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Motivations of Puerto Rico's Independent Podcasters: Between Amateur Creator and Formalised Producer Entrepreneurship

Motivaciones de los podcasters independientes de Puerto Rico: entre el emprendimiento del creador amateur y del productor formalizado

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Abstract

The economic fervour surrounding podcasting rekindles tensions between the inherent collaborative culture of independent creation and business models from platforms like Spotify, YouTube, Apple Podcasts, or Google Podcasts. Within this framework, there is a growing disparity between the motivations and practices of countercultural podcasters and those of formalised producers who aspire to monetise the process. This research explores the main motivations of 30 independent podcasters in Puerto Rico to undertake and continue their activities and determines whether their entrepreneurship provides an alternative form of capital (social, cultural, or symbolic) (Bourdieu, 1986, 2000). A qualitative methodology is applied and 30 semi-structured interviews are conducted with podcasters from 16 March to 6 May 2022. The responses are processed through the assisted qualitative analysis program ATLAS.ti. The independent Puerto Rican podcasters analysed are, primarily, driven by technological or media motivations, and personal, and creative content. That is, they promote forms of cultural, social, and symbolic capital, rather than economic capital. However, there is a growing economic motivation among the profile of formalised producers (6 cases out of 30) leading them to manage the sale of online consulting and educational services, subscription payment, Brand sponsorships, and live events for the community. This evolution breaks with the authenticity of a free media of conversation so as to create relationships. The recognition of being an alternative medium to the mainstream motivates one to pursue podcasting, while the management of a community motivates one to continue working in this field.

Keywords

Freelance podcaster; entrepreneurship; motivation; professional podcaster; podcasting; Puerto Rico.

Resumen

El fervor económico que rodea al podcasting reaviva las tensiones entre la inherente cultura colaborativa de la creación independiente y los modelos de negocio de plataformas como Spotify, YouTube, Apple Podcasts o Google Podcasts. En este marco, crece el debate sobre las motivaciones y las prácticas de los y las podcasters de espíritu contracultural frente a los y las productores/as formalizados/as que aspiran a monetizar. Esta investigación explora las motivaciones principales de 30 podcasters independientes de Puerto Rico para emprender y continuar con su actividad, y determina si aportan una forma alternativa de capital (social, cultural o simbólico) (Bourdieu, 1986, 2000). Se realizaron 30 entrevistas semiestructuradas cualitativas a podcasters del 16 de marzo al 6 de mayo de 2022. Las respuestas se procesaron a través del programa de análisis cualitativo asistido ATLAS.ti. Los podcasters independientes de Puerto Rico analizados emprenden por motivaciones tecnológicas o mediáticas, personales, y creativas o de contenido. Es decir, promueven formas de capital cultural, social y simbólico, más que capital económico. No obstante, se observa una motivación económica creciente entre el perfil de productores formalizados (6 casos de 30) que les lleva a gestionar la venta de servicios de consultoría y educativos en línea, el pago por suscripción, los auspicios de marcas y los eventos en directo para su comunidad. Esta evolución rompe con la autenticidad de un medio de conversación libre para crear relaciones. El reconocimiento de ser un medio alternativo a lo mainstream motiva para emprender, mientras que la gestión de una comunidad lo es para continuar.

Palabras clave

Creador freelance; emprendimiento; motivación; productor formalizado; podcasting; Puerto Rico.

1. Introduction

The economic fervour which surrounds podcasting in its third stage of development, characterised by “platformisation” (Sullivan, 2018, 2019), revives the debate about whether the motivations of the independent creators respond to a cultural, social or symbolic entrepreneurship, or rather an economic one. Recent studies show the inherent tensions between the collaborative culture of independent podcasting and the business models of Spotify, YouTube, Apple or Google (Adler Berg, 2021; Rime, Pike and Collins, 2022). The debate is whether their activity serves as alternative forms of capital or economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986, 2000). From this theoretical perspective, Jorgensen (2021) shows that the creative autonomy of these entrepreneurs provides valuable cultural capital. Independent podcasting is becoming a specific practice with its own identity in relation to the media industry (Milette, 2011). However, the boost of the audio market by media and streaming platforms after the success of Serial (2014) questions whether independent podcasting embraces mainstream awareness (Markman, 2015).

There are very few studies in the literature which delve directly into the motivations of the male and female independent podcasters (Markman, 2011; Markman and Sawyer, 2014; Mehendale, 2022; Milette, 2011; Taylor, 2023). Moreover, few studies approach this question from Bourdieu's theory of forms of capital (Jorgensen, 2021). This research draws on this theory to explore the main motivations of podcasters in Puerto Rico and to recognise whether their entrepreneurship is driven by a cultural, social or symbolic alternative, or an economic reason. A qualitative approximation was carried out through 30 semi-structured interviews of podcasters from Puerto Rico. The results are presented at a time when podcasting is about to celebrate two decades on the island and after having evaluated the offer from a quantitative approach (Ortiz Díaz, Moreno-Moreno and Vargas, 2022). Two in every ten Puerto Ricans listen to podcasts daily (Entravision Cisneros Interactive, 2022).

