Moving Mindsets Innovation Lab

Finding Openings for Change: What the Media Landscape Reveals About Gender, Care & Families

FRAME WORKS

What is the Moving Mindsets Innovation Lab?

The Moving Mindsets Innovation Lab is a multi-year effort to develop and test innovative narrative strategies that counter harmful cultural ideas driving inequality.

Housekeeping

- We are recording today’s session. You will receive the recording and supporting materials via email.
- Please remove all AI notetakers.
- There will be time for Q&A at the end of the presentation. Please use the Q&A function at the bottom of Zoom.
- Please use the chat to introduce yourself and talk with other participants.

Today's Speakers



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Finding Openings for Change: What the Media Landscape Reveals About Gender, Care & Families

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Senior Researcher

FRAME WORKS

September 9, 2026
Moving Mindsets Innovation Lab: Gender, Care, Families

Agenda

Research overview

Defining narrative for research purposes

Finding 1: The *War on Western Civilization* narrative

Finding 2: Narratives that individualize care

Narrative opportunities

Future research

Research Overview

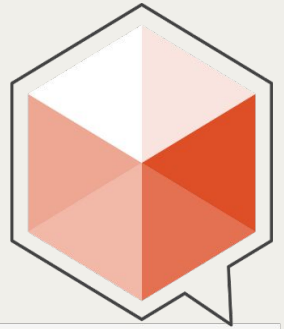
- What are the features of narratives about gender, care and families on social media, TV, and podcasts?

Research Overview

- What are the features of narratives about gender, care and families on social media, TV, and podcasts?

- Qualitative analysis
  - 140 pieces of content
    - Facebook, Reddit, YouTube, and TikTok
    - Top 50 TV shows of 2025
    - Top 50 podcasts of 2025

Narrative I Story



	Definition	Example
Narratives	Are templates: recurring patterns of meaning that cut across stories and tie them together	A *template*. In the “bootstraps narrative,” an individual down on their luck struggles to overcome obstacles, but beats the odds and succeeds.
Story	Are tales about particular events and people; may be true or fictional	A *telling*. In the TV show Empire, a family rises from poverty to become executives in a successful record company.

Findings

1

Conservatives are weaving a coherent story **explaining our current crisis, who is to blame, and what needs to be done:**
the *War on Western Civilization* narrative.

War on Western Civilization narrative

Typical plot

In the last few decades, the nuclear family and traditional gender roles—bedrocks of American society—have been under attack by people of color, feminists, the left, and LGBTQ people.

The *War on Western Civilization* narrative is a far-right attempt to weaponize genuine dissatisfaction with a truly unequal status quo.

The *War on Western Civilization* **narrative is advanced by two narratives:**

The *War on Masculinity* **and the** *War on the Family*

The *War on Masculinity* narrative

Typical plot

In the last few decades, young men have been systematically disadvantaged and emasculated in key sectors of society, especially education and the workplace, by feminists and the left.

The *War on the Family* narrative

Typical plot

The white nuclear family is under attack from the left.

War on Masculinity and *War on the Family* | TikTok



1

Our takeaways

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War on Masculinity and ***War on the Family*** distort reality but carry emotional resonance.

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Progressive narratives about care, gender, and families have yet to saturate media ecosystems.

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War on Masculinity and ***War on the Family*** distort reality but carry emotional resonance.

Big-picture progressive narratives about care, gender, and families have yet to saturate media ecosystems.

None of the progressive narratives we found match The ***War on Western Civilization's*** scale and cohesiveness.

