

Just Stop Oil: Climate Activism Narratives in the UK

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Research Question

How do narratives about climate activism differ
between mainstream media and activists
themselves?

Motivation

- Relevance of climate change issues and high coverage of such topics
- Same actions described by the people who performed them and mainstream media
- UK: big English language corpus of articles

Data Collection

Collected all articles published over the last year on two sources:

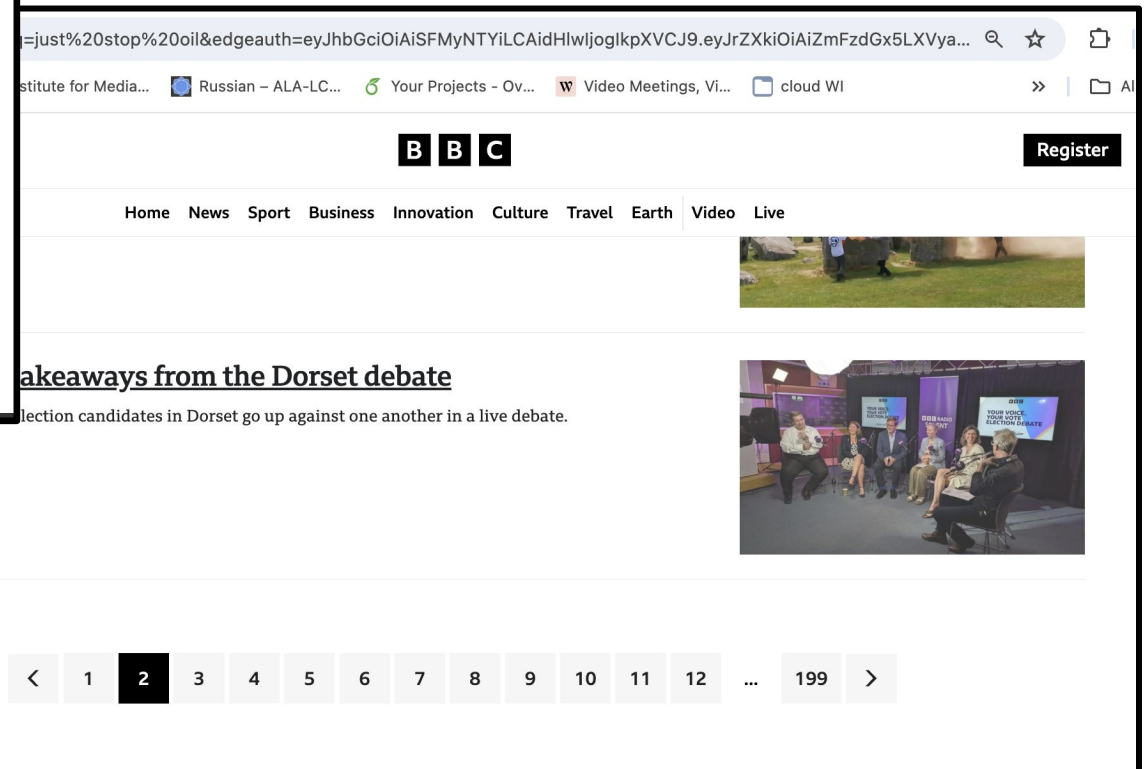
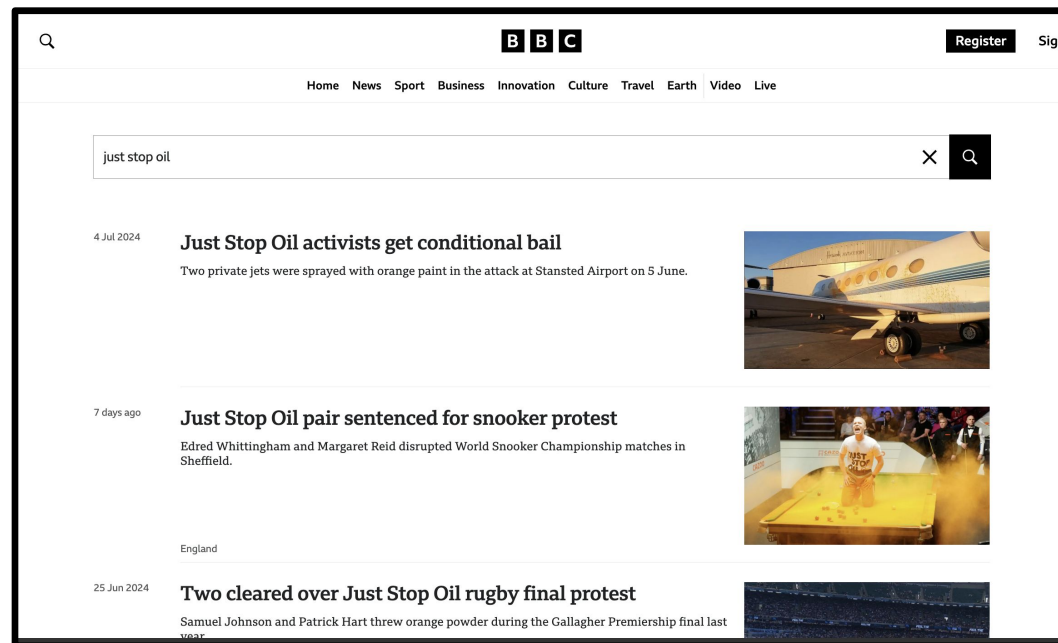
- BBC: big mainstream media outlet
- Just Stop Oil: website of an environmental nonviolent civil resistance group in the UK founded in 2022



