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NEW: First-Ever ‘Manosphere Index’ Reveals How Economic Pressure, not Ideology or Online Influences, Is Shaping Modern Masculinity

Most in-depth study to date across all race and age groups challenges narratives around the “masculinity crisis” and exposes significant differences on gender roles, faith, societal pressures, economic strain and who and what shapes their worldview

Findings reveal men are poised to be more receptive to brands and campaigns that acknowledge their pressure points in 2026

Additional research on women reveals differences in online preferences, the role of femininity vs. feminism and workplace power dynamics

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The “[**Manosphere Index**](#)” — a first-of-its kind national study conducted and released today by [**Precision**](#) and [**Tunnl**](#) — provides the most comprehensive look yet at modern masculinity, examining identity, culture, faith, media behavior, and economic pressure across every major race and generation. The findings offer essential insights for brands, campaigns, and organizations trying to understand shifting attitudes among American men.

Since the 2024 election, consumer, political, and media organizations have scrambled to explain men’s behavior — often reducing it to a fear that young men are sliding into extreme online spaces. Headlines warn of a “masculinity crisis,” a growing manosphere, and a generation drifting toward harder ideological content.

Precision and Tunnl partnered to challenge that storyline. Through more than 4,000 interviews, the study reveals something more complex: Men aren’t moving sharply rightward — they’re responding to the collision of economic strain, algorithmic media, and questions of identity and purpose. These forces cut across racial and generational lines in ways that haven’t been captured in existing reporting.

“Existing narratives flatten millions of men into one storyline when the reality is far more nuanced. Men aren’t undergoing an ideological shift — they are reacting to economic stress, dwindling trust in institutions, online echo chambers, and uncertainty about their place in a changing world,” said **Stephanie Cutter, Managing Partner of Precision**. “This isn’t a ‘crisis of masculinity.’ It’s a broader cultural reset shaped by daily pressures and a search for purpose and belonging. If brands and campaigns want to reach men — especially young men of color, who make up two of the country’s largest voting constituencies but who remain notably absent from the broader manosphere conversation — they need to stop treating them as a monolith

and start addressing the diverse pressures across generations and ethnicities. And they must meet men where they actually are: on YouTube, in podcasts, and across creator-driven platforms.”

Using this dataset, researchers can compare men to one another, to women, and across racial and generational groups — not just in what they believe, but in who shapes their worldview, how societal pressures differ, how economic strain drives behavior, and how online environments influence their thinking.

“The data makes clear that men aren’t just responding to economic pressure, they’re also navigating questions of identity, purpose, and faith that shape how they interpret the world,” said **Sara Fagan, CEO and Co-Founder at Tunnl**. “A majority of men, and particularly young Black men, describe faith or spirituality as central to their worldview. That has profound implications for any brand or campaign trying to connect with them. If you’re not speaking to meaning, belonging, and moral grounding, you’re missing where many men actually live. And importantly, these dynamics mirror what we see among women as well, especially Black women, which means the opportunity for authentic, values-driven engagement spans far beyond just men.”

Men Are Not A Monolith — Brands Should Stop Treating Them Like One

Men today feel economically strained, digitally overwhelmed, and culturally unseen — yet they’re not disengaging. They’re seeking structure and community in alternative spaces. Podcast hosts, YouTubers, and long-form commentators have become de facto trust brokers, often outranking traditional institutions.

To reach men, brands and campaigns must enter these ecosystems — not avoid them — with messaging rooted in purpose, belonging, responsibility, and identity. One-in-five men participate in online “men’s issues” spaces, which have become major opinion-shaping environments and which should be treated as mainstream, not fringe.

Key findings of the Manosphere Index include:

→ **Economic pressure — not ideology — is shaping modern masculinity.**

- ◆ 41% of men across all races say it’s hard to find a good-paying job. Men cite inflation, fewer openings, layoffs, credential creep and rising expectations as top barriers. Some cite women as having an advantage in hiring.
- ◆ Gen Z men — across racial groups — report the highest economic strain, with ~50% relying on gig work just to stay afloat.
- ◆ For Black men, the “provider” identity for families is especially strong: nearly 70% of Black Gen Z and Millennial men say being head of household is central to masculinity.
- ◆ This economic story is shaping identity in ways that look political—but actually reflect instability and pressure.

→ **The media center of gravity for men has shifted decisively to YouTube and long-form creators.**

- ◆ YouTube is the new prime-time for men, with 86% of men using it weekly and nearly 60% identify as heavy users.
- ◆ Podcasts function as cultural interpreters — with Joe Rogan, Tucker Carlson, and Stephen A. Smith emerging as among the most trusted figures, especially for Millennial Hispanic men who are emerging as a major podcast demographic.

- ◆ 60% of all men are listening to some amount of podcasting throughout the week, and 12% are spending 6+ hours on podcasts during their week.
- ◆ Millennial Hispanic men listen to podcasts at twice the rate of other cohorts (23% listening to 6+ hours of podcast a week), signaling that bicultural men are gravitating toward long-form, identity-driven commentary that replaces traditional institutions.
- ◆ 57% of men say their feeds have grown more extreme — but the most controversial content reaches men who are online the most, especially young Black and Hispanic men.
- ◆ This points to algorithmic exposure, not ideological searching, as the driver of manosphere visibility.

