Graduate Thesis

Turning the Dial: A Quantitative Discourse Analysis to Study the Opportunities and Limitations for Women in Podcasting

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Abstract

This graduate research project was conducted to survey the opportunities, constraints, and limitations for women participating in podcasting, while querying the historical opportunities and limitations available to women involved in radio. Are the opportunities for women in podcasting in juxtaposition or in tandem to the history of gender in radio? To identify these queries, a thematic discourse analysis was conducted with the texts of the 2017 Werk It Women's Podcast Festival, supported by an overview of the current state of the relationship between gender and podcasting. Seven themes were subsequently identified and interpreted based on the gendered history of radio, the present and future of podcasting, and my own experiences working as a young woman in commercial radio.

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Introduction

On October 3rd, 2017, on the stage of the historical Ace Theatre in downtown Los Angeles, Laura Walker, President of WNYC Studios, addressed the hundreds of women in the audience in attendance for Werk It 2017 – at the time, the first and only all women's podcast festival of its kind. Her opening address doubled as a rally cry; "Women are not equal parts in telling the story. Women are not equal in sourcing those people who tell the story. We have an opportunity to change that with podcasting" (Walker, 2017).

Still considered a form of "new media", the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines a podcast as a digital file made available on the Internet for downloading on a computer or mobile device, typically available as a series. Interestingly, the *Cambridge English Dictionary* defines podcast in nearly the same manner, but with one very important distinction: a podcast is a *radio program* that is stored in digital form. These conflicting definitions conveniently represent what Markman (2015) calls "the paradoxical findings" of several authors that podcasting is a remediation of the live radio experience. Even without agreement over what defines a podcast and how it relates to radio, podcasting is becoming an important area of study. While podcasting shares many similarities with radio, there are also many ways in which the two mediums diverge.

Though the first podcasts launched in 2004, scholarly writing on the subject is "mostly dedicated to instructing neophytes or evangelizing the uninitiated" (Markman, 2011, p. 547). This is not to discredit the work of scholars who have studied podcasting. Valuable work has been done in this field as scholarship on podcasting has grown exponentially in the last several years. However, far less scholarship exists surrounding the questions of gender and podcasting.

In 2017, there were an estimated 48 million active podcast listeners in the United States alone (The Infinite Dial, 2018), and at that time Apple Podcasts hosted more than 500,000 active

podcasts in more than 100 languages (Lopez, 2018). Today, Edison Research and Triton Digital report that there are over 104 million active podcast listeners in the United States. This is equivalent to 37% of all Americans over the age of 12. In 2017, the Interactive Advertising Bureau forecasted podcast revenue in the United States was forecasted to grow from $119 million in 2016 to $220 million by the end of that year (IAB, 2017). The industry generated an estimated $479.1 million in revenue in 2018, and by the end of 2021, is expected to eclipse $1 billion (IAB, 2019), indicating the growing popularity of podcasts.

As advertising revenues have increased, so too has the audience of popular podcasts. 2.8 million unique listeners download each weekly episode of 'This American Life' (This American Life), the series 'S-Town' exceeded 40 million downloads (Quah, 2017) , and *The New York Times'* daily audio news show, *The Daily*, reached 100 million downloads within just nine months of its launch (PressRun, 2017). In 2020, Statista released statistics on monthly listening of top podcast producers in the US. At the top of the list, iHeartRadio maintains over 30 million unique monthly listeners with its programming (Statista, 2020). With volume like that, one could argue podcasting has reached the level of mass media, yet, it certainly isn't being studied as such, at least not in the manner more traditional forms of broadcast media have been studied.

For example, there is a wealth of research to suggest traditional forms of broadcast media (radio, television, newspaper, and film) demonstrate systemic gender imbalance (Coles, 2016; Bielby, 2009; Cullity & Younger, 2009), but no such work has been done on podcasting. In 2014, the Women's Media Center reported that gender inequality among journalists is evident across all media outlets on all issues, citing that men receive 63% of by-line credits in print, Internet, and news wire. The most recent Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media from the International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF), published in 2011, provides

abundant evidence of underrepresentation of women in news-gathering positions and management jobs in the majority of countries. This could be due in part to the current organizational structure of traditional media companies, which makes it difficult to promote gender equity and accommodate for balanced representation of women's voices and perspectives.

IMWF researchers found women hold only 27% of top management positions and only 36% of reporting positions, but are nearing parity with 41% in senior news-gathering, editing, and writing jobs. The study also identified a *glass ceiling* for women in 20 of the 59 nations studied: most commonly, these invisible barriers met women at the middle and senior management level. The most recent report on gender equality and sustainable development from UN Women, published in 2014, found women make up only 24% of subjects in print, radio and television – an increase of only 7% from 1995. When women appear in the news, 46% of the stories reinforce gender stereotypes and just 6% challenge them. As such, we are consuming media that can actively reinforce traditional gender norms and stereotypes.

With podcasting in its relative infancy, there is the opportunity to foster gender equity and inclusion before it becomes systematically entrenched in traditional gender norms that continue to exist in more traditional forms of media like television. Podcasting may be a way in which one old prejudice – that authority *looks* and *sounds* male – plays less of a role, creating space for women to excel (I.W., 2017). Could podcasting provide a space to amplify voices traditionally silenced in contemporary society? What kinds of opportunities might be available for women in podcasting that are more difficult to access in traditional broadcasting?

In questioning if podcasting and internet streamed audio is truly "radio" Bonin-Labelle (2020) argues "the need for women to find an outlet for their voices to be heard is something that

is really not up for debate" (p. 1). She notes women have found ways to actively participate in audio production whether it be a YouTube video or a weekly podcast. Women have operated wireless radio on land and at sea, and they have worked as operators, engineers, journalists, and producers during war and conflict. Despite this rich history, "when it comes down to naming the most famous female radio personalities from any decade, the task is arduous, particularly if we limit ourselves to Canada" (Bonin-Labelle, 2020, p.1).

In 2015, WNYC Studios recognized podcasting as a medium with the potential to create opportunities for women to excel in ways that may be less attainable through traditional broadcasting. WNYC Studios is a podcast production house under the same business umbrella as legendary New York public radio station WNYC. At the time, their research showed only 20% of podcasts on the iTunes top 100 chart were hosted by women (Werk It, 2017). Laura Walker, then president and CEO of WNYC Studios, wanted to do something to change that. Together with Patricia Harrison, president and CEO of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, they came up with the idea of hosting an all-women's podcast festival. Walker and Harrison envisioned an inclusive event with the purpose of encouraging and inspiring women to become podcasters, and in 2015, the first 'Werk It' festival took place in New York City (Dishman, 2017).

WYNC's internal research indicated a barrier to women's involvement in podcasting was a lack of confidence: Women didn't feel they had the skills to host, produce, or edit podcasts. As a result, 'Werk It' would provide the opportunity for women to learn these skills in an inclusive, diverse, and supportive environment. The first festival hosted 85 women by invitation only, and featured industry workshops, panel discussions, and networking opportunities with women experienced in and succeeding in the industry (WYNC, 2015). Subsequently, Werk It festivals took place from 2016 - 2019 in either New York or Los Angeles. I had the privilege of attending

the 2017 Werk It festival in October of that year in Los Angeles, California. The 2017 event hosted 600 women from 12 countries (Maclean, 2017) from a multitude of backgrounds and professional experiences.

"White men talking" is a trope that has long defined radio and podcasting (Borden, 2017), but commitments to education and gender equitable programming may help change that. The efforts by WNYC Studios demonstrate the possibility for podcasting to move beyond the familiar systems of traditional broadcast media. More recently, it's been suggested women host or co-host upwards of 30% of podcasts on the iTunes Top 100 chart (Dunn, 2017). Though this shows significant growth from 2015, there remains an obvious imbalance in terms of gender parity. An updated analysis of gender balance on the iTunes Top 100 podcast chart should be conducted to serve as a benchmark for future study.

If the president and CEO of *WNYC Studios* were a cis-gendered white male, would he have had the foresight to create a festival like 'Werk It'? If there were inequitable and homogenous white male leadership at WNYC Studios, it's important to consider how that may impact the following numbers. In 2017, WNYC Studios hosted 20 podcasts, 45% of which included at least one host that identify as female. As of January 2021, WNYC Studios features 51 podcasts. Of these podcasts, 7% include multiple or shifting contributors. Podcasts in this category include children's programming, fictional audio drama, and programming that features the voices and stories of listeners. Upon assessment, 5% of podcasts listed on WNYC's roster are no longer hosted on the WNYC platform. Considering those numbers, 47% of WNYC podcasts feature at least one host that identifies as female. Only 33% of WNYC Studios programs are hosted solely by one or two women.

Purpose of Research

Through their unique political economic structure, can WNYC Studios serve as an extraordinary example of a media organization working actively to promote gender parity in its programming? Through answering that question, WNYC Studios, the 'Werk It' women's podcast festival, and the podcast programming WNYC Studios produces serve as excellent case studies for analysis of the following: What does the history of gender and radio, and the current state of podcasting, reveal about the limitations, constraints, opportunities, and future possibilities for women in podcasting?

Literature Review

As suggested previously, it is impossible to discuss podcasting without first discussing radio. Lacey (2013) argues that "to get caught up in each new moment without a sense of what went before it is to run the risk of missing the bigger picture". Under remediation theory, Bolter and Grusin suggest that "no medium today, and certainly no single media event, seems to do its cultural work in isolation from other media." (1999, p. 15). Podcasting does not exist in exclusion from radio, as messages cannot live in isolation from the medium in which they are broadcast (Pierce, 2011). Therefore, to fully understand podcasting, one must first turn to radio. The following provides an overview of the historical relationship between radio and gender, as well as the current state of podcasting scholarship and research.

Radio Utopianism

Remediation theorists argue that podcasting is a refashioning or repurposing of radio, just as they would argue that photography remediated the painting. As a remediation of radio, podcasting holds the ability to assert itself as a digital and mobile technology that is structurally different from radio, but not emancipated from it entirely. For example, an important distinction of podcasting from radio is that it provides a platform freed from regulatory constraints like the FCC or the CRTC, although podcasters can copyright their work (Lutkevich, 2022). Podcasters don't need to aggregate programming for a local audience or commit to performing and upholding the traditional radio aesthetic both sonically and in terms of organizational structure. From a technology perspective, podcasting can be distinguished from radio in that it is delivered through digital files that are available on demand rather than through a broadcast transmitter. The second major distinction is that while radio is an instantaneous medium, podcasts are recorded before being uploaded to a syndicate platform like iTunes or Stitcher.

Mullen (2012) argues new media doesn't *radically* change the mediascape, but rather it *alters* the existing media (Mullen, 2012). Podcasting hasn't radically changed the radio industry, but an argument could be made that it has altered radio in some ways. While early discourse pointed to podcasting as a possible disruptor or total eliminator of radio, Markman is hopeful podcasting is "a platform that has breathed life into established, and in some cases largely forgotten tropes and forms" (2015, p. 241). Examples include the reemergence of serialized audio dramas and extended talk-show formats. With a similar sense of nostalgia, Bolter and Grusin (1999) argue the cultural significance of new media is achieved by paying homage to earlier media via remediation.

As the first mode of wireless electronic communication, to say the invention of radio was a technological wonder would be an understatement. That said, before radio captivated the hearts and minds of audiences all over the world, it dealt in rudimentary experiments. Guglielmo Marconi performed the first successful experiments with radio in the late 1800s, with the most notable involving wireless ship to shore communication. In 1901, on top of Signal Hill in Newfoundland, Marconi conducted the first transatlantic radio broadcast. However, this was not the romantic sort of radio carrying disembodied voices over the ether – these messages were conveyed via Morse code (Robinson, 2009, p. 191).

Reginald Fessenden is credited with the world's first radio broadcast. On Christmas Eve, 1906, a handful of shipboard operators stood captivated as they listened to a radio show that forecasted the kinds of programming that would dominate the airwaves in the 1920s and beyond. "The program on Christmas Eve was as follows: first a short speech by me saying what we were going to do, then some phonograph music […], then came a violin solo by me […], then came a bible text. Finally we wound up by wishing [the sailors] a Merry Christmas, and then saying that

we proposed to broadcast again New Year's Eve" (Hilmes, 1997, p. 36). The pattern of announcer//song//song//announcer continues to be upheld on radio broadcasts today, especially in commercially formatted music stations, with an announcer's voice bookending popular music and advertisements. Podcasting, in contrast, has never followed this structure. At its inception, podcasting was developed to transcend live radio broadcasts so that they could be downloaded and listened to freely. In a way, initial radio broadcasts broke through similar restrictions of space and time. With radio, you no longer had to be within listening distance of a person to hear what they had to say. In a similar vein, with podcasting, you no longer had to be within listening distance of a radio set to participate as a listener in that day's programming.

The Competing Roles of Radio: Culture and Commodity

A few years after the inaugural radio broadcast, before radio was even called 'radio', women working with this new medium were already facing limitations. Nora Stanton Blatch and her husband, Lee DeForest, were some of the first to develop radio as a means of entertainment (Hilmes, 1997, p. 37). Blatch, a trained electrical engineer, worked alongside DeForest to help achieve his vision for radio: A means of disseminating culture and entertainment to the masses. In 1909, after the birth of their first child, DeForest insisted Blatch concede her wireless work to commit to motherhood full-time. That not only marked the end of their professional partnership, but also their marriage. Nora Blatch became the first, but certainly not the last, woman to meet resistance in her attempts to take an active role in broadcasting (Douglas, 1989).

In the years that followed, there were more questions than answers when it came to radio. "How was this revolutionary technology to be employed? Who would control radio broadcasting? Who would subsidize it? What was its fundamental purpose?" (Robinson, 1999, p. 206). Who would pay for it, and most importantly, who could profit from it (Vipond, 1992)? As

Hilmes notes, in 1920 radio broadcasting didn't even have a name, but by 1922, the following predictions were made:

> So we may begin to picture for ourselves what radio will mean in our homes in the years to come. We shall all have receiving sets – there is little doubt of that. We shall come down in the morning to hear the newspaper headlines read while we eat. A little while later, perhaps, a department store will have bargains of interest to announce – sugar-coating the advertisement with some good entertainment, so that we will not be tempted to turn our machines off (Barton, 1922).

These predictions demonstrate that broadcasting was assumed to be a commodity even in its earliest days. In contrast, McChesney (1999) argues the starting point for any understanding of the current predicament of broadcasting is debunking the notion it was profit-driven from the start. This aligns with documentation from the 1920s that shows most nations considered the usability and function of radio as a political issue with social, rather than economic, implications. Hilmes counters that argument, at least in the United States, where she says: "there was never a time in the history of broadcasting in the US when commercialism, and its avenue of access to the popular, did not form a central core of the listening experience." (1997, p. 17). Perhaps the United States' inclination to commercialize radio speaks most to the social construction of a nation and its hopes for the realization of the American dream. I would consider both to be true in different ways. Maybe the social construct of different countries led those with more capitalistic tendencies to be the earliest to focus on the economic value of radio.

McChesney may agree, suggesting that social influences on radio were powerful enough to produce different outcomes for the use of broadcasting from country to country. In Britain, for example, they hoped to reach wide audiences to sell more wireless sets; while in the U.S., they

wanted to reach the largest audience possible for specific programs financed by commercial sponsorship. In England, Lord John Reith wanted a system independent of both government and business, as he believed radio held the social responsibility to educate, inform, and entertain (Chapman, 2005). According to Reith, "listeners should all appreciate the same variety of programming, irrespective of their social background" (Chapman, 2005, p. 151), echoing the somewhat utopian desires of those who hoped radio could serve as a truly democratic medium. It was under these principles that the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) was developed, and The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Canada's public broadcaster, was modeled after the BBC.

Meanwhile, the system under development in the United States could not have been more contradictory to the development of the BBC in Britain and the CBC in Canada. Supported exclusively through advertising revenue, NBC and CBS were developed with an emphasis on maximizing profits by whatever means necessary. There were those who opposed the commercialization of the American broadcast industry, and in the late 1920s radio reformers made a push to eliminate the advertising supported broadcast model. These radio amateurs hoped the broadcasting system could support public-service, social, and cultural interests over commercial interests. However, the passage of the Communications Act of 1934, and the subsequent development of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), all but solidified the basis of American broadcasting as profit driven. Commercial broadcasters have been champion ever since with the largest audiences and the greatest profits.

During the same period, the Canadian government appointed a commission to study broadcasting systems employed by other nations in order to best recommend the type of broadcast system for Canadian adoption. McChesney (2005) explains that the commission was

thrilled with both the commercial and non-commercial systems in Europe, and eventually recommended Canada adopt a hybrid model based on Britain and Germany's respective public service systems. It took three years for the recommendations to pass through the Supreme Court, and in those intervening years, radio broadcasting exploded in North America, creating demand for both public service *and* privatized broadcasting.

Radio: The Rise of Exclusion and Homogeneity

A 1928 report titled "Radio – The new social force" from *The New York Times* proclaimed that "in all the history of inventing, nothing has approached the rise of radio from obscurity to power". Chapman (2005) explains that in the 1920s in the United States, radio access was largely limited to urban areas and cities. By 1938, more than 90% of urban and 70% of rural households had wireless sets in the home. In Britain, broadcasting was embraced even more rapidly. By the mid-20s, 85% of the population could receive national programming (thanks to the early adoption of the BBC), and by the end of the 1930s, there were nine million wireless sets across the UK. As new voices, stories, music, and ideas were broadcast into homes, audiences became more and more captivated by radio.

