

Mommy culture

N[®] PIGEON[®] PIGEON[®] PIGEON[®] PI
IGEON[®] PIGEON[®] PIGEON[®] PIGEON[®]
N[®] PIGEON[®] PIGEON[®] PIGEON[®] PI

VENTURE

INTO

THE

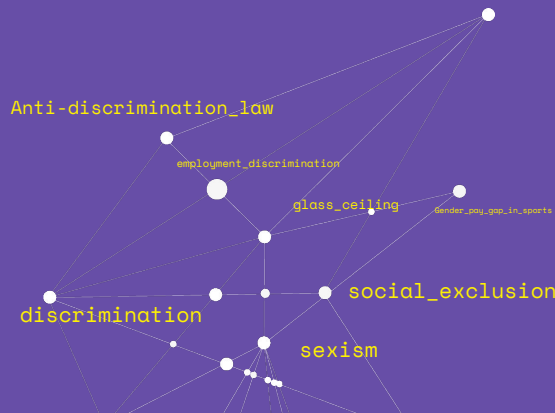
CULTURE

ECONOMY

needs a reboot

METHODOLOGY

01



THE PIGEON CULTURAL OPERATING SYSTEM (OS)

We asked our proprietary AI tool to map the themes and communities related to motherhood. It leverages big data, social listening, artificial intelligence and natural language processing to provide a view of a brand's (or concept's) cultural ecosystem and the network of connected spaces and communities that hold value.

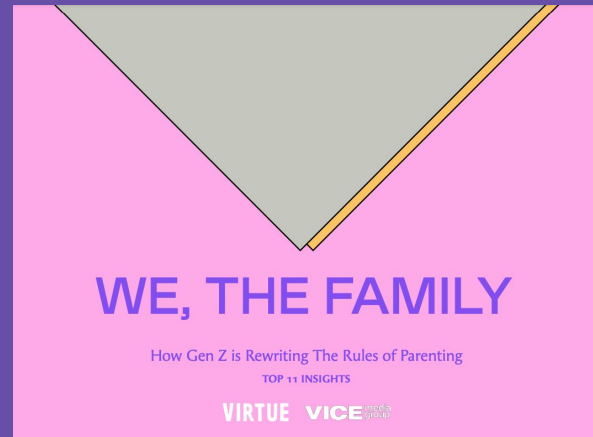
02



THE VOICES OF MOTHERS

We analyzed qualitative input direct from the voices of Gen Z & Y mothers who told us society needs to do better, despite how far we've come.

03



PROPRIETARY & DESK RESEARCH

We tapped into our proprietary insights and desk research to better understand youth sentiment and gain a deeper cultural understanding of the evolving meaning of motherhood.



NO ONE IS SAYING motherhood DOESN'T BRING PROFOUND JOY TO OUR LIVES (most of the time)

A highly rewarding experience



"It can be extremely stressful and anxiety inducing. It's unbelievably relentless. But also hilarious, fun and rewarding and it's lovely having a little person love you so much."
-Mother, Gen Y, UK

Fosters emotional fulfilment & shared bonds



"We love to have movie night, grab a big cover, pick one of the various Disney movies and sit down to watch while eating snacks and cuddling."
- Mother, Gen Z, US

"I never thought about death before and now I'm afraid of dying... I think this mentality shift shows how much my daughter has given me a very different type of purpose and love."
- Mother, Gen Y, US

Creates connection to communities



"I love my buy-nothing parent groups on Facebook! So much baby/kid stuff becomes obsolete after a matter of months, and it feels great to help and be helped by the community."
- Mother, Gen Y, US

"We did Happy Parent Happy Baby which is like NCT and that is where we met our really good parent friends. It's held in a pub rather than a community hall so I think it attracts like minded people! I'd consider the girls I met there among my best friends now and my partner has found the same in the Dads."
- Mother, Gen Y, UK

Affords personal growth and adaptation



"It's a way of life; once you adopt it, there is no going back. It's a learning process, one that never ends, and which gets updated very frequently."
- Mother, Gen Y, MENA



BUT, motherhood COMES WITH VERY REAL CHALLENGES



Mom-Guilt



"There is still the same amount of pressure to perform 100% at work and be 100% present for their family and continue baseline functionality as a human - social life, working out, travel, extended family, etc. You inevitably end up falling short in one area and feeling guilty."

- Mother, Gen Y, US

"I really want to be a parent without 'mom-guilt' and everyday that I have to prioritize work, a friend or working out I have to intentionally push back against this feeling."

