Can You Judge a Book by Its Cover?

An Analysis of Book Title Language and Bans in the United States from 2021-2025



By Team Git-Gods

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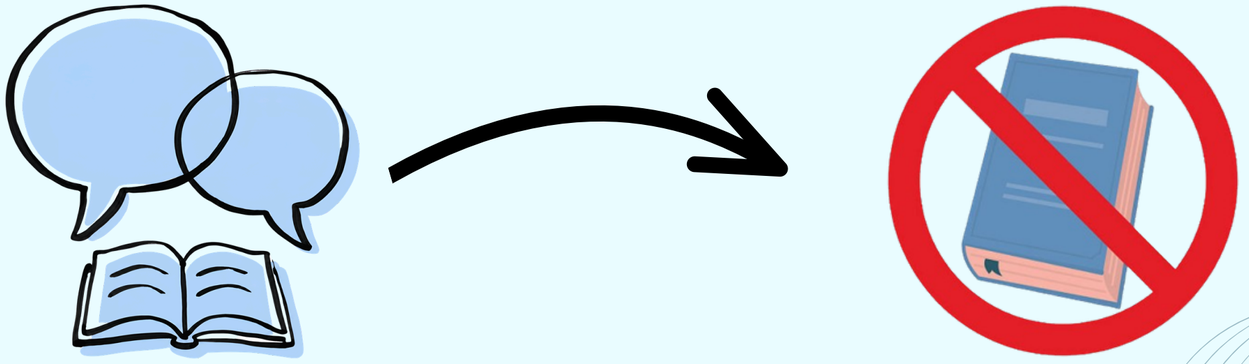
THE DATA SET

- **EveryLibrary Institute** - non-profit organization committed to protecting libraries through advancing library funding within the public and political agendas.
- The Censorship Attacks database tracks book bans by location, date, genre
- Access granted by Dr. Tasslyn Magnusson (an independent researcher with a PhD in history from Case Western Reserve University) organized this database.
- **Total columns: 30**
- **Total Rows: 20890**
- **Key Variables: Title, Author, Year, State, Decision, Current Book Status...and more!**