2

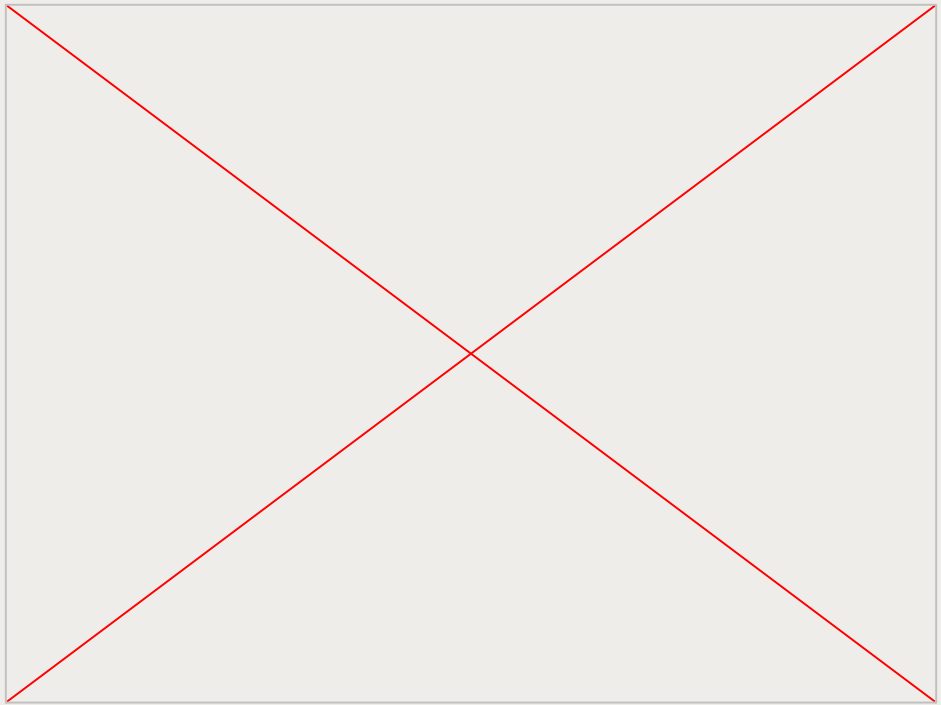
Narratives that individualize care are widespread, effectively concealing the structural inequities in caregiving.

The *Family Cares for Family* narrative

Typical plot

A family member, typically a woman, cares for their loved one(s).

The *Family Cares for Family* narrative | TikTok



2

The *Self-Care for Caregivers* narrative

Typical plot

A person experiences the toll of caregiving. They take time away from care work to address their own physical, emotional, or mental health needs.

The *Self-Care for Caregivers* narrative | Podcast

“I was so happy on days when Lauren made the choice that she didn't have to go see her mother…that's her prioritizing her own mental health. And she's not abandoning her mother. She sees them all the time[...] and if you talk about brain health, your brain health, you know, when there is a genetic, you know, predisposition, it becomes increasingly more important for the family members of people with Alzheimer's to focus on self-care for their longevity.

Seth Rogen

IMO with Michelle Obama and Craig Robinson

“Caretakers Need to Care for Themselves”

2

Our takeaways

Narratives that individualize care naturalize inequality by justifying the privatization of caregiving.

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Narratives that individualize care naturalize the privatization of caregiving.

Progressive societal-level narratives about care have not yet saturated media ecosystems.

Narrative Opportunities

People are looking for new ways to make sense of social problems. They are also looking for new solutions.

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We can meet this demand for big-picture narratives by advancing more expansive approaches to gender, care, and families along with systemic solutions that help everyone.

People are at a collective breaking point under the strain of caregiving.

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We can amplify counternarratives that reimagine caregiving as a collective process, involving robust support from government institutions.

Racism underpins conservative narratives that blame social problems on marginalized communities.

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We can amplify narratives that counter white supremacy from the anti-racist struggle dating back to the abolition movement.

Online engagement can fulfill men’s desire for purpose and connection.

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We can create a new sense of belonging for cis men by amplifying narratives grounded in alternative visions of masculinity and a shared fight for a better future.

What is the big-picture story you tell about how we ended up where we are and what we need to do to fix it?

Please respond in the chat!

What’s next for our research?

Thank You!

EXPANDING CARE, QUESTIONING RELATIONS

Forward Together's Approach to Combatting Harmful Narratives on Family and Caregiving

FORWARD TOGETHER



SHIFTING MINDSETS

- QTBIPOC have and continue to create networks of care that nurture safety and belonging
- Care is not scarce. Individualism within this context is a false narrative.
- Care is the resource; family is the container. We are each others' keepers.



FAMILY, CAREGIVING, AND REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE

- QTBIPOC have defied attacks on body sovereignty and made it a point to self-determine our own futures, including if, when, how, and with whom we choose to make a family.
- Our approach is that we are building care networks in real-time with our constituencies. We are identifying nontraditional, third spaces (digitally and in-person) for QTBIPOC communities to share stories, test ideas, and create art that reflects our lived experiences.



