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## Meet the Hosts

In an article published in August 2020 in the e-zine *Atalayar*, which seeks to bridge communication and culture between Mediterranean and Atlantic leaders, Ana Rodriguez argues: “To speak of radio is to speak, as Ryszard Kapuscinko would say, of ‘that desire for our voice to reach somewhere that is a characteristic need of imprisoned people who cling like a plank of salvation to the world’s faith in justice, who are convinced that to be heard is to be understood and, therefore, to demonstrate the justice of their cause and to win it.’”<sup>1</sup>

The *raison d’être* of clandestine rebel radio remains the same for alternative voices in the existing landscape of podcasting. Political scientist Francis Fukuyama contends that the rise of identity politics should be understood as a reaction to the feeling of invisibility experienced among identity groups.<sup>2</sup> The *International Encyclopedia of Communication* defines identity politics as “the struggle for political recognition by marginalized social groups based on particular affiliations of individual identity, such as gender, sexuality, ‘race,’ ethnicity, and nationality.”<sup>3</sup> Podcasters use their positionality as outsiders to deconstruct the hegemonic structures that render them invisible.

This and other social justice imperatives of our surveyed podcasters reflect an enduring belief in the power of communication and in the persuasive power of truth-telling.<sup>4</sup> The present survey of podcasting is being undertaken during a critical inflection point in American history, a moment when the fundamental assumptions about representative democracy are being openly challenged by demagoguery and power inequities, when American advancements in science are being undermined by false prophets, through half-baked distortions of liberty and myths of rugged individualism, and when virulent racism has been unmasked and amplified by a racist white nationalist head of state.<sup>5</sup> We believe that, just as revolutionary radio broadcasts were products of their time, meeting the need of decolonizing struggles, podcasting answers the various needs of the early twenty-first century, and particularly the basic need for truth-telling in an era of mass media disinformation.

The rise of podcasting meets a specific historical need for a diversity of relevant, truthful, and reliable information sources. Where mass media and the Internet offer an often overwhelming and largely distorted information product,<sup>6</sup> podcasters generally strive to provide targeted, contextualized, and relevant

information for their audiences. It is important to understand that meaning is produced by our podcasters within a broader context of misinformation, disinformation, and hegemonic control.<sup>7</sup> This is not a new problem for broadcasters who seek to disseminate a decolonizing message. Moorman notes: “The history of radio and state in Angola should remind us that the problems of fake news, bots, and infiltrated media ecosystems that make the headlines today have antecedents. They are also human problems that require human solutions.”<sup>8</sup>

Our examination of podcasts is centered on anticolonial content producers who were managing a maelstrom of political events set against the backdrop of COVID-19. Our voyage through this space revealed that the podcasters’ ability to “create” public opinion and serve as the centerpiece of communities of resistance may be even more critical in times of social conflict and transformation. Through her reading of the critical importance of the radio station *The Voice of Fighting Algeria* during the Algerian struggle for independence, Rodriguez insists:

Various studies on mass communication have shown that the media are a very effective instrument in the creation of public opinion; an opinion which – as a rule – tends to have very significant effects on society, even if there is no consensus on the nature and extent of these effects. This influence also depends on the more or less critical moments in society. As a rule, the media tend to be more influential in times of crisis.<sup>9</sup>

To better understand how these podcasters see themselves, we examined the keywords they chose to describe their podcasts. On most podcast-hosting websites, podcasters are asked to enter keywords as a way to help audiences determine whether the podcast covers the topics that they would be interested in. We looked at hundreds of keywords from the surveyed podcasts. The most common ones, in descending order, were “sex/sexism/sexuality,” “culture/cultural,” “LGBTQIA”; “gender”; “race/racism/multiracial,” “identity”; and “political/politics.” With much lower frequency, the next set of most common keywords, in descending order, included “personal (in terms of experience, perspective, and stories),” “feminism/feminist,” “economics/economy,” “inequality/inequity,” “love,” “relationship(s),” “empowerment,” “capitalism,” “emotional,” “government,” “intersectionality,” “lighthearted,” “non-binary,” “passion,” “poverty,” “safe space,” “slut/slut shaming,” “socialism,” and “society.” Interestingly, the word “decolonization” rarely appears; the few that list it among their keywords include *From Hoodrat to Headwrap*, which is described as “a Decolonized Podcast for lovers on the margins,”<sup>10</sup> or the *Red Nation* and *Eat the Rich* podcasts, which focus respectively on “Indigenous history, politics, and culture from a left perspective” and the “political economy” and “late stage capitalism.”<sup>11</sup>

This chapter offers a critical analysis of the purpose, form, and style of many alternative voices in decolonial podcasting as well as an overview of the demographics of our surveyed podcasters. We also explore fundraising as a form of communication and community building. Throughout, we focus on how alternative voices in podcasting create public opinion, form counter-publics, and provide spaces for resistance, decolonization, and greater democratic access through the very purpose, form, and style they employ and through their fundraising.

Fundamental to the strategy of amplification and to the presumption of understanding is the way in which podcasts “create” public opinion about stories and issues intentionally marginalized by corporate mass media and, in so doing, either form or effectively rally a counter-public of formerly “imprisoned people.” For example, research has long discovered a class, race, gender, and nationalist bias that is endemic in corporate media sources.<sup>12</sup> As a result, corporate news media may genuflect on issues of more equal representation, but frame policies discourses around a narrow set of ideological positions that maintain the status quo.<sup>13</sup> This is not a result of technological innovation, but rather, as Marissa J. Moorman has argued, one of use: broadcasters use the available technologies in a way that allows them to *create meaning*. Writing about a similar issue in revolutionary radio (*Angola Combatente* [Combating Angola], *Voz Livre de Angola* [Free Voice of Angola]) during the anticolonial struggle in Angola (1961–1974), Moorman asserts: “How radio works is as important as what radio says. Technology matters too, but does not determine, how people produce meaning.”<sup>14</sup>

We recognize that podcasting is not a panacea for colonization, but it has the potential to shape public opinion and form counter-publics of resistance because, just like revolutionary radio, it transforms passive listeners into active community members. Listeners of revolutionary radio were called to assist with the transmission through oral retellings of broadcasts, actively monitor intermittent broadcasts, and discern the counterinsurgent broadcasts of the colonial state, separating them from the movement’s news from the front. But, above all, listeners were invited to be part of a community that operated in secret against the state. In referring to *Angola Combatente* or *Voz Livre de Angola*, Moorman notes: “Many listeners remember hiding out to listen – tucking themselves in small quiet places under beds or desks, or in empty, open-air ones such as soccer fields or rural backyards – and passing along the information to other supporters of independence and nationalist activists. Some radio listeners recall the thrill of secret listening.”<sup>15</sup> Reminiscent of the active and clandestine community of rebel radio listeners during the Angolan struggle for independence, contemporary podcast listeners and subscribers can and do use earbuds and other noise-canceling devices to amplify the revolutionary content in the privacy of their ears.