1.1. Motivations in independent podcasting

Podcasters express different motivations for engaging with podcasting. However, it is not clear which specific reasons are expressed by amateur creators and formalised producers. Markman (2011) proposed a decade ago that these motivations fall into six categories: creative or content, personal, interpersonal, technological or media, process or innovation, and economic. Their evolution can be studied according to the three development stages of podcasting (Berry, 2015; Bonini, 2015; Bottomley, 2015). During the first stage (2002-2005), amateur creators started making podcasts for three main reasons, in this order: technological or media, personal and creative or content (Markman, 2011; Markman and Sawyer, 2014). This reflects the collaborative culture of Web 2.0 and the medium as a form of produsage (Bruns, 2008). No significant economic interest is recorded, and the podcast remains in the longtail of online content. As podcasters gain experience, they reinforce interpersonal motivations to impact audiences and to project communities from multi-social dimensions (Adler Berg, 2022). The experience gained also brings with it the desire to turn production into a full-time paid job (Markman and Sawyer, 2014). These incentives coincide with the second stage (2005-2015), marked by the growth of the podcast community and the incursion of the media. Interpersonal and economic motives come to the fore from 2015 onwards, during the third stage. This is the year in which Serial (2014) became popular. Subsequently, “platformisation” promotes the creation of podcasts based on business logic, although few manage to make them profitable (Montero Caretero, 2022; Quah, 2019; Sullivan, 2018, 2019). Podcasting stops being a marginal medium (Bottomley, 2015). However, passion for the field and the recognition of being an alternative medium remain key motivations for entrepreneurship, while managing a community is a key motivation to continue (Mehendale, 2022). The ‘non-monetary’ spirit, audience connection and sense of community continue to drive independent podcasting (Taylor, 2023).

1.2. Entrepreneurship in independent podcasting

The evolution of podcasting from the collaborative culture framework of Web 2.0 to the formalisation of a cultural industry questions its identity as a critical subculture (Milette, 2011). The literature identifies two types of entrepreneurial profiles. On the one hand, amateur creators make the most of the participatory, democratic and decentralised potential of podcasting (Attig, 2020; Berry, 2018; Milette, 2011; Wade-Morris, Hansen and Hoyt, 2019). It is a do-it-yourself production that shares interests in virtual communities in which they form their identities (García-Marín, 2020a). As participants in User Generated Content (UGC), based on the open architecture of Really Simple Syndication (RSS), they aspire towards citizen empowerment and self-participation (Berry, 2018; Wade-Morris, Hansen and Hoyt, 2019). However, in some cases, such as in the Spanish language, no real interaction is achieved (García-Marín and Aparici, 2020). Despite their amateur character, they can make money through advertising, sponsorship and donations (Markman and Sawyer, 2014). However, economic motivation implies a certain contradiction for them, as commercial logics contrast with their creative autonomy and self-expression (Adler Berg, 2021; Jorgensen, 2021; Spinelli and Dann, 2019; Taylor, 2023).

On the other hand, formalised podcast producers follow the production structures and the quality standards of the media and sharing platforms. Monetisation is a relevant business aspect (Adler Berg,

2021; Heeremans, 2018; Murray, 2019; Sullivan, 2018). Indeed, the curation and marketing management offered by platforms are key motivations for them, alongside creative autonomy (Adler Berg, 2021; Sullivan, 2018). The more formalised producers earn money through advertising, sponsorship, live events, subscription payments and crowdfunding (Adler Berg, 2021; Rei-Anderson, 2022). The challenge is to make each case sustainable and achieve the financial support of the followers. These podcasters started as amateur creators and, as they built considerable audiences, they were recruited by native podcasting platforms and networks. "Platformisation" also causes prestigious professionals to revalidate their reputation by accumulating knowledge on the topics covered (García-Marín, 2020a). This profile contributes to the fact that an increasing number of independent podcasters are considering funding (Westphal, 2022).

1.3. Bourdieu's theory of the different forms of capital

The theory of alternative forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986, 2000) has a long history in the literature. However, there are few studies that consider it when analysing independent podcasting (Jorgensen, 2021) and other do-it-yourself creations (Scott, 2012). According to Bourdieu (1986, 2000), the capital concept is presented in four fundamental ways: economic, social, cultural (institutionalised, incorporated and objectified), and symbolic. For this author, capital is about more than economic profit: "It is impossible to give a full account of the structure and functioning of the social world unless we reintroduce the concept of capital in all its manifestations, and not only in the form recognised by economic theory" (Bourdieu, 2000): 133).

Motivations linked to the dynamics of the podcast market (audience and revenue) can therefore be connected to economic capital, including the personal reason of gaining popularity so that the audience collaborates directly (paid subscription) or indirectly (advertising). Also linked to this capital is the interpersonal motivation to interact with the community. Both have an impact on the production and publication parameters of the podcast given the knowledge and resources invested. Likewise, the content or creative motivation for a live event can lead to revenue.

