

protest legitimacy

Travis Riddle

3/8/2019

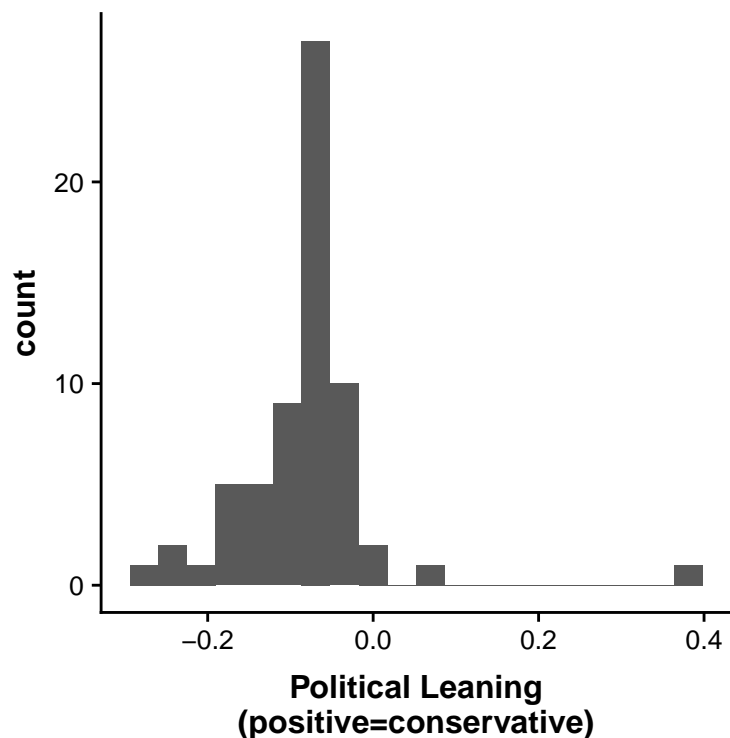
This is the first pass at the analyses registered on the [OSF](#).

Descriptives

All of the data we are working with are drawn from press coverage of the shooting Michael Brown and subsequent protests. We targeted the top 50 news organizations and the top 18 African American news organizations, as indicated by Pew Research. For each of these sources, our final data includes any article in the 10 days after the shooting that mentions Michael Brown, along with all pictures published within that article. For this work, we are focusing on the titles of these articles, and the captions for the *featured* images within the articles. Featured images are those that appear in the text of the version of the article published online (as opposed to images that are published as part of a gallery that is linked to within an article).

In total, this work covers 3278 articles and 5502 images, though 1282 images do not have a caption.

As part of this work, we are also using the political leaning of these news sources. We use the same political orientation estimates as in previous work. The distribution of political orientation is displayed below (Note that some sources are missing here, though I can't recall what the reason was. . . We have 64 source ratings.)



Note that this distribution is a little difficult. Effectively we only have three sources that have conservative ratings (TheBlaze, The Daily Mail, and Fox News), with the vast majority of sources having a moderately liberal bent. This makes assessing the effect of political leaning difficult, but also seems like it's an accurate reflection of the media landscape (especially at the time of the shooting).