Pointing to radio as remediation of print, McLuhan eloquently expresses that "all those gestural qualities that the printed page strips for language come back in the dark, and on the radio" (1994, p. 44). He argues radio is an extension of the central nervous system that is matched only by human speech. Senator James Watson proclaimed radio supplied "renewed evidence of the sublime fact that God moves in mysterious ways his wonders to perform", while Joseph K Hart triumphed that "the day of universal culture has dawned at last!" (as cited in Hilmes, 1997, p. 1). Veercamp explains how the radio carried disembodied voices "almost as if they were God's own, into our most intimate domestic spaces. Radio's transcendent, expansive

possibilities were speculated upon with wonder and fear. Radio became the omniscient voice of culture. It made distance irrelevant and created a sense of unity" (2014, p. 308).

In 1933, Gertrude Berg, a pioneer of classic radio, mocked Christopher Columbus for discovering nothing but a rock-ribbed continent. She contested that if one wants to discover "the real heart and mind of America you've got to look for it "on the air". The programs of all the broadcasting companies are like mirrors held up to America's soul. They reflect what people are asking for and wanting to know" (as cited in Hilmes, 1997, p. 1). Hilmes points to two decades of this utopian rhetoric tied to nationalism that glorified radio's special properties and emphasized its uniquely "American" character. "In speaking to us as a nation during a crucial period of time, [radio] helped to shape our cultural consciousness and to define us as people in ways that were certainly not unitary, but cut deeply across individual, class, racial, and ethnic experiences" (Douglas, 1989, p. 11).

Douglas' suggestion that radio can at least partially unify cultural experiences serves as a compromise to Hilmes and McLuhan's views on the matter. Hilmes notes that Gertrude Berg, alongside many contemporaries and later historians, believed strongly in radio's ability to promote cultural homogeneity. A study conducted in 1933 by Herbert Hoover's President's Research Committee on Social Trends concluded, with gleeful certainty, that radio promoted cultural leveling with the provisions of such examples: "Negroes barred from entering universities can receive instruction from the same institutions by radio, [and] residents outside of large cities who have never seen the inside of an opera house can become familiar with the works of the masters" (as cited in Hilmes, 1997, p. 5). McLuhan disagrees, arguing that instead of homogenizing the village quarters, radio has the ability to shrink the world to village-sized dimensions. He uses the example of the resurgence of ancient languages in certain countries

(India, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland) since the coming of radio. If radio truly had the power to homogenize the village quarters wouldn't everyone speak the same language? Rather than acting as a homogenizing force, McLuhan says radio is decentralizing and pluralistic. Homogeneity, of course, ought not be confused with the monopolistic effects of radio. Quoting Lazarsfeld, McLuhan explains the ways in which a government can monopolize radio, then through mere repetition and exclusion of conflicting ideas, it can determine the opinions of the population. To invoke a contemporary analogy, it's not unlike the totalitarian version of the filter bubble we're at risk of experiencing through our Internet searches and social media feeds (Pariser, 2011). As McLuhan notes, "it is often forgotten that Hitler did not achieve control through radio, but almost despite it, because at the time of his rise to power radio was controlled by his enemies" (1994, p. 44), although Hitler did proclaim "We should not have captured Germany without the loudspeaker." (Chapman, 2005, p. 143). In discussing all of the ways radio can bring people together, it's of even more importance to pay attention to the groups excluded and limited from participation. How are the effects of this felt at the current moment, and how were these limitations remediated and transferred from radio to podcasting?

Susan Douglas has observed that "while radio brought America together as a nation in the 1930s and 40s, it also highlighted the country's ethnic, racial, geographic, and gendered divisions'' (1999, p. 5). In short, the homogenous community that radio helped us imagine, in turn, created segmentation and exclusion. Hilmes has discussed the ways that decisions made by station managers and advertisers in early days of radio shaped this sense of unity and exclusion and determined ''who would speak to whom, saying what, on whose behalf—and, conversely, who would not be allowed to speak, whose speech would be carefully limited and contained, and who would not be addressed at all'' (1997, p. 13). These were the questions not necessarily

answered purely on economic or commercial grounds, but by pre-existing social and cultural hierarchies. Will the same hold true for podcasting?

Veercamp (2014) believes that radio has failed to live up to its potential, with its early and contemporary impacts diminished through neglecting the needs and experiences of women and minorities. Not only have women been neglected as active participants in the medium, but in the writings of its history too. Despite evidence of having made significant contributions, scholars note the surprising lack of record on women's involvement in broadcast history (Hilmes, 1997; Ehrick, 2015; Cramer, 2002). The misconception that men had everything to do with broadcasting was nicely summarized by Shurick in 1946:

> Women have had a surprising lot to do with broadcasting and its development. Not in the scientific laboratory, where the women's delicate touch is in little evidence! Nor especially in an executive sense with making the wheels go round the radio station! But when it comes to a subtle feminine influence from the receiving end as listeners, women have had everything to do with broadcasting!

To understand the partial and contradictory ways women were incorporated into the broadcasting sphere, it's important to consider the problematic but central role played by gender when it came to the development of appropriate broadcasting functions. As Shurick notes above, women *did* have everything to do with broadcasting: It is the historical writing of radio that has pushed women to the sidelines, not actual historical events. It's a depressingly familiar trope that men alone hold historical relevance.

Women: Listeners and Participants

In what follows, I explore two major themes of women's historical involvement in radio: first, women's involvement as the principal radio audience; and second, "women as participants

in broadcasting's social address, actively competing for control over their own voices and venues, vying for the right to speak and be heard by the public at large" (Hilmes, 1997, p. 131). Both themes will help better situate the systematic disenfranchisement of women in broadcasting and its relation to podcasting in the current moment.

In the 1930s and 1940s, Hilmes (1997) notes that radio's primary audience was female. At this time, the purchase of products by women provided broadcasting's most basic financial support. History makes this seem natural: women are the audience; men are the producers, writers, editors, announcers, managers, and critics. As Hilmes notes, this is a big part of the problem because what has been assumed as 'natural' was not. It was contrived.

'The audience' is branded as a vague, remote, and passive non-entity. In many cases, history neglects to attribute the construction of the audience as decidedly female. Simply acknowledging the woman as an audience member offers recognition for an important and sometimes forgotten aspect of radio's social role. Of course *she* was the principal audience of early radio. With radio sets in the home, and men away at work for most of the day, women made up the majority of the available audience. The social construct of the era made it so.

This was realized in the mid-to-late 1920s just as radio started to experience commercial success in the United States. The economic buying power of women increased their appeal as audience members, though they were still considered 'lesser'. Programs intended for women, such as soap operas, which Chapman explains were named as such because the first program sponsors were producers of washing detergent, were restricted to day-time hours. All the while, programs for general audiences (which Hilmes decodes as 'men') were given prime-time evening slots with prime-time ad rates (Veerkamp, 2014). Even so, the commercial success of radio offered a new sense of autonomy for some women. Chapman (2005) argues that it's

because of radio, and the newly enfranchised status it allowed, that women were finally granted access to the public sphere.

The Ethics of Commodification

While it may be easy to forget today, there was a time that the experience of listening to radio was separate from the experience of listening to advertisements. When advertising was first introduced to the airwaves, it was considered a crass invasion of people's private lives (Douglas, 2004, p. 195). At first, only indirect advertising was accepted with sponsors showing up in the titles of shows, like 'The Eveready Hour', and in the naming of performers such as 'The Lucky Strike Orchestra' (Vipond, 1992). Direct and spot style advertising was practically condemned. It was considered a gross intrusion of private life: "a snake of commercialism in an Eden of entertainment" (Vipond, 1992, p. 201). But as more types of advertising were accepted and disseminated, radio's economic power grew, and suddenly anything that sounded 'different' also meant 'worth less money' as it was less appealing to advertisers.

Similar ethical debates have happened amongst podcast producers and consumers. My favourite podcast hosts have advertised comfortable underwear, meal kit subscriptions, vitamins, smoothies, shoes, employee recruitment tools, and postage, often coming across as more of personal endorsement from the host than a paid advertisement. It's almost impossible to imagine what early critics of radio advertisements would have to say about this form of advertising. Is this the modern version of Vipond's so-called "snake of commercialism"? The potential for the commodification of podcasting is immense.

If there's any doubt of the commodification of podcasts presently, it's important to mention there exists advertising agencies, such as Midroll Media, that exclusively cater to podcast advertisers. In 2016, Midroll Media reported 96% of its ads were read by podcast hosts

(Doctor, 2016). This rapport is appealing to both advertisers and listeners. “When hosts do the ads, advertisers are assuming there’s a parasocial relationship between the host and the listener” (Meyers, 2017), and often, there is.

Having experienced this type of relationship first-hand, Otega Uwaga, a podcaster and author, explains it this: “the term [parasocial relationship] describes people forming intense – and crucially, one-sided – attachments to celebrities or public figures” (Uwagba, 2022). This is why advertisers are interested in the influence podcasters have over the buying audience. It’s such a juxtaposition from what was culturally and ethically accepted in the early days of radio.

In my consumption of podcasts, and my career working in commercial radio, I’ve also noted the language and strategy when it comes to podcast advertising versus radio advertising. In commercial radio, the segments during the hour that play advertisements are referred to as “commercial islands”. These ‘islands’ standalone (as you might expect from the nomenclature) and are completely ignored by the announcers in hopes the listener won’t change the dial when the ads begin. As a part of my announcer training to never mention these commercial islands. Anything like “we’ll be back after these messages” is forbidden. In juxtaposition, and with complete awareness that a listener can chose to skip through podcast advertisements, some podcast hosts will literally ask you to listen to messages from ‘supporters of the show’. To quote the anonymous host of Case File, “by listening to these advertisements you’re supporting our show”. It’s another bid to leverage the parasocial relationship mentioned above.

The consequence of this type of relationship is, of course, the potential loss of this perceived sincerity, if, and when, an endorsement feels more like what it really is: an advertisement. It’s one thing for a host to endorse a website building platform when they personally used this platform to create the website for their show. “There’s a tension about the

sincerity of an endorsement," Meyers argues. "The danger of integrating ads is that the audience gets cynical and stops believing it" (2017).

Will this model of host read advertisements in podcasts remain? As noted by Locke (2017), radio struggled with similar authenticity and credibility issues as a maturing medium. In the 1920s radio offered a brand new, and much more intimate way, to advertise to the masses as compared to newspapers and movie screenings. Advertisers were eager to take advantage of this new type of relationship that listeners had developed with their favourite hosts, and as such, much like podcasting, these early radio ads relied heavily on announcer-voiced spots. However, as "advertisers capitalized on [...] host-read ads, [...] listeners grew cynical of host-read spots and advertisers wanted a harder sell, and radio's advertising model changed." (Locke, 2017).

Returning to the early economic structures of radio, in the 1920s, radio sets started to appear in the nation's homes and living rooms. At the time, nobody had yet figured out how to make any money from this new medium, even though it seemed everyone was getting involved. The debates surrounding direct versus indirect advertising had barely begun. Hilmes notes there was no prestige in early radio work, which in turn made it an organic environment in which women could seek employment. In 1920s radio, there was a climate of acceptance irrespective of gender. Bertha Brainard, Judith Waller, Margaret Cuthbert, Gwen Wagner, and Elsie Dick are examples of women who were not only able to gain access to early radio, but they also rose through the ranks of major broadcasters into decision-making roles. However, heightened commercialism in the 1940s combined with the construed perception that women's voices were 'undesirable' increasingly limited and restricted women's access to the microphone.

Voice in the Patriarchal Soundscape

In a 1994 essay, Frances Dyson argues that the radio voice is "traditionally male, having timbre and intonation that suggests a belief in what it is saying, and a degree of authority saying it" (as cited in Augaitis & Langer, 1994, p. 167). Apart from pragmatically masculine characteristics, Dyson also posits that the radio voice is singular. This formulation leaves room for only one voice at a time, while other voices are reduced to background noise or ambiance where they can easily be rendered meaningless. This is important considering women are often relegated to the role of co-host over primary host in radio shows. If women appear at all. In this regard, Waterman (2006) notes that the authoritative male voice continues to benefit from implicit forms of privilege in Canadian radio. In considering the success that early female radio pioneers experienced, what triggered a woman's voice to be deemed undesirable?

Hilmes (1997) argues an editorial published in 1924 in *Radio Broadcast* magazine served as a potential catalyst for accepting the male voice as omnipotent. A phonograph dealer wrote to the magazine to say that records featuring women's voices were selling poorly. As such, he wondered if the public may be less accepting of female radio announcers: "The voice of a woman, when she cannot be seen, is very undesirable, and to many, both men and women, displeasing" (p. 142). As Jamieson (1988, p. 67) reminds us, "History has many themes. One of them is that women should be quiet." To further explore the issue, the magazine called upon the opinions of the managers of several radio stations – all of whom were men. Hilmes (1997) writes of one manager who noted women's voices didn't carry a distinct personality. Two years later, another station manager considered that perhaps women's voices carried *too much* personality. Some blamed equipment for the poor reproduction of a woman's voice, as it carried a higher pitch more difficult to replicate with early equipment (Bonin-Labelle, 2020). In 1926, WJZ

conducted an independent follow up survey of 5000 participants to further explore the query. The survey results showed men's voices were preferred to women's by a margin of a hundred to one. By 1933, it was considered 'impossible' to send a woman out on assignment to cover a physically taxing affair like a major sports or political event. "They simply are not physically, or by experience and temperament, suited to the job, we are told" (Codell as cited in Hilmes, 1997, p. 143). Just ten years earlier, women had been working every position at the radio station, but by the 1940s, women's voices had largely disappeared from the airwaves. Ehrick (2015) notes that since then, and even prior to the advent of radio, our collective ear has become so attuned to what she calls the *patriarchal soundscape*, that the female voice sounds disruptive and jarring. Men's voices are of such predominance in our society that anything other than that is easily chastized. Jamieson (1988) reinforces this point by arguing that although there aren't many descriptors to characterize the 'maleness' of male speech, there exists an entire vocabulary of words to condemn the female voice. Women are scolds, nags, shrews, bitches, and hens (Jamieson, 1988, p. 68). Our voices are shrill, emotional, and scolding. We speak with reprimanded characteristics like vocal fry and upspeak. Overall, radio's impact on linguistic homogeneity cannot be overstated. Hilmes notes that along with cultural and physical unification, radio created linguistic unity as well. This has created a sense that anything that sounds *different* than the authoritative male norm is lesser than, or not as good.

At the time the initial commentary was published in 1924, women frequently occupied the role of manager at stations across North America. This multifaceted position combined functions of program producer, talent coordinator, and on-air host. Though program styles, delivery methods, and formats changed over the years, the role of announcer has remained consistently central to the radio experience. But by the 1930s, non-performing women's voices

had practically vanished from prime-time evening schedules and could only be heard during day-time hours devoted specifically to women's concerns (Hilmes, 1997). In considering the lasting and damning effects of this commentary and subsequent debate, a brief analysis of my own experience as a young female announcer in commercial privatized radio may be beneficial. The majority, albeit not the entirety, of female radio announcers hosting a solo show continue to be restricted to the 'mid-day' timeslot just as we were in the 1930s and 1940s. Often, when radio stations are actively looking to cut costs, the mid-day position will be eliminated entirely, as is my own experience. This means that when women are given an active and independent role in radio, their positions are inherently more disposable and precarious than the roles typically given to men. At the radio station where I worked during the initial wave of Covid-19, lay-offs impacted women at a one to four ratio. None of the lay-offs impacted the radio announcers, but rather, the administrative and 'behind the scenes' positions that in my experience are more frequently occupied by women.

Women's Representation in Radio

Just as they did in the early days, men continue to predominantly occupy central roles in the now prime-time slots of afternoons and mornings, considered as such because they take place during the rush-hour commute. On the BBC in 2011, only 2% of morning radio shows were presented by a solo woman while 82% were hosted by a solo man. Men comprised 90% of studio operators and 99% of editors. Only 16% of women working in radio had dependent children (Sawyer, 2016). At the medium-market radio station where I was employed until 2022, for example, there are no women in decision-making positions or at the middle-management level. When women do appear in morning radio, it's most often as a co-host. Typically, the lead male announcer is also the equipment operator, giving them the explicit power over the on/off

function of his co-host's microphone. I have experienced this too, when, due to an earlier disagreement, the male host of the morning show I was a part of decided I was not allowed to participate in an interview with our city's mayor. Lacey (2013) suggests that this is important not because it is the number of voices or contributions that matter, but that it's the variety of voices and the variety of ways in which those voices are able to speak that matters. It's important because the power dynamics that privilege certain voices over others do not exist in a vacuum – they're replicated off-air in our everyday lives. In considering this in combination with my own frustrations with the commercial radio industry, it's no surprise women are looking for alternative means to re-claim their voice outside of traditional broadcasting.

Community and campus radio stations, with less regulation and increased flexibility, seem like a more natural entry point for women to hone their skills as announcers and producers. Waterman (2006) notes that while women have maintained a creative voice in Canadian campus and community radio, they remain largely under-represented. As of 2004, women's representation in community campus radio hovered around the 30% mark, which aligns with the numbers reported in the IWMF's 'Global Report on the Status of Women in News Media' in 2011. Leventhal (2004) applauds the engagement and dialogue fostered by campus and community radio because she says it's proof a real conversation is taking place. However, she does note with concern that for all the efforts devoted to increasing women's visibility in alternative media, women for the most part are continuing to hold their tongues. This is not to say that there aren't women in broadcasting and on the radio (both community and corporate) who are making significant and important contributions to the industry. Considering women are under-represented in both commercial and community radio, can we expect women's representation in podcasting to be any different?

