Presentation notes:

* I’m presenting a work in progress final project for AP Seminar with Kathy
* And just to set some expectations, I am not planning to pursue this project beyond what’s required for the class, but I would love to hear any suggestions on how to do qualitative analysis beyond what I have here since that was something I struggled to understand and frame my options for with this project

BACKGROUND & RESEARCH QUESTION

* The premise for this project is to create a memo directed at a certain audience characterizing public thought on either the Black Lives Matter movement or COVID with a comparison between two places, and I chose Salt Lake City and Provo Utah because I am familiar with the local political scenes there
* So in thinking about how I saw people express opinions and hot takes around the Black Lives Matter movement and protests earlier this year, I noticed that many people seemed to center organizations in different ways contingent on whether they supported the movement or opposed it, despite the fact that the movement is not leader or organization-centric – there is no one organization leading this movement
* So for people who did not support the movement, they often said things like “oh, well I don’t support it and the Black Lives Matter organization is a terrorist group” referring to a national or global founding organization in the movement called the Black Lives Matter Global Network
* And others who supported the movement often referred to local community action groups and protest organizers instead, in trying to draw attention to more of a local connection to the movement
* This led me to my research question: does organizational reference vary with support for the Black Lives Matter movement?
* And I am basing the theory behind this question off the works of Schattschneider (1960), Zaller (1992), and Nelson & Kinder (1994). Schattschneider discussed how the scope of conflict can be expanded or contracted as a strategy for winning, whereas Zaller and Nelson and Kinder’s work suggests that the way the public receives information and the way the issue is framed will alter how they think about and express their own opinions

HYPOTHESES

* So the basic hypothesis behind this paper is that support or opposition to the Black Lives Matter movement is correlated or predicts the scope of the organization centered in public discourse
* And the null hypothesis, of course, would be no correlation between the two

DATA

* The talk radio data I am using is actually just a collection of radio shows I identified as being influential in Salt Lake City and Provo Utah, which really doesn’t have much in the way of talk radio, but they do have these programmatic shows from KUER public radio in SLC and BYU Radio in Provo
* And I also have a large number of tweets that were identified as related to the Black Lives Matter discourse and scraped from Twitter by the MIT Media Lab, which Deb Roy, who co-taught the class with Kathy, is a part of
* I really don’t know much about how their data collection methods or what some of the variables are, but I have the tweets!

METHOD

* The method I am using to sort through the talk radio data is inductive qualitative analysis and I’m listening for any words that relate to different organizations and the context of how they are talking about the movement, if it’s positive or negative, to organize thematic evidence and quotes about how the radio people are talking about it
* For the tweets, I plan to primarily use descriptive statistics and potentially hypothesis testing using a t-test, though I’m not sure I’ll be able to translate them that way

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

* So the preliminary results I’ll show you here come from putting together word clouds of the first 1,000 tweets that I have (out of 46,000 total tweets)
* This first word cloud shows that Black Lives Matter occurs most frequently, as you’d expect
* And this frequency graph shows that as well, although white comes up fifth
* So when we look at a word cloud that removes the words Black Lives Matter, we see the most frequent words are people, white, movement, support, police, protest, etc.
* And we can see this from this frequency graph as well
* There are also a lot of action words here, which I’m not sure should be included or not, but they might reflect a general orientation that people have to talk about how to act in response to this movement

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

* So in conclusion, we can already see a couple themes in these tweets:
* White comes up frequently, which suggests people are making comparisons between Black and white people and potentially framing their thinking on the movement overall as a Black versus white issue
* Surprisingly, I didn’t see that many tweets referencing the Democratic or Republican parties, although there were enough referencing President Trump that his name and handle came up pretty frequently
* And a fun fact/totally not surprising thing is that swear words came up super frequently. The f word is on there as one of the most frequent words
* And so far, what I’m seeing with the talk radio data is that all of them talk about the movement in ways that I would expect for the most part, in that the JayMac show is extremely conservative and frames the movement and protests in a negative light whereas the others are either neutral or paint it positively
* But I’m not seeing much yet in terms of reference to an organization and I think that’s largely because most of them are not talk radio shows in the traditional sense that members of the public call in, so it sort of serves as an intermediary between political elites and the public