BBC Data Collection

- First attempt: BBC API
 - Only 100 articles per day and country
 - Multiple news sources
- Used RSelenium to click through (only one url for all pages)
- Scraped articles published in the last year, that contained “stop” and „oil“ (not possible to filter by the expression „just stop oil“)
- Extracted articles until 15 June 2023
- Collected 2000 articles

BBC Structure



Number of pages but
no difference in the URL!

Just Stop Oil

Website organized in 3 text sections and 1 video section

Our dataset

PRESS RELEASES



Just Stop Oil Letter to Prime Minister Starmer

July 16, 2024

Dear Prime Minister, We write to congratulate you on becoming Prime Minister and to acknowledge that one of the first steps of your new government

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5 Just Stop Oil Supporters Found Guilty As UN Slams Trial

July 11, 2024

Five Just Stop Oil supporters were convicted of conspiracy to cause public nuisance at Southwark Crown Court today for planning to disrupt the M25 by

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World Snooker Championships Disruptors Sentenced

July 10, 2024

Two Just Stop Oil supporters, Margaret Reid and Eddie Whittingham, were sentenced today at Sheffield Magistrates' Court following their conviction for disrupting the World Snooker

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Jury out in historic Just Stop Oil conspiracy case

July 10, 2024

The jury is now deliberating the verdict in a case involving Just Stop Oil supporters Daniel Shaw, Cressie Gethin, Lucia Whittaker De Abreu, Louise Lancaster,

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'Paint the town orange' - Just Stop Oil wins first demand

July 10, 2024

Four Just Stop Oil supporters have painted Parliament Square orange to celebrate winning Just Stop Oil's original demand, that the UK Government commit to ending

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UN Special Rapporteur Attends Trial of Just Stop Oil Supporters at Southwark Crown Court

July 4, 2024

UN Special Rapporteur on Environmental Defenders under the Aarhus Convention and former UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders Michel Forst is attending the ongoing

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COURT & PRISON UPDATES



World Snooker Championships Disruptors Sentenced

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Wiltshire Borough Council use money to protect oil companies

May 10, 2024

Wiltshire Borough Council are using public money to make an interim banning protest at Kingsbury oil permanent. Just Stop Oil

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World Snooker Championships disruptors on trial

May 10, 2024

Two Just Stop Oil supporters, Margaret Reid and Eddie Whittingham, are appearing today before the Sheffield Magistrate's court. The trial follows their disruption of the

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Phoebe Plummer, Chiara Sarti and Daniel Hall on trial in major test case for 20 minute march

May 8, 2024

Three Just Stop Oil supporters are on trial in a landmark case. They are the first to be prosecuted under Section 7 of the controversial

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BLOG



Just Stop Oil's homes?

There has been significant publicity of visiting MP's attempts to communicate

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Shifting sands and changing tides: sending The Rig to rehab

February 19, 2024

What can we make of Saudi Arabia's oil rig-themed luxury resort? Saudi Arabia, the second largest producer of oil, has commissioned the retrofitting of a

[READ MORE »](#)



The UK's Billionaire Media

January 25, 2024

By Donnachadh McCarthy, 25th Jan 2024 There is only ONE REASON why Just Stop Oil climate protectors are being jailed: The UK's 4 climate-trashing media

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Chris Skidmore

December 16, 2023

Chris Skidmore was recently rejected by a social conservative

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An invitation to join us

December 16, 2023

To the 126 who wrote and signed the letter of solidarity with the nine women who smashed HSBC's windows, and the jury who found them

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So what's your theory of change? COP28 or Just Stop Oil?