Podcasting: A Brief History

Podcasting began in the early 2000s when a software developer, David Winer, and a video jockey from MTV (Music Television Network), Adam Curry, developed a new form of audio distribution online. The term 'podcast' is an amalgamation of Apple's "iPod" and "broadcast", though at the time, podcast directories such as Apple's iTunes (now called Podcasts) didn't exist. In fact, at the time, high speed Internet was not widely available. The only way aspiring listeners could access a podcast was to search for specific content, then either listen to it at your computer or download the file from your computer to your iPod (Little, Hampton, Gronowski, et al., 2020). The act of recording, producing, and distributing a podcast was even more daunting. As Melissa Kiesche, Edison Research senior vice president, notes, "it was a tech heavy ask for people.… [I]t makes sense that this was an industry born from the depths of male tech culture" (Team Sounder, 2020).

Wilner and Curry developed a way to attach files to a syndication feed, in turn finding a way to facilitate subscriptions to these podcast feeds. Thus, syndication enabled subscribers to receive new episodes as soon as they were produced or choose to listen to them later. In this way, podcasts offer time and space shifting properties that are unattainable through radio but especially desirable in the digital age (Berry, 2006). It was for these reasons that podcasting initially presented itself as a potential threat to radio, before settling into what Berry (2015) calls a "steady growth of niche content and on-demand listening". While podcasting does share some structural elements with radio, an important differentiator is that it is streamed, syndicated, and not available instantaneously. However, what can present itself as an opportunity can also present itself as a threat: one can happen upon listening to a radio station, but listening to a podcast requires choice and intention. You can stumble across a program you enjoy while tuning

the radio in your car, but if you want to listen to an episode of your favourite podcast, you need to intentionally seek it out. Another key difference between podcasting and radio is that the realm of podcasting continues to be unregulated by the FCC and CRTC, granting certain freedoms unattainable through more heavily regulated traditional broadcast formats. While this is an important differentiation to consider, I'm not sure liberty from regulation offers the same opportunities as liberty from commodification. If regulation was a primary concern, major players in the podcast market would already be publicly grappling with it. Instead, in my own summation, matters of regulation have been put aside for matters of economics.

As podcasting started to gain momentum, so too did predictions for this remediation of radio. In 2006, Berry questioned if the iPod might kill the radio star. After all, as he notes, podcasting seemed to both "democratize access and break content free from the tyranny of the schedule", and scholarship did consider how podcasting, with its offer of an uncontrolled space and media democratization, might allow amateurs to compete equally with traditional media. But just 10 years after the medium was first introduced, the podcast industry was already being dominated by the same champions of traditional media: services, brands, and individuals with public profiles (Berry, 2015).

In 2014, those working in the podcast industry started to realize more mainstream success. Before that, it appeared unable to live up to its promise of mainstream penetration. Quirk (2015) points to the introduction of Apple's native podcast app in 2012 as significantly lowering the barrier to entry for many potential consumers. As mentioned previously, before that, access to podcasts was prohibitive and clunky, requiring several steps and a great deal of intention to download a single episode to your chosen device. In 2015, Rob Walch, vice president of podcast hosting service Lisbyn, argued that "the iPhone has done more for

podcasting than anything else". At a moment when iPhone users were suddenly discovering podcasts were now easier to find, subscribe to, and consume, we arrived upon another pivotal moment in the history of podcasting: the release of Serial.

In late 2014, 'This American Life' and the Chicago public radio station WBEZ launched the podcast series 'Serial'. The first season investigates the 1999 murder of Hae Min Lee, with chapters of the story unfolding week-by-week. Upon listening to the first season, *New Yorker* journalist Sarah Larson (2014) remarked on an important aspect of podcasting that has made 'Serial' and countless other podcasts so successful: "it sounds like your smart friend is investigating a murder and telling you about it". Podcasting provides a casual intimacy difficult to access through traditional broadcasting.

Suddenly, with the release of Serial, "the world was talking about podcasting again" (Berry, 2015). Berry explains how Serial's premise mirrors the narratives of classic serialized programming from the early history of radio – a radio genre in which women historically have found success in broadcasting. So, how serendipitous that the producer of podcasting's first breakout hit was both co-created and co-produced by two women, Julie Snyder and Sarah Koenig, and hosted exclusively by Koenig herself. Interestingly, Doane, McCormick, & Sorce (2016) use Koenig as an example of someone able to successfully engage the general public in feminist politics, as her journalistic methods intersect with a core method of feminist ideology. They argue she has the ability to investigate highly politicized issues around social justice without alienating her audience or grounding her critiques in confrontation. They conclude Koenig can effectively subtract her own ideology from the message, which may be the best way to engage with questions of feminist ideology, not only within podcasting but also for public scholarship.

As of December 2014, Serial had been downloaded an estimated 40 million times with each episode earning an estimated 3.4 million downloads. *Slate* went so far as to develop a podcast to discuss and analyze the series; as of March 2018, there are more than 50,000 members of a subreddit on Reddit discussing the case, and listeners rallied to create a $25,000 scholarship in Hae Min Lee's name (Roberts, 2014). In fact, Serial experienced such widespread success that Fox had plans to adapt it into a series for television (Lockett, 2015).

With the success of Serial, Koenig and Snyder founded *Serial Productions* with colleague Ira Glass, and subsequently produced two additional seasons of Serial, and several new series: S-Town, Nice White Parents (This American Life, N.D.). In 2020, The New York Times acquired Serial Productions for an estimated $25 million dollars in hopes of providing resources for Koenig and Snyder to increase audio production (Abrams, 2020).

The Study of Podcasting

Since the rise of Serial, scholars have paid closer attention to podcasting. In 2015, Markman hopefully wondered if the newly sustained momentum of podcasting could mean the start of sustained study on the topic. He notes parallels between the trajectories of podcasting and its study over the first 10 years of the medium: an initial flurry, followed by slow but steady growth, followed by the eventual arrival of podcasting into the mainstream consciousness (of both the public and academics). While the body of scholarly work surrounding podcasting is by no means robust, there are scholars dedicating considerable energy to its research. Richard Berry, in particular, has written several articles and chapters on the topic of podcasting with a particular focus on the intersection between audio and technology. In addition, Marx (2015) has discussed bridging old and new media through The Onion News podcast; Park (2017) has documented the ways in which citizen news podcasts are forming a counter sphere in South Korea; Florini (2015)

has explored how an informal network of Black podcasters serve as a digital reiteration of Black social spaces; Markman (2011) has studied the motivations of independent podcasters; Bottomley (2015) has examined the podcast *Welcome to the Night Vale* as a case study to explore podcasting's revival of the radio drama; Gaden (2020) has discussed podcasting as providing new opportunities for pedagogy and activism; and finally, with a unique point of view as both a podcaster and a feminist scholar, Hannah McGregor has been featured in the popular press's writings of podcasting (Nair, 2017; Conolly, 2016; Berrett, 2016). Missing from this list of scholarship is the study of gender and podcasting, and while sparse, it does exist. Feminist media scholars have started to consider the influence of gender on podcasting with a particular interest in vocal authority but the opportunities for future study are vast.

Considering the historical importance of vocal authority to radio, it isn't surprising that it's also significant to the study of podcasting, especially in relation to the potential limitations and opportunities afforded to women in the field. A 2017 study from Mottram (2017) asks how vocal authority is being qualified in the medium of podcasting. She recognizes a dominant theme in discussion of the 'authoritative voice' is that the female voice often lacks authority, and wonders what this may mean for female podcasters. Mottram concludes that while conventional vocal authority in other communication and performance mediums may have a gendered slant, in podcasting, finding 'vocal authority' means finding one's individual authenticity. A second study on feminized vocality comes from Tiffe & Hoffman (2017), who like Hannah McGregor, are feminist scholars *and* podcasters. They note the significance of more and more female-hosted podcasts in a world where women are taught to take up less space and be quiet. As Mottram found in her study, Hoffman & Tiffe agree that the voices of women in podcasts often reflect the same qualities that are policed and criticized in contemporary society. Articles have been written

in the popular press condemning and discussing specific qualities of women's voices, with a particular focus on vocal-fry (Wolf, 2015; Dunn, 2015; Khazen, 2014; NPR, 2015; Hess, 2013). Urban Dictionary defines vocal-fry as a "gravelly, voice lowering way to speak that makes you sound like a ditz". Interestingly, this definition of 'vocal fry' is inherently feminized through use of the word 'ditz', even though men are also capable of speaking in this vocal register. Brian Reed, the host of the immensely popular podcast series *S-Town,* serves as an example. However, it's these exact tendencies – the same ones that would see a voice rejected from traditional broadcasting – that are celebrated in podcasting. As a result, Tiffe & Hoffman are hopeful, given their own experiences and those of other 'different' sounding women, for the potential of podcasting to provide a space for voices traditionally disenfranchised, oppressed, and restricted. They point to the examples of Aminatou Sow, the host of popular feminist podcast, Call Your Girlfriend, and Jessica Williams and Phoebe Robinson, hosts of WNYC's popular podcasts Two Dope Queens and Sooo Many White Guys. Despite criticism of Sow's uptalking, or critics accusing Williams and Robinson of sounding 'too Black', all three podcasts have proven to be critically and financially successful. In fact, Two Dope Queens is one of WNYC's most successful podcasts and has been adapted into an HBO comedy special (Desta, 2018).

Research Questions

Podcasting offers a new space for expression, identity formation, and political engagement to be at least partly realized. The principal inquiry of this study was to document how the history of gender and radio, and the current state of podcasting, reveals the limitations, constraints, opportunities, and future possibilities for women in podcasting. Are there opportunities available to women in podcasting that have been historically difficult to access in radio? Can podcasting, as a relatively young form of media, serve to reinforce or reduce the barriers that female listeners and participants have typically faced in traditional media? Is it possible for podcasting to live up to the early desires of a true democratization of the media soundscape?

Figure 1

Research Questions

RQ1 What does the history of gender and radio, and the current state of podcasting, reveal about the limitations, constraints, opportunities, and future possibilities for women in podcasting?
RQ2 What is the current state of gender and podcasting?

Methodology and Theoretical Framework

To inform this research, I employed a thematic discourse analysis using WNYC Studios podcast programming from the 2017 Werk It women's podcast festival. To this thematic discourse analysis, I applied a liberal feminist and grounded theory framework. I also relied on the history of women in radio, remediation theory, cultural studies, and the political economy of the media to support and inform the primary research question: What are the opportunities and limitations for women in podcasting? A critical analysis of the festival's programming served not only as a manifestation of the potential barriers women are experiencing in podcasting, but also as a path to propose solutions to the issues of gender parity in this industry.

Thematic discourse analysis is a form of content analysis: a research tool applied to determine the presence of certain words, concepts, or in the case of this study, themes. The presence of these themes allows researchers to "make inferences about the messages within the texts, the writers, the audience, and even the culture and time surrounding that text" (Population Health Methods, n.d.). The findings of the analysis can then help us "learn about our society by interrogating material items produced within the culture" (Leavy, 2007, p. 229). While sources of data can be wide ranging—from interviews to field research notes—for this study, the source of the data was the content of the podcasts produced from the 2017 Werk It Women's Podcast festival. According to Leavy, thematic content analysis "offers feminist researchers a flexible and wide-reaching method for engaging in this intellectual and political process" (2007, p. 224-225).

Generally, there are two types of content analysis: conceptual analysis and relational analysis. This study relied on conceptual analysis through the reduction of the dialogue of the Werk It festival programming into manageable themes. With conceptual analysis, a concept is

chosen for study, and the subsequent analysis quantifies its presence (Hsief & Shannon, 2005, p. 1277). Another term for this type of category development is the 'deductive development of categories', allowing for themes to be derived from a theory, from the current state of existing research, and/or derived from the research question (Kukartz, 2019).

These concepts, or themes, are then each assigned a category for the purposes of 'coding the text'. "Coding is the process of analyzing qualitative text data by taking them apart to see what they yield before putting the data back together in a meaningful way" (Creswell, 2012, p. 156). The term 'text' does not refer only to the written word. According to van Zoonen (1994), a text can be a movie, newspaper article, television show, or any other form of media subjected to content analysis. In this case the texts under analysis were the podcasts produced from the 2017 Werk It Women's Podcast Festival.

In navigating how exactly to develop the coding scheme, I found myself frustrated and lost with the lack of set rules and boundaries. A 2018 article from Elliot attempts to soothe beginner researchers with an excellent summary of the different ways one can approach the development of a coding schedule. Elliot suggests the researcher should "conceptualize coding as a decision-making process, where the decisions must be made in the context of a particular piece of research" (Elliot, 2018, p. 2851). It is inferred that the approach of developing codes and themes ought to shift from study to study depending on the nature of the research itself. Ultimately, the act of working through the frustrations and uncertainties of developing themes from the literature allowed me to better understand it.

I chose to hand code the data after transcribing the dialogue from the Werk It podcast series. The resulting data was rich and dense, and assigning themes and code by hand helped me contextualize my analysis more intimately than if I had used computer software. I also decided to

quantify the data rather than have the study remain entirely qualitative. Mainly, I made this decision because, as Elliot (2018) suggests, counting is a practical use indicator for the importance of a given code. However, I equally appreciate that "it is not necessarily the number of times a code appears in the data, but how widespread it is among the data which might be significant" (p. 2857).

By quantifying the presence of themes within the festival's podcasts, I could then analyze the results and draw conclusions and generalizations to assist in answering the principal research question. Throughout this thematic content analysis, an open and iterative coding process was employed, allowing for greater flexibility to examine and reexamine the code. According to Kukartz (2019), categories are at the heart of the method of content analysis, with Berelson (1952, p. 147) cautioning that since the themes contain the substance of the investigation, "a content analysis stands or falls by its categories".

Stuart Hall's 1975 description of textual analysis, as described by Smith, Immirizi, and Blackwell, states that this form of study is best used when attempting to understand the latent meaning of a text rather than 'why the content is like that'. "Content analysis is ordinarily limited to the manifest content of the communication and is not normally done directly in terms of latent intention which the content may express" (Berelson, 1952, p. 213).

In general, "feminist theories aim to understand the origins and continuing nature of women's nearly universal devaluation in society" (Steeves, 2009, p. 2). Content analysis "can help make sense of whose perspectives are highlighted, and whose perspectives, voices, and visions of the world are silenced or marginalized" (Leavy, 2007, p. 226). Content analysis is favoured by feminist media scholars as "the question of how media output relates to society

underlies the majority of analyses of media texts, raising the issue of how mass communication performs its mediating role in society" (McQuail, 1987, p. 192).

This is especially important considering the academic research and popular press articles demonstrating the negative attitudes towards women in radio, "where men's voices were credited with authority while women were constructed as passive and largely domestic audience members" (O'Brien, 2018, p. 225). Additionally, Gibbons (2000) notes the typical underrepresentation of women working in media, including disproportionate employment in part-time and contract work. Steward and Garratt (1984) and Gill (1993) consider the absence of female radio hosts and what they call the "flexible sexism" that is applied in layers to maintain women's exclusion from mainstream radio (O'Brien, 2018).

With that in mind, Hedley (2002) suggests content analysis is ideal for the consideration of what kinds of women's participation in podcasting are most significant in transcending the historical norms of radio, and what contexts prevent women's participation while allowing men's participation. Content analysis provides a method by which a feminist researcher might question whose point of view is represented in popular and commercial culture. Leavy (2007, p. 227) suggests the method can assist in analyzing how difference is represented in culture - whether that be race and ethnicity, gender, or otherwise. In terms of this research study, an examination of podcast programming from the 2017 Werk It Women's Podcast Festival has been conducted by thematic content analysis to inform the opportunities and limitations for women in this emerging field.

In terms of the suitability of studying the content of podcasts, Marshall (1995, p.147) writes that "a number of researchers point to the role of alternative media, linked to progressive social movements, in facilitating a revitalization of the public sphere". Of course, the aspiration

for a revitalized public sphere in the context of this study would be equal opportunities for women working in broadcasting. “In these accounts, media are afforded a central role in carving out new spaces for expression, identity formation, and political engagement” (Marshall, 1995, p. 147). Is there an opportunity for podcasting to provide an alternative public sphere where these aspirations are at least partially realized? Ideally, the podcasting industry would amplify, rather than silence, marginalized voices.

The texts produced through WNYC Studios and the Werk It women’s podcast festival were chosen as a case study because they were created in an effort to increase the representation of women identifying individuals in the podcasting industry, as WNYC Studios strives to be an exceptional example of a network working to actively promote gender parity in podcasting. Laura Walker, former President of WNYC Studios, explained the inspiration for the festival by arguing “Women are not equal parts in telling the story… women are not equal in sourcing those people who tell the story… we have an opportunity to change that with podcasting” (Walker, 2017). The first iteration of Werk It, in 2015, hosted roughly 100 women by invitation only, who met in WNYC’s Greene Space. The 2017 festival drew 600 pass-holding attendees and presenters (Clyne, 2017).

The data for the thematic discourse analysis was the set of produced podcasts developed from the 2017 Werk It women’s podcast festival. Although I had the privilege of attending the three-day festival in-person, WNYC Studios made the programming from the festival available on podcast platforms to increase the scope of its reach. These legacy podcasts produced by Werk It were analyzed through thematic content analysis to better understand the opportunities and limitations for women in podcasting. A thematic discourse analysis with a thorough coding

schedule helped me to assess whether the dominant framework of WNYC Studios and the Werk It festival have facilitated or compromised their ability to produce equitable audio content.