Another recurring practice in podcasting that is redolent of rebel radio is the encouragement of audiences to consider themselves to be in a shared community with the hosts and guests who are calling for action. Indeed, in the podcasting space, listeners and subscribers are often called to action for the betterment of the specific communities served by the podcast. These communities, which either are formed around a podcast or create one organically, for their own needs, provide a kind of ongoing feedback loop; they inform the hosts of their choices for content and offer a critique of how subjects, interviews, and discussions were handled. Podcast listeners are often called upon by hosts to reflect on contemporaneous events and developments in their communities. Podcasters in turn provide information that includes recommendations for further action and links to resources for community building. The sharing of community solutions and problems across the podcast's global reach makes that podcast serve as an audio forum for future planning and as a sort of global classroom of ideas.

## Hosts

A demographic analysis of podcast hosts revealed much diversity in their racial, sexual, ethnicity, and gendered identities, but there is significant uniformity in their educational backgrounds, class perspectives, and occupational histories. While there is broad diversity in the topics and issues that they seek to decolonize, these podcasters share significant background as entrepreneurs, as people involved in the non-profit sector, and as writers and producers in established corporate news media. In fact, in the hosts we surveyed, podcasting appears to be ancillary income and promotion. Among the entrepreneurial voices are Doreen Caven (*The Girls Like Me*), owner and creative director of the African-inspired clothing brand Pop Caven, and Nick Hanauer (*Pitchfork Economics*), a business leader and venture capitalist who was famously the first non-family investor in Amazon. Among the more notable voices from the non-profit sector are Ikhlas Saleem (*Identity Politics*), director of Digital Purpose for Education Post, a communications non-profit organization focused on improving public education, and Kate Supron (*All Things Equal*), who is involved with a variety of non-profits especially in education. Makkah Ali (*Identity Politics*) works simultaneously in the for-profit sector, as associate director of Arabella Advisors, a company that works with philanthropic and non-profit organizations, and as president of the board of directors of the Muslim Anti-Racism Collaborative.<sup>16</sup>

Many of the hosts have advanced degrees and affiliations with educational institutions. In fact many of them were scholars – for example the media scholar Shane Sheehy (*Eat the Rich*), or Verity Firth (*All Things Equal*),

executive director of the Centre for Social Justice at the University of Technology at Sydney. Emmanuel Ortega (*Latinos Who Lunch*) aka Babelito is a visiting professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago; Nick Estes (*Red Nation*) is assistant professor of American Studies at the University of New Mexico; Luigi Zingales (*Capitalism's*) is professor of finance at the University of Chicago (Booth School of Business); Kate Waldock (*Capitalism's*) is assistant professor in the Finance Area Faculty at Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business; and Marcia Chatelain (*The Waves*) is associate professor of history and African American studies at Georgetown University.<sup>17</sup> Other hosts mention their higher education degrees in their biographies; so does Dennis Norris II (*Food 4 Thot*), who is an educator, Sunny Megatron (*American Sex*), an adult sexuality educator, Dr. Chris Donaghue (*Loveline*), a sex therapist, and Rob (*Inner Hoe Uprising*), who “holds degrees in both Psychology and Human Biology.”<sup>18</sup> Finally, Briahna Joy Gray (*Bad Faith*) holds a Juris Doctor (JD) degree from Harvard University.<sup>19</sup>

One of the most widely shared commonalities we saw among the hosts was a background that involved writing. This category includes bloggers such as Gene Demby (*Code Switch*), editors such as Fran Tirado (*Food 4 Thot*), and columnists such as Hitha Herzog (*The Guilty Feminist*) and Wesley Morris (*Still Processing*).<sup>20</sup> Many of the hosts have published books, for example Doreen Caven (*The Girls Like Me*), Luigi Zingales (*Capitalism's*), Baratunde Thurston (*Show about Race*), Tanner Colby (*Show about Race*), Reni Eddo-Lodge (*About Race*), Lenard Larry McKelvey aka Charlamagne Tha God (*The Brilliant Idiots*), Krystal Ball (*Krystal Kyle & Friends*), Tommy Pico (*Food 4 Thot*), Sarah Jaffe (*Interviews for Resistance*), Tina Horn (*Why Are People into That?!*), Hitha Herzog (*The Guilty Feminist*), Cathy Erway (*Self Evident: Asian America's Stories*), and Matt Taibbi (*Useful Idiots*).<sup>21</sup>

In addition to their shared backgrounds in critical and expository writing, many of our surveyed podcasters have been trained and have worked as journalists or for news outlets such as *The Today Show*, *The Daily Show*, *MSNBC*, *Fox News*, *National Public Radio*, *ABC News*, *The New York Times*, *BBC*, *Boston Globe*, *Vox*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *Rolling Stone*, *Russia Today*, *The Washington Post*, *The New Yorker*, *Slate*, and *The San Francisco Examiner*. These hosts included Wesley Morris (*Still Processing*), Nastaran “Nas” Tavakoli-Far (*Gender Knot*), Dave Zirin (*The Collision*), Anna Holmes (*Show About Race*), Liz Plank (*Divided States of Women*), Jonathan Capehart (*Cape Up*), Ahmed Ali Akbar (*See Something, Say Something*), Shereen Marisol Meraji (*Code Switch*), Virgil Texas (*Bad Faith*), Matt Taibbi (*Useful Idiots*), Alix Spiegel (*Invisibilia*), Abby Martin (*Empire Files*), Cristen Conger (*Unladylike*), June Thomas (*The Waves*), Stephanie Kuo (*Racist Sandwich*), and Hanna Rosin (*Invisibilia*).<sup>22</sup>