Police/Protest frequency

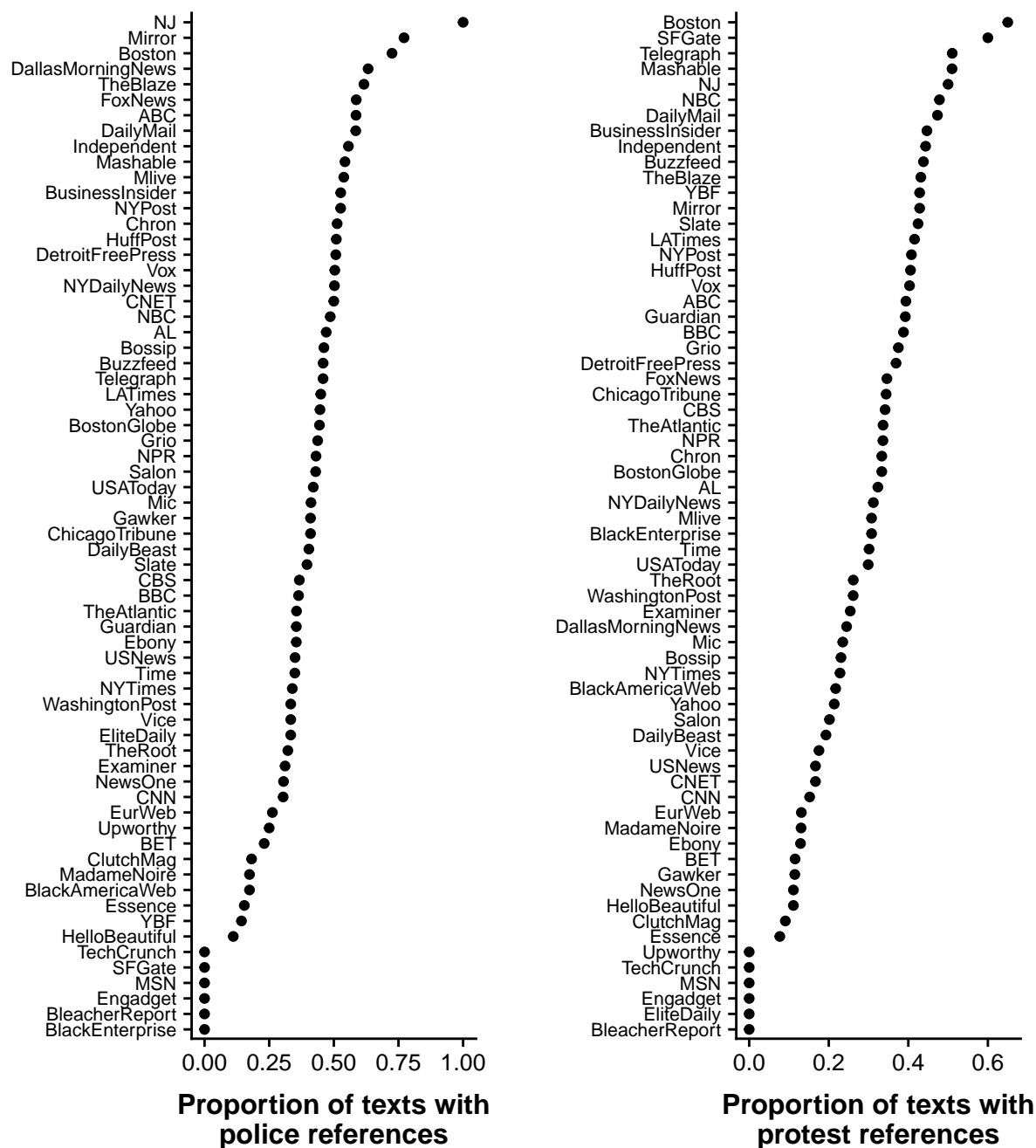
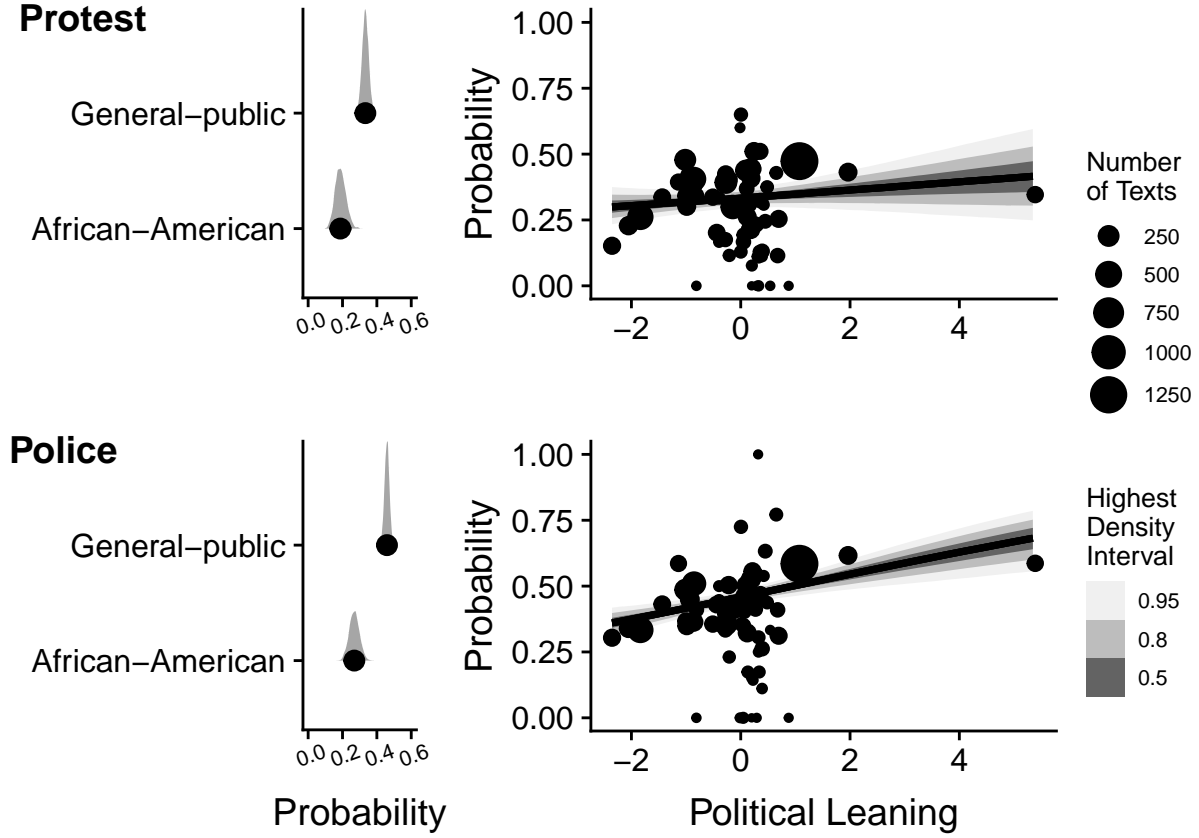


