

MEN'S FLOURISHING + MEDIA

How online media behaviors
relate to flourishing for
5 audiences of men

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Concern about men's media behavior is widespread.

There's worry about online influencers peddling misogyny and retrograde masculinities, a so-called manosphere. See Louis Theroux's documentary *Into the Manosphere*. There's worry about problematic porn usage, and how it associates with depression and anxiety and sexual and relationship dysfunction. There's gamer culture, with its well-documented misogynies, and, more generally, social media and its affect on men's mental health, body image, body modification, eating behavior, and more.

Underlying this concern is a feeling that men are not OK.

There's also a fear that, when men are not OK, they may choose to work it out with dominance, control, and violence: violence against women, violence against other men. This threatens everyone's flourishing. Peace, harmony, and prosperity retreat, on the scale of individual relationships and households, and on the scale of nations. And the slow, steady progress toward gender equality enjoyed in many places in the world flags.

There is truth in these concerns, feelings, and fears.

Flourishing is out of reach for too many men today, and this can lead to a sense of grievance. But it's also out of reach for too many women.

What stands out to us from our research is just how similar men and women are, overall, in how they perceive flourishing and their capacity to realize it. It's not that one gender or the other is doing emotion, connection, or some other thing wrong, which requires fixing. Rather, each gender is experiencing gaps in their flourishing, which they respond to and seek support for in different ways, including through media and online engagement.

In the report that follows, we focus on men in the U.S., contextualized in relationship to women, in order to understand how they perceive and experience their own flourishing, their own identities, relationships, and responsibilities; how they engage with media that represents, complicates, and contributes to their flourishing; and what this means for people and organizations wanting to support men in their journey toward a more loving, equal future.

Harmony Labs partnered with LinkUp Lab
to map *audiences of men online*:

how they *participate in media cultures*;
relate to different *masculinities*;
and see *themselves, relationships, communities*;

+ how this contributes to their flourishing.

MIXED METHODS OVERVIEW

To map audiences along key tensions in flourishing baselines, attitudes, values, media behaviors, and more, we used a combination of survey, opt-in media panel data, and content testing.

The study period for our streaming media and porn analysis was June through December 2025. The YouTube analysis study period was January through December 2025. Our survey fielded in the third quarter of 2025. We conducted content testing between December 2025 and February 2026. [Read more methods.](#)

OPT-IN MEDIA PANEL

300K

PEOPLE IN THE U.S.

MEDIA BEHAVIOR AND
CONTENT ANALYSIS FROM:

- STREAMING
- YOUTUBE
- MOBILE
- DESKTOP
- PORN

842

STREAMING TITLES
ANALYZED

27K

YOUTUBE CHANNEL
NETWORK

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF A
NATIONALLY REPRESENTATIVE

3,000

PERSON SURVEY

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF

10

OPEN-ENDED SURVEY RESPONSES

40

VIDEOS CLIPS EVALUATED FOR
FLOURISHING BELIEF AGREEMENT
AND EMOTIONAL EFFECTS ON

13K

PEOPLE IN RANDOMIZED
CONTROL-STYLE TESTING

KEY INSIGHTS

*Flourishing dimensions and how men and women relate to them and to media;
some features of men's media; 5 audiences of men and how they engage with porn,
and with “manosphere” content on YouTube + how it affects them.*

5 BELIEFS SIGNAL FLOURISHING FOR WOMEN AND MEN

Flourishing is a well-researched psychometric concept. In a [2021 paper](#), Ekman and Simon-Thomas define it as “an overarching quality of life, ‘the good life,’ grounded in everyday connection, positivity, and resilience . . . key to lifelong health and well-being.”

To represent flourishing in our study, we landed on 5 beliefs that capture the needs and tensions people of all gender identities experience with respect to living their best lives. We use these beliefs as a narrative goal to evaluate whether and how media moves men in the “right” direction.

Our baseline survey identified gaps of 5+ points between men and women on two dimensions of flourishing: bridging (men +5) and mutuality (women +7).



MORE ON FLOURISHING CORRELATES

We tested agreement among men and women with concepts correlated and more or less central to our five dimensions of flourishing. The chart to the right lists them in order of descending centrality.

The biggest differences between men and women are around turning to close friends for support (women +24) and being comfortable asking for support (women +15), highlighted yellow.

Having kids is another area of significant difference. On average men are 12+ higher in associating having and raising kids with the good life, and 2+ higher in seeing supporting a family or community as a life path, highlighted green.

		WOMEN AGREEMENT	MEN AGREEMENT	M-F DIFFERENCE
CENTRAL TO FLOURISHING	Helping others meaningfully	77%	73%	-4%
	Comfortable asking for support	62%	47%	-15%
	Turn to close friends for support	73%	49%	-24%
	Prioritize meaningful friendships	76%	69%	-7%
	Turn to mentors/allies for support	66%	62%	-4%
	Confident finding romantic partners	69%	68%	-1%
	Celebrate others' success	82%	78%	-4%
	Work with people who disagree	76%	72%	-4%
	Willing to take risks	57%	64%	7%
	Has enough meaning in life	74%	73%	-1%
CORRELATED BUT LESS CENTRAL	Discuss differences calmly	70%	67%	-3%
	Having/caring for a spouse	69%	66%	-3%
	Feel in control of life	70%	68%	-2%
	Raising kids important to good life	55%	67%	12%
	Turn to family for support	88%	84%	-4%
	Support family/community as life path	76%	78%	2%
	Self-description/admired traits match	95%	91%	-4%
	Turn to therapy for support	46%	38%	-8%
	Shares deepest thoughts/feelings openly	52%	59%	7%
	Have female friends	75%	62%	-13%
	Have male friends	60%	79%	19%

DIFFERENT MEDIA MOVE MEN AND WOMEN DIFFERENTLY

We used clips from 8 shows—*NCIS*, *The Lion King*, *Queer Eye*, *Tulsa King*, *Brooklyn 99*, *Everybody Hates Chris*, *Landman*, *Dandadan*—to field-test how media moved 2,800 people on agreement with our five flourishing beliefs and on emotional affect.

We found that most of the clips that yielded positive movement for men, against all flourishing beliefs, yielded negative movement for women, and vice versa. Like *Queer Eye*, which positively affected women and negatively affected men, or *NCIS*, which positively affected men and negatively affected women.

Only *The Lion King* clip we tested—Simba talking to the spirit of his father Mufasa, guided by Rafiki—produced positive movement for both men and women, and an increase in broadening emotions.

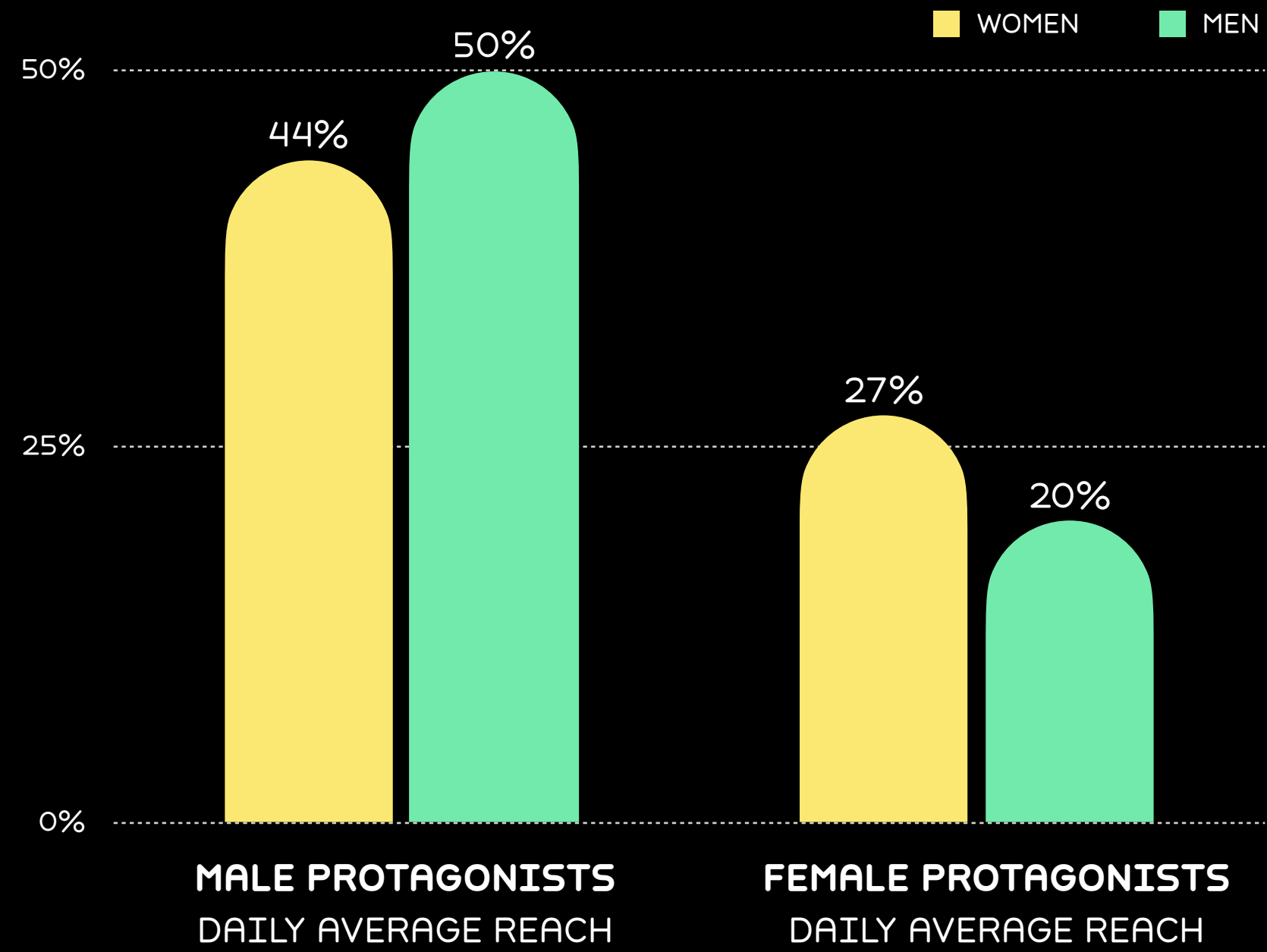
Additional content testing confirmed that gender specific effects from media are the rule, not the exception. Which speaks against using our own responses to media to predict the responses of people with different gender identities.

PROTAGONIST-AUDIENCE GENDER MATCH IN MEDIA LIGHTLY PREFERRED

We sampled and coded for protagonist gender the 100 most engaged with streaming programs from our study period: 42 with men protagonists, 24 with women protagonists, and the rest with mixed gender ensemble casts or no clear protagonist. Then we analyzed how these related to engagement behavior among men and women.

We observe more people watching male protagonists, because there are more of them. We also observe what looks like a slight preference for protagonist-audience gender matches. In other words, female audiences slightly prefer content with female protagonists, and male audiences show a slight preference for male protagonists.

Clearly protagonist gender is just one element of what audiences look for in the streaming stories they choose to engage with.



ACTION AND CRISIS RESOLUTION DRIVE MEN'S STREAMING

The streaming content that attracts men and women is distinct. In general, women are slightly more likely to seek stories exploring relationships and emotional interiority that take characters from OK to flourishing. Men are a little more likely to seek out stories about externalities, like navigating broken systems, with protagonists taking decisive action to resolve specific threats or crises. This content often shows characters and worlds moving from bad to better, but rarely all the way to flourishing.

This might look like facing physical or existential threats, as in a criminal network in *Reacher* or *The Equalizer*, or fighting for survival in *Squid Game*, or navigating elite gatekeeping in *Crazy Rich Asians*, or oppressive regimes in *Andor*.



INTEREST, AMUSEMENT, JOY + PRIDE FEATURE IN MEN'S STREAMING

For men, when streaming media depicts flourishing, characters embody joy, amusement, interest, or pride. These positive emotions stem from: progress toward goals, safe social incongruity, novelty and mystery, and a job well done, respectively. Trust, safety, and space to be vulnerable are earned through competence, rather than something characters just show up to the party with.

Characters in the media women choose, by contrast, embody positive emotions like hope and love, stemming from belief in a better day and connection with others. It's the connection itself that transforms. Many stories with strong cross-gender appeal, like *The Last of Us*, use high-stakes externalities, like existential threat, to drive connection and relationship transformation, which, in turn, heightens survival skill.



THE BLACKLIST

INTO THE SPIDER-VERSE

LANDMAN

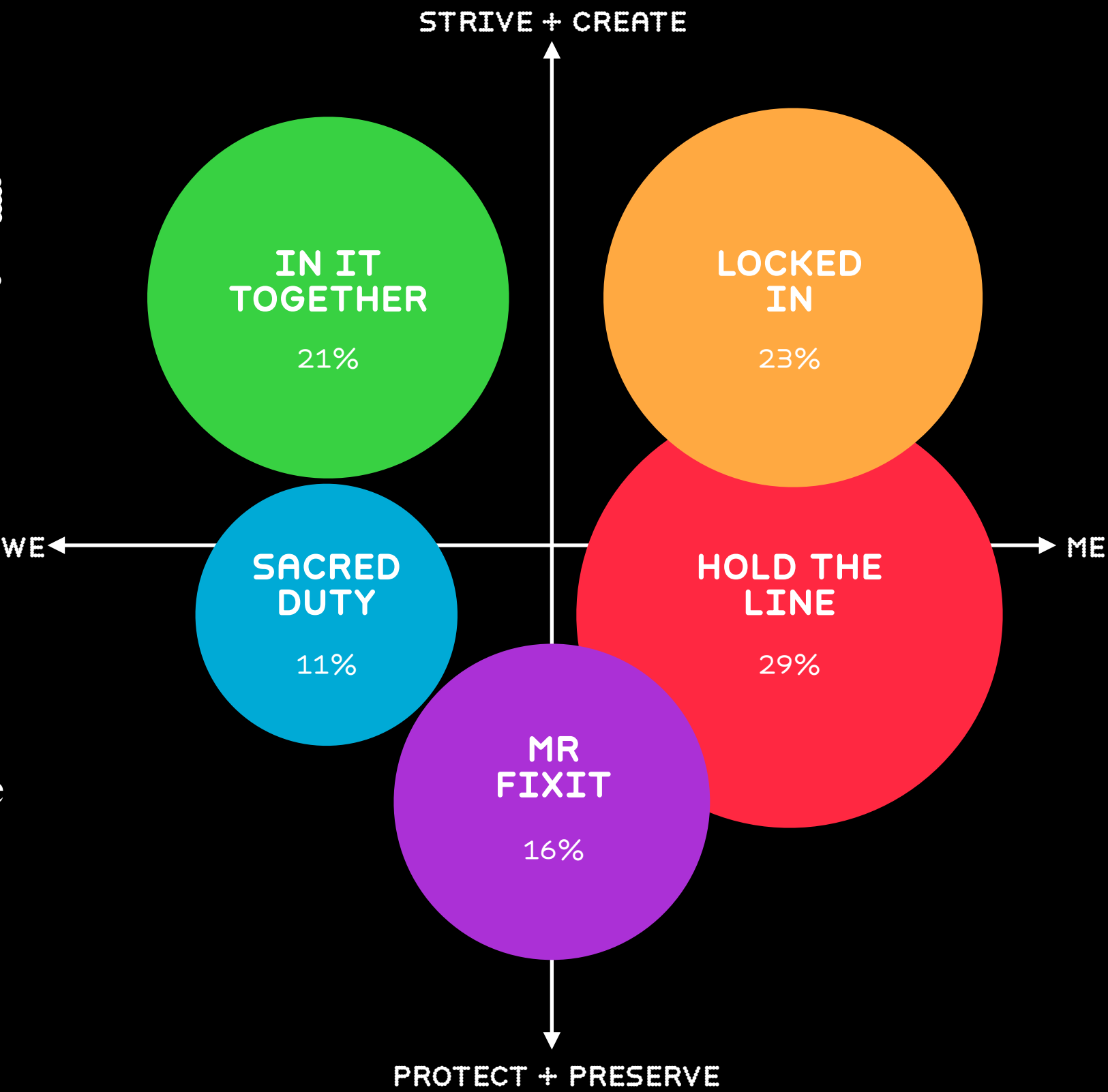
THE LAST OF US

DEADPOOL

5 AUDIENCES OF MEN DEFINED BY FLOURISHING BASELINES, VALUES, MEDIA BEHAVIORS, ATTITUDES TO GENDER, RELATIONSHIPS + MORE

In order to understand the attitudes and media choices of men more deeply, we need to further segment them into different audiences.

The five audience segments we created divide along key tensions in flourishing baselines, attitudes, values, and media behaviors. We arrange them along an x-y values axis, with a collective focus on the left (“We”) and an individualist focus on the right (“Me”), and a predilection for stability and tradition down below (“Protect & Preserve”) and for creativity and innovation up on top (“Strive & Create”). We size each audience according to the percentage of men contained in our nationally representative survey. [Read more audiences.](#)



MEN'S BEHAVIOR ON YOUTUBE DOES NOT YIELD A MANOSPHERE SHAPED LIKE A RABBIT HOLE OR A COHERENT MONOCULTURE OF CONTENT

We were curious whether we could derive from the YouTube behaviors of audiences in our media panel a “manosphere,” a coherent monoculture or rabbit hole of misogyny and gender grievance content men risk falling into online.

We started from 8 YouTube channels, whose content reliably features misogyny and gender grievance. From these eight “anchor channels” we spun out networks according to the engagement behaviors of men in our panel. This allows us to see the channel engagements that co-occur on the same day with anchor channel engagements.

The networks that emerged were more diverse in content than we might expect from a rabbit hole. Which is to say, most men engaging these eight channels also consumed all sorts of other media, like [CNN](#), [Fox News](#), [Saturday Night Live](#), or [ESPN](#), to

name a few, all with much higher average daily reach and more varied in their views on women and masculinity.

Metaphors matter, insofar as they shape our perceptions of problems and suggest solutions. The manosphere as rabbit hole is likely to suggest diversionary re-directions of men’s attention. Our findings suggest such tactics may be superfluous, insofar as most men already consume a wide array of content.

This is not to diminish the negative effects of content proximate to our eight anchor channels. From among the 32 YouTube video clips we tested, content close in our network to these anchor channels was 8x more likely to decrease broadening emotions and 3x more likely to increase narrowing emotions and decrease agreement with our flourishing beliefs. [Read more YouTube analysis.](#)

COMPANION REPORT FOR PORN ENGAGEMENT BY AUDIENCE

The self-reported centrality of porn to men’s online experiences is well documented. Yet there is little cross-platform, internet-scale information about porn engagement. So we also looked into online porn behaviors for each audience, in [a companion report](#).

What stood out across *all of men’s media engagement*, including porn, was the space media affords for exploring, reflecting on, and reinforcing formulations of and attitudes about masculinity, replete with all its desires, fears, and fascinations.

We have one audience that tends to hold so-called “traditional family values.” They gravitate to stories that resolve in men taking control in difficult situations, often as family providers and protectors. In their porn, infidelity initiated by wives and watched by husbands is a key theme. When asked, this audience reports relationship failure as a change catalyst more frequently than other men. Clearly fear and fascination with failing at traditional gender norms and becoming a cuckold preoccupy this audience. [Read more porn analysis](#).

12%
DAILY AVERAGE REACH
FOR PORN AMONG MEN

18-24
51-60
HIGHEST ENGAGEMENT
AGE GROUPS FOR PORN
FOR MEN

10:00
AVERAGE MINUTES
PER PORN SESSION
FOR MEN



INSIDE THE ACTION, MEN BEING MEN TOGETHER, WITHOUT REFERENCE TO MASCULINITY

We tested 32 video clips representing the range of YouTube content that engages men. We were looking for videos that: increased broadening emotions, decreased narrowing emotions, and increased agreement with our flourishing belief statements.

Much of what we tested increased narrowing emotions and decreased broadening emotions. From the content that reliably produced positive effects in men, we share 3 observations. [Read more content testing and design principles.](#)

1

Content that elicits a feeling of being inside the action—via dynamic situations, locations, camera work, or savvy editing—keeps narrowing emotions and flourishing beliefs stable and lifts broadening emotions.

2

Content with building, competing, exploring, coaching . . . doing any social activity in groups that manifestly engages curiosity and skill is broadening. It lifts the bridging, mutuality, and resilience dimensions of flourishing too.

