinity through physical discipline, competitiveness, and controlled aggression. The lexical association between martial arts and "masculine culture" positions physical toughness and competitive behavior as authentic expressions of masculinity. Excerpt 8 further strengthens this discourse by describing masculine bonding through physical interaction: *"Having a thing that I can just do with my guy friends and we just beat each other a*

bit ... it's good." Here, physical aggression is normalized as part of friendship, intimacy, and male social bonding.

At the level of discursive practice, the podcast interaction frames aggression and physical masculinity as ordinary and experience-based rather than ideologically controversial. The conversational style between Zuckerberg and Joe Rogan relies heavily on personal narrative and anecdotal experience, which strengthens authenticity performance within the interaction. Rather than presenting aggression through institutional or psychological discourse, the speakers discuss it casually as part of everyday masculine identity and self-development.

Recent studies on podcast communication suggest that informal storytelling and personal testimony often increase audience trust because speakers appear authentic and emotionally sincere (Spinelli & Dann, 2019; Sullivan, 2024). Consequently, the podcast environment enables aggressive masculine behavior to be represented as natural, socially acceptable, and personally meaningful.

The discourse also reflects broader alternative media narratives surrounding masculinity and authenticity. Within contemporary digital culture, aggression and physical competitiveness are frequently reconstructed as signs of resilience, self-discipline, and masculine independence rather than toxic behavior. Recent studies on digital masculinity indicate that alternative media discourse increasingly associates authentic masculinity with physical toughness, emotional control, and resistance toward socially restrictive norms (Ging, 2019). In this context, martial arts and physical aggression are discursively positioned as spaces where masculinity can be expressed freely outside institutional expectations and politically regulated social behavior.

At the broader sociocultural level, the discourse reflects ongoing tensions surrounding masculinity and contemporary gender norms. Public discourse in recent years has increasingly problematized aggression as a harmful masculine trait associated with violence and domination. However, within the podcast interaction, aggression is reconstructed as socially productive, emotionally healthy, and necessary for masculine development. Anti-establishment discourse therefore functions to resist institutional narratives

that frame aggression primarily as toxic or dangerous. Instead, aggression is legitimized as part of authentic masculine identity and social bonding. In relation to the research questions, the discourse demonstrates how masculinity is represented through physical strength, competitiveness, and aggression (RQ1), while anti-establishment discourse functions to challenge dominant institutional interpretations of masculine behavior within contemporary society (RQ2).

c. Anti-Establishment Discourse and Institutional Distrust

Another dominant discourse pattern within the podcast interaction is the construction of institutional authority as restrictive, excessive, and threatening

toward individual freedom. This anti-establishment positioning is particularly visible in the statement, *"We've reached a point where it's just too many mistakes and too much censorship"* (Excerpt 10). At the textual level, the repeated intensifier *"too"* constructs censorship as excessive and socially problematic. The lexical choice *censorship* also carries strong ideological implications because it associates institutional regulation with suppression and limitation of free expression. As Norman Fairclough (1995) states that lexical choices function ideologically by shaping how institutions and social practices are represented within discourse. In this context, institutions are framed negatively as entities restricting authenticity and individual expression.

This anti-establishment discourse is reinforced in Excerpt 9, where governments are represented as coercive and threatening: *"One of the government tactics that I've seen that I think is pretty not great is an increasing number of governments basically threatening to throw executives in prison."* The phrase *threatening to throw executives in prison* constructs governmental institutions as aggressive and excessive in exercising authority. Similarly, Excerpt 11 states, *"We're going to get back to our roots and focus on restoring free expression on our platforms."* The lexical expression *"get back to our roots"* constructs authenticity as something original and legitimate that has been lost due to institutional interference. Through these linguistic choices, institutional systems are represented as disconnected from authentic social values, while free expression is positioned as an alternative ideological principle.

At the level of discursive practice, the podcast interaction enables anti-establishment ideology to be communicated through informal and experience-based conversation rather than formal political rhetoric. The relaxed conversational style between Mark Zuckerberg and Joe Rogan creates the impression that criticism toward institutions emerges naturally from personal experience and practical concern. According to recent studies on podcast discourse, conversational informality often strengthens audience trust because speakers appear authentic, independent, and less constrained by institutional communication norms (Spinelli & Dann, 2019; Sullivan, 2024). Consequently, anti-establishment discourse within podcasts may become more persuasive because it is framed as ordinary conversation rather than ideological confrontation.

The discourse also reflects broader alternative media narratives concerning freedom of speech and institutional distrust in contemporary digital culture. Alternative media platforms frequently position themselves against mainstream institutions by promoting ideas of authenticity, openness, and resistance toward censorship. Recent studies indicate that digital alternative media increasingly construct institutional systems as elitist, politically motivated, and disconnected from ordinary individuals (Bennett & Livingston, 2020; Bozzi, 2025). Within this context, anti-establishment discourse functions not only as political criticism, but also as a mechanism for constructing masculine authenticity and independence.

Resistance toward institutional control is implicitly associated with confidence, courage, and autonomy, which are commonly linked to hegemonic masculine identity.

At the broader sociocultural level, the discourse reflects growing public tensions surrounding freedom of expression, digital regulation, and institutional authority in contemporary society. Debates concerning misinformation, platform moderation, and political censorship have intensified in recent years, particularly within digital communication environments. However, within the podcast discourse, institutional regulation is predominantly represented as excessive interference restricting authentic communication and individual freedom. Anti-establishment discourse therefore functions to legitimize alternative media culture while simultaneously challenging mainstream institutional authority. In relation to the research questions, the excerpts demonstrate how masculinity is associated with authenticity, independence, and resistance toward institutional control (RQ1), while anti-establishment discourse operates as a central mechanism for legitimizing masculine identity and opposing dominant institutional narratives within contemporary digital media culture (RQ2).

6. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that masculinity in *The Joe Rogan Experience* featuring Mark Zuckerberg is discursively constructed as a natural, positive, and socially necessary identity. Through lexical choices related to “masculine energy,” aggression, physicality, competitiveness, and authenticity, masculinity is represented as a legitimate social characteristic associated with strength, resilience, confidence, and independence. At the same time, institutional and corporate cultures are frequently constructed as restrictive environments that suppress or delegitimize masculine expression through excessive political correctness, regulation, and social control. Consequently, anti-establishment discourse functions as an important ideological mechanism through which masculinity is normalized, defended, and reconstructed within podcast interaction.

The findings also reveal that podcast discourse provides an alternative communicative space where socially sensitive issues surrounding masculinity, institutional authority, and freedom of expression can be negotiated through informal and conversational interaction. The relaxed conversational style between Mark Zuckerberg and Joe Rogan contributes to the construction of authenticity and audience intimacy, enabling anti-establishment narratives to appear natural, experience-based, and emotionally persuasive. Through Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis framework, the study demonstrates that podcast discourse not only reflects broader sociocultural tensions surrounding gender and institutional authority, but also actively participates in shaping contemporary understandings of masculinity within digital media culture.

This study contributes to contemporary discussions on Critical Discourse

Analysis, digital masculinity, and alternative media discourse by examining how masculinity is constructed through anti-establishment narratives in long-form podcast interaction. Unlike many previous studies focusing on political speeches, social media texts, or visual media representations, this study highlights podcasts as important discursive sites for ideological negotiation and masculine identity construction. Nevertheless, this study is limited to a single podcast episode featuring a specific public figure and sociocultural context. Future research may expand the analysis by comparing different podcast platforms, speakers, or digital media environments to explore how masculinity and anti-establishment discourse are constructed across broader communicative contexts.

7. References

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