Figure XXX shows the proportion of texts (the union of captions and titles) that contain references to either police or protest. One can see that the proportions vary across sources, and level varies between police and protest references. Indeed, the proportion of all texts that refer to police is about 0.46, while the proportion of texts that refer to protest is about 0.36.

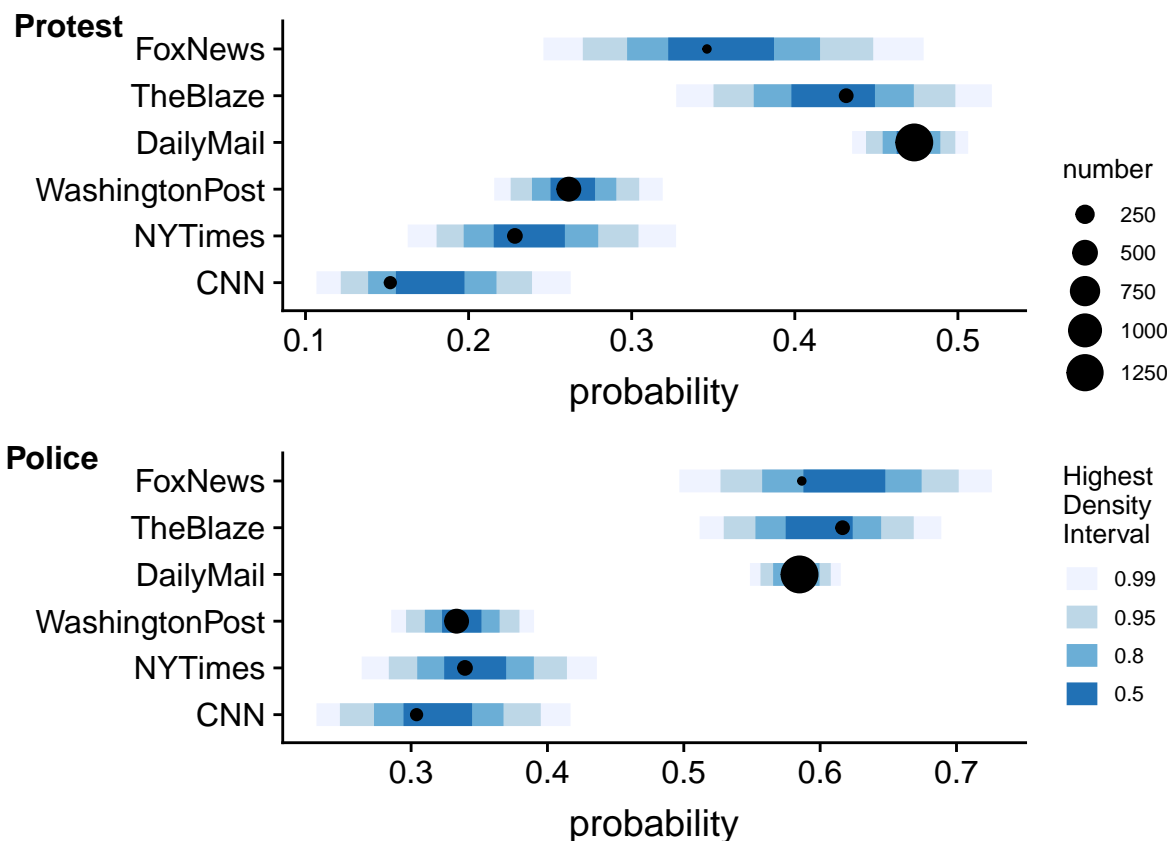
Models of police/protest as a function of audience & political orientation