3

Content that references masculinity—even inside of comedy—zeros out broadening emotions and raises narrowing emotions. Just show men being men, doing stuff together in groups, and bring viewers into the action.

A theme in men's media is the search for role models, for this or that skill, for whatever needs fixing or improving before the desired thing happens, and the good life begins.

But skills are built *through* relationships, not *before* them, and relationships usually work best IRL.

Is there a role for media to play in springing this trap?

5 AUDIENCES OF MEN, 5 WAYS OF BEING

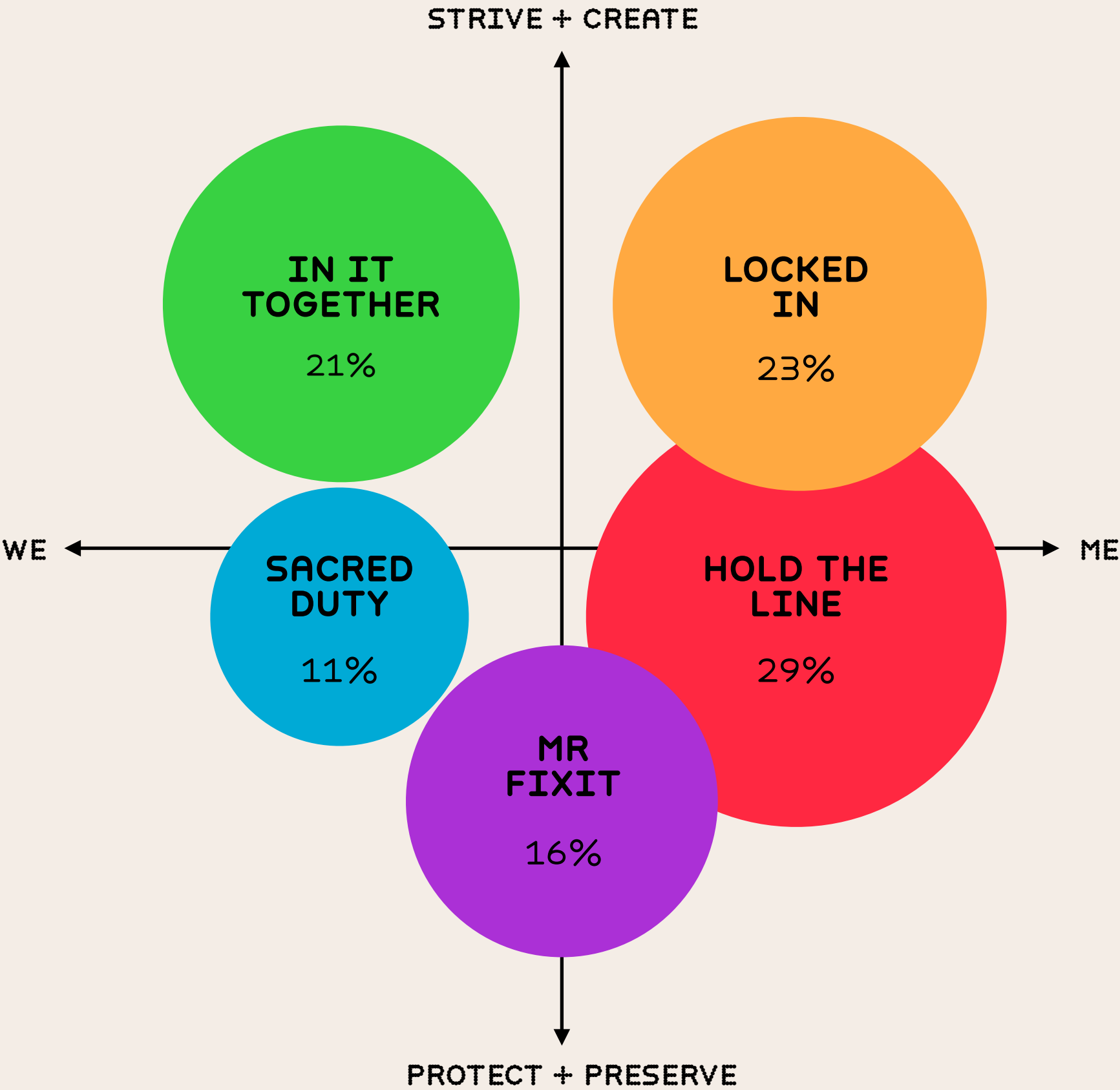
Representing the range of how men perceive and experience: flourishing, gender identities and roles, relationships and responsibilities; and how they engage with media that represents, complicates, and contributes to flourishing

5 AUDIENCES OF MEN ORGANIZED BY VALUES

The five audience segments we created divide along key tensions in flourishing baselines, media behaviors, attitudes to gender, relationships, responsibilities, and more.

We organize them according to values, using the Narrative Observatory values architecture, derived from the work of Shalom Schwartz, and arrange them along an x-y values axis. There’s a collective focus on the left (“We”) and an individualist focus on the right (“Me”); and a predilection for stability and tradition down below (“Protect & Preserve”) and for creativity and innovation up on top (“Strive & Create”).

We size each audience according to the percentage of men contained in our nationally representative survey. And we present the audiences throughout the report in order of size.



MEET THE AUDIENCES

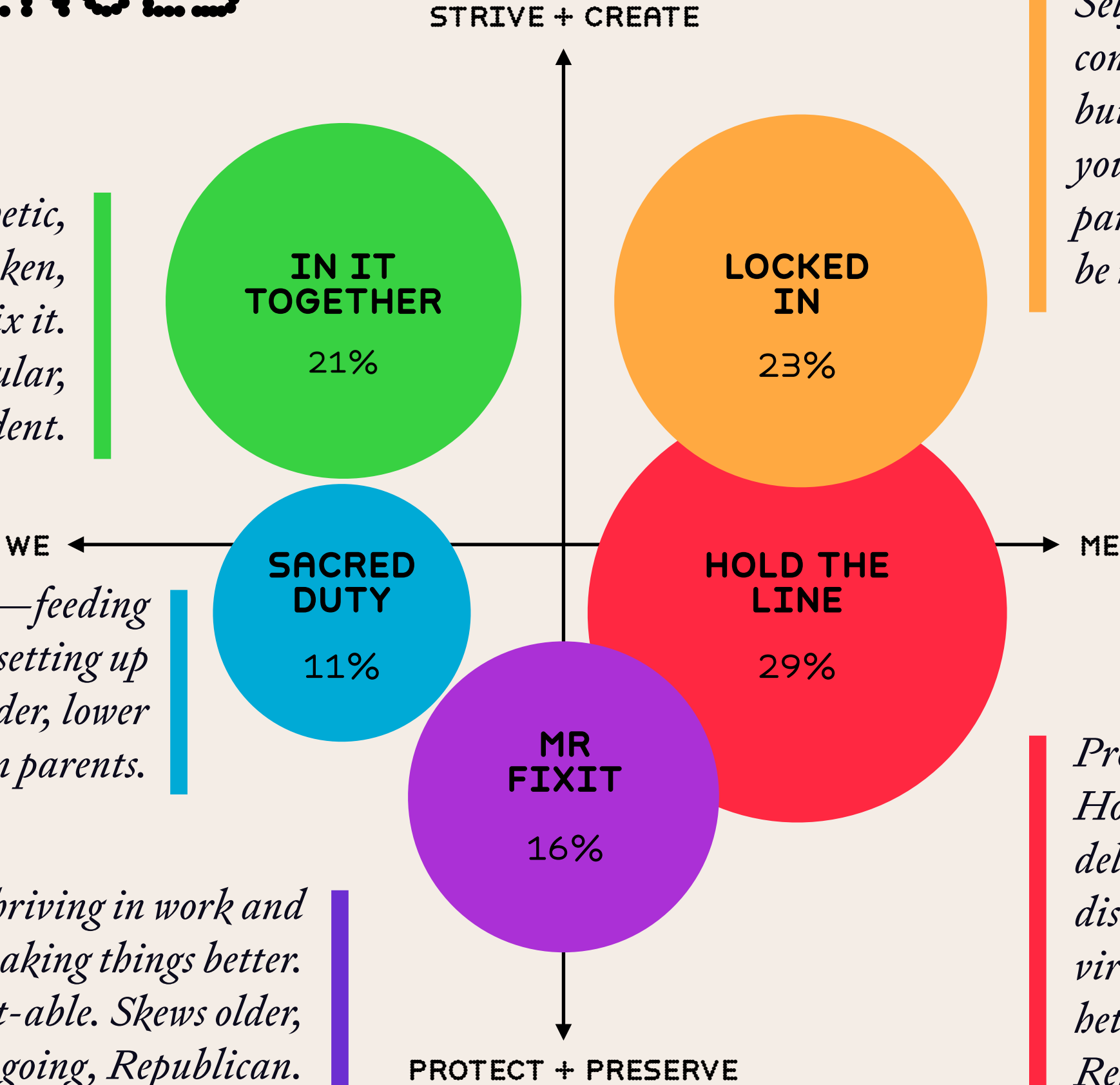
Community-oriented, empathetic, can't look away from what's broken, though can't always see a path to fix it. Skews college-educated, secular, Democrat or Independent.

Service and faith are the way—feeding the homeless, caring for elders, setting up what comes next. Skews older, lower income, likely to have been parents.

Adaptive problem solvers, thriving in work and family, with a knack for making things better. Everything is figure-out-able. Skews older, heterosexual, church going, Republican.

Self-reliant, self-made, competing to make it and build something real. Skews younger, secular, single, non-parents, especially likely to be men of color.

Provider, protector. Holds things together, delivers. Loyalty and discipline are core virtues. Skews older, heterosexual, religious, Republican.

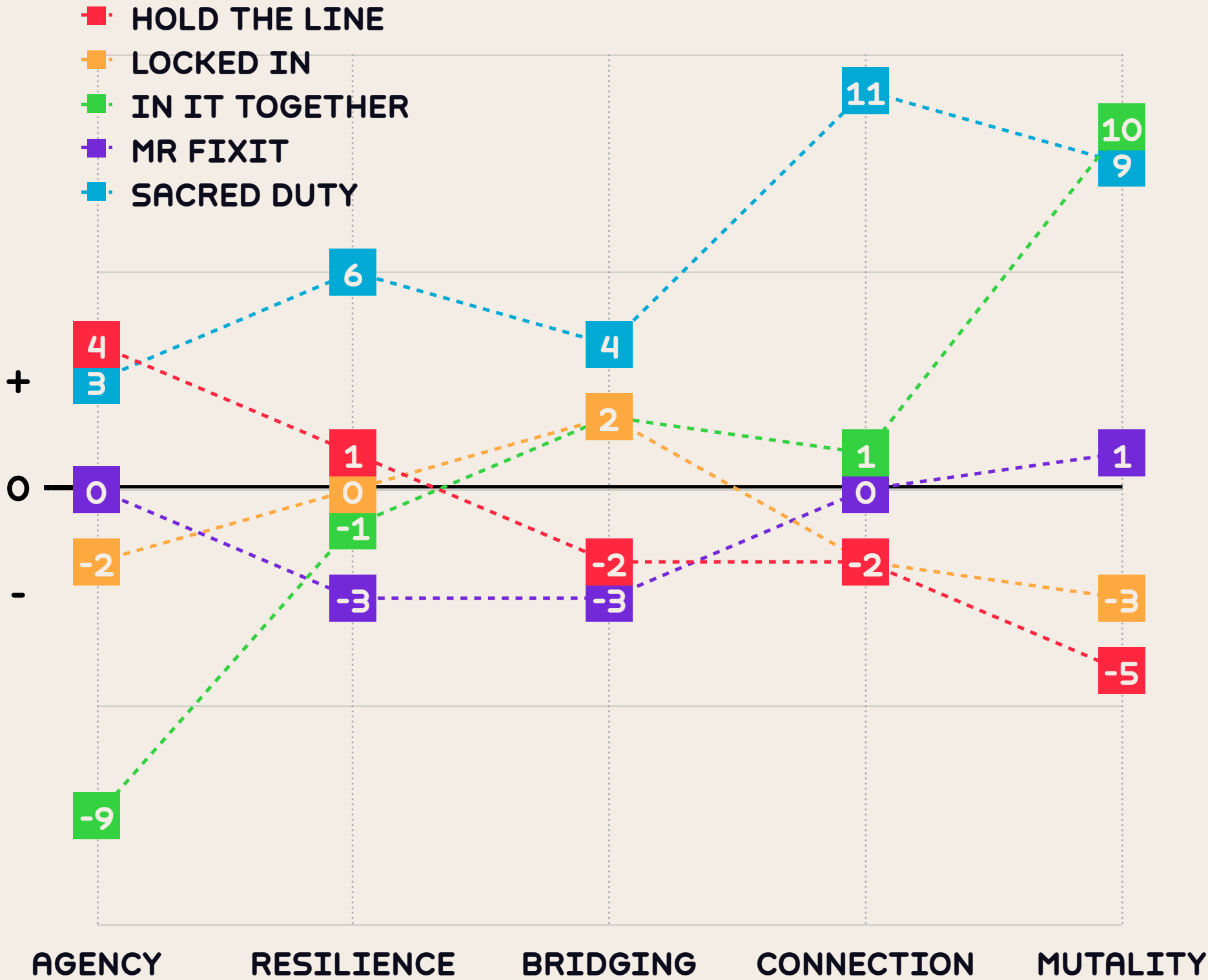


FLOURISHING BASELINES BY AUDIENCE

One of the key dividing lines between audiences is how they score on our 5 flourishing dimensions, relative to the average for all audiences of men.

LOCKED IN struggles with agency, connection, and mutuality, compared to other men. HOLD THE LINE struggles with mutuality, bridging, and connection. IN IT TOGETHER struggles with agency and resilience. MR FIXIT struggles with resilience and bridging.

SACRED DUTY scores highest across almost all dimensions, surpassed only by HOLD THE LINE on agency and by IN IT TOGETHER on mutuality.



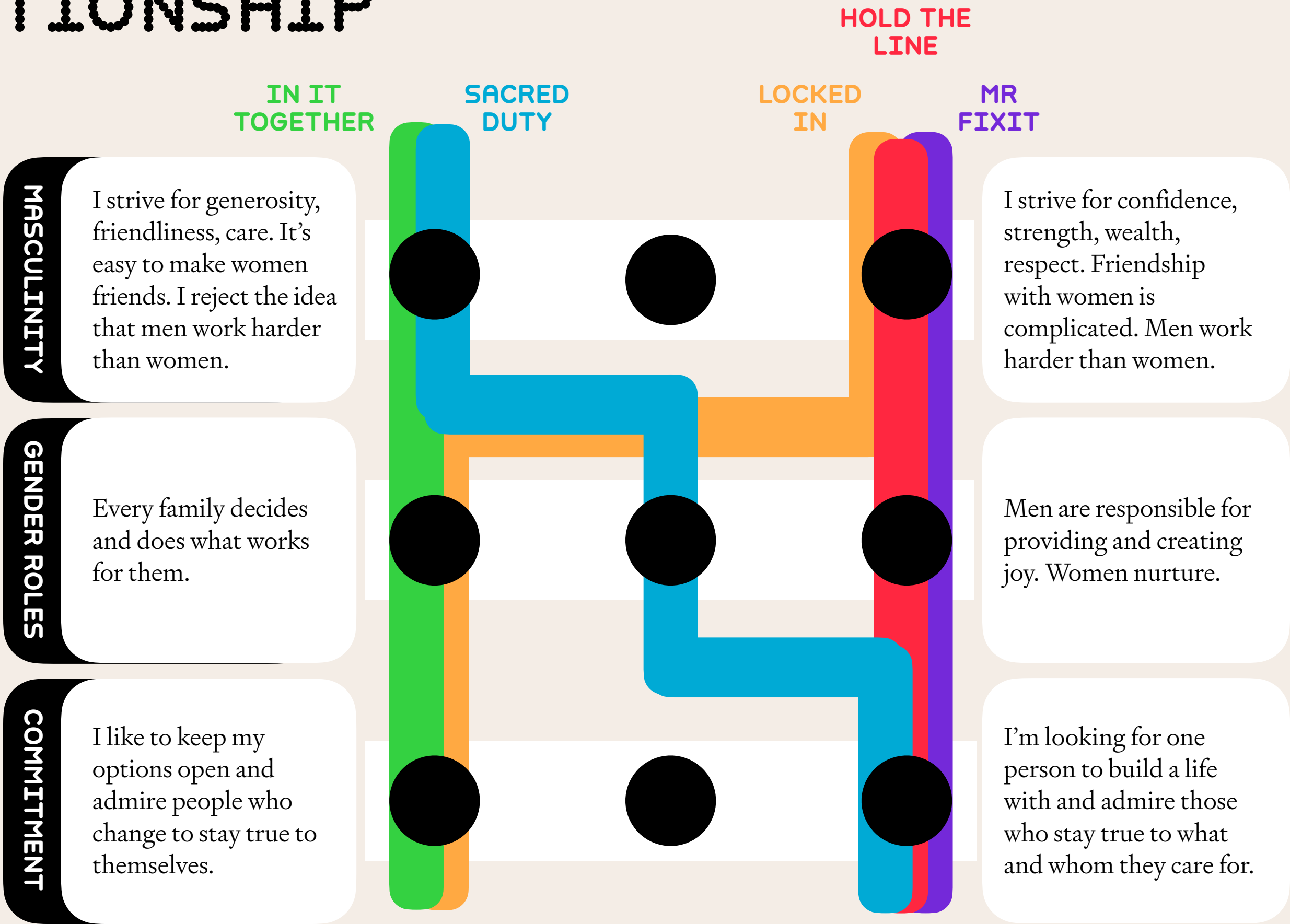
AGENCY. I know exactly what actions will move my life forward, and I take them consistently.
RESILIENCE. When things go wrong, I have multiple ways to handle it and get back on track.
BRIDGING. I know how to work with people who disagree with me to achieve my goals.
CONNECTION. Making time for meaningful friendships is a top priority for me right now.
MUTUALITY. I go out of my way to support others when they succeed.

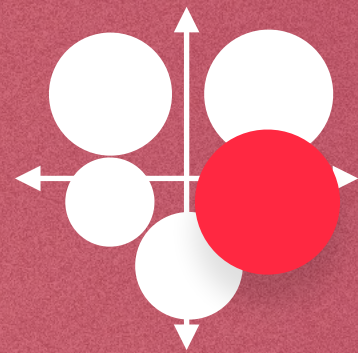
GENDER + RELATIONSHIP ATTITUDES BY AUDIENCE

Another key dividing line among audiences are attitudes related to masculinity, gender roles, and relationship commitment.

Here are ranges of attitudes for each, with more conservative attitudes on the right. The dot in the middle of each range indicates a middle ground between the two attitudes.

Each audience has a line running through the attitudes it associates with.





HOLD THE LINE

PROVIDER, PROTECTOR, ROOTED IN FAITH AND FAMILY · 29% OF MEN

We hold things together. We deliver. Loyalty and discipline are key, in a world marked by threat and scarcity. We believe men and women have different strengths and work to do. Our flourishing gap is bridging, connection, and mutuality, working with, supporting, and uplifting others.

IN OUR OWN WORDS

*Faith and discipline are all I need.
No one but me will provide for my own.*

MEDIA DIET

RELUCTANT PROTECTOR

The story pattern in HOLD THE LINE’s streaming media looks like a wounded, isolated professional pulled into someone else’s crisis. Through protecting the vulnerable, they reconnect with purpose, form meaningful bonds, and reclaim agency. The external mission heals the internal wound.

TOP STREAMING HITS AND YOUTUBE VIDEOS



TULSA KING



SEINFELD



LANDMAN



PAWN STARS



OOMPAVILLE



SOUP



THE BOYS



LIONESS



THE BLACKLIST



BLUE BLOODS



ANCIENT ALIENS



THEQUARTERING



JYNXZI LIVE



LIBERAL HIVEMIND



SNL DESTROYS KAMALA!



