Characterizing the Dynamics of a Protracted Activist Movement via Social Media

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Black Lives Matter

- Black Lives Matter is an international activist movement and sociopolitical media forum, that began in the summer of 2013 by organizers, Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi. Black Lives Matter campaigns against anti-Black racism and works for the validity of Black life
- It began as a hashtag on Twitter and grew into a protest slogan — after prominent police killings of blacks over the past 1.5 years — and became an Internet-driven civil rights movement
- We study how data shared on social media around the Black Lives Matter protests and the associated incidents of police brutality in Ferguson, NYC and Baltimore may reflect the broader community's perception of these events.

Pharoah Jackson
@ThePharoah

I JUST SAW SOMEONE DIE OMFG

RETWEETS 1,065   LIKES 502

10:03 AM - 9 Aug 2014

Timeline

FERGUSON AUGUST
Aug. 9, 2014: Michael Brown is killed by Ferguson police officer Darren Wilson, @ThePharoah begins to live-tweet events (M)
Aug. 14, 2014: President Obama releases statement on events (P)
Aug. 18, 2014: National Guard is ordered to Ferguson
Aug. 20, 2014: Police release name of shooting officer (Darren Wilson) and surveillance tape. Protesters come to Ferguson from across the nation.
Aug 25, 2014: Michael Brown's funeral

FERGUSON NOVEMBER
Nov. 17, 2014: Governor of Missouri declares state of emergency in anticipation of protests (W)
Nov. 24, 2014: Grand jury decided not to indict Wilson in the shooting death of Brown. (W)
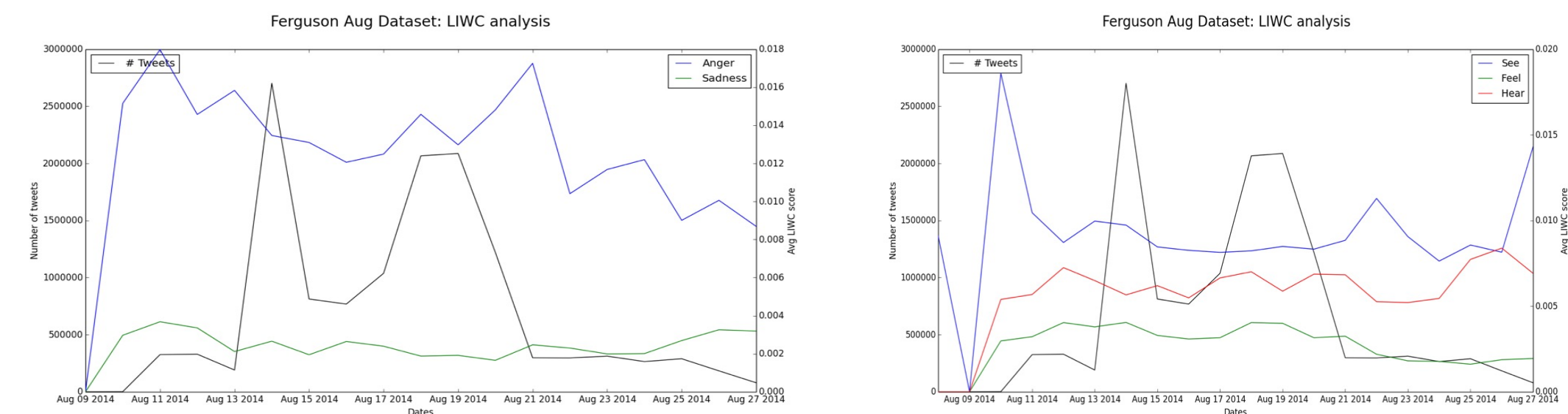Nov. 25, 2014: protests erupted in 170 cities across the U.S.