Results are reported using the median and 95% highest density intervals from the posterior distribution. Figure XXX shows how the modeled probabilities vary as a function of political leaning (right column) and source audience (left column). These models indicate that sources that are oriented to the general public have higher rates of reference to both protest-related words ($p_{generalpublic} = 0.33$, [0.3, 0.37]; $p_{africanamerican} = 0.19$, [0.13, 0.25], $prob_{gp>aa} > .99$) and for police-related words ($p_{generalpublic} = 0.46$, [0.43, 0.48]; $p_{africanamerican} = 0.27$, [0.21, 0.32], $prob_{gp>aa} > .99$).

The association between political leaning and references to these concepts is not as directionally consistent. There is a slight tendency for more conservative sources to make reference to protest ($\beta = 0.07$, [-0.06, 0.2]), though we are unable to rule out zero as a probable value for this association. In contrast, it is apparent that more conservative sources are far more likely to make reference to police ($\beta = 0.17$, [0.08, 0.28]).

Of course, the data in figure XXX makes clear that Fox News has a high degree of leverage over the fitted model. Accordingly, we refit the models excluding data from this source and found that the results are similar. Indeed, the effect of source political orientation on the probability of making reference to police is actually stronger when Fox News is excluded from the data ($\beta = 0.25$, [0.12, 0.38]). We are still unable to rule out zero as a probable value when examining the effect of political orientation on references to protest ($\beta = 0.15$, [-0.04, 0.34]).



The our spotlight analysis focuses on the three most conservative and three most liberal sources. These are (from most conservative to most liberal) Fox News (standardized lean score = 5.39), The Blaze (1.96), The Daily Mail (1.07), The Washington Post (-1.84), The New York Times (-2.05), and CNN (-2.35). Figure XXX shows the observed proportion of texts that contain references to protest or police, along with the range of probabilities predicted to be credible by the model. One can see that the predicted probabilities generally correspond to the observed data, though it appears the predicted probabilities for police references are slightly over estimated for Fox News and protest references are slightly overestimated for CNN.

The table below shows a random sample of three texts for each of these six sources, along with what type of text it is (photo caption or article title), and two indicator columns showing whether they were coded as containing police or protest references..

Source	text	type	police_ref	protest_ref
CNN	Demonstrators raise their arms in protest after a police shooting that killed an unarmed black teenager.	Caption	1	1
CNN	A town in turmoil – 5 things about Ferguson, Missouri	Title	0	0
CNN	New head of Ferguson security: 'How would I feel?'	Title	0	0
NYTimes	National Guard troops arrived in Ferguson on Monday. Gov. Jay Nixon said the Guard would have only a limited role, protecting the police command post.	Caption	1	0
NYTimes	Several newspapers led with the story about the clashes between residents and the police in Ferguson, Mo., on Thursday morning.	Caption	1	0
NYTimes	President Obama at a news conference Thursday on Martha's Vineyard, where he spoke about the situation in Iraq and in Ferguson, Mo.	Caption	0	0
WashingtonPost	Even before Michael Brown's slaying in Ferguson, racial questions hung over police	Title	1	0
WashingtonPost	In the battle for America's identity, Ferguson is Ground Zero	Title	0	0
WashingtonPost	Grand jury will hear case of Staten Island man who died after police chokehold	Title	1	0
DailyMail	Mission creep? Obama vows MORE airstrikes and increasing military aid to Iraqis after 'almost flawless' operation to end siege of thousands on mountain	Title	0	0
DailyMail	Shocked: Wesley Lowery took to Twitter to make his feelings about his treatment by police very clear	Caption	1	0
DailyMail	Guide to developments in Missouri police shooting	Title	1	0
TheBlaze	Surreal Video, Images Out of Ferguson as Unrest Resumes Following Shooting of Unarmed Teen: 'I Can't Believe This is Happening'	Title	0	1
TheBlaze	A makeshift memorial sits in the middle of the street where 18-year-old Michael Brown was shot and killed by police, Monday, Aug. 11, 2014, in Ferguson, Mo. The FBI has opened an investigation into the fatal shooting of an unarmed black teenager on Saturday whose death stirred unrest in a St. Louis suburb.	Caption	1	1
TheBlaze	The Eye-Opening Words of a Lifelong Ferguson Resident Who Bought a Shotgun and Handgun as Looting, Unrest Raged in His Town	Title	0	1
FoxNews	Friday Lightning Round: ObamaCare, Ferguson protest	Title	0	1
FoxNews	Lawyer: Family of Missouri teen killed by cop asking Justice Department to oversee 2nd autopsy	Title	1	0
FoxNews	Family's attorney: Ferguson police are trying to assassinate character of teen shooting victim	Title	1	0