NEW VISIONS

"Family should be an abundant texture felt like the wind in the air, but it's been packaged and sold. Entangled in a societal need for legibility–to standardize experience and capture care. It's never been neutral. It's been captured by syntax and imbued with symbolism. Our job is to bring humanity back to collective integration, to life. To expand the limits of our imaginations of family beyond what it should look like and towards an expansive and abundant experiential model. An embodied feeling of family beyond legibility. We need to call ourselves back to modalities of care that preceded the colonial invention of family as a unit. We must radically re-envision how we relate to one another..."
– L'lerrét Jazelle, "Kin or 'To Kin'"



BEYOND / BINARIES

- Kinship Kickback - An informal focus group where we shared stories and tested language. We learned how QTBIPOC are talking about and [re]shaping identity to/with[in] family and caregiving structures
- New Visions - We continue to socialize and make more accessible this living anthology as an intervention for "nontraditional" families.





FORWARD TOGETHER

EXPANDING CARE, QUESTIONING RELATIONS







MAPPING MASCULINITIES IN THE AGE OF THE INTERNET

EQUIMUNDO'S LENS ON NARRATIVE CHANGE

equimundo

SEPTEMBER 2026

Young men are looking for a way forward in an uncertain world.



65% of men in the U.S. agree that "**no one really knows me**"

48% say their **online lives are more engaging** and rewarding than their offline lives

52% 18-23 year old men most likely to say **feminism has made the US worse off**

equimundo

Equimundo: State of American Men 2023

The aspirations are healthy. The stories around how to achieve them are up for grabs.









86%

of men chose "**provider**" as the top trait they should have

77%

of women chose "**provider**" as the top trait a man should have

THEIR SOCIETAL EXPECTATIONS OFTEN DON'T MEET THEIR ECONOMIC REALITY

SOCIAL EXPECTATION

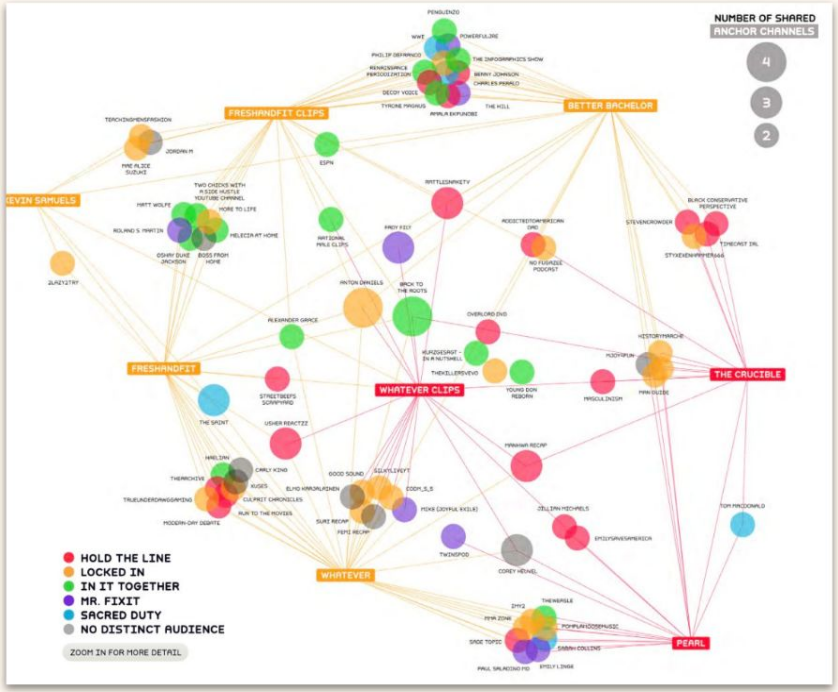
Be financially successful. Provide.

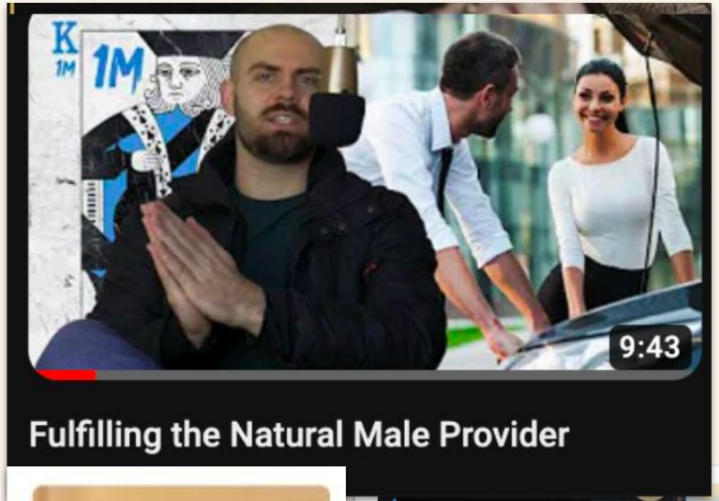
ECONOMIC REALITY

That pathway feels increasingly difficult.