December 5, 2023

By Jonathan Porritt The waves of phoney positivity emanating from COP28 in Dubai are making me feel sick. "Look at our shiny new Loss and

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Just Stop Oil Data Collection

- Used RSelenium to load all press releases until selected date
- Scrape in one go
- Skipped “Blog Post” and “Court & Prison Updates”
- Collected press releases from their own website until June 15th, 2023

Data cleaning



- Adjust date of newer articles
- Remove irrelevant text of body (copyright, social media)
- Filter article urls and texts (no collections, videos...)
- Split articles into reports with “Just Stop Oil” and “benchmark”



- Cut out videos and other other text sources using URLs
- Remove social media section (used “ENDS” keyword)

Final data

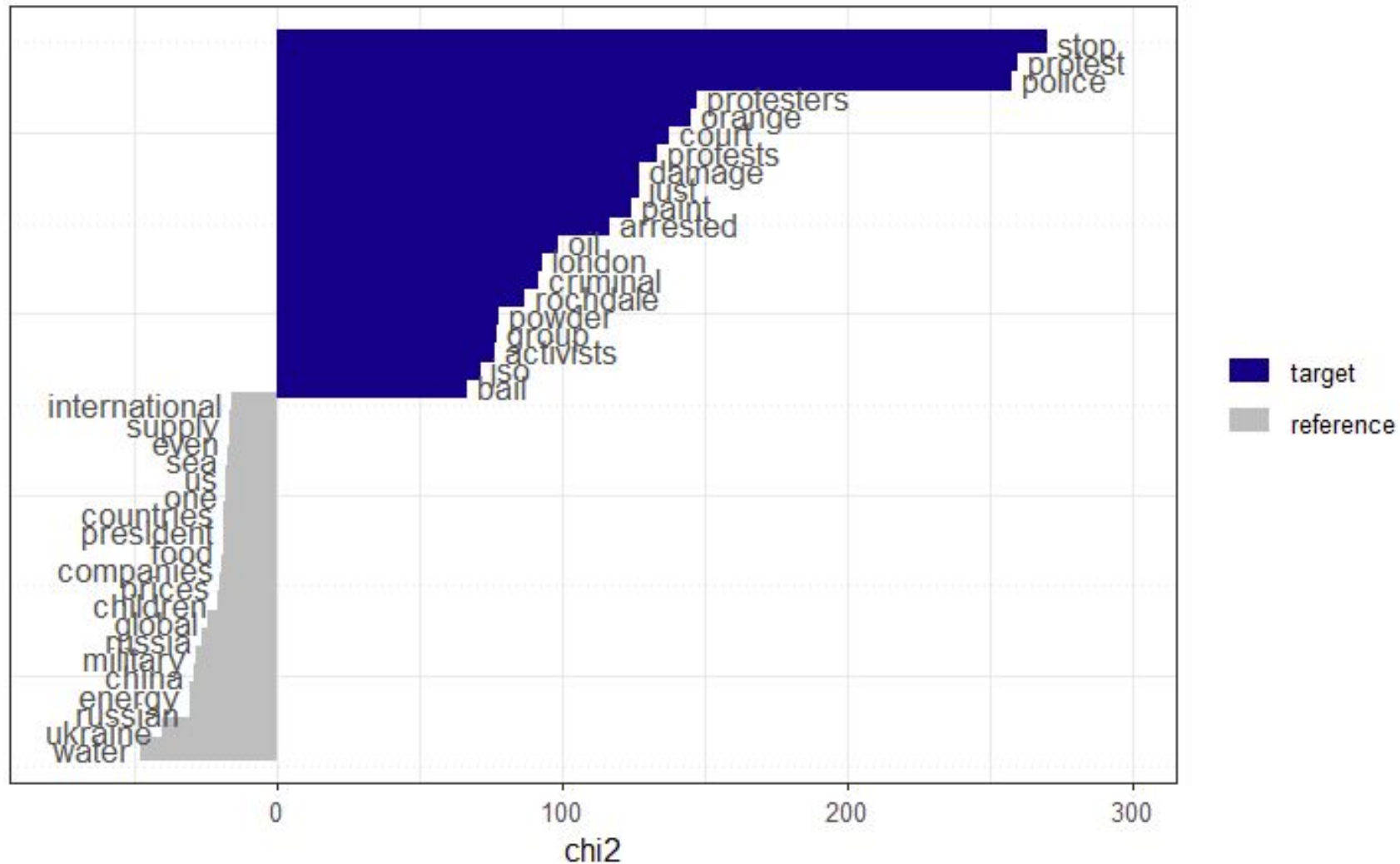


234 articles
97 JSO + 137 bench

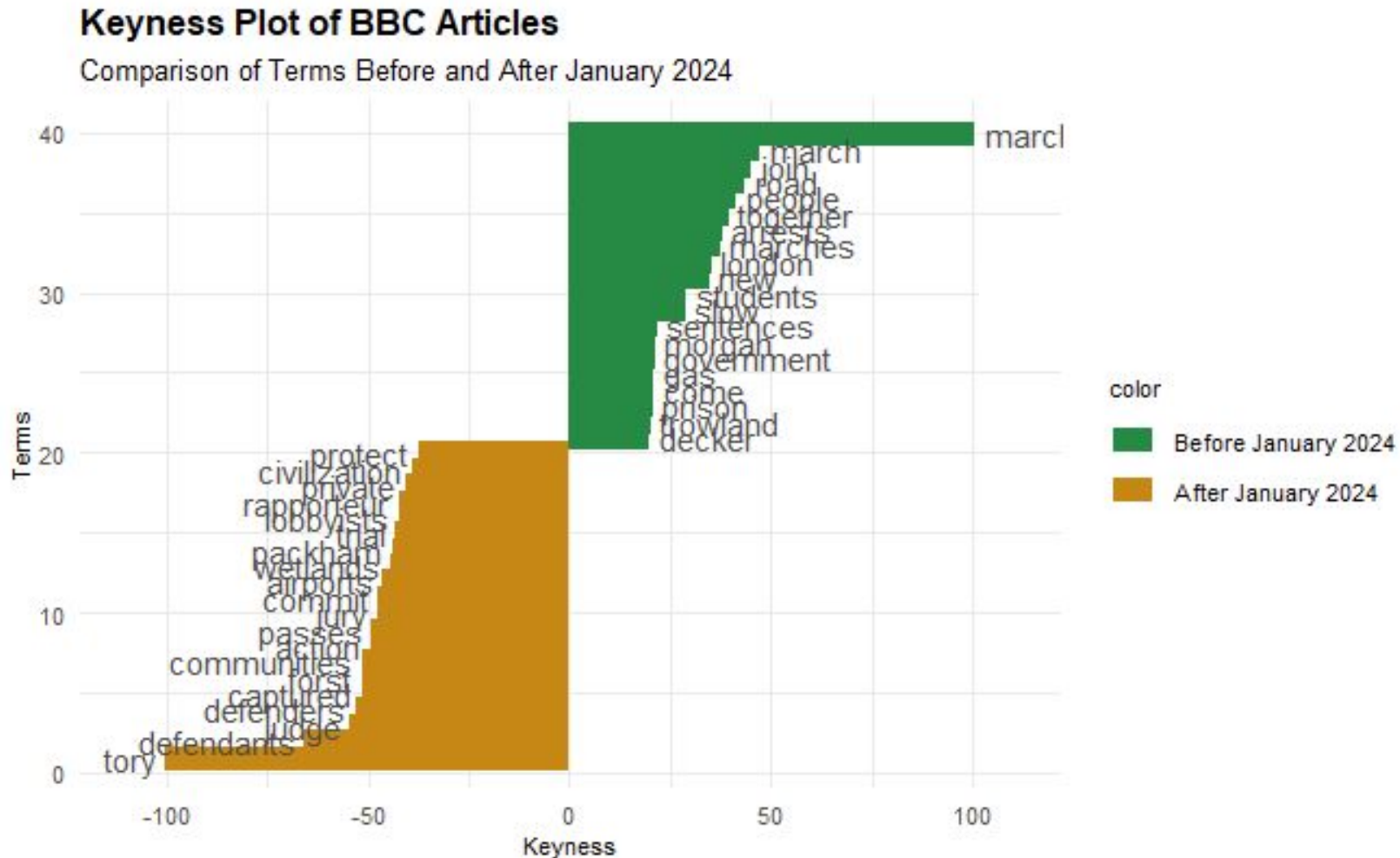
JUST STOP OIL 

192 articles

Keyness Plot for BBC Articles including “Just Stop Oil”