** Probably some commentary here about the titles & captions above **

Focusing on negative protest words

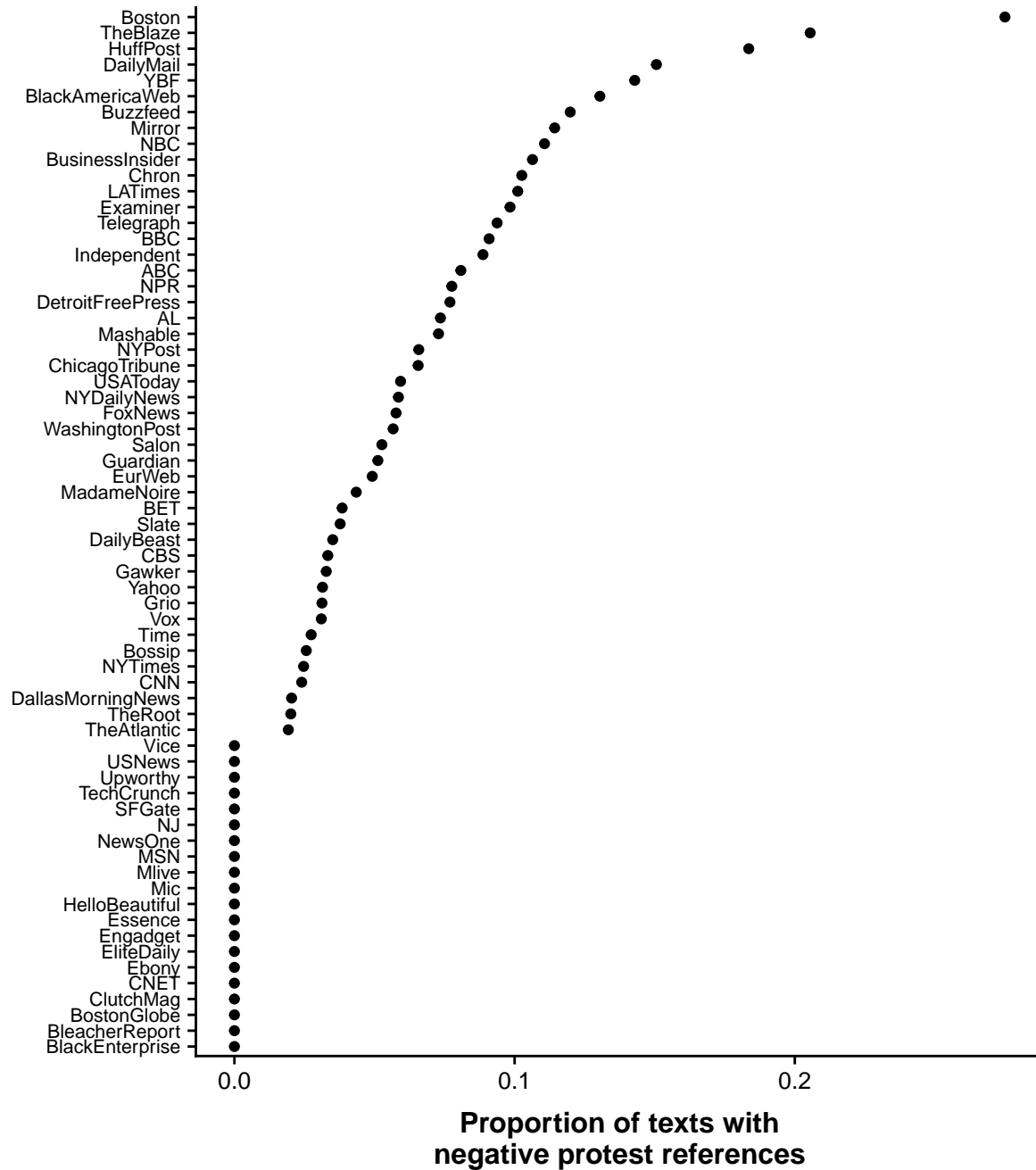
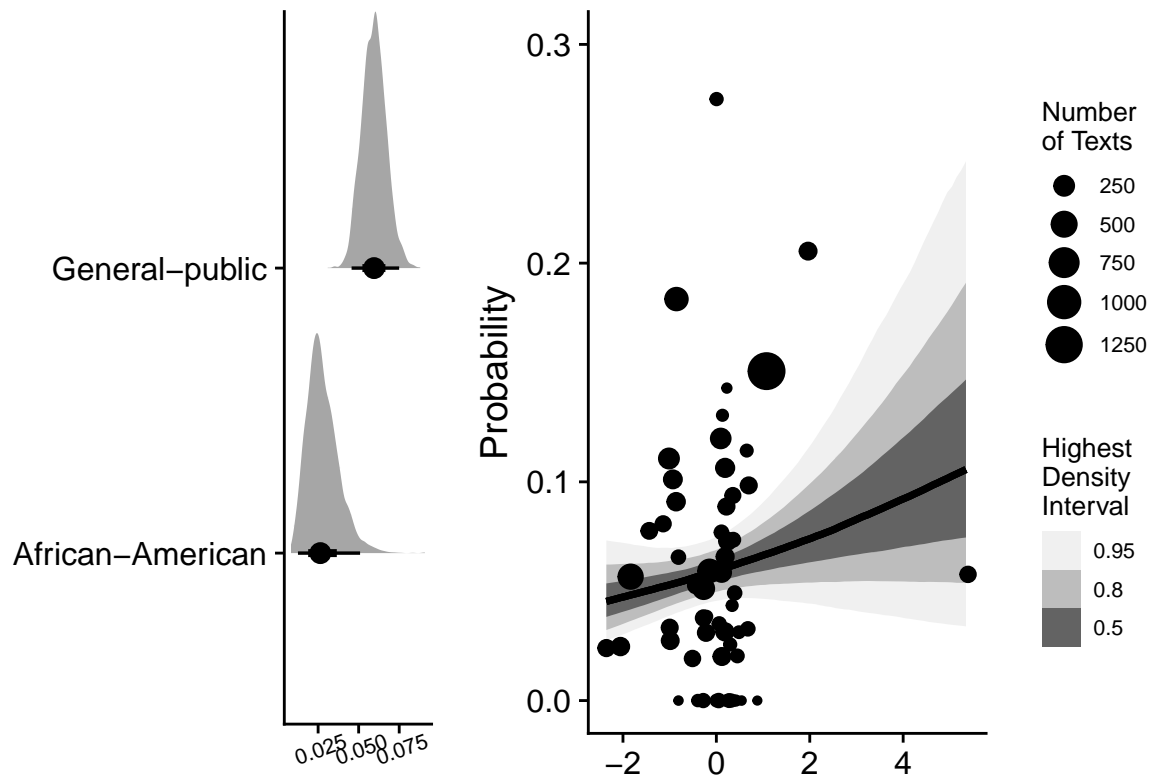


Figure XXX shows the proportion of texts that contain references to either negative protest words (i.e. riot* or loot*). As expected proportions of this reduced category are diminished in comparison with the full set of protest words, with the overall mean of the source-level proportions about 0.09



The pattern of results when modeling this category of word is largely similar to those seen for the more general protest and police categories. Figure XXX shows how the modeled probabilities vary as a function of political leaning (right column) and source audience (left column). The model indicates that sources that are oriented to the general public have higher rates of reference to both negative protest-related words ($p_{generalpublic} = 0.06$, [0.04, 0.07]; $p_{africanamerican} = 0.03$, [0.01, 0.05], $prob_{gp>aa} = 0.99$).

Again, there is a slight tendency for more conservative sources to use negative protest words ($\beta = 0.12$, [-0.07, 0.34]), though we are unable to rule out zero as a probable value for this association.

Once again, Fox News acts as a point with high leverage. Excluding Fox News and refitting the model leads to substantively similar conclusions, though the slope of the association between political leaning and probability of negative protest words becomes steeper, we are still unable to exclude zero as a probable value ($\beta = 0.12$, [-0.07, 0.34]).