- Mother, Gen Y, US

Physical and mental health challenges



"Postpartum is not talked about enough and still too taboo. Going through Covid while dealing with postpartum blues was next level, it was a total out-of-body experience and it took about 18 months to get back to feeling like myself again. It's so important to lean into what makes you happy and try to maintain a sense of self."

- Mother, Gen Y, US

Loss of identity



"Also the way you become someone completely new - as a first time mum, I had a really hard time finding who I was again and feeling myself."

- Mother, Gen Z, UK

Workplace dynamics



"In the workspace, we, mothers, should not feel guilty for having kids, for picking them from school, for having shorter days so we can spend some time with them, not working late or during weekends."

- Mother, Gen Y, MENA





Let's face it. It's a full-time side hustle!

"Total chaos mixed with heart-melting moments. Always on the grind, juggling meltdowns and milestones, but the love hits differently. In short, it's the ultimate blend of exhaustion and joy, like a never-ending scroll of cute baby memes on TikTok."

- Mother, Gen Y, APAC



SO: WHAT ABOUT BEING ALLOWED TO VOICE the frustrations?



Should Amy Adams inner dog be
a rallying cry for us all?


Marielle Heller's latest film *Nightbitch*, adapted from Rachel Yoder's 2021 novel, plunges us headfirst into the messy, unvarnished reality of motherhood.

Amy Adams takes on a role that speaks to so many women - her character, once an artist, now grapples with losing the person she was before becoming a mom.

Nightbitch reopens a much-needed dialogue around identity, as it sheds light on the sacrifices, challenges, and impossible choices women often face when it comes to parenting, self-fulfillment, careers, and marriage.

"We are gods, we fucking create life" - MOTHER





**'CAN WE DEBUNK THE MYTH
THAT CHILDBIRTH
TRANSFORMS WOMEN INTO FLAWLESS, SELFLESS
BEINGS?**



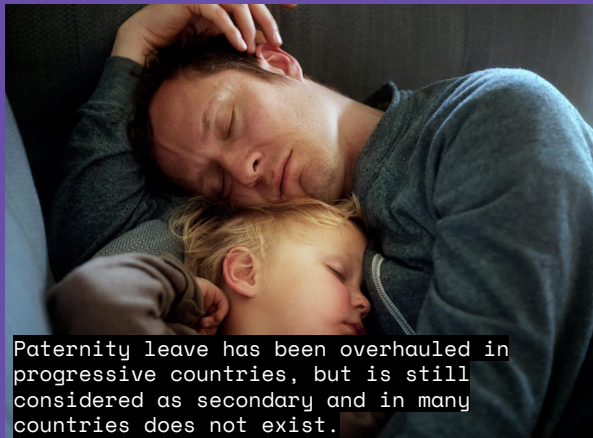
SOCIETY NEEDS TO WAKE UP TO THE FACT PARENTING IS A shared responsibility

only
1 IN 3

Gen Z parents believe it's the mother's responsibility to handle most household and parenting duties



It's 2024 - bathroom setups don't reflect today's society.



Paternity leave has been overhauled in progressive countries, but is still considered as secondary and in many countries does not exist.



As birth rates plummet and Gen Z eschews traditional pathways, a rise in pronatalism is hoping for a baby boom.

And allow people the right to control their own fertility



have empathy

FOR EACH OTHER'S CHOICES

**“At some point, I was just
like: fuck it, I am different.”**

- Cressida, Berlin - at wearechildfree.com

“I've been witnessing the rise of the voices of those who affirm their right to not be mothers and to have their lives accepted as valuable and complete without the experience of motherhood. I am in full support of those voices and rights. But what seems to be happening at the moment is a fight between mothers and non-mothers. (Some) mothers see it all as a personal attack, while (some) childfree women are amongst the most vicious attackers of motherhood, as though only by annihilating its perceived virtues one could affirm a fulfilling identity without children at its centre. One group calls the other selfish and vile because they don't want to experience sacrifice. The others call the first group selfish and vile because they don't think of the environment and because humans just suck as a species anyway.

Sisters really ought to cut each other some slack. The patriarchy thanks you dearly for your service.”

- Mother, Gen Y, US



GIVE THE EXPERIENCE OF parental regret A LITTLE AIR TIME

Lately, a wave of honesty is sweeping across social media as women open up about something that's often considered taboo: regretting motherhood. From wishing they had stayed #childfree or #childfreebychoice, to questioning the societal expectations placed on them, these voices are shedding light on a conversation that's long overdue.