Keyness Plot for Just Stop Oil Articles before and after January 2024

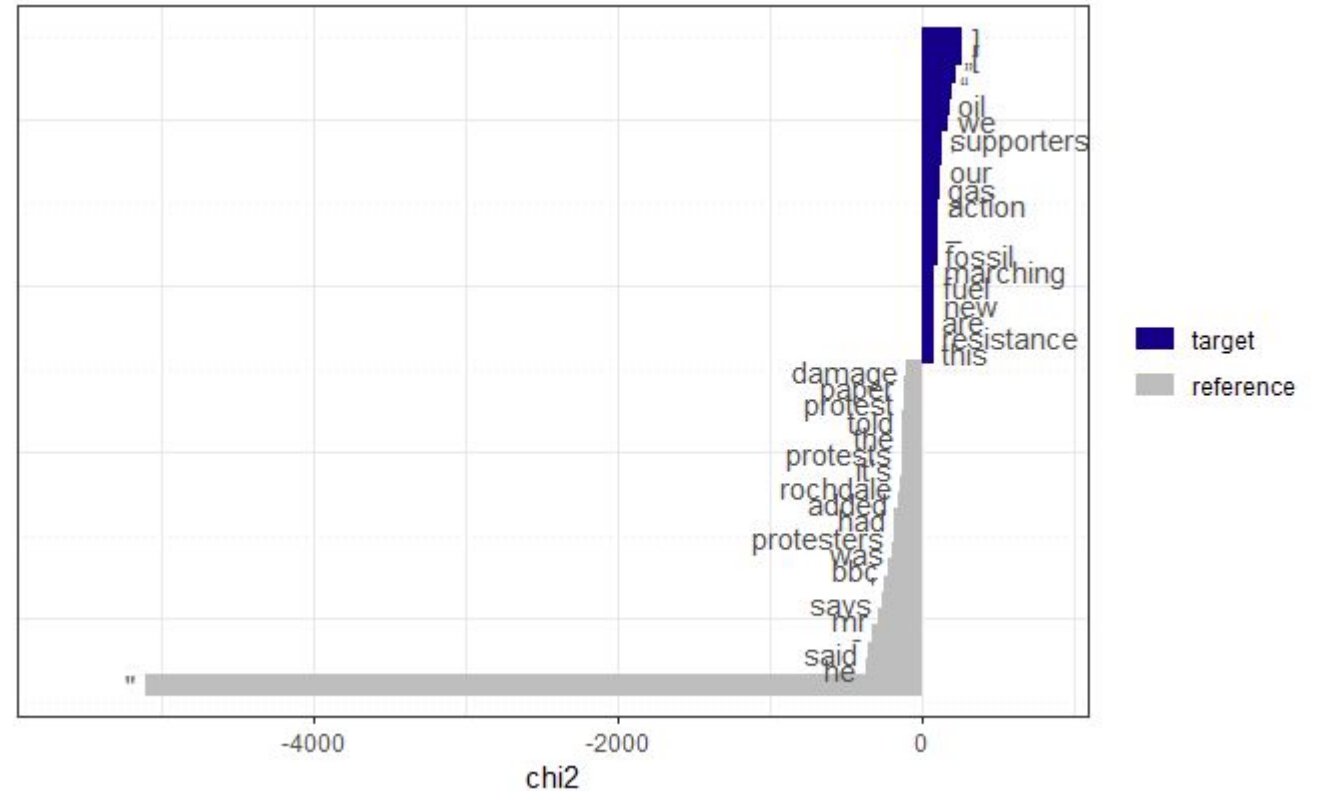


When combining data frames and trying to create a Keyness Plot

```
Error in textstat keyness.dfm(all_dfmPP, target =  
docvars(corpus all, :  
  logical target value length must equal the number of  
documents
```

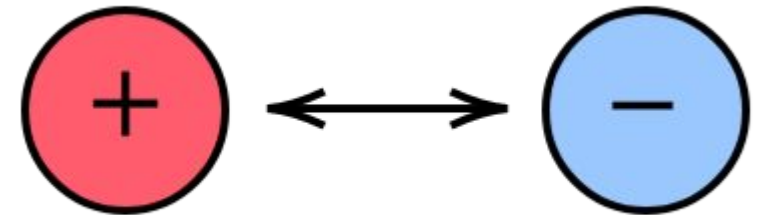
Other Issues

- changing the text size
- Stemming in pre-processing (march & maching)

