

#ReThinkPink

Celebrating International Women's Day with
a social listening exploration of the pink tax

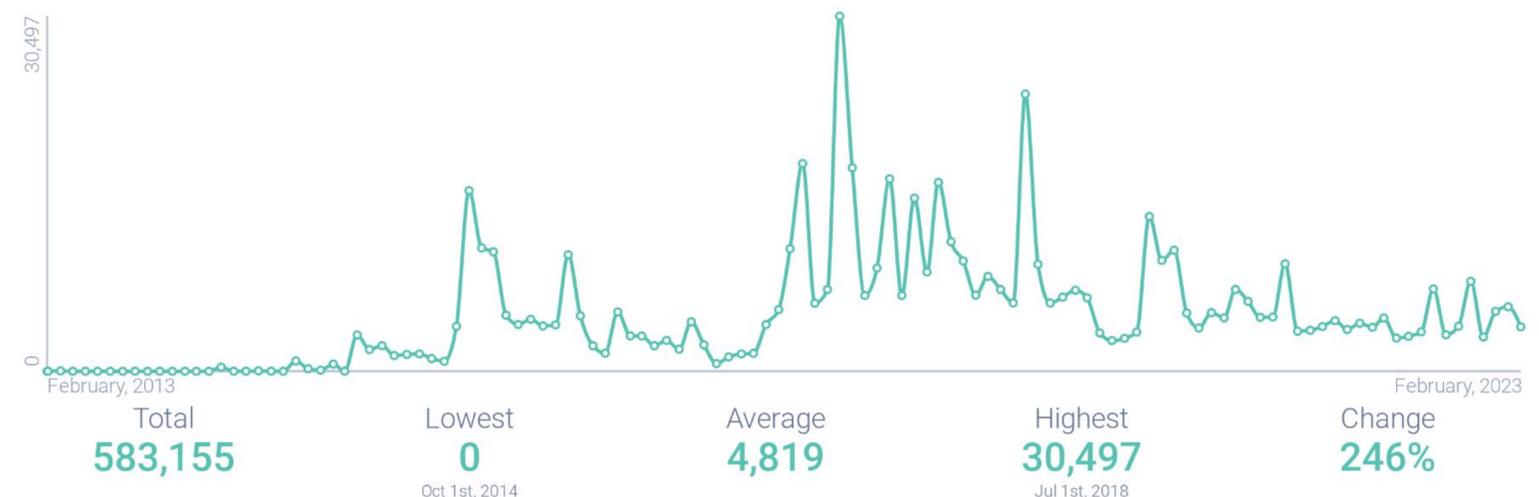
Henry Chapman
Research Analyst



The pink tax: women paying more for the same goods and services

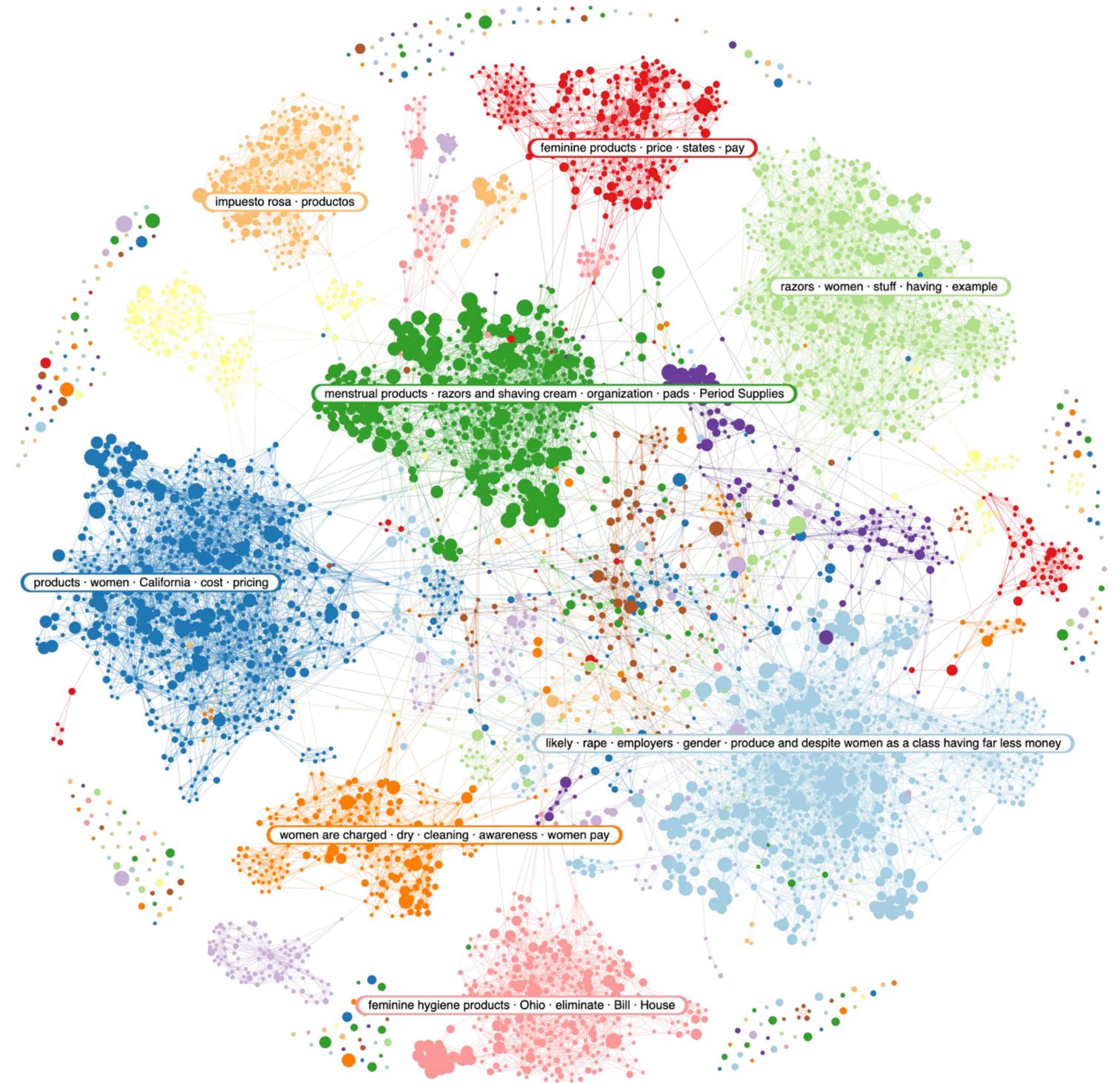
The pink tax is not a literal tax. It refers to the practice of upcharging goods and services that are marketed specifically to women. An example that's been on the receiving end of both humor and contempt is the Bic for Her pens which were released in a variety of pastel shades and priced higher than Bic's regular pens. Bic was roasted by Ellen Degeneres for their attempt at 'pink taxing' a writing utensil, and they suspended the product shortly after its release.

While the practice has been prevalent in the consumer packaged goods industry for decades, the problem emerged into cultural awareness after the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs published a report in 2015. This report looked at a cross section of goods and found that women were being charged, on average, 7% more for equivalent goods ranging from razors to scooters. Since then, social listening data has shown a significant increase in attention and exposure to the topic. Here, we explore the origins of the pink tax, identify the brands consumers most associate with it online, highlight the brands recognized for fighting against it, and examine the politicians and state governments which have attempted to engage the issue.



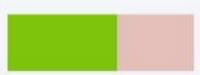
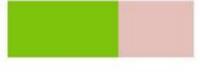
Blatant inequity: feminine hygiene products

Feminine health products like tampons, pads, and diva cups are considered the most troubling in terms of the pink tax. These are not cosmetic or luxury products, but rather, basic necessities for individuals who menstruate. Women are required to purchase these products on a regular basis, which leads to an inelastic demand curve. This allows brands to take advantage and charge more. In the US, some states now waive the sales tax on feminine hygiene items – but not all. Infegy’s Narratives notes a large percentage of online conversation around the pink tax centers around feminine hygiene product discussions. Social listening data reveals a large volume of conversation around the increased costs of these products.



