

Imagine all the People: Characterizing Social Music Sharing on Reddit

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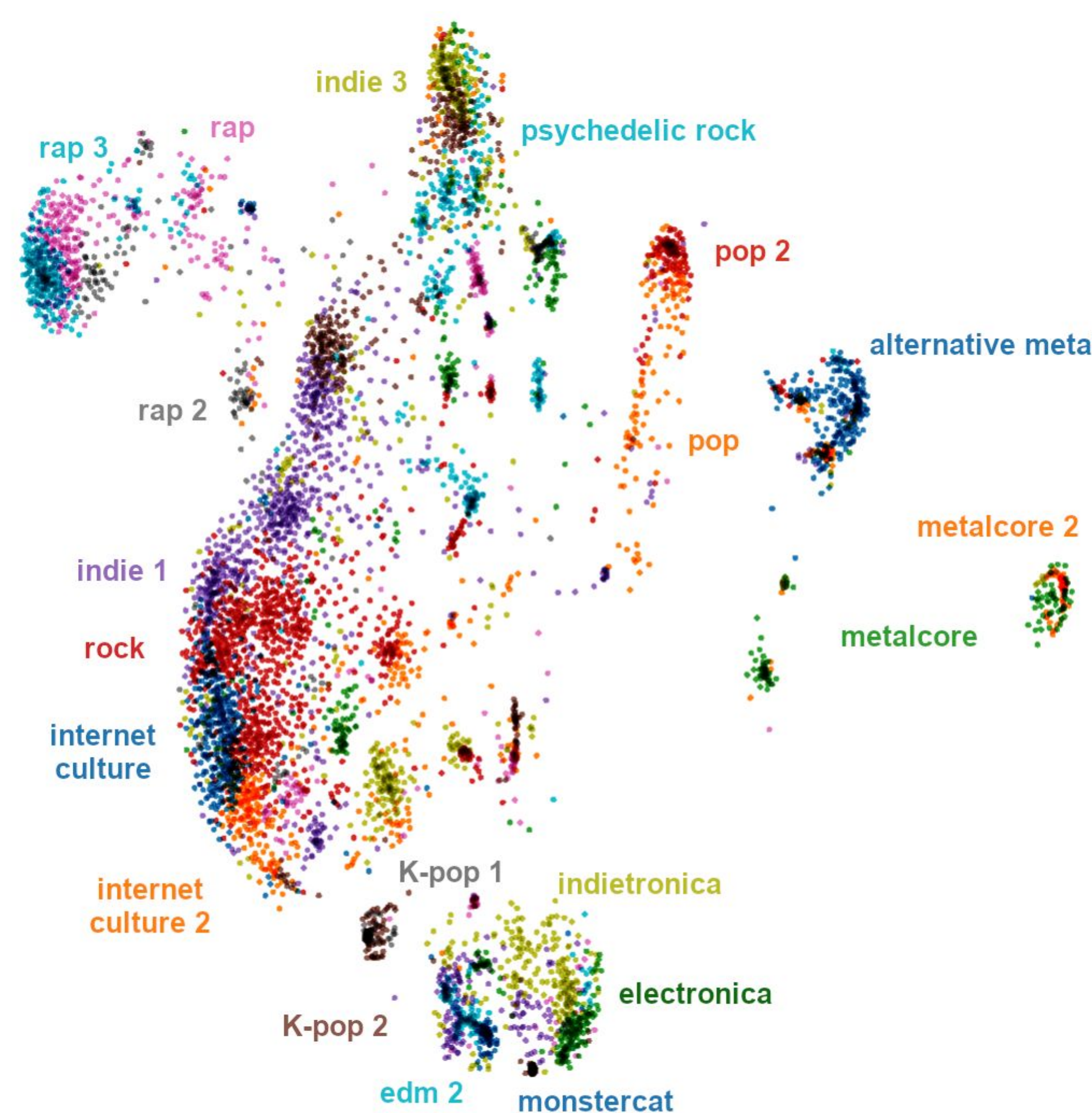
“While music may be shaped by the people who first make and use it, as experience it has a life of its own.” - Sociomusicologist Simon Frith

Embed artists in a “behavioural space”

Artists are shared in communities on Reddit; some are shared similarly to others, others are shared differently.