NYC
Dec. 19, 2014: "Pro-police" counter protests
Dec. 20, 2014: Ismaaiyl Abdullah Brinsley kills two on-duty NYPD officers Wenjian Liu and Rafael Ramos [1]
Dec. 21, 2014: Sergeants Benevolent Association tweets that Mayor DeBlasio has blood on his hands, Blue Lives Matter tweets call for Mayor's resignation
Dec. 27, 2014: Funeral for Rafael Ramos, thousands of people attend, largest police funeral in the city's history. [1]
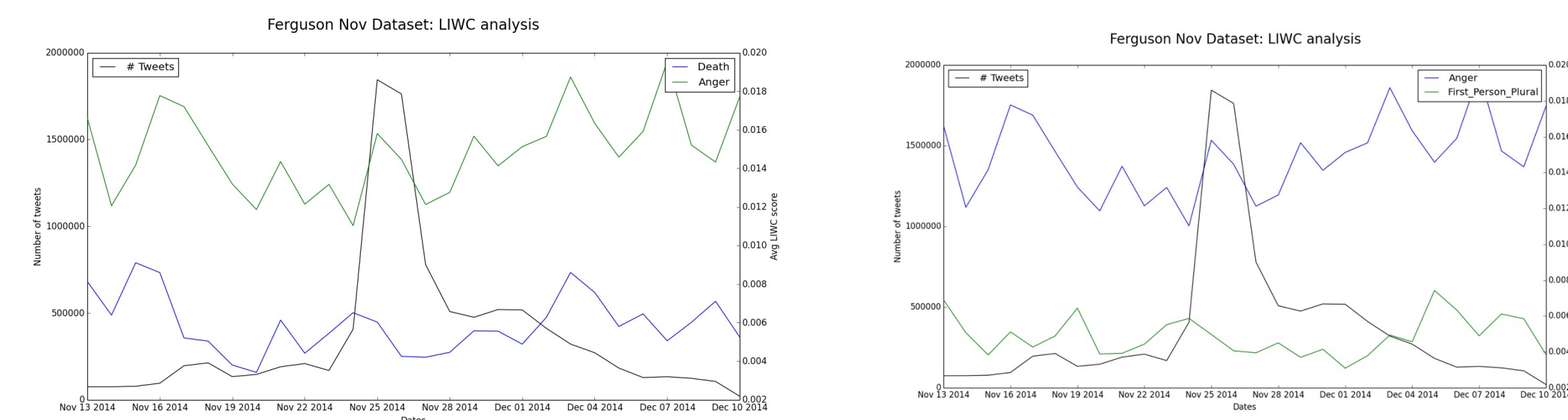Jan. 4, 2015: Funeral for Wenjian Liu