BLACK CONSERVATIVE PERSPECTIVE



“THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED”

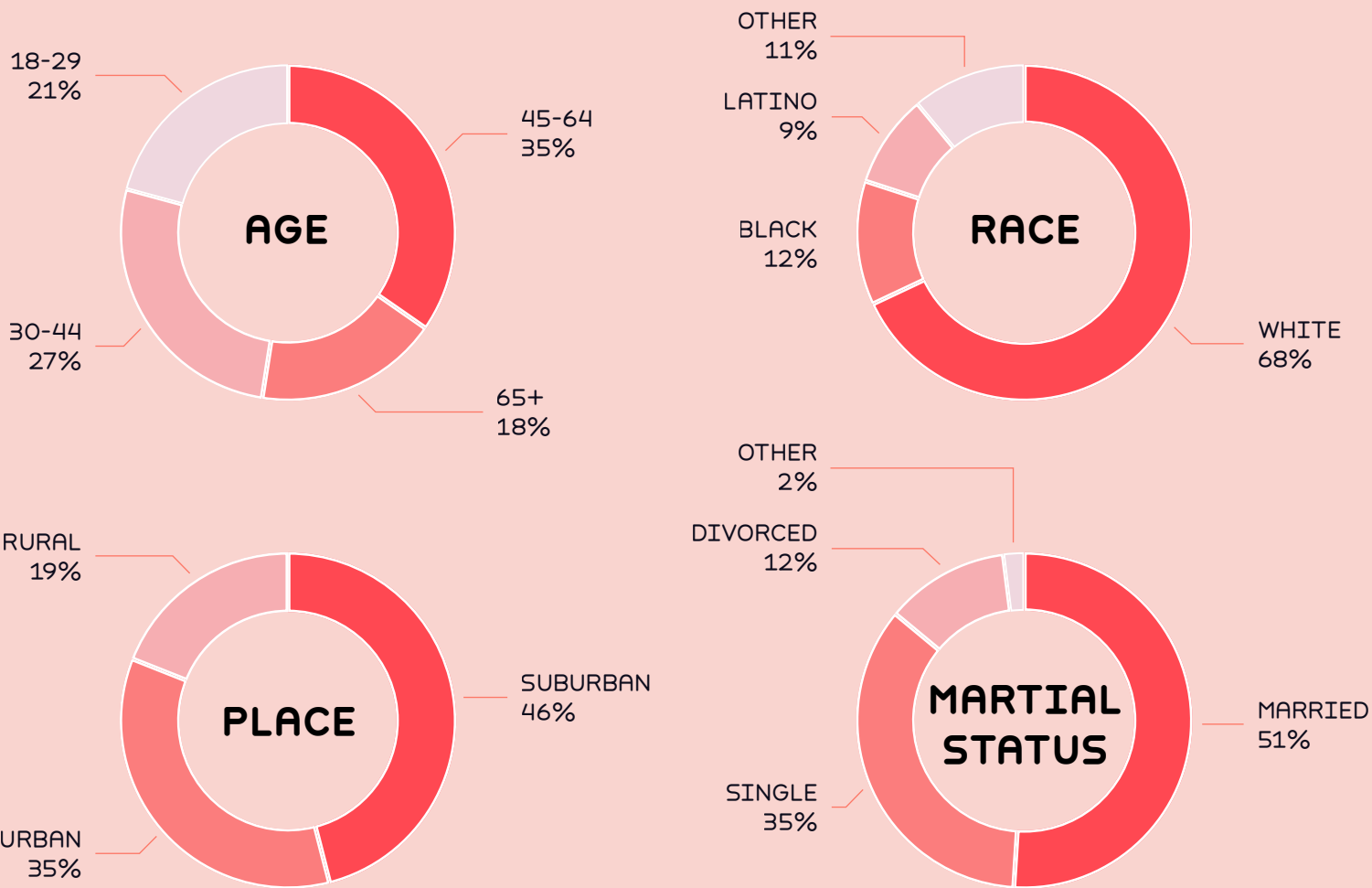
ON YOUTUBE: Group gaming (*Jynxzi Live*), reaction comedy (*Oompaville*), and political commentary (*Benny Johnson*).

IN STREAMING MEDIA: Taylor Sheridan-style crime/frontier dramas (*Landman*) and cop procedurals (*Blue Bloods*).

ALL MEDIA ARE CLICKABLE

STRENGTH PROTECTS AND PROVIDES

DEMOGRAPHIC HIGHLIGHTS



- 53% NO COLLEGE

14% 2-YR DEGREE

33% 4-YR DEGREE
- 58% PARENTS

23% PARENTS W/ KIDS < 18
- 32% ATTEND CHURCH

34% CHRISTIAN
- 43% REPUBLICAN

29% INDEPENDENT

14% DEMOCRAT

STARS INDICATE DISTINCTIVE DEMOGRAPHIC TRAITS

DEFINING BELIEF

Men and women have fundamentally different strengths.

ON TRAITS THEY ADMIRE IN PEOPLE

“Stoic, witty, disciplined, respectful, mentally tough, observant, grounded in purpose”

ON A PERSON THEY ADMIRE AND WHY

“Dwight Eisenhower because practical and steady and served his country with discipline and integrity.”

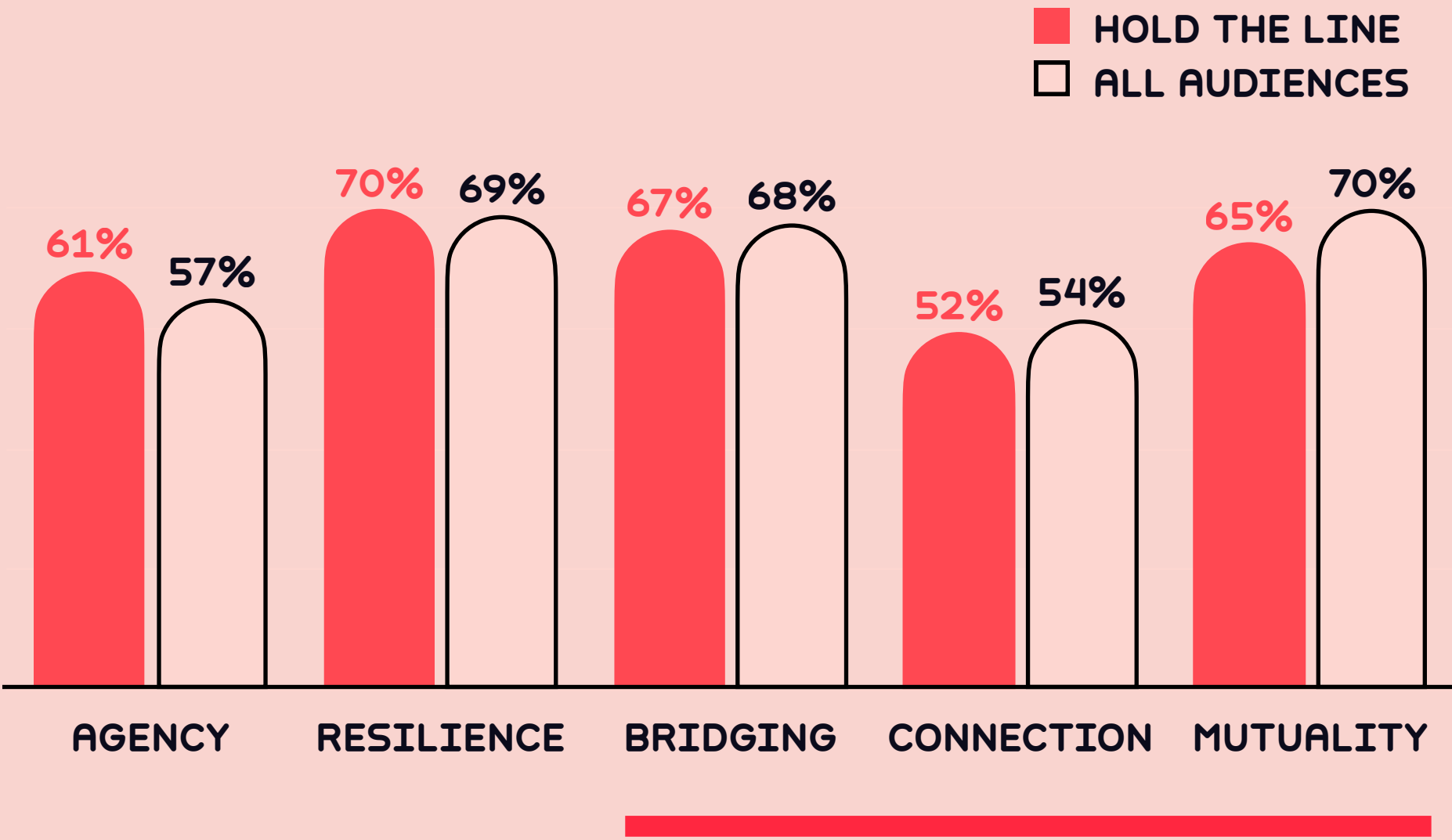
FLOURISHING GAP

BRIDGING, CONNECTION, MUTUALITY

HOLD THE LINE doesn't struggle to act or recover from setbacks. Compared to other audiences, they score high on agency and resilience.

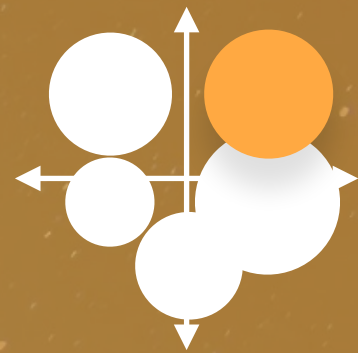
On average, compared to all audiences, they lag on bridging and connection and struggle with mutuality, or showing up for other people's wins. Compared to women, they lag on mutuality by -12 points.

This gap in mutuality correlates to a model of manhood built around provision and protection, where someone else's success can feel like a zero-sum event rather than something to celebrate.



FLOURISHING AGREEMENT PER AUDIENCE
5-POINT SCALE—SOMEWHAT AGREE, STRONGLY AGREE

- AGENCY. I know exactly what actions will move my life forward, and I take them consistently.
- RESILIENCE. When things go wrong, I have multiple ways to handle it and get back on track.
- BRIDGING. I know how to work with people who disagree with me to achieve my goals.
- CONNECTION. Making time for meaningful friendships is a top priority for me right now.
- MUTUALITY. I go out of my way to support others when they succeed.



LOCKED IN

SELF-MADE, SELF-RELIANT, PLAYS HARD · 23% OF MEN

We're looking to build something real, for a reason to look up from the grind. In a world where men have to work hard, and no one hands you anything. We don't shy away from conflict, but can avoid closeness. Our flourishing gap is in agency, connection, and mutuality.

IN OUR OWN WORDS

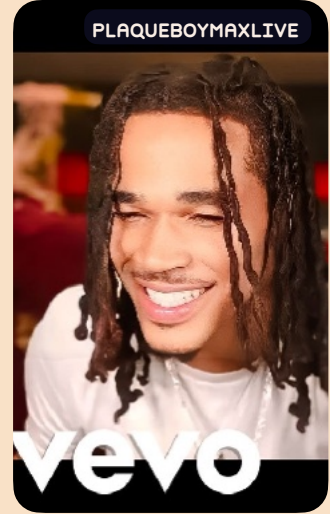
*No one really gets me, so I'm gonna get mine on my own.
They won't even see me coming.*

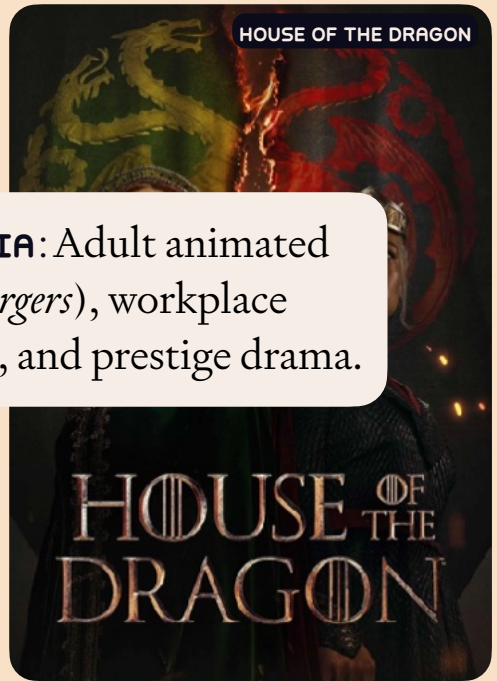
MEDIA DIET

MISFIT WHO FINALLY BELONGS

The story pattern in LOCKED IN’s streaming media is a character cast out, estranged, or fundamentally other, whom crisis forces to find their true self and sometimes their tribe. By confronting past trauma and embracing their singularity, they discover they were always meant to belong. Their difference is their gift.

TOP STREAMING HITS AND YOUTUBE VIDEOS





IN STREAMING MEDIA: Adult animated sitcoms (*Bob's Burgers*), workplace comedies (*The Office*), and prestige drama.

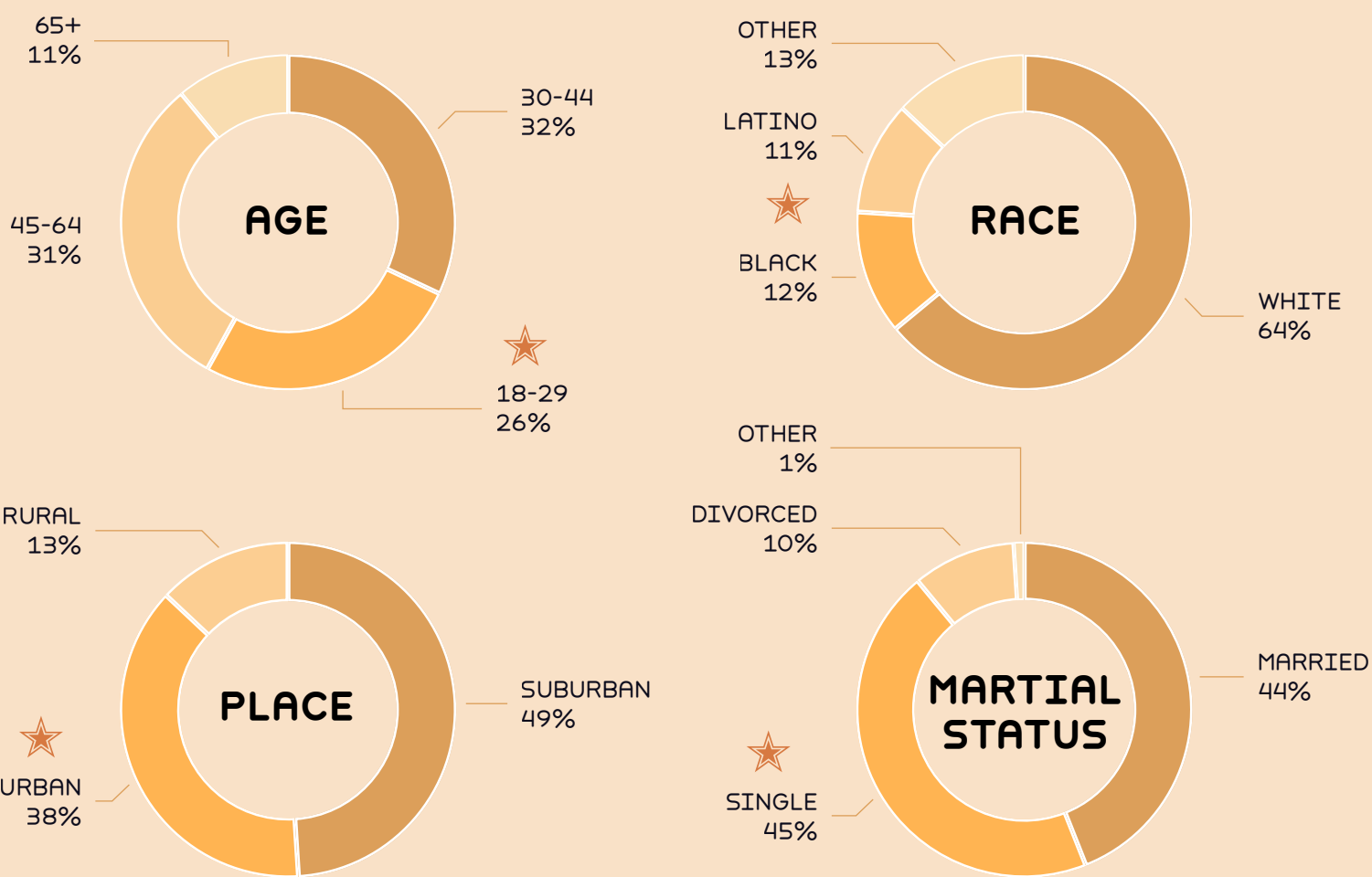
ON YOUTUBE: Livestreamers (*Kai Cenat*), gaming (*penguinz0*), anime (*Crunchyroll*), and horror fandom (*Dead Meat*).

ALL MEDIA ARE CLICKABLE

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STRENGTH BUILDS THEIR OWN WAY

DEMOGRAPHIC HIGHLIGHTS



- 51% NO COLLEGE

10% 2-YR DEGREE

39% 4-YR DEGREE
- 44% PARENTS

23% PARENTS W/ KIDS < 18
- 22% ATTEND CHURCH

16% CHRISTIAN
- 40% DEMOCRAT

29% INDEPENDENT

26% REPUBLICAN

KEY ATTITUDES

- Believe that **MEN HAVE IT HARDER** than women, and men should be providers
- **31%** name “me” as beneficiaries of the work they do, the highest of any audience
- **24%** distrust the people who are supposed to hold others accountable vs. 16% of other men
- **22%** say nobody is accountable
- They want to be a **"SELF-STARTER AND INDEPENDENT," "STRONG & SELF MADE," "FLEXIBLE & FREE"**

STARS INDICATE DISTINCTIVE DEMOGRAPHIC TRAITS

DEFINING BELIEF

I keep pushing for what I need even when people get uncomfortable.

ON TRAITS THEY ADMIRE IN PEOPLE

“Cunning, intelligence, wisdom, observant, astuteness”

ON A PERSON THEY ADMIRE AND WHY

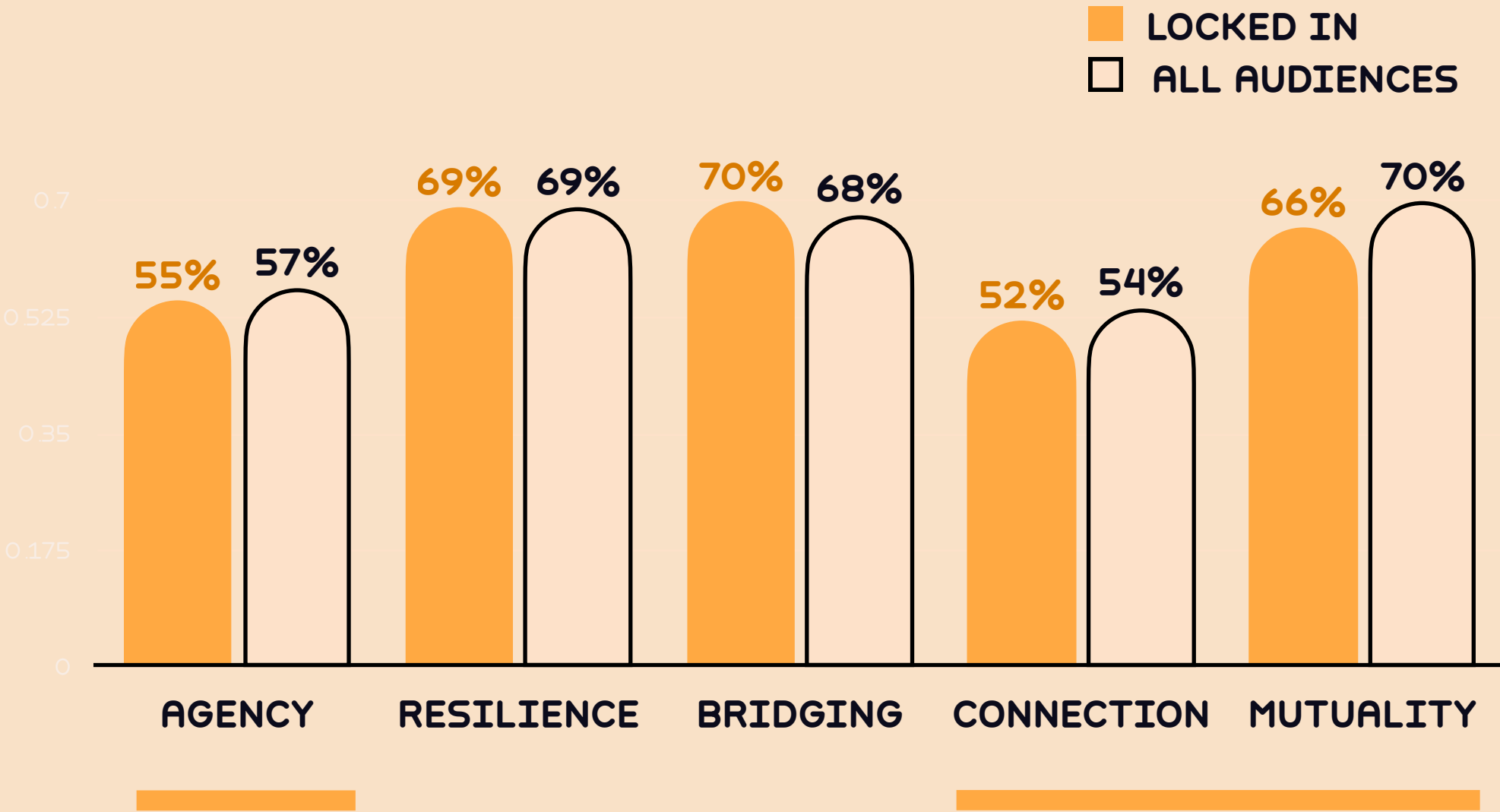
“Elon Musk because he is an innovative entrepreneur who has changed the world through his work in space exploration, electric cars, and renewable energy.”