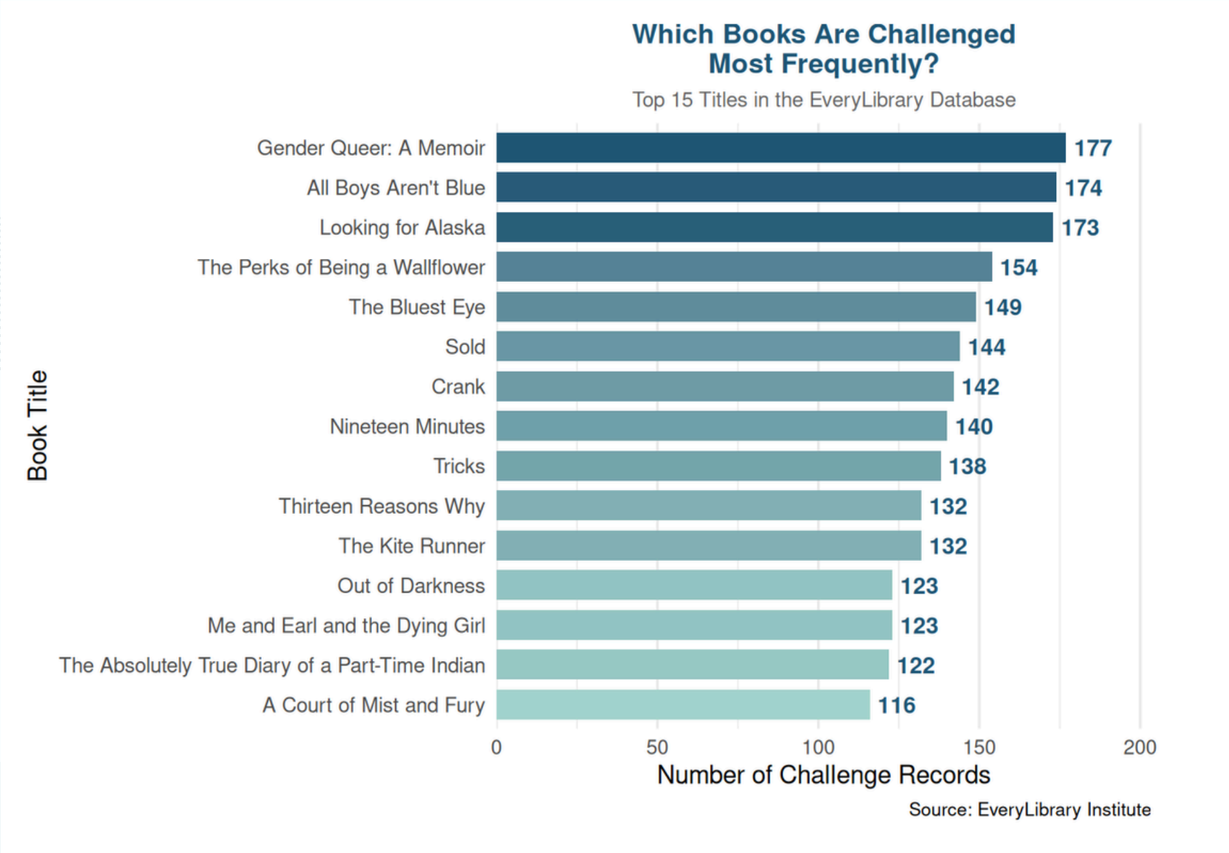
RESEARCH QUESTION

How is the presence of potentially **controversial language** in **book titles** associated with documented censorship **outcomes**, and how do these relationships vary across **U.S. states** from 2021 to 2025?