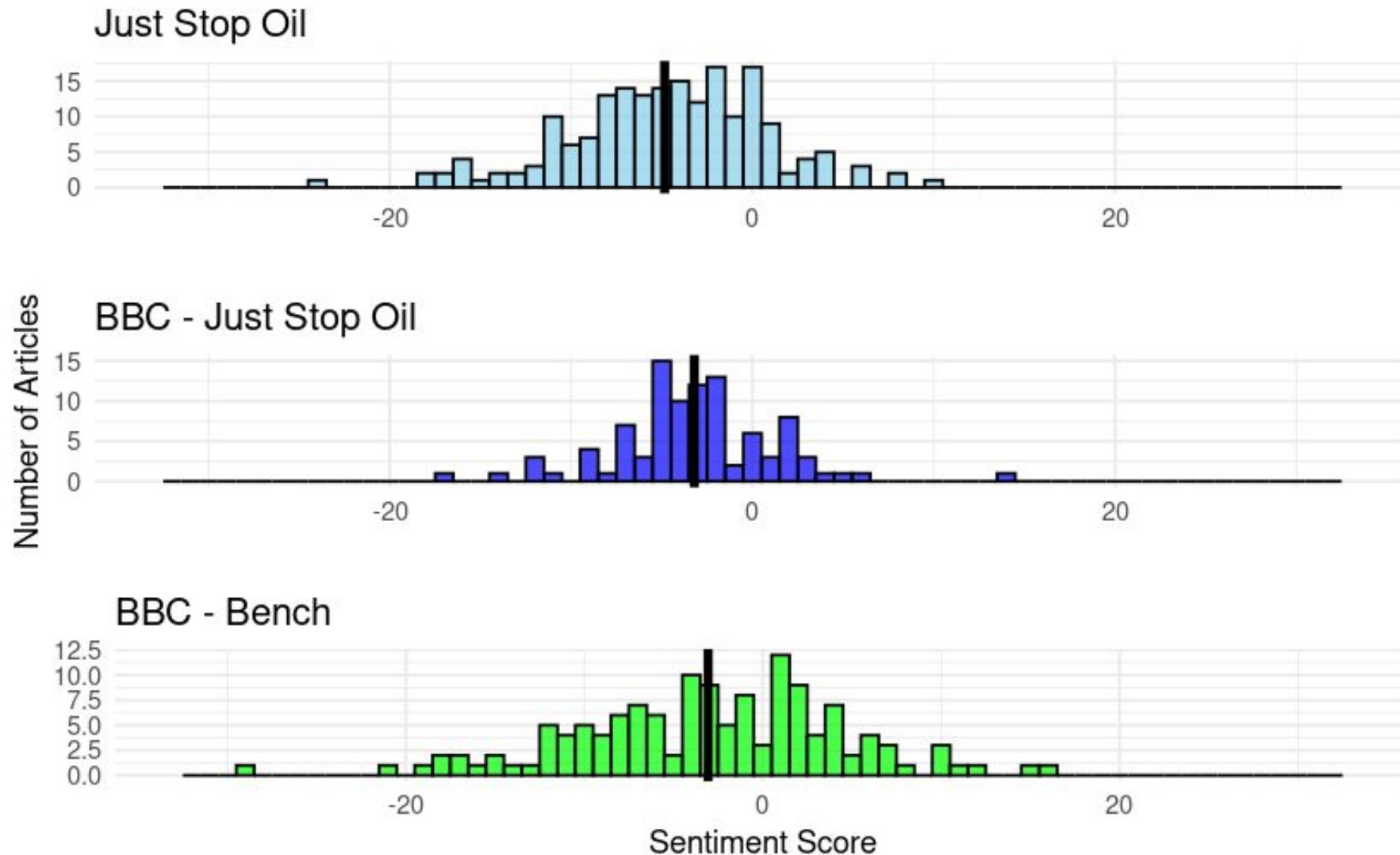


Methodology: Sentiment Analysis

- Pre-processing of dataframes (tokenization, no stop words...)
- Use binary sentiment lexicon “bing”
- Compare and contrast articles
 - Press releases from Just Stop Oil
 - BBC about Just Stop Oil
 - General articles from BBC for reference



