

Reading Between the Reels: A Data Analysis of City Entertainment Magazine (1979–2007)

1. Introduction

A Unique Cultural Artefact: Founded in 1979, *City Entertainment Magazine* chronicles the 28-year arc of Hong Kong's cinematic golden age through its final issue in 2007.

列標籤	Number	%
1. Magazine Structure	2731	10.81%
2. Film Criticism	4191	16.59%
3. Film Studies & Theory	407	1.61%
4. Interview & Profile	2622	10.38%
5. Industry & Market	4088	16.18%
6. Production & Technology	132	0.52%
7. Television & Other Performing Arts	2285	9.04%
8. Cultural Commentary	8810	34.87%
總計	25266	100.00%

Figure 1: Content Architecture Overview

Data Scale (The Corpus):

- Temporal Scope: **28 years** of uninterrupted publication (1979–2007).
- Volume: **25,266 articles** meticulously categorised across **8 editorial categories**.
- Authorship: A diverse network of **3,640 unique authors**, ranging from prolific staff critics to one-time contributors.

The Problem: How can we extract hidden cultural logic from 28 years of digitised print media at scale?

- Author contribution data exists but has never been visualised dynamically
- Topic patterns across decades are invisible to manual reading
- Food and everyday life vocabulary in the corpus has been overlooked

2. Objective

Demonstrate that open humanities data + computational methods can reveal profound insights

- Visualise the dynamics of the author community — who dominated, who faded, and when influence changed hands
- Identify the latent topic structure of the corpus and track how topic proportions shifted from 1979 to 2007
- Use food vocabulary as a cultural proxy to measure the magazine's shifting register — from local to cosmopolitan