BALTIMORE
April 19, 2015: Freddie Gray dies from injuries to the spinal cord sustained during an arrest on April 12, 2014
April 27, 2015: An image that is circulated on social media before the funeral urging high school students to meet at the Mondawmin Mall at 3 p.m. for a "purge."
April 27, 2015: Police pre-empt protests by showing up at the high school with riot gear.
April 27, 2015: Governor declares state of emergency, orders curfew, and activates National Guard [2]
April 28, 2015: National Guard deployed, curfew goes into effect at 10pm [4]
April 29, 2015: Solidarity protests reported in at least 10 other cities
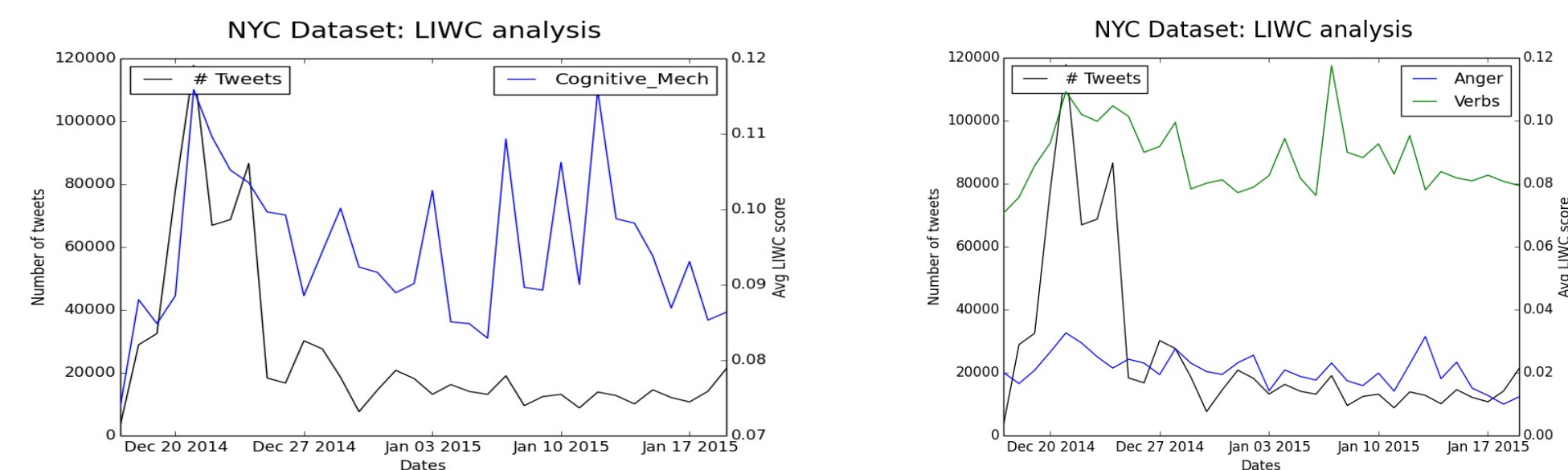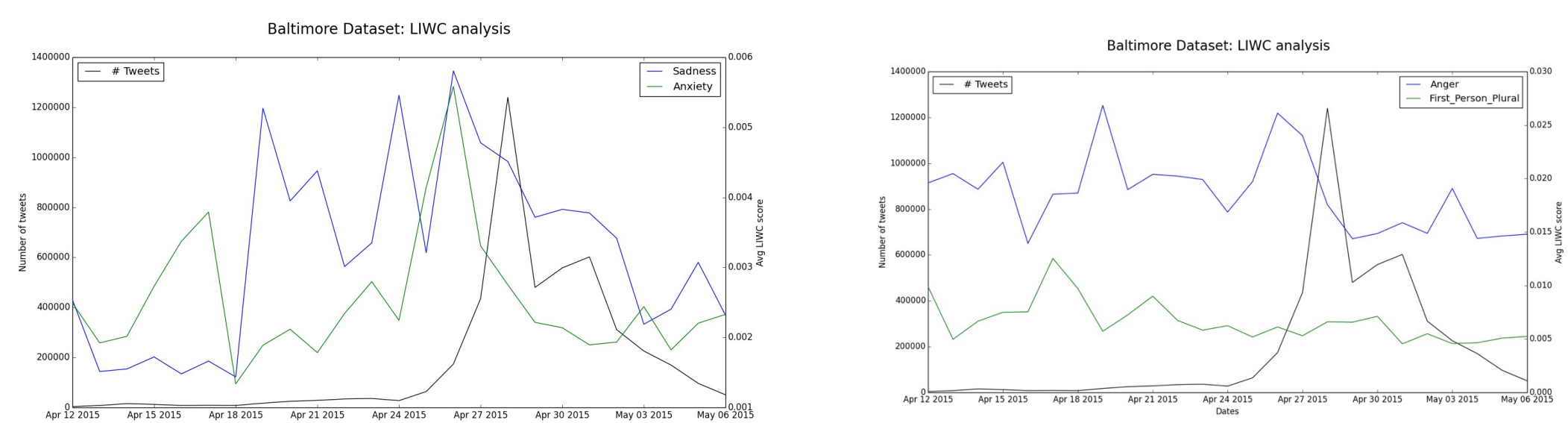May 3, 2015: Curfew is lifted [2]
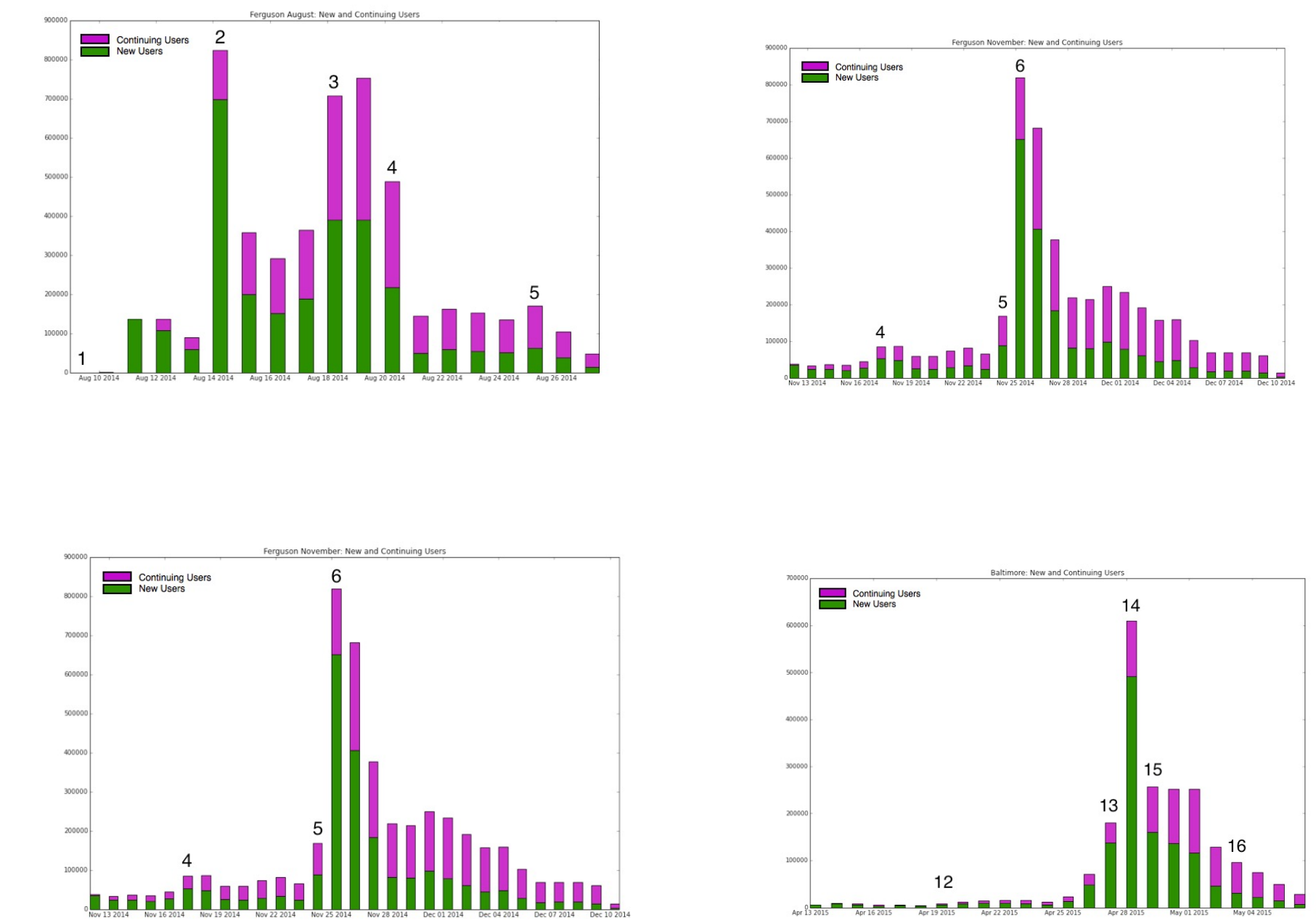
Ferguson August