Results: sentiment analysis



- Slightly negative attitude from BBC

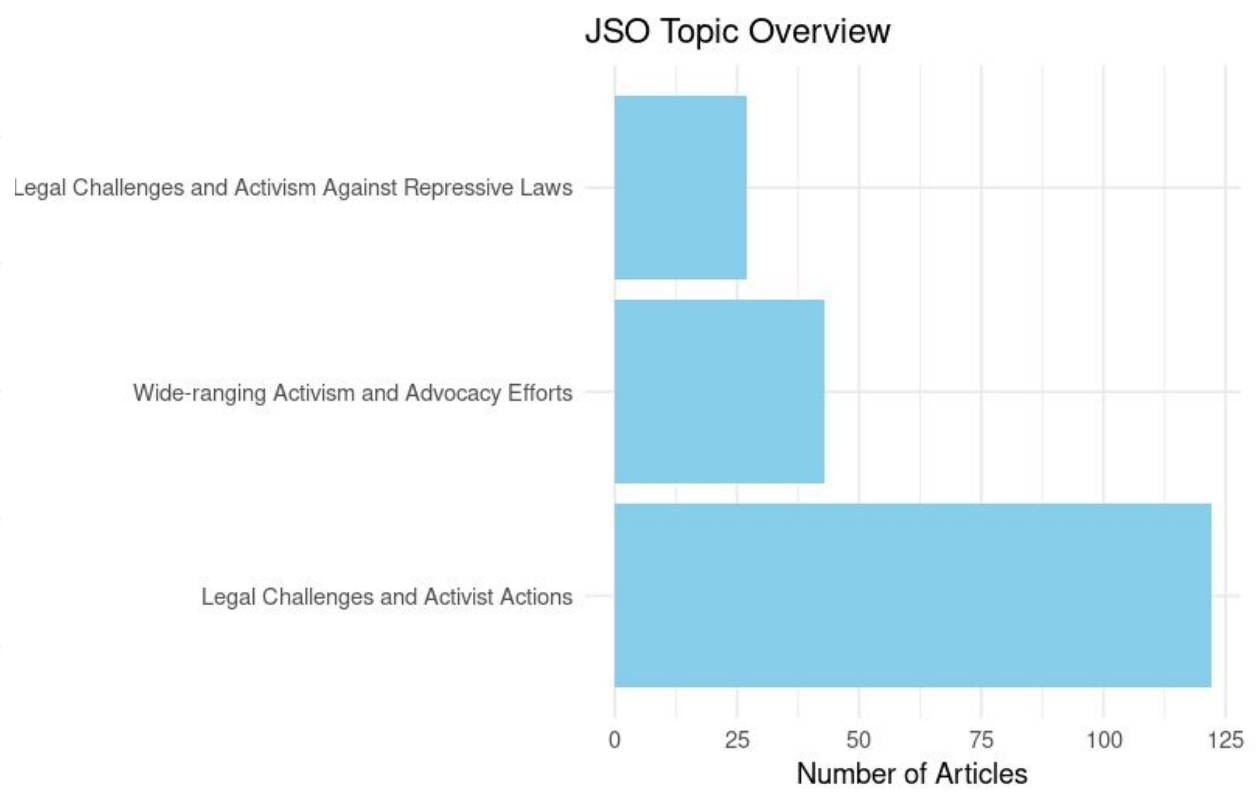
- More negative attitude from Just Stop Oil

Methodology: Clustering and topic finding

- SentenceTransformer for embedding of titles
- Kmeans clustering of articles titles:
 - Just Stop Oil press releases
 - BBC articles about Just Stop Oil
- Test different cluster sizes ($k = 3, 5$)
- OpenAi prompt titles for topic finding via ChatGPT directly