In turn, the interpersonal motivation to impact public opinion fits with social capital if relationships or influence are created. Other interpersonal motives such as promoting other people's services, giving a voice to others, or belonging to a virtual community also provide social capital. With respect to cultural capital, personal motivations to acquire knowledge and skills by producing the podcast, and to demonstrate them, are associated with the three types of this form of capital: institutionalised, incorporated and objectified. The institutionalised form is concerned with academic certification, for example. The incorporated is reflected in the incentive to learn during the production process and to publicly demonstrate the extent to which you have mastered a subject. And the objectified is the one that has cultural goods and is exploited according to the incorporated capital. Finally, interpersonal motivations to achieve prestige among the podcasting community are forms of symbolic capital.

2. Research questions and objectives

Bearing in mind that independent podcasters have certain motivations for entrepreneurship (Markman, 2011; Markman and Sawyer, 2014; Mehendale, 2022; Taylor, 2023) and that throughout their activity they can create cultural, social, symbolic and economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986, 2000), the following three research questions are formulated for the case of Puerto Rico:

RQ1: What are the main motivations for podcasters to become entrepreneurs?

RQ2: In what way do these main motivations evolve?

RQ3: Which forms of capital promote amateur creation and formalised production?

To respond to these questions, a general objective was established to explore the main motivations of the independent Puerto Rican podcasters for becoming entrepreneurs and continuing with this activity. As specific objectives, we have established the following: a) categorise the motivations and observe their evolution; b) check whether the profiles of amateur creator and formalised producer exist; c) recognise whether these entrepreneurial profiles are driven by a cultural, social or symbolic alternative or, on the contrary, by an economic reason.

3. Methodology

This research has a qualitative character and is based on the interview technique which was also used by previous studies that have approached the motivations of independent podcasters (Mehendale, 2022; Millette, 2011; Taylor, 2023), and their practices (Adler Berg, 2021, 2022; García-Marín, 2020b; Rime, Francombe and Collins, 2022; Taylor, 2022; Westphal, 2022). In particular, the semi-structured interview is used as it is useful for understanding the life, behaviour and characteristics of certain social groups,

and their relationships with the environment, without spatio-temporal limitations (Cadena-Íñiguez et al., 2017; Díaz-Bravo et al., 2013). In this case, the aim is to understand in detail the motivations, decisions and behaviours of a significant group of podcasters in Puerto Rico after obtaining a frame of reference of people and situations. Therefore, this study is based on an interpretative paradigm with an inductive character and follows the procedure systematised in the literature (Howitt, 2019).

3.1. Sample of podcasters

To identify and select the sample of the 30 independent podcasters who comprise this study, a database created and previously updated from the Puerto Rico Podcast Observatory was used. This database gathers 723 independent podcasts that were active between the 1st of January 2020 and 31st of January 2021 out of a total of 1,299 podcasts registered in the Observatory at that time (Ortiz Díaz, Moreno-Moreno and Vargas, 2022). The independent podcaster is defined as having editorial and economic autonomy from any media or journalistic organisation.

Firstly, 43 podcasters were chosen to be asked if they wished to participate, and they were contacted via email and social media. They all fulfilled one or more of the following four identification and selection criteria according to the objectives of this study: a) they were still active according to the Puerto Rico Podcast Observatory as of the 16th February 2022, prior to the start of the interview process; b) their average frequency of publication was high (between 1 and 7 days), medium or low (between 15 and 45 days); c) they had been engaged in entrepreneurship at different stages of the development of podcasting (2002-present); and d) that there was a presence of women. Listening to podcasters who post at different intervals makes it possible to determine how the regularity of posting influences the parameters of production and revenue generation. The inclusion of women is justified as it widens the analysis perspective, given that the male gender continues to be the predominant gender in independent podcasting (Attig, 2020; Ortiz Díaz, Moreno-Moreno and Vargas, 2022; Shamburg, 2020; Taylor, 2023). Once the 43 invitations were sent, 13 podcasters were discarded, either because they didn't reply to the proposal, or it wasn't possible to establish a date and time to conduct the interview.

The sociodemographic profiles of the 30 people interviewed include the following variables. In terms of gender, 21 were men and 9 were women. Regarding their age, the sample of podcasters were between 20 and 75 years old, although 20 of them are concentrated around 30-47 years (eight of them between 30 and 38 years old, and twelve between 40 and 47 years old). In other words, the majority are young adults or adults. Regarding educational level, the majority have a high level of education because they completed university degrees: 9 in Communication (Cinema, Journalism, Advertising); 8 in Humanities (Drama, Literature, History, Philosophy, Art); 5 in Business Administration (Finance, Management, Human Resources); 2 in Law; 2 in Electrical Engineering; 1 in Public Health and 1 in Environmental Sciences. Only two have an intermediate level of education, having completed a technical degree. According to the data from the United States Department of Labour's Bureau of Labor Statistics from 2021, a total of 16 participants reaches the high-income level (\$63,500 or more per year, which is currently the highest salary scale in Puerto Rico), 9 podcasters generate the average income in Puerto Rico (\$38,000 per year) and 5 the lowest (\$18,000 or less).

Most of the people interviewed, 21 of them, have jobs linked in some way to technology and consider this to be one of their hobbies. Many of these socio-demographic characteristics coincide with the traits that define an independent podcaster in the literature.