3. Methodology

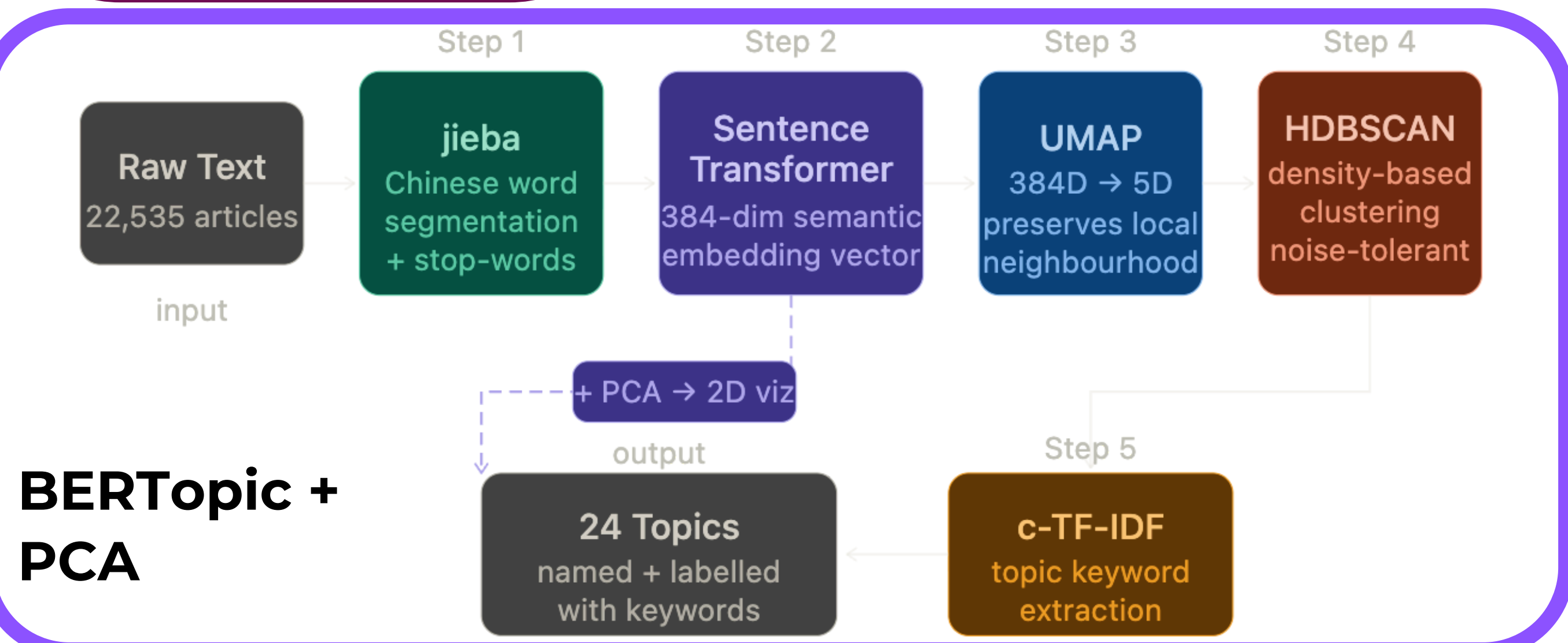


Figure 2: Methodology of BERTopic + PCA

- Traditional TF-IDF or LDA treat text as bags of words — they miss meaning, metaphor, and context
- BERTopic uses Sentence Transformers to embed each article as a 384-dimensional meaning vector — semantically similar articles cluster together regardless of exact word overlap
- PCA adds a second lens: compresses 384D to 2D to visualise how the centre of gravity drifted across eras

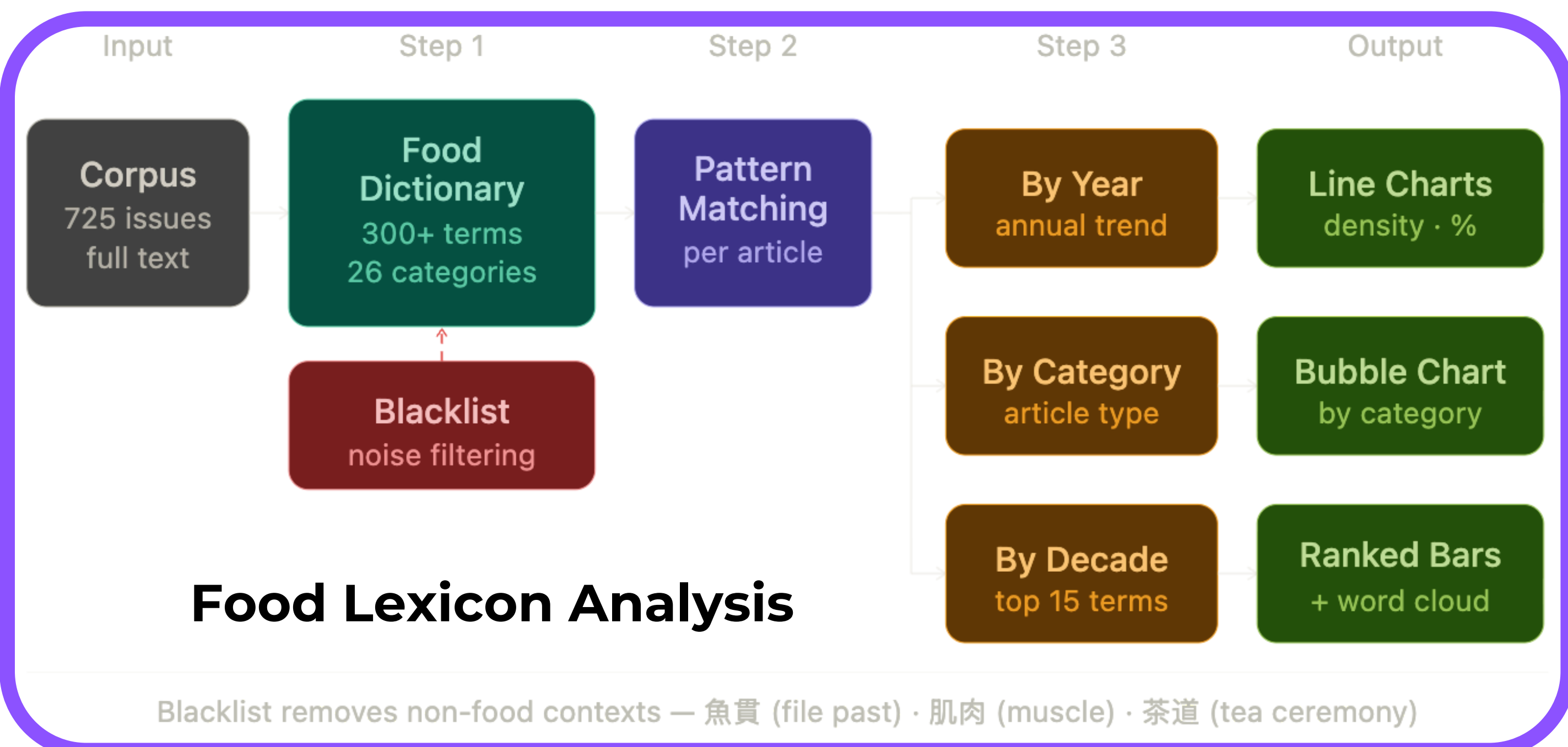


Figure 3: Methodology of Food Lexicon Analysis

- Food references are culturally specific and historically sensitive — they encode identity, aspiration, and social change
- Chosen because it offers a non-obvious cultural signal — one that traditional film scholarship would overlook entirely