As a festival designed by women, for women, Werk It was posited as an event to bring together female identifying individuals from around the world with a background or vested interest in hosting, producing, developing, editing, and designing podcasts. When speaking about the importance of Werk It, Lauren Ober, host of the WAMU podcast The Big Listen, describes podcasts as having a "megaphone effect, amplifying voices that majority audiences wouldn't normally hear" (Clyne, 2017). The festival took place in the Ace Theatre with hosted workshops, panels, conversations, presentations, and live podcast events over the course of the festival.

These discussions, hosted by a diverse group of women, culminated in 27 fully produced podcast episodes that are available for free on any platform one would typically use to listen to a podcast. The podcasts are also available online through WNYC's website and are available to be streamed on demand. These podcasts were then subsequently submitted to a thematic discourse analysis to develop a quantitative measure of the results.

In terms of analyzing the data, I first reviewed the written descriptions of the podcasts to assist in the development of my thematic code. Subsequently, I compared those descriptions to the existing literature on the historical presence of women in radio and the current research available on women in podcasting. I subsequently developed an initial coding scheme of 25-30 possible themes. To test the code's validity, I then conducted a pilot study using 20% of the podcasts. That allowed me to finalize my coding schedule by eliminating redundancies and insufficiencies. I identified overlap through the guidance of Creswell's winnowing technique, and eventually collapsed the coding scheme into seven themes that comprise the major headings in my findings section of my qualitative report (2015, p. 160).

Thematic Coding Scheme

The following themes informed the analysis and discussion of the thematic discourse analysis of the 2017 Werk It Women's Podcast Festival hosted by WNYC Studios.

Vocal Authority

The opportunity to embrace and celebrate voices and vocal traits in hosts that are traditionally marginalized and silenced in contemporary society.

Access to Leadership

Activities, such as mentoring, that seek to increase women's self-confidence so that they may take on the role of generators of positive change and/or leadership in the podcasting community.

Empowerment Through Education

The acknowledgement that professional education provides the opportunity for professional success and intellectual growth. Efforts to promote women's professional success through practical and intellectual education.

Precarity

Contexts preventing or limiting women's securely held participation in podcasting.

Amplifying Authenticity and Autonomy

The opportunity for female podcast hosts to be honest, authentic, un-programmed versions of themselves. Telling stories in "their own voice" and making autonomous choices about their work.

Legitimacy

The general acceptance of a woman's authority and autonomy in audio production.

Accessing Diversity

Podcasting's opportunity to make space for the creation of media that reflects the diversity of the public by emphasizing representation of multiple, and often marginalized, perspectives.

Quantitative Results

The following chart demonstrates the quantitative results of the thematic discourse analysis. The most dominant category, by far, is Empowerment through Education. This indicates Werk It's commitment to festival programming that educates attendees both practically and intellectually. Surprisingly, Vocal Authority appeared in only 33.3% of the surveyed texts, despite its prevalence in scholarly and popular press articles.

In what follows, I will interpret the results with support from the history of women in radio, the current state of podcasting, and samples of the programming of Werk It 2017. The interpretations of these findings outline my principal research inquiry of surveying the opportunities, limitations, and constraints for women in podcasting.

Figure 2

Results

Code	**Description**	**Quantified Representation**
Vocal Authority	The opportunity to embrace and celebrate voices and vocal traits in hosts that are traditionally marginalized and silenced in contemporary society.	33.3%
Access to Leadership	Activities, such as mentoring, that seek to increase women's self-confidence so that they may take on the role of generators of positive change and/or leadership in the podcasting community.	66%
Empowerment Through Education	The acknowledgement that professional education provides the opportunity for	88%

	professional success and intellectual growth. Efforts to promote women's professional success through practical and intellectual education.	
Precarity	Contexts preventing or limiting women's securely held participation in podcasting.	29%
Amplifying Authenticity and Autonomy	The opportunity for female podcast hosts to be honest, authentic, un-programmed versions of themselves. Telling stories in "their own voice" and making autonomous choices about their work.	22%
Legitimacy	The general acceptance of a woman's authority and autonomy in audio production.	33.3%
Accessing Diversity	Podcasting's opportunity to make space for the creation of media that reflects the diversity of the public by emphasizing representation of multiple, and often marginalized, perspectives.	44.4%

Note: Number of podcasts = 27

Interpretation and Findings

The principal research query from this study questions the opportunities, limitations, constraints, and possibilities for women in podcasting as compared to the historical opportunities and limitations for women in radio. To explore this question, I conducted a thematic discourse analysis of the programming from WNYC's 2017 Werk It Women's Podcast Festival in Los Angeles, California. The festival was facilitated and presented entirely by women currently working in radio and or podcasting. Each presentation and discussion from the festival was recorded and made available for free as a series of 27 podcast episodes. The following discussion situates the opportunities and limitations for women in podcasting as demonstrated by the 2017 Werk It Women's Podcast Festival.

Empowerment Through Education

In general, the findings of the study aligned with existing literature of women working in radio, with Empowerment Through Education and Access to Leadership appearing as the most prevalent categories. In the context of this study, the explanation for those themes are as follows: Empowerment Through Education is the acknowledgement that practical education provides the opportunity for professional success and intellectual growth. Access to Leadership is the notion that access to leaders that 'look and sound like you' increases women's self-confidence so that they, in turn, may take on the role of generators of positive change and/or leadership in the podcasting community.

The two categories are similar but differ in important ways, and I would argue, work best in tandem. Empowerment Through Education focuses on the importance of educating women at a level that they feel empowered and confident to produce and create audio. Unfortunately, in terms of radio, educational and training opportunities are frequently led by male colleagues.

That's why it was important to include the theme of Access to Leadership. Across Canada, 86% of women report that when they see women in positions of leadership, their own confidence in reaching those positions increases (Canadian Women's Foundation, n.d.). The combination of these themes builds the foundation of the Werk It festival: learning opportunities for women, by women.

88% of podcast episodes included the theme of Empowerment Through Education. The producers of WNYC's programming included question and answer periods at the end of nearly every session, and most episodes also included practical advice on the production and promotion of podcasts. The practicality of these episodes is obvious from the episode title and descriptions alone, including *Extreme Engagement: Get some tools you can use to engage with your audience and form long term loyalty.; Make Your Ads as Good as Your Show: The people who listen to your show also have to listen to your ads. Don't make them skip 15 seconds forward.; Scoring: How to do it Well, and Legally; and Turning Downloads into Dollars: You've created a compelling series, and you even got downloads! Now can you turn a profit?* As Laura Walker, former President and CEO of WNYC Studios, argues in *Why We Werk It,* "We knew we had to help women understand the sponsorship, distribution, production, intellectual capital. Behind the mic we wanted women to help direct podcasting's future, how to create a product, about scoring. We knew women needed this. We knew women needed to be inspired and to have the confidence to lean in" (Werk It, 2017). It's powerful that Walker acknowledges the importance of education as an opportunity to sustain and increase women's participation in podcasting.

Access to Leadership

The concept of the importance of women working in audio production receiving formal training and leadership, especially from other women, isn't new. A 2004 report from the Status

of Women in Community-based Radio in Canada argues women who are intimidated by technology are unable to find adequate encouragement or resources to fully participate in the radio station. Women that participated in the report remarked that when they raised concerns over a lack of technological education, it wasn't seen as a gendered issue, but rather a behavioral or personality problem. As quoted: "Radio art seemed to be the preserve of nerdy, technically savvy boys".

In *Episode 14: What They Didn't Tell Me About Podcasting,* this is emphasized by Ann Friedman's initial fear of the technical aspects of podcasting as she explains her early thoughts of the medium, noting that "if I touch a microphone it will break" (Werk It, 2017). A lack of confidence in terms of technology is an obvious limitation. One that, according to Wang (2018), begins from a young age. "Society teaches girls to focus on perfecting rather than building, abiding by rules rather than breaking them -- a trend that has naturally pushed girls away from participating in technology and entrepreneurship".

A 2016 survey done by the Audio Engineers Society found just 7% of its members were women. Historically, audio engineering has relied on apprenticeships. While such mentorships have the ability to foster confidence, this method can also end up shutting women out of the field (Lanzendorfer, 2017). In the same piece, Susan Rogers argues "the apprenticeship model gives young women a challenge because it's less likely that an older male engineer is going to see himself in a young woman [...] so it's another barrier of entry". Rogers, an advocate for mentorships, was Prince's sound engineer for many of his biggest commercial hits (Crane, 2017).

Above and beyond the issue of technical training are concerns of general safety and security. One would think that campus and community radio stations would be a natural space to

receive education and mentorship, but that isn't always the case. Skoog (2020) describes community radio as an important space for the empowerment of women. Generally operated under a not-for-profit structure, community and campus radio stations are typically operated by volunteers. Under this not-for-profit structure, they are able to serve communities and perspectives often neglected by the mainstream media. As such, Caroline Mitchell, an Associate Professor of Radio and Participation at the University of Sunderland in the UK, and co-founder of Fem FM, The UK's first radio station for women, notes community radio offers "a space for women's representation, participation, and resistance" (2016, p. 4). The economic structure of radio and podcasting bureaus, and how it influences the delivery of content, will be addressed in more detail in the following pages.

Overwhelmingly, the main concern of new female programmers working in community and campus radio is safety and security (Centime-Zeleke, 2004, p. 9). Case studies cited in the report demonstrate examples of sexual harassment, discrimination, and verbal and physical assault. Additionally, new on-air announcers are given shifts late into the evenings or on weekends when there is nobody else around the radio station, leaving women more vulnerable to harassment. From my own experience working a part-time weekend shift, sitting with your back to the door with headphones on can be an unnerving experience, so much so that management installed a mirror over the computer monitor so the announcer can see if somebody is entering the studio.

In the campus and community radio sector, it should be noted that stations able to support increased hours of specialty programming created for women, by women, results in greater variety of shows to choose from when new volunteers are trying to find a program to train with. As noted by Centime-Zeleke (2004, p. 22), "having a diversity of women's programming is

therefore not only good in terms of programming, but it serves to create an institutional culture that is supportive to a diversity of women". These findings underscore the importance of Werk It programming that focused on educational opportunities provided in a safe and supportive space amongst other people that identify as female. 66% of Werk It programming fell within the theme of *Access to Leadership*. Outside of the lectures and expert panels, Werk It also offered one on one audio engineering workshops where women were able to schedule sessions with leaders that identify as female and work in the audio industry. These mentorship sessions were available to book in advance, allowing WNYC staff to best match mentees to their mentors. Similarly, general mentorship opportunities were provided to festival delegates through advanced registration. For example, I was paired with Veronica Simmonds, an experienced and inspiring radio producer with CBC Radio in Toronto, along with three other likeminded peers. Another example comes from a Werk It session titled 'Pitch Time!', which offered attendees the opportunity to pitch their podcast ideas and receive real time feedback from PRX's Kerri Hoffman, Pineapple Street's Jenna Weiss-Berman, NPR's N'Jeri Eaton, and WNYC Studios' Paula Azuchman and Anayansi Diaz-Cortez.

The theory behind mentorship modeling has been proven successful in the past. In 2010, Irish-American journalist Margaret Ward founded *Women on Air*, a group of women working in the industry that ran seminars and workshops to help give women the skills and confidence to pursue radio and television (Brady, 2014). Examples of testimonies from past participants cite, "Women on Air has given me access to decision-makers and working journalists in the media" and "I used the knowledge and network I gleaned from Women On Air to become a regular guest, and a local newspaper editor, [...] resulting in a move to a full time role in a move to a broadcasting".

The series of 'How We Make It' lectures at Werk It also align with this type of model. In the 'How We Make It' series, experienced and successful podcasters share inside knowledge and practical advice. During one such session, Theo Balcomb, executive producer and co-creator of podcast 'The Daily', explained how the New York Times pioneered what she calls "a more liberal format of a daily news show" (Werk It, 2017). Other examples of podcasts and their creators featured in this series include Jenn White and Trisha Bobeda of *Making Oprah*, acclaimed couples therapist Esther Perel of *Where Should We Begin*, and *There Goes the Neighbourhood* from Rebecca Carroll, Anna Scott, and Celeste Wesson.

While it isn't obvious from the podcast form of the 'How We Make It' series made available by WNYC Studios, the in-person sessions were much more intimate than the larger panel discussions. Instead of hundreds of women in an auditorium these sessions could be attended by two or three dozen women only in a room no larger than your average kitchen. The setting of the 'How We Make It' sessions allowed participants access to training and advice from leaders in the industry in an environment that was safe and unthreatening.

The popularity of the 'How We Make It' sessions cannot be understated. Women waited in line for over an hour in an attempt to gain access to the more popular speakers, like Startup's Lisa Chow, in which she covered the development of the season that focused on the highly controversial ex-CEO of American Apparel, Dov Charney (Gimlet, 2016). There were several other in-person sessions of this variety offered at Werk It 2017, but due to the nature of the information disclosed in these forums, several speakers requested there be no recording. In particular, the session offered by Chow. From my notes, I mention her willingness to provide specific information about the investigative journalism techniques used to gain access to Charney comes at the expense of documentation.

Radio stations, when the opportunity is made available, have also found success in increasing women's participation by the creation of women's collectives similar to Werk It. As found in the community and campus radio sector, "these collectives not only create programming but act as a venue for peer support, exchange of content related to women, exchange of ideas, etc." (Centime-Zeleke, 2004, p. 31).

The digital sphere has also created space for women to form these types of communities and relationships. *She Podcasts* started as a Facebook group in January 2014 under the name *Women Who Podcast* and the tag-line "Everyone deserves to be heard" (She Podcasts, n.d.). The opening paragraph on the About section of the She Podcasts website eloquently describes the barriers to entry and limitations women may experience in considering podcasting:

> We started this group because we believe women have a unique challenge in getting their voices to be heard. Women lead busy, full lives and often don't put themselves first. Some of them have charity and philanthropy they want to support but don't think they have the technical knowledge to podcast. Some of them feel hesitant about putting themselves into a public space. And all of them, just like all human beings, wonder if they're good enough to have their own show.

The group's founder, Jessica Kupferman, started her own podcast in 2014 as a way to hopefully grow her own business. After appearing as a guest on another podcast, and hoping to do it more often, she recognized that there were a lot of "young, white dudes interviewing other young, white dudes." Exasperated, this was the inspiration for Kupferman to develop a collective for female identifying podcasters. At the date of writing, the She Podcasts Facebook group hosts nearly 21,000 users, with the group offering coaching, webinars, workshops, and in-person meet ups to facilitate the growth of the number of successful women hosted and produced podcasts.

The power of these types of initiatives should not be underestimated. “Women who choose to work with other women to produce women-identified words and images are -- whether they anticipate it or not - involved in political questions of power and rights” (Lloyd, 1987, p. 29).

Accessing Diversity

Moving on from the themes of Empowerment through Education and Access to Leadership, the theme of Accessing Diversity appeared in 44.4% of podcasts analyzed from the 2017 Werk It Women’s Podcast Festival. I describe Accessing Diversity as “podcasting’s opportunity to make space for the creation of media that reflects the diversity of the public by emphasizing representation of multiple, and often marginalized, perspectives”. The importance of diverse women’s programming is not just about offering dynamic and diverse content, it’s also important because “it serves to create an institutional culture that is supportive to a diversity of women” (Vongalis-Macrow, 2016, p. 93). As cited at Werk It 2017, “Podcasting does a really great job of amplifying underrepresented audiences. The number one thing we’re all trying to do is get invited into your ears.”

Mitchell explains that women’s approaches to radio programming should be understood in terms of a range of influences: their radio use, lack of role models, dearth of confidence in broadcasting, and the institutional contexts that are clearly male-dominated, while emphasizing how community radio, in the form of feminist activist radio, has been “instrumental in reconfiguring modern spaces of identity and agency” (1999, p. 82). O’Brien (2018) argues that it’s unfortunate that there is a relative lack of examination of women working in radio, especially in the context of community radio, “because its entire reason to exist is founded on fostering greater social inclusion and ensuring a diversity of voices on air” (p. 86). This stands as an opportunity for podcasting. However, as Mary Harris explains during *Episode 4: Question*

Everything, the conversation needs to shift the conversation from 'too many men in podcasting' to 'who holds the power, and why that matters'. "What happens at this particular moment in podcasting? Because I feel like we're still at a very particular point in podcasting where you can be at home in your jammies and make a product that becomes very popular, but there are also a lot of people coming into this space with money. And money makes decisions really quickly" (Harris, 2017). If podcasting is to follow the same historical trajectory as radio, we can expect that money will limit the popularity of podcasts featuring diverse voices and opinions. Not only as hosts, but also behind the scenes at various levels of management.

At roughly the 12 minute-mark of *Episode 1: Don't Point* the creators of There Goes The Neighborhood express frustration that at junior and middle level management there's racial diversity, but not at senior or upper level management. Rebecca Carrol, a BIPOC manager of special projects at WNYC, notes that in "pioneering the spaces that radio refuses to go [...] colleagues who don't look like us don't seem to get questioned in the same way we do". It's easy to see how biases from radio could translate to podcasting, especially with former radio industry employees transitioning to a career in podcasting. A 2019 report from the Federal Communications Commission cites only 7% of FM licenses in the United States are owned by women and less than 3% are owned by a visible minority.