FLOURISHING GAP

AGENCY, CONNECTION, MUTUALITY

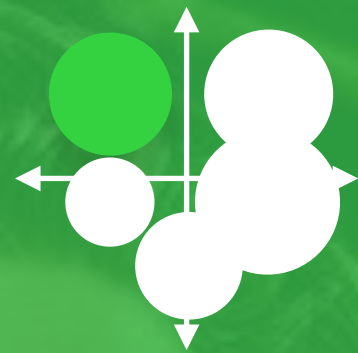
LOCKED IN lags the most of any audience on flourishing dimensions. The one dimension they lead on is bridging, which suggests they don't avoid conflict. They do, however, avoid closeness, tying **HOLD THE LINE** for the lowest connection score across audiences. Their mutuality score is among the lowest, a full -11 points below women. Their sense of agency is also low.

Low connection and mutuality scores do not mean they don't feel things. Rather, they have learned, probably through experience, that needing people and being needed are liabilities. Their self-sufficiency reads like an adaptive response.



FLOURISHING AGREEMENT PER AUDIENCE
5-POINT SCALE—SOMEWHAT AGREE, STRONGLY AGREE

- AGENCY.** I know exactly what actions will move my life forward, and I take them consistently.
- RESILIENCE.** When things go wrong, I have multiple ways to handle it and get back on track.
- BRIDGING.** I know how to work with people who disagree with me to achieve my goals.
- CONNECTION.** Making time for meaningful friendships is a top priority for me right now.
- MUTUALITY.** I go out of my way to support others when they succeed.



IN IT TOGETHER

SEES WHAT'S BROKEN AND CAN'T LOOK AWAY · 21% OF MEN

We all deserve the same power and the same shot: men, women, everyone. Community-oriented and empathetic, we feel deeply. And see clearly where systems fall short. We can struggle with the agency to act and resilience in the face of adversity. We're seekers and searchers. We do what we can and work on others' behalf.

IN OUR OWN WORDS

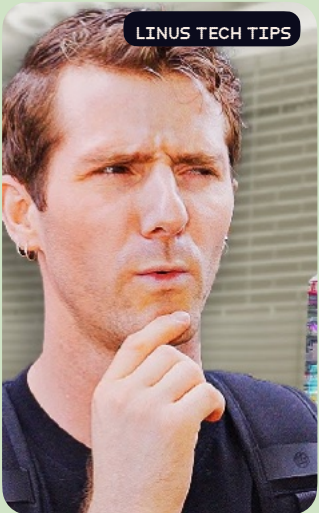
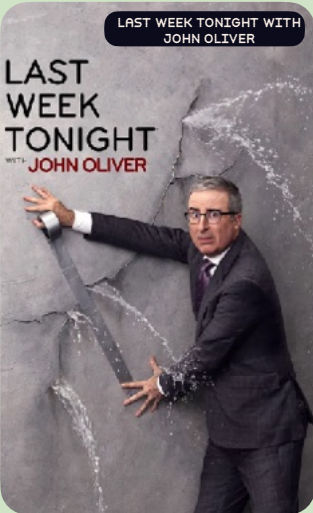
I will use my power to give voice to the voiceless.

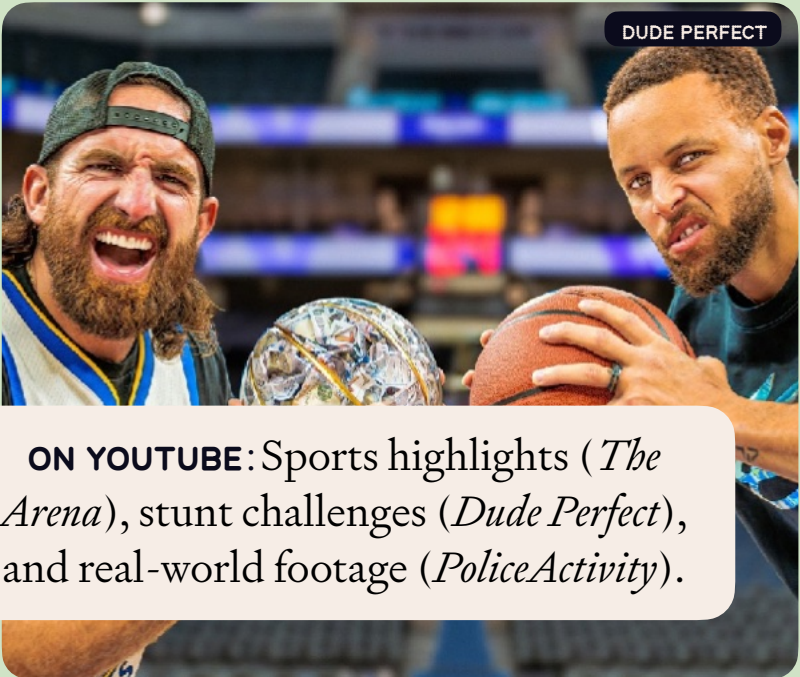
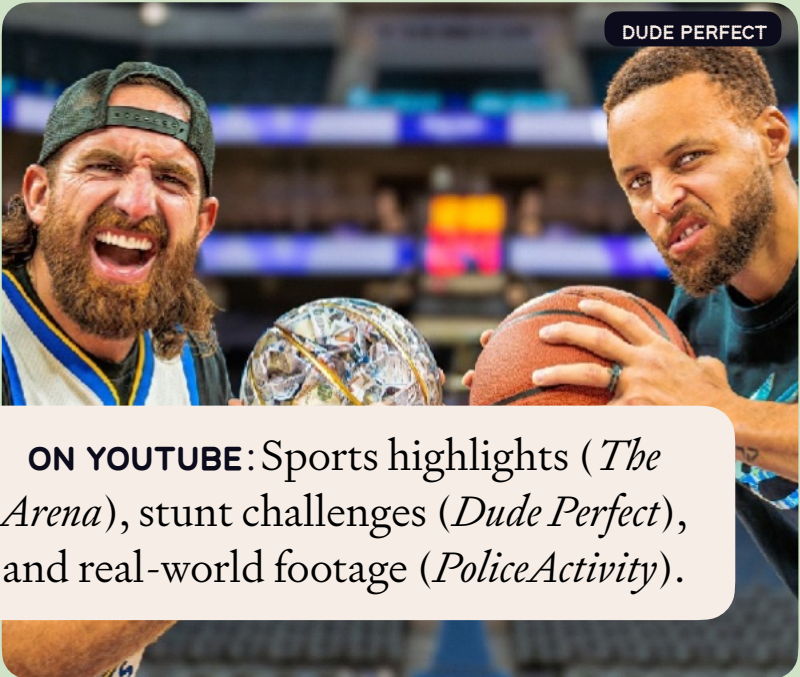
MEDIA DIET

INSIDER OPERATORS

The story pattern for IN IT TOGETHER’s streaming media is an insecure character constrained by systems, gaining leverage through circumstance or discovery. By showing up vulnerably, they shift power dynamics in their favor and earn one for community. They’re not fighting the system, but strategically working it by staying true to themselves.

TOP STREAMING HITS AND YOUTUBE VIDEOS





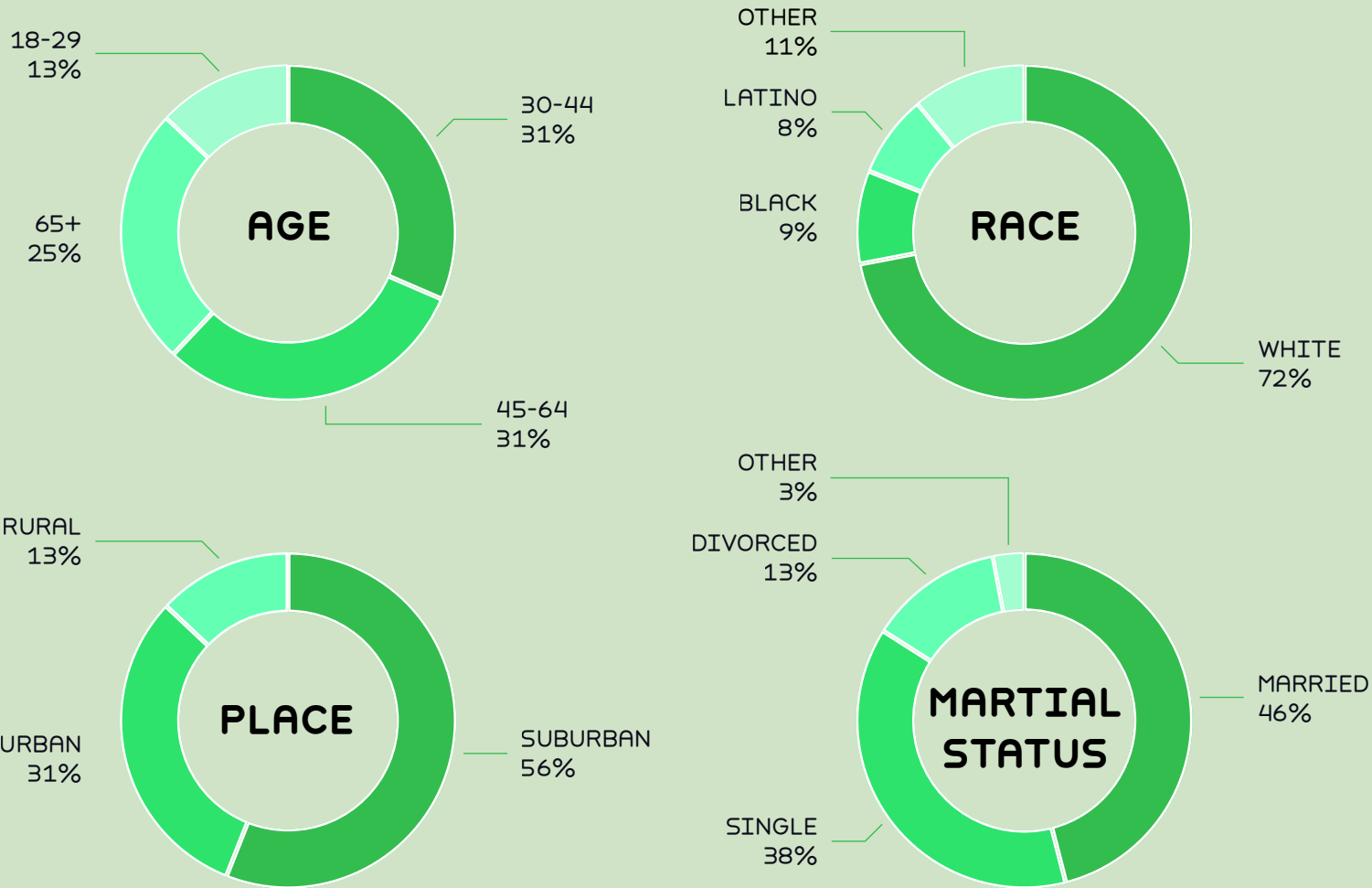
IN STREAMING MEDIA: Ensemble comedy (*Modern Family*) and drama (*The Bear*), late-night satire (*Last Week Tonight*).

ON YOUTUBE: Sports highlights (*The Arena*), stunt challenges (*Dude Perfect*), and real-world footage (*PoliceActivity*).

ALL MEDIA ARE CLICKABLE

STRENGTH
EMPATHETIC, FAIR, SUPPORTIVE

DEMOGRAPHIC HIGHLIGHTS



- 44% NO COLLEGE

11% 2-YR DEGREE

45% 4-YR DEGREE ★
- 43% PARENTS

18% PARENTS W/ KIDS < 18
- 12% ATTEND CHURCH

11% CHRISTIAN
- 49% DEMOCRAT ★

35% INDEPENDENT ★

8% REPUBLICAN

STARS INDICATE DISTINCTIVE DEMOGRAPHIC TRAITS

DEFINING BELIEF

I have the ability to articulate the feelings of the people around me.

ON TRAITS THEY ADMIRE IN PEOPLE

“Honesty, selflessness, generosity, empathy and tolerance of others”

ON A PERSON THEY ADMIRE AND WHY

“Barack Obama because he fought, was smart, and while flawed seemed to genuinely care about the people.”

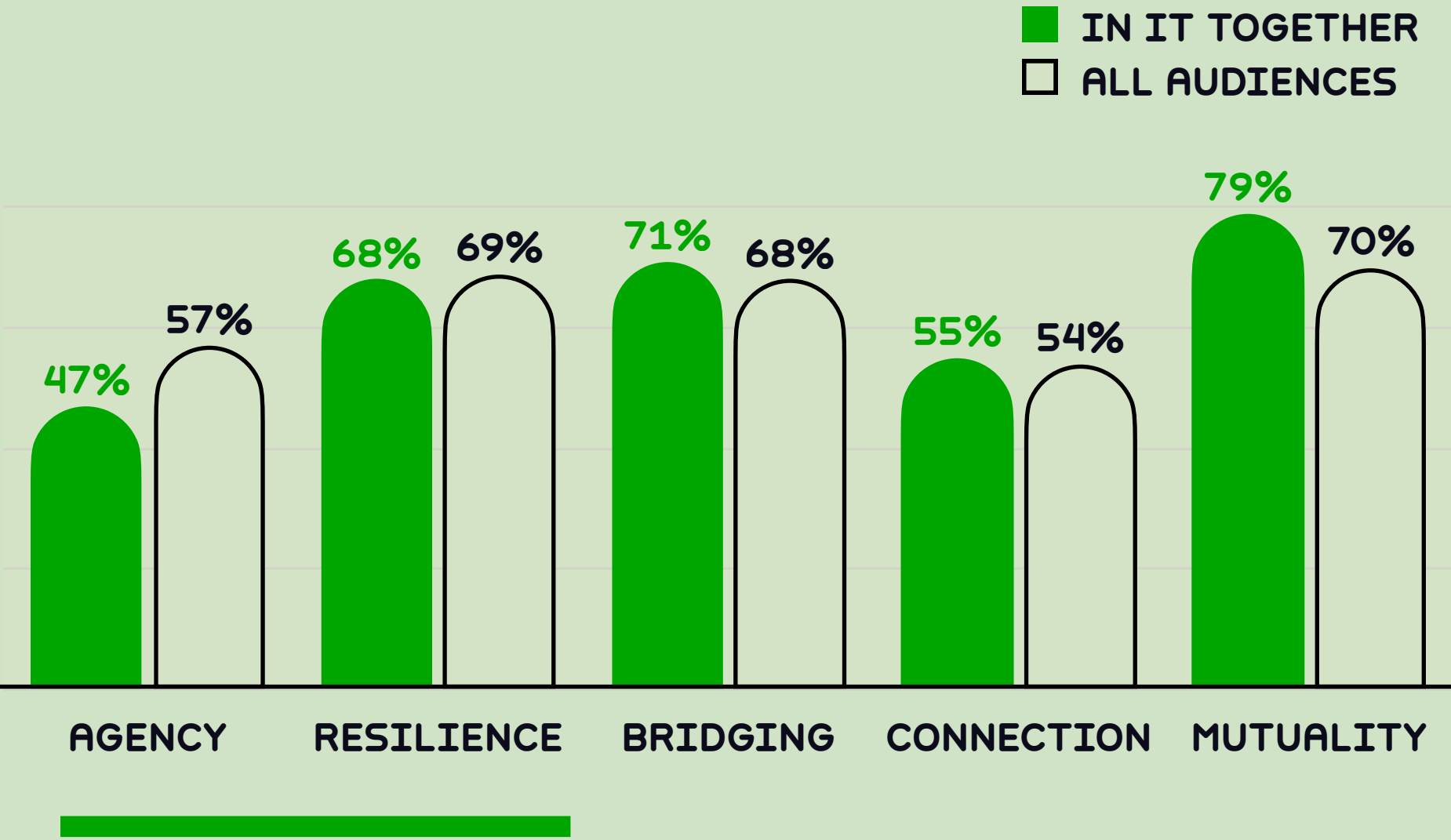
FLOURISHING GAP

AGENCY AND RESILIENCE

IN IT TOGETHER are among the most connected and supportive audiences. Their mutuality score leads every audience, including women by 2+ points. They see clearly, care deeply, and show up.

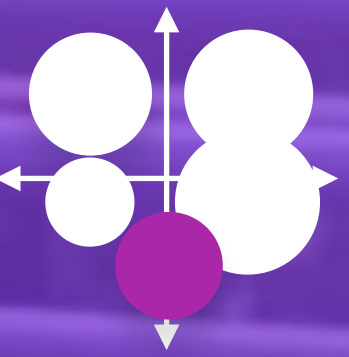
What they struggle with is converting that care into action and recovering from set backs. Their agency score sits -10 points below all audiences, the widest agency gap of any audience. And their resilience score is -1 points below all audiences.

Being so attuned to what’s wrong, and so aware of the scale of it, can be paralyzing, and they can doubt their own efficacy.



FLOURISHING AGREEMENT PER AUDIENCE
5-POINT SCALE—SOMEWHAT AGREE, STRONGLY AGREE

- AGENCY.** I know exactly what actions will move my life forward, and I take them consistently.
- RESILIENCE.** When things go wrong, I have multiple ways to handle it and get back on track.
- BRIDGING.** I know how to work with people who disagree with me to achieve my goals.
- CONNECTION.** Making time for meaningful friendships is a top priority for me right now.
- MUTUALITY.** I go out of my way to support others when they succeed.



MR FIXIT

ADAPTIVE PROBLEM-SOLVER, LIFELONG LEARNER · 16% OF MEN

We figure it out. We fix it. We leave it better than we found it, especially at work and for our families. We go to church. We're loyal to leaders. We protect what's ours, in a world that's changing fast, sometimes for the worse. Our flourishing gaps are resilience, bridging, agency.

IN OUR OWN WORDS

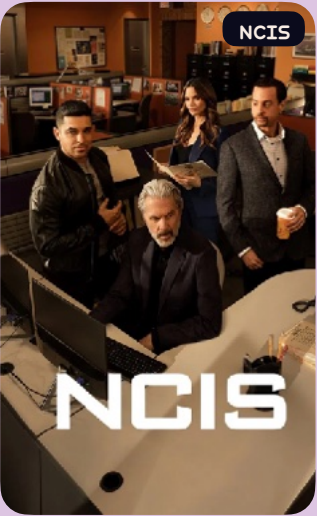
*Give me a problem and I'll figure it out.
My family's better off because I do.*

MEDIA DIET

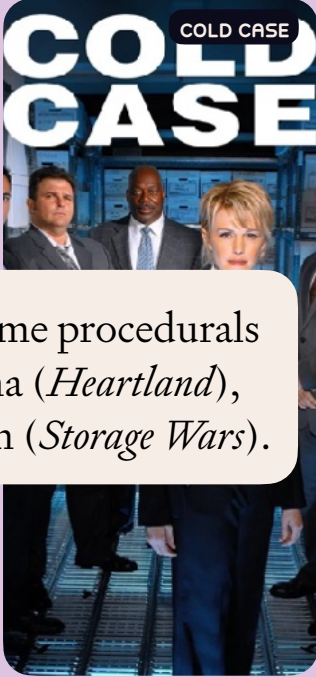
COMPETENT LONER REDEEMED

The story pattern in MR FIXIT’s streaming media looks like a skilled, capable loner carrying old wounds, drawn back into action by necessity. Through a mission with an unlikely partner, they find purpose in protecting others, peace through choosing principle over revenge, and connection through demonstrated skill, competence, and wisdom.