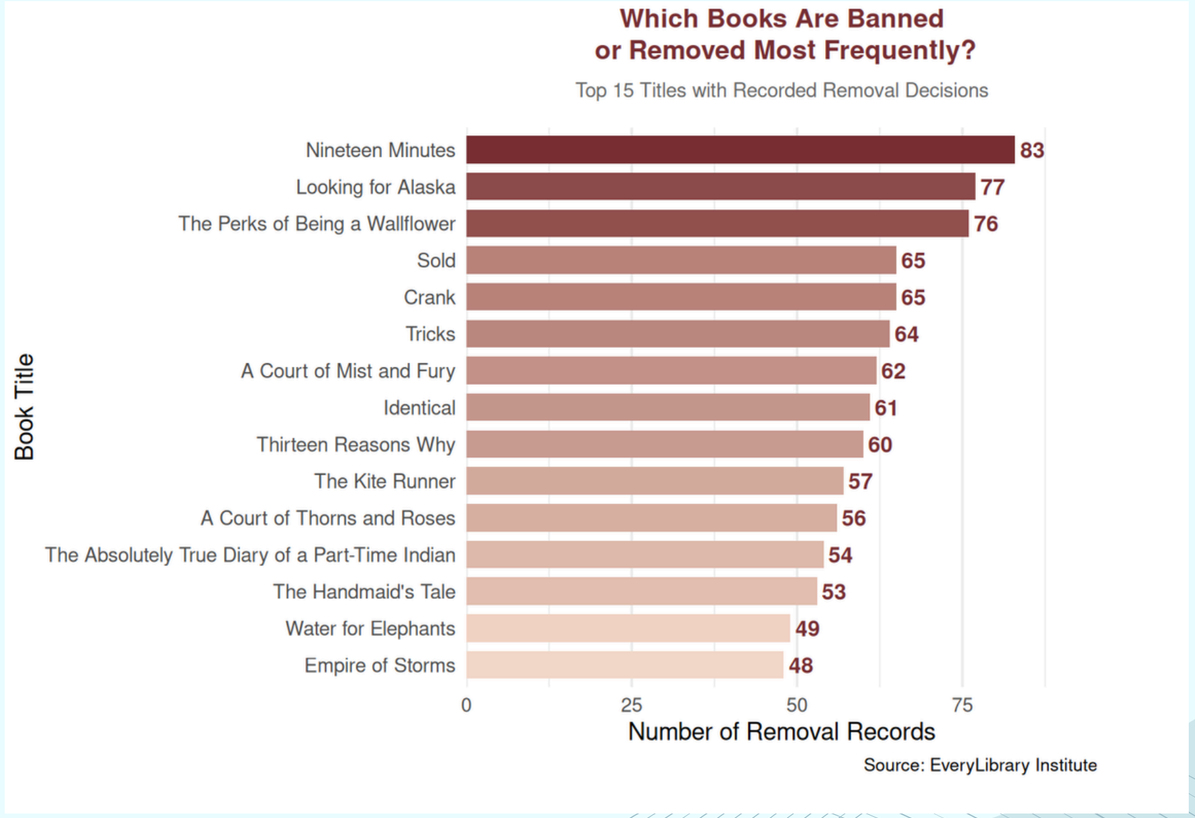


CHALLENGED ≠ REMOVED

TOP 15 CHALLENGED BOOKS



TOP 15 BANNED BOOKS





GENDER/SEXUALITY

RACE/ETHNICITY

VIOLENCE/DEATH

RELATIONSHIPS/ROMANCE

RELIGION/POLITICS

HEALTH/BODY/SUBSTANCE USE

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# A tibble: 7 × 2