Experts, including psychologists and educators, are stepping in to remind us that regret isn't a dirty word - it's a universal human experience. For many parents, it's not their children they regret but the circumstances: the timing, the number of kids, the choice of partner, or even the overwhelming demands of motherhood in today's world.

Some mothers, in particular, are struggling with the role of motherhood. For many, loving your kids and feeling regret are not mutually exclusive, and it's time we consider breaking down the taboo.



ALLOW motherhood TO EXIST OUTSIDE OF CULTURAL IDEOLOGIES AND EVEN OUR own expectations



"As a society we need to do a better job of normalizing the "second best" option in parenting. Often times, the first best option is not feasible for parents, and because second best or third best options are not formally condoned, parents are forced to vet alternative options on their own, which we are not always equipped to do"

- Mother, Gen Y, US



RECOGNIZE AND CELEBRATE IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO RAISE A CHILD



Aunties make our world go round. This tee is to honour the aspects of aunty hood that we adore (mostly!) The aunties that say it like it is, have care oozing from every pore even while they maybe rolling their eyes, the effortless style for days, dry laughs and cuddly cries are to name just a few of our favourite Aunty feelings.

- norblacknorwhite.com

From Late Night Mummies Club to NCT, Facebook forums, friends, family and Home-Start - a charity that connects families with volunteers in the community - support networks remain critical to our mothers, especially during the postpartum period.

The call is out for communities to remain judgement free and promote understanding that not every mother's experience or need will be the same.

“THE WAY WE PORTRAY PARTNERS AND THE VILLAGE OF FRIENDS/FAMILY COULD BE MORE ELEVATING AND EMPOWERING SO THAT MORE PEOPLE CAN NATURALLY TAKE UP THIS ROLE. OFTEN SOCIETY AND MEDIA DOESN'T ACKNOWLEDGE ALL THESE VERY IMPORTANT ROLES THAT SUPPORT MOMS.”

- Mother, Gen Y, UK





**ARE WE FINALLY READY TO
REBOOT** motherhood?

THROUGHOUT HISTORY FEMINISM AND FEMINISTS HAVE BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN ADVOCATING FOR THE RIGHTS OF MOTHERS

2 in 5

VICE youth say modern feminism should continue to focus on equity (providing equal outcomes)

↑ 60% Non-binary
↑ 48% US Women
↑ 46% Black Women

First-wave feminism:

Focused on women's suffrage and legal rights, this wave laid the groundwork for recognizing mothers' legal rights, such as custody rights and the right to work.

Second-wave feminism:

Addressed issues like reproductive rights, including birth control and abortion, which directly impact motherhood by giving women the choice and autonomy over whether to become mothers.

Third-wave feminism:

Emphasized individualism and diversity, recognizing the varied experiences of motherhood across different cultures, races, and classes. It also pushed back against the notion that all women should aspire to motherhood.

Fourth-wave feminism:

Promotes intersectional approaches to understanding motherhood. Advocating for issues like maternal health and parental leave and against the motherhood penalty in the workplace.

FEMINISM IS THE LARGEST CULTURAL CLUSTER WITHIN THE 'MOTHERHOOD' PIGEON AS ECOSYSTEM

SOURCE: PIGEON Cultural OS "Motherhood" / VMG The Future of Feminism, 2024



ALONGSIDE ARTISTS, ACADEMICS AND SCHOLARS WHO HAVE PLAYED A PIVOTAL ROLE IN FURTHERING WOMEN'S RIGHTS, EXPLORING GENDER ISSUES AND MYTH BUSTING THE TROUPES OF MOTHERHOOD FOR DECADES.

Cristina Alcalde is a scholar of Latin American and gender studies, focusing on issues such as migration, violence, and feminist theory.

CRISTINA ALCALDE

Dottie Wiltse Collins was a pioneering female baseball player, representing women in sports during an era when it was predominantly male-dominated.

PINAREE SANPITAK

LIBERTY BARNES

PAULINE UWAKWEH

EDITH BADHAM

RAQUEL RIBA

SHEHERAZADE GOLDSMITH

AZILA TALIT REISENBERGER

ROSABETTY MUNOZ

LEAH DEVUN

Leah DeVun is a historian whose research often focuses on gender, sexuality, and feminist history.

HIROMI ITA

DOTTIE WILTSE COLLINS

ELAINE SALO

Elaine Salo was a feminist scholar and activist from South Africa, known for her work in gender studies and advocacy for women's rights.