4. Visualisation

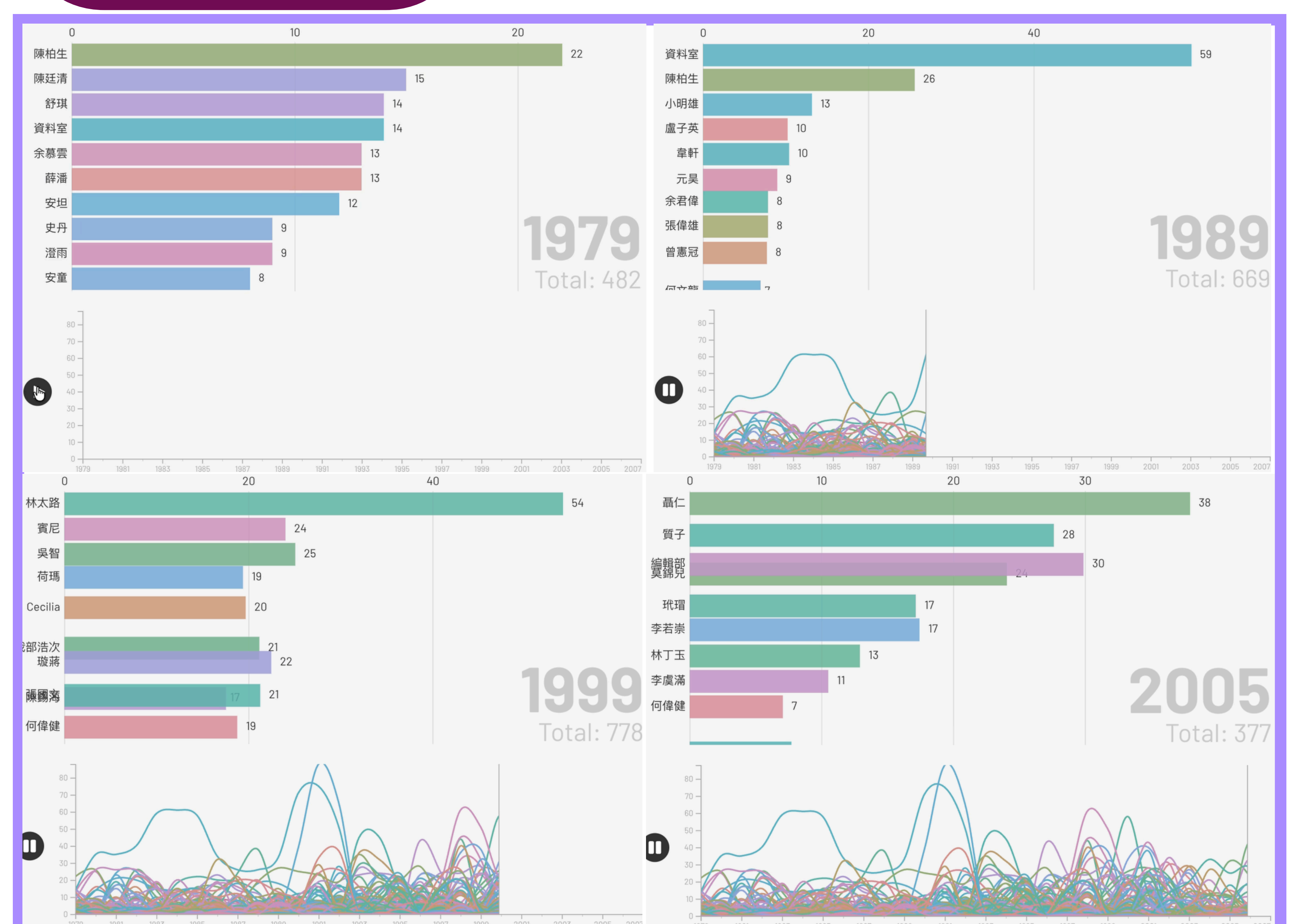


Figure 4: Visualisation of Author Dynamics (1979–2007)

◆ **Bar Chart Race:** The Great Author Marathon, 1979–2007
Visualising generational shifts in editorial influence