TOP STREAMING HITS AND YOUTUBE VIDEOS



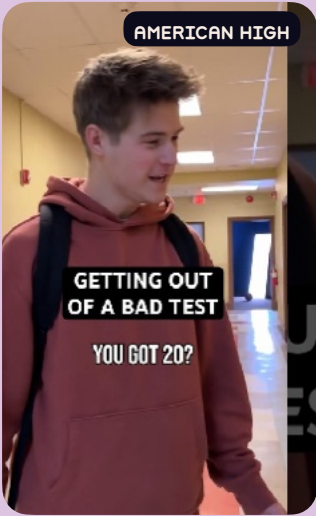












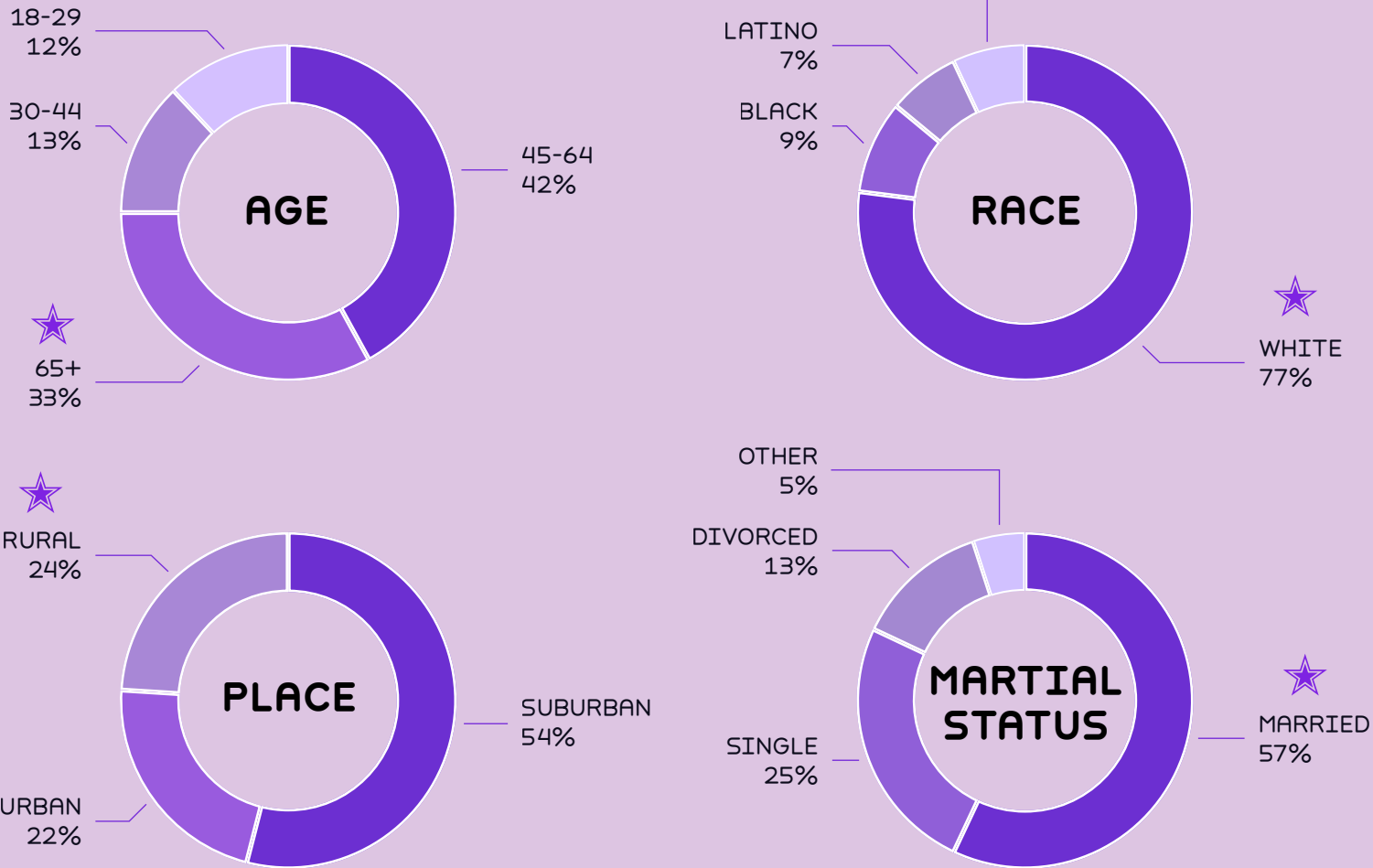
IN STREAMING MEDIA: Crime procedurals (*NCIS*), classic Americana (*Heartland*), and reality TV competition (*Storage Wars*).

ON YOUTUBE: Car builds (*Cleetus McFarland*), skill-building (*Trading Lab*), and sketch comedy (*Call Me Kevin*).

ALL MEDIA ARE CLICKABLE

STRENGTH FIGURES IT OUT AND FIXES IT

DEMOGRAPHIC HIGHLIGHTS



- 57% NO COLLEGE

12% 2-YR DEGREE

31% 4-YR DEGREE
- 67% PARENTS

18% PARENTS W/ KIDS < 18
- 41% ATTEND CHURCH

45% CHRISTIAN
- 54% REPUBLICAN

23% INDEPENDENT

18% DEMOCRAT

KEY ATTITUDES

- Information comes from **CONSERVATIVE MEDIA AND LOCAL NEWS**, “the most unbiased reporting in news”
- ADMIRE LEADERS WHO “GET THINGS DONE,”** like Reagan and Trump
- 4%** name their employer as a beneficiary of their work vs. 1% of other audiences, the strongest employer-loyalty signal
- 10%** cite faith as a turning point in their lives vs 5% of other audiences

STARS INDICATE DISTINCTIVE DEMOGRAPHIC TRAITS

DEFINING BELIEF

When facing a major challenge, I turn to family for support.

ON TRAITS THEY ADMIRE IN PEOPLE

“Kind, gentle, honest, reliable, forceful, strong.”

ON A PERSON THEY ADMIRE AND WHY

“President Ronald Reagan. He got our country moving in the right direction and created new job growth.”

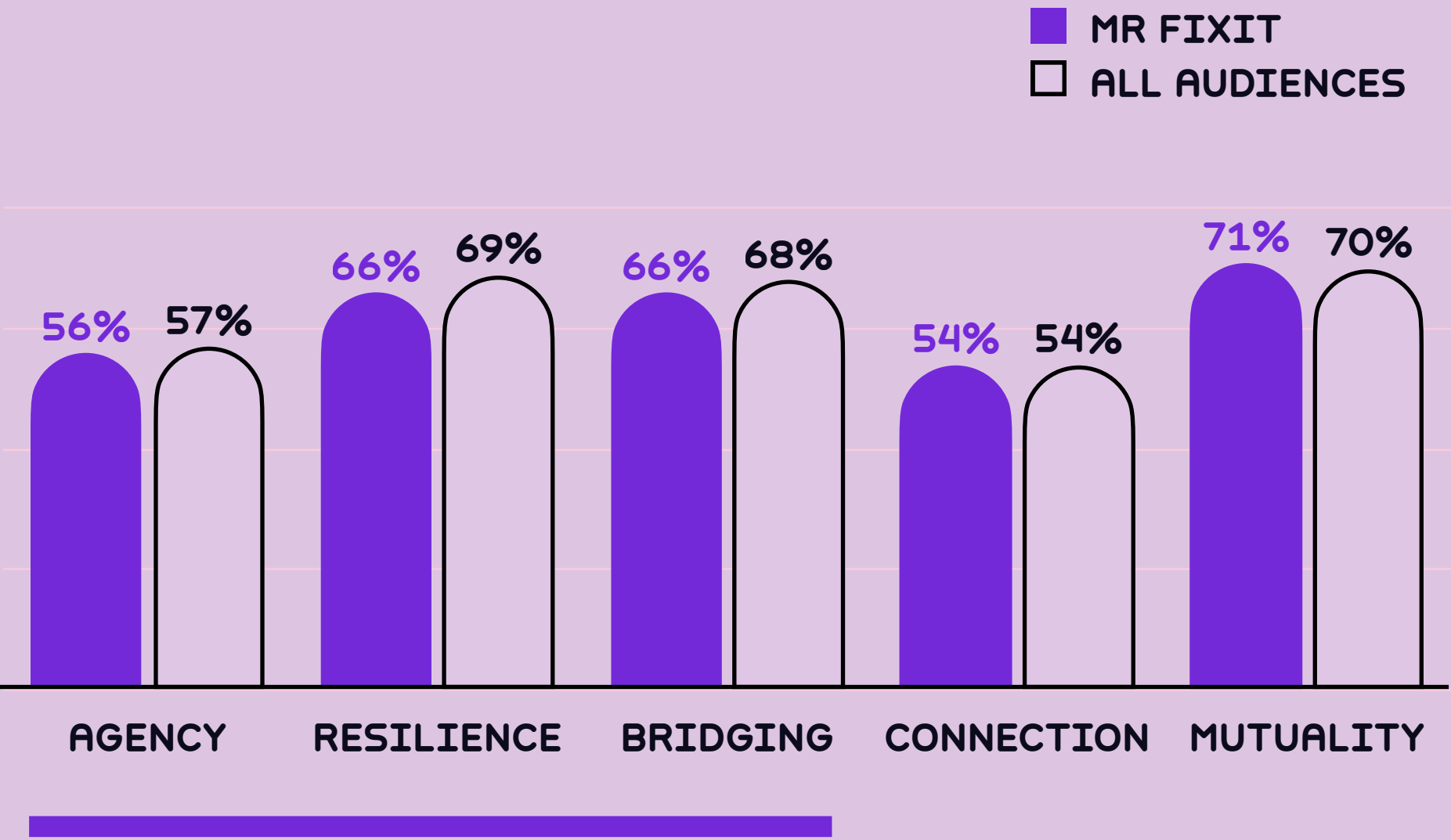
FLOURISHING GAP

AGENCY, BRIDGING, RESILIENCE

MR FIXIT lags most on resilience and slightly less on agency and bridging, which is to say working across difference.

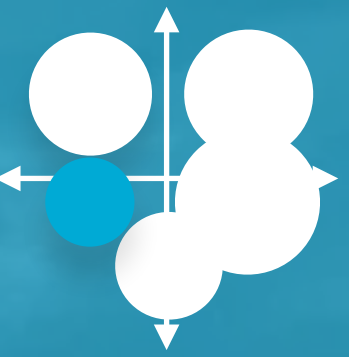
Otherwise, this audience enjoys flourishing scores close to or slightly above the average across all audiences.

Their faith, their orientation as problem solvers and lifelong learners, and their dedication to work and family likely act as a buffer, affording them a steadiness and resolve in how they relate to others.



FLOURISHING AGREEMENT PER AUDIENCE
5-POINT SCALE—SOMEWHAT AGREE, STRONGLY AGREE

- AGENCY.** I know exactly what actions will move my life forward, and I take them consistently.
- RESILIENCE.** When things go wrong, I have multiple ways to handle it and get back on track.
- BRIDGING.** I know how to work with people who disagree with me to achieve my goals.
- CONNECTION.** Making time for meaningful friendships is a top priority for me right now.
- MUTUALITY.** I go out of my way to support others when they succeed.



SACRED DUTY

FAITH-ANCHORED, COMMUNITY-ROOTED · 11% OF MEN

Service and faith are the way. We feed the homeless. We care for our elders, mentor the young. We set the stage for what comes next, and we're already flourishing, across all dimensions. We meet the world around us with flexibility, tolerance, and forbearance, channeling pain into purpose. We've seen it all. We have enough.

IN OUR OWN WORDS

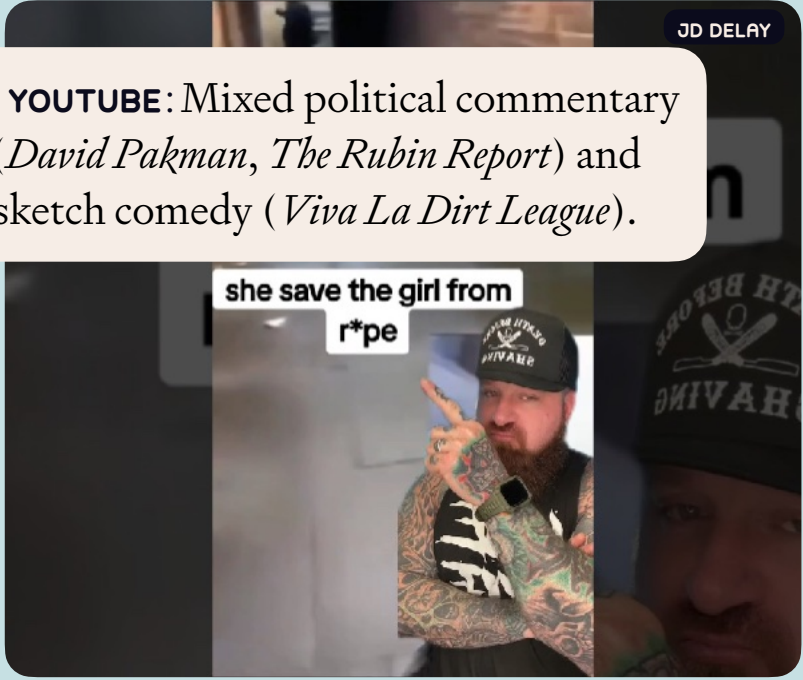
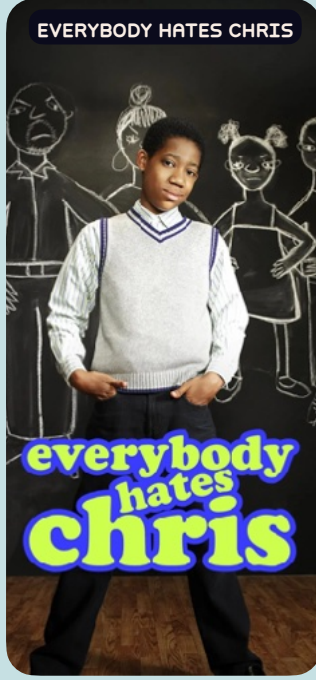
God showed me it's not about me. My community is better off because I'm here, and that's enough.

MEDIA DIET

RIGHTEOUS WARRIOR

The story pattern in SACRED DUTY’s streaming media is a highly capable individual in crisis finding purpose through protecting the vulnerable or fighting corruption. A mission-based partnership allows them to channel their pain into purposeful action, often against the powerful. In this way, they achieve justice and find deeper meaning in service.

TOP STREAMING HITS AND YOUTUBE VIDEOS

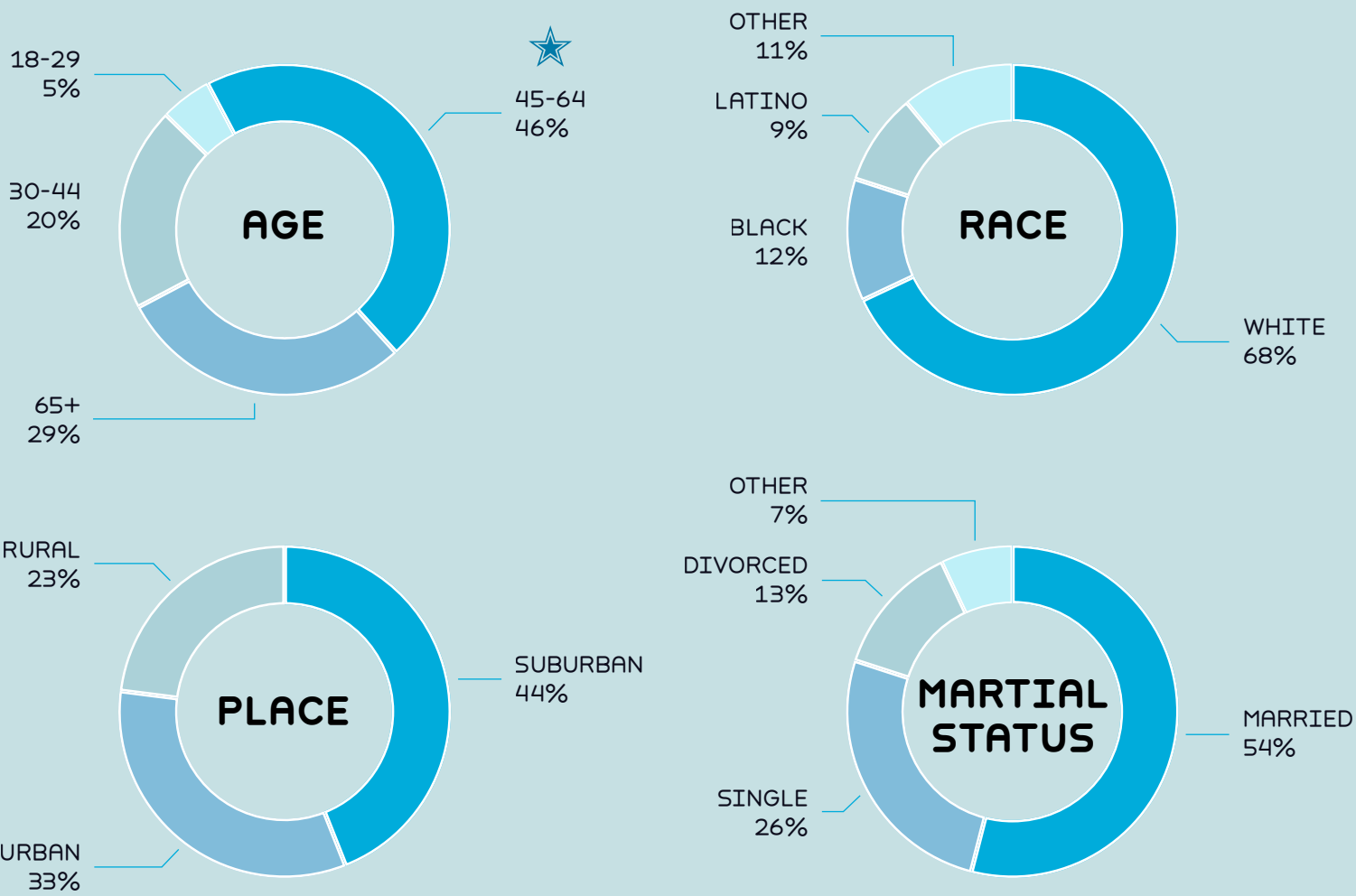


IN STREAMING MEDIA: Classic sitcoms (Everybody Hates Chris), true-crime (The First 48).

ON YOUTUBE: Mixed political commentary (David Pakman, The Rubin Report) and sketch comedy (Viva La Dirt League).

STRENGTH FAITHFUL SERVICE

DEMOGRAPHIC HIGHLIGHTS



- 55% NO COLLEGE

10% 2-YR DEGREE

35% 4-YR DEGREE
- 68% PARENTS ★

16% PARENTS W/ KIDS < 18
- 25% ATTEND CHURCH

29% CHRISTIAN
- 41% DEMOCRAT

32% REPUBLICAN

22% INDEPENDENT

KEY ATTITUDES

- **STRONGEST SERVICE SIGNAL** of any audience
- **4%** name their local community when asked who benefits from their work vs. 3% of other men
- **35%** name a systems-change character who fights for reform as admirable vs. 16% of other men
- **10%** admire Jesus vs. 4% of other men
- **16%** value compassion vs. 8% of other men
- **6%** value loving warmth vs. 3% of other men

STARS INDICATE DISTINCTIVE DEMOGRAPHIC TRAITS

DEFINING BELIEF

The path to a fulfilling life is serving something larger than yourself.