Another commonality we found among the hosts was a shared history of media production in the entertainment industry. Hosts with a background in media include producers such as Sunny Megatron (*American Sex*), who was the

host and executive producer of *Sex with Sunny Megatron* on Showtime, radio broadcasters such as Kaitlin Prest (*The Heart*) and Alice Levine (*My Dad Wrote a Porno*), filmmakers such as Raquel Cepeda (*Show about Race*) and Jamie Morton (*My Dad Wrote a Porno*), and stand-up comedians such as Daniel “Dan” Carroll (*Gender Knot*), Krystyna Hutchinson (*Guys We F\*\*\*\*d*), Corinne Fisher (*Guys We F\*\*\*\*d*), Katie Halper (*Useful Idiots*), and Jimmy Dore (*The Jimmy Dore Comedy Podcast*).<sup>23</sup> A few of the hosts identified as actors: Nico Tortorella (*The Love Bomb*), Amber Rose (*Loveline*), and Cameron Esposito (*Queery*).<sup>24</sup>

Finally, we discovered that many of our podcasters are in romantic relationships with each other. For example, *The Gender Rebels* is hosted by Faith DaBrooke, a transgender woman, and her cis female partner Kath.<sup>25</sup> Married couples also host podcasts; for example Jeremie Saunders and Bryde MacLean, “a married, poly, adventurous couple who love to talk to people about s-e-x,” host *Turn Me On*, which “is geared toward getting real about pleasures of the flesh with intelligence, humour and maybe a little pillow talk.”<sup>26</sup> Similarly, the hosts of *We Gotta Thing: A Swinger Podcast*, Mr. and Mrs. Jones, describe themselves as “happily married couple of over 30 years” who “have an amazing relationship.”<sup>27</sup> Their podcast centers on how the independence of their children led to more growth and sexual experimentation in the relationship. *The Jimmy Dore Show* centers on the comedic misanthrope Jimmy Dore, who performs a mix of monologues and skits lampooning elite political culture; this is followed by interviews with guests and by dialogue with his wife, educator Stefane Zamorano, who also reads and responds to audience feedback live on air.<sup>28</sup>

In view of the podcasters’ common class, educational, and occupational experiences, it is surprising to find commonalities in their mission, too. Furthermore, it is not difficult to understand how their shared class, educational, and occupational experiences complement their ability to interconnect, cross-promote, and invite one another as guests on their programs. We found both these features in our survey. Our point is that these shared experiences enable a kind of network of voices in the podcasting space where resources and talent can be shared in a broader communal system. In the end, this may prove to be the most effective tool that podcasters have for effectively challenging the current information hegemony.

## Format and Style

To rectify the perils of podcasting, for example funding and audience growth, decolonial podcasters seek to amplify the voices of community members through a style and a tone that reflect the cultural prerogatives of listeners. These approaches to podcasting, coupled with crowdfunding strategies and an

openness to subscriber comments and critiques, give a sense of democratic inclusivity that cannot be overestimated as a factor in the effective creation of public opinion. Radio stations such as *The Voice of Fighting Algeria*, *Angola Combatante*, or Cuba's *Radio Rebelde* were committed to building communities of resistance through their programming. They accomplished this through strategies that reflected the cultural and political prerogatives of the communities that they reportedly served. Rodriguez writes:

The military forgot that the radio was first and foremost the resonating chamber of a society, a reflection of opinion rather than a convincing machine ... they forgot above all that, to convince, as Mao described, the revolutionary must be among the people like a fish in water.<sup>29</sup>

In other words, only by being in and of the communities that they served could the broadcasters of legendary revolutionary radio broadcasts like *The Voice of Fighting Algeria* understand the discursive practices of those communities, effectively create public opinion and rally revolutionary counter-publics, and thereby serve as a true “plank of salvation.” There are four podcasting formats: commentary, conversation, storytelling, and self-deprecating humor.

Commentary-driven podcasts deconstruct the dominant ideologies that frame the contemporary issues, events, or stories that circulate in mass media. The hosts of the *Chicken & Jollof Rice (CNJR) Show* use their podcast as a contemplative space, in order to reframe dominant media discourses. They describe their program as “featuring first-gen African-Americans’ perspectives on current events & pop culture.”<sup>30</sup> Similarly, *The Brilliant Idiots* podcast, hosted by Charlamagne Tha God and Andrew Schulz, offers alternative perspectives on popular cultural stories promulgated by mass media. In a June 11, 2020 episode entitled “Feel the Feels,” the two hosts confronted the dominant discourses about the movement to “Defund the Police.” Schultz discussed how dominant discourses define “defund the police” before Charlamagne Tha God introduced a definition from those who advocate for local governments to defund the police:

When you read what “Defund the Police” means they want to take money out of these bloated police budgets and put them into communities that need them, which makes absolute sense because New York city has a 6 billion dollar police budget. Take a couple of those billion and put them into the hoods in the city that need them. Put them into the schools, give people better housing, create job training programs, create STEM programs, you know, put more money in social services so people can have, you know, mental health services at their disposal. Once you do that, then what happens is the hood has opportunities now.<sup>31</sup>

These podcasters assiduously explained that corporate news media have incorrectly framed the issue as anti-policing, when in fact it is a much more nuanced policy, which seeks to abrogate failed and destructive policing. This serves to inform audiences about activists' demands, without those demands having to be sanitized and pasteurized by the corporate media.

Conversational podcasts assume that dialogue is an efficacious approach to normalizing behaviors and attitudes dismissed and marginalized by the dominant culture. For example, the *Fucks Given* podcast, which seeks to “break taboos and offer profoundly educational, wickedly funny and genuine thoughts and ideas,” operates from the assumption that dialogue can decolonize mindsets about sexuality.<sup>32</sup> In a heavily British accent, hosts Florence Barkway and Reed Amber describe this ethos by noting: “We’ve always been about normalizing the conversation around sex, sexual health and sexual preference, which is what makes this podcast such a great opportunity to open up the discussion even more, for all genders, sexualities and experiences.”<sup>33</sup> For example, a July 2020 episode titled “Aftercare and Anal Prep with Dr. Christopher Jones” introduced the rarely discussed aspect of pleasure in sex:<sup>34</sup>

DR. CHRISTOPHER JONES: We have images of fetuses masturbating, and it’s a common throughout our life that sense of pleasure is connected to our genitals ... I work with a lot of religious clients and I know some of them wait until they’re married to have sex which is fine, but what is troubling too is when they are so negative about sex education and masturbation, because I can tell you to you’re a point about “you know you cannot make it to 29 without masturbating,” they often argue that condoms break, well abstinence vows break a lot more than condoms break, and you are not giving people these tools and understandings we are really robbing them and putting them in really risky situations.

