Anti-Racist Books in the Seattle Public Library

BLACK LIVES MATTER

Outline

1. Introduction
2. Data scraping of anti-racist books
3. Queries and Results
4. Discussion and Conclusions

Introduction

- Black Lives Matter emerged as a movement in 2013
- Major protests against police brutality
- Question: Are there any patterns in check-out counts and estimated purchase dates?

Data Scraping

- From 7 online outlets: newspapers, libraries, activist compilations
- Scraped websites for book titles
- Coded ISBNdb API script for title verification
- 150 unique titles after cleaning
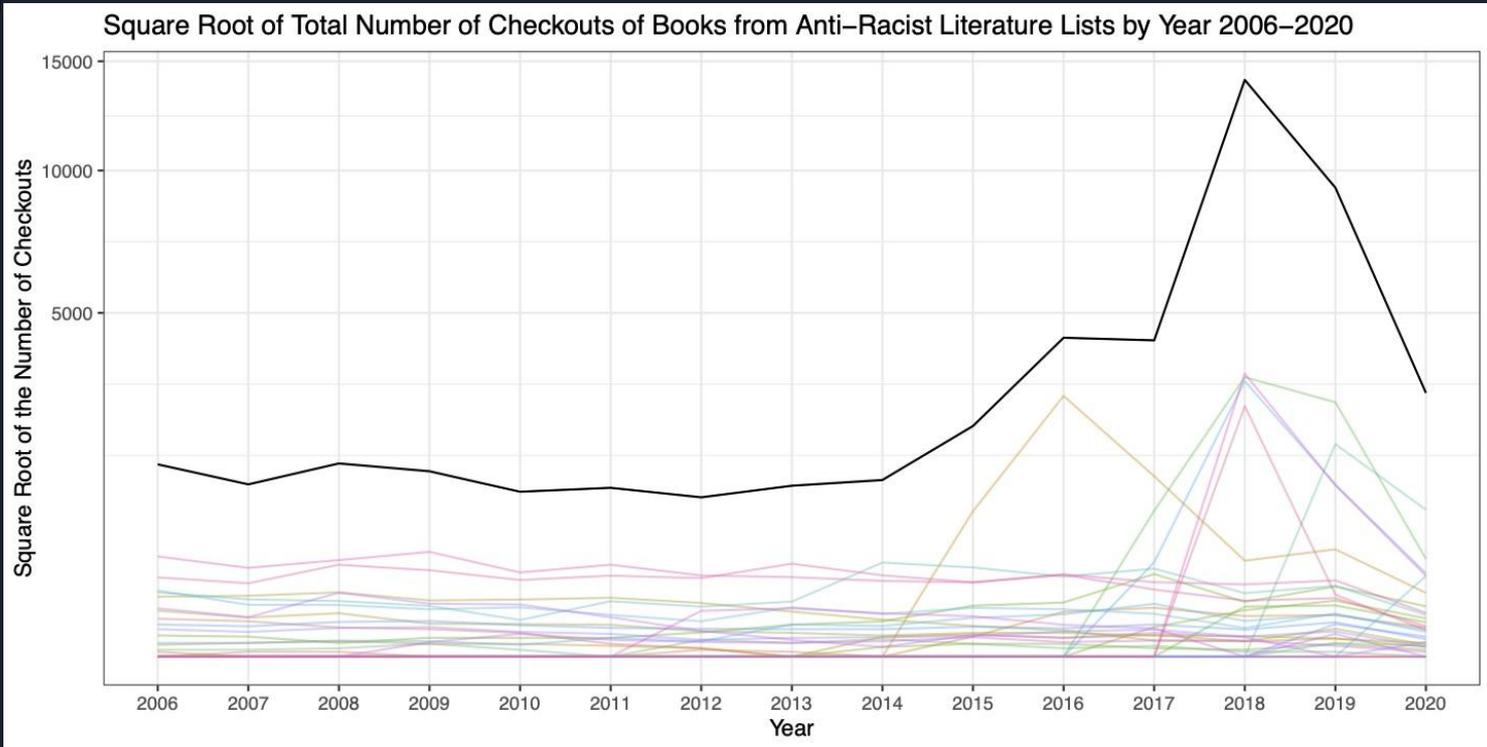
Query 1: Overall checkouts by year 2006-today

```
1    # This query is to see how many anti-racist items were checked out by year in 2020
2 •  SELECT YEAR(cout), title, count(title) AS cout_by_year
3        FROM spl_2016.outraw
4    WHERE title IN (anti-racist-books)
5    GROUP BY
6        YEAR(cout),
7        title
```
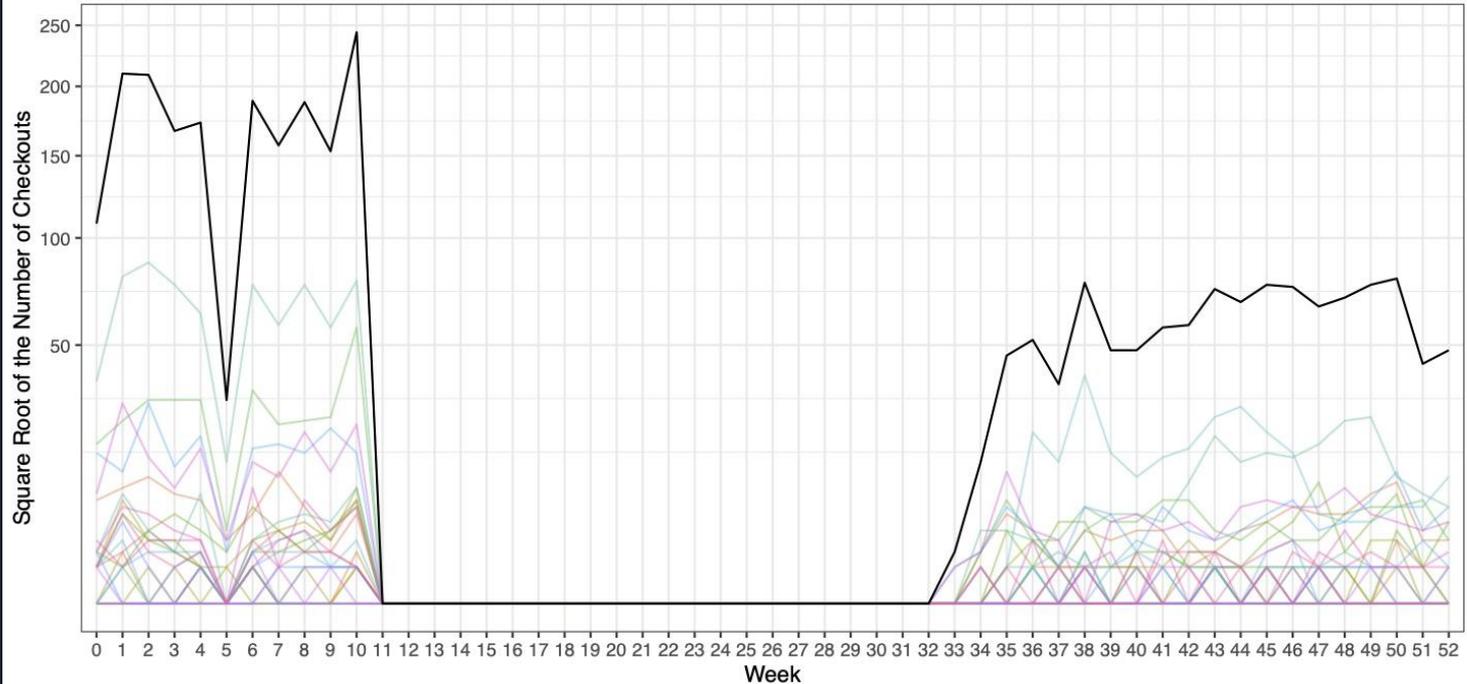
Query 1: Plot