ON TRAITS THEY ADMIRE IN PEOPLE

“Compassionate, honest, loving, merciful, unselfish, determined”

ON A PERSON THEY ADMIRE AND WHY

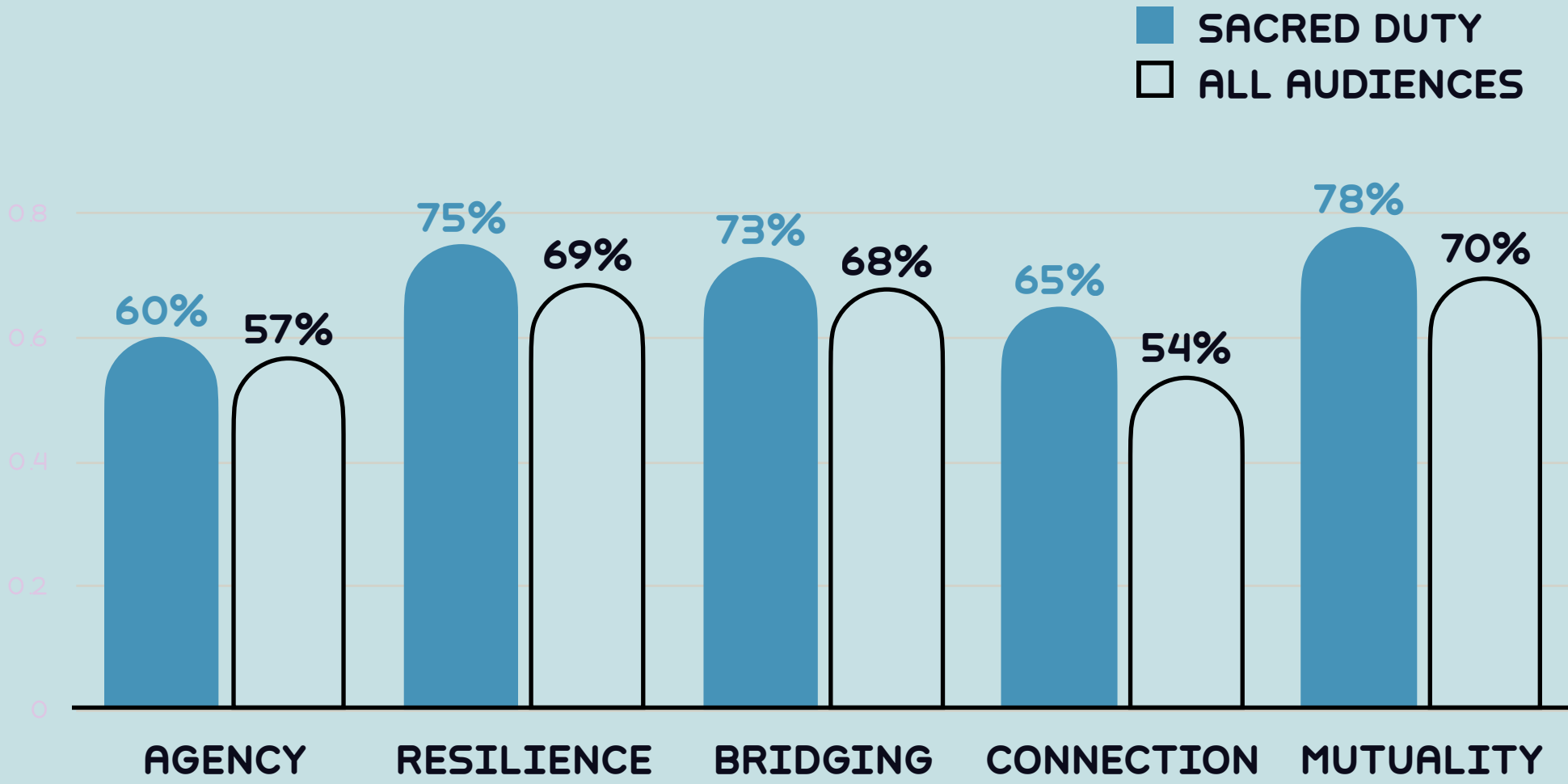
“Jesus. Loving others as my self, helping the weakest among us, avoiding the desire for power over others, striving for peace.”

~~FLOURISHING GAP~~
THEY'RE ALREADY
FLOURISHING!

SACRED DUTY is already flourishing. Which is to say, they score above all audiences’ averages on all five flourishing dimensions.

They are particular strong on mutuality, 8+ points above all audiences and +1 above women. Also strong is resilience, at 6+ points above all audiences, and connection.

Their faith and service orientation likely give them a container large enough to hold difficulty without being overwhelmed. Both MR FIXIT and SACRED DUTY are deeply engaged with the people in their lives, but SACRED DUTY enjoys a distinctive steadiness in their lives and communities.



FLOURISHING AGREEMENT PER AUDIENCE
5-POINT SCALE—SOMEWHAT AGREE, STRONGLY AGREE

- AGENCY. I know exactly what actions will move my life forward, and I take them consistently.
- RESILIENCE. When things go wrong, I have multiple ways to handle it and get back on track.
- BRIDGING. I know how to work with people who disagree with me to achieve my goals.
- CONNECTION. Making time for meaningful friendships is a top priority for me right now.
- MUTUALITY. I go out of my way to support others when they succeed.

AUDIENCES AT A GLANCE

	HOLD THE LINE 29% PROVIDER, PROTECTOR, FAITH & FAMILY ROOTED We hold things together. We deliver. Loyalty and discipline are key, in a world marked by threat and scarcity. We believe men and women have different strengths and work to do.	LOCKED IN 23% SELF-MADE, SELF- RELIANT, PLAYS HARD We’re looking to build something real, for a reason to look up from the grind. In a world where men have to work hard, and no one hands you anything. We don’t shy away from conflict.	IN IT TOGETHER 21% SEES WHAT’S BROKEN AND CAN’T LOOK AWAY We all deserve the same power and the same shot: men, women, everyone. Community-oriented and empathetic, we feel deeply. And we see clearly where systems fall short.	MR FIXIT 16% ADAPTIVE PROBLEM SOLVER & LEARNER We figure it out. We fix it. We leave it better than we found it, especially at work and for our families. We’re loyal to leaders. We protect what’s ours, in a world that’s changing fast.	SACRED DUTY 11% FAITH-ANCHORED, COMMUNITY-ROOTED Service and faith are the way. We feed the homeless. We care for our elders, mentor the young. We set the stage for what comes next, channeling pain into purpose. We’ve seen it all. We have enough.
STORY PATTERN: STREAMING	Isolated professional receives a call to protect a vulnerable person, and the mission creates a bond.	Wounded outsider with hidden abilities forced to reveal their true self. Others’ acceptance is followed by self-acceptance.	Character constrained by expectations uses strategic positioning and authentic presence to earn their place.	Professional loner forms a partnership through shared danger and gains trust through competence.	Capable individual channels pain into purpose through protecting others and/or fighting against corruption.
FLOURISHING GAPS	MUTUALITY, CONNECTION, BRIDGING	MUTUALITY, CONNECTION, AGENCY	AGENCY, RESILIENCE	RESILIENCE, BRIDGING, AGENCY	NO GAPS!
FLOURISHING STRENGTHS	AGENCY LEADS ALL AUDIENCES	BRIDGING	MUTUALITY LEADS ALL AUDIENCES	MUTUALITY	CONNECTION, MUTUALITY, RESILIENCE
DEMOGRAPHY	48% AGE 18 - 44 51% MARRIED 58% PARENTS 53% NO COLLEGE 46% SUBURBAN 32% CHURCH GOING	58% AGE 18 - 44 45% SINGLE 44% PARENTS 51% NO COLLEGE 38% URBAN 22% CHURCH GOING	56% AGE 45+ 46% MARRIED 43% PARENTS 45% 4-YR DEGREE 56% SUBURBAN 12% CHURCH GOING	75% AGE 45+ 57% MARRIED 67% PARENTS 57% NO COLLEGE 24% RURAL 41% CHURCH GOING	75% AGE 45+ 57% MARRIED 68% PARENTS 55% NO COLLEGE 44% SUBURBAN 25% CHURCH GOING

A MANOSPHERE ON YOUTUBE?

How audiences of men engage with YouTube channels that reliably offer up misogyny and gender grievance; how it affects them; and what this suggests for supporting men in their journey toward a more loving, equal future.

ENGAGEMENT NETWORKS FOR OUR AUDIENCES ON YOUTUBE

We wondered if we could derive from audiences' YouTube behaviors a coherent monoculture or rabbit hole of gender grievance and misogyny content men risk falling into online.

We started with two channels whose content reliably demeans women guests ([FreshandFit](#)) and makes women look foolish on camera ([Whatever](#)), plus their clip feeds ([FreshandFit Clips](#) + [Whatever Clips](#)). Then we looked for channels that: (1) co-occur with these two channels in the viewing behaviors of 40+ media panelists; and (2) also reliably feature misogyny and gender grievance. This yielded an additional 4 channels: [Better Bachelor](#), [The Crucible](#), [Kevin Samuels](#), and [Pearl](#).

From these 8 anchor channels, we spun out networks according to our audiences' engagement behaviors. This

allows us to see what other channel engagements co-occur on the same day with anchor channel engagements. We limited networks to the 100 nearest neighboring channels.

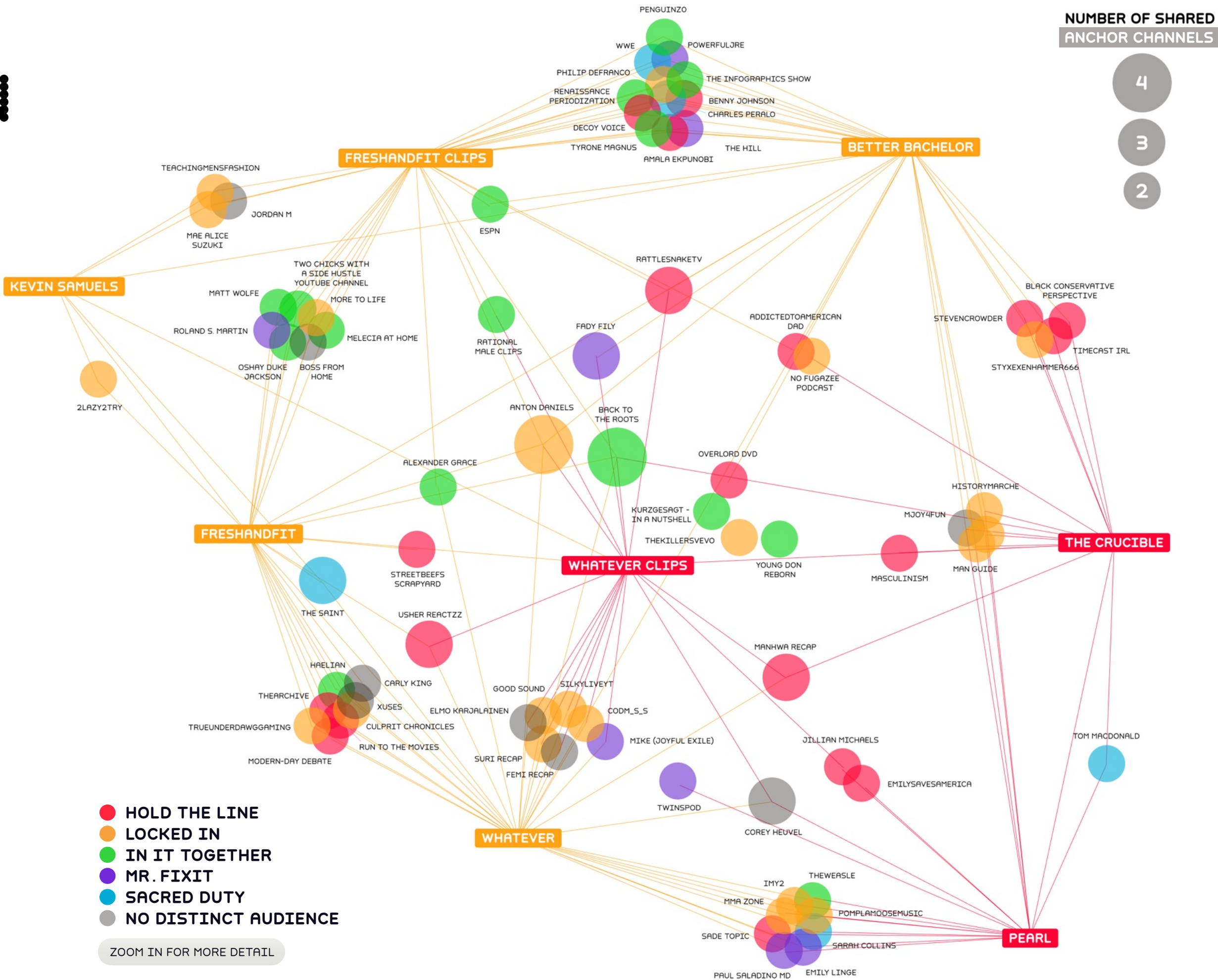
In the network visualization on the next slide, we display each anchor channel as a rectangle, and channels that co-occur in audiences' same-day engagement behaviors as circles. The sizes of the circles denote the number of networks they appear in: the larger the circle, the more networks they appear in. (We only include channels in the visualization that occur in 2 or more networks.) Their relative closeness to one another depicts proximity in audiences' clickstreams: the tighter the cluster, the closer in time the co-viewing is. We color each rectangle or circle according to the audience most engaged in it, and we use grey for channels with no clearly distinctive audience.

WHAT WE LEARN

Our 8 anchor channels mainly cluster with a more mainstream mix of sports, music, gaming, film, late-night, and podcast content, suggesting something other than a monoculture or a rabbit hole.

Our 8 anchor channels primarily engage the **HOLD THE LINE** and **LOCKED IN** audiences. These two audiences appear to be most susceptible to this kind of content.

All audiences engage channels networked with our 8 anchor channels, which suggests *potential* pathways to this anchor channel content via recommendations. But overall anchor channel reach is exceedingly low.



CHANNEL REACH

The percentage of men in our panel who engage with any of our 8 anchor channels on any given day, which we refer to as average daily reach, is very low. When we round percentages to two decimal places, many numbers disappear to zero.

The channel networks our anchor channels are embedded within have reach 50x to 1,000x higher. We include the top eight network channels by average daily reach for comparison.

		MEN OVERALL	WOMEN OVERALL	HOLD THE LINE	LOCKED IN	IN IT TOGETHER	MR FIXIT	SACRED DUTY
ANCHOR CHANNELS	WHATEVER CLIPS	0.03%	0.01%	0.04%	0.02%	0.02%	0.02%	0.02%
	WHATEVER	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%	0.02%	0.01%	0%
	FRESHANDFIT	0.01%	0%	0.01%	0.02%	0.01%	0%	0%
	PEARL	0.01%	0%	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%	0%	0.01%
	BETTER BACHELOR	0%	0%	0%	0%	0.01%	0.01%	0%
	FRESHANDFIT CLIPS	0%	0%	0%	0.01%	0%	0%	0%
	THE CRUCIBLE	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0.01%
	KEVIN SAMUELS	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
TOP NETWORK CHANNELS	PENGUINZO	1.16%	0.49%	1.07%	1.31%	1.21%	0.87%	0.93%
	MRBEAST	0.38%	0.20%	0.35%	0.46%	0.35%	0.29%	0.32%
	FOX NEWS	0.21%	0.17%	0.27%	0.12%	0.22%	0.34%	0.31%
	SNL	0.15%	0.13%	0.13%	0.14%	0.19%	0.13%	0.13%
	CNN	0.12%	0.10%	0.09%	0.10%	0.16%	0.13%	0.17%
	POWERFULJRE	0.11%	0.04%	0.12%	0.09%	0.12%	0.11%	0.08%
	ESPN	0.09%	0.03%	0.08%	0.08%	0.11%	0.08%	0.08%
	PHILIP DEFRANCO	0.05%	0.04%	0.04%	0.05%	0.06%	0.06%	0.05%

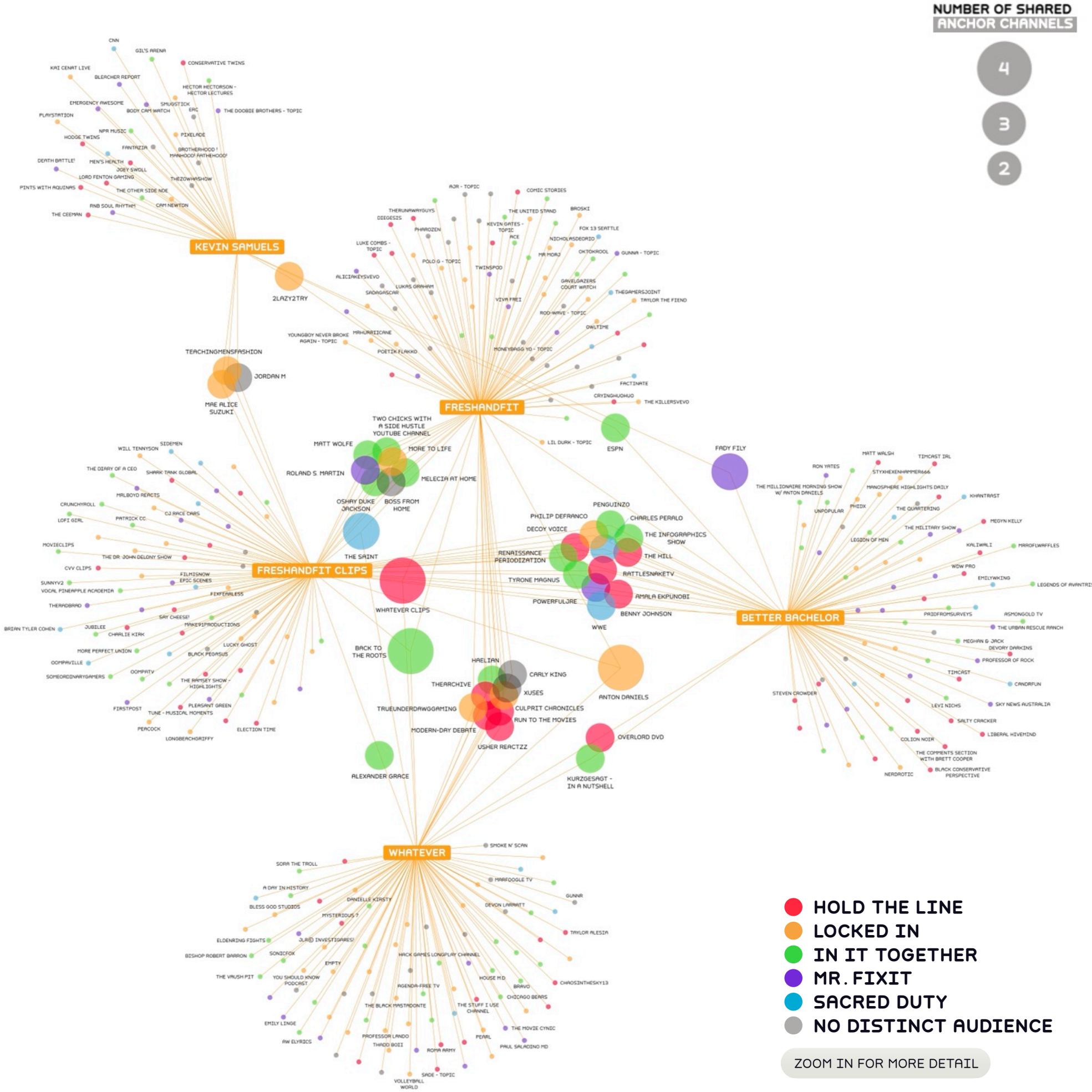
LOCKED IN AUDIENCE CLOSE UP

This visualization shows the top channels by average daily reach associated with the anchor channels distinctively engaged by the LOCKED IN audience.

A qualitative content analysis suggests content here tends toward self-improvement. Content is largely instructional: how-to and self presentation (Teachingmensfashion, Front Row with Ed and Elizabeth, Men’s Health); science-and-build (Tom Stanton, Matt Wolfe, The Military Show); gaming skill builders (Haelian, Xuses); and hustle education (Thomas Frank, The Finance Zone).

There’s also a commentary-talk strand, represented by Philip DeFranco, penguinz0, and PowerfulJRE. This ranges across topics, like comedy, MMA, and politics, but carries a “get in shape, optimize yourself” vibe, with takeaways, even though you’re watching someone talk rather than, say, work out.