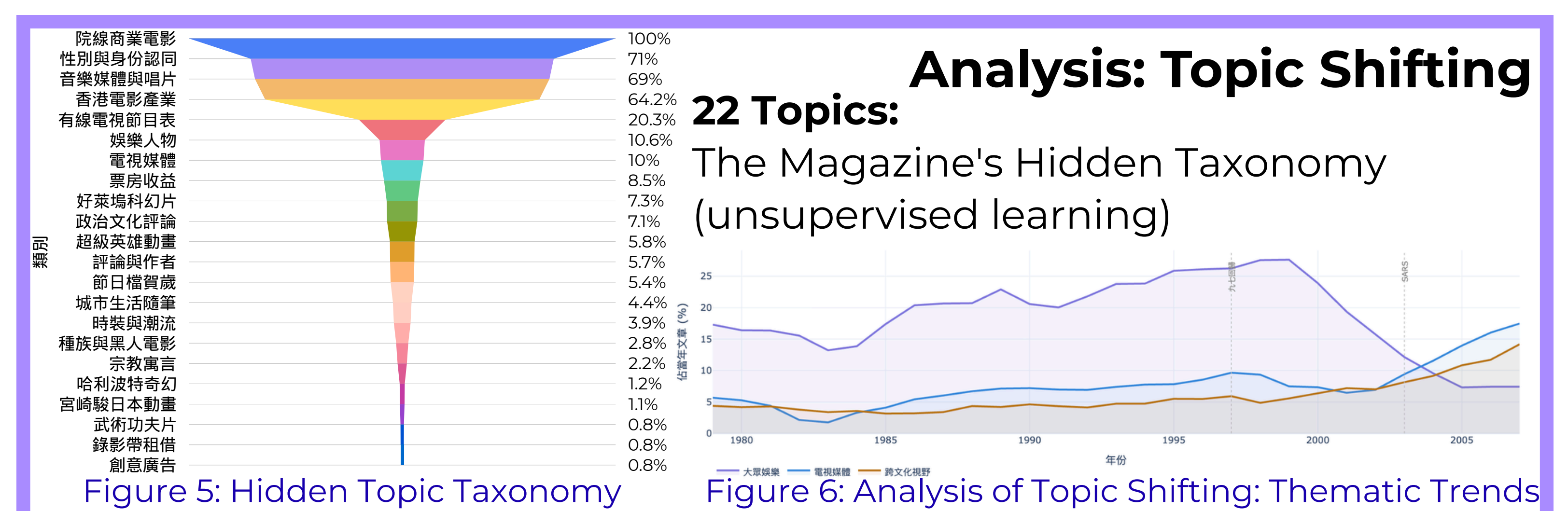


Figure 5: Hidden Topic Taxonomy

Figure 6: Analysis of Topic Shifting: Thematic Trends

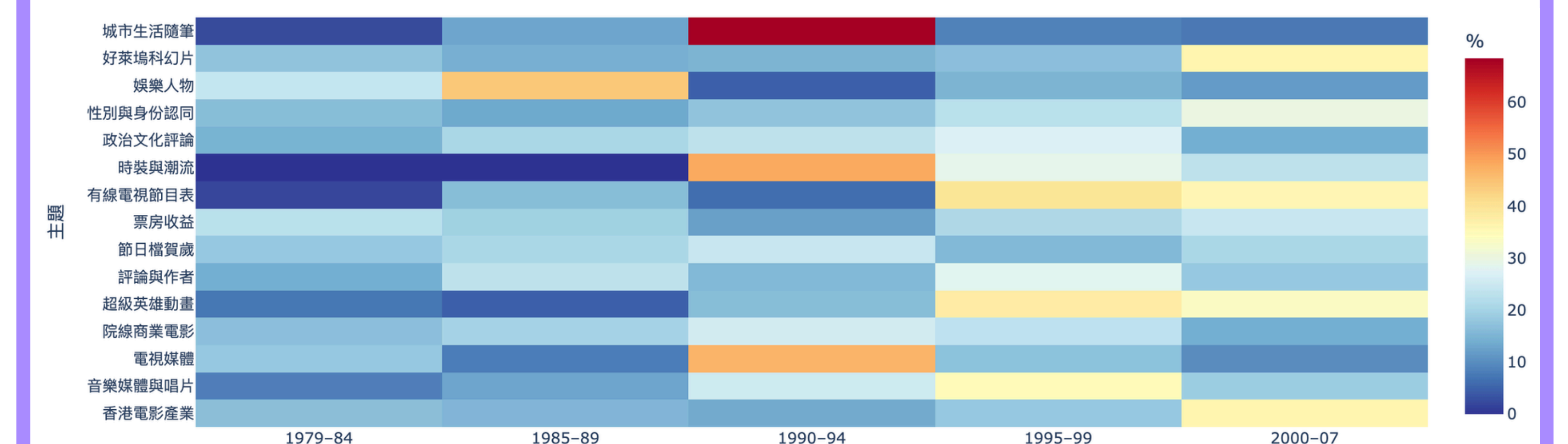


Figure 7: Analysis of Topic Shifting: Topic Heatmap

Core Finding: Popular entertainment peaks then collapses post-1999
The structural shift in the magazine's editorial identity