HOST: Yeah, That is true, people need to be talking about it and sex education needs to be there or otherwise you do end up in dangerous situations because you won’t have been taught about your body, you won’t been taught about consent

JONES: Sadly, in most places sex education is about abstinence or the negative impact sex can have ... there are not any curriculums out there talking about pleasure and this is a major aspect because this what people are after.

Another example is *Guys We F\*\*\*\*d*, which assumes that “discussions on the most taboo kinks, interviews with revolutionaries in sexual health, cultural icons, and, occasionally, guys they’ve fucked” will expand audiences’ understanding of these topics.<sup>35</sup> Their podcast offers yet another example of discourses that run antithetically to what corporate media deem appropriate or

audience worthy. These types of discourses are anathema to corporate media. Issues of sex and sex education are dealt with at a superficial level in corporate media and are often framed as responses to the consternation of a vocal minority of opponents. Podcasting enables sex education and related issues to escape the superficiality and ineffectiveness of corporate media discourses and to metamorphose into a much more sophisticated dialogue.

Numerous conversational podcasts use the podcasting space to engender audience awareness of the colonial legacy of race and racism. Many of their conversations center on deconstructing the intended meaning and purpose of racial categories such as Black or ethnic categories such as Asian. For example, the host of *Self Evident: Asian America's Stories* discussed how “Asian American” can mean many different things to different people,” but the people it refers to are monolithic in discourses of “representation and exclusion, empowerment, and stereotyping, under the diverse umbrella of Asian American identity.”<sup>36</sup> Similarly, the *About Race* podcast investigated the word “Black” with a panel of five guests from diverse backgrounds who all identified as Black.<sup>37</sup> *Invisibilia* is a podcast focusing on stories where competing notions of race come into conflict. For example, one episode profiled a city council candidate who identified as Black, “but his opponent accuses him of being a white man pretending to be Black.”<sup>38</sup> The show used the story to explore questions such as: “If race is simply a social construct and not a biological reality, how do we determine someone’s race? And who gets to decide?” These podcasts are built around the idea of illuminating that race is fluid and enormously consequential. Both examples demonstrate the complications of racial discourses; they also bring about, by contrast, the certainty with which colonial discourses use racial categories despite their fluidity. These conversations go beyond vapid corporate media discourses, which discuss issues of representation: they go to a deeper level, asking who has the power to create racial categories and showing how that power is a malignant force, reproduced through language.

Storytelling podcasts use narrative as a means of creating public opinion and deconstructing mass media perspectives. For example, Kai Wright, host of *The Stakes*, describes his podcast as a “show about what it takes to create change” and uses individual stories to illustrate systematic racial oppression. In an October 2019 episode, Wright offered a story about

an ambitious young immigrant [who] needs a car and ends up with a loan he cannot afford [sic]. His lender, Credit Acceptance, specializes in subprime car loans – lending to people with poor credit at exorbitant interest rates. Reporter Anjali Kamat tells the story of one man’s peregrination with his Credit Acceptance loan from a used car lot to a courtroom, and traces how, a decade after subprime mortgages brought down the economy, subprime car loans remain a favorite on Wall Street.<sup>39</sup>

Here Wright uses narrative to humanize the experiences of American immigrants and critique broader structures of economic oppression that prey on immigrants. His narrative is a rebuke of the anti-immigrant and pro-capitalist tropes we find in dominant media discourses.

Other podcasters rely on a serial approach to storytelling. A serial approach consists of a continuous narrative that unfolds in a sequential fashion, episode by episode.<sup>40</sup> One of the more popular examples of this approach is Ryan McMahon and Jon Thompson's *Thunder Bay* podcast, which completed its second season in 2020.<sup>41</sup> It is a true crime podcast about a series of deaths of indigenous youths in Thunder Bay, Ontario. It investigates the murders as a perpetuation of Canada's colonial legacy to indigenous people. In the process, it draws international parallels by comparing the experience of indigenous peoples in Canada with that of people in the United States. The analysis is centered on the real story of persistent and often uninvestigated murders of indigenous peoples in Thunder Bay, Ontario, which according to the hosts registers more murders than any other place in Canada. As part of this analysis, they interview locals and make the case that the colonial legacy of systemic racism, especially in law enforcement, has led to the habitual murdering of indigenous people. Moreover, such acts are often not discussed.

In addition to reflecting on the experience of others, the decolonial podcast's hosts use personal stories to interrogate and critique colonial mentalities. The use of personal stories was common in podcasts that sought to decolonize sex and sexuality. For example Mr. and Mrs. Jones, the hosts of *We Gotta Thing: A Swinger Podcast*, interrogate their romantic relationship. In an episode in June 2020 they tell us how they were managing their open relationship during COVID-19 and its shelter-in-place order:<sup>42</sup>

MR. JONES: There is no sense in talking about STIs [sexually transmitted infections] when nobody is playing anyways. When things get back to normal it will be more appropriate.

MRS. JONES: [laughing] I know. So, the STI test you had back in March probably still applies at this point. Which is a good thing I guess

MR. JONES: So there is not a lot. We were hoping last month that we would be able to say "this month we got out and did some stuff" but it has all been virtual.

MRS. JONES: Yeah, it has been. Except for the fact that our guest bedroom bed is full of stuff, I am actually packing.

MR. JONES: Yes, yeah, I finally, highly encouraged Mrs. Jones to book us a few days at the beach

MRS. JONES: (laughing) As in, you bullied me.

MR. JONES: Yeah.

MRS. JONES: Yeah, so we are going to go to the beach, Saturday, 2 days from know

MR. JONES: Yeah,

MRS. JONES: Just you and me and we have a condo on the beach ... we will be at the beach, we will be at our happy place

What is fascinating here is how this podcast seeks to decolonize heteronormative notions about committed monogamous relationships and sexuality. This is clear from Mr. Jones' use of "fun" to describe sexual relations with other partners. Such a description, made in front of his wife, is presumably incomprehensible to listeners who had their understanding of commitment within monogamous boundaries shaped by the dominant mass media in the United States, where few if any polyandrous relationships are ever represented, let alone investigated. However, the rest of the Jones' discourse, about anodyne issues such as the guest bedroom, communication, and vacation, is seemingly such that listeners can relate to it. In this way the podcast not only decolonizes listeners' assertions about sex and relationships but bridges the perceived differences between monogamous and other relationships.