NARRATIVE OPENING

Someone gets to explain why.


NUMBER OF SHARED ANCHOR CHANNELS
4
3
2
FRESHANDFIT CLIPS
BETTER BACHELOR
FRESHANDFIT
WHATEVER CLIPS
THE CRUCIBLE
WHATEVER
PEARL
HOLD THE LINE
LOCKED IN
IN IT TOGETHER
MR. FIXIT
SACRED DUTY
NO DISTINCT AUDIENCE
ZOOM IN FOR MORE DETAIL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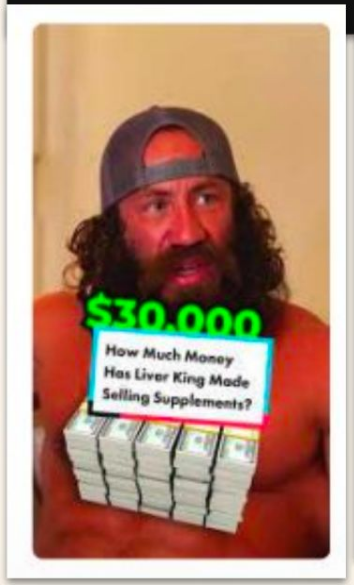
Fulfilling the Natural Male Provider


THE BRIDGE
Why You Should Never Get Back With Your Ex ...
47K views


$30,000
How Much Money Has Liver King Made Selling Supplements?


Includes paid promotion
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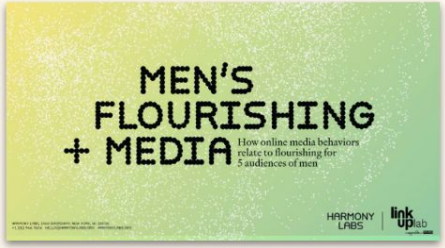
"Feminism is Wrecking Women" Michael & The Alpha Mentor | Justin Waller
Michael Knowles
2.28M subscribers
Subscribe
10K
Share


MEN'S FLOURISHING + MEDIA
How online media behaviors relate to flourishing for 5 audiences of men
HARMONY LABS
link Up lab

The narrative opportunity is much bigger than a singular manosphere “rabbit hole.”

Gender grievance content has a negative impact on men themselves.

8×

Decrease broadening emotions

Content close to the “Manosphere” anchor channels significantly reduces constructive and broadening perspectives.

3×

Increase narrowing emotions

Three times more likely to fuel narrowing mindsets and systematically decrease flourishing beliefs.

Harmful narratives sit inside a much bigger mainstream content ecosystem.

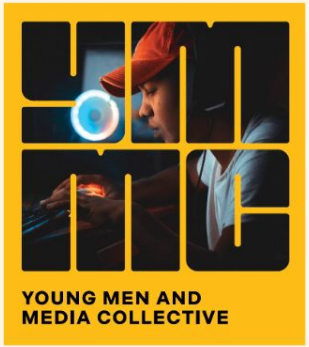
1k×

Greater reach than grievance channels

The surrounding mainstream channel networks have vastly wider reach than the eight anchor channels.

We're building the supply side of healthier narratives.

The goal isn't more content from Equimundo's accounts. It's more credible messengers telling better stories.







100M

Young Men Reach

YMMC: Test What Works

9 "test and learn" projects

- **Gaming:** Training streamers to model healthier masculinity from within.
- **Trades:** Using humor to reach young men in construction communities.
- **Creator "Hype" Houses:** Utilizing existing audiences of micro creators for in-person, real-time testing labs.

Open Range: Network for Scale

Exploring the myth of the American cowboy

A creative retreat for 20 macro creators that takes the classic archetype of the cowboy — strong, silent, self-sufficient, and invulnerable — and uses it as a strategic starting point to explore and tell more expansive, healthy stories of manhood.

Thank You!