Finally, in terms of the place of residency, 19 podcasters live in the metropolitan area of Puerto Rico (15 in the capital of the island, San Juan). Another 7 people reside in regions or towns of the island such as Añasco, Arecibo, Canóvanas, Juana Díaz and Naranjito. In addition, four reside in the United States, which is the justification for interviewing them via video call as some other studies have done (Rime, Pike and Collins, 2022; Taylor, 2022, 2023). Another four people were born in the United States and now live in Puerto Rico, a diasporic movement that is an important identity element in Puerto Rican culture.

Table 1 shows the 30 people participating in this study whose identity has been anonymised to respect their privacy.

Table 1. List of study participants

Podcaster	Start year of the podcast	Subject of the podcast
Podcaster 1	2010	Music
Podcaster 2	2021	Education
Podcaster 3	2018	Art

Podcaster	Start year of the podcast	Subject of the podcast
Podcaster 4	2013	The News
Podcaster 5	2014	Science
Podcaster 6	2021	Religion and spirituality
Podcaster 7	2015	TV and cinema
Podcaster 8	2008	Technology
Podcaster 9	2010	Technology
Podcaster 10	2018	Society and culture
Podcaster 11	2018	Health and physical wellbeing
Podcaster 12	2019	Technology
Podcaster 13	2020	Religion and spirituality
Podcaster 14	2018	Business
Podcaster 15	2018	TV and cinema
Podcaster 16	2019	Sport
Podcaster 17	2019	Art
Podcaster 18	2020	The News
Podcaster 19	2019	The News
Podcaster 20	2018	Sport
Podcaster 21	2018	Business
Podcaster 22	2018	Education
Podcaster 23	2019	Sport
Podcaster 24	2017	The News
Podcaster 25	2018	Education
Podcaster 26	2002	Society and culture
Podcaster 27	2018	Comedy
Podcaster 28	2014	Comedy
Podcaster 29	2018	TV and cinema
Podcaster 30	2019	TV and cinema

Source: own elaboration

3.2. Semi-structured questionnaire

A semi-structured questionnaire was developed to explore the everyday experience of independent podcasters as a social group or community in different times and spaces (Cadena-Iñiguez et al., 2017). The three thematic blocks of the script used in the interviews correspond to the following variables of analysis: a) general data on the podcast, b) main motivations for starting and continuing as a podcaster, and c) type of entrepreneurship (forms of capital). Firstly, establishing the general data of the podcast helps to define the essential elements of the type of communication offered by each podcaster. Secondly, tracing the evolution of the motivations of each podcaster allows us to delimit the effects of these decisions in the personal field (freedom of expression, creative autonomy, etc.), in the virtual community (interaction) and in the context of the market (impact on the audience, monetisation, etc.). Thirdly, and finally, specifying the types of entrepreneurship makes it possible to establish the forms of capital generated (economic, social, cultural or symbolic) and, more specifically, to see if "platformisation" influences them. The specific description of these three analysis variables can be seen in table 2.

Therefore, the variety of responses that informants attributed to the key issues determined how podcasters' motivations evolve, and whether different forms of capital (economic, social, cultural and symbolic) are observed according to the profiles of amateur creator and formalised producer. These were processed and analysed to establish the results.

3.3. Conducting the interviews and analysis with ATLAS.ti

The semi-structured interviews were conducted in person or via video call, separately, from the 16th of March to the 6th of May 2022. They had an average duration of 45 to 60 minutes and were then transliterated from the 8th to 28th May 2022. The 30 interviews are considered to reach a "saturation point" (Díaz-Bravo et al., 2013) appropriate to the objectives of this exploratory research. Before conducting the interview, the participants were informed of the purpose of the study and were asked for permission to record the audio of the interview. Informed consent has been obtained and signed by all 30 people.

Subsequently, the responses to the interviews were analysed with ATLAS.ti software (version 23). It is one of the most relevant computer-assisted qualitative analysis software for categorised, coded and sorted results. The categorisation and codification process was carried out according to the guide by Lopezosa, Codina and Freixa (2022). Firstly, the transcriptions of the interviews were imported to the ATLAS.ti programme in Word format and then 29 codes were determined. Of these 29 codes, 9 of them resulted in 43 sub-codes. All of them were determined manually and in coordination with the thematic blocks of the questionnaire. Finally, between the 31st of January and the 23rd of February 2023, we classified the statements in each one of the 30 transcriptions that were imported to the software using the codes and sub-codes.

Table 2. Thematic blocks of the questionnaire and codes in ATLAS.ti

Analysis variables	Thematic blocks of the questionnaire	Codes in ATLAS.ti	Frequency
General data of the podcast	Title		
	Subject		
	Duration	Regularity of publication	13
	Publication frequency of episodes	Production	6
	Time spent as a podcaster	Followers	12
Initial and current motivations		Freedom of expression	23
		Skills development	33
		Virtual community	21
		Demonstrate expertise	7
	Creative or content	Entertainment	18
	Personal, Interpersonal	Web space	24
	Technological or media	Evolution	10
	Process or innovation	Personal expression	21
	Economic	Impact on Audience	23
	To continue being active in podcasting	Interaction	15
		Current motivation	20
		Main initial motivation	30
		Secondary motivation	29
	Motivation for continuing	28	

Analysis variables	Thematic blocks of the questionnaire	Codes in ATLAS.ti	Frequency
Types of entrepreneurship	Forms of capital generated: economic, social, cultural, symbolic	Audience	22
		Forms of capital	40
	Production and publication based on aspects of forms of capital	Exclusivity contract with platforms	3
		Amateur creator	
	Funding channels	Entrepreneurship	20
		Income	36
	Economic collaboration of the audience	Monetisation	22
	Podcasting as a paid job	Business	23
	Motivations for changing the initial type of entrepreneurship	Patreon	11
		Formalised	7
	Producer	10	
	Paid work	10	
	Funding channels	28	
	Influence of "platformisation" on the freedom of expression and creative autonomy		

Source: own elaboration.

The thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews allows us to delve into the common and differential aspects of the decisions and behaviours of the independent podcasters.

4. Analysis of results

4.1. Technological, personal and creative motivations for entrepreneurship

Most of the people interviewed started podcasting mainly for motivations in three categories: technological or media, personal, and creative or content (24 cases out of 30). Thirty responses were associated with the code "main initial motivation", of which eight were categorised with the sub-code "technological", eight with the sub-code "personal" and eight with the sub-code "content". The culture of listening to the radio and podcasts influenced those who started for technological or media reasons (8 cases). Some of them collaborated in radio programmes in the country, although their podcasts have always been disconnected from media companies (3 cases). Podcasting proved to be a new medium to serve Puerto Ricans in the diaspora: "Half of my audience is outside Puerto Rico, and I'm their media for Puerto Rico, I'm their way of staying up to date with what's happening" (podcaster 19). Curiosity about the technological and communicative nature of podcasting also encouraged podcaster 8, who is blind, to share reviews of electronic devices adapted for this community: "Since my podcast is about technologies for blind people, it made sense for me to create information that was in audio format" (podcaster 8).

Regarding personal motivations, the importance of having one's own voice was a reason highlighted through the codes "web space" (24 responses), "freedom of expression" (23 responses) and "personal expression" (21 responses), particularly by feeling able to talk about the issue at hand. There is also the motivation to give a voice to other people, including their colleagues:

I wanted the people who worked in the industry that I work in (film) to have a voice [...] because people in Puerto Rico don't know the great stories that these people have and the number of films they have made (podcaster 7).

Improving or developing conversational skills and techniques such as sound editing were other personal motivations. Of 33 responses labelled "skills development", 11 relate to achieving effective communication and 11 relate to learning how to use audio editing software. Podcaster 18 said: "Doing all these little things myself, creating the intro, the pauses, doing the audio myself, uploading it to the computer and the networks, all this production technology for me is something I learned". However, some of these skills may come from obligation: "I've been forced to, but if I had the money to pay someone to edit for me I would probably pay them because I don't like it. I do it because it's part of the process" (podcaster 20).

Furthermore, another relevant personal motivation is for entertainment purposes (18 responses). However, the podcast might not represent a hobby: "It's entertaining when you get creative, but I see it more as a social responsibility" (podcaster 10). In this sense, the effort involved in driving the space forward was highlighted: "For me, the podcast is a job and I mean that in all senses. I'm sacrificing an

hour and a half of spending time with my partner, in which time I create the content, edit it and upload it" (podcaster 20). Finally, promoting Puerto Rican identity abroad is another significant personal reason. Podcaster 26, a university professor and writer, wanted to develop an educational and social project on a larger scale: "What I was aiming for was to take what I do in a classroom to thousands of listeners". In this way, he projects Puerto Rico, as "We are outstanding in all fields. That's why, in my podcast, you will see that I talk about literature, art, music, government, politics" (podcaster 26).

Regarding creative or content motivations, podcasters mentioned the interest in dealing with topics they are passionate about, filling a thematic gap in podcasting in Spanish, expanding the content covered in a personal blog, and promoting the career of independent artists outside mainstream culture (8 cases). Podcaster 23 explained it as follows: "I really like to help the independent artist, the one who doesn't have the means, doesn't have the voice, the one who won't be interviewed (in the traditional media) because it's not business" (podcaster 23). For podcaster 27, an actress and drama teacher, she wanted "to create a space for female comedians", which is neglected by the Puerto Rican media. Among the female podcasters interviewed (9 cases), some of them considered that their participation is important for the representation of women in the media sphere (4 cases). Podcaster 17 underlined the personal need that she felt to ensure there is a female presence and also a presence of the LGBT community because "that representation for me is really important" (podcaster 17). On the other hand, others pointed out that rather than dealing with issues outside mainstream culture, they talk about the same issues but handle them in other ways: in more depth and without responding to the interests of advertisers or sponsors (8 cases). The code "demonstrate expertise" or mastery of the subject which they are passionate about was associated with 7 responses. In the case of podcaster 12, demonstrating mastery of the subject matter to their audience is a strategy: "sharing what I know is my content marketing strategy to get people to sponsor my service".

