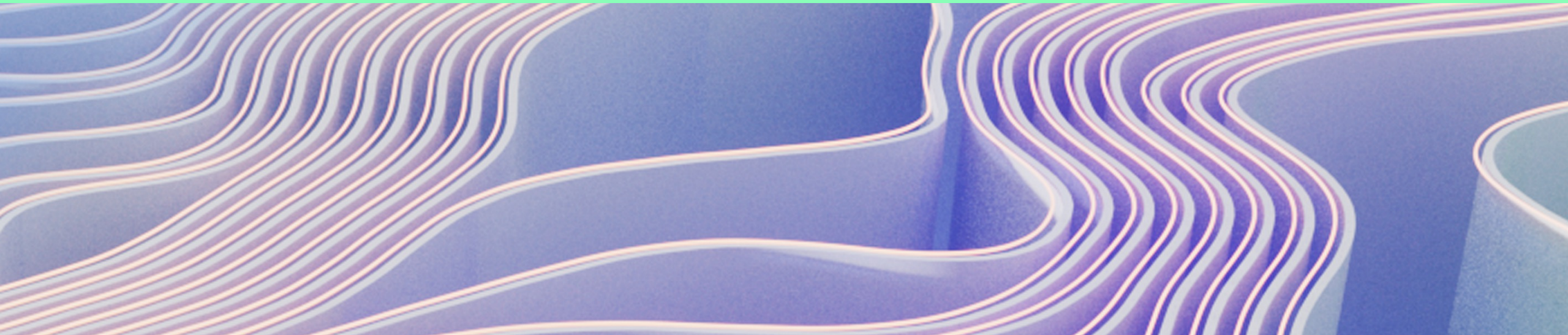


PULSAR*



The Narrative Report

Spring/Summer 2025

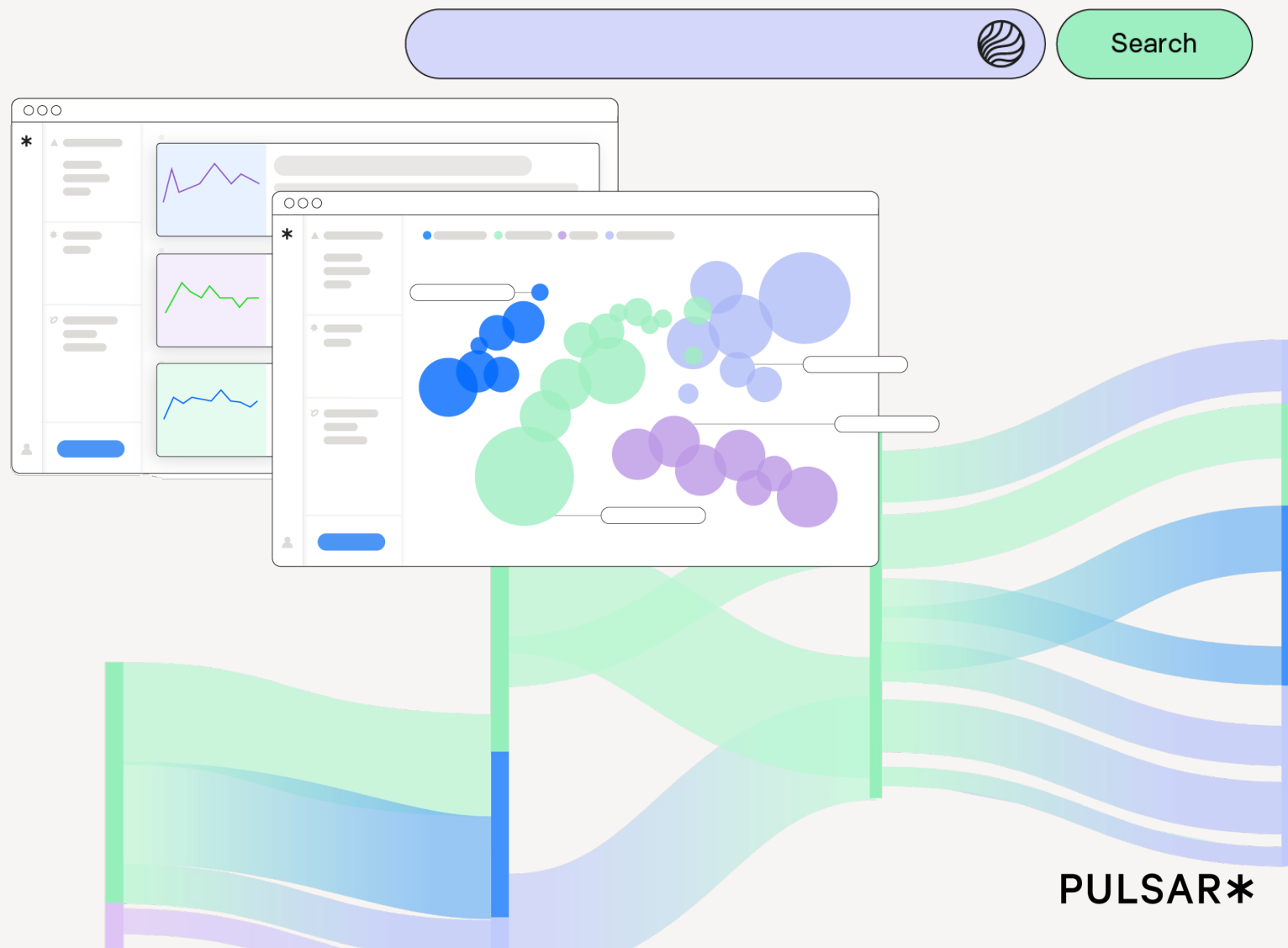


What is Narrative Intelligence?

While everyone obsesses over data and analytics, the real competitive edge today for marketers, researchers, and strategists lies in being able to spot, understand, and leverage the narratives that are flowing through public opinion. We call it Narrative Intelligence.

This report aims to offer a broad view of the directions in which public opinion is evolving across 11 sectors through a narrative lens. Each section includes an overview of the main narrative themes present in public conversations relating to that sector, as well as a spotlight on 2 narratives we uncovered which have strong potential to affect those sectors and industries in the coming months.

This report was prepared entirely using [Narratives AI](#), the first search engine for public opinion.



This report explores narratives in:



Media & Entertainment P4-5.
social media fatigue; distrust in mainstream media;
nostalgia



Health & Pharma P6-7.
distrust in healthcare; health Influencers;
polypharmacy



Finance & Markets P8-9.
tariff impact; distrust in establishing system;
retirement anxiety



The Workplace P10-11.
workplace politics; AI's impact; gender equality



Society & Culture P12-13.
fandom communities; toxic masculinity; redefining
relationships



Politics P14-15.
failed states; MAGA women; church leadership



Technology P16-17.
AI tech optimism; technology's impact on global
power dynamics; China as a threat



Climate Sustainability P18-19.
AI-powered solution; climate anxiety; sustainable
consumption



Food & drink P20-21.
food affordability; polarized food politics; sustainable
food



Sports P22-23.
sport as identity; the rise of IPTV; widening
tribalism in sports



Fashion & Beauty P24-25.
affordable fashion; social commerce; beauty
standards

Media & Entertainment

Fragmented platforms and audience needs

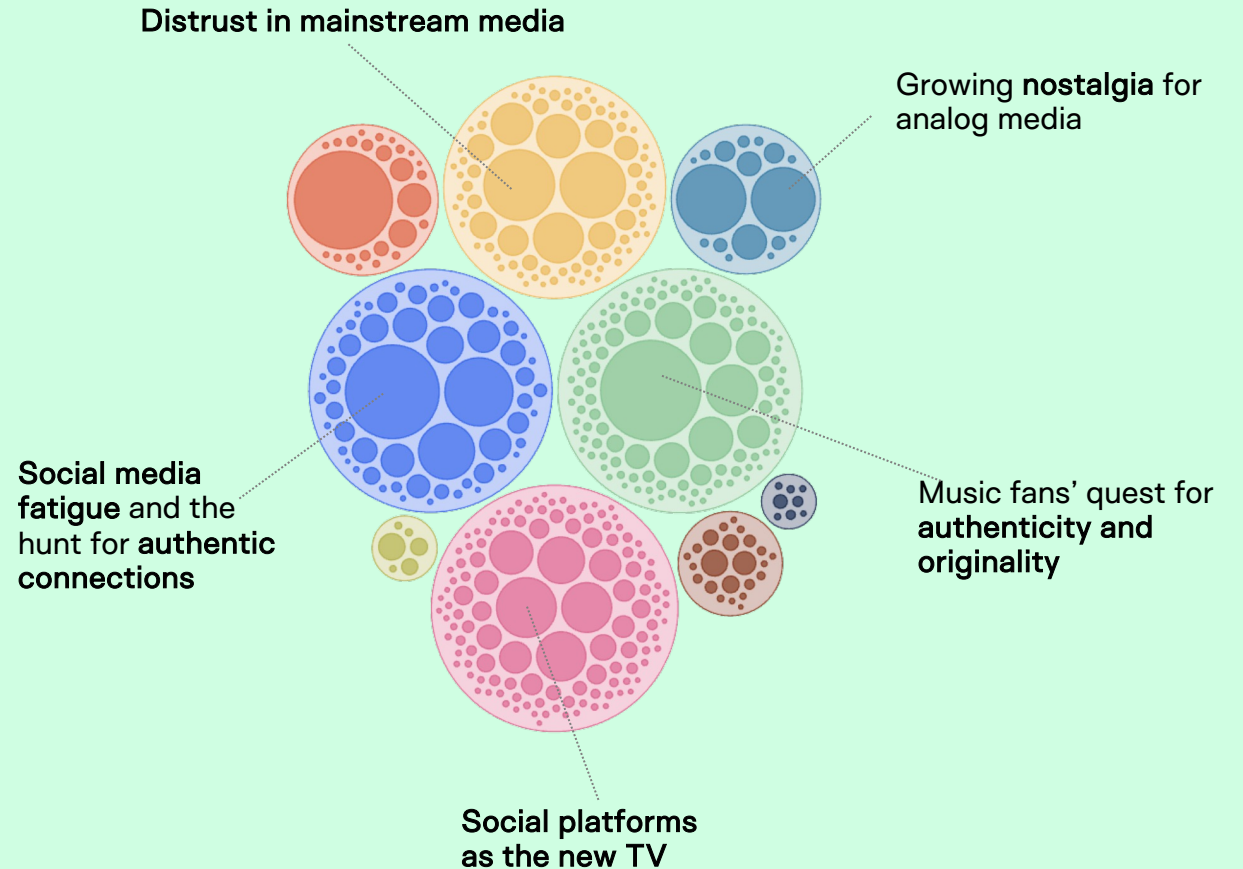
Total Narratives: 106,929

As platforms fragment, so do audiences, driving demand for content that's more authentic and speaks to more niche communities.

Media and entertainment narratives are increasingly shaped by both fatigue with the mainstream and by trends taking shape across social media, leading audiences to demand more authentic spaces where they can build meaningful communities.

In music, fans are creating a new mainstream orientated around megastars who span geographic and genre lines, whether that's the continued maturation of K-Pop or the new eras and personas of stars such Taylor Swift & Beyonce. Similarly, streaming platforms are becoming the "new TV" – having displaced traditional television, these services are increasingly facing questions around ethics, affordability and quality.

Meanwhile, traditional entertainment like movies and books continues to adapt, offering comfort and escapism to niche audiences in a fragmented, uncertain world.