The use of a personal narrative for investigating sex and sexuality is also visible in lengthy program descriptions. For example, on *The Manwhore Podcast*, Billy Procida interrogates himself by analyzing sexual explorations and romantic relationships. Its description reads:

I'm Billy Procida. I'm professionally bad at dating. For 6 years, I've interviewed women I've hooked up with about sex, dating, and why we didn't work out on *The Manwhore Podcast*. This show has also allowed me to chat with notorious sex educators, porn stars, sex workers, queer performers, feminist icons, and dating experts. I've gotten a happy ending massage on mic, held oral sex auditions for my frustrated friend, and recorded a voyeuristic episode at a swingers resort. Life is dope.<sup>43</sup>

Procida acts as a substitute for the audience, as his questions, reactions, and perspectives are meant to be instructive to audiences who are curious about the dynamics of dating, especially in relation to their own shortcomings. The audience's expectations and assertions about dating and sex are predicated on colonial mentalities that Procida helps deconstruct through sensationally entertaining commentary. Similarly, *Turn Me On's* host Jeremie introduces himself and the podcast thus:

"Oh, Hi there. I'm Jeremie. A normally horny 31-year old. I'm the producer and host of *Sickboy Podcast* and now this fun little project I've created with my rather bably wife, Bryde. I sorta lost my virginity in a threesome. Put my balls in a space laser and happen to be sterile. Oddly

enough those last two facts are not related in any way. Safe to say my life's education has been approached with the mentality of closing my eyes and jumping head first off the high dive just to see what happens. Enter *Turn Me On*. I wanna know all about everyone else's sex lives... So I can compare them to my own and maybe glean some new finishing moves. Ya smell what I'm cookin?" Bryde: "Hey, I'm Bryde, a sexual being in my 30s. I'm an actor, a yogi, a planner of things, a big sister, a little sister, a slut, a writer and many other labels and archetypes. I just realized that by definition I am also a Millennial, which explains a lot about the attitude I was raised to have about sex, like that it's special, sheltered, team-oriented, conventional, pressured, and achieving. Fuck that. In pursuit of my own adult themed sex-ed, I dragged my podcasting husband into the recording studio to help me talk to other people about everything from jerking off to sex work. This could be my new favorite thing."<sup>44</sup>

These lengthy descriptions illuminate the hosts' contention that identity is crucial for understanding the podcast's purpose and discourse. The assumed understanding between the audience and Jeremie, just like that between the audience and Procida, enables the host to act as a conduit of sexual exploration for listeners. In the process, listeners confront challenging issues and colonial mentalities related to sexuality.

Personal narratives are a modality through which many podcasts interrogate and critique race and racism. For example, the *Parallax Views* podcast host authors such as Zakkiyah Iman, who chronicles his personal battles with racism in *Becoming Human: Matter and Meaning in an Antiracist World*. However, the format of *Self Evident: Asian America's Stories* is predicated on using personal narratives and stories to examine race and racism in the Asian American community. In a summer 2020 episode titled "Hate Goes Viral," *Self Evident* analyzed anti-Asian racism through the personal narrative of Dr. Sojung Yi, who was working as an emergency room doctor in San Francisco when some of the first patients with COVID symptoms began to arrive:<sup>45</sup>

Host: But COVID was not the only threat that found its way into her hospital.

Yi: I remember walking into a patient's room and one of my patients asked me where I am from. And, given our context, I knew exactly why she was asking that question.

Host: Yi grew up in Seattle, but

Yi: As an Asian American I have always fielded that question, asking kind of my legitimacy, *am I from here?*. She kind of fumbled and said you know I am not racist, I just do not want to get sick, that was the

moment for me that I realized, it doesn't even matter that I have a physician badge, at the end of the day what the patient sees is what I look like. And that was kind of a little devastating for me.

Host: Even though this hurt Sojung, she had this responsibility as a doctor to build a rapport with patients especially someone who is coming to the emergency room looking to her for help with a virus that nobody knew very much about, but the kind of help they started to ask for was something she couldn't stand for.

Yi: People were asking me if they could have another nurse take care of them. There are a significant portion of US health care workers, who are Asian, and there are many Filipino nurses in our hospitals here, and one of my patients asked me where my nurse was from and that they didn't want to be taken care of by them. I think the combination of my personal interactions and seeing how patients interact with my staff members made me realize that there was this new wave of anti-Asian racism that was here to stay.

The hosts use Sojung's story to help audiences understand how they perpetuate colonial mentalities with seemingly harmless questions such as "Where are you from?" Furthermore, the story illustrates to audiences the salience of xenophobic discourses when they are ubiquitous in the lives of professionals entrusted with saving lives. Indeed, even achieving a wealthy professional career as a physician – an achievement capitalist ideology portrays as synonymous with liberation – Yi is still maligned by colonial mentalities.

Many of the podcasters rely upon personal narratives to interrogate and critique cultural outsidership. For instance, *Long Distance Radio*, a documentary podcast series about stories in the Filipino diaspora, investigates identity through history: "At 15, Larry Itliong came to America with a dream. His plans changed when he learned the truth about his new home. In 1965, he led Filipino farmworkers in a historic fight for their rights."<sup>46</sup> Similarly, *Latinos Who Lunch* looked at the Latinos/as' cultural outsider status in the Anglo-dominated podcast world. Favela and Ortega explain that, "by maintaining visibility, accessibility, and philosophy of de-centering white male dominating cultural practices at the core mission of their content, *Latinos Who Lunch* strives to open a dialogue with their listeners."<sup>47</sup>

In addition to interrogating ethnic outsiders, decolonizing podcasts use personal stories to critique and raise questions about religious ostracization. In *See Something, Say Something*, personal stories offer a window into the ways in which colonial mentalities about Islam are expressed in the structures of US society. This was the focal point of a May 2020 episode, which the podcast's webpage presented as follows:

Burying a loved one is never easy. But for Muslims New Yorkers, the price of land, gentrification, and ritual practices complicates an already difficult process. As a result, most Muslims in the 5 boroughs tend to be buried hours away from their homes, at cemeteries in Long Island or New Jersey. With the death rate in NYC soaring due to COVID-19, Muslim funeral homes have borne the burden of a crisis that developed long before the quarantine. How does one grapple with saying goodbye to our loved ones when burial is less than ideal?