During Episode 21: How I Make It, the hosts of the popular BuzzFeed podcast, *Another Round*, note that it's very rare that a group of women "who look like us get this kind of creative control over what we make" (Werk It, 2017). The show is produced by an all-woman team, and the show's hosts, Tracy Clayton and Heben Nigatau, are Black. As a part of *Episode 19: How to Hook an Audience*, panelists comment that while podcasting is better than radio at amplifying underrepresented voices, there's still a long way to go. WNYC's Sarah Gonzalez, a Hispanic

producer and host, recognizes there are a lot of wonderful podcasts made by women, but typically white men or white women are the ones who get to tell the story. “The podcasting world has not done a very good job of attracting me. I don’t hear from enough people who look like me or my family. I don’t hear the issues or people talked about in a way that makes me want to keep listening” (Gonzolez via Werk It, 2017). This notion mirrors the early days of radio. Susan Douglas (2004) notes that during the 1930s and 1940s there was a blackout of African Americans on the radio, and when African American perspectives were shared over the airwaves it was pervasively stereotyped. The rise of dedicated African American programming in the 1950s coincided with the 1949 publication from “*Sponsor,* which warned broadcasters they were missing out on a $12 billion market by ignoring African American consumers” (Douglas, 2004, p. 234). Even so, the previous homogenization of the industry allowed for persistent racism in the decades to follow. That’s precisely the reason that initiatives like WNYC’s Werk It hold such importance during podcast’s maturation as a medium. Radio, as observed by Lacey, was informed and shaped by the gender ideologies of its age, but was also a site where gender relations could be contested, negotiated, and redefined (Skoog & Badenoch, 2020). Preventing homogeneity and promoting diversity now will lead to more opportunities later. That’s exactly why a podcaster like Joe Rogan could be seen as harmful to the future of podcasting.

The Joe Rogan Experience debuted on YouTube in 2009, and by 2015, it was one of the world’s ten most popular podcasts (Eadiccio, 2015). In the Spring of 2020, Rogan announced to his 9.5 million Instagram followers that the music streaming platform, Spotify, had exclusively acquired his podcast under an estimated $100 million dollar contract (Cramer, 2020). Since then, debates have continued over what role media companies like Spotify should play in terms of monitoring, and potentially censoring, harmful rhetoric and misinformation. Before the

acquisition, Rogan had opened his platform to a host of divisive personalities such as conservative scholar Jordan B Peterson, the founder of the right winged Proud Boys, Sandy Hook conspiracy theorist Alex Jones, and proponents of so-called '9/11 truthism' (Flock, 2022). In 2018, Rogan described transgendered women as "having gorilla hands" and "size 14 feet" (Rutledge, 2021). In a later interview with Abigail Shrier, author of the book *Irreversible Damage: The Transgender Craze Seducing our Daughters*, Rogan is quoted as saying, "You realize that people are not looking at this objectively. They are activists and they have this agenda, and the agenda is very ideologically driven that anybody who even thinks they might be trans should be trans, are trans, and the more trans people the better." (Cox & Maiberg, 2020). Understandably, some employees of Spotify felt alienated and outraged that the service would host, and profit from, someone entrenched in such harmful rhetoric. A year and a half after launching on Spotify, Joe Rogan and the hosting platform were accused of spreading Covid-19 disinformation. Flock (2020) reports that the controversy started with Rogan's argument that young, healthy individuals don't need to be vaccinated against Covid-19. Then, when he contracted Covid, Rogan encouraged the use of the equine drug Ivermectin to help cure the disease. Finally, he hosted two guests that relayed, in terms of Covid-19, the world has fallen under "a mass psychosis" and that the pandemic was 'planned'.

Despite the controversy, or perhaps because of it, *The Joe Rogan Experience* remains one of the most listened to podcasts in the world with an estimated 11 million weekly listeners. Sienkiewicz and Marx (2022) note that "Rogan's podcast has long promoted right-wing comedy and libertarian political voices, including some who trade quite gleefully in racism and misogyny". Although it is disheartening that a podcaster like Joe Rogan continues to experience such success, I want to remain hopeful the consumers will continue to listen to the podcast

critically. In turn, Rogan's polarizing views may offer some listeners an opportunity to discover counter opinions from more inclusive podcasters. While Spotify has publicly condemned Rogan's words, its CEO Daniel Ek says he doesn't believe "silencing Joe is the answer" (Carman, 2022). That said, according to the website jremissing.com, Spotify has removed 113 episodes of The Joe Rogan Experience from its platform for promoting ideologies that do not align with the values of the company. It's not so different from the history of shock jock Howard Stern who signed a $10 million contract with Infinity in 1990 and became the first local DJ to hold a national audience (Douglas, p. 303). Much like Rogan, Stern's biggest draw was never knowing which rule he would violate next. There aren't any available reports that cite the advertising and sponsorship dollars Spotify has lost by standing behind Rogan, but obviously they've secured a return on their investment. In 1992, the FCC had mounted $1.7 million in fines against Infinity for refusing to censor Stern's show (Douglas, p. 306). As Nina Jacobsen says during *Episode 11: Nina Jacobsen on Being a Hollywood Boss,* "white men have been running things into the ground for a long time" (2017).

That said, to demonstrate just how pervasive discrimination and racism are in the audio industry, it's important to cite that even the organizations publicly attempting to change the narrative are not exempt from limiting a diversity of voices. Palace Shaw, a former employee of Public Radio Exchange (PRX), addressed her reasons for leaving the organization in a letter she distributed to her colleagues. PRX is a non-profit public media company that specializes in the distribution of audio journalism, storytelling, and podcasting that claims to support an "entrepreneurial and inclusive culture" (PRX, n.d.). Parts of Shaw's letter subsequently went public after an anonymous Twitter account, @freepublicradio, shared it in a thread that has since been widely distributed (Quah, 2020). In the letter, Shaw notes she is the fourth Black woman in

less than a year that has chosen to leave the organization without a new job to go to, due to the "systematic mistreatment that exists [at PRX]" (Shaw, 2020). In explaining why she chose to distribute the letter to her former colleagues, Shaw said, "At this point, ignoring it reveals a calculated effort to protect those with power while abusing the interests of the marginalized as a marketing tactic for the organization's many lines of business and programming. How can PRX pay so much lip service to diversifying the industry and being the future of public media, when it cannot do the same for itself internally?" One may ask the same questions of WNYC, the radio arm of the same media organization that runs WNYC Studios, New York Public Media.

In 2017, sexual harassment allegations surfaced against John Hockenbury, a long-time host of WNYC's *The Takeaway* (Kim, 2017). Young women working as mid-level producers, assistants, and interns experienced unwelcome sexual advances, as did women of colour working alongside Hockenberry as his co-hosts. It's important to note that *The Takeaway* was explicitly founded to bring more diverse voices to public radio. These women, his putative equals, didn't describe sexual run-ins with him, but instead, bullying behaviour that undermined their performance" (Kim, 2017). While many feared retaliations and avoided going to management, at least two women did complain, but their positions were soon eliminated. In response, New York Public Media President and CEO, Laura Walker, said via spokesperson that WNYC was "challenging [itself] to do more to ensure that our New York Public Radio community can thrive and excel in an inclusive and diverse environment" (2017). The examples from WNYC and PRX demonstrate that the silencing of diverse voices can occur even within the very organizations that strive for the opposite. This is the product of the challenges and contradictions of attempting to enact progressive politics and bring about positive social change. "Most of us know when we see stories about women that there aren't any women in the writers room, or about people of colour,

there aren't any people of colour in the writer's room. You can immerse yourself in research. You can immerse yourself in questions. But there is no way for a white person to understand what it is to talk in the world as not a white person. There is no real way to understand what an OJ or a Katrina means to the Black community if you don't have voices that can speak a truth about themselves" (Jacobsen, 2017).

It's important to note that there are podcast production companies attempting to create an equitable space for podcasters, regardless of gender. Lisbyn and iHeart are media companies that can be turned to for examples of measures to address representation issues in the industry. In March 2020, Lysbin launched its #ClaimPodParity campaign, referencing a study from AT&T that showed women only represent 27% of podcast creators (Pod News, 2022). This hashtag was launched on International Women's Day to bring awareness to the underrepresentation of women in the industry. Meanwhile, iHeart partnered with Seneca Women Podcast Network to host a podcast competition for women that saw the winners awarded their own show on both networks (Langston, 2022).

Legitimacy

In the analysis of the texts, the theme of Legitimacy appears in 33.3% of surveyed podcasts. I've defined this category as the general acceptance of a woman's professional legitimacy in audio production. More simply, it's the understanding that women have felt like illegitimate actors in a cultural space that prioritizes male legitimacy and recognizing the opportunity to change that. Kate Lacey argues that the history of radio "represents a prolific and valuable repository for investigating women's experiences and agency" (2013, p. 208). However, Starlee Kline noted an important limitation during the panel discussion feature in *Episode 4: Question Everything* at Werk It 2017, "In radio, you aren't encouraged to find your own voice or

sound like yourself. You're taught to sound like someone else. People say you're doing well when you're stealing inspiration from elsewhere". It's not a surprise that there can be a sense of illegitimacy or imposter syndrome amongst women working in radio and podcasting.

Although it's been addressed previously, to further underscore the importance for leadership collectives for women in audio, it has been argued that women are more likely to experience feelings of imposter syndrome if we don't see many examples of people who look like us that are clearly succeeding in our field. Therefore, a lack of role models for women and marginalized communities can have a critical impact on making folks feel like they do or don't belong in certain environments. "When you experience systemic oppression or are directly or indirectly told your whole life that you are less-than or undeserving of success and you begin to achieve things in a way that goes against a long-standing narrative in the mind, imposter syndrome will occur" (Nance-Nash, 2020). That's why initiatives like Werk It that challenge the long-standing narrative that women in audio are 'less than' are so important. It's an opportunity to create a sense of legitimacy for marginalized groups and empower them to speak up. It has been observed by Michael Albert that a mainstream media institution is typically built "to help reinforce society's defining hierarchical social relationships, and is generally, controlled by major social institutions, particularly corporations", alternative media is crafted to "subvert society's defining social relationships and establish new ways of organizing media and social activity" (Bonin-Labelle, p. 174, 2020). Therefore, programs like Werk It can serve to further legitimize women and marginalized voices' occupation of spaces typically reserved for men.

In traditional media, women are especially under-represented in the reporting on the fields of science, technology, and sports (Laucella, Hardin, Bien-Aimé & Antunovic, 2017; AAUW, 2020; Anthram, Bennett & Bawa, 2021). At Werk It, podcasters excelling in the very

fields that are often limiting for women in traditional mainstream media speak to the importance of forging space in these traditionally male occupied genres. *Episode 8: Extreme Engagement* from Werk It 2017 was put together to help attendees learn tools that can be used to engage audiences and form long term loyalty and is hosted by Manoush Zomorodi, Karen Grigsby Bates, and Gretchen Rubin. As the host of a popular digital technology podcast, Zomorodi, in particular, was able to share examples of instances when she was made to feel like an illegitimate actor as the host of her own podcast. "I was surprised at just how strong the boys network is with certain genres of podcasting. When I called [Note to Self] a tech show, I was not welcome in the club. But as soon as I stopped calling it a tech show they accepted me." (Werk It, 2017). The panel discusses the importance of growing your listening audience by acting as a guest on another podcast within the same genre. "The boys are on each other's podcasts but they aren't inviting women. So, this male podcaster and I happened to be at the same event, so I asked if we could be on each other's shows" [...] "He wrote back and said, 'yeah, I'll just come on your show'. Of the 40 people he'd interviewed on his show in the last two years only 4 were women" (Werk It, 2017). Two years later, at Werk It 2019, the hosts of Note to Self continue to receive feedback like this:

> [audio clip] Dear Manoush and Jen, Please please please stop giggling and acting like embarrassing junior high girls. Every time the vocabulary or abstraction level goes beyond a 7th grade level. You are smart. That's why we listen to the podcast. Act like the intelligent, thoughtful people that you are. You don't know everything. You are in a learning process in a field that is new for all of us. That's fine. That's great. But please stop acting like silly dumb girls. Every time things get in-depth or interesting. It's not a good look and it quickly gets tiresome. Still listening. David.

> Oh David, I hope you will continue to listen when I tell you this all the laughing that Jen and I do -- which I guess sounds like giggling to you -- it is genuine and we laugh because we know it's okay not to know everything that this is a real time exploration an investigation into changes that are happening in tech and our culture. And you know what? We don't really care if it's not a good look because it's who we are and I'm sorry if you find that tiresome. But I really do hope you will keep listening and get used to what strong, intelligent women sometimes sound like. I think that the show's new tagline might need to be Zig Zag: Come for the crypto, stay for the female empowerment. [end audio clip] (Werk It, 2019).

Vocal Authority

The most surprising takeaway from the study of the texts surveyed is that the theme of Vocal Authority appeared only in 33.3% of Werk It 2017 podcasts. The discussions of a woman's voice, and what it may have to do with the gendered imbalance of today's audio soundscape, appear frequently in academic and popular press writings on the subject. For the purposes of this study, the theme of vocal authority represents the opportunity to embrace and celebrate voices and vocal traits in hosts that are traditionally silenced in contemporary society. I consider this theme to be important as it discusses the sound of a woman's voice as a potential limiting factor in their equal participation in radio, and subsequently, podcasting. With increased vocal authority encouraging a woman to 'own the sound of her own voice', the realm of podcasting could arguably provide an opportunity for increased dissemination of a plurality and diversity of vocal traits.

Feminist media research on the topic argues the importance of highlighting "the relationship between gendered voices and power, and emphasize the importance of feminist

media scholars engaging not just with the visual, but with the sonic too" (Berridge, Portwood-Stacer & Lovatt, 2017). This hasn't always been the case. Copeland (2018) notes that a major issue faced in studying the early years of women's history in radio is that women's voices were "deemed essential to archive". As women's visibility in historical texts has increased it was accompanied by greater audibility as well, allowing Skoog and Bandenock (2019) to argue media scholars should pay closer attention to radio in terms of the general study of histories of women, gender, and feminism. Indeed, radio had influence over the disruption of customary physical and social barriers. As Hilmes notes (1997, p. 21) "by removing the visual, men could enter the home to entertain the woman of the house seductively over her morning coffee, women had the potential to enter the public sphere and assume the voice of authority". Consider this position of authority and its importance in terms of the power dynamics of a radio broadcast. There is only room for one voice at a time. Many microphones may be turned on at once, but 'other' voices are reduced to background ambiance, further enforcing the authority of the singular, which in radio has been traditionally male. In this perspective the male's voice would always be prioritized while the female co-host is reduced to the background. Waterman (2006, p. 79-80) notes that "since women are evidently reluctant to take their place on the air, it appears that the singular, authoritative male voice is still implicitly privileged in Canadian campus and community radio". There are many opinions on why the male voice continues to be privileged. Frances Dyson (1994) notes that the microphone was invented for the male voice, so of course a woman's voice may sound less desirable when broadcast; Anne McKay argues negative attitudes towards women in radio are due to women's social construction as passive and largely domestic audience members (O'Brien, 2018); Hilmes (1997) points to radio's ability to forge cultural and

physical unification, including the side effect of linguistic unity, whereby anything that sounded different was considered 'less than'.

Laura Walker, President and CEO of New York Public Media, noted in her opening address at Werk It 2017 that the festival was created to disrupt the disruption: "To get women's voices, a diversity of women voices, on the charts". What specific programming discussed the acceptance or rejection of the female voice, and in what ways?

Rebecca Carrol, as a part of *Episode 1: Don't Point*, in which experts discuss how to effectively report on diverse subjects without tokenizing marginalized groups, notes that "white men may have invented the podcast but they did not invent the voice". As mentioned previously, even today, the authoritative male voice is still considered to be unrivaled. Although the theme of Vocal Authority didn't appear as often as expected in the surveyed texts, when it did, I found it to be quite powerful. Take the following excerpt from *Episode 16: How I Make It - Making Oprah* as an example. In this clip, host Jenn White discusses her motivation to help women fall in love with their authentic voice:

> How many people have been told at some point in their work that they don't have "the voice" to do what they're doing? I just want to encourage you to fall in love with your own voice. There was a time in my career where I got that message as well, and I had to fall in love with my own voice, and if I do nothing else in my career than help other women fall in love with their own voice… that's enough. Do what you gotta do. Sing in the shower, read poetry out loud, whatever it is… fall in love with your own voice. You have something worth saying.

There is one episode of Werk It 2017 programming that focuses entirely on voice, *Episode 24: The Art of Voicing,* although I've noted it was focused much more on the practical

aspects of voicing versus the more theoretical discussions of the policing of the female voice. This discussion was hosted by Krissy Clark, the host of NPR's *The Uncertain Hour*, a show that focuses each season on a different aspect of the American economy. Clark encourages the audience to discover what your voice really sounds like, noting "there's a wide variety of women's voices on public radio right now and I'm so excited about that. Part of that is, a lot of those voices are just saying, 'I'm going to sound like me'".

Hoffman and Tiffe (2016) argue the significance of the increase of podcasts hosted by women, and the notions put forward by Clark, should not be ignored, especially in consideration that these women are speaking up in a world that teaches them to take up less space and be quiet. Their work is of relevance to this study as the duo are academic scholars and podcast hosts focused on the study of female vocalization as a tool for resistance. They speak to the diversity of voices of women on podcasts and how they often reflect the same qualities that are criticized by contemporary society, noting that "Numerous popular press articles have been written criticizing the traditionally feminized qualities of women's voices, including: vocal fry, upspeak, the use of the word "like", and women using curse words, among others" (Hoffman & Tiffe, 2016, p. 117).