We extract a dataset of 1.3M music shares on Reddit and embed artists into a socially constructed behavioural Reddit embedding

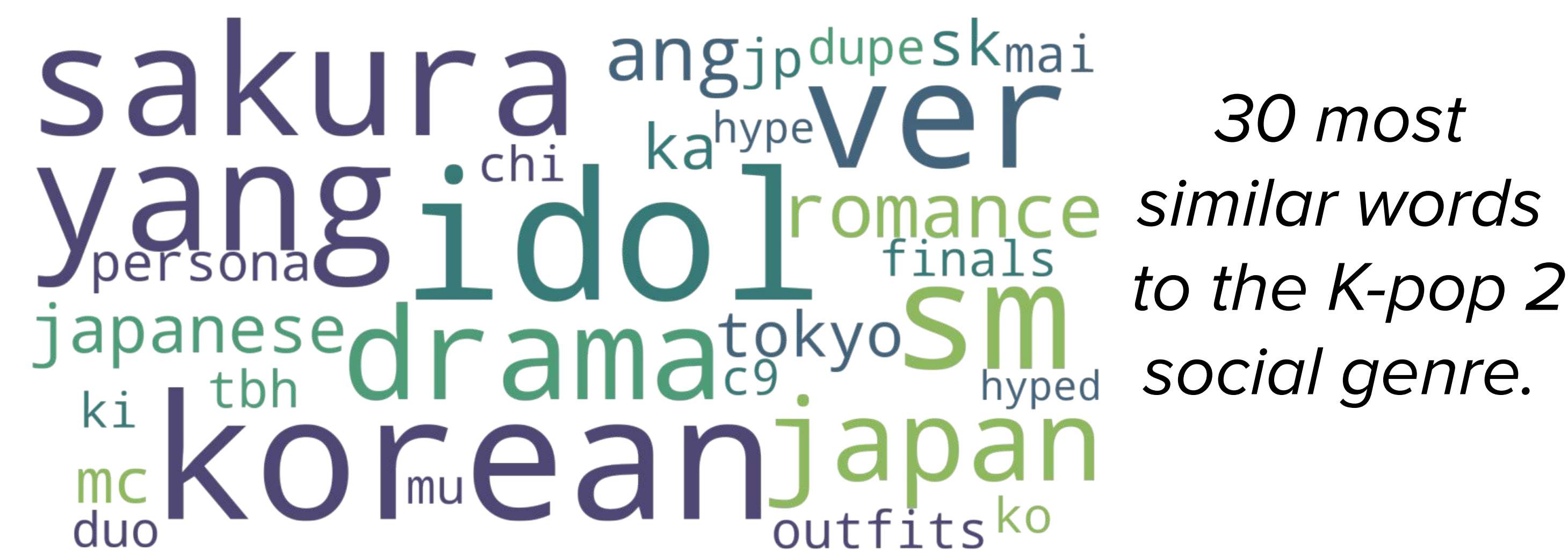
Clustering these artists reveals novel **social genres**. Social genres reflect similarities in how artists are shared, not necessarily similarities in how they sound



t-SNE showing how social genres cluster together

Uncover latent social connections

Language is a key indicator of culture. We co-embed language on Reddit to find words most similar to social genres.



Musicians that are shared in **younger communities** are more likely to have a **younger following**. Musicians that are shared in **left-leaning communities** are more likely to be **associated with the left**.

Using this simple observation we calculate how artists project onto social dimensions (affluence, age, gender, partisan, politicalness, and sociality).

Measuring “extra-musicality”

When does music take on a “life of its own”?

We develop two scores to capture a new concept we term *extra-musical sharing*.

GS Score

Extra-musical sharing is more likely than ordinary musical sharing to occur in a wide variety of contexts.

This scores aims to measure how generalist vs. specialist the sharing of an artist is.

Five most general artists

Artist	Top Track
The Pointer Sisters	I'm So Excited
Kool & The Gang	Celebration
Les Miserables	One Day More!
Bonnie Tyler	Total Eclipse of the Heart
Dwayne Johnson	You're Welcome

Meme Score

Rick Astley's "Never Gonna Give You Up" is the prototypical example of a meme song on Reddit.

We calculate how similar a musicians sharing is to Rick Astley to derive their meme association.

Five most meme-oriented artists

Artist	Top Track
Luis Fonsi	Despacito
Video Game Players	DuckTales
Blonde Readhead	For the Damaged Coda
Valve Studio Orchestra	Team Fortress 2
Rick Astley	Never Gonna Give You Up