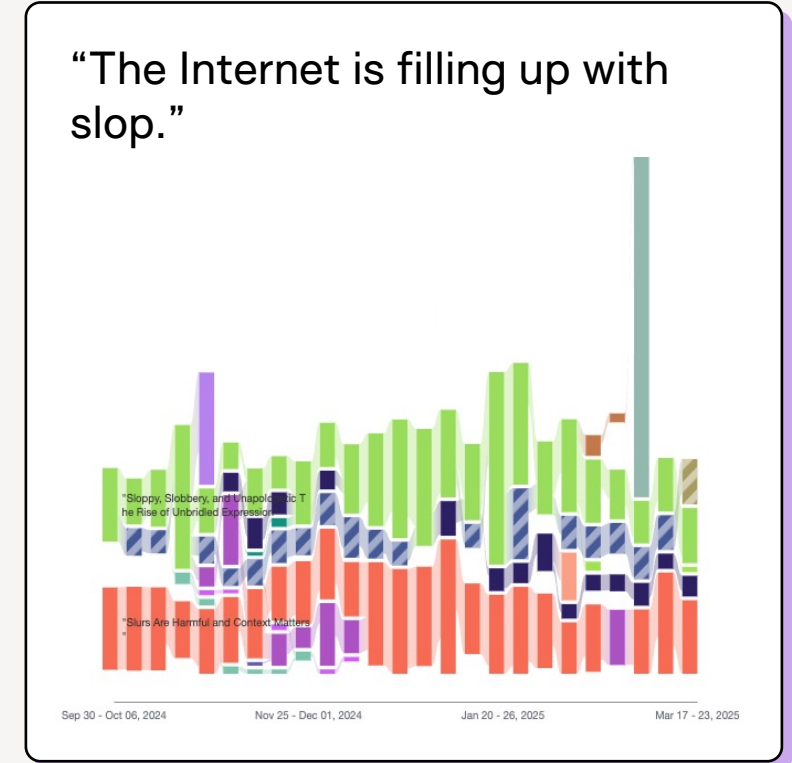
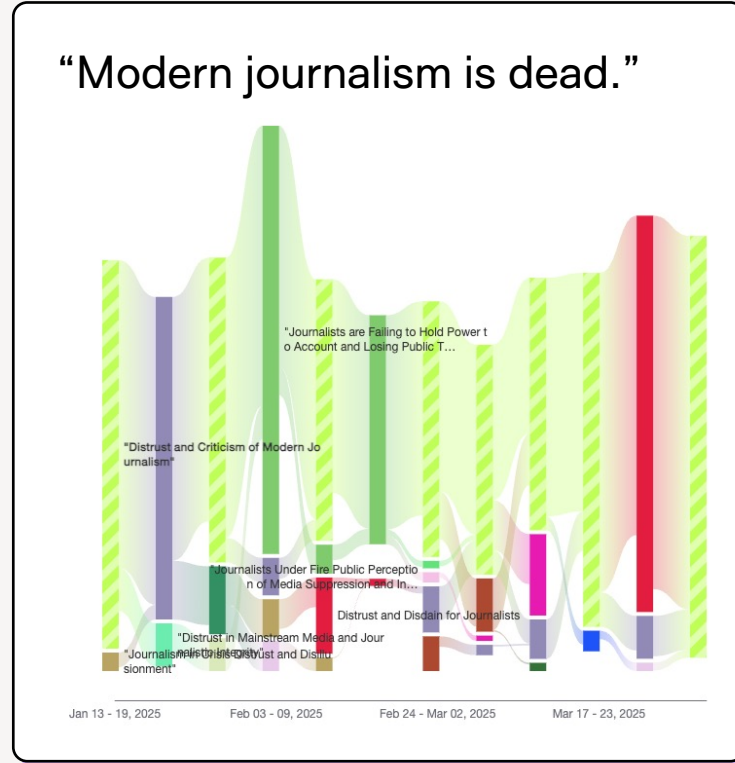


Media & Entertainment: Narrative Spotlight

At the core of growing disillusionment in media and entertainment are two narratives: that institutions once entrusted with informing us have faltered, and that the systems now providing entertainment are overwhelmed with garbage.

On one side, disillusionment with mainstream media are growing stronger, as many feel that news is increasingly tainted by bias, sensationalism, and a lack of accountability. As trust continues to erode, more and more people are turning to alternative platforms and voices they find more authentic and better aligned with their news consumption habits.

Parallel to this, a broader disillusionment is rising through "slop culture"—a term that started with low-effort, AI-generated content but now defines the flood of shallow, mass-produced media taking over our screens. For younger audiences, this chaotic, low-value term has become an aesthetic, entertainment, and critique. As algorithms tighten their grip, many are turning to absurdist media, seeking something real amid the predictable chaos.

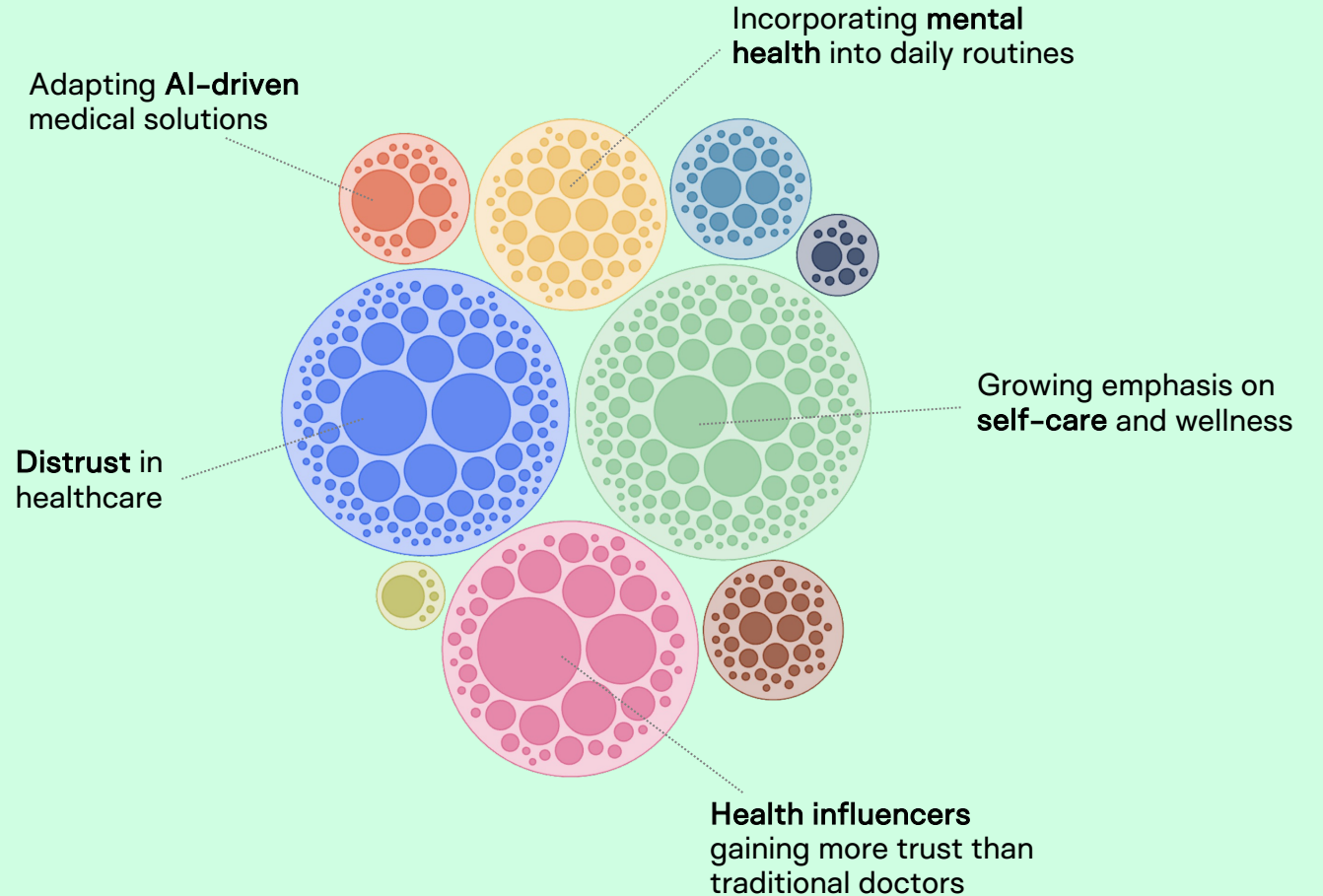


The rise of personalized health

The growing narrative of distrust in traditional healthcare systems and professionals is most pronounced against welfare states where calls for reform, as have been leveled against the NHS in the UK, suggest a deeper desire for change in the health system.

As part of this shift, a new narrative is emerging, where people are increasingly turning to health influencers (HCPs) and social media for peer-to-peer recommendations, quasi-polypharmacy, and personalized wellness advice. These influencers, sharing self-care tips and tailored advice, are shaping a narrative that prioritizes individual choice and autonomy over traditional medical advice.

Concurrently, AI-driven medical technologies are accelerating the shift toward personalized health. From drug discovery to self-diagnosis and therapeutic tools, more people are challenging traditional healthcare structures.

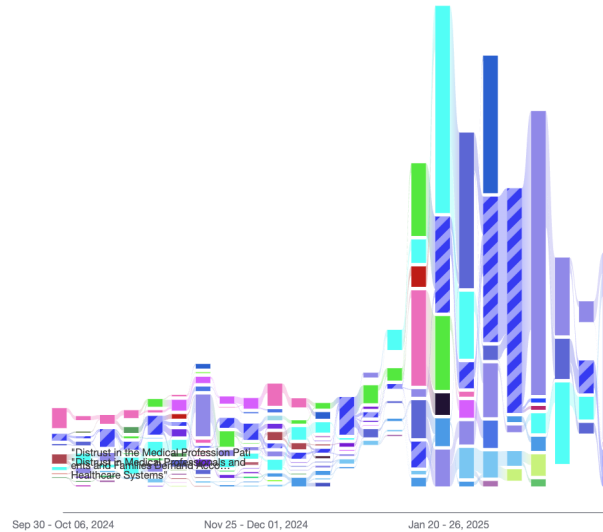


Health & Pharma: Narrative Spotlight

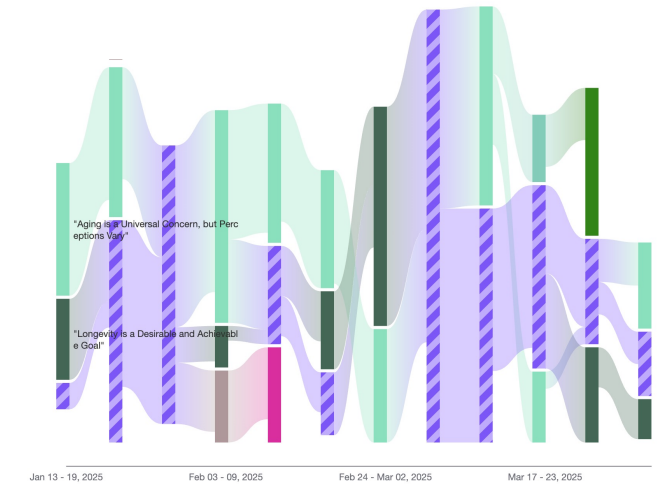
As more people lose trust in the healthcare system, they're starting to question not just the system but the professionals behind it. This shift is sparking a rise in alternative health narratives, especially on social platforms like subreddits and social media, where people are swapping advice, sharing their own experiences, and talking through health issues. With the help of AI tools and crowdsourced tips, many are choosing personalized health options, often skipping traditional medicine in favor of more flexible, though less regulated, solutions—despite the concerns that come with it.

At the same time, and driven by longevity science hitting the cultural mainstream, belief in aging as a treatable condition is rising. It's driving a wave of self-optimization—fasting, supplements, wearables, and biohacking—as individuals seek not just to extend life but improve its quality. The shift from lifespan to healthspan reflects a deeper mindset change: aging is no longer passive, but something to be actively shaped.

“Doctors are no longer someone I can rely on.”



“Aging is a treatable condition.”