  Title_Topic                      n
  <chr>                        <int>
1 No selected keywords         17561
2 Gender/Sexuality              1070
3 Race/Ethnicity                 564
4 Violence/Death                 538
5 Relationships/Romance          356
6 Religion/Politics              237
7 Health/Body/Substance Use      137
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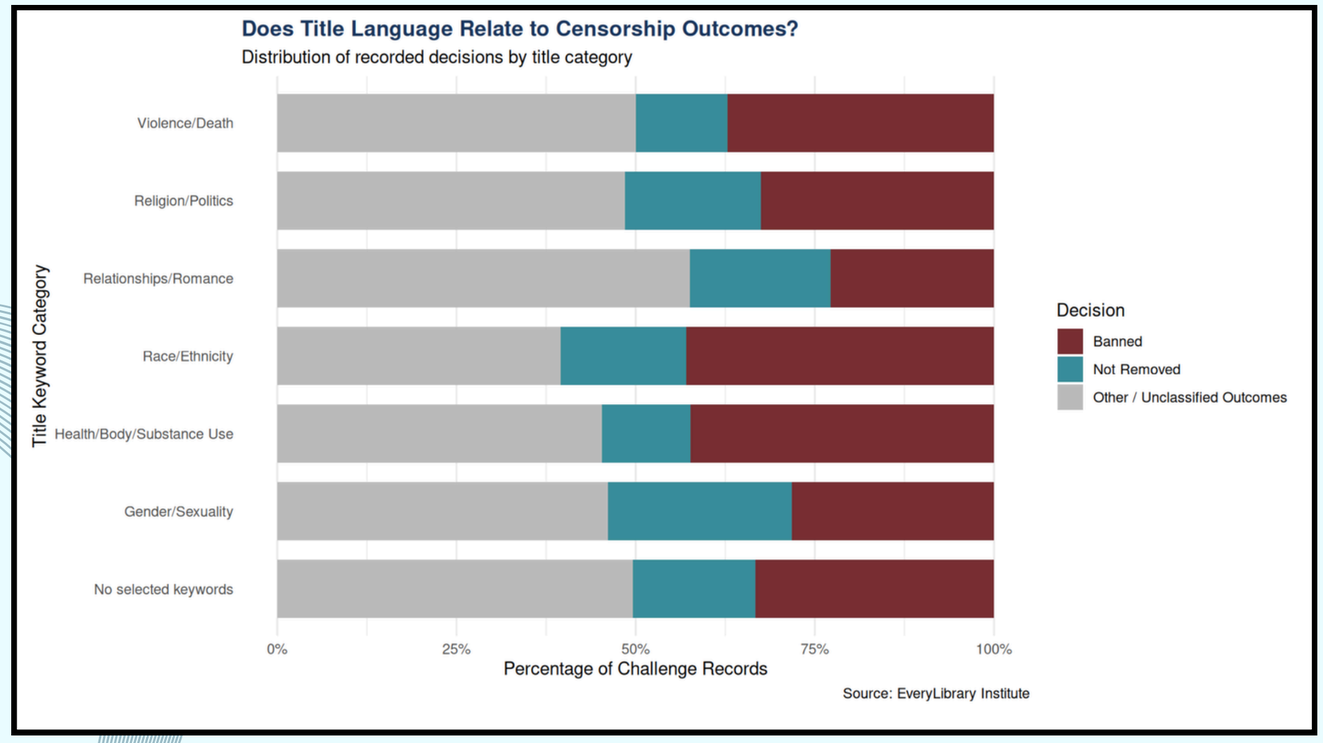
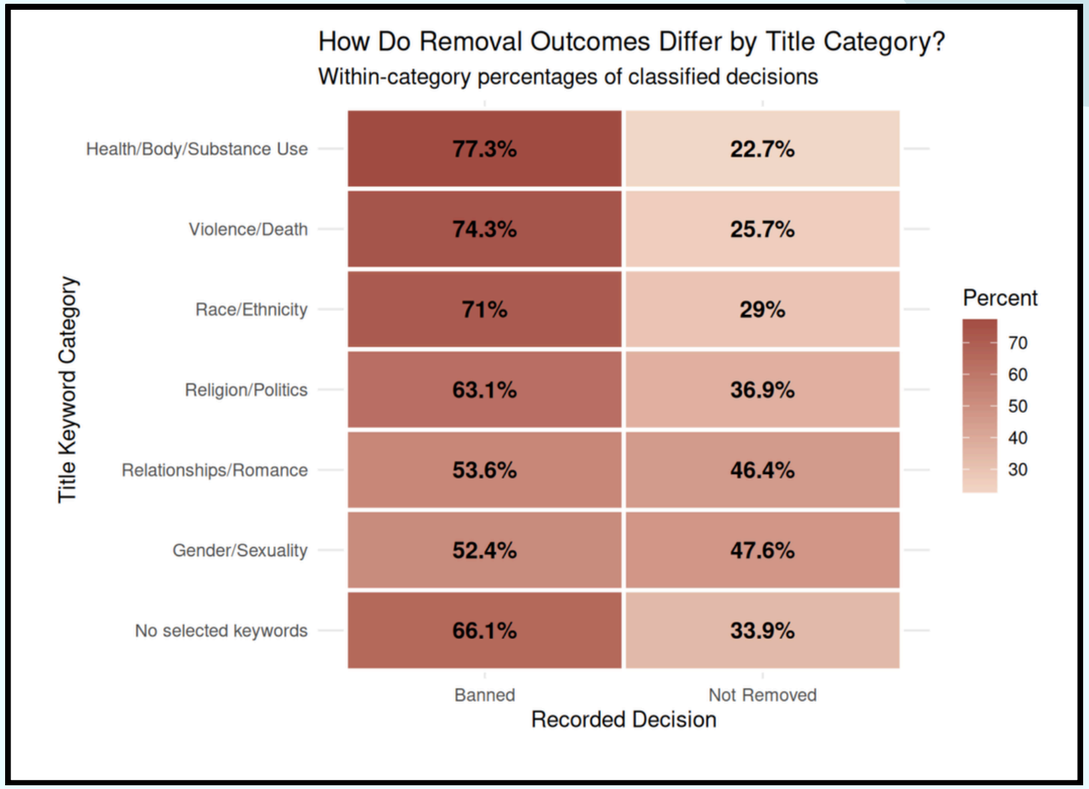
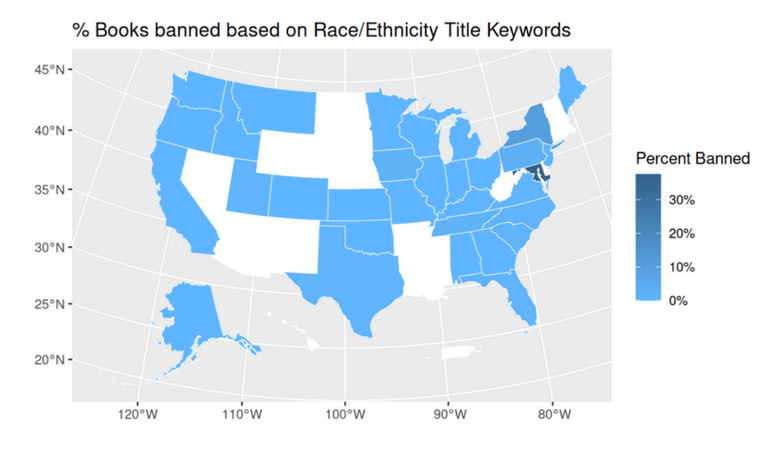
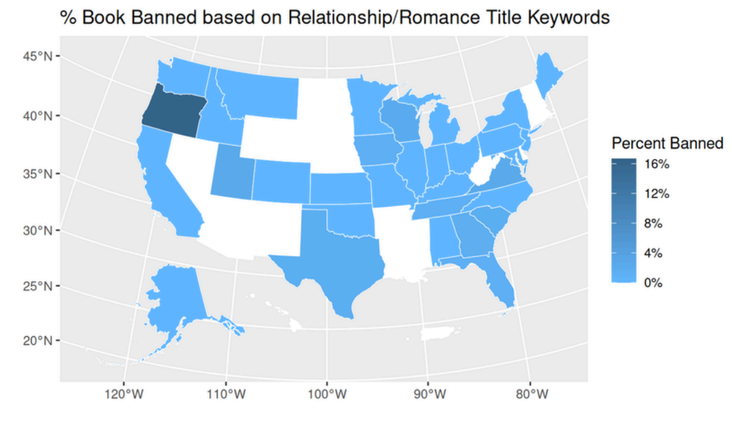
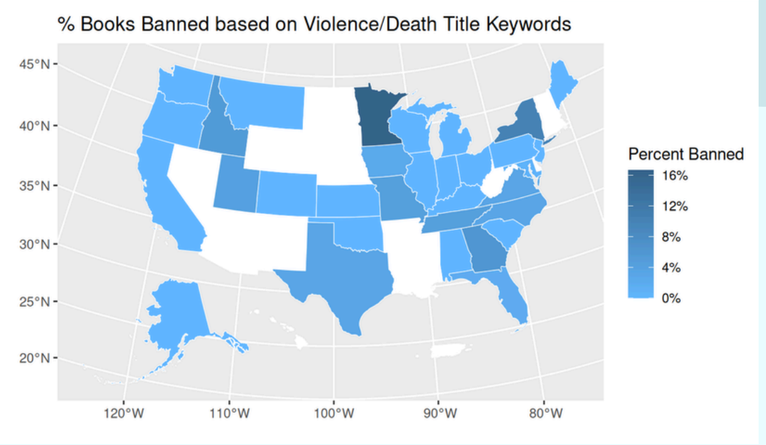