The episode reveals to audiences that dominant culture is an expression of colonial forces that shape society in a way that renders select rituals and practices difficult, impossible, and invaluable.<sup>48</sup>

The podcasters also relied on personal stories to ask critical questions about gender. In November 2019 Ikhlas Saleem and Makkah Ali, hosts of *Identity Politics*, shared with the producer, Hibba Meraay, stories about their own experience of giving birth. During the program, the producer kicked off the discussion with Ikhlas' recent experience of becoming a mother with a question that assumed that dominant discourses are limited when it comes to what aspects of the birthing process they pay attention to:

**HIBBA:** That is intense, but also amazing. Was it surreal to actually have a human person join your family? I feel like so much is discussed about oh I'm pregnant oh, but whatever, but then the creation of an actual life, what was that like?...

**IKHLAS:** Oh my gosh! It was crazy because, ok so you know for the listeners if you missed previous episodes and are just catching up. I was planning on having a home birth ... the thing I didn't realize is my midwife was prepping us, like, the whole time, and just you this is what to expect but when you're in the moment, I just was like "what the hell is going on?" like I did not know this was gonna to happen ... It was crazy because I did not have my cellphone ... I just had gone to lunch that day, I had gone to Trader Joes, just had a normal casual day. But I also didn't have my cellphone cause I left it at my mom's house the day before. And Joshua kept being like make sure you pick up your cellphone from your mom's house ... like you never know what could happen I was like, just chill, chill it'll be fine. When my water broke, I was like damit. This would happen. On the day where he told me to get my phone. I did not get my phone ... I stood up from taking a nap on our couch, and then my waer just broke. Kind of a lot of water started coming out. But it's weird because it's not just water, it's blood, it's mucus, it's everything. So I just stood in the shower, and then came out and texted Joshua. And the crazy thing about this

HIBBA: [interrupting] Wait? You texted him? You didn't even call him?  
 [laughing]  
 IKHLAS: [laughing] I didn't think about it at the moment. I just  
 WhatsApped him. [laughing]

Ikhlās' response wove a comical narrative that simultaneously introduced the precarious confluence of excitement, uncertainty, and misinformation that women receive about the birthing process. In this sense, it created a space for not only discussing the reality of the birthing process but dispelling some of the misconceptions and misplaced expectations that frame dominant discourses on pregnancy and birthing.<sup>49</sup>

As a respite from the sensitive nature and crucial importance of the topics and issues discussed in corporate media, local and national cable news programming frequently intermingles humorous asides, as well as human interest or pop-cultural references. Noteworthy examples are the humorous banter between Joe Scarborough and Willie Geist about the rivalry between the Boston Red Sox and the New York Yankees on MSNBC's *Morning Joe*, or Ari Melber's clunky hip-hop references on *The Beat*. In these instances, humor serves more as a distraction than as a direct and substantive form of critique. However, these same broadcasts also offer sarcasm, irony, and ridicule in their criticism of opposing political perspectives in the eternal, dichotomous, and revenue-generating left-right battle that serves as background for most cable news. Additionally, left-leaning late-night programming (e.g. *Jimmy Kimmel Live!*, the *Tonight Show* with Jimmy Fallon, the *Late Late Show with James Corden*) offers broadcasts that almost exclusively center on sarcasm, irony, and ridicule. Right-leaning cable news shows (e.g. *Red Eye* with Greg Gutfeld on Fox News) and podcasts (e.g. the *Savage Nation* podcast or Dennis Miller's the *All New Dennis Miller Option*), many of which have migrated from radio formats, almost exclusively deploy ridicule and name calling for the purpose of debasing political rivals. Here the politics of outrage and resentment serves as a basis for "humor." To be clear, these programs are not themselves humorous but often represent forms of verbal bullying, where listeners are called upon to delight in mocking and taunting. Unfortunately this form of expression can and does create meaning and opinion; and it calls people together into a culture of hate, not unlike crowds that gather to encourage a bully to higher levels of cruelty.

However, podcasters who seek to present alternative and often marginalized perspectives consistently eschew ridicule and frequently center on self-deprecation and on the comedy of abjection. Our survey suggests that podcasters who attempt to challenge dominant discourses and to present alternative perspectives most frequently use humor as a means of humanizing themselves. Humor is used neither to mitigate the importance of the topics at hand nor to provide a

distraction or debase political rivals or dominant cultural opinions; it serves instead as a way to engage and connect with audiences at a more intimate and *human* level.

Self-deprecation is often found in the titles of podcasts – titles such as Charlamagne Tha God and Andrew Schulz’s *The Brilliant Idiots*, or *Food 4 Thot*, whose hosts speak of their “favorite literary practice of all: HOETRY!,” or *Divided States of Women*, or Julie Goldman and Brandy Howard’s *Dumb, Gay Politics*, or the Feminist Action Collective’s *Feminists Ruin Everything*. Other podcasts include in their name some self-deprecating premise; a good example is *My Dad Wrote a Porno*, which introduces itself thus: “Imagine if your Dad wrote a dirty book. Most people would try to ignore it and pretend it had never happened – but not Jamie Morton. Instead, he’s decided to read it to the world in this award-winning comedy podcast.”<sup>50</sup>

There are also a number of podcasts that either are specifically hosted by comedians or highlight the centrality of humor in the presentation of alternative perspectives and political or cultural critique. British comedian Deborah Frances-White’s *The Guilty Feminist*

is a light-hearted but enlightening show about modern feminism. Hosted by British comedian, Deborah Frances-White, the show is recorded before a live audience and sees Frances-White and other guests discuss and joke about sex, friendships, relationships and the challenges modern women and feminists face. <https://guiltyfeminist.com/>

Jeremie and Bryde, a married poly couple who host the *Turn Me On*, describe their podcast as “intelligence, humor and maybe a little pillow talk.” Other notable podcasts employing this format include W. Kamau Bell’s *Politically Re-active*, Negin Farsad’s *Fake the Nation*, Erin Gibson and Bryan Safi’s *Throwing Shade*, Andrew Heaton’s *The Political Orphanage*, which offers “politics minus bile plus jokes,” Ben Kisell and Marcus Parks’ *Abe Lincoln’s Top Hat*, *The Skepticrat*, Cody Lindquist and Charlie Todd’s *Two Beers In: A Tippy Political Round Table*, and *Identity Politics*, hosted by comedian and social media satirist Nadirah Pierre, who discusses “navigating the comedy scene while staying true to herself and her community as a Black Muslim woman.” Pierre uses comedy to offer a perspective overlooked in comedy that highlights the presence of Black Muslim women and amplifies the voices of those overlooked.

