# Morphed, Entangled, and **United**:

## Introducing the Hybridity of Radicalization in the COVID-19 era



PRESENTER:

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### WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

• COVID-19 misinformation has been resonating with right-wing extremist beliefs, transnationally

### WHY IS IT A PROBLEM?

- Mutual reinforcement that expands the strength and scope of extremist influence
- Rising challenge of isolating groups and containing radicalization

### **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES & QUESTIONS:**

### **Objective 1:** Patterns of Reasoning

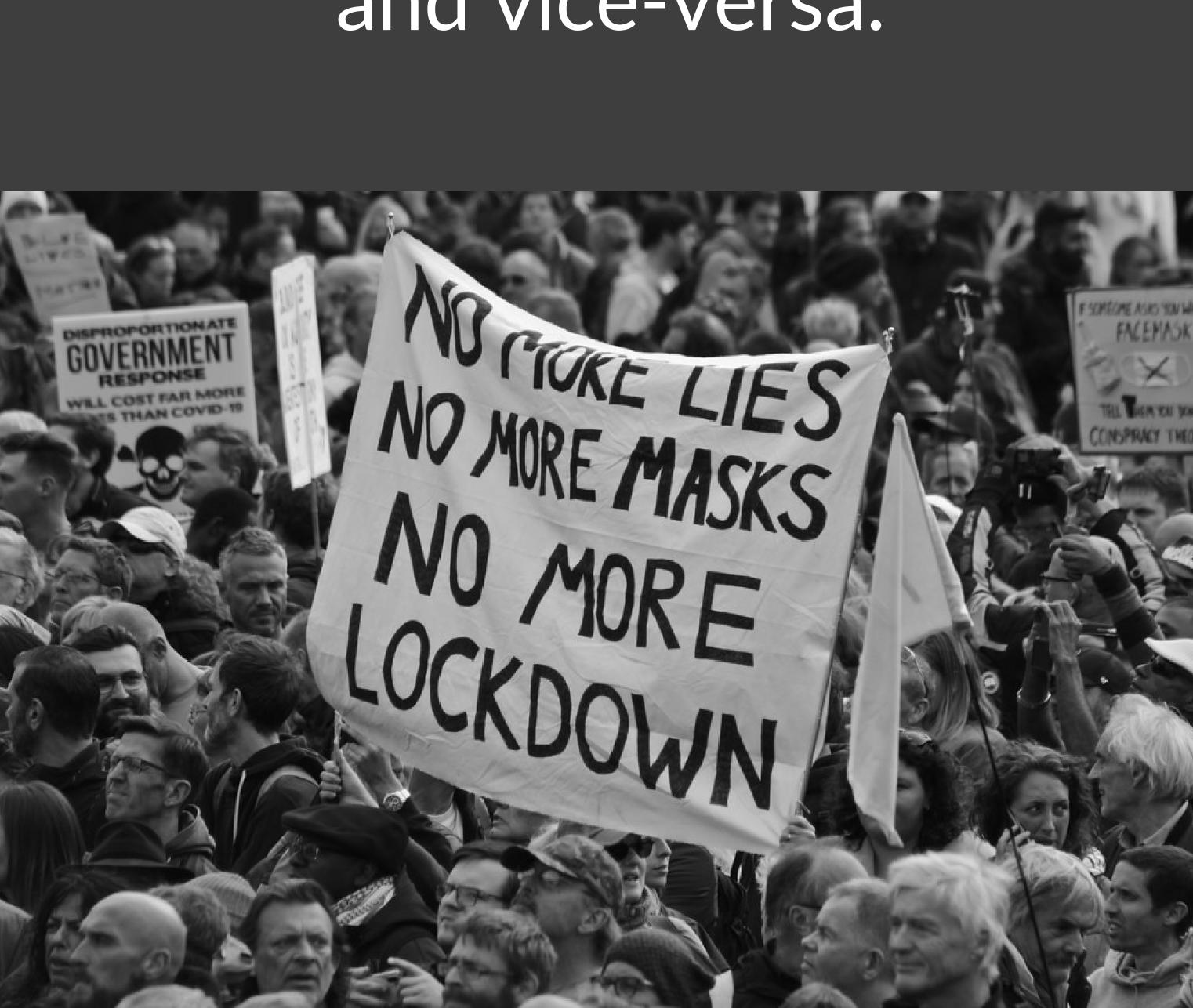
- What are the reasons behind the support for the **6**<sup>th</sup> **World Wide** Freedom Rally and the **Freedom Convoy**?
- To what extent do they demonstrate a willingness to engage in threatful behaviour?

**Objective 2:** Ideological Overlaps

• Where do the ideological overlaps across COVID-19 misinformation and right-wing extremist beliefs lie?

• How strong are the overlaps?





**COVID-19 misinformation has** emboldened right-wing extremist rationale, and vice-versa.

*Note.* From *IMG\_9518* [Photograph], by Steve Eason, 2020, Flickr (https://www.flickr.com/photos/127991958@N06/50385119683). CC BY 2.0.

### **METHODS:**

#### **Data Collection**

• Tweets leading up to the **6th** World Wide Freedom Rally and the Freedom Convoy

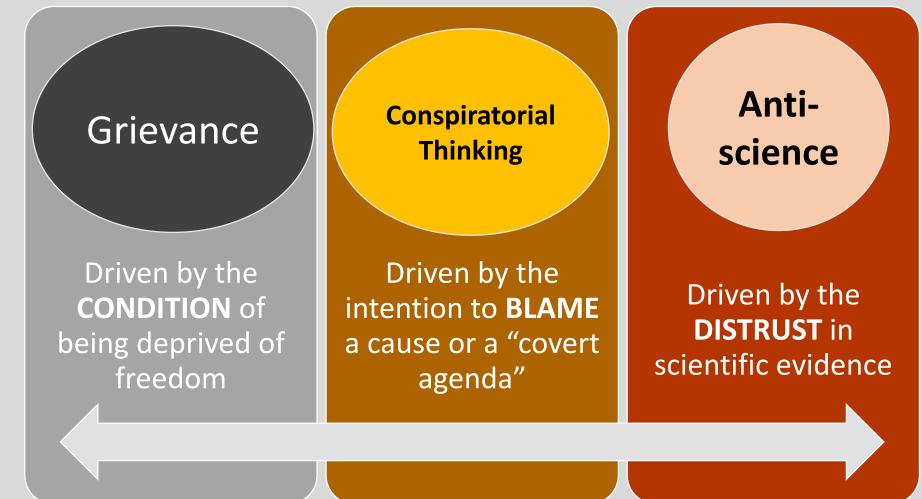
#### **Thematic Analysis**

• Uncover patterns of reasoning behind the support for the protests

#### **Social Network Analysis**

• Uncover ideological intersections across COVID-19 misinformation and right-wing extremist beliefs

### **MAJOR THEMES:**



### **DISCUSSION:**

- Overlaps suggest a wider reach of extremist sympathizers
- Overlaps demonstrate a hybrid environment of radicalization with multiple identities that reinforce each other's beliefs
- Overlaps highlight potential for misinformed beliefs to be brought to radical positions that could escalate into violence

### **REFERENCES:**

Steve Eason. (2020). *IMG\_9518* [Photograph]. Flickr. https://www.flickr.com/photos/127991958@N06/5 0385119683

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