Only a few participants referred directly to interpersonal motivations (6 cases). This involved impacting the audience, spending production time with co-moderator friends and being part of a virtual community. The connection with the audience and the sense of community was observed in 23 comments catalogued under "impact on audience" and 20 under "virtual community". Podcaster 27 was the only one to cite some financial motivation for getting started, but this was secondary rather than primary, as "trying to make money from a podcast is difficult". Nobody declared process or innovation motivations either.

4.2. Towards a financial motivation

The monetisation of independent podcasting is a recent concern in Puerto Rico which coincides with the third stage of development (2015-present). This concern is observed in the responses recognised under the codes "funding channels" (28), 'monetisation' (23), 'income' (22), 'business' (11) and 'paid work' (10). None of the 30 people interviewed were economically motivated entrepreneurs, but most of them are currently exploring specific funding channels (21 cases). For example, after 20 years of activity, podcaster 26 states that he continues mainly for reasons linked to forms of social and cultural capital but generates some income from the sale of books he has authored, which he then invests in production. Only a few people aren't generating economic capital (9 cases). Specifically, podcaster 8 has never wanted to monetise his work and continues to be a social entrepreneur after 14 years.

The interest in making the podcast profitable is particularly reflected in a group of 6 podcasters who now claim to have a main economic motivation (see table 3) after starting up between 2014 and 2019.

Table 3. Evolution of the motivations of the Puerto Rican independent podcasters who were analysed

Motivation	Initial	Current
Technological or media	8 cases	5 cases
Personal	8 cases	7 cases
Creative or content	8 cases	7cases
Interpersonal	6 cases	5 cases
Economic	0 cases	6 cases
Process or innovation	0 cases	0 cases

Source: own elaboration.

Podcasters who value some form of monetisation perceive tensions between safeguarding the creative, cultural and social interest and the decision to earn an income. These are the cases of podcaster 7 and podcaster 28, who mentioned the sale of online financial consultancy services or business entrepreneurship services, and crowdfunding at different membership levels on the Patreon platform. In contrast, others did not note tensions between the different forms of capital since they had created a business within their community. Podcaster 14 started in 2018 inspired by listening to podcasts and is now motivated by the self-sustaining business that has sprung up around her venture. Through online consulting she helps her clients to become entrepreneurs. She says:

My business is the main sponsor of the podcast[...] People hear that I'm a virtual educator through the podcast [...] The podcast for me is the widest part of the funnel, that's where people enter and reach my free virtual platforms [...]. From there, those who are interested are passed on, until customers are formed (podcaster 14).

In another case, podcaster 21 started in 2018 because of a drive to "communicate and connect with a community" and is currently focused on "the benefits I see for my online business". This online business is designed to create and boost the podcasts of the people who stumble across the one she hosts daily, who then become her customers: "I wasn't sure if I was going to monetise it or not. It all came about in a way that was unexpected for me. Although I always knew that if you worked with a community, it's a consequence (to monetise)" (podcaster 21).

In addition, other podcasters are using crowdfunding at different membership levels. The sub-code "pay per subscription" was related in 8 responses. Podcaster 19 works with Patreon and, in 2019, started to create content for his current podcast from the experience of having been a podcaster. The main motivation for getting involved in the media 15 years ago was for entertainment purposes. Nowadays, the economic factor motivates him to continue: "We opened a Patreon as the pandemic started and we have an average of 600 to 700 people who pay different levels of subscription and it generates about \$5,500 per month, which we split in half" (podcaster 19). Patreon also allows the creation of extra content based on the podcast. Podcaster 30 started in 2018 and was motivated by meeting people, but now she follows this strategy to receive some kind of financial benefit:

I didn't expect that we'd be able to monetise the podcast, but now that we're doing it, I'm extremely grateful for this extra income. So, you do have to keep an eye on Patreon and look for something interesting to talk to the audience about because they are supporting us (financially) (podcaster 30).

Another platform that podcasters use is YouTube. Podcaster 7 started his podcast in 2015 thanks to his personal motivation to give a voice to colleagues in the film industry and has now added the option of monetising video podcasts.

Finally, some podcasters also organise live events. Podcaster 28 is a professional in the world of cinema who hasn't lost the personal motivation that he had in 2014 of taking comedy to the podcast community. These days his space has sometimes become a "Late Night Show" with interactions with the public. In this way, he manages advertising, box office sales and merchandising or selling products related to the podcast. He is committed to this business strategy because:

If you do a live presentation and you're charging admission, you monetise. If you already have sponsors or ads on the podcast, you monetise more because you sell to the customer that the ad will be live that night and that it will also be recorded for the podcast. If you have merchandise, you can also sell it at the event (podcaster 28).

However, the holding of live events is not a widespread activity (the sub code "events" was associated with 3 responses, provided by podcasters 14, 27 and 28).

4.3. Amateur creator and formalised producer

Most of the people interviewed were categorised under the amateur creator profile (20 responses). In this profile, there are those who have implemented some form of financing, even if they have little income and this is not their main motivation (11 cases). These podcasters invest the income earned for the benefit of the podcast, mostly in technical equipment to improve audio quality or in editing software. In addition, they prioritise the quality of the content over the regularity of posting episodes. They understand that regularity is necessary to build audience and loyalty but consider that quality has an impact on engagement. The profile of amateur creator also encompasses those who have never been interested in generating economic capital (9 cases). The specific behaviour of this group of 9 amateur creators is reflected in the word cloud (13 nouns) generated from the frequency of repetition of terms in their responses (see Figure 1, left).