Square Root of Total Number of Checkouts of Books from Anti–Racist Literature Lists by Year 2006–2020

Query 2: Checkouts by week 2020

```sql
1    # This query is to see how many anti-racist items were checked out by week in 2020
2  • SELECT WEEK(cout), title, count(title) AS cout_by_week
3      FROM spl_2016.outraw
4  WHERE title IN (anti-racist-titles)
5               AND
6               YEAR(cout) = 2020
7  GROUP BY
8      WEEK(cout),
9      title;
```
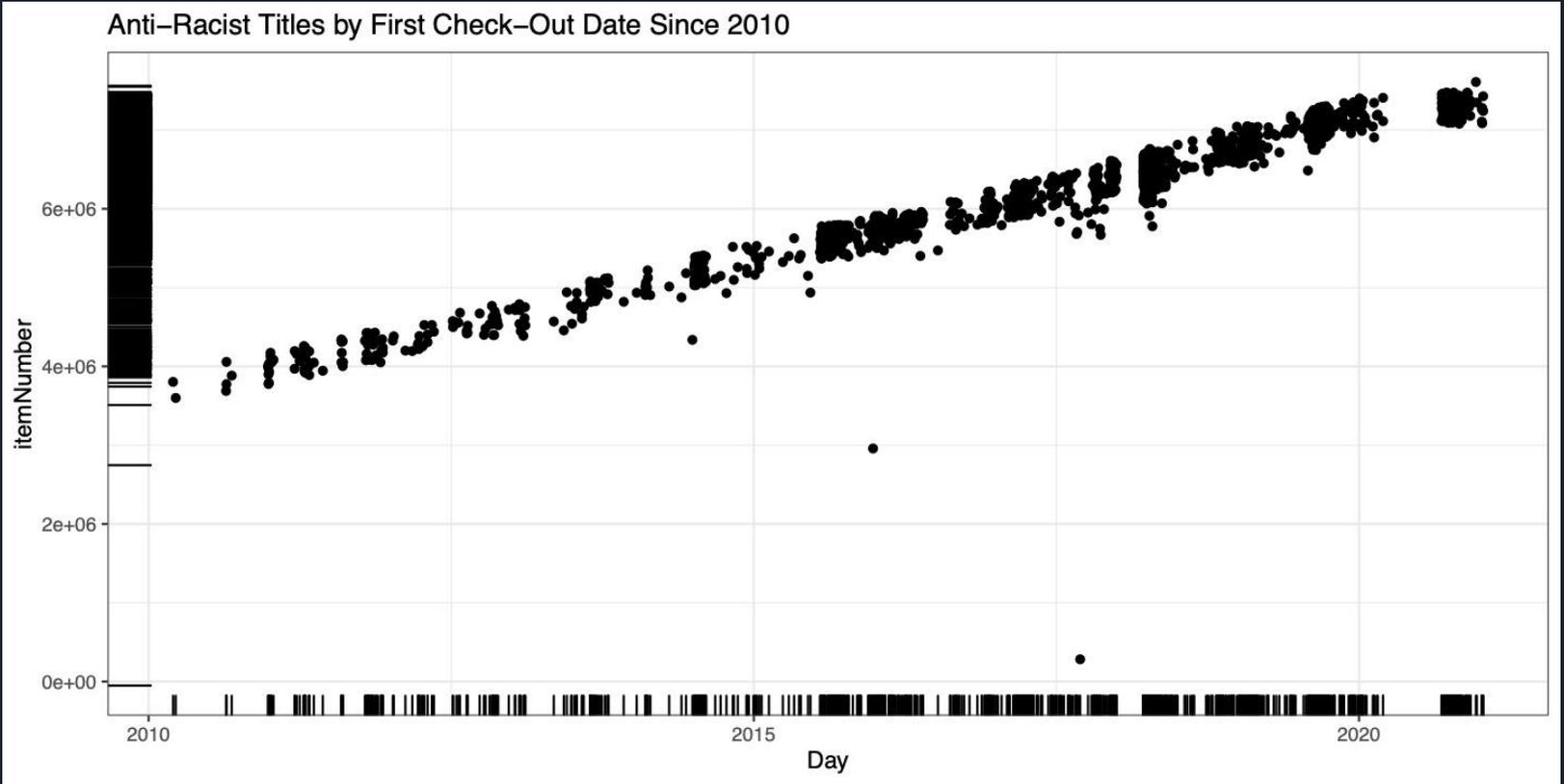
Query 2: Plot

Square Root of Total Number of Checkouts of Books from Anti–Racist Literature Lists by Week of 2020