Finance & markets

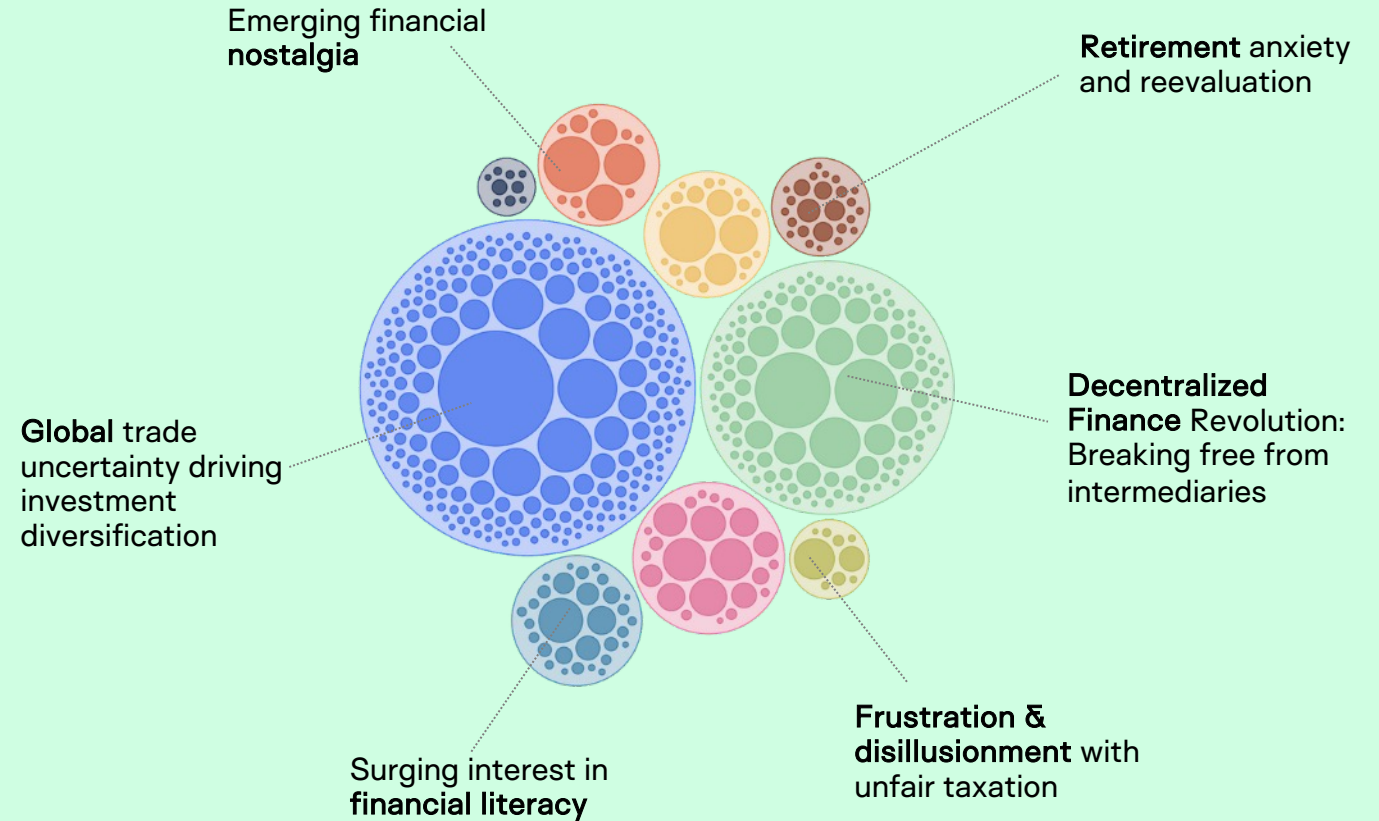
Total Narratives: 92,772

Tariffs & global uncertainty drive financial system critique and interest in alternative currencies

The uncertain global economy has weighed heavily on financial narratives in recent months. Finance discussions are dominated by tariffs and taxation, whether that's their influence on individual consumers, the wider economy or the political implications or pursuing economic nationalism.

These narratives also highlight the growing appetite for decentralized finance, fueled by growing mistrust in traditional systems. If staples become unaffordable, the narratives suggest, what is the point in maintaining the status quo?

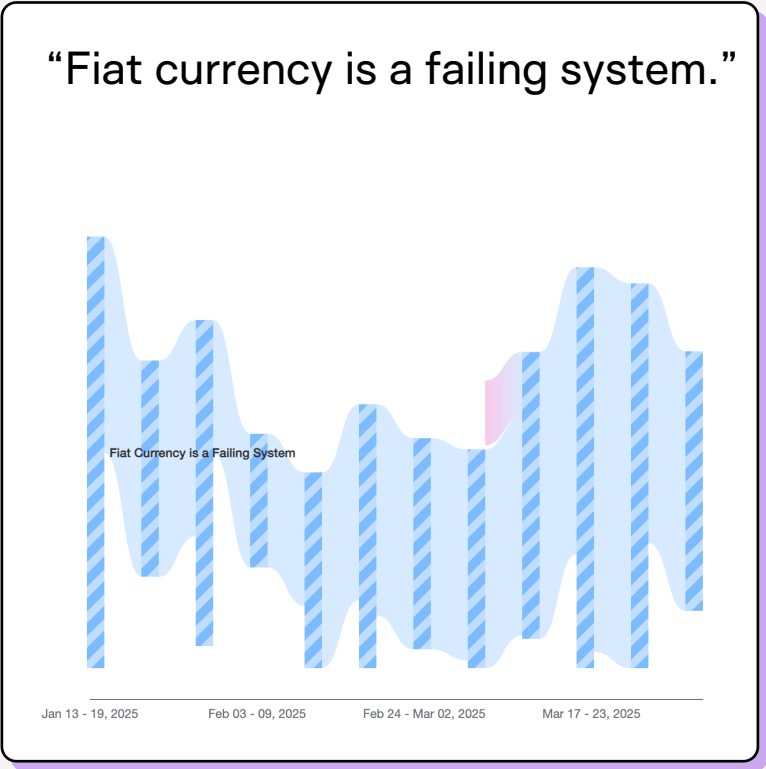
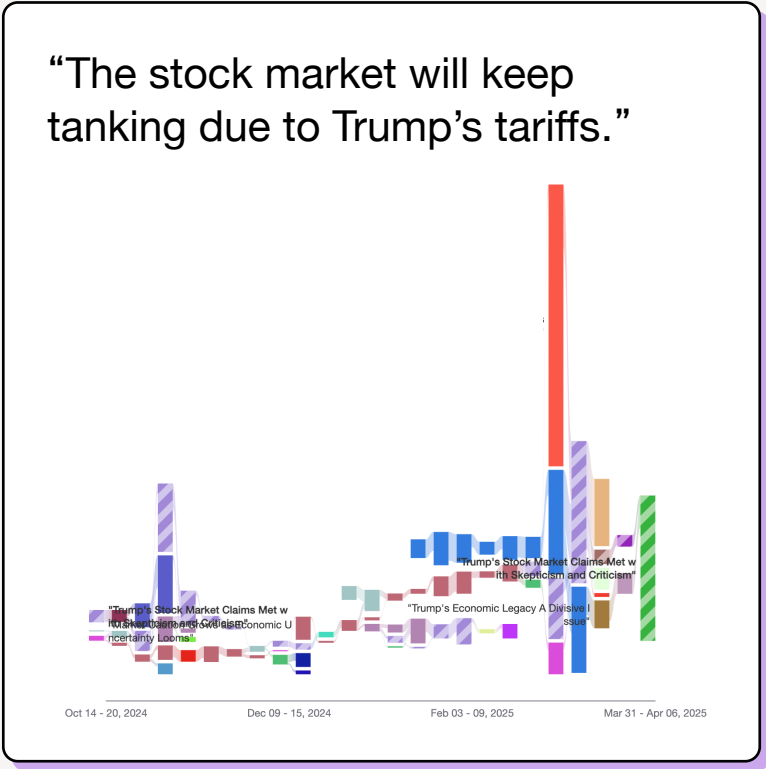
In general, these narratives reveal a picture of growing interest in exploring other money models, promoting financial literacy, and solving problems of inequality and injustice in the present financial system.



Finance & markets: Narrative Spotlight

Dominant market narratives are increasingly driven by skepticism toward established financial policies, exacerbated by global tensions and rising uncertainty. As President Trump's tariffs rise, more investors are blaming stock market declines on his economic policies. The "Trump bump" has faded, both with regards to the S&P 500 and also the more positive economic narratives that had accompanied his inauguration.

This growing distrust is also reflected in increased interest towards fiat currency alternatives. As anxiety around the US dollar intensifies, many see fiat currency as deliberately devalued—and a threat to financial freedom. Growing distrust in central banks, viewed as vehicles for enriching the elite, is pushing people toward DeFi alternatives. Amid the chaos, Bitcoin stands out to supporters as a more trusted option, prized for its fixed supply and perceived credibility—unlike flashier picks like Ethereum or Memecoins, despite its own controversies.



The Workplace

Total Narratives: 83,225

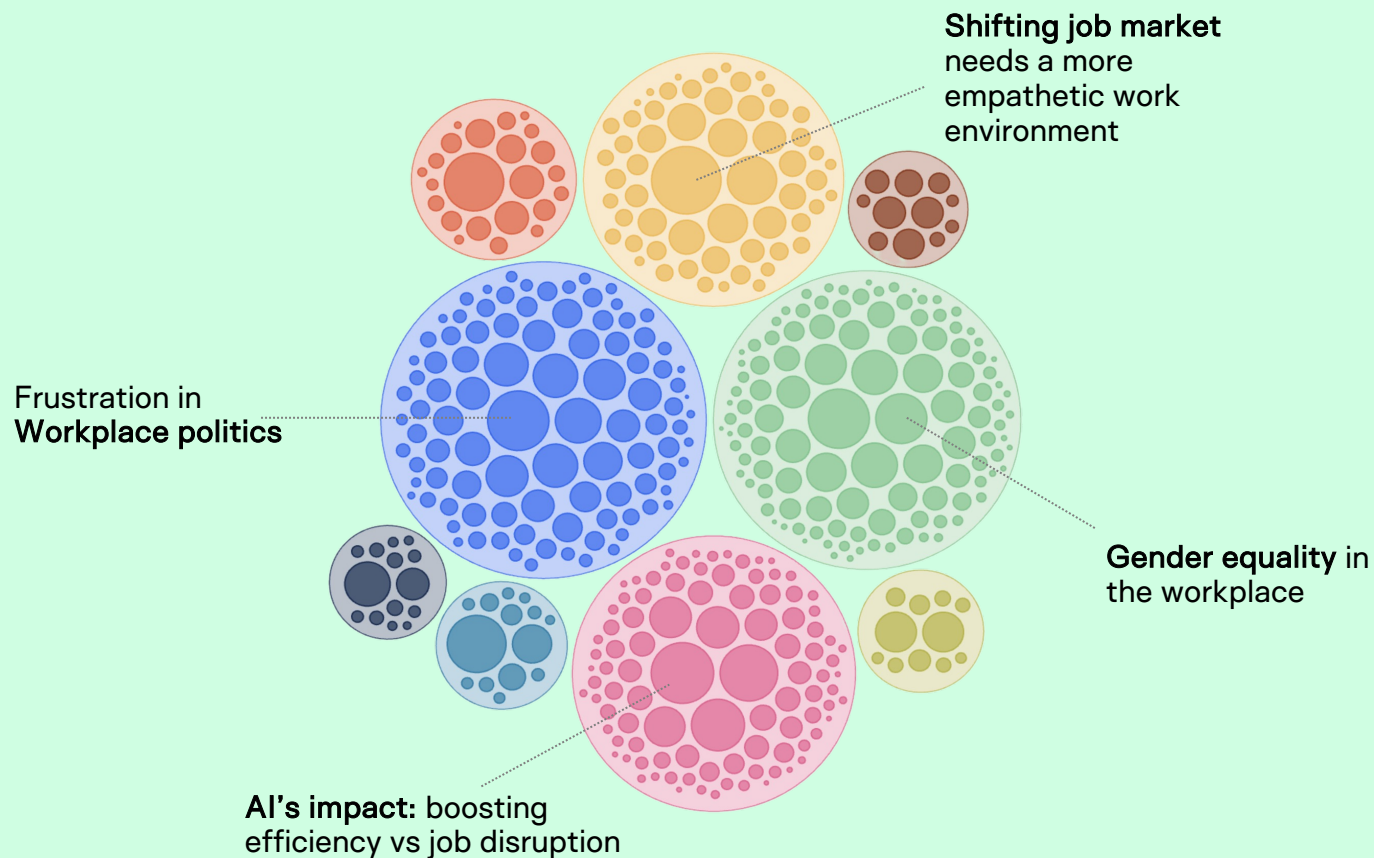
Redefining Work: Boundaries & Productivity

The concept of "work" has expanded beyond traditional office settings, with remote work and entrepreneurship firmly established within the cultural mainstream.