Here gender grievance content reads as advice.

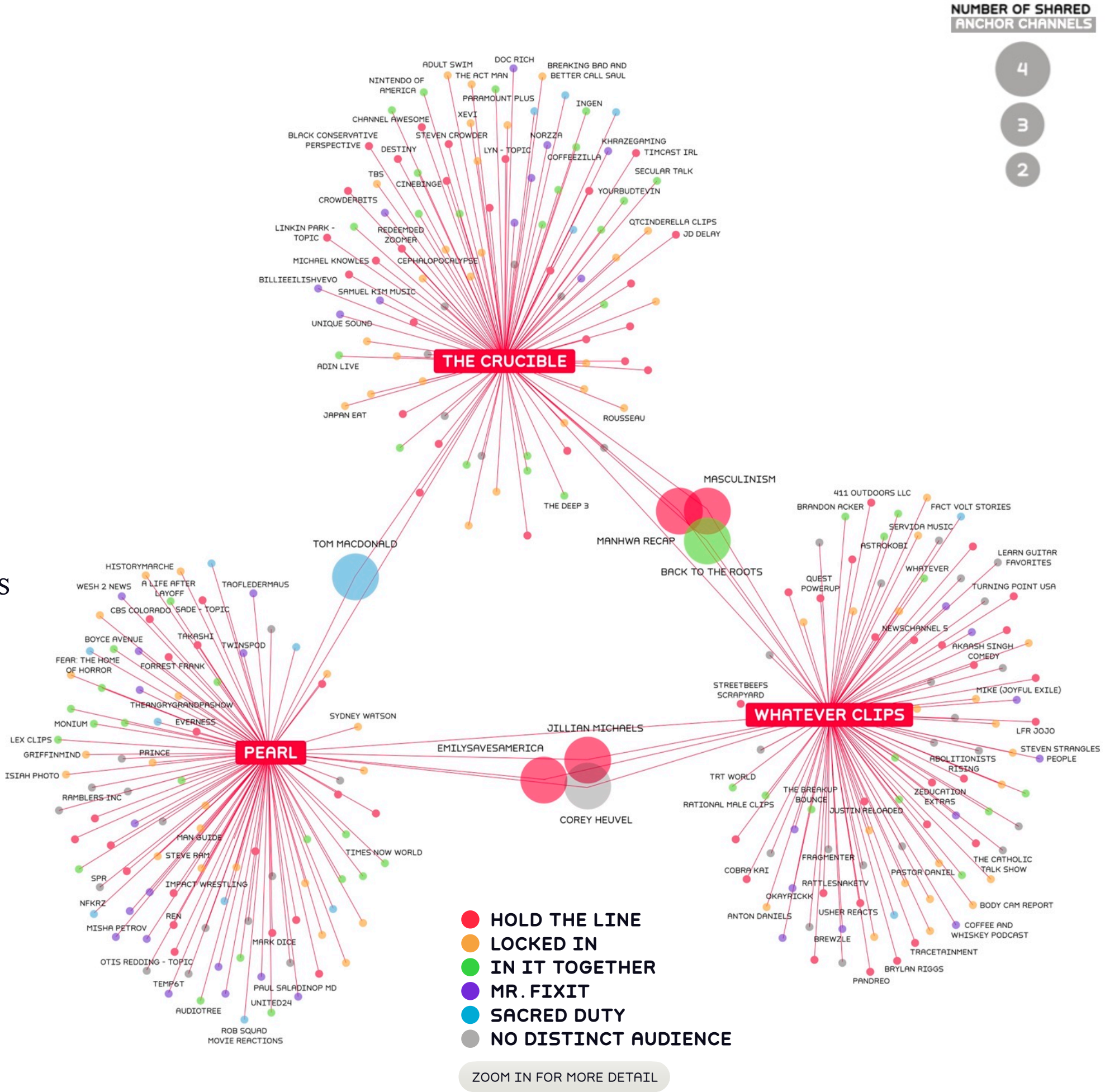


HOLD THE LINE AUDIENCE CLOSE UP

This visualization shows the top channels by average daily reach associated with the anchor channels distinctively engaged by the **HOLD THE LINE** audience.

A qualitative content analysis suggests content tending toward entertainment rather than life lessons. There are primarily two content categories. Film & Animation runs on anime-manhwa clips ([Asura Recaps](#), [AniLefort](#)), movie recaps and reaction ([CineBinge](#), [Rob Squad Movie Reactions](#)), and fandom content ([Star Wars Centralized](#), [Cobra Kai](#)). Comedy runs on street-charisma reaction performances ([Josh Nasar’s sidewalk bits](#), [Benedict Polizzi’s “politely catcalling”](#)).

There’s also winning as spectacle: combat sports ([MMA Talk](#), [Karate Combat](#)), athlete drama ([Behind the Line](#)), and political argument as contest ([Sargon of Akkad](#), [Jillian Michaels](#) in debate-not-workout mode). Here gender grievance content also occurs as spectacle.



MEN'S BEHAVIOR ON YOUTUBE DOES NOT YIELD A MANOSPHERE SHAPED LIKE A RABBIT HOLE OR A COHERENT MONOCULTURE OF CONTENT

Engagement with the gender-grievance and misogyny content we looked at is rare for all audiences via source channels. A video might rack up millions of views, but almost no one is watching this content regularly. It shows up occasionally, alongside gaming, fitness, comedy, and whatever else men engage with daily. Which means tactics to redirect men's attention elsewhere are probably superfluous. Most of the time men's attention is already elsewhere.

It's probably better to think about a "manosphere" not as a rabbit hole or coherent monoculture of content, but as a diffuse cultural phenomenon that propagates via memes, clips, visual styles, and insider language rather than via at-the-source views, subscriptions, or recommendations. Andrew Tate proves that low channel reach and high cultural

penetration are simultaneously possible. Even when Tate's channels were banned from most platforms, he was one of the most searched for people in the world. What our analysis observed is direct consumption at the source on a particular platform. We did not quantify cultural diffusion. But we could, and we should!

Metaphors matter, insofar as they shape perceptions of problems and suggest solutions. The rabbit-hole metaphor implies a captive, escalating audience, which evidence on YouTube does not support. We recommend retiring it, and letting empirical investigation continue to sharpen our view of what's happening and what response it demands.

Which brings us to how gender grievance and misogyny content actually affect the audiences who engage with it.

HOW CONTENT AFFECTS AUDIENCES

To discover how the content audiences engage affects them, in collaboration with LinkUp Lab and others, we sampled and clipped 32 videos from our anchor channels, their broader engagement networks, and beyond. We were interested in the full range of YouTube content that engages men, content about fitness, firearms, philosophy, commentary, craft, explainers, play alongs +



Sam Cornforth



Paul Olima



Euan Findlay



John Fisher



Fergus Crawley



Daragh Fleming



Fresh & Fit



Darius M



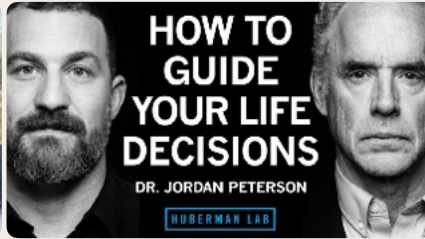
Colin Coaches



Flagrant



Zack Telander



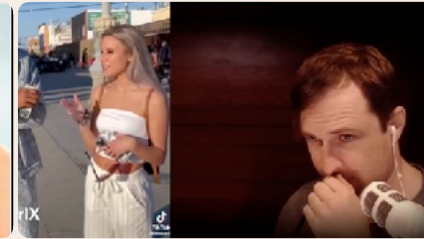
Andrew Huberman



Vox



Marni Your Personal Wing Girl



Alexander Grace



Whatever



Yes Theory



Thinking Football



Sajam



Joe Rogan



Scott Galloway



Vlogbrothers



JimmyOnRelationships



Aba N Preach



Ham Radio Crash Course



Deestroying



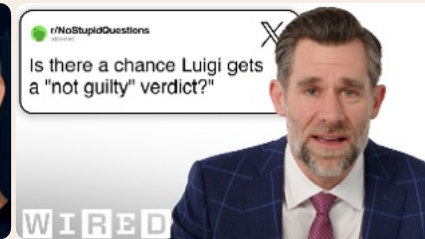
ClassicFirearms



PBS



Chris Williamson



LegalEagle



Allen Pan

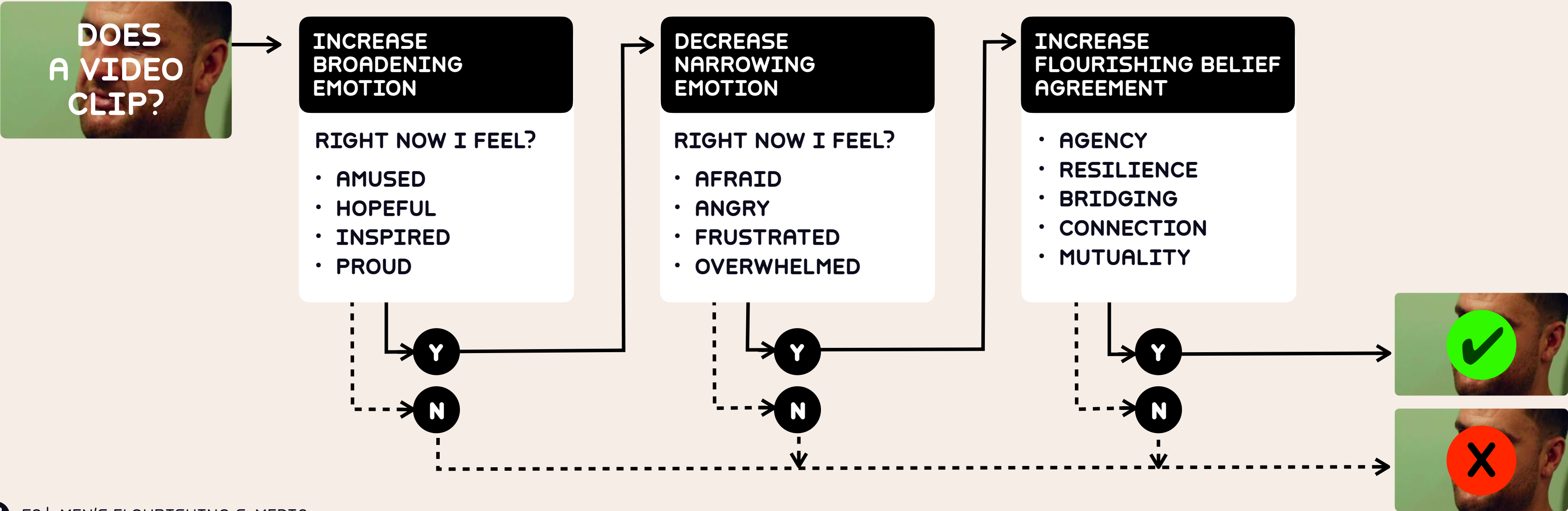


SmarterEveryDay

ALL MEDIA ARE CLICKABLE

HOW WE TESTED

We tested our 32 videos in randomized control trial-style online tests, with 10,000 men. Which means we randomly assigned panelists to treatment and control groups. The treatment group saw one of our videos. The control group saw a “placebo” video, like a video of a screensaver. Then people in both groups completed the same survey pertaining to narrowing and broadening emotions, our five flourishing beliefs, and a standard battery of demographics and values questions. We were looking for videos that: increased broadening emotions, decreased narrowing emotions, and increased agreement with our flourishing belief statements.

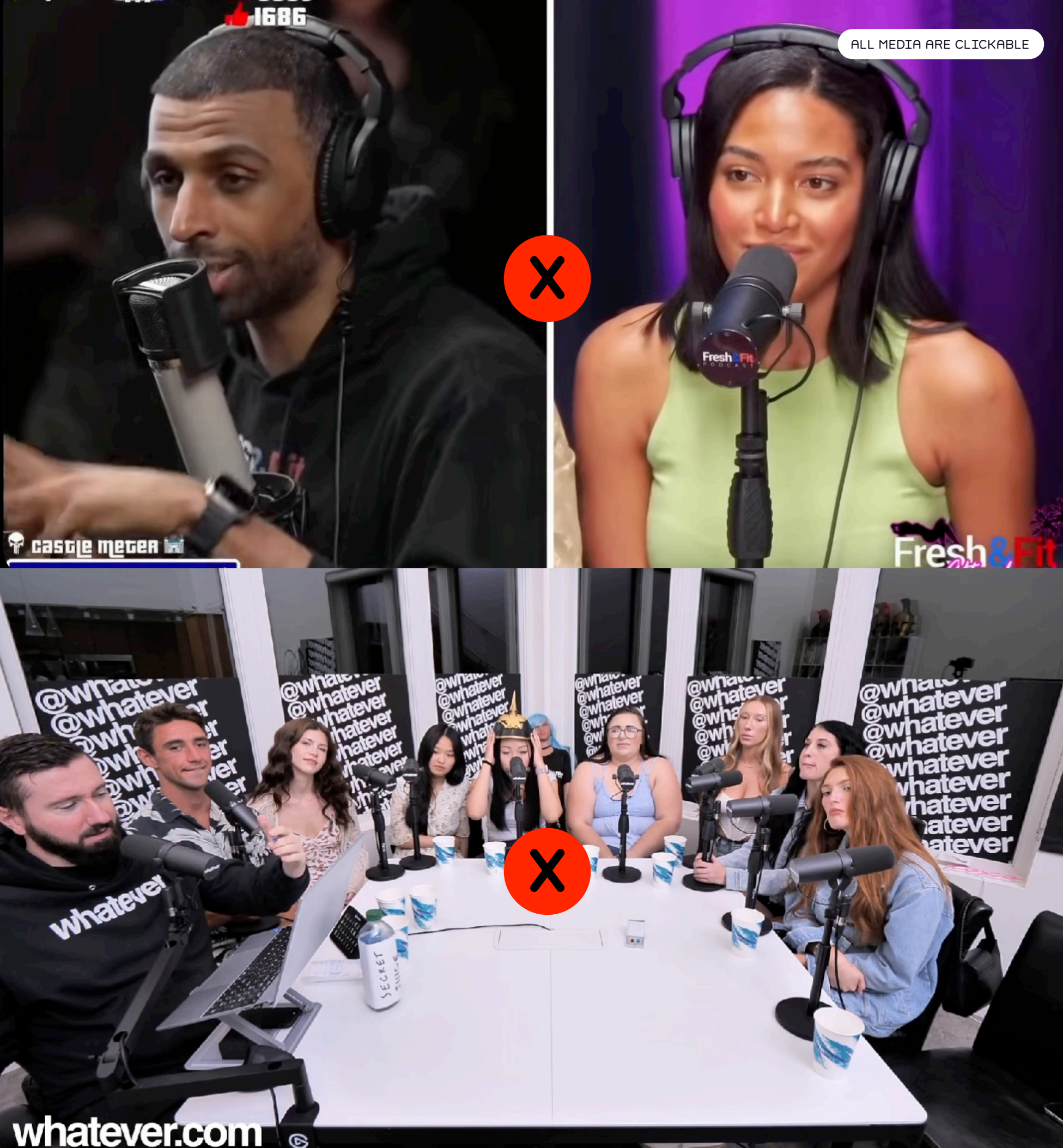


GRIEVANCE CONTENT SAPS FLOURISHING + AFFECT

Among the 32 videos we tested, content close in to our 8 anchor channels was 8x more likely to decrease broadening emotions and 3x more likely to both increase narrowing emotions and decrease agreement with our flourishing beliefs.

However, some of this content increased the agency dimension of flourishing. Which suggests that audiences engaging with such content may really be shopping for agency, which the LOCKED IN audience definitely lags on.

This may open an opportunity for content that triggers in viewers agency centered in taking action from within situations, rather than exercising control over situations, and over people, in particular, women.

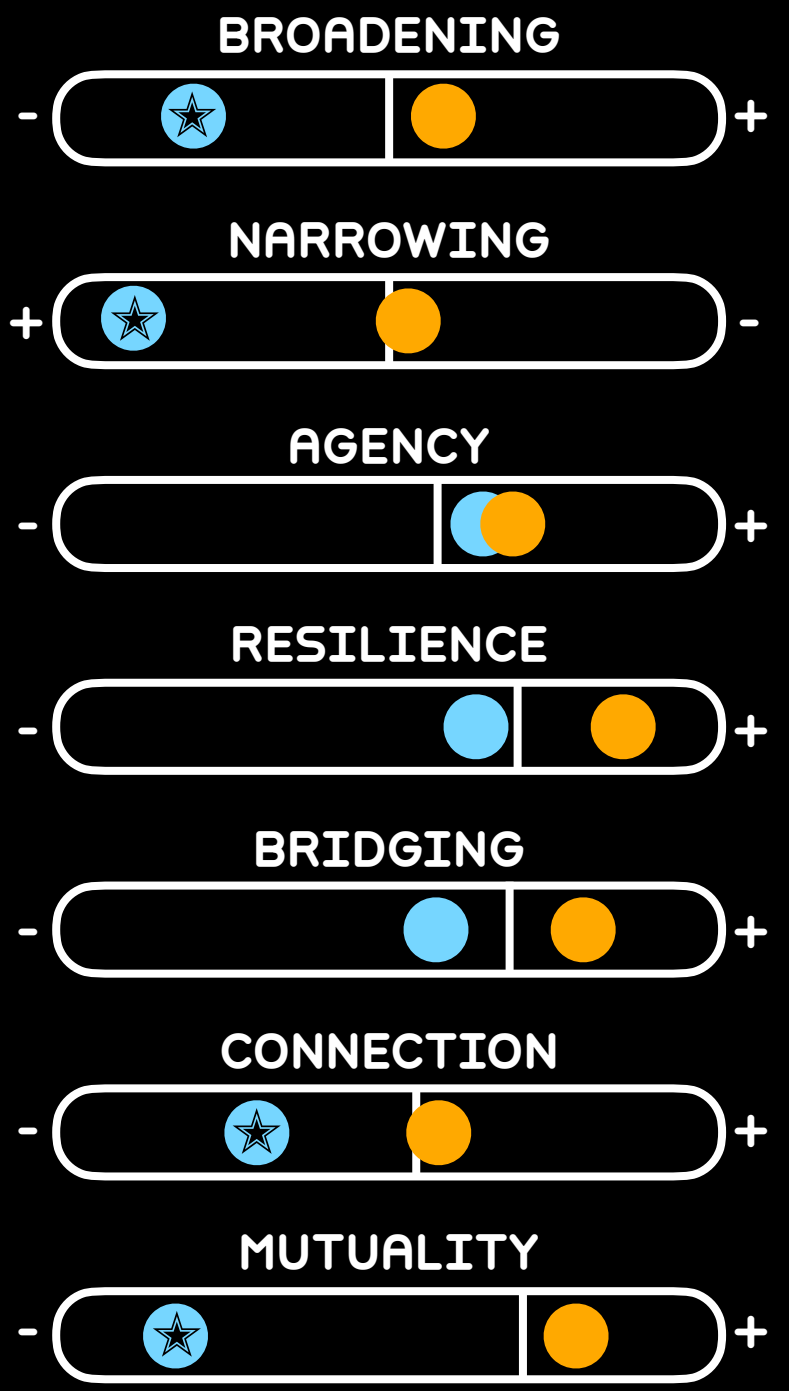


INSIDE VS OUTSIDE VIBE

Being lectured at or being a voyeur of a world that feels sealed off, staid or static increases narrowing emotions, decreases broadening emotions, and decreases most dimensions of flourishing. By contrast, content that creates the feeling of the viewer being inside the action—whether through a dynamic situation, locations, camera work, or savvy editing—keeps narrowing emotions and flourishing beliefs stable and lifts broadening emotions.