DELIVERING UNIQUE CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS THAT CONTINUE TO PUSH THE BOUNDARIES OF MOTHERHOOD AND IDENTITY



PINAREE SANPITAK

One of the most compelling and influential Thai artists of her generation, Sanpitak frequently explores motherhood, womanhood, and the cultural impact and significance of the female form in her artworks.



RAQUEL RIBA ROSSY

A Spanish illustrator and author, Rossy is the visionary behind Lola Vendetta, a fierce, no-nonsense heroine who takes aim at society's toxic norms. Her work boldly challenges conventional expectations, empowering women and shaking up the status quo. With themes like menstruation, the myths of motherhood, and the fight against machismo.



HIROMI ITO

A leading voice in Japanese women's poetry, Ito's feminist writing gravitates toward issues of the feminine body, women's psychology, sexuality, and motherhood. Her poems remind readers of the raw, often unspoken realities of motherhood.



But let's be frank

**WE NEED MORE VOICES
BECAUSE SOCIETY
HASN'T SOLVED THESE
evergreen issues**



THE THEMES ASSOCIATED WITH 'MOTHERHOOD' FROM OUR PIGEON OS SUGGEST CRITICAL CONCERNS AREN'T GOING AWAY ANYTIME SOON

From social exclusion, to employment discrimination, the glass ceiling and gender pay gap in sports. These concerns are connected directly to 'motherhood' and many women continue to question whether the outcome will be worth it.

anti-discrimination & law

employment discrimination

glass ceiling

Gender pay gap in sports

PIGEON OS MOTHERHOOD & RISKS ASSOCIATION

Social exclusion

sexism

discrimination

SOURCE: PIGEON Cultural OS "Motherhood"





MULTIPLE BURDENS OF motherhood yet to be tackled

The “motherhood penalty”, aka the motherhood tax, is the harsh reality many women face when it comes to their earnings post-kids. Women of colour are often at a compound disadvantage.

But it’s not just about the hit to careers. Motherhood can impact a women’s identity and loss of sense of self. Compounded with a lack of supportive infrastructures and overwhelming societal norms around what makes a ‘good’ mom, the experience can feel isolating and unjust.

Mothers with two children take home
26% less income
than women without children

- Fawcett Society, The Ethnicity Motherhood Pay Penalty Report

We asked respondents: What can society do to support mothers in their daily lives?

- “Improve financial aid for mothers through affordable childcare options and access to IVF.”
- “Rethink urban design with mothers in mind, such as step-free access, child-play spaces, places to nurse.”
- “Foster supportive communities amongst women that are forged through mutual respect.”
- “Create workplace environments that afford flexible working, shared parental leave and offer careers that don’t penalize mothers financially.”
- “Drive cultural shifts to remove the stigma of conforming to traditional expectations of motherhood.”

SOURCE: PIGEON: Examining Motherhood & Emotion, 2024





We deserve freedom from worry and uncertainty

"My goals are to gain lucrative employment where I can provide our needs, have fun and have good experiences with my child. I want my child to feel safe and grow to be whoever he wants and have a happy life and love himself."

- Mother, Gen Z, US



AND, WHILE REPRESENTATION is changing

The way mothers are portrayed on screen is finally catching up with reality. We're seeing more honest depictions of moms who struggle with work-life balance, mental health, and the societal pressures that come with parenting.

Non-traditional families and culturally diverse mothers are also getting the spotlight, breaking down outdated stereotypes.

This shift is giving us a more authentic and relatable view of motherhood, reflecting the real, nuanced lives of women today.

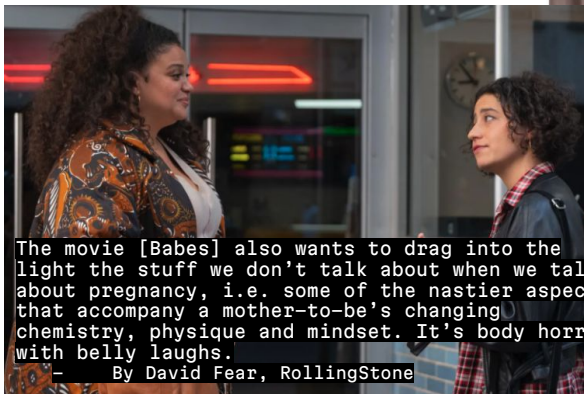
Entertainment

This Film Looks at Motherhood in the Harsh Winter

A pregnant woman trudges alone on an endless grassland, icy and barren in the depth of winter—almost like an open graveyard. This is the opening scene of the short film *Graveyard of Horses*, a story about motherhood in the bitter cold.