Does Title Language Relate to Censorship Outcomes?
Distribution of recorded decisions by title category
Violence/Death
Religion/Politics
Relationships/Romance
Race/Ethnicity
Health/Body/Substance Use
Gender/Sexuality
No selected keywords
Title Keyword Category
0%
25%
50%
75%
100%
Percentage of Challenge Records
Decision
Banned
Not Removed
Other / Unclassified Outcomes
Source: EveryLibrary Institute

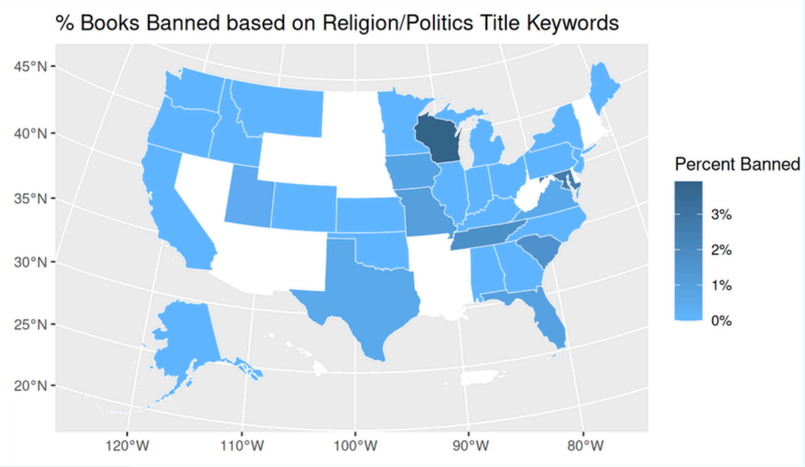

How Do Removal Outcomes Differ by Title Category?
Within-category percentages of classified decisions
Health/Body/Substance Use
Violence/Death
Race/Ethnicity
Religion/Politics
Relationships/Romance
Gender/Sexuality
No selected keywords
77.3%
22.7%
74.3%
25.7%
71%
29%
63.1%
36.9%
53.6%
46.4%
52.4%
47.6%
66.1%
33.9%
Title Keyword Category
Banned
Not Removed
Recorded Decision
Percent
70
60
50
40
30