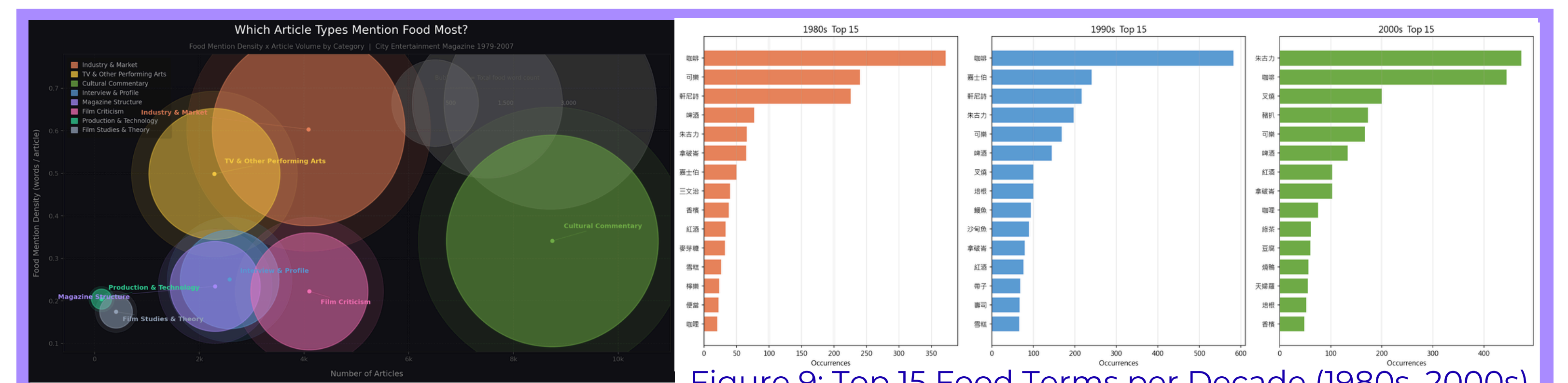


Figure 8: Food Mention Density by Article Category

Figure 9: Top 15 Food Terms per Decade (1980s–2000s)

The Full Flavour of 28 Years

- Coffee dominated all three decades
- The 1990s saw a surge of Japanese food references
- Local Hong Kong foods reclaimed ground in the 2000s

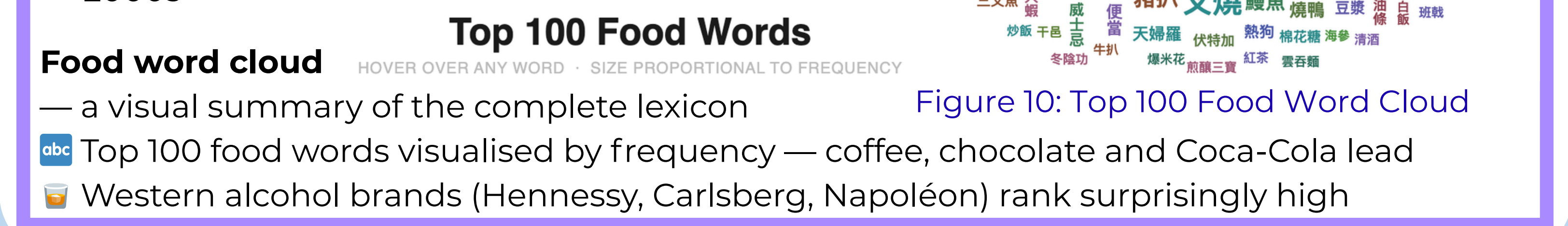


Figure 10: Top 100 Food Word Cloud

— a visual summary of the complete lexicon
Top 100 food words visualised by frequency — coffee, chocolate and Coca-Cola lead
Western alcohol brands (Hennessy, Carlsberg, Napoléon) rank surprisingly high

5. Conclusion

- Author Dynamics: The people changed — new author generations brought new vocabularies and priorities
- Topic Shifting: The magazine's discourse industrialised — topics shifted from cultural critique to market reporting
- Food as Cultural Mirror: The city changed too — food writing tracked Hong Kong's cosmopolitan turn in real time

"City Entertainment Magazine is not just a record of HK cinema — it is a semantic container of the city's cultural identity."