Although there wasn't an abundance of conversations regarding voice at Werk It 2017, it is being discussed elsewhere in the industry. A 2015 episode of Chicago Public Radio's *This American Life*, IF YOU DON'T HAVE ANYTHING NICE TO SAY, SAY IT IN ALL CAPS, focused on vocal fry as one of the episode's stories. The show's host, Ira Glass, explains that the women on staff with This American Life have been receiving feedback from listeners like this:

Quote 1: "The voice of Chana Joffe-Walt is just too much to bear, and I turn off any episode she's on. A quick bit of research found an appropriate description, which is vocal fry. How can This American Life have this on the show? It escapes me."

Quote 2: “Vocal fry is a growing fad among young American women. Miki Meek provides a vivid and grating example of this unfortunate affectation."

Quote 3: “Perhaps Alix could cover the vocal fry epidemic. It’d be really interesting to hear her take as she is clearly a victim herself.”

Quote 4: "Listen, I know there's pressure to hire females-- in particular, young females just out of college. And besides, they're likely to work for less money. But do you have to choose the most irritating voices in the English speaking world? I mean, are you forced to? Or maybe, as I imagine, NPR runs national contests looking for them."

Vocal fry is described as speaking at your lowest natural tone, often resulting in a sort of creaky or friable vocal quality. For some people it’s just the natural intonation of their voice, but for others, perhaps it is an attempt at sounding ‘more male’. That idea aligns with research by Tigue et al that found lower-pitched recordings of voices were more frequently associated with favorable personality traits. Similar work has found lower-pitched voices to be perceived as more competent and dominant. In 2019, podcast host and feminist scholar Hannah McGregor spoke to an audience at Simon Fraser University about the time she and her co-host were interviewed on CBC Edmonton AM to discuss their thoughts on the relatively fewer numbers of women than men in podcasting. During the interview, McGregor and Kosman argued women are less inclined to hosting podcasts because of “the policing of women’s voices for things like upspeak and vocal fry”. McGregor commented that the host essentially ‘mansplained’ that vocal fry is bad for your voice, and concluded, “So thanks, I guess, for making our point for us?”

Whether or not it appeared as prevalent in the surveyed texts, it's clear the theme of Vocal Authority is being discussed in popular culture and academic circles. And with quotes like these from listeners, "Can't stand the pain. Distractingly disgusting. Could not get over how annoyed I was. I am so appalled. Detracts from the credibility of the journalist" (This American Life, 2016), it's also apparent the female voice is being discussed elsewhere, too. Maybe that's why at Werk It 2019, there was a workshop titled "How I Learned to Fall in Love With My Voice" hosted by podcast host Lauren Ober. In this workshop, Ober discusses why women's voices are so often criticized and why these criticisms are so easy to internalize. She also discusses examples of women who are using their authentic voice to reclaim power, saying, "I just want you to know that all those people talked about their voice as resistance, and [...] in this time it's really important. Because a lot of us are being silenced or people are trying to silence us" (Werk It, 2019).

Precarity

For the purposes of this study, the theme of precarity is defined as contexts preventing or limiting women's securely held participation in podcasting. This theme appeared in 29% of surveyed texts. The Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (2016) argues that precarity, and precarious work, is an evolving concept with definitional issues. I appreciate the lens employed by CRIA for exploring the topic of precarity, as they note "by using a gendered and intersectional lens, [we explore] how women's experiences might vary because of how and where they are situated in society" (Levac & Cowper-Smith, 2016). Likewise, I'm interested in precarity as a limitation withholding women from achieving parity in podcasting based on the historical positioning of women within the history of radio, and society as a whole.

Consider precarity as a combination of vulnerabilities. Levan and Cowper-Smith's 2016 report cites these vulnerabilities can include, but aren't limited to: a lack of control over the work environment and details of employment, lack of protection from discrimination and sudden unemployment, and insufficient income to meet a living wage. While the CRIA report focuses predominantly on women in the public sector, several studies have been published noting women are over-represented in precarious work across all sectors (McInturff, 2014; Premji et al., 2014; Vosko et al., 2009). Additionally, work has been done that has identified women working in media to be especially vulnerable to precarious employment and underrepresentation (Rattan et al., 2019; Humphrect & Esser, 2017; Kassova, 2020), while the IMWF's Global Report on the Status of Women in News Media specifically identifies a gendered overrepresentation of women in media when it comes to junior, part-time, and contract positions. This is important because, as noted by Fuller and Voska (2008), a tendency towards this type of work makes the radio sector less advantageous than for full-time workers. It's especially limiting since women are overrepresented in the same positions that are more likely to be precarious. Much like public sector employees, women in media are more likely to hold positions susceptible to restructuring, concentrated in administrative roles, and generally hold lower-paying roles than men. Gibbons (in Mitchell, 2000) also points to women in radio disproportionately holding part-time and contract positions, observing women suffer a pay gap, vertical and horizontal segregation, with women predominantly found in lower hierarchical levels, general administration, and production support roles. Meanwhile, research also shows that though women's position within society has continued to advance over the last several decades, there has been an increase of only 7% in terms of women appearing in and presenting the news. When women are represented it's often in

trivialized roles that reinforce stereotypes and gender norms (D'Heer, Vergotte, De Vuyst & Van Leuven, 2020).

Of course, marginalized women are further overrepresented in positions of precarity. Sangha et al. (2012, p. 286) found "racialized processes stereotype workers and their skill sets, organize their work, and determine their access and exclusion from certain types of jobs". My concern is that these processes are mirrored in radio and podcasting, which is reinforced by this quote from Rebecca Carroll, a black special projects producer from WNYC presenting at Werk It 2017: "In pioneering the spaces radio refuses to go into [...] colleagues who don't look like us don't seem to get questioned in the same way that we do", after suggesting an overall frustration that although racial diversity exists at the junior and middle management levels, it's mostly absent in more senior roles.

Another cause of women's precarity, in radio in particular, is the perception that women take on the majority of visible and invisible labour within the household (Eden & Schulz, 2016), whether it's caring for an aging parent or a child. O'Brien (2018) points to specific instances whereby managers of radio stations assume women's absence from certain roles is due the disproportionate burden of childcare. Sawyer (2011) found that all women in radio - not only presenters - are typically leaving the radio industry just after the age of 35. Of those who continue to work in the industry, only 16% are living with dependent children. The consequence of this fallout means that the further up the hierarchical structure you look, the less women you'll find in managerial and senior roles.

In writing of the potential barriers to women's equal participation in community radio in Uganda, Musubika (2018) echoes these arguments citing the disproportionately immense work and care-work burden faced by women. Meanwhile, another survey respondent from O'Brien's

work expects the issues lies with women themselves, “I think women very often lack the confidence to broadcast”. If women lack the confidence to broadcast by means of traditional radio, why wouldn’t it be mirrored in podcasting? As noted in earlier sections, a major barrier to entry is the lack of leadership roles for women in technical positions. “If I touch a microphone, it will break!” Erica Williams Simon (Werk It, 2017) argues this is just “the barrier they make you think you have - you can watch a YouTube tutorial to figure it out!”.

Whether it’s a lack of confidence, increased burden of childcare, technical or societal barriers, it’s apparent there are several limitations that could lead to women’s precarity in radio and podcasting. I am arguing the greatest area of precarity for women in podcasting is income, which is why it was so important to see Werk It 2017 conducting specific and practical forums on making money in the industry. Although precarity appeared in only 29% of the surveyed texts, when the theme did appear, it was predominantly skewed towards discussions of income. The titles of these discussions, that have since turned into podcasts available to download for free, are: *The million dollar podcast, Turning downloads into dollars, My podcast gives me joy and health insurance*, and *Make your ads as good as your show*.

Episode 13: The Million Dollar Podcast features Madana Mofini of Fusion Media, Jenna Weiss Berman of Pineapple Street Studios, and Danielle Dana from Science Fridays, all chosen because each has a hand in the production of a podcast that earns over a million dollars each year. These women discuss the different revenue streams for podcasts, from foundational grants to finding seed investors, to advertising and sponsorship revenue. For example, Weiss Berman specifically discusses Lena Dunham’s *Women of the Hour* podcast, and the four revenue streams it provided with 500,000 listeners per episode in its first season. The presenting sponsorship was sold to Mail Chimp and included one ten-second ad over ten episodes ($300,000), an agency

representing the NBC series *Search Party* purchased ads on three episodes ($350,000), and they were approached by Clinique who wanted to purchase the naming rights to a single episode. Instead, Weiss Berman offered Clinique a fully sponsored episode whereby Dunham interested three actors about activism and related it all back to the brand. That single episode sold for $250,000. Additionally, they sold ad time on the show at a rate of $50 CPM, representing a cost of $50 per thousand listeners for a single thirty-second ad. From there, the revenue was split 50/50 with Lena Dunham, while Weiss Berman used her share of the profits to fund and start her own podcast production house, Pineapple Street Studios. Presently, Pineapple Street is one of the most successful podcast producers in the industry, regularly creating podcasts that debut on the iTunes Top 10 chart (Pineapple Street Studios, 2022).

The hosts of these episodes offer important advice and guidance to women entering the industry. How else would you know the value of your product unless someone told you? For example, it's noted that at a standard ad rate of $100 CPM, if you are the producer of a podcast with 2 million weekly listeners, you shouldn't be making any less than $200,000 per episode (Werk It, 2017). Perhaps the most important piece of advice from these financially focused episodes is this: "Don't do stuff for free. Ask for your worth. Know how valuable your skill set is" (Weiss Berman, 2017).

Episode 20: Turning Downloads into Dollars, hosted by Bossed Up's Emilie Aries, focuses on 'how to get paid for what you're doing'. She emphasizes that although working on a podcast can be creatively fulfilling, it also has to be a sustainable endeavor, pointing back to the importance of earning possibilities and protection against unemployment in the labour market to avoid precarity mentioned previously. Aries encourages the audience "to learn from how the white boys in podcasting are making money".

Anna Sale, the host of WNYC's Death Sex and Money, led *Episode 22: My Podcast Gives me Joy (and Health Insurance)*, and reinforces that "making money matters". Interestingly, Sale is the only one who mentions childcare/maternity leave as a potential barrier to the growth of her show. I mention this because although the disproportionate burden childcare on women appeared frequently in the reviewed literature, it only appeared once at Werk It 2017: "How do I keep growing this show and also take maternity leave? You need to ask for what you need. And then, you need to pass it on because that is how we lift each other up". E*pisode 23: How to get Your Podcast off the Ground* explicitly discusses the average salaries in the United States for people working in podcasting: $78,000 on average for private podcast companies and $53,000 on average for public media companies. I think this is important because it at least provides a baseline for women who may be attempting to negotiate their way out of a more vulnerable salary. The podcast, Call Your Girlfriend, was one of the first successful podcasts that actually did start in a closet. One of the hosts, Aminatou Sow, had this to say about the podcast's rise to success, and the recognition that when the podcast started, it was quite precarious:

> There's kind of a thing where it's like, 'Oh, I'm really enjoying doing this creative thing that's taking up a lot of my time'... and I'm gonna wanna make some money because this has turned into an almost full time job that I'm not getting paid for… and so you're like well I'm going to need to open a bank account… and you're like oh shit this has turned into a small business and I thought it was just a podcast where I'm talking to my friend!

Again, I want to underscore the importance of Werk It choosing to focus so much of its content on practical advice to help women in the industry earn a fair wage and to know their value. Years later, Call Your Girlfriend continues to thrive as a successful podcast. Their website mentions "we believe in giving people credit and paying people fairly. We also believe in paying

ourselves, which means we accept advertising dollars and sell merchandise and tickets to our live events. We recognize that all money is dirty, but we also apply an ethical framework to our decisions and make every effort to work with businesses that consider the ethical implications of their choices, too". This is exactly what podcasting can offer: increased autonomy to make your own authentic business *and* creative decisions.

Amplifying Authenticity and Autonomy

The final category I will be discussing, appearing in 22% of the surveyed texts, is *Amplifying Authenticity and Autonomy.* I describe this theme as "the opportunity for female podcast hosts to be honest, authentic, un-programmed versions of themselves. Telling stories in their own voices and making autonomous choices about their work". This notion is important as it can be seen as a departure from the norms of radio. Copeland notes that as commercial radio begins testing the mainstream audience desire for more diversified content, "the freedom and empowerment of a woman's voice on radio is put into question when it must rely on advertising revenue and mass appeal to stay on the air" (2018, p. 3).

Typically, in commercial radio, the announcers have little control over the advertisers that purchase commercial airtime and are encouraged to speak and perform in a certain way. Station managers are often motivated by revenue over content, which is what makes the case study of WOMN so fascinating.

In 1978, in New Haven, Connecticut, Robert Herpe purchased the Top 40 radio station, WCDQ-AM, with the intention of creating a format specifically for women, by women (Sterling, 2011). He hired an entirely female staff, applied to have the call letters legally changed to WOMN, and branded the station on-air as WOMAN Radio (DiPasquale, 2019). According to a 1978 news article covering the launch of the radio station, Herpe wanted to "give a chance to that

other 50 percent of the world to give input to the media" though he was hesitant to brand the format as feminist, saying "studies show about 50 percent of people are turned off by overtly feminist things, while the rest like it, so why lose half your audience before you even get going?" (Robbins via Carter, 2009). An interesting parallel can be drawn between Herpe's hesitancy to brand an inherently feminist product for what it is, and comments from Serial's Sara Koenig as researched by Doane, McCormick & Scorce. Although Koenig identifies as a feminist, she's hesitant to brand herself that way, wanting to avoid mixing her personal politics with the podcasts she produces (2018, p. 119). What does this add to discussions around authenticity in podcasting and for Serial's success?

Returning to WOMN, Herpe focused the format's content on issues like parents' role reversal, nurse-midwives, birth control, battered women, and sexist language. The station even featured a two-part series on abortion (Carter, 2009). However, the most empowering aspect of WOMN were their incredibly strict advertising standards, with Herpe being quoted as saying "the copy should not put down women in any way". Any content that further stereotyped women would not make it to air. While the radio station's launch received national media coverage, advertising revenues were unable to sustain WOMN's operation. A year later, WOMN ceased programming women's content, and eventually the format reverted back to Top 40 (Dipasquale, 2019).

But when it comes to podcasting, women are re-writing many of radio's old tropes. As Sarah Gonzalez said at Werk It 2017, "people have these really polarizing views of what women can be, and those rules don't have to exist in podcasting".

Episode 4: Question Everything, hosted by producer Starlee Kine, WNYC's Mary Harris, and the Allusionist's Helen Zalzman, encourages breaking 'the rules' you think you know about

radio and podcasting. Kine argues that in radio, you aren't encouraged to find your own voice or sound like yourself. "People tell you 'you're doing well' when you sound like someone else". Podcasting has given her space to be her authentic self, and hold the autonomy to make her own decisions about the products she's producing.

For example, Kine has the authority to decide which advertisers can and cannot access commercial time on her podcasts, saying "I have the autonomy to make a list of ads I wouldn't do. I wouldn't/couldn't do an ad for a bank, and we boycott any company that supports Trump". Zaltzman adds that she rewrites all of her own ads because she wants them to sound in her style, "and that means the listeners will listen to them more, and they won't be quite as dull. I worry that's something that won't last much longer because of the way things are going", in reference to larger corporations that are now becoming involved in podcasting. That's why it's so important to emphasize the importance of this power disruption. In this same episode, Mary Harris argues "we're still at a very particular moment in podcasting where you can be at home in your jammies and make a product that becomes very popular, but there are a lot of people coming into this space with money. And money makes decisions really quickly. So I wanna talk about these power dynamics".

Further proof of a shift in these power dynamics comes from Jenna Weisse-Berman in discussing the ways she secured funding for her production studio and having the ability to choose exactly where that money comes from. After meeting with a group of venture capitalists to discuss funding opportunities for Pineapple Street Studios, she recalls that they said "'you're doing this Hillary Clinton show. What we want to know is that you'd do a Donald Trump show if it brought in enough money." We didn't answer them". It's argued that this type of calculated authenticity can actually serve to strengthen a brand, which should be appealing to advertisers.

Pooley (2010, p. 72) says “a key aspect of a successful brand is authenticity; in a media literate and consumerism savvy age, the more the heart is managed, the more we value the unmanaged heart”. That idea is also reinforced by Sarah Gonzalez during *Episode 19: How to hook an audience*: “the critical piece is speaking like ourselves. We don’t have to pretend or put on voices [...] Be honest. Find the thru lines. Talk like yourself. When people say, ‘maybe you should try to reach more white people’ I say, um, well there’s stuff for them, so I don’t have to do that! Also - they’re welcome to be *here*!”.

It’s important for society to be presented with authentic women, especially when increasingly confronted by mainstream media with versions of ourselves that are anything but authentic. Especially for women of colour. The hosts of Another Round, Tracy Clayton and Heben Nigatu, discuss this during *Episode 21: How I make it: Another Roun*d: “I feel like it’s very rare that a group of women who look like us get this kind of creative control over what we make” (Werk It, 2017). As Symone D. Sanders argues, “a change of tone of voice may seem like no big deal on the surface. But it can lead to women of color also stifling their thoughts, ideas, passions, and purpose to fit into someone else’s box”. In podcasting, not only are these things encouraged, they’re celebrated.

Discussion

After conducting a thematic discourse analysis of the texts from Werk It 2017, I've come away with the following four key findings of the study.