— By Pan Qian Yi and Lu Jia Lin, VICE

VICE



The movie [Babes] also wants to drag into the light the stuff we don't talk about when we talk about pregnancy, i.e. some of the nastier aspects that accompany a mother-to-be's changing chemistry, physique and mindset. It's body horror with belly laughs.

— By David Fear, RollingStone

Historically, the MILF has been the object of a film, rarely the subject — or, when she was the subject, she often found herself trapped in a grave drama or punished for her age-defying crimes.

— By Rachel Handler, Vulture and New York



Many felt media & advertising STILL HAS A LONG WAY TO GO

"I think most media does a disservice to motherhood, it either depicts this chaotic woman who ONLY focuses on her kids and does nothing for herself... or it's a well put together/ successful woman who neglects her kids. I felt like Babes the movie had a few moments that were really great and very true to my experience."

- Mother, Gen Y, US





10 ❌

ARE WE FINALLY READY
TO TACKLE SOME OF THESE
SYSTEMIC ISSUES HEAD ON? ❌



CONSIDER:

01

CREATE REAL CONVERSATIONS: can you make space for real conversations on all facets of motherhood - the joy, the exhaustion, the drain to the finances, the prioritization of someone other than yourself?

02

FOSTER INTENTIONALITY: as a society can we create space for conversations on motherhood and parenting to help make informed decisions, destigmatize opting out of motherhood and decouple from the idea of female achievement?

03

PAINT WITH NUANCE: what texture, nuance, shades of grey, or dare we say sexuality, can you give to your next mom archetype?


04

DRIVE SYSTEMIC CHANGE: on a systemic level are you, your brand, your business doing it's part to change society and advocating to make being mom less of a sacrifice - wage equality, paid parental leave, affordable childcare, accessible spaces, flexible working options, and more!

05

KNOW IT TAKES A VILLAGE: contribute to building the communities mothers need to feel supported. Celebrate and empower the people, from dads, to aunts or just great neighbours, who help along the way.



A close-up, side-profile photograph of a woman with dark, curly hair breastfeeding her baby. The woman is wearing a striped tank top. The baby is lying on its back, looking up at the woman. The scene is set against a bright, out-of-focus background, suggesting a window or natural light. The overall mood is intimate and tender.

**WE WON'T WAIT FOR
MOTHER'S DAY
TO TAKE UP THE MANTLE**



AFTER ALL, MOMS CAN'T TAKE A BREAK, SO WHY SHOULD WE?

"The most difficult and intense change that I've ever experienced. It's emotionally and physically exhausting. Overwhelming most of the time. A wild roller coaster and once you're strapped in, that seatbelt can't be unbuckled. You signed up for life and there is no stop / pause button."

- Mother, Gen Y, UK



CONTINUE TO DECODE CULTURE WITH US

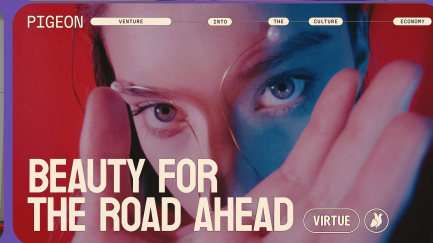
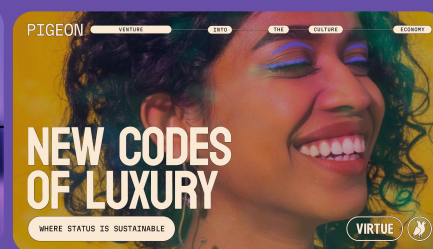
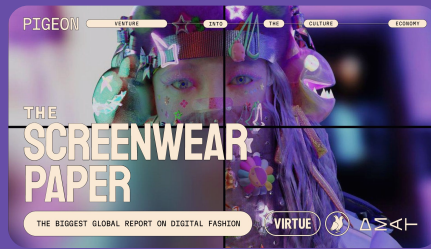
PIGEON BY VIRTUE is representative of the Pigeon itself. A deeper, more meaningful view into culture and the context of the world.

Backed by a proprietary operating system (OS), PIGEON provides a new model for companies to qualify cultural capital and to embed within the territories and communities they have a right to play.

Want more?

Want us to explore a particular topic?

Contact us: Foresight@vice.com





(2024)

Amy Davies, Partner

amy.davies@vice.com

Jamison Duffield, Partner

jamison.duffield@vice.com

venture, INTO THE CULTURE ECONOMY