The comedy of abjection and the use of absurd and shocking statements are also frequently employed by our podcasters and represent a subset of the broader comedic podcast environment. Many of these hosts follow the tradition of classic stand-up comedians like Dick Gregory, Richard Pryor, or Lenny Bruce, presenting challenging political and cultural critiques. Sometimes they

engage with the comedy of abjection, which compels audiences to confront their complicity in ritualized practices of humiliation and exile.<sup>51</sup> Perhaps the most notable example of this kind is Aamer Rahman, an Australian comedian and podcaster of Bangladeshi descent who appears on the Earwolf podcast network. Rahman’s “reverse racism” routine, which propelled his stardom and is emblematic of his brand of activist comedy,

conjured a world where Europe has been colonised: an alternate reality where the continent’s resources have been divvied up by the leaders of Africa, Asia, the Middle East and the Americas, with a transatlantic slave trade sending white people to work on rice plantations in China. The routine became a breakout success, perfectly illustrating what Aamer does so well: using wit to disarm listeners before unpicking everyday hypocrisy.<sup>52</sup>

Other notable examples in the tradition of the comedy of abjection and shock value include Nicole Byer’s *Why Won’t You Date Me* podcast, which centrally involves her presentation of past lovers and asks “Why won’t you date me?” as part of her personal exploration of why she has remained single. Even when comedian Byer brings to her program other guests, including fellow comedians, she insists on asking this question, ultimately using shock value as a means of critiquing the marginalization of plus-sized women and American body shaming. Additionally, *Laid Bare* hosts Oloni and Shani Jamilah comically ask: “Who said? Yes, right now I know she wants to see my penis, that’ll make her day” – in order to highlight the illogical nature of sexual assault.

## Fundraising and Promotion

Revolutionary radio broadcasters in the period 1950s–1970s typically relied on the services and radio waves of recently liberated neighboring countries, taking a broader international community approach. Moorman specifically addresses how Angola Combatente and Voz Livre de Angola relied on the services of Ghana and Zaire (formerly the Congo):

The external services of newly independent countries offered airtime to nationalist movements fighting the white settler redoubts of Southern Africa, giving them access to international airwaves. Intermittent broadcasts came from Ghana. Consistent transmission occurred only after the MPLA settled in Brazzaville and the FNLA, already based in Kinshasa, established a relationship with the broadcaster there.<sup>53</sup>

Moorman further speaks of the existence of “radio clubs” that created networks that preceded cross-border collaboration.

Radio in Angola got its start in the hands of hobbyists. Radio clubs spread across the territory connecting white settlements by the mid-1940s. The state became involved in broadcasting belatedly. The need to argue its position on the war motivated colonial state broadcasting. The police suppressed nationalist organizers in 1959 in the *Processo dos 50* (Trial of 50). The state arrested and sent some nationalists to Luanda prisons and others to Tarrafal Prison in Cape Verde. The PIDE arrived in Angola shortly thereafter. But it did not stop insurgency. In early January 1961, cotton workers in Malanje went on strike to protest against forced labor and taxation; they mobilized around a prophetic movement that announced Maria’s arrival, a woman who would deliver freedom from Portuguese oppression. António Mariano, originally from Malanje but recently returned from the newly independent Congo, galvanized a following who preached Maria’s return, in what became known as “Maria’s War.” Historian Aida Freudenthal called this an “anticolonial revolt permeated by an ethno-nationalist ferment,” though it lacked a nationalist or even a clear political program. The movement evidenced, if not prefigured, a robust, cross-border communications network – one that straddled the material and the spiritual worlds – well before the advent of guerrilla broadcasting.<sup>54</sup>

Although these initial radio clubs served largely white settler populations and were frequently co-opted by the settler government and used for the purposes of counter-insurgency, the networks they established functioned as a foundation for intrastate and cross-border communications networks, which were created by rebel radio broadcasters. Moorman writes:

A vast network of radio broadcasters, largely member based radio clubs, developed in Angola from the 1930s. By the 1950s, each region of Angola had a least one radio club. This meant a total of 10 broadcasters for a white settler population that reached nearly half a million by the early 1970s. They were also served by a commercial station, another belonging to the diamond mining company Diamang, and the EOA. Member based groups drew from radio enthusiasts, the local business elite, and, increasingly, young folks. Every club was different in structure and size. While they broadcast in Portuguese, their main focus was local events: football games, car races, and radio plays. Many also organised live musical events. They often implored the colonial state for

financial support and strategically lauded Portuguese Prime Minister António Salazar and the work of empire. Yet, radio club broadcasters were largely (though not entirely) deaf to the nationalist cause. Still, these young men and women created a dynamic network and vibrant modernity. If clubs found their broadcasters pressed into broadcasting counterinsurgency messages, it seemed a small price to pay.<sup>55</sup>

We find that the cross-border collaboration of rebel broadcasters in twentieth-century decolonization movements and the radio clubs of white settler populations offer important analogies for the funding models of contemporary podcasters. Podcasting does not work on a mass market corporate media model. Podcasting formats do not yet conspire to acquire all print, radio, television, and Internet media, as a predatory oligarchic structure. In the absence of a corporate culture and, specifically, in the absence of corporate competition, podcasters resort to collaboration. Rather than compete for audience share, they generally engage in collaborative cross-promotion and attempt to build a base of loyal subscribers who may in principle be shared with other programs and their advertisers. As we have argued earlier, this method of communal sharing and collaboration is made possible by the shared social, educational, and occupational experiences of podcasters.

There are cultural rewards and systems of recognition for subscribers that create something akin to a “clublike,” “in-group,” or “family” atmosphere. Billy Procida has assembled a fanwhore community with six levels of support, from the basic “Official Fanwhore” (\$2 a month) to the “Whore Head” (\$10 a month) and to the limited “Party People” (\$5,000 a month). Wyoh Lee offers pay per post or unlimited monthly access to her artful erotic nude portraits, a system of sharing the beauty of her body and her eroticism with her fans. Ev’Yan Whitney invites supporters for her podcast into a sexually liberated community, claiming: “In exchange for your support, you’ll join a community of rad sexposi folks who are on this journey of sexual liberation just like you are.”<sup>56</sup> *The F\*\*\*\*s Given* podcast offers access to exclusive weekly episodes to members of its Curious Fckers Club, as a reward for contributions to the program through Patreon.<sup>57</sup>

The proliferation of venues for broadcasting stands in stark contrast to the consolidation of corporate media conglomerates. Although alternative and decolonizing voices compete with corporate mass media and community broadcasters compete with well-recognized names, the proliferation of these venues contrasts sharply with the consolidation of media in other spaces. However, as we will address later, it will appear that, in the broader landscape of Internet providers and search engines, this process does cast a shadow over the broad variety of podcasting platforms. Among the more notable forums are

Acast, AntennaPod, Apple Podcasts, AudioBoom, BeyondPod, Breaker, Bullhorn, Castro, DoggCatcher, Deezer, Downcast, Earwolf, Google podcasts, iHeart Radio, iVoox, Luminary, Overcast, Player Fm, Patreon, Pocket Casts, PodBay, Podbean, Podcast Addict, Podcast Republic, Radio Public, Soundcloud, Spotify, Stitcher, Swinger Podcasts & Blogs, The Podcast App, The Baffler, TuneIn, and YouTube.

