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4/19/2023

EMAT 62110-001

Project Milestone 1

Milestone number one proved to be more complicated than I imagined. I had categorized this milestone as the “Identify and evaluate data and data sources” step in my project plan. It was fraught with unforeseen obstacles throughout, and certainly did not align with my initial expectations. Often, my findings were within targeted and limited reports and the bulk of the information I was able to gather was not in a dataset format. Identifying a useable data source for my topic that had not already been scoped and filtered was challenging. These various reports had only parts and pieces of the target data, thus significantly inhibiting my ability to gather quality source data.

I was able to obtain tables used in FBI annual crime reporting, which provided the majority of the data points I had been looking for. In these reports, homicides were categorized by the weapons involved for each State. This information was broken down for the calendar year that the homicide occurred, each in individual Microsoft Excel spreadsheets for that year. I collected these tables for 2015 up to 2019, allowing for a 5-year time span to evaluate. I needed to combine these tables and add a field for each year that the data was sourced. Perhaps not in alignment with our efforts in Python, I used my knowledge within Microsoft Access to bring this data together into one comma separated value file (.csv). While not entirely appealing or compelling data, I searched for something to help supplement my findings. After additional searching, I found police staffing data within the same FBI annual crime reports per year. This time only 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019 data was available. This staffing data allowed me to examine the correlations between policing efforts and the use of weapons, more specifically guns, for homicides. With 2016 data missing, I again used Access to create an average between 2015-2017 to generate data for all policing fields to represent the year of 2016. This simulated value was added as columns to the existing .csv file to create a more extensive dataset.

In retrospect, despite having a target story to tell in my project plan, the gathered data has taken my desired outcome and shuffled it some. I believe that I may be able to tell a 2nd Amendment story here, but it is not the story I had set out to tell. This is where the shortcomings of my milestone one will show. I did find data. I found data that could tell my story, but not as clearly as I desired. The data does have issues as previously indicated, and it does contain some missing data. While the obstacles were many to get this point, I feel that I did come close to reaching my milestone goals. It was not a full success; the story has changed, and I cannot fully commit to saying I have data that will tell a compelling story. I will move forward with the information I have collected, and attempt to tell the best visual story I can find.

**Self-Evaluation Grade: C+ to B-**

**Personal Critique:** I needed more work in Plotly to evaluate the data. This was sidelined do to my perception of the data I had obtained as being limited. This visualization process will ramp up considerably during milestone two.