This is why amateur creators are often the only ones to generate social and cultural capital. Podcaster 17, for example, brings both forms of capital as she has created collaborative agreements with universities to use her weekly podcast as part of their Design course syllabus. Among the reasons for not monetising, we highlight podcaster 20. He thinks that it is unfair for followers to have to pay a subscription: "We've had class discussions because Patreon usually offers additional content to people who pay and that's been my problem" (podcaster 20).

Figure 1. Word clouds created with ATLAS.ti



Source: own elaboration.

On the other hand, the profile of the formalised producer promotes economic capital even if this wasn't their main motivation at the start (10 cases, 3 of them collaborate in the media). In other words, these podcasters want to monetise the product they create. However, not all cases achieve the same level of income. A group of 5 podcasters do not get paid for making their podcast, although they have conceptualised a small business. For example, podcaster 4 has a main job with which he funds his podcast: "I don't invest in my podcast expecting that in a year's time I will have the same amount I invested plus \$1000 profit. It may be a bad business model, but for me the product comes first and if I can subsidise it, I do" (podcaster 4).

In contrast, another group of 5 podcasters have consolidated businesses around their podcasts which have become their main jobs. The decisions of this group of 5 formalised producers are evidenced in the word cloud (13 nouns) which includes the most frequently used terms "business", "work" and "audience"(see Figure 1, right). For example, three women use their spaces to gain interest from potential clients for their online consultation and education businesses. Podcaster 21 explains: "I've worked with sponsors, but now my podcast is mainly focused on selling/offering my services, in directing people to my sales funnel" (podcaster 21). Podcasters 7 and 12 have paid staff. It's something that they have achieved over time, according to podcaster 12:

I started with the objective of learning and of helping others. Then I said to myself, 'huh, I'm going to dedicate more time to this, I have to create something that makes money, not only for me, but for the team as well' (podcaster 12).

Likewise, podcaster 7 has an audiovisual recording studio and an online network which hosts 17 podcasts. He has established a revenue model to provide them with the physical and virtual production and performance space in exchange for a percentage of the revenue they generate.

All the participants consider that they work under almost professional standards using the knowledge and resources available.

5. Discussion and conclusions

This article makes two main contributions to the literature. First, independent podcasting theory is further developed by relating Bourdieu's (1986, 2000) sociological perspective of forms of capital to the categories of podcasters' motivations (Markman, 2011; Markman and Sawyer, 2014). Secondly, using a qualitative empirical approach, we explore the main motivations to start and continue podcasting of a relevant group of independent podcasters in Puerto Rico. A total of 30 semi-structured interviews were carried out from the 16th of March to the 6th of May 2022 which were subsequently electronically and semi-automatically coded with the qualitative analysis program ATLAS.ti. More specifically, we delved into the qualitative aspects of their motivations, decisions and behaviours in order to observe the evolution of their activity and to recognise whether this trajectory reflects forms of social, cultural, symbolic or economic capital.

This research finds that most of the Puerto Rican podcasters surveyed were driven by technological or media, personal, and creative or content motivations (response to RQ1). The 30 statements coded under "main initial motivation" were related to 8 responses associated with the sub-code "technological", 8 with the sub-code "personal" and 8 with the sub-code "content". These 24 responses show similar reasons for starting in the world of independent podcasting as those indicated by previous studies (Markman, 2011; Markman and Sawyer, 2014; Taylor, 2023). The culture of listening to the radio and podcasts and the curiosity to discover new communication technologies were the main technological reasons. Likewise, demonstrating knowledge on a specialised topic and improving conversational skills were personal motives, as well as the relevant particularity of having one's own voice in Puerto Rican culture and asserting oneself abroad, giving a voice to professional colleagues or experts, and entertaining oneself. In particular, having one's own voice was highlighted through the codes "web space" (24 responses), "freedom of expression" (23 responses) and "personal expression" (21 responses). There is a certain subculture of podcasting on the island that shares values, hobbies, experiences and creates tension with the dominant culture (Millette, 2011), without forgetting the entertainment aspect (18 responses). The podcasters studied were also creatively motivated to promote independent artists and content from approaches that differed from mainstream and advertising interests. These performances also entail the interpersonal motivations of audience connection and sense of community that were reflected in the codes "audience impact" (23 responses) and "virtual community" (21 responses). As in previous research, the aim is to be part of a recognised virtual community (Markman, 2011; Markman and Sawyer, 2014; Mehendale, 2022; Taylor, 2023). None of the participants reported economic, process and innovation motivations for starting their podcast.