These narratives also touch on the challenges of finding employment, the importance of work-life balance, and the need for employers to respect boundaries and prioritize employee well-being.

Furthermore, the rise of remote work has led to a reevaluation of what it means to be a "good" employee and the value placed on productivity and efficiency.

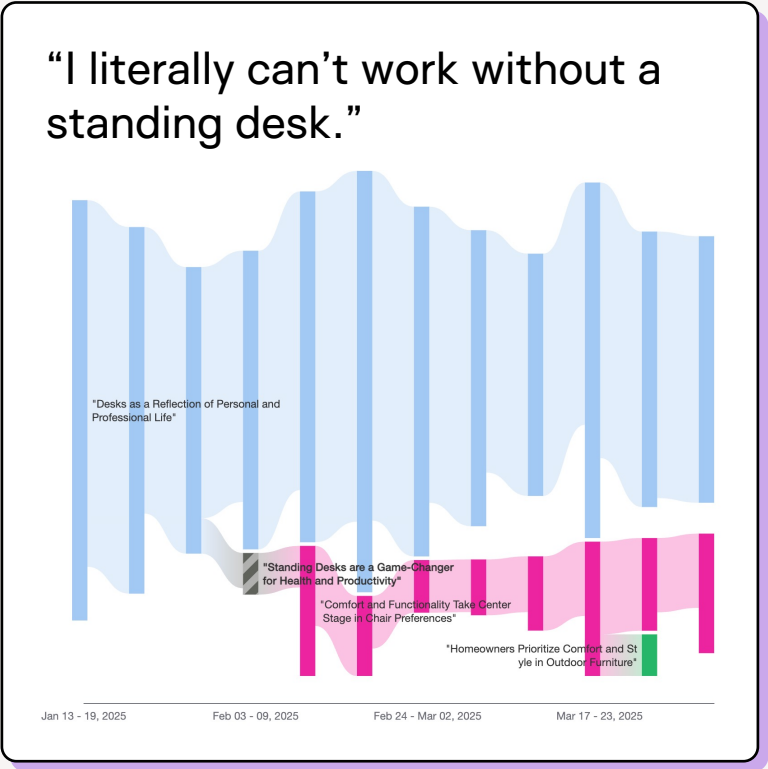
Gender equality in the workplace also remains a key issue, as the push for equal pay, more accessible leadership roles, and inclusive policies intensifies, especially amidst the backdrop of widespread layoffs and an unstable job market, with the goal of fostering fairer, more inclusive work environments for all.



The Workplace: Narrative Spotlight

Workplace narratives are increasingly shaped by frustration with inefficient and biased hiring practices. Many candidates see the system as slow, impersonal, and exclusionary, with outdated processes and biases limiting fair opportunities. As job seekers push for greater transparency and inclusivity, companies face mounting pressure to modernize hiring while competing for top talent.

At the same time, the conversation around workplace well-being is fueling the standing desk narrative. Long hours at desks contribute to back pain, poor posture, and fatigue, making ergonomic solutions feel essential rather than optional. Some argue that standing desks have also become a status symbol, signaling a modern, employee-friendly workplace. For many, not having one suggests being undervalued or stuck in an outdated work culture.



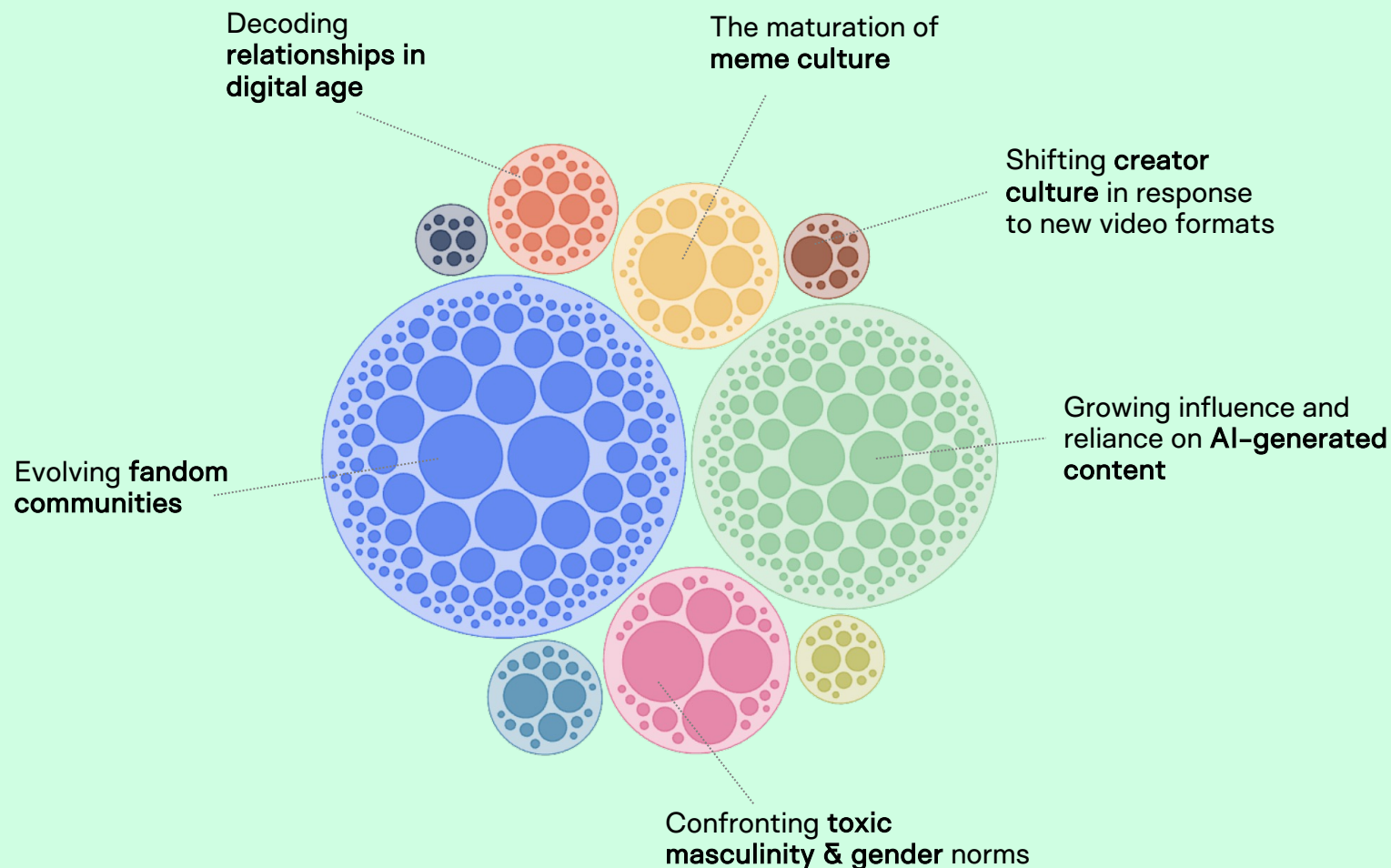
Society & Culture

Total Narratives: 81,717

Exploring identity and relationships, and fandoms in a blurred reality

As Internet culture matures, the prevailing narratives about culture & society increasingly concern online communities erasing the lines between virtual and IRL experience. Fandoms are a large part of that, as fans begin to question their place and grapple with the authenticity vs loyalty dilemma. The double-edged quality of internet —both community-creating and toxic— contributes to the complexity of this shifting dynamic.

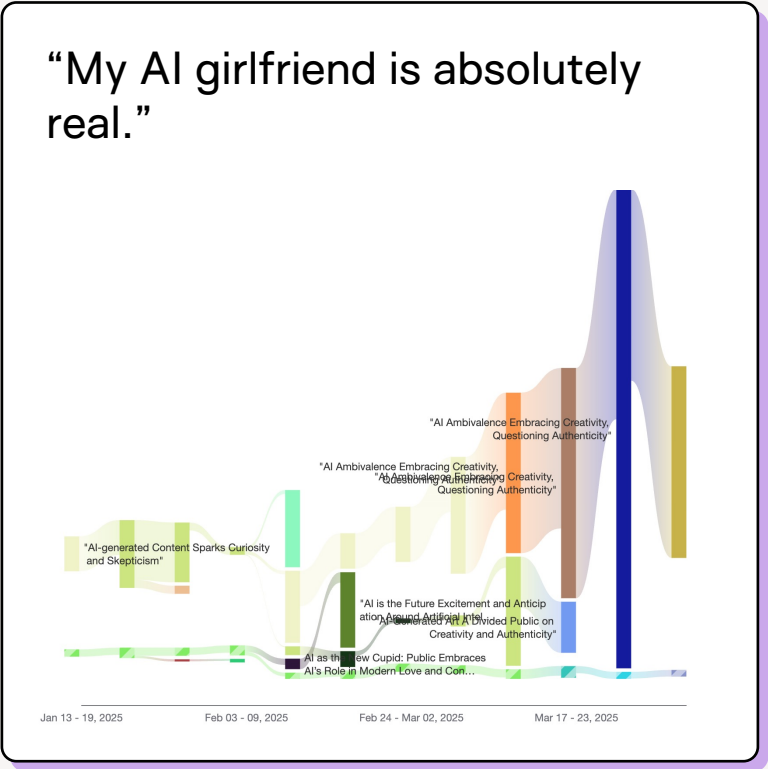
In response to changing social structures and growing awareness of inequality, toxic masculinity narratives have gained traction. As gender norms evolve and conversations about power, privilege, and identity intensify, these narratives reflect society's struggle to redefine masculinity in a rapidly changing world, especially in an era where online platforms amplify both progressive and reactionary voices.



Society & culture: Narrative Spotlight

The top culture and society narratives also reflect deep-seated frustration with cities and communities failing to provide the essential support people need. This sense of neglect has led more individuals to seek virtual spaces, where they can find meaningful connections and online communities that they feel are lacking in their real-world environments.

The rise of AI virtual partners, for example, signals a growing acceptance of alternative realities, driven by the desire for authenticity, emotional connection, and the value such virtual interactions bring into people's lives, especially when traditional models fails to do so.

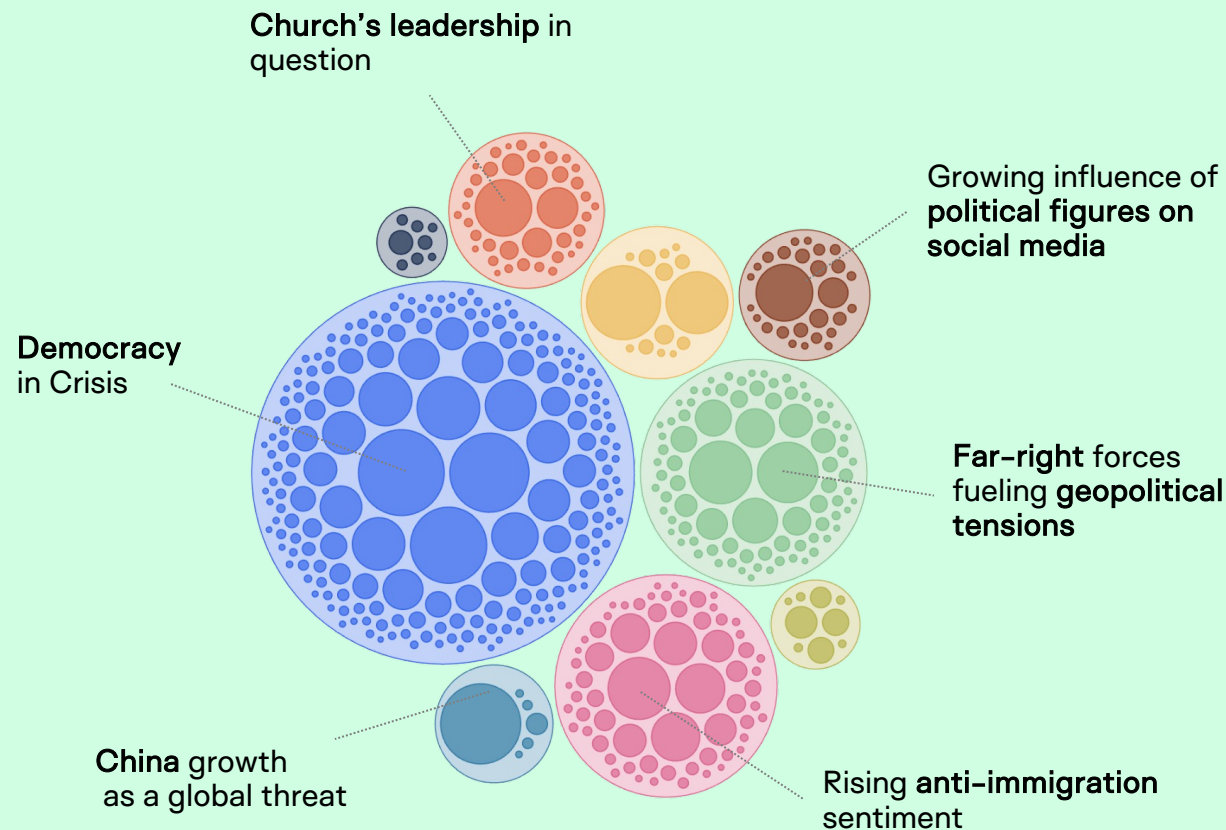


Instability & polarization at the local and global level

The narratives surrounding today's political landscape reveal a deep-seated polarization, where political ideologies begin to take on a cult-like intensity. The divide between liberals and conservatives has reached a boiling point, with allegiance to ideologies becoming more about identity than shared values.