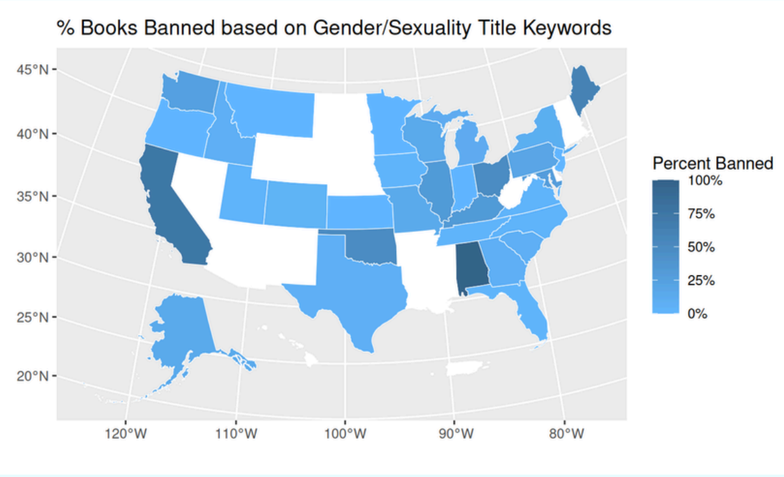
Banning Across States & Title Language

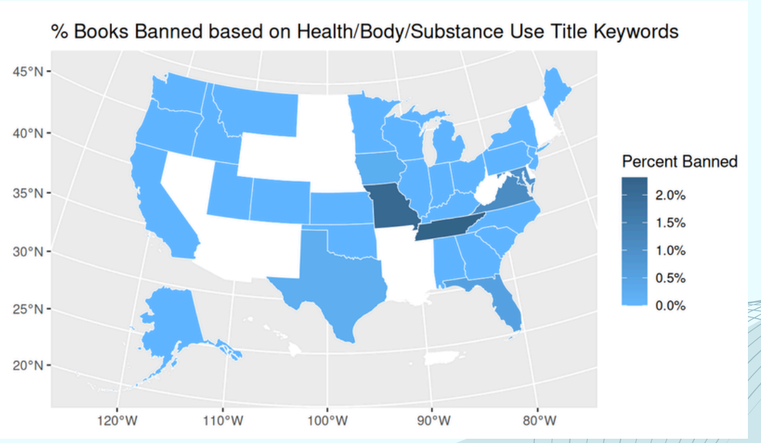




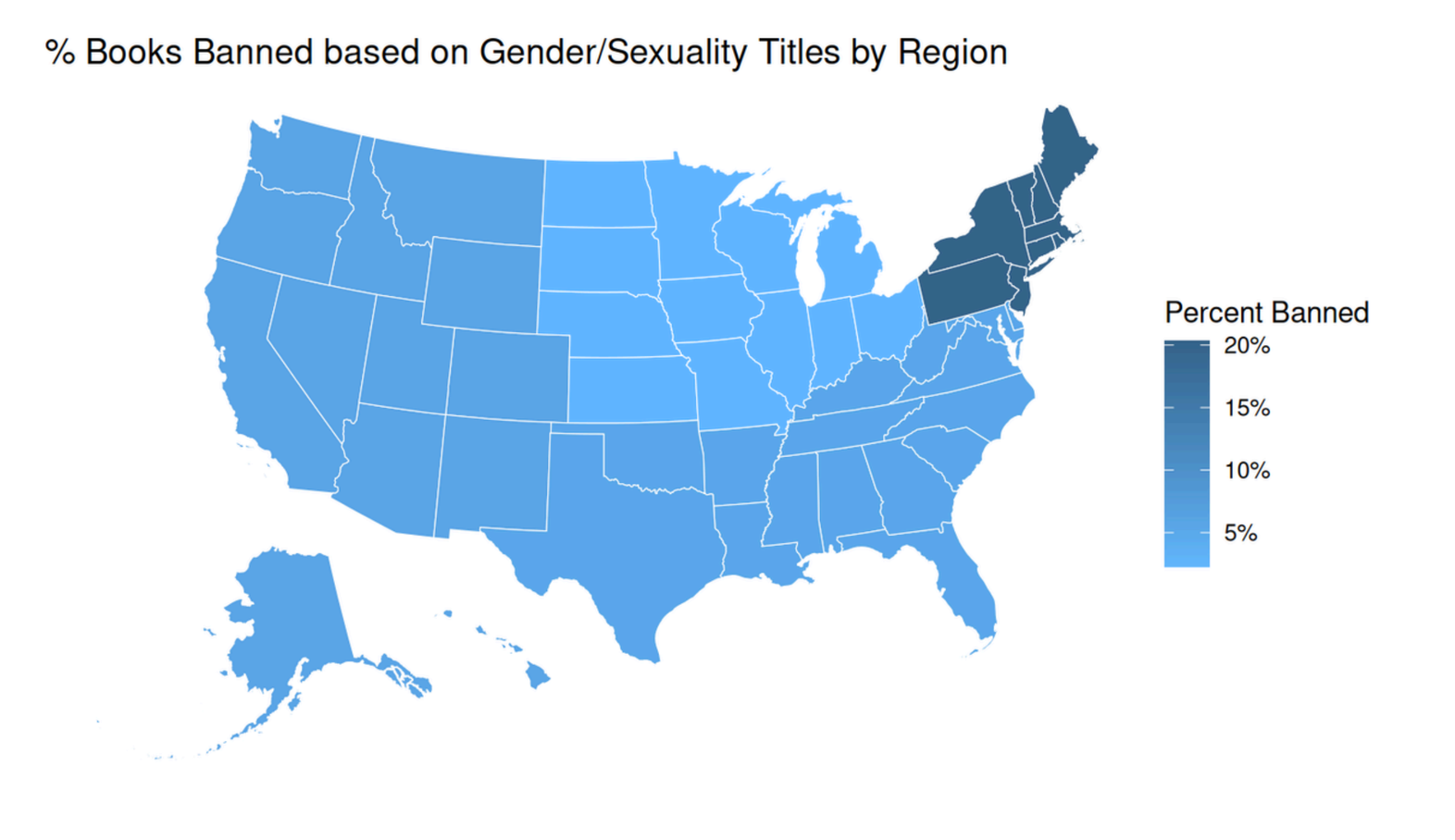








Banning Across Regions ~ Gender & Sexuality



Conclusions and Limtations

1

Title Language
Ban rates vary across book title keyword categories

2

Geography
Book banning across the different categories varied geographically

3

Limitations
Large % of unclassifed books

4

Future Directions
Author demographics and cover illustrations