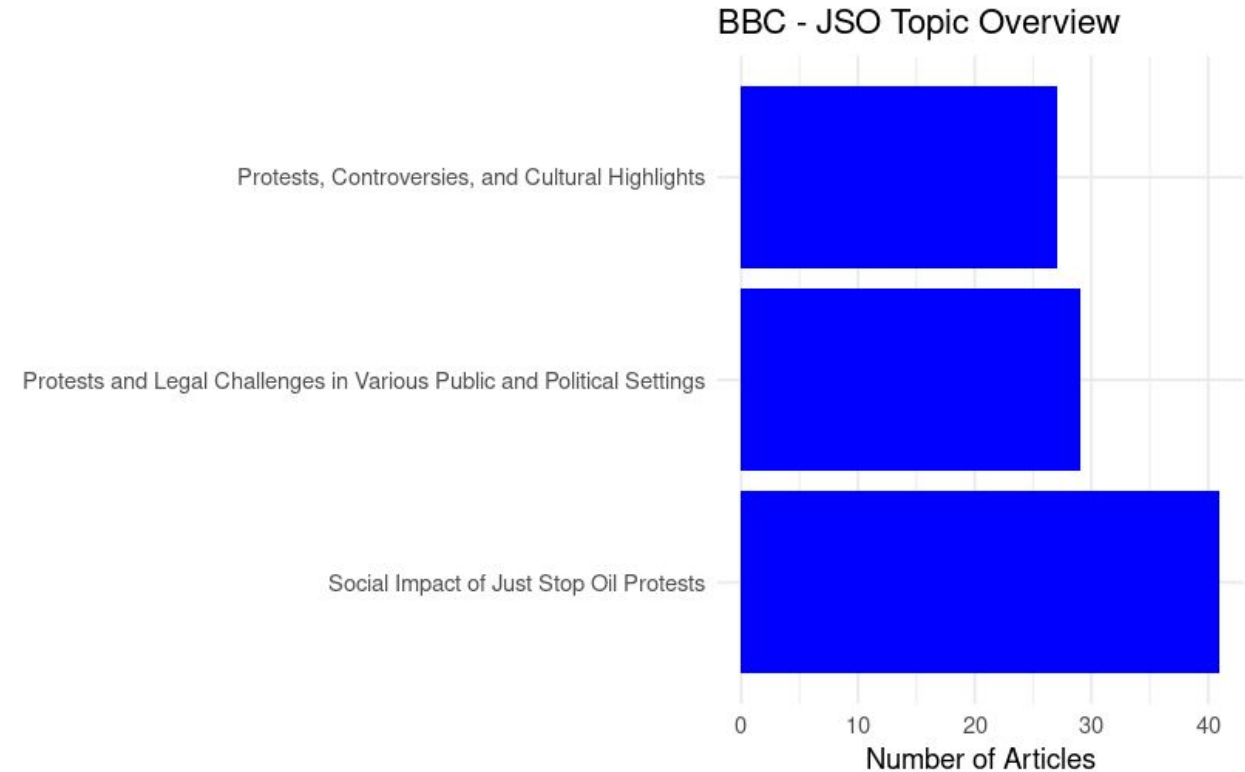
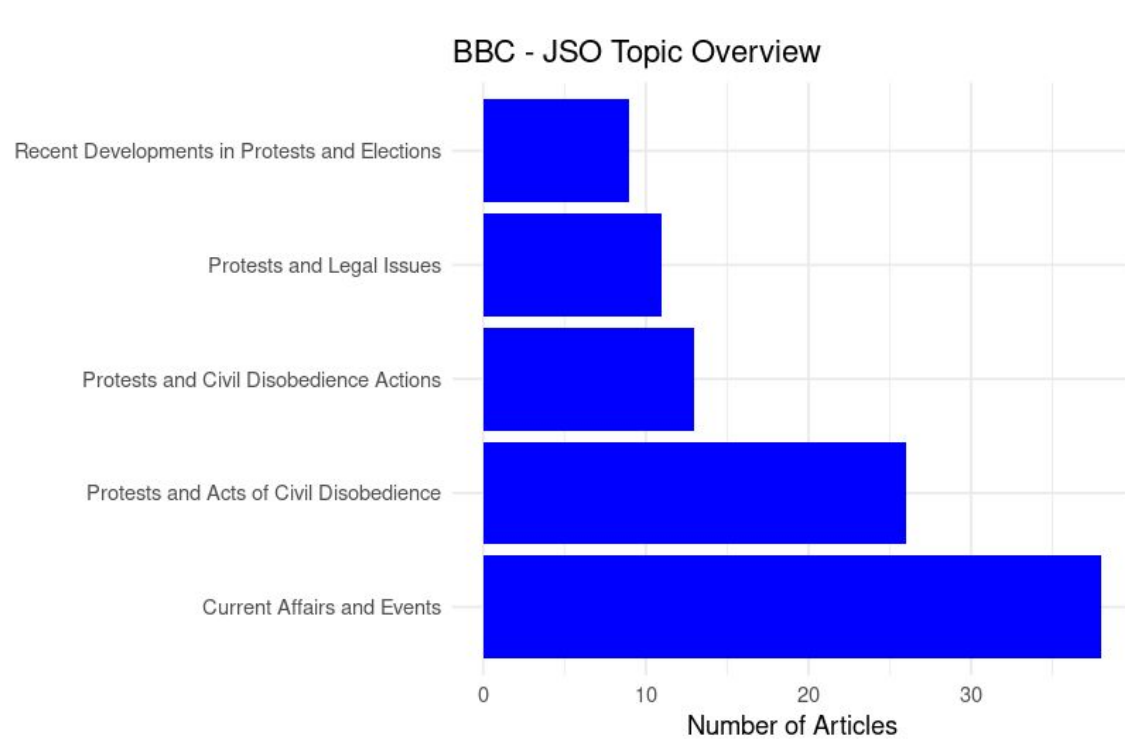


Topic clustering - Just Stop Oil



Some topics consistent, some topics get lost (student protest)

Topic clustering - BBC



Legal aspects often discussed, social impact, not much diversity in topics

What would you do differently next time

- Find a slightly more straightforward website to scrape from as a start
- Include news sources with political leaning to investigate polarization
- Scrape a longer timespan and analyze topic evolution

Summary & Outlook

- Use an additional news source for cross comparisons
- Calibrate topic modeling
- Trying out different topic model methods (BERT, LDA)
- Look at other countries
- Extend time frame