Trust in democracy is rapidly eroding, as more people lose faith in traditional institutions and are increasingly drawn to radical extremes. Politics has shifted from a system of governance to a tribalistic battleground, where adherence to an ideology is absolute, and dissent is treated as heresy.

Geopolitical issues, from national sovereignty to China's rise, add fuel to the fire, creating an environment of fear and division. These narratives push a sense of urgency, amplifying ideological divides, and framing political struggles as existential battles rather than policy disagreements.

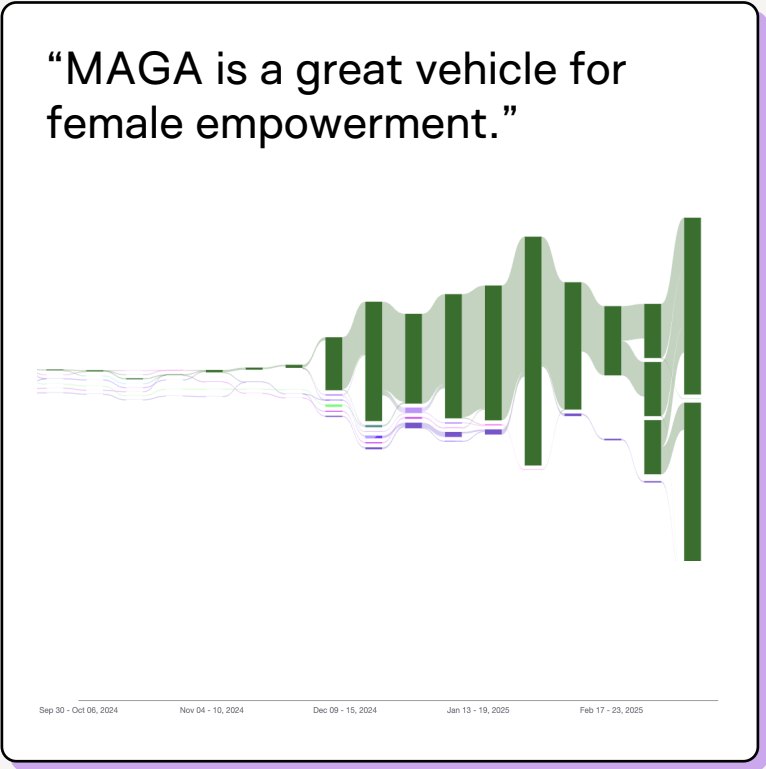
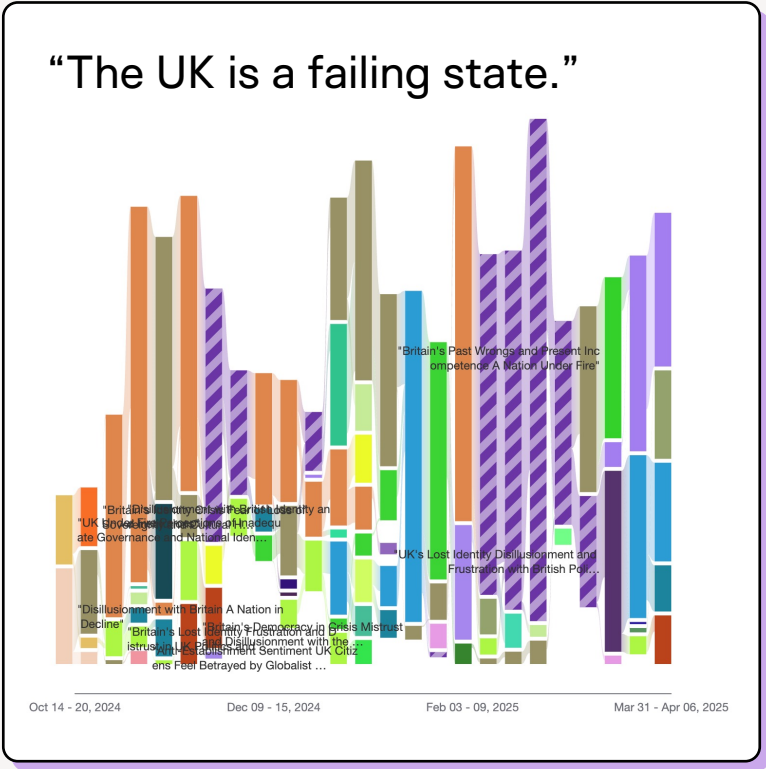


Politics Narrative Spotlight

One of the dominant political narratives in recent months is the erosion of trust in institutions.

In the UK, top political narratives reflect rising disillusionment, with many feeling powerless as the country struggles. Key issues like the NHS, education, and climate change are sidelined, while fears of outside manipulation and media complicity grow. Xenophobic and nationalist sentiments are also rising, leaving many feeling unwelcome.

Domestic politics are also becoming more cult-like. 'MAGA women' provide one such example, rebranding Trumpism as female empowerment. The rise of 'Proud MAGA Girls💙' shows a shift from hard politics to lifestyle and identity. With blue heart emojis and social media savviness, young MAGA women like Kai Trump are attracting Gen Z followers who may not fully buy into Trump's views but are drawn to the aspirational appeal of the 'brand'.



Technology

Total Narratives: 63,771

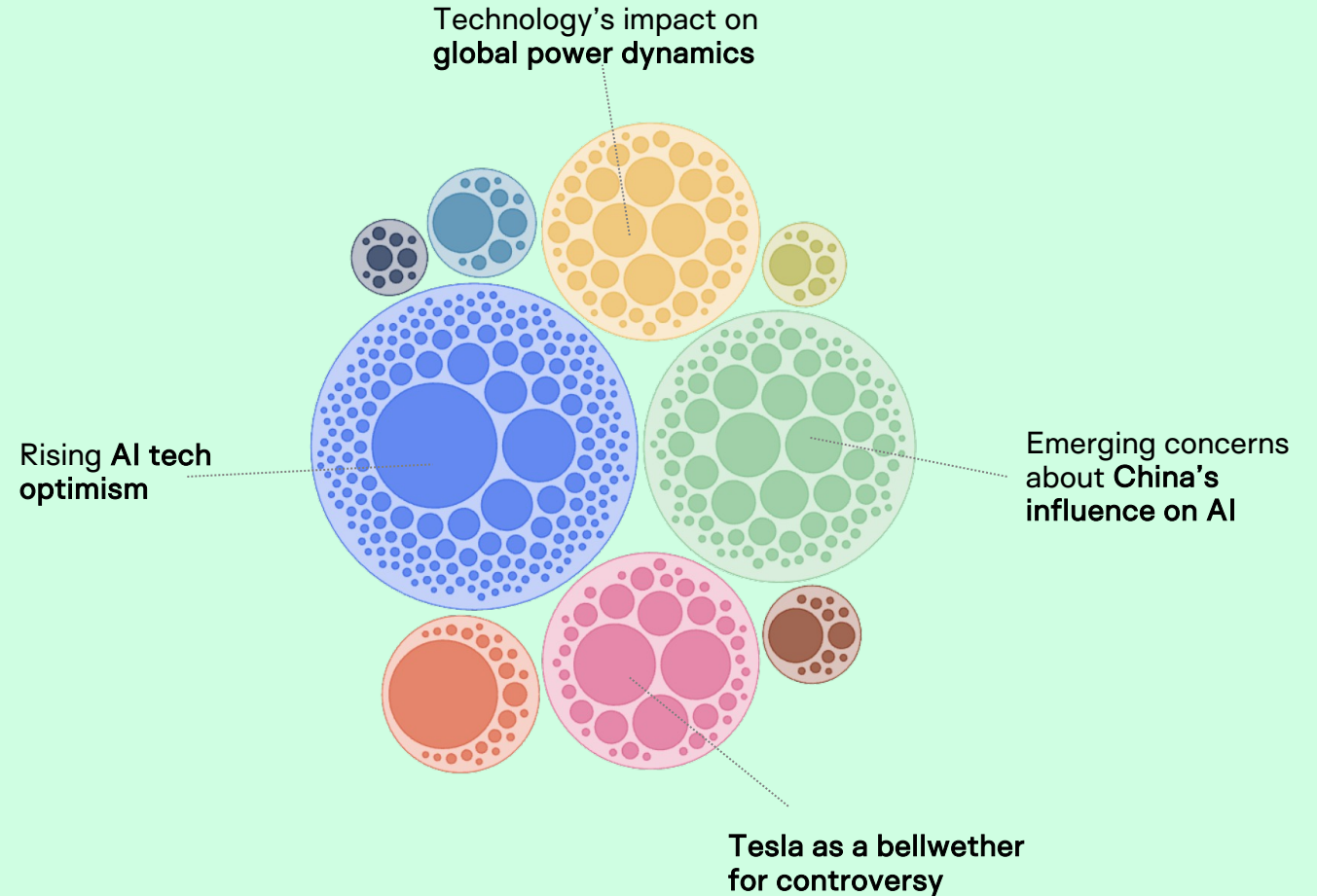
Innovation vs ethics: shaping public perception of technology

As technology moves forward at lightning speed, the public's narrative is being shaped by the push and pull between innovation and ethics.

On one hand, there's the excitement for AI, Web3, and quantum computing opening up new possibilities; on the other, there's a growing recognition of the need for caution, ethical oversight, and responsible management, especially in areas like AI-generated art where the lines between creativity and automation blur.

As this unfolds, global concerns are rising—particularly around China's rapid technological advancements. Many see it as a growing challenge to global security, adding an extra layer of urgency to discussions about the future of tech.

Amid all this, tech giants like Tesla, SpaceX, Apple, and Samsung continue to shape the tech narrative. But the real question is whether their dominance will remain, or if the ever-evolving tech landscape will force a shift in their influence.



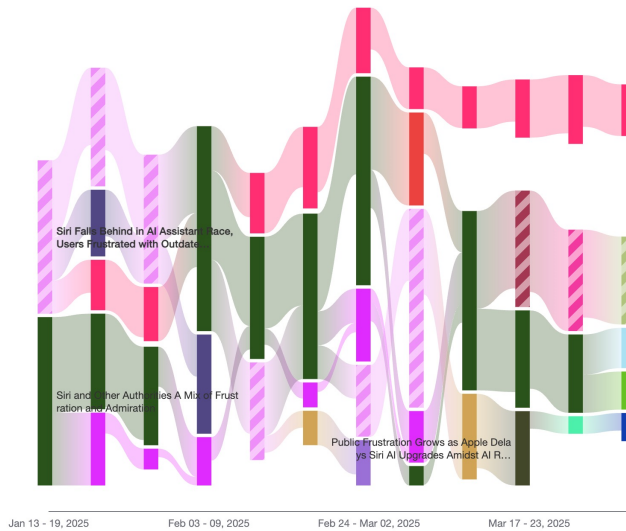
Technology Narrative Spotlight

No surprise AI is dominating emerging narratives, driven by its rapid growth and vast potential. But frustration with tech giants like Apple is growing, especially regarding its AI, with Siri falling behind more advanced generative systems like ChatGPT.