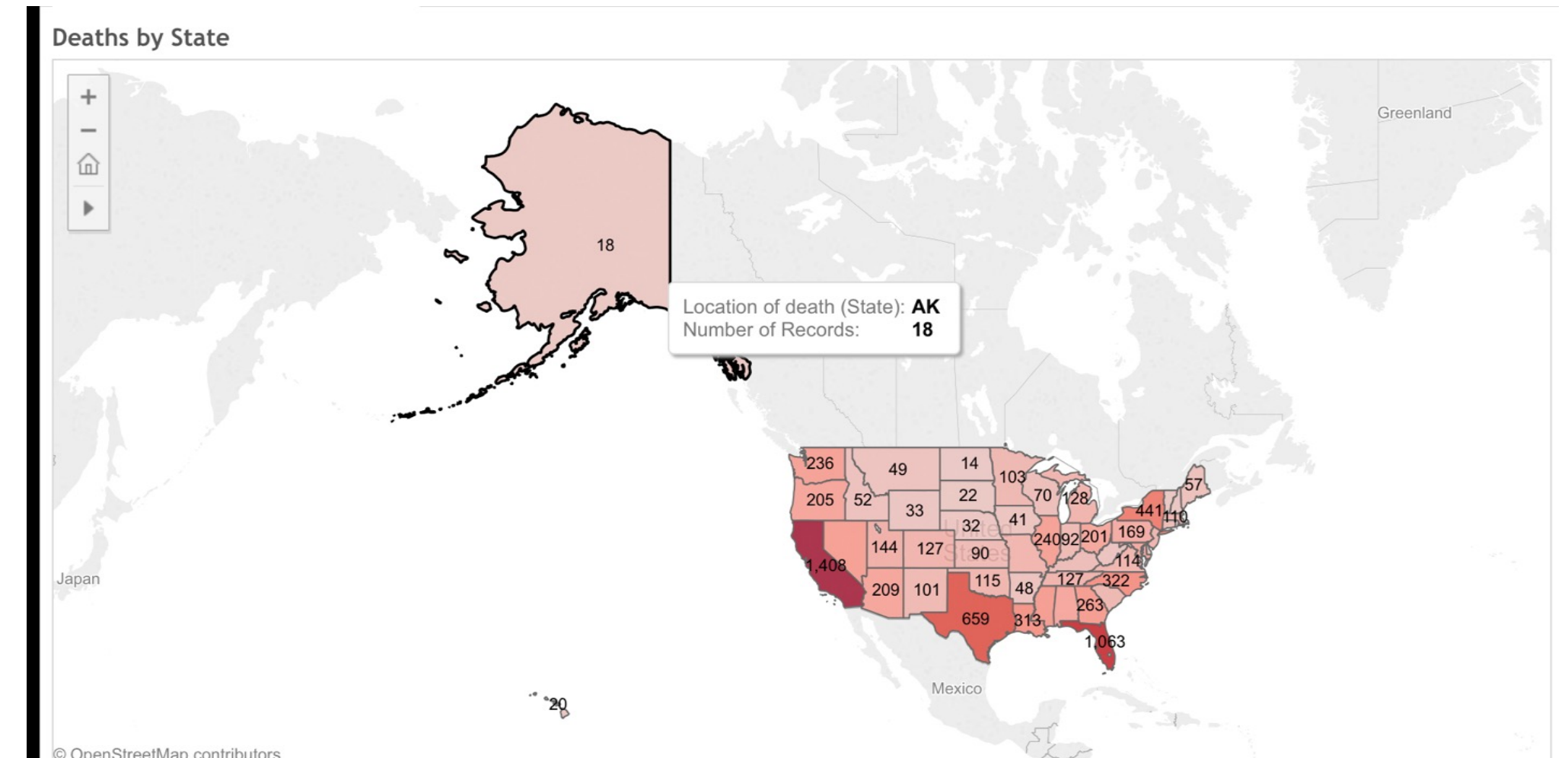## Ferguson November

New York City

Baltimore

New vs Continuing Users

Work in Progress

- We utilize the Police shooting datasets from Mapping Police Violence and fatalencounters.org.
- We will build regression models to predict Twitter response (in different states) with police violence data (in different states) with state-level demographic and SES data as control variables
- We have collected daily volume of protests across different states in the US. We will build regression models to predict protest daily volumes with Twitter measures (aggregated daily)