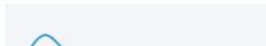
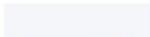
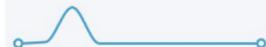
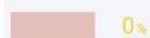
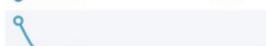
Which brands are most negatively associated with the pink tax?

Social listening data reveals that Gillette is the brand most associated with the pink tax, with 88% of the mentions of top brands tied to it. Razors have become an easy target of criticism, because they appear in stores on the same shelf, serve the same purpose, but have very different prices. Other brands like Tampax, Old Spice (and their female-targeted brand, Fiji), and Nivea are also negatively associated with the pink tax. Gillette tried to break this negative association by attempting to acquire Billie, a women-founded shaving subscription service start-up, in 2020. However, the Federal Trade Commission filed a complaint against P&G for anti-competitive behavior, so P&G aborted its acquisition before it could be completed.

Entity	Trend	Change	Sentiment	Universe Posts	Appearances Per Post
Gillette		-67%	 59%	6.31k	1.4
Tampax		43%	 60%	272	1
Old Spice		-91%	 56%	258	1.2
Nivea		-100%	 33%	169	1.1
Barbasol		-45%	 100%	102	1

Burger King pushes against the pink tax with viral marketing

While P&G and other brands have huge negative connotations around the pink tax, other US brands are pushing back to raise awareness. In 2018, Burger King launched a satirical marketing campaign to highlight the issue of the pink tax. The campaign, called "Chick Fries," was a parody of the brand's chicken fries product. The only differences between the two were that Chick Fries were delivered in a pink carton and listed at double the price. The campaign was launched on National Women's Equality Day and quickly gained widespread attention on social media. While the campaign received criticism from those who felt that it trivialized a serious issue, the overall response was positive, and the Chick Fries campaign helped to raise awareness of the pink tax.

Entity	Trend	Change	Sentiment	Universe Posts	Appearances Per Post
Burger King		-96%	 36%	9.70k	1.1
Dollar Shave Club		-96%	 73%	1.98k	1.4
New York City Department of Consumer and Worker Protection		-78%	 14%	1.46k	1.1
Target Corporation		161%	 31%	1.46k	1
Tesco		-100%	 0%	1.07k	2.2
CVS Health		>1000%	 40%	1.05k	1.9
BBC News		50%	 67%	1.03k	1
Procter & Gamble		447%	 96%	899	1.7
Tumblr		-100%	 17%	833	2.4
Lyft		-63%	 29%	812	1.2

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Burger King takes on the Pink Tax with a new chicken fries stunt

Whether deodorant or razors, women routinely pay more for the same products as men, so BK is using fast-food to raise awareness and support for the Pink Tax Repeal Act.



Conclusion



The pink tax is an issue that has been prevalent in the consumer packaged goods industry for decades, with women often being charged more for products and services that are essentially the same as those marketed to men. Social listening data has revealed the emergence of the term in 2015 after New York City's report, along with the impact of the pink tax, highlighting its prevalence across feminine hygiene products and consumer packaged goods. We also discussed brands like Procter and Gamble's Gillette brand, which bears much of the online resentment.

Meanwhile, Burger King used a viral marketing campaign to draw attention to the inequities of charging women more for the same product branded differently. Finally, we looked at the politicians and states which have been most prevalent in pushing for reform efforts.

Overall, the pink tax is an important issue that should be addressed by all brands seeking to build a strong relationship with their female customers. Brands that take a proactive approach to gender equality and show a commitment to fairness and transparency will be well-positioned to succeed in the marketplace and make a positive impact in their communities.

About Infegy

We're changing the way companies listen to consumers, and what they do about it.

- Robust social listening data and analysis
- Quickest view of consumers' thoughts and sentiments
- Unmatched client experience and support
- Agile approach to products and services



ENDEAVOR



Our dataset

- Social dataset spanning hundreds of billions of posts and growing fast.
- Data collection that best mirrors varied real-world populations.
- Unlimited data access provides flexibility to obtain the context that matters.
- In-house data storage allows for unmatched speed to insight.