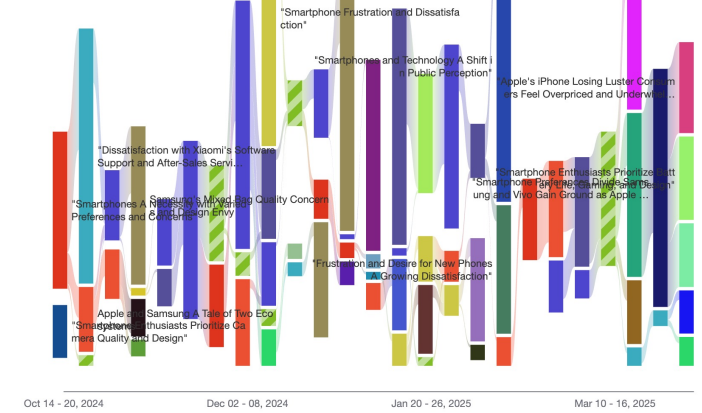
People are pointing out that Siri's limitations are increasingly obvious next to AIs like OpenAI's and DeepSeek, which can hold nuanced conversations and understand context. This has sparked more questions about whether Apple's Intelligence can keep up with competitors, notwithstanding its increased openness to partnering with AI companies.

When it comes to purchasing hardware such as smartphones, meanwhile, the customers are shifting their focus away from brand loyalties to more practical concerns. Driven by necessity for functionality and performance, they are opting for products that provide utility without the perceived attention-harvesting downsides of a smartphone.

“Apple's Siri has fallen behind its competitors in AI.”



“I care more about function than brand when choosing a smartphone.”



🌱 Climate & Sustainability

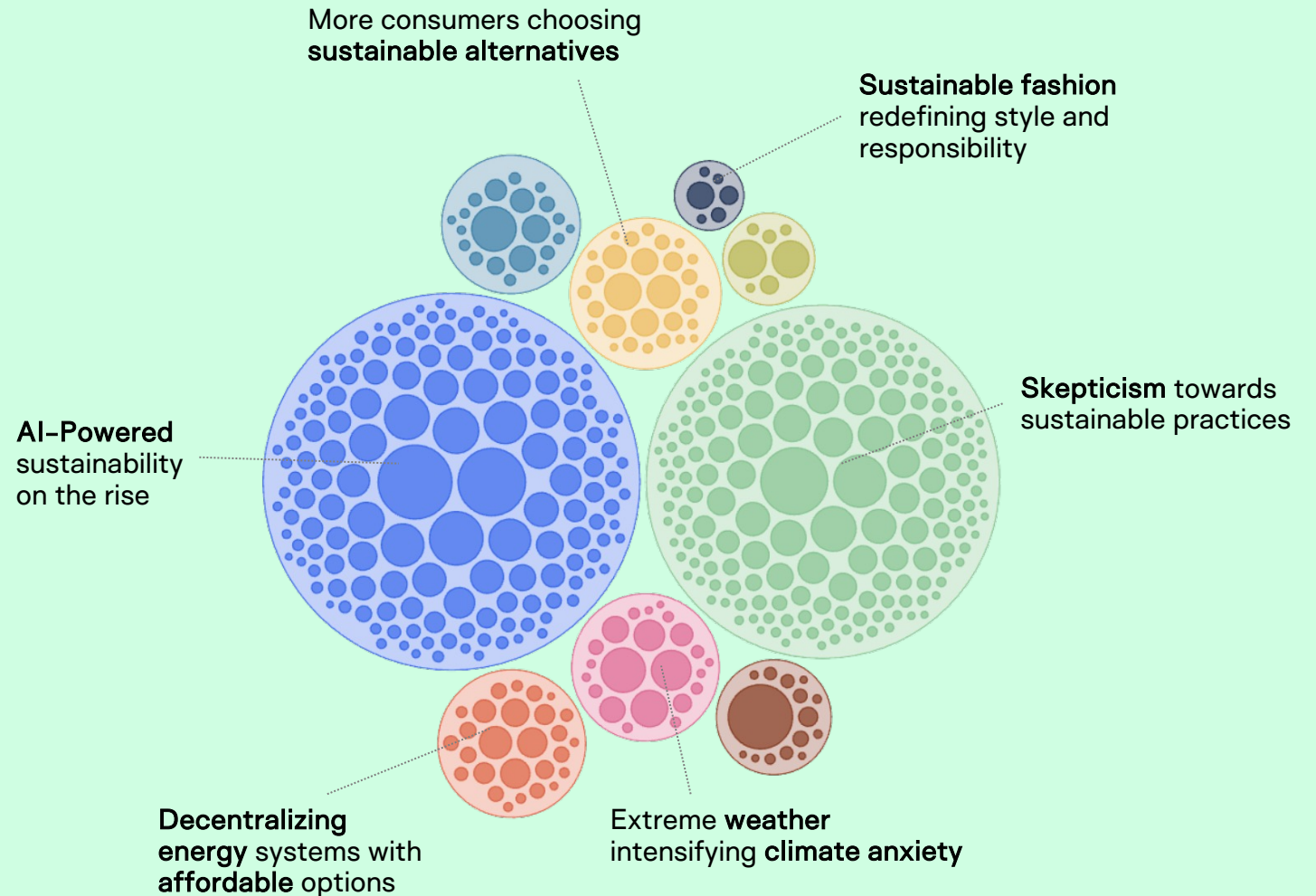
Total Narratives: 63,092

The shift to consumer-driven sustainability

Recent sustainability narratives highlight how consumers are now driving the conversation. This is related in part to the rollback of sustainability initiatives amongst many organizations. Where corporate policies, climate finance, and regulations once dominated, individuals are increasingly framed as shaping sustainability through their purchasing power and lifestyle choices.

Optimism surrounding AI-powered solutions is growing among investors, as these technologies promise to bring efficiency and innovation to carbon tracking and regulation against greenwashing. However, skepticism persists, fueled by the intensification of extreme weather events and mounting frustration over the failures of sustainable policies, such as Net Zero initiatives, and the lack of government support against surging energy costs, and the absence of global action.

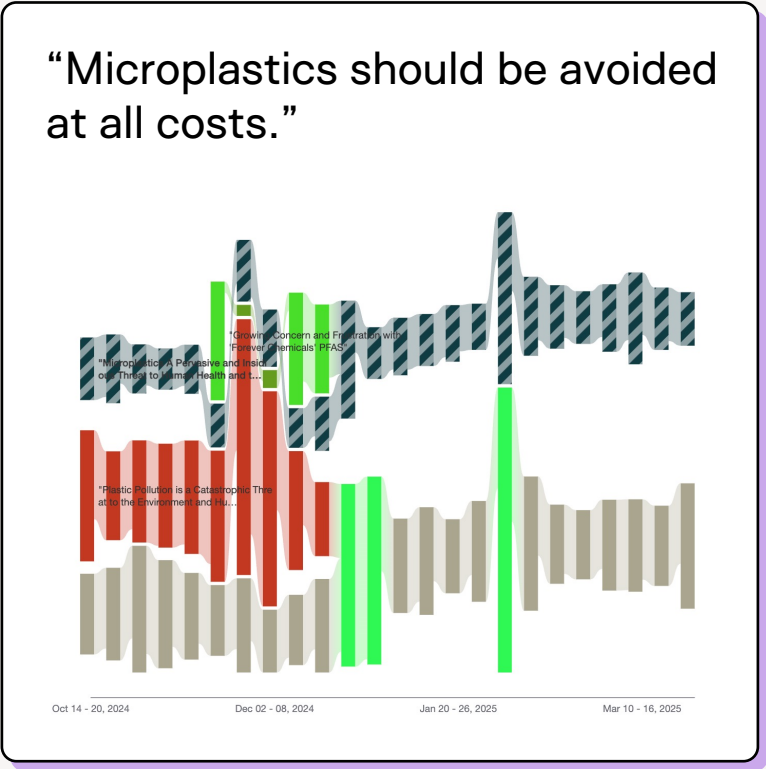
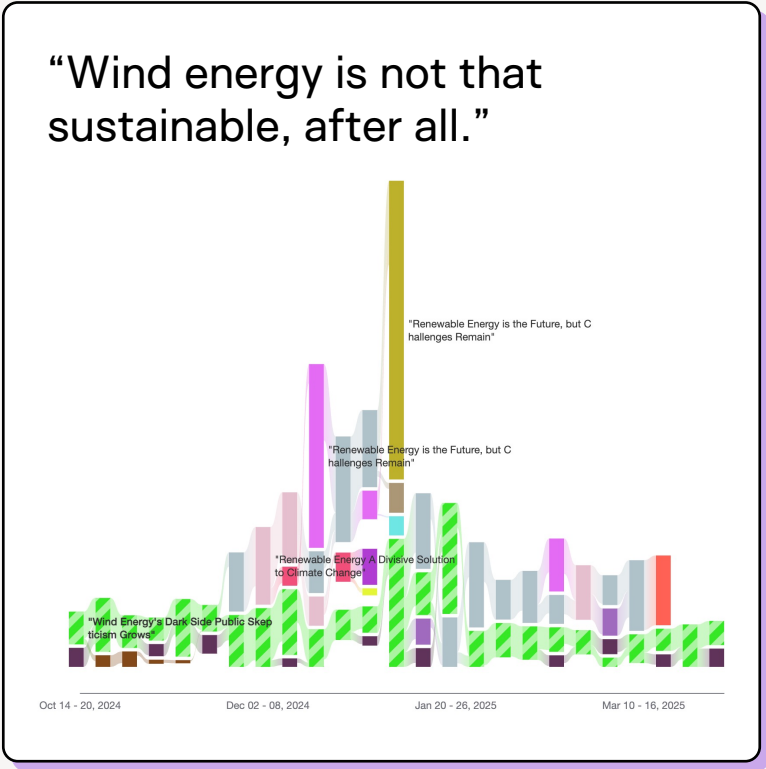
Consumers are responding by making sustainability personal—seeking budget-friendly solar panels and water tank at home, shopping secondhand, and cutting consumption, often as much for financial reasons as ethical ones.



Climate & Sustainability: Narrative Spotlight

Narratives are increasingly marked by skepticism toward renewable energy and previous held climate beliefs. For instance, more people question the efficacy of wind farms, given their environmental impact—such as harming sea creatures, disrupting whale sonar, and recycling challenges of massive turbine blades. Such concerns, coupled with regulatory challenges, feed doubt about the success of "green" initiatives.

At the same time, consumers are waking up to the hidden threats woven into everyday life. Microplastics—once seen as a distant environmental issue—are now understood as a direct health hazard, linked to hormone disruption, reproductive toxicity, and chronic illness. This shift is fueling a surge in narratives around “plastic-free” and “toxic-free” living, as people reconsider what they allow into their homes and bodies. Many are also taking matters into their own hands—ditching plastic and pressuring brands and policymakers to respond.