With so many hosting platforms, podcast hosts can have a difficult time figuring out how to maximize their reach. Platforms such as Blubrry seek to help podcasters with a series of resources and with expertise that, they claim, is correctly “helping thousands of podcasters with hosting, distribution & analytics.” Still, the podcasters we surveyed posted their programs on a multitude of platforms. This is surely a tedious and laborious endeavor, but podcasters who limit themselves to one platform risk obscurity. The complications surrounding the decision where to post content derive from the differing data and goals of the algorithms that each platform employs. For example, Breaker admits that it privileges podcasts that are already widely listened to. Indeed, it promises to assuage listeners’ fears about being unaware of what is popular in the podcasting space by offering a platform to discover “hot” episodes that everyone is listening to. Meanwhile, Castbox claims to have “invested in advanced artificial intelligence, robust recommendation engines, and pioneered the world’s first automated transcribing and indexing tool for podcasts that powers our In-Audio Search” in order to ensure that audiences whose interests overlap with the podcast program will find their content.<sup>58</sup> Other podcast platforms are genre-based; such as Earwolf, which purports to be the “leading comedy podcast network devoted to creating the best, funniest, and most entertaining podcast shows in existence.”<sup>59</sup> Choosing a single platform may result in privileging or concealing the podcasters’ content.

In addition to posting their content on their platforms, podcasters also have to manage a social media presence that makes audiences aware of vital information about the upcoming programs, for instance the topics they will tackle and the guests who will be appearing. The podcasters we surveyed used a litany of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram Tumblr, Pinterest, LinkedIn, and/or Google+. Just like posting one’s podcasts, the social media aspect of podcasting requires a lot of time and resources. Many podcasters seem to post content on the Internet laboriously, without remuneration, until their program results in some funding. Funding for these alternative voices in podcasting comes from a mix of sponsors and audience subscriptions. Podcasters encourage audience members to become regular donors on a monthly basis by offering incentives such as early access to episodes, bonus programs available only to

subscribers, and listings of subscribers during programs.<sup>60</sup> Besides individual listeners, sponsors provide funding for podcasts. These sponsors include federal agencies such as the National Endowment for the Arts, which funds *The Nod* – a podcast where the hosts “gleefully explore all the beautiful, complicated dimensions of Black life.”<sup>61</sup> Other podcasts are sponsored by businesses such as the prescription glasses and sunglasses company Warby Parker, which funds the *Chicken & Jollof Rice Show*, or Abbey Creek Vineyards and Winery, which funds *The Racist Sandwich*. The *Off-Kilter* podcast is funded by the Center for American Progress Action Fund, which is a policy institute and an advocacy organization. Similarly, activist groups such as the Feminist Action Collective sponsor podcasts such as *Feminists Ruin Everything*. News media outlets also fund podcasts; for example *The Waves*, *Cape Up*, and *The Guilty Feminist* are funded by Slate, *Washington Post*, and *Vox Media* respectively. Educational institutions can be co-sponsors; thus Cornell University joins the Cayuga Radio Group in co-sponsoring *All Things Equal*. Finally, non-profits such as the Center for Asian American Media and foundations such as the Ford Foundation co-sponsor the podcast *Self-Evident: Asian America’s Stories*.

As we have mentioned, podcasters, as a community, help advertise one another. For example, podcasts focused on coloniality tend to promote podcasts that operate in similar spaces. Reni Eddo-Lodge, the host of *About Race*, lists a podcast she has been a guest on in the trailer of her show.<sup>62</sup> Podcasters in the alternative sexuality space, including Wyoh Lee of the *Sex Stories* podcast, Billy Procida of *The Manwhore Podcast*, Ev’Yan Whitney of *The Sexually Liberated Woman*, and Cam and Karen Lee Poter of *Sex Talk with My Mom*<sup>63</sup> have appeared on, and promote, one another’s podcasts as members of a larger community. Other programs promote other podcasters by dedicating complete episodes to podcasters whose hosts cover similar topics. *Self Evident: Asian America’s Stories* offered a bonus episode, because its producers “were surprised at how many people wanted a new show but hadn’t heard about all the Asian American podcasts already out there. In this bonus episode, our team shares clips from a few other independent podcasts, showing a wide range of Asian American stories and conversations.”<sup>64</sup>

Collaboration around funding indicates an ideological shift from the capitalist design of radio. The promotion of other podcasts is unlike anything we find in radio, where the competition for listeners saw hosts such as Howard Stern and Don Imus actively work to destroy each other’s program.<sup>65</sup> In the podcasts we surveyed, there seems to be a concerted effort to build a community around common interests and goals rather than cultivate competition or greed.

## Conclusions

Our demographic survey and content analysis suggest that podcasters seeking to promote alternative perspectives and to challenge the corporate hegemony over information are radically diverse yet share educational, social, and occupational backgrounds that enable cross-promotion and collaboration. The diversity of podcasts enables a broad presentation of opinions that challenge dominant political, social, and cultural norms – opinions on matters such as the dichotomous two-party political system, gender binaries, beauty standards, settler monogamy, racial hierarchies, and white supremacy. The shared backgrounds of podcasters enable communal cooperation, which simultaneously provides funding and promotion for their broadcasts and serves as an alternative to the cutthroat competitive environment of corporate media. The importance of these factors for listeners cannot be overestimated – especially for listeners who may be open to engage in and entertain alternative perspectives and meanings through podcasting. We would argue that the combination of diverse perspectives and communal non-competition solicits trust and inspires community formation and, as we shall see, activism.

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