First, discussions of female vocal traits as a limiting factor in women's participation in radio and podcasting are quite prevalent in scholarly writing and popular press articles. This led me to believe the same discussions would be equally prevalent at Werk It 2017, but that wasn't the case. One conclusion may be that since society is generally more accepting of women today than they were in the early days of radio, podcasting has come about at a time when it's less jarring to hear a female voice break through what Christine Ehrick coined 'the patriarchal soundscape': a deviation from the standard soundscape in radio which is predominantly male.

Another more cynical conclusion is that female announcers have just learned to live with the criticism, so unless the conversation is going to be about learning to reclaim your authentic voice (as presented by Lauren Oberman at Werk It 2018), why bring it up? As Oberman said, "But women always complain about their own voices. I can't tell you how many times people say: I love to do radio but I hate my voice. And I wonder if we hate our voices. That because we hate our voices, other people hate them, too? [...] Basically I'm trying to say it's a chicken and an egg situation. All right. So like, do we hate women's voices because women hate their voices or vice versa?". While podcasting may create the opportunity for a *safer* space for women to reclaim their authentic voice, I was recently reminded by a popular female podcast host, Corrine Fisher, through a shared post via her personal Instagram, that women in podcasting are not isolated from complaints about voice. @janemarielynch on Twitter posted "I love women. I AM woman. Our voices are higher than men's voices. Women's voices can get into the annoying

area if it gets too high. If you're doing a podcast, consider lowering your pitch a tad. If you think I'm being sexist about this then I don't know what to do with you" (July 25, 2022).

Which leads nicely into the next key takeaway: the importance of access to female mentors, leadership, and women's collectives. As a part of their 2021 report, *Resetting Normal: Gender, Intersectionality, and Leadership*, The Canadian Women's Foundation argues that the "under-representation and inadequate representation in leadership and decision-making contributes to ongoing marginalization and inequality". They believe that without adequate representation at the leadership and management level, any policies, procedures, or systems that are put in place will fall short. This is of importance because, Carter (2009) suggests that the most successful model created to promote gender equity was by the creation of a government mandate to hire women. The goals of liberal feminists would focus on opportunities for women's intellectual growth and professional success. Steeves (2009, p.6) cites that while early advocates worked for women's suffrage and property ownership, contemporary liberals are focused on issues such as equal pay and employment. The importance of this contemporary focus can be highlighted through a finding from the same report that notes Canadian women are 30% less likely to be promoted from an entry level role than as compared to their male counterparts. The premise of WNYC Studio's Werk It podcast festival is in and of itself an opportunity for female podcasters access to leadership and mentorship. Therefore, it isn't much of a surprise that Access to Leadership and Empowerment through Education are the two most prevalent themes in the surveyed texts.

A third key finding from the study is the opportunity for podcasting as a space for greater representation of BIPOC or BAME (Black, Asian, Minority-Ethnic) individuals as compared to radio and other mainstream forms of media. Laura Walker, former President of WNYC, said that

one of the motivations for the creation of Werk It was the idea that "observations of this world should be more diverse". The general consensus from women of colour at Werk It 2017 is that while there seems to be better greater acceptance of a diversity of voices in podcasting than compared to radio, it must be acknowledged that podcasting as an industry continues to exist within the digital sphere. As Vrikki & Malik, 2019, argue, "podcasts exist in a digital realm where racial prejudices, inequalities, and structural disenfranchisement shape content dissemination and popular representations". This means that although the opportunity for BIPOC cultural production and representation is heightened in podcasting, the same limitations experienced across the creative and cultural industries are still at play. As Smith argues in a 2016 essay, "it only takes a mere scratch of the surface to reveal hostility and deep discomfort about women's ever strengthening public voice". If this study has taught me anything, it's to be incredibly cautious against idealized interpretations of equal access. Yes, women of color have increased access and visibility in podcasting, but "in the spirit of neoliberalism, being permitted to exist is not the same as equal representation" (Nakamura & Chow-White, 2012, p. 206).

Finally, I'd like to discuss the ways in which podcasting can challenge dominant media power dynamics by offering women the opportunity for heightened autonomy and authenticity over their own creative labor. This can present itself in many ways. For example, presenters at Werk It 2017 talked about holding the power to deny advertisers access to ad space if they didn't align with their own morals and ethics. Attendees of Werk It were given advice on setting their own pricing structure for ad space, re-writing advertising copy, and how to say no to business deals. As the former host of a radio show, I would never have been given this type of authority or autonomy. And not just because I'm a woman. This type of autonomy may have more to do with the differences between radio and podcasting itself than gender. However, with the consideration

of the historical barriers women have faced in accessing the microphone, the ability for control over those who can capitalize on the commodification of your labor is a powerful notion to consider. In 2017, The Economist posited that "podcasting may be a way in which one old prejudice - that authority looks and sounds male - plays less of a role".

What's most intriguing to me about this notion is that individuals are not fixed in their positions of power. In discussing campus-community radio, Rodriguez (2011) argues "alternative media spin transformative processes that alter people's sense of self, their subject positioning, and therefore their access to power". (Bonin-Labelle, 2020) says that through this lens, the campus-community radio sector has the potential to empower marginalized groups and individuals. That said, this opportunity should be taken with caution as alternative media, such as podcasting, can also "reproduce, through exclusion, the dominant power dynamics against which it claims to struggle" (p. 21). I argue the same can be said for podcasting.

Study Limitations

It's important to address what I consider to be the two main limitations of this study.

First, this study would be classified as a single case study analysis, with the sole situation or event surveyed being the 2017 Werk it Women's Podcast Festival. A general limitation to any study of a single case is the risk of overgeneralization. As argued by Willis (2014, p.4), "how is that one case can reliably offer anything beyond the particular?".

For this reason, the themes developed from thematic discourse analysis, and the corresponding findings, should not be considered the sole opportunities and limitations for the study of gender and podcasting. While it is true that the emerging themes generally parallel the supporting literature, the limitation lies in the "difficulty of generalizing from the single case" (Simons, 2006, p. 225). At its worst, Bennett and Elman (2006, p. 461) argue that

overgeneralization can lead to “grievous misunderstandings of the relationship between variables or processes”.

Another considerable limitation can be applied to both this particular study and the general field of qualitative research: the theory of the *researcher-as-instrument*. This term refers to “the researcher as an active respondent in the research process” (Pezalla et al., 2012). The researcher is the instrument used to both collect and interpret the data. As such, some bias is to be expected. However, one might argue that I’m too close to the subject to be objective. I attended college for radio studies from 2009 - 2011 and subsequently worked in the field until 2022. My interest in the opportunities for women in podcasting comes from my own experienced limitations.

The term *confirmation bias* is the notion that a researcher may interpret study data to support their hypothesis (Shah, 2019). This could be true of any study, but especially because the material I’m grappling with speaks to many of my own experiences. It was natural for me to facilitate connections between the data and the literature that were reminiscent of my own participation in the medium.

That said, there are critics of quantitative research that might celebrate this research scenario. Two of those critics, feminist scholars Oakley & Roberts (1981) and Graham (1983), argue that quantitative data collection by a “detached and value-free researcher” is a missed opportunity. To that end, the opportunity comes from an interpersonal connection with the data that is otherwise not accessible. Is it possible I am able to offer a richer interpretation of the data because of my experiences? I would argue that my personal knowledge gained through my direct experience working in radio is more robust than knowledge gained through the representations

constructed by others. If it weren't more my own frustrations of the radio industry, this study would not exist.

Opportunities for Future Study

There's a sense that the opportunities for future podcasting scholarship are vast, even if podcasting scholars only followed the same general path of inquiry as traditional media scholars. For example, one could study topics like ethics, media ownership and power structures, and its effect on audiences.

A general, yet more gendered approach, might consider the consequences of women's under-representation behind the scenes and behind the microphone of the world's most popular podcasts.

In terms of this work in particular, it is my hope that this study can serve as a benchmark for future feminist scholarship on podcasting. Comparatively, will the state of podcasting in five, ten, or fifteen years serve to shift the current opportunities and limitations for women, BAME, and BIPOC individuals?

A key area of opportunity for future study is further interrogation into the commodification and commercialization of podcasting. What remains of the utopian notion that podcasting had the potential to democratize and decentralize radio? If it is more accessible than radio, then is it equally accessible regardless of gender or socioeconomic background? These questions could be investigated through a more specific focus on the political economic structure of the most (and perhaps the least) financially successful podcasts and podcast production companies.

In terms of future study of podcasting that also includes radio, I'm interested in community radio as a model for the diversification of podcasting. Researchers and advocates

invested in gender equity in radio have considered the ability of community radio to "give women a voice they never had" (Sengupta, 2019). While that may certainly be a benefit of community radio, what are the disadvantages and barriers experienced by women participating in it? Do those same barriers exist in podcasting? Once those questions are asked and answered, we are given the opportunity to explore suggestions and solutions to limit them.

Conclusion

The social processes that helped form radio in the early 20th century influenced the definitions of what could be and would be said over radio in its early years, and of who would be in charge and who banished from the airwaves. These decisions continue to influence radio, and perhaps the larger mediascape, today. For those reasons, we can expect these so-called early years of podcasting to be equally as significant in the formation of the industry's future. As argued by Marshall (1995), the answers to these questions, “who would speak to whom? On whose behalf? Who would not be allowed to speak, whose speech would be carefully limited and contained, and who would not be addressed at all?” weren’t necessarily answered by commercial means, but by pre-existing social and cultural hierarchies. Though her words apply to radio, I argue they could also be applied to the state of podcasting in 2022. The answers to my research questions are more grounded in culture than technology, and influenced more by existing social structures than economy. What does that mean for podcasting if the existing social structures continue to disenfranchise women? Likewise - what opportunities have been created for women and podcasting that weren’t available during the advent of radio or even television?

When I started this study, I had the naively utopian opinion that podcasting could serve to fully transform the existing media landscape. Of course this isn’t the case. As my research for this study comes to a close, I would like to argue that instead of fully transforming or democratizing the existing mediascape, podcasting offers women access to a space where, theoretically, amateurs can compete with traditional media. However, as Berry (2015, p. 171) notes, “the head of the tail” is still about hits - podcasts created by services, brands, and individuals with public profiles. For some brands and organizations, podcasting is merely another form of distribution. A scan of Apple’s Top 100 Podcasts chart reinforces this notion

with popular and recognizable brands and people appearing prevalently in the top 25. Examples include Dateline NBC, The New York Times, SmartLess hosted by Jason Bateman, Will Arnett, and Sean Hayes, We Can Do Hard Things with Glennon Doyle, and Fly on the Wall with Dana Carvery and David Spade. Meanwhile, on the Spotify Top Podcasts chart, The Joe Rogan Experience continues to reign supreme in the number one spot. Dr. Andrew Huberman's the Huberman Lab, Laguna Beach recap series Back to the Beach, Jet Talk with Andrew Tate (a world champion kick boxer), and French podcast Sexe Oral hosted by Lysandre and Joanie round out the top 5.

As a remediation of radio, we can expect podcasting to follow similar trajectories to podcasting. During the advent of radio, women were up against generations of treatment as the intellectual inferiors of men, which led to a reluctance to become involved in public affairs. As written by Fisher (2021), the opportunity to speak in public, and hear other women doing the same, resulted in a big change in women's confidence in themselves and men's readiness to accept them as equals. Nearly a hundred years later, there's still plenty of work to do.

As Laura Walker said in her opening address at Werk It 2017, "women are not equal parts in telling the story… women are not equal in sourcing those people who tell the story… we have an opportunity to change that with podcasting". Marshall (1995) points to media holding the potential to form the existence of alternative public spheres by which alternative forms of social organization might be envisioned. I take this to mean that podcasting, as an 'alternative' public sphere, can hold space for social organization that treats men and women as equals. Marshall says that under this argument, "media are afforded a central role in carving out new spaces for expression, identity formation, and political engagement" (p. 134). Of course, it's not about pushing men out of the equation. In writing about the gender imbalance of presenters on

morning radio in Ireland, Joyce Fegen argues that “it’s about looking at how we can encourage organizational change so that there is a value placed on women’s involvement and contribution, and which considered the principle of equal participation of men and women as a good one, and one that reflects the make-up or Irish society”. I believe WNYC Studios, through Werk It, is one such entity encouraging organizational change.

At Werk It 2017, then CEO of WNYC, Laura Walker, opened the festival with a discussion of the history of Werk It. In 2015, WNYC founded Werk It after a study was released demonstrating only 20% of Apple Podcasts Top 100 were hosted by a woman. By 2017, according to internal research conducted by WNYC Studios, that number had increased to 33.3%. The goal of Werk It Podcast Festival was to provide women with the means to realize professional success and equal representation on the Apple Podcasts Top 100 charts by 2020.

In 2017, Apple Podcasts held a relative monopoly over smartphone-based podcast applications. As of March 2022, although there are several other major podcast player applications available for download, Apple Podcasts has maintained its dominant market share and hosts over 30 million podcast episodes on its platform (Tricarico et al., 2022). In terms of listenership, a 2020 report from Statista notes 25% of US podcast listeners use Spotify to consume podcasts, while 20% use Apple Podcasts. Regardless, a podcast’s success on Apple’s chart is still considered a key indicator of popularity, although the algorithm used for determining popularity has been a long kept secret. Apple explains that the Apple Podcast Charts reflect “the most popular shows and episodes available in a given market [and] while the exact algorithm cannot be shared to protect their integrity”, the charts measure a combination of listening, follows, and completion rate. Since Walker noted Apple specifically at Werk It 2017, I will leverage the current state of the Apple Podcasts Top 100 to survey the current state of

gender equity in podcasting, while recognizing this is not a complete or exhaustive study. I'd also like to acknowledge that this list does not take into consideration the gender of those working behind the scenes in roles like editors or producers, or whether or not the host identifies as being racially marginalized.

Many podcasts are hosted by multiple people and may include both men and women. For that reason, I've compiled the data in two ways in an attempt to produce a more dynamic rendering of the results. As of February 28th, 2022, 41% of podcasts appearing on the Apple Podcasts Top 100 chart included at least one woman host, but it's important to note that this figure includes podcasts co-hosted by both men and women. As of the same date, 59% of podcasts on the Apple Podcasts Top 100 chart were hosted by a man or multiple men. If the Top 100 chart is analyzed by looking at male hosted, female hosted, and mixed gender hosted podcasts, the analysis changes. In that case, 15% of podcasts are hosted by some combination of men and women, 29% are hosted by one woman or multiple women, and 56% are hosted by one man or multiple men. The second analysis demonstrates the popularity of male only hosted shows as compared to podcasts hosted by women only. Although progress has been made, WNYC's 2017 goal of equal representation on the Top 100 chart has not yet been realized. However, a recent study from AT&T shows more positive results. In March of 2022, AT&T released the results of a study that that documented the most popular top-rated podcasts by gender. The research found 61% of top rated podcasts are hosted by men, 27% are hosted by a female, and 12% are hosted by a man and a woman. Interestingly, "even though most of the top-rated podcasts feature male hosts, female-led podcasts still account for 50% of the top ten rated podcasts" (AT&T, 2022).

Further study should be conducted to determine the political economics of the networks and organizations that produce and create these top podcasts. Scanning the list, one may recognize the names of hosts that are relevant in contemporary culture, such as Zoey Deschanel, Glennon Doyle, Emma Chamberland, and Rachel Maddow. Are these women featured in the Top 100 charts as champions of authenticity, autonomy, and diversity? Or does their spot on the chart more heavily influenced by the commodification of their individual brand?

If I were to draw a parallel between the state of podcasting today and the history of radio I would argue we are experiencing with podcasting what we experienced with radio in the 1920s and 1930s: the rise of commercialism. A 2022 report from Neilsen demonstrated that the growth of podcast listeners in the US alone has increased by 40% in just three years, with Edison Research estimating an estimated 226 million active podcast listeners (2022). The buying power of that audience is significant. In a 2020 report, Grand View Research estimated the global podcasting market to be worth 11.5 billion, with expectations that it will grow to be worth 60.5 billion dollars by 2027. If podcasting continues to follow the history of radio, we can expect a combination of culture and capital to influence who will be able to participate and who will be relegated.

When I started this study, I was influenced by my own frustrations as a young woman working in commercial radio. I was exhausted with the state of an industry I wanted so badly to be a part of, and I couldn't reconcile how the inherent structure of this medium that I loved so much seemed to be working so hard to exclude me. I was hopeful that podcasting as an industry would offer a space that was more inclusive and accepting than radio has been historically. Early in this project, I came across an article written by Alice Wong about diversifying radio with disabled voices, and the manifesto she authored on the same topic. As I was assessing the

opportunities and limitations for women in podcasting as compared to the historical opportunities and limitations for radio, I kept re-visiting Wong's work, and I'd like her words to conclude my thesis.