🍷 Food & Drink

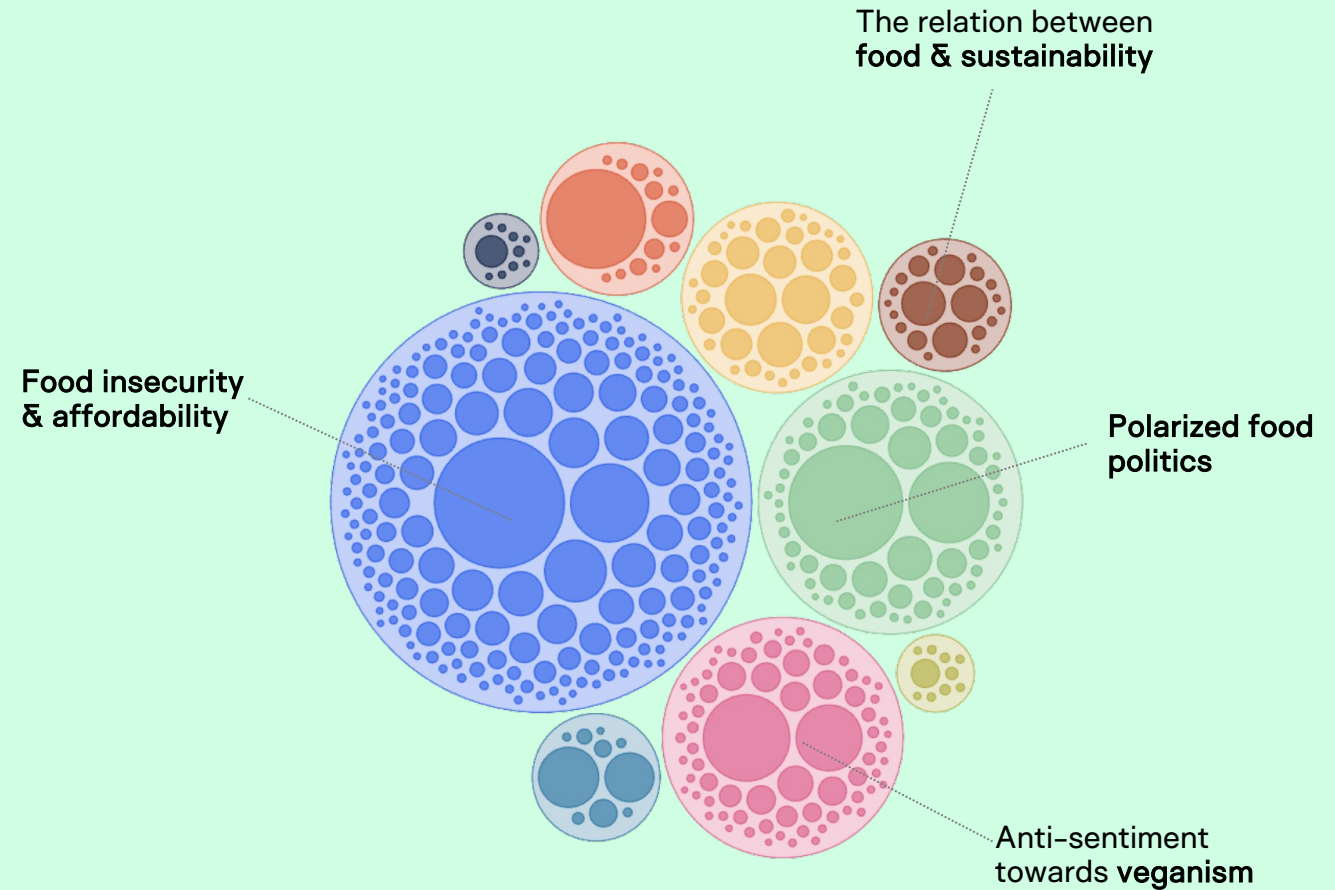
Total Narratives: 58,075

Insecurity rising in lockstep with prices

Food and drink have become key battlegrounds in the economic and political landscape, with narratives focusing on affordability and food security. Rising inflation, coupled with uncertain global politics and the impact of climate change, has exacerbated the strain on food systems. As prices soar and more people face food insecurity, frustration grows, sparking questions about the effectiveness of government initiatives aimed at supporting agriculture, tackling malnutrition and simply ensuring reasonable grocery prices.

Food also remains a deeply personal issue—shaped by culture, identity, and social connections. The ongoing debate around veganism versus meat-eating, now that cultural impetus has swung back behind the latter, intensifies these divisions, highlighting moral divides.

At the same time, climate narratives about food are gaining traction, complicating the broader conversation. These ideas challenge the very foundations of what we consume, further entangling food in a web of political, economic, and moral conflict.

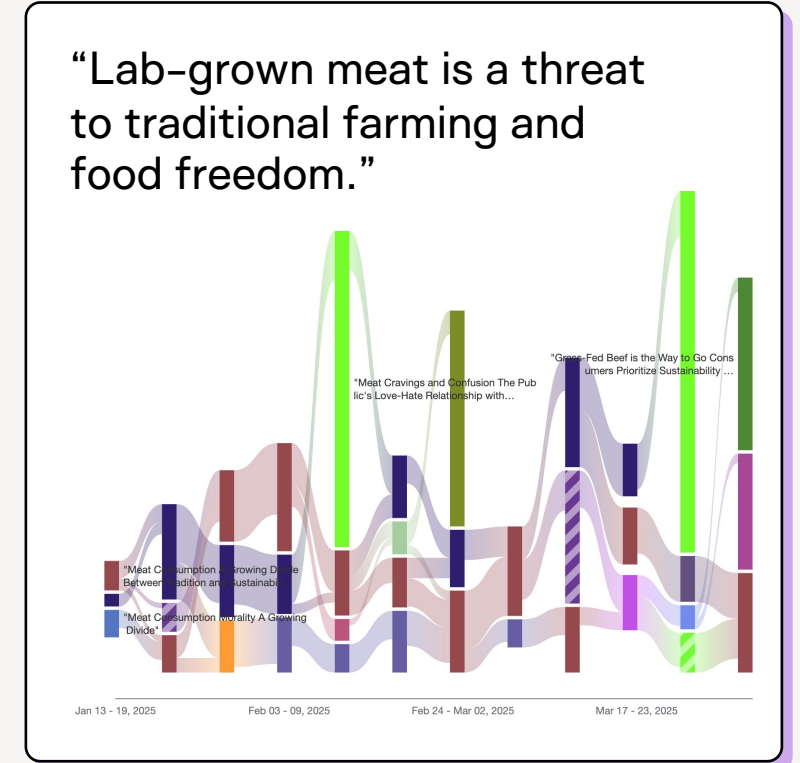


Food & drink: Narrative Spotlight

With inflation driving up costs and environmental factors threatening crop yields, the call for local, self-sufficient food systems is growing stronger.

Many are now arguing that eating well isn't just a matter of willpower—it's a matter of privilege. As the cost of nutritious foods rises, processed snacks dominate, and meal prepping demands more time, healthy eating is increasingly seen as out of reach for many. This growing belief underscores how what was once viewed as a personal choice has become a marker of socio-economic status.

At the same time, the rise of anti-lab-grown meat sentiment is adding another layer of complexity to food choices. Critics view lab-grown meat as a step toward corporate control over food production, fearing it could undermine food sovereignty, displace small-scale farms, and create synthetic, mass-produced systems that lack transparency and sustainability.



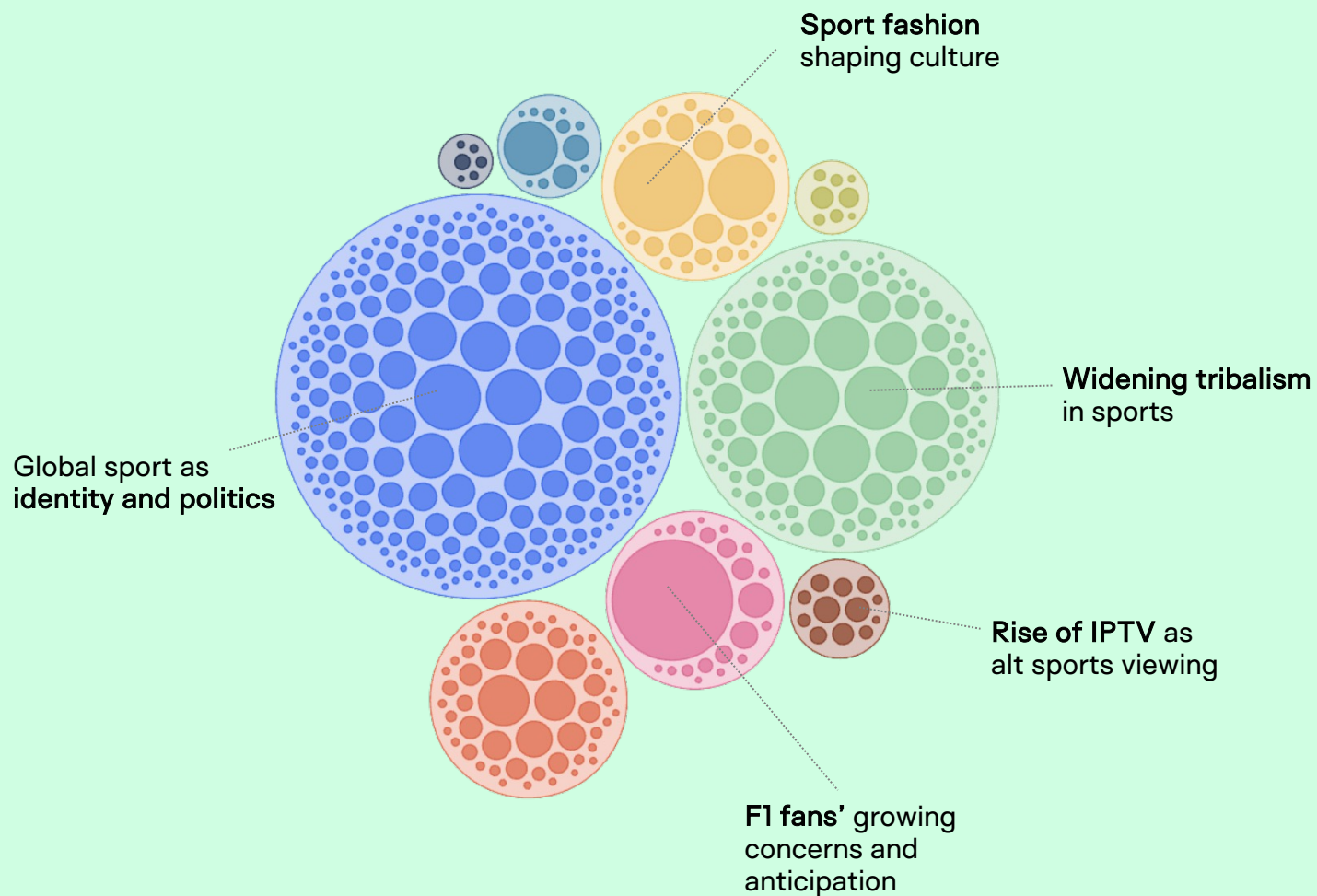
⚽ Sports

Total Narratives: 52,897

Sports as a key driver of identity

Perspectives and beliefs around sports often foreground the role of community and self-identification. From football and basketball to F1 and WWE, sports is increasing cast as the stream through which broader society and culture flows – whether that's because of the power and influence of individual sports stars, or sports being cast as the battleground in which wider cultural issues find plainest expression.