BEING INSIDE AN EXPERIENCE			BEING LECTURED AT		
<i>Zack Telander</i> Strength coach cues a strongman athlete through a PR lift attempt, rep by rep. Viewer feels ringside in his unfolding triumph	<i>Joe Rogan</i> Rogan, Matt Damon, and Ben Affleck on giving film crew profit-share bonuses. Editing gives participatory feel.	<i>Allen Pan</i> Engineer tests arm exoskeleton in arm wrestling at Muscle Beach. Viewer rides along through iterative attempts and growth.	<i>Andrew Huberman</i> Peterson holds forth about porn as a super-stimulus for men. Serious intellectual conversation, fly on the wall viewer	<i>Fresh & Fit</i> Host tells a 24-year-old woman she is narcissistic and will be used rather than loved. Humiliation from the outside in	<i>Alexander Grace</i> Moral commentary on interview with woman recounting her own infidelity story, judgement from a distance, fly on the wall viewer

ALL MEDIA ARE CLICKABLE



Sliders represent agreement movement scales relative to baselines, marked by white lines.
Orange dots represent movement across all “Being Inside an Experience” videos.
Blue dots represent movement across all “Being Lectured At” videos.
Stars call attention to statistically significant movement.

DUDES DOING VS SOLO REACTIONS

Building, competing, exploring, coaching . . . doing any social activity in groups that manifestly engages curiosity and skill is broadening. It lifts the bridging, mutuality, and resilience dimensions of flourishing too. By contrast, the emotional signature of watching one dude rant and react on screen appears to be narrowing. Even worse is judgy content that assigns blame, which collapses the belief in supporting others, or mutuality.

TWO+ DUDES DOING



Flag football game with iShowSpeed. Live ins and outs of athlete life: wins, losses, respect for opponents, trash talk and other tactics.



Shared curiosity outdoors. Destin and Phil close up on how cicadas make noise, using a high-speed camera, with post-mortem on the project.



3 dudes reacting in split screen to gaming clips ask, “Will it kill?” Lots of laughs + gentle trash-talking. “You a bunch of bitches, but I still love you.”



Breathless, high-strung, studio-set, news anchor-style rant on Trump’s inauguration day events and all the billionaires in attendance.



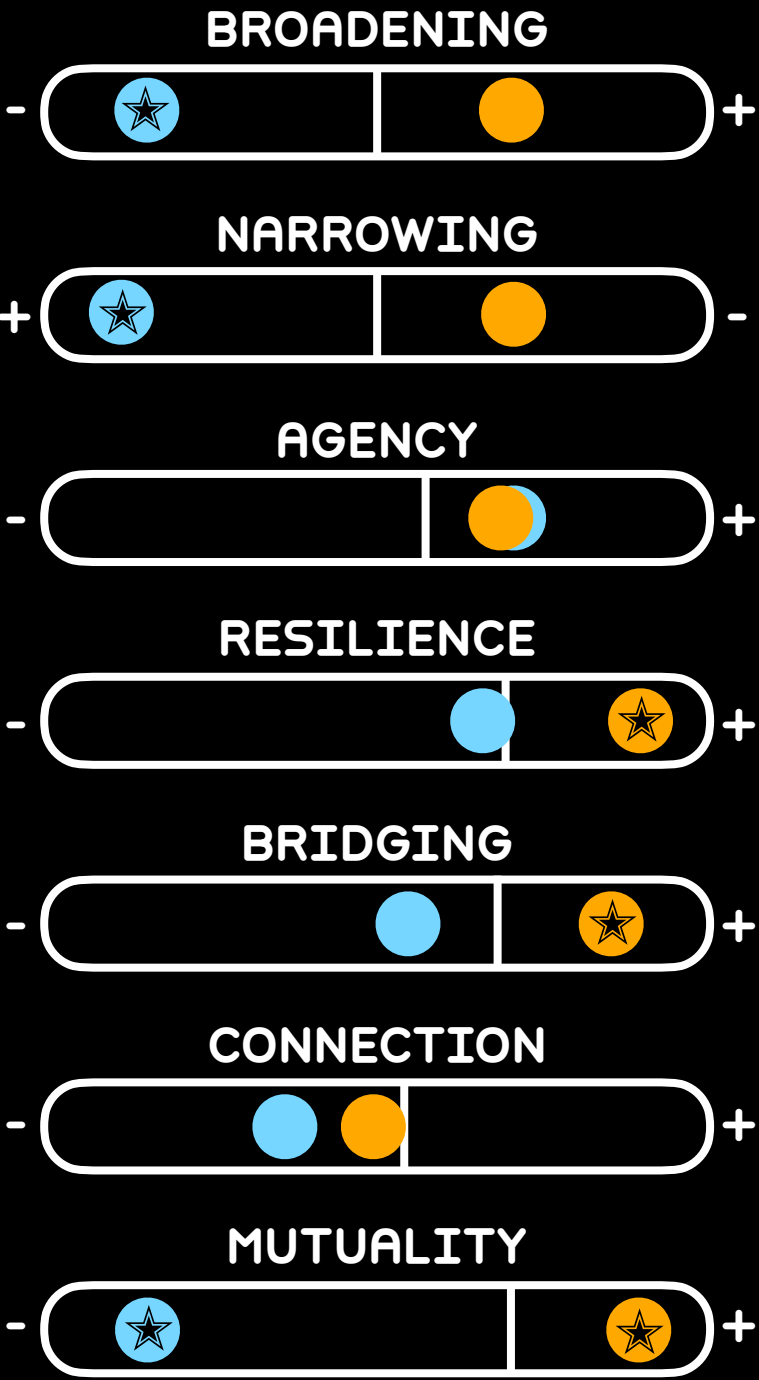
Earnest, measured, straight-to-camera critique of a creator who allegedly recorded and shared videos of women without consent.



Low-res webcam reaction to clipped interview with a woman about her dating choices. Commentary on dating scene. Split screen.

ALL MEDIA ARE CLICKABLE

SOLO RANTS + REACTIONS



Sliders represent agreement movement scales relative to baselines, marked by white lines.
Orange dots represent movement across all “Two+ Dudes Doing” videos.
Blue dots represent movement across all “Solo Rants + Reactions” videos.
Stars call attention to statistically significant movement.

CRITIQUE VS MEN JUST BEING MEN

Referencing being a man or critiquing gender norms—even inside of comedy—zeros out broadening emotions and raises narrowing emotions. It also suppresses the bridging, connection, and mutuality dimensions of flourishing. By contrast, content that just shows men being men, doing stuff together in groups, and brings viewers into the action, just works. No topic seems to be inherently bad: fitness, firearms, gaming, finance.

NOT ABOUT MEN PER SE

BRO CULTURE + MANBOX CRITIQUE



Deestroying

Flag football game with iShowSpeed. Live ins and outs of athlete life: wins, losses, respect for opponents, trash talk and tactics.



Joe Rogan

Rogan, Matt Damon, and Ben Affleck on giving film crew profit-share bonuses. Editing gives participatory feel.



SmarterEveryDay

Shared curiosity outdoors. Dudes close up on how cicadas make noise, using a high-speed camera and a post-mortem on the day.



John Fisher

Boxer cries in dressing room: “My dad’s strong.” “It’s alright to cry if you’re a man. Try to do it in private. Not like me.”



Colin Coaches

Lifter argues gym should be about enjoyment, not optimization nor the grindset. “I just like lifting weights and being jacked.”

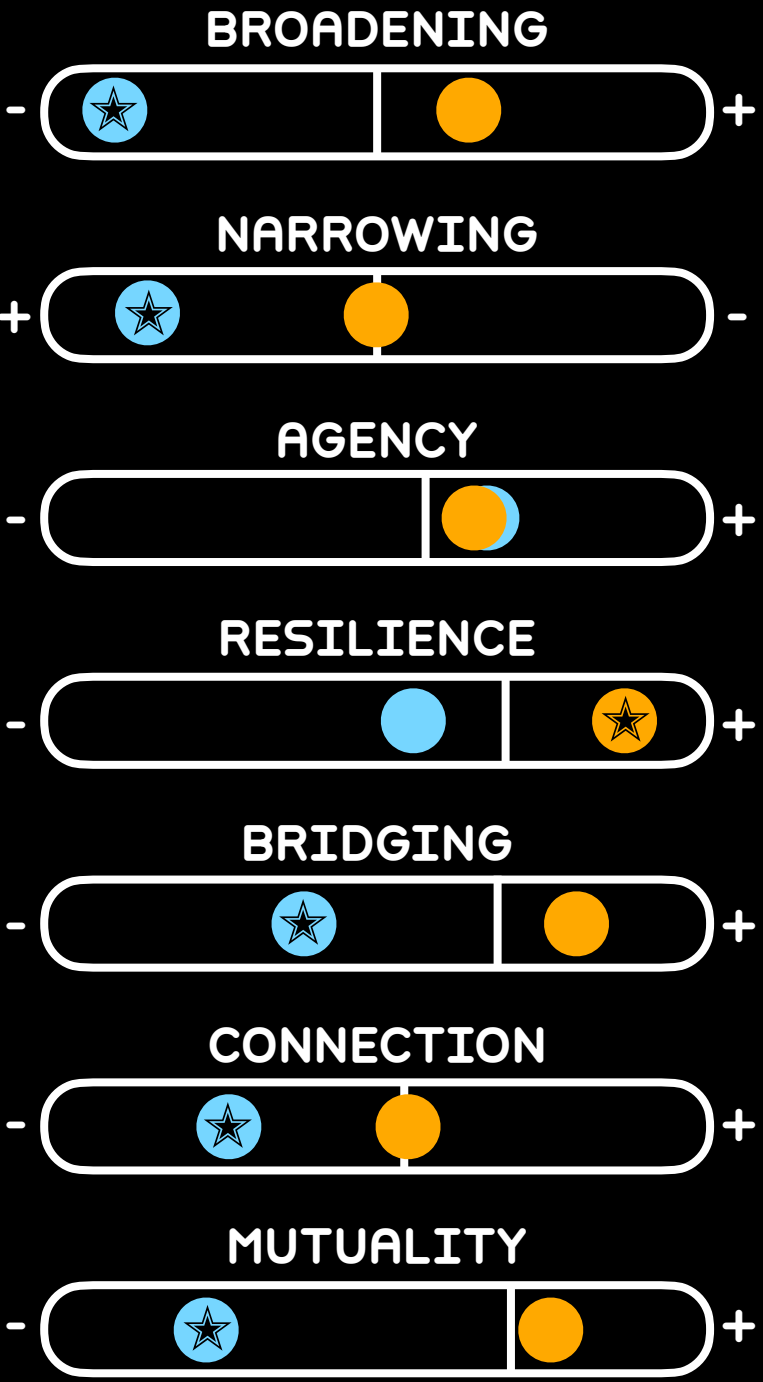


Sam Cornforth

Polished comedy sketch satirizing 2025 fitness bro performative-ness, optimization, and creator culture. “Say less x.”

ALL MEDIA ARE CLICKABLE

Sliders represent agreement movement scales relative to baselines, marked by white lines.
Orange dots represent movement across all “Not About Men Per Se” videos.
Blue dots represent movement across all “Bro Culture + Manbox Critique” videos.
Stars call attention to statistically significant movement.



3 DESIGN PRINCIPLES

To support men's flourishing through media as they move toward a more loving, equal future, our content testing says:

DON'T OVERTLY CRITIQUE MASCULINITY

Making it a gender project forfeits emotional umph, even if you're right, even if you care.

DON'T GO FOR SOLO RANTS AND REACTIONS

One judgy dude casting blame doesn't broaden, no matter how outrageous, far out, or funny.

DON'T BE STAIID, STATIC, SEALED OFF

Shutting out or alienating audiences from the action diminishes connection, obviously.



DO FEATURE MEN JUST BEING MEN

Let men be men in whatever way suits them best and aligns with flourishing and broadening.



DO TWO+ DUDES DOING STUFF

Showing the social, skills, and curiosity at work builds the same in audiences.



DO PLACE THE VIEWER INSIDE THE ACTION

Using situations, characters, locations, camera, or editing to increase identification makes magic.

*We hope you make
them your own + use
them to drive more
experimentation.*

THANK YOU

QUESTIONS? EMAIL HELLO@HARMONYLABS.ORG.

Harmony Labs is a nonprofit media research lab on a mission to research and reshape society's relationship with media, using science, data, and creativity. For more than a decade, our work has helped storytellers and strategists, decision makers and dreamers, harness the immense power of media to shape a positive, pluralistic future and support human flourishing.

LinkUp Lab, an innovation hub designed by Equimundo and Futures Without Violence, incubates and accelerates solutions that reimagine the online spaces where young men play and connect to be safer, supportive, and pro-social.

Special thanks to our project advisors and reviewers, including Soren Duggan, Alex Nemo Hanse, Richie Hardcore, Ashley Kolaya, Sam Pressler, Ezra Sullivan, and Kaitlyn Tierney.

APPENDIX

Methods detail, including survey questions

Survey. A survey of some 70 items was fielded in October 2025 to 3,000 general population respondents, serving as the main audience segmentation instrument for the project. We used values and attitudinal dimensions in the survey data to cluster respondents into five distinct audience segments.

Streaming Analysis. We used 7 months of Narrative Observatory streaming media data—the streaming films and series engaged by panelists from June through December 2024. Then we determined which content was most distinctively engaged by each audience and by gender. For each of the five audiences, we identified the content they watched disproportionately more than other audiences, rather than simply the most popular titles. Finally, we assessed relevance to flourishing. We used AI and human annotation to code each story across four stages: starting state, catalyst, transformation, and resolution. We evaluated how each story spoke to themes of growth and flourishing, and emotion, then looked for themes across streaming media for different audiences and genders.

YouTube Network Analysis. We used Narrative Observatory YouTube viewing panel data to collect YouTube videos actually engaged by panelists from January through December 2024. We built channel networks anchored around select channels. We measured audience overlap between every channel pair, where high overlap means “close” and low overlap means “far,” producing a co-viewing distance. Each anchor’s network is its 100 nearest neighbors by that measure. We also calculated average daily reach: the average per day share of active panelists who watched a given anchor or any channel in its network.

Content Testing. We tested 32 videos in randomized control trial-style online tests, with 10,977 men. We randomly assigned panelists to treatment and control groups. The treatment group saw one of 32 videos. The control group saw a “placebo” video, like a video of a screensaver. Then people in both groups completed the same survey pertaining to narrowing and broadening emotions, our five flourishing beliefs, and a standard battery of demographics and values questions.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

	SURVEY ITEM	RESPONSE OPTIONS
Narrative Goal v1	I am in full control of my life, even when I face setbacks	Strongly disagree; Somewhat disagree; Neither agree nor disagree; Somewhat agree; Strongly agree
	I know how to work with people who disagree with me to achieve my goals	
	Making time for meaningful friendships is a top priority for me right now	
	When I feel stress, I am comfortable asking for support	
	I go out of my way to support others when they succeed	
Admirable Traits	The kinds of people I really admire and want to be like are... (Select 3)	Loyal; Friendly; Protective; Nurturing; Physically fit; Respected; Aggressive; Wealthy; Strong; Confident; Generous; Something else [Open-ended response]
	What are the traits you most admire and want to be like?	[Open-ended response]
	You previously said the following when asked about what traits you most admire: [piped text]. To what extent do you describe yourself as that?	That doesn't describe me at all; That somewhat describes me; That perfectly describes me; not asked
	Name a real person (living or dead) you really admire and why:	[Open-ended response]
Emotional Intelligence	I have the ability to articulate the feelings of the people around me	Never true; Rarely true; Sometimes true; Often true; Almost always true; not asked
	I am good at identifying my feelings	
	I struggle to articulate the feelings of the people around me	
	It is hard for me to identify my feelings	
Action Triggers	The kind of person I admire would have to take action if they realized... (Select top 2)	People they care about were being hurt or threatened; Others needed help and they were the one who could provide it; They had to change in order to be true to themselves; They couldn't handle things on their own anymore

SURVEY QUESTIONS

	SURVEY ITEM	RESPONSE OPTIONS
Friendship & Support	When facing a major challenge, how often do you turn to the following people for support? - Family related by blood - Close friends who really know me - Allies in my life like teachers, coaches, and colleagues - Books, podcasts, influencer content or other media - Medical professionals, like a therapist	Never; Rarely; Sometimes; Always
	Some of my best friends are men	Strongly disagree; Somewhat disagree; Neither agree nor disagree; Somewhat agree; Strongly agree
	Some of my best friends are women	
Purpose, Service & Meaning	I do not have enough meaning in my life.	Absolutely untrue; Mostly untrue; Somewhat untrue; Can't say true or false; Somewhat true; Mostly true; Absolutely true
	When you think about the work you do or want to do in life, who do you most hope benefits from it?	[Open-ended response]
	Raising kids is an important part of living a good life.	Strongly disagree; Somewhat disagree; Neither agree nor disagree; Somewhat agree; Strongly agree
	Having and caring for a spouse is an important part of living a good life.	
	The path to a fulfilling life is serving something larger than yourself.	
	At this time of my life, I see myself as helping others in meaningful ways.	
	At this time of my life, I see myself as willing to take risks for what matters most.	Not at all; A little; Somewhat; Very much
Transformation	Describe a moment that transformed your life.	

SURVEY QUESTIONS

	SURVEY ITEM	RESPONSE OPTIONS
Relationships & Gender	In romantic relationships, I prefer to:	Share my deepest thoughts and feelings openly; Keep some emotional boundaries while still feeling close; Focus more on actions than emotional expression
	My approach to long-term romantic commitment is:	I want to find one person to build a life with; I prefer to keep my options open and see what develops; I'm not focused on commitment right now
	I am confident I can find romantic partners.	Strongly disagree; Somewhat disagree; Neither agree nor disagree; Somewhat agree; Strongly agree
	In the stories that really resonate with me, the main obstacles or threats are usually represented by:	Men; Women; Gender doesn't matter
	In my experience, anyone can make a mistake, but the people who are truly evil are usually:	
	In an ideal world, who is best suited to make sure material needs, like money, are met for others?	Every family decides what works for them; Men provide so women can do other things; Women provide so men can do other things
	In an ideal world, who is best suited to care for others by cooking, cleaning, and looking after everyone's basic needs?	
	In an ideal world, who is best suited to create joy for others?	
	Men and women shouldn't try to be friends because sex gets in the way	Strongly disagree; Somewhat disagree; Neither agree nor disagree; Somewhat agree; Strongly agree
	Men and women have fundamentally different strengths vs mostly similar strengths.	[7-pt scale] Fundamentally different strengths; Neutral; Mostly similar strengths
	I have felt pressure to have children I wasn't sure I wanted.	Strongly disagree; Somewhat disagree; Neither agree nor disagree; Somewhat agree; Strongly agree
	Men have it harder than women when it comes to opportunities.	
	Have you experienced the following: being forced to do something sexual that you didn't want to do.	Yes; No; Prefer not to answer

SURVEY QUESTIONS

	SURVEY ITEM	RESPONSE OPTIONS
Agency, Resilience & Conflict	I keep pushing for what I need even when people get uncomfortable.	Strongly disagree; Somewhat disagree; Neither agree nor disagree; Somewhat agree; Strongly agree
	If something really important was at stake, I wouldn't hesitate to get physical in a fight.	
	I discuss my differences with others calmly and openly.	
Governance & Trust	Whom do you trust most to provide you with the information you need about how local and federal government are working?	[Open-ended response]
	Whom do you trust most to stand up for your rights and needs?	
	Whom do you trust most to make sure the government delivers?	
Good Life	Everyone has a different belief about what it takes to live a good life; what's your opinion?	[Open-ended response]
Systems Change	Who is a hero from a book, TV show, or movie who you think made their society more democratic?	[Open-ended response]
Demographics	[Standard battery]	[Standard battery]
Values	[Standard battery]	[Standard battery]

SURVEY QUESTIONS

	SURVEY ITEM	RESPONSE OPTIONS
Narrative Goal v2	I know exactly what actions will move my life forward, and I take them consistently.	Strongly disagree; Somewhat disagree; Neither agree nor disagree; Somewhat agree; Strongly agree
	When things go wrong, I have multiple ways to handle it and get back on track.	
	I know how to work with people who disagree with me to achieve my goals.	
	Making time for meaningful friendships is a top priority for me right now.	
	I go out of my way to support others when they succeed.	
Broadening	Please indicate how much you [disagree or agree] with the following statements: - Right now, I feel hopeful. - Right now, I feel inspired. - Right now, I feel proud. - Right now, I feel amused.	
Narrowing	Please indicate how much you [disagree or agree] with the following statements: - Right now, I feel afraid. - Right now, I feel angry. - Right now, I feel frustrated. - Right now, I feel overwhelmed.	
Gender	What gender do you identify with?	Male; Female; Non binary; Transgender male; Transgender female; Agender; My gender is not listed