Therefore, the main motivations of the independent Puerto Rican podcasters considered in this study are related over time with a form of produsage (Bruns, 2008) and with social, cultural and symbolic forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986, 2000). In other words, they seek their own identity (Adler Berg, 2022). Of the 40 responses coded under "forms of capital", 36 were associated with the sub-codes "cultural", "social" and "symbolic", while only 4 were related to the sub-code "economic". However, it is noticeable that the recent decisions of the podcasters analysed also contribute to the cultural tensions caused by the business models of "platformisation" (Adler Berg, 2021; Rime, Pike and Collins, 2022). As previous studies have shown (Markman and Sawyer, 2014), the economic motivation to monetise the podcast and, consequently, the need to have a greater impact on and interact with the audience (interpersonal motives) have gained some prominence since 2015 (response to RQ2). This is evident in the mentions of the codes "monetisation" (23 responses), "impact audience" (23 responses) and "interaction" (15 responses). Perhaps this explains why many interviewees explored funding channels to generate some financial capital to reinvest in the podcast (21 cases), while remaining true to their initial motivations (technological, personal and creative). During the third stage of podcasts (2015-present), one group of podcasters in particular claims to have a primary economic motivation (6 cases out of 30). This group evolves towards business logics by deciding to manage advertising, sponsorship and crowdfunding of different membership levels. They are formalised producers (Sullivan, 2018) who have implemented sustainable finance models around their own communities and also in the United States, Denmark or Spain (Adler Berg, 2022; Montero Carretero, 2022; Sullivan, 2018, 2019). In Puerto Rico, it is also noted that some independent podcasters increasingly value monetisation in their production practices (Westphal, 2022), but only a few link this to a "form of economic capital".

In any case, the independent podcasters of Puerto Rico examined in this study continue generating social, cultural and symbolic capital more than economic capital (response to RQ3). As is the case in other countries such as Australia (Jorgensen, 2021), this is the type of entrepreneurship which characterises the profile of an amateur creator (20 cases). In particular, one group of these podcasters has never been interested in monetisation (9 cases) and their motivations are focused on personal and creative or content aspects (see Figure 1, word cloud). In fact, several of them aim to raise awareness of the cultural and social identity of Puerto Ricans (podcaster 26), cater to future generations (podcasters 3, 16 and 26), and fill a thematic void on the island (podcasters 1 and 16). Although, another group of amateur creators does generate economic capital through advertising, brand services or sponsorship, merchandising or selling articles related to the podcast and crowdfunding through different membership levels despite not having a primary economic motivation (11 cases). On the other hand, the motivations of the formalised producer profile are more often linked to the market dynamic and generating economic capital (10 cases). Converting independent podcasting into a sustainable full-time job is a motivation that has been highlighted by previous studies (Adler Berg, 2021; Markman and Sawyer, 2014). For now, in Puerto Rico, some formalised producers are earning a supplementary income (5 cases) using avenues also tried by amateur creators. Others have achieved full-time paid work (5 cases) through the sale of online consulting and educational services, subscription-based payment, brand sponsorships and live events for their community (produsage culture). This last group of podcasters or entrepreneurial sub-profile, who have made podcasting their main source of income, more frequently stated the words "business", "work" and "audience" (see Figure 1, word cloud).

Table 4 summarises the characteristics of amateur creators and formalised producers.

Table 4. Independent podcaster profiles

Amateur Creator	Formalised producer
+ initial motivation for aspects of participatory culture	- evolution of initial motivation for aspects of participatory nature
+ citizen entrepreneurship	+ strengthening of citizen empowerment
- social recognition in the face of mainstream media	+ social recognition in the face of mainstream media
- possibility of influencing public opinion and audiences	+ possibility of influencing public opinion and audiences
- production of economic and symbolic capital	+ production of economic and symbolic capital
+ cultural and social entrepreneurship	+ economic entrepreneurship
- capacity to convert podcasting into a paid job	+ capacity to convert podcasting into a paid job
- commercial and business interest and organisationl	+ commercial and business interest and organisation
- control of personal expression	+ control of personal expression

Source: own elaboration.

In summary, the independent Puerto Rican podcasters analysed in this study can be considered as cultural and social entrepreneurs who promote alternative forms of capital (Jorgensen, 2021). However, the recent economic motivation of some formalised producers breaks the authenticity of an unrestricted and free medium of conversation to create relationships (Adler Berg, 2022; Rime, Pike and Collins, 2022). Despite this, the passion and recognition of being an alternative medium to mainstream awareness is a motivation for entrepreneurship, while managing a community is a key motivation to continue (Mehendale, 2022). The sense of community continues to be a social value (Taylor, 2023).

Finally, this exploratory study has two main limitations. As this is a small-scale qualitative study, the results cannot be extrapolated to independent podcasting in Puerto Rico as a whole. Moreover, only the semi-structured interview technique has been used, although the sample corresponds to 30 participants.

Future research on the Puerto Rican case could extend to participant observation and qualitative content analysis of podcasts to delve into podcasters' motivations (Jorgensen, 2021) and their practices (Adler Berg, 2021, 2022; García-Marín, 2022; Taylor, 2022), or into the uniqueness of their discourse. These future studies will contribute to redefining a cultural reality that is in continuous transformation.

6. Contributions

Contributions	Authors
Study conception and design	Author 2 and Author 1
Documentary search	Author 2
Methodology	Author 2 and Author 1
Data collection	Author 1
Critical analysis/ interpretation of data	Author 1, Author 2
Writing–original draft	Author 1, Author 2
Revision and approval of versions	Author 2 and Author 1

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The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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