→ **Faith is quietly reshaping modern masculinity.**

- ◆ 53% of men say faith gives their life meaning; 71% of Black men say the same.
- ◆ Black Gen Z men are the only group where religiosity is rising, not falling.
- ◆ Men with strong faith identities are more likely to identify as “very masculine,” trust manosphere-adjacent creators, and have supported Trump.
- ◆ This emerging blend of faith + masculinity + long-form media marks an underreported cultural realignment.

→ **Men aren't withdrawing — they're building new communities outside traditional institutions.** The research shows men are not disengaged so much as re-engaging elsewhere:

- ◆ 35% of men — including more than 50% of Gen Z men — rely on gig income when their economic situation feels unstable.
- ◆ 60% of men are turning to podcasters when traditional institutions lose trust or politics feels alienating or judgmental.
- ◆ 53% say faith gives their life meaning and guides their decisions, meaning they turn to faith and spirituality when identity feels unsettled.

Men of Color Among the Strongest Forces Shaping Modern Masculinity

The Manosphere Index reveals how Black, Hispanic, and Asian American men are driving many “manosphere” underlying trends:

→ **Black men carry the strongest provider expectations — and the sharpest economic strain.**

- ◆ Nearly 70% of Black Gen Z and Millennial men say being “head of household” is very masculine — the highest of any group.
- ◆ When work feels unstable, the emotional impact is significantly more acute for Black men, because the provider role is tied to cultural expectations of leadership and resilience. This creates a unique identity pressure not reflected in standard “crisis of masculinity” narratives.

→ **Young Hispanic and Black men are among the heaviest consumers of algorithm-driven content — and they know it.**

- ◆ Hispanic Gen Z men are some of the most digitally immersed: almost half spend 6+ hours a week on individual social and streaming platforms.
- ◆ Black Gen Z men report similarly high levels of digital exposure and are among those most aware that their feeds are becoming more controversial.

- ◆ This makes them disproportionately shaped by algorithmic drift — not because they seek extreme content, but because the platforms they rely on push it toward them.

→ **Black Gen Z men are an unexpected countertrend in America's declining faith landscape.**

- ◆ While Gen Z is the least religious generation overall, 68% of Black Gen Z men say faith guides their lives — dramatically higher than their peers.
- ◆ Faith, in their case, coexists with digital masculinity content rather than moderates it.
- ◆ For young Black men, spirituality is becoming a stabilizing force in an increasingly unstable environment.

"Despite headlines that portray the manosphere as a monolithic, mostly white digital phenomenon, this study shows something different: Men of color are central to the story, but in ways that are deeply shaped by economic pressure, cultural expectations, and the platforms where they feel seen," said **Krishana Davis, Executive Vice President at Precision**.

"Coverage of communities of color rarely intersects with coverage of masculinity and digital identity — but this research shows they're completely intertwined. You'll find some of the strongest forces shaping modern masculinity emerging specifically among young Black and Hispanic men, with political, cultural, and community-level implications. The through-line is simple: men of color aren't drawn to the manosphere, they're drawn to spaces of validation, interpretation, and cultural resonance."

In 2026, Men Are Poised to Be Receptive to Voices Acknowledging Pressure Points

Men across racial and generational lines are entering 2026 feeling economically strained and culturally overlooked — making them more receptive to voices that acknowledge their pressure points. Men are persuadable, but not through traditional advocacy-oriented language. The data shows that men respond to social reassurance when making decisions, meaning voting and political participation is best presented as a way to show up for your community, protect your family's future, and show leadership — rather than guilt-based pressure into fulfilling a social obligation.

Campaigns that acknowledge their economic pressure, speak to their values, and engage them through the creator ecosystems they trust will have a decisive advantage in mobilizing each cohort when it counts.

→ **Men aren't becoming more partisan — they're becoming more situational.** They represent a reachable, context-sensitive middle, especially among non-white cohorts who are:

- ◆ economically pressured,
- ◆ unsure where they belong politically,
- ◆ exhausted by ideological performance that doesn't translate into stability,
- ◆ quick to adjust their preferences as political conditions shift.

→ **Men's drift toward Trump in 2024 was likely not driven by ideology.**

- ◆ The Manosphere Index — which included all men, even those not voting — shows men's support for Trump increased slightly between 2020 and 2024 (39% → 42%).
- ◆ This shift was likely driven not by ideology, but by feeling unanchored, economically insecure, and institutionally overlooked.
- ◆ In fact, key definitions and aspects of masculinity aligned with Trump traits, including 76% of men consider "having a strong opinion" to be masculine; 20% of men participate in men's-issue online spaces which amplify grievance, distrust, and skepticism of elites; and 23% of men say "brazen, natural confidence" is one of the most important leadership traits while another 46% say it matters at least somewhat.

→ In 2025's off-year elections, Democrats outperformed for a number of reasons, but also because the emotional context changed.