> On radio, I want to hear people who…
>
> lisp
>
> stutter
>
> gurgle
>
> stammer
>
> wheeze
>
> repeat themselves
>
> pause when needing to breathe
>
> make noises when they talk
>
> salivate and drool
>
> communicate, enunciate, and pronounce differently
>
> use different speech patterns and rhythms
>
> use ventilators or other assistive technology
>
> use sign language interpreters or other people that facilitate speech
>
> use computer-generated speech
>
> …I want to disrupt what's thought of as the default public radio voice. I want to challenge listeners as they ride the subway, jog on their treadmills, drive on their commute. Even if the sounds and words we create might require greater concentration and attention, I believe our stories are worth the effort.
>
> (Wong, 2016)

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Appendix A
Thematic Coding Sheet & Notes

Episode title	Themes present	Comments
Don't Point	Accessing diversity, character legitimacy, precarity (observing a glass ceiling for POC),	We want our listeners to learn and be moved and see the world differently -- but what's the line between those experiences and merely gawking at people different from ourselves? - Reporting on complex topics without gawking or tokenizing
Ask The Ethicist	Access to leadership (Assistant General Council at Buzzfeed + Q&A), Empowerment through education (teaching practical skill of appropriate truth telling),	What's fair use? Do you need to get approval from Richard Simmons to do a podcast about Richard Simmons? A journalist and a lawyer tackle all your pod-ethics questions.
How I Make It: There goes the neighbourhood	Character legitimacy, Amplifying authenticity and autonomy, accessing diversity (directly dealing with civil rights and racism), empowerment through education, access to leadership (Q&A), vocal authority (differs from journalism in that it's much more intimate, and in podcasting that's your prerogative)	The team behind There Goes the Neighborhood, a series that explores gentrification in Brooklyn and Los Angeles, talks about how they turned a complex topic into a gripping story.
Question Everything	Amplifying autonomy and authenticity (refusing to run certain ads), character legitimacy, accessing leadership (using creative ads that have been successful as case studies for how to do things differently), Empowerment through education (podcasting does not need to sound like radio), Vocal Authority (host of mystery show has a lisp)	There are hundreds of thousands of podcasts. And for each one, there are endless opinions on how they should be made. In this episode, a conversation about breaking the 'rules'.
The Future of Love, Lust, and Listening	Character Legitimacy, Empowerment through Education (Q&A on how the podcast is made)	Esther Perel's new podcast, "Where Should We Begin?" features recordings of real people in couple's therapy. Here, the therapist explains how this benefits her patients - and listeners.

This Is Not a Joke with Lena Waithe	Character Legitimacy, Amplifying authenticity and autonomy, accessing diversity (directly dealing with civil rights and racism), empowerment through education, access to leadership (Q&A), vocal authority (differs from journalism in that it's much more intimate, and in podcasting that's your prerogative)	A funny conversation about how the funny can illuminate the serious. With Master of None's Lena Waithe, Terrible Thanks for Asking's Nora McInerny and Maeve in America's Maeve Higgins.
Creating Universes	Amplifying authenticity and autonomy, character legitimacy , empowerment through education,	A conversation with women who make fiction podcasts and non-fiction podcasts, about how to create strong characters and story lines that move your narrative forward. With The Bright Sessions' Lauren Shippen, Love Me's Cristal Duhaime, Accused's Amber Hunt, and Celestial Blood's Gisele Regatao
Extreme Engagement	Empowerment through education, precarity, amplifying authenticity and autonomy (ability to connect with listeners in a very personal way),	Get some tools you can use to engage with your audience and form long term loyalty. With Note to Self's Manoush Zomorodi, NPR's Karen Grigsby Bates and Happier's Gretchen Rubin.
Make Your Ads As Good As Your Show	Empowerment through education, Access to leadership, amplifying authenticity and autonomy (these hosts have creative authority over ads),	The people who listen to your show also have to listen to your ads. Don't make them skip 15 seconds forward. With Gimlet's Nazanin Rafsanjani and KPCC's Josie Huang.
Pitch Time!	Empowerment through education, Access to leadership, Accessing diversity,	Several leading ladies in podcasting give honest feedback on live pitches. With PRX's Kerri Hoffman, Pineapple Street's Jenna Weiss-Berman, NPR's N'Jeri Eaton, WNYC Studios' Paula Szuchman, and Anayansi Diaz-Cortez.
Nina Jacobsen on Being a Hollywood Boss	Accessing diversity, Character legitimacy (through authentic storytellers writing the stories), Empowerment through education (Q&A), vocal authority	Film and TV Producer Nina Jacobson's credits range from the Hunger Games to The People Vs OJ Simpson. In this Werk It session, Nina tells Erica Williams Simon about how she started, and runs, her own

		production studio, and where she gets the ideas that go on to become blockbusters.
How I Make it: Ester Perel	Empowerment through education, Amplifying authenticity & autonomy (doing her typical job, just with a microphone on), Character authenticity,	Esther Perel's new podcast, "Where Should We Begin," lets people listen in to her actual couples therapy sessions. In this episode, Esther is joined by the show's co-executive producer Jesse Baker to reveal how they get patients to open up, on mic.
Why We Werk It	Precarity, access to leadership, access to diversity, amplifying authenticity and autonomy,	Our mission: To increase women's presence in the podcasting space. We're getting close, says President and CEO of New York Public Radio Laura Walker.
What They Didn't Tell Me About Podcasting	Accessing diversity, amplifying authenticity and autonomy, vocal authority, precarity, empowerment through education, access to leadership (Q&A)	New to podcasting? You're not alone. Hear from women who crossed over into the podcasting space, and what they learned along the way. With Fake The Nation's Negin Farsad, The Call's Erica Williams Simon, Bad With Money's Gaby Dunn, and Call Your Girlfriend's Ann Friedman.
Scoring: How to do it Well and Legally	Empowerment through education, access to leadership, amplifying authenticity and autonomy,	This American Life's Jane Marie presents everything you need to know about how to incorporate music, talk to a composer and find original songs.
The Million Dollar Podcast	Precarity (lack of money), Access to leadership, Empowerment through education, authenticity and autonomy (choice of who to accept money from),	Hear from the women who are making it their business to turn a profit doing the thing they love. With Science Friday's Danielle Dana, Pineapple Street Media's Jenna Weiss-Berman and Fusion Media Group's Mandana Mofidi.
How I Make It: Making Oprah	Empowerment through education, authenticity and autonomy (WBEZ giving the team autonomy), vocal authority	How do you tell the story of the greatest talk show that ever lived? The Making Oprah team tells all.

Put Yourself In My Ears	Empowerment through education, Access to leadership, authenticity and autonomy,	How to listen, talk to composers, score and sound design. With Emily Botein, a Vice President for On-Demand Content at WNYC Studios, and Marianne McCune, editor of Rough Translation.
I Have 100 Hours of Tape - Now What?	Empowerment through education, Access to leadership,	How do you take a mountain of tape and turn it into a story? Radiolab's Molly Webster shares her secrets.
How To Hook An Audience	Accessing diversity, vocal authority, authenticity and autonomy, empowerment through education, Access to leadership	Making a thing is only half the battle. Getting - and growing - an audience can be even harder. With WNYC's Sarah Gonzalez, KPCC's Ashley Alvarado, Merge Records' Christina Rentz and The Mash Up Americans' Rebecca Lehrer.
Turning Downloads into Dollars	Precarity (financial), empowerment through education, authenticity and autonomy (pitching and selling your own ads, setting your own rates, etc.), Access to leadership	You've created a compelling series, and you've even got downloads! Now can you turn a profit? With Emilie Aries, CEO of Bossed Up and co-host of the podcast Stuff Mom Never Told You.
How I Make It: Another Round	Authenticity and autonomy, empowerment through education, access to leadership, character legitimacy , accessing diversity	How do hosts Heben Nigatu and Tracy Clayton manage to make us laugh each and every week? The Another Round team reveal the mysteries behind production of their hit podcast. In this episode, the director of audio at Buzzfeed Eleanor Kagan is joined by the show's hosts Heben Nigatu and Tracy Clayton.
My Podcast Gives Me Joy (and Health Insurance)	Precarity, empowerment through education, vocal authority, accessing diversity, character legitimacy (discussions with Arthur and his wife)	Anna Sale, host of Death, Sex & Money, kicks off Werk It with the 11 things she's learned on her journey to podcast glory.
How to get your podcast off the ground	Empowerment through education, precarity, access to leadership	Taz Ahmed is a long-time storyteller and the host/producer of the podcast Good Muslim Bad Muslim. Here's Taz, along with Call Your Girlfriend's Gina Delvac and NPR's N'Jeri Eaton talking about what it takes to

		staff a podcast, from the small budget to the big.
Myth: All the great podcast ideas are taken	Access to leadership (Lauren Oberman of The Big Listen),	There are podcasts about politics, food, love, death, celebrity, hiking, crime, health, science, and even…the California DMV handbook. So has every podcast idea been taken? Join host of The Big Listen Lauren Ober as she explores the topics that are waiting to be exploited by new podcasters. Special bonus: Lauren gives away 50 free podcast ideas.
The Art of Voicing	Vocal authority, accessing diversity, access to leadership, empowerment through education (how to script, voice, etc.)	When Krissy Clark sits down to record an episode of her podcast The Uncertain Hour, she's not aiming to sound professional - she just wants to sound like herself.
How I Make It: The Daily	Access to leadership, empowerment through education, accessing diversity	What does it take to make a daily news show? In this episode, managing producer of the New York Times' podcast The Daily, reveals what it takes to get the show out the door. We recorded Theo Balcomb during Werk It's How I Make It Track, where producers and hosts from top podcasts pull back the curtain on their productions.

Appendix B
Apple Podcasts Top 100 Chart
Recorded February 28th, 2022

Rank	Podcast Title	Host(s)	Network/Artist
1	The Daily	Michael Barbaro	New York Times
2	Twin Flames	Stephanie Beatriz	Wondery
3	The Trojan Horse Affair	Brian Reid and Hamza Syed	Serial Productions & The New York Times
4	Morbid: A True Crime Podcast	Alaina Urquart (aunt) and Ashleigh Kelley (niece)	A True Crime Podcast
5	Crime Junkie	Ashley Flowers and Brit Prawat	audiochuck
6	Gone South	Jed Lipinski	C13Originals
7	The Deck	Ashley Flowers	audiochuck
8	Dateline NBC	Keith Morrison or Lester Holt	NBC News
9	SmartLess	Jason Bateman, Sean Hayes, Will Arnett	Jason Bateman, Sean Hayes, Will Arnett
10	Offline with Jon Favreau	Jon Favreau	Crooked Media
11	Up First	Leila Fadel, Steve Inskeep, Rachel Martin, A Martinez	NPR
12	Chamelon: Wild Boys	Sam Mullins	Campside Media
13	The Ben Shapiro Show	Ben Shapiro	The Daily Wire
14	Global News Podcast	Oliver Conway	BBC World Service
15	The Thing About Pam	Keith Morrison	NBC News
16	My Favourite Murder with Karen Kalgariff and Georgia Hardstark	Karen Kalgariff and Georgia Hardstark	Exactly Right
17	Barely Famous	Kail Lowry	PodcastOne
18	MrBallen Podcast: Strange, Dark & Mysterious Stories	John Allen	MrBallen
19	NPR News Now	Lakshmi Singh	NPR
20	Something Was Wrong	Tiffany Reese	audiochuck
21	Stuff You Should Know	Josh Clark	iHeartPodcasts
22	Sweet Bobby	Alexi Mostrous	Tortoise Media
23	The Bible in a Year (with Fr. Mike Schmitz)	Mike Schmitz	Ascension Catholic Faith Formation
24	This American Life	Ira Glass	This American Life
25	Scoundrel: History's Forgotten Villains	Carissa & Jason Weiser	KAST MEDIA | Jason and Carissa Weiser
26	The Happiness Lab with Dr. Laurie Santos	Dr. Laurie Santos	Pushkin Industries
27	Fly on the Wall with Dana Carvey and David Spade	David Spade and Dana Carvey	Cadence13
28	Criminal	Pheobe Judge	Vox Media Podcast Network
29	Pod Save the World	Tommy Vietor and Ben Rhodes	Crooked Media

30	Anatomy of Murder	Anna Sigga Nicolazzi and Sheriff Scott	audiochuck
31	20/20	David Muir and Amy Robach	ABC News
32	On Purpose with Jay Shetty	Jay Shetty	Jay Shetty
33	Murder, Mystery & Makeup	Bailey Brooke Sarian	Audioboom Studios
34	This Is Actually Happening	Whit Missildine	Wondery
35	We Can Do Hard Things with Glennon Doyle	Glennon Doyle	Glennon Doyle & Cadence13
36	Planet Money	Amanda Aronczyk, Mary Childs, Karen Duffin, Jacob Goldstein, Sarah Gonzalez, Kenny Malone	NPR
37	Anything Goes with Emma Chamberlain	Emma Chamberlain	Emma Chamberlain and Ramble
38	Today, Explained	Sean Rameswaram and Noel King	Vox Media Podcast Network
39	It's Me, Tinx	Christina Majjar (Tinx)	Tinx
40	Huberman Lab	Andrew Huberman	Scicomm Media
41	Pod Save America	Jon Favreau, Daniel Pfeiffer, Jon Lovett, Tommy Vietor	Crooked Media
42	Wait Wait... Don't Tell Me!	Emma Choi	NPR
43	Lex Fridman Podcast	Lex Fridman	Lex Fridman
44	Welcome to Our Show	Zoey Deschanel, Hannah Simone, Lamorne Morris	iHeartPodcasts
45	Hidden Brain	Shankar Vedantam	Hidden Brain
46	Serial	Sarah Koenig	Serial Productions
47	The Always Sunny Podcast	Charlie Day, Glenn Howerton, Rob McElhenney	Charlie Day, Glenn Howerton, Rob McElhenney
48	Casefile True Crime	Anonymous Host (perceived male)	Casefile Presents
49	Conan O'Brien Needs a Friend	Conan O'Brien	Team Coco & Earwold
50	Maintenance Phase	Aubrey Gordon and Michael Hobbes	Aubrey Gordon & Michael Hobbs
51	The Dan Bongino Show	Dan Bongino	Cumulus Podcast Network | Dan Bongino
52	The Ramsey Show	Dave Ramsey	Ramsey Network
53	Fresh Air	Terry Cross	NPR
54	Murdaugh Murders Podcast	Mandy Matney	Mandy Matney
55	Wild Things: Sigfried & Roy	Steven Leckart	Apple TV+ / AT WILL MEDIA
56	Ridiculous Crime	Zaron Burnett and Elizabeth Dutton	iHeartPodcasts
57	Radiolab	Latif Nasser and Lulu Miller	WNYC Studios

58	Office Ladies	Jenna Fischer and Angela Kinsey	Earwolf
59	Last Podcast On The Left	Marcus Parks, Henry Zebrowski, Ben Kissel	The Last Podcast Network
60	Apple News Today	Shumita Basu	Apple News
61	The Jordan B. Peterson Podcast	Jordan B Peterson	Dr. Jordan B. Peterson
62	The Ezra Klien Show	Ezra Klien	New Work Times Opinion
63	Bannon's War Room	Stephen Bannon	WarRoom.org
64	The Journal	Kate Linebaugh and Ryan Knutson	The Wall Street Journal & Gimlet
65	The Problem with Jon Stewart	Jon Stewart	Apple TV+
66	Pardon My Take	Dan Katz, Jerry O'Connell, Eric Sollenberger	Barstool Sports
67	The Glenn Beck Program	Glenn Beck	Blaze Podcast Network
68	Normal Gossip	Kelsey McKinney	Normal Gossip
69	The Dan Le Batard Show with Stugotz	Dan Le Batard	Dan Le Batard, Stugotz
70	The Bible Recap	Leigh Cobble	D-Group
71	The Rachel Maddow Show	Rachel Maddow	Rachel Maddow, MSNBC
72	Suspect	Matthew Shaer, Eric Benson, Matt Baglio	Wondery | Campside
73	The Moth	Dan Kennedy	The Moth
74	American Scandal	Lindsay Graham	Wondery
75	Morning Wire	John Bickley and Georgia Howe	The Daily Wire
76	American Hostage	Serialized audio series starring Jon Hamm	Amazon Music | Criminal Content | Wondery
77	Sword and Scale	Mike Boudet	Incongruity
78	Freakonomics Radio	Stephen Dubner	Freakonomics Radio + Stitcher
79	Bone Marry Bury	Serialized audio drama starring Sarah Hyland and Harvey Guillen	Dear Media
80	You're Wrong About	Sarah Marshall	Sarah Marshall
81	The Bill Simmons Podcast	Bill Simmons	The Ringer & Bill Simmons
82	Cold	Dave Cawley	KSL | Amazon
83	Consider This from NPR	Kelly McEvers	NPR
84	The Matt Walsh Show	Matt Walsh	The Daily Wire
85	Breaking Points with Krystal and Saagar	Krystal Ball, Saagar Enjeti	Breaking Points
86	Deep Cover: Mob Land	Jake Halpern	Pushkin Industries
87	True Crime Garage	Nic Edwards and Patrick Edwards	TRUE CRIME GARAGE
88	The Twilight Effect	Ashley Greene	Kast Media | Ashley Greene

89	Supernatural with Ashley Flowers	Ashley Flowers	Parcast Network
90	The Thing About Helen & Olga	Keith Morrison	NBC News
91	Joe Rogan Experience Review Podcast	Adam Thorne	Adam Thorne
92	Real Time with Bill Maher	Bill Maher	HBO Podcasts
93	REAL AF with Andy Frisella	Andy Frisella	Andy Frisella #100to0d
94	The Generation Why Podcast	Aaron Habel, Justin Evans	Wondery
95	Dan Carlin's Hardcore History	Dan Carlin	Dan Carlin
96	Candace	Candace Owens	The Daily Wire
97	S-Town	Brian Reid	Serial Productions
98	The Megyn Kelly Show	Megyn Kelly	SiriusXM
99	The Tim Dillon Show	Tim Dillon	Tim Dillon
100	Lifespan with Dr. David Sinclair	David Sinclair	Scicomm Media