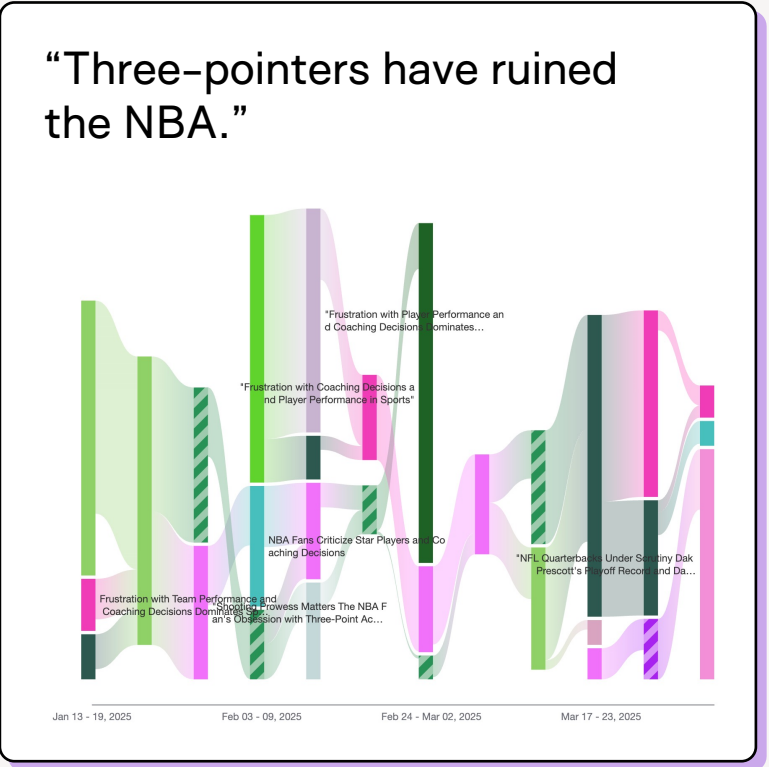
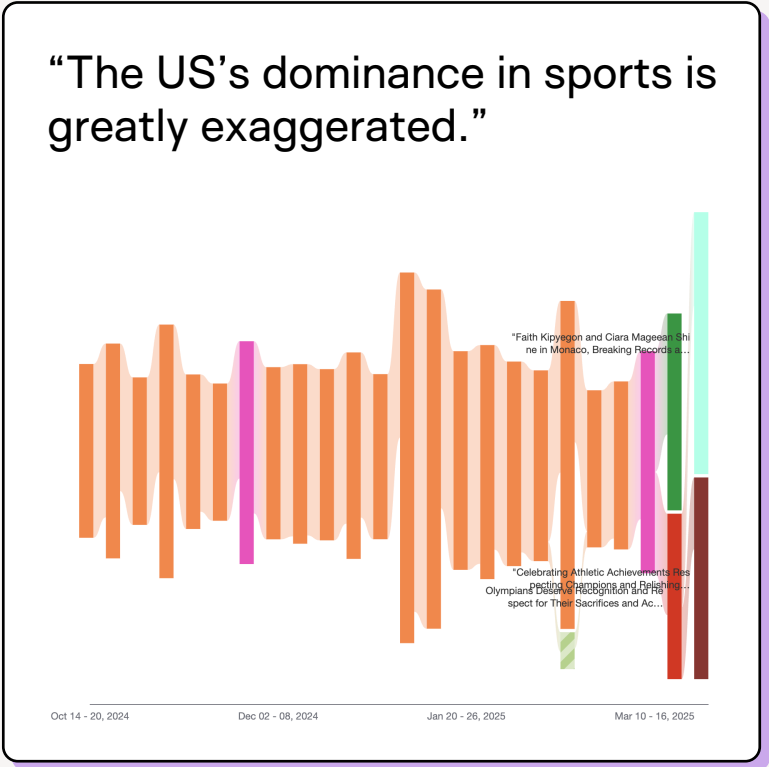
At the same time, the rise of sports tech is creating new investment, fan engagement, and entertainment opportunities, showing increased technology infusion into sporting life. Sport fashion is also growing its footprint, driven by collaborations and the evocation of nostalgia by established sportswear names like Nike, Adidas, as well as challenger or culturally resurgent brands.



Sports: Narrative Spotlight

There's a rising belief that US dominance is overstated. Fans, especially from outside the US, are questioning why American achievements, particularly in basketball and athletics, are often cast as 'world' championships. With the US's cultural hegemony under challenge, and halfway between two global competitions that pit the US against the rest of the world (the Olympics and the Football World Cup), these long-time complaints are attaining a new intensity.

Concurrently, die-hard sports enthusiasts of franchises like the NBA crave authentic strategies rather than routine and predictable play. They feel the game has become too staid and reliant on long-range shooting, losing the depth and variety of strategies that once made it exciting. Fans are calling for a return to a more diverse style of play, one that values creativity and inside tactics over the current emphasis on three-pointers.



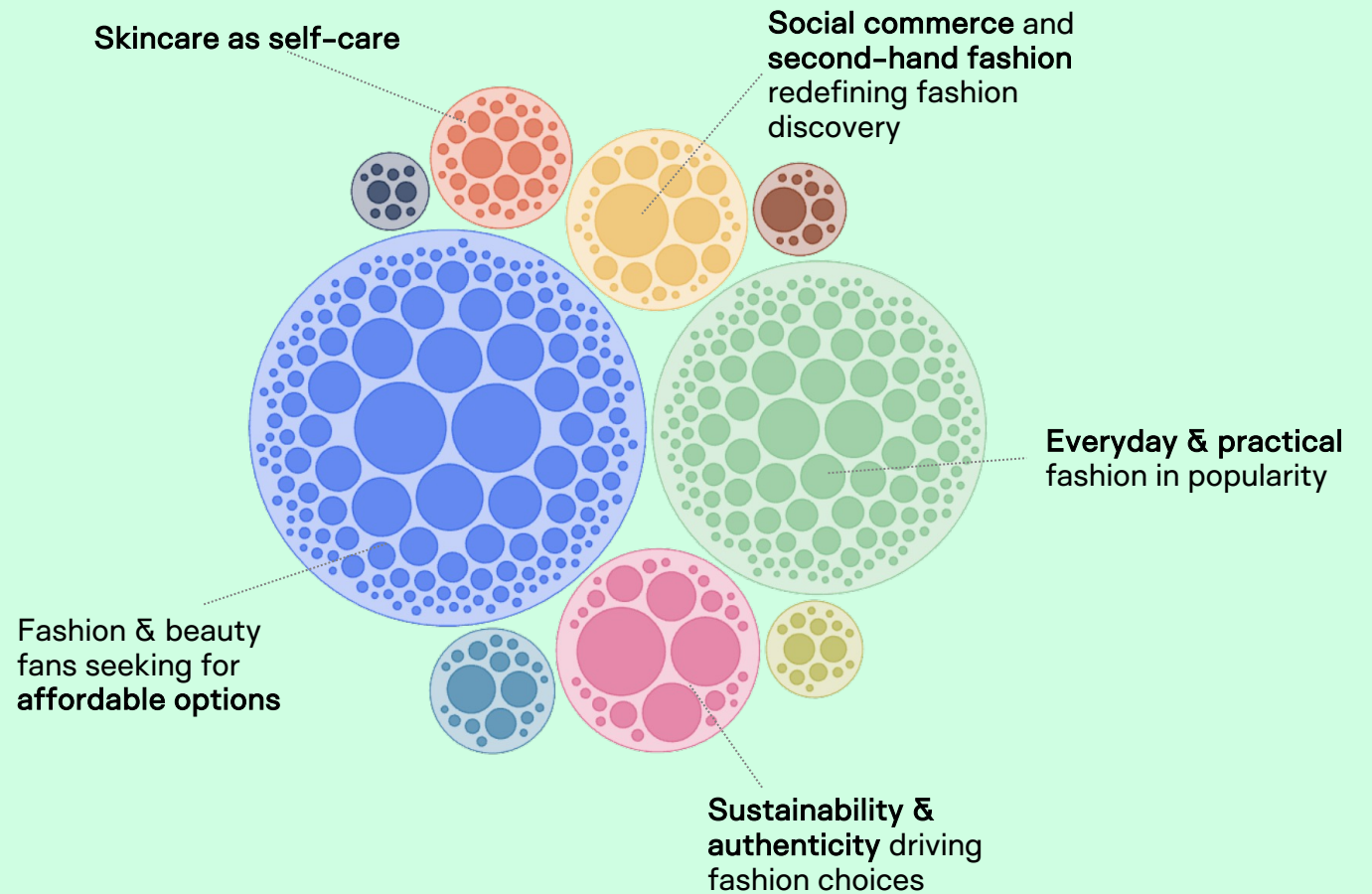
Fashion & Beauty

Total Narratives: 44,972

Affordability meets individuality

Affordability and sustainability have become dominant factors in both fashion and beauty. Fashion has shifted from being solely about personal identity to being more focused on practicality and everyday relevance with their peers. The growing narratives around normcore and #nonaesthetic illustrate this change, where the emphasis is on adaptability, comfort, and functionality rather than uniqueness. The rise of secondhand shopping and platforms that offer affordable, versatile choices reflects the growing demand for budget-conscious options, particularly amidst economic instability.

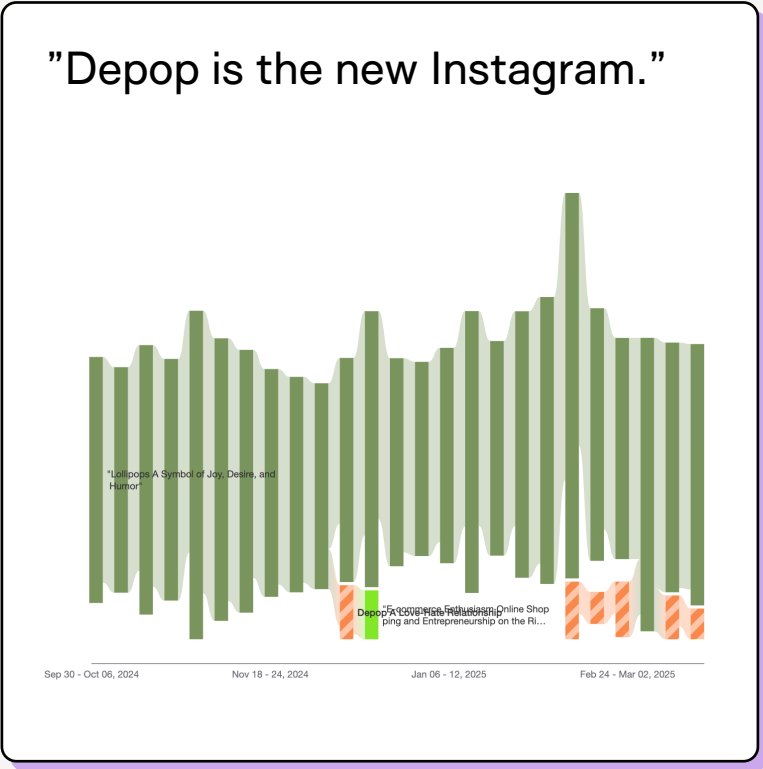
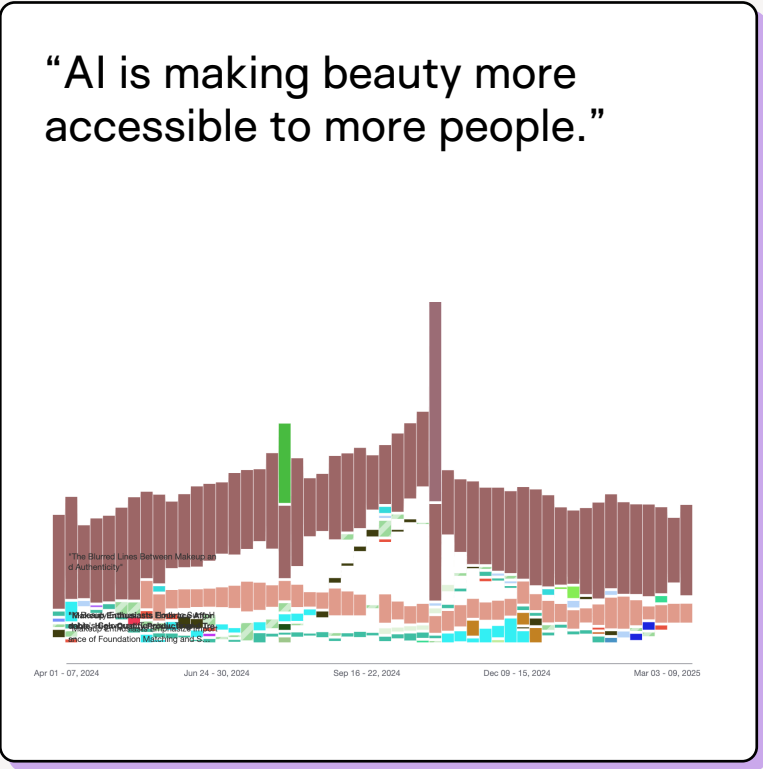
In beauty, there's a growing interest in clean, natural routines, and a stronger focus on skincare and emotional wellness. Yet the resurgence of traditional beauty standards—often seen in preppy looks and injectables—challenges the inclusive beauty standards that have gained ground in recent years. With self-expression at an all-time high, some are turning to technology to help them achieve their desired image.



Fashion & Beauty: Narrative Spotlight

AI is increasingly seen as a key player in making high-end products and services more accessible—even in beauty. From virtual try-ons to personalized skincare diagnostics, beauty fans are turning to AI as their own personal consultants—helping them discover new products, refine their routines, and get tailored recommendations with a few taps. These tools are bringing consumers closer to experiences once reserved for in-store specialists or luxury services.

At the same time, peer-to-peer platforms like Depop, Vinted, TikTok Shop, and Instagram Shop are gaining popularity, especially among younger consumers. These platforms not only provide an avenue for discovering rare items and reselling pre-loved pieces but also offer an engaging, social media-like experience that keeps users entertained. Younger people are increasingly drawn to these platforms not just for shopping, but for browsing feeds, interacting with other users, and keeping up with trends.





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