- ◆ Men were less responsive to national grievance cues and more focused on local stability, competence, and non-chaotic governance.
- ◆ Candidates who leaned heavily into national culture-war frames struggled to hold men who drifted right in 2024.
- ◆ All three successful democratic campaigns avoided highly divisive social issues — and had platforms that largely ignored Trump.

Femininity Remains Unifying, While Feminism Is More Polarizing

Precision and Tunnl conducted parallel research with 3,000 interviews with women across similar age and race cohorts. The picture for American women underscores how gendered identity is evolving across generations and diverging across digital ecosystems. Key findings include:

→ Women's digital center of gravity is rooted in Meta platforms.

- ◆ Unlike men, whose center of gravity is overwhelmingly on YouTube and long-form creators, women have digital lives that are anchored in Meta platforms.
- ◆ Women's primary digital home is Facebook, with 52% identifying as frequent users and 85% using it weekly.
- ◆ YouTube remains important — 47% of women call themselves frequent users and 80% use it weekly — but it does not serve as their dominant hub.

→ Younger women are anchored on Instagram and TikTok

- ◆ Across Gen Z and Millennial women, at least 7-in-10 use one or both platforms weekly—and in some cohorts the figure approaches 9-in-10.
- ◆ Among Gen Z Hispanic women, 82% use Instagram weekly and 56% are frequent users.
- ◆ Subcultures like Black Girl TikTok illustrate how platform-native communities shape Gen Z and Millennial women's identity and cultural consumption.

→ Black Gen Z women are also leading a renewed spiritual shift. Just as faith is reshaping modern masculinity, it is also becoming an unexpected anchor for young women's identity — but not evenly across generations or racial groups.

- ◆ While over half of women broadly say faith guides their life, the number flattens for White Gen Z women (44% faith-guided), as many younger women are secularizing quickly.

- ◆ But Black Gen Z women are moving in the opposite direction. 72% — *higher than any other women's group* and even a point higher than Black Gen Z men.
- **Women overwhelmingly like being seen as feminine, but are divided on whether they want to be labeled as feminists.**
 - ◆ Women embrace “femininity”: 80% feel positive toward the word and almost 9-in-10 (87%) say they consider themselves feminine.
 - ◆ But feminism is more polarizing: Only 66% relate to the word in a positive way, and almost 1-in-5 feel negatively. Only 52% agree with the phrase “I consider myself a feminist”.
- **Femininity seems to unify women across backgrounds; feminism divides them and functions more as a political or cultural label some women may be hesitant to claim.**
 - ◆ White and Black Boomer women show the strongest connection: 89% identify with the term — but even the group least likely to claim it, Black Gen Z women, still comes in at 83%, just five points below the national average. The language of femininity resonates almost everywhere you look.
 - ◆ Feminism, however, reveals real fracture lines: Boomer white women and lower-income women are the least likely to identify as feminists — only 45% and 47%, respectively, vs. 52% overall — reflecting both generational distance from modern feminist language and economic priorities that make ideological labels potentially feel less central to daily life.
 - ◆ Younger women are the ones redefining the feminist identity: Millennials and Gen Z women rise well above older cohorts, with Asian Gen Z women leading at 65%, the highest of any group. For them, feminism isn't an external label or ideological test — it's becoming an intuitive extension of how they see their place in culture and community.

A full copy of The Manosphere Index can be downloaded by clicking [here](#).

Methodology

To build a multidimensional understanding of men's experiences, researchers fielded two national studies. The first was a foundational pilot survey of just over 1,000 men under 60, with deliberate oversamples of African American, Hispanic, and Asian American men to ensure cultural nuance rather than broad generalizations. This initial study allowed researchers to test assumptions, refine key themes, and identify early signal patterns. The second—and larger—study surveyed 3,000 men and 3,000 women across all racial and age groups. This dataset reflects the full U.S. adult population and allowed researchers to examine gender identity, cultural pressures, political attitudes, and digital behaviors across a broader spectrum. Together, these surveys make it possible to compare men to one another, men to women, and racial groups within generational lines—not just in what they believe, but where they spend their time and who shapes their worldviews. From these two bodies of work, researchers developed a series of generational and behavioral segments that group audiences by the stories they engage with, the platforms they trust, and the pressures they feel. These segments underscore a critical finding: men are not monolithic, and the factors shaping their identities are both deeply personal and structurally patterned.

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Precision is an integrated strategy and marketing agency. Powered by data, we bring world-class experts in each of our service areas to conceive, develop, and run campaigns that help our clients seize opportunities and solve their biggest challenges. Whether it is elevating a brand, shaping a narrative, defining a reputation, navigating a crisis, or persuading and mobilizing an audience, we don't just break through. We break new ground.

Tunnl is leveraging AI to erase the boundaries between insights, audiences, and outcomes to ensure every piece of intelligence can be acted on. We combine the judgment of seasoned data experts with the power of artificial intelligence to help organizations find and connect with the people who matter most. With years of experience embedded in our platform, we enable research at scale, define the right audiences, surface powerful insights, identify optimal communication channels, and measure changing attitudes over time—all in one connected experience. Whether building a brand, shaping public opinion, managing risk, or launching a new initiative, Tunnl empowers organizations to move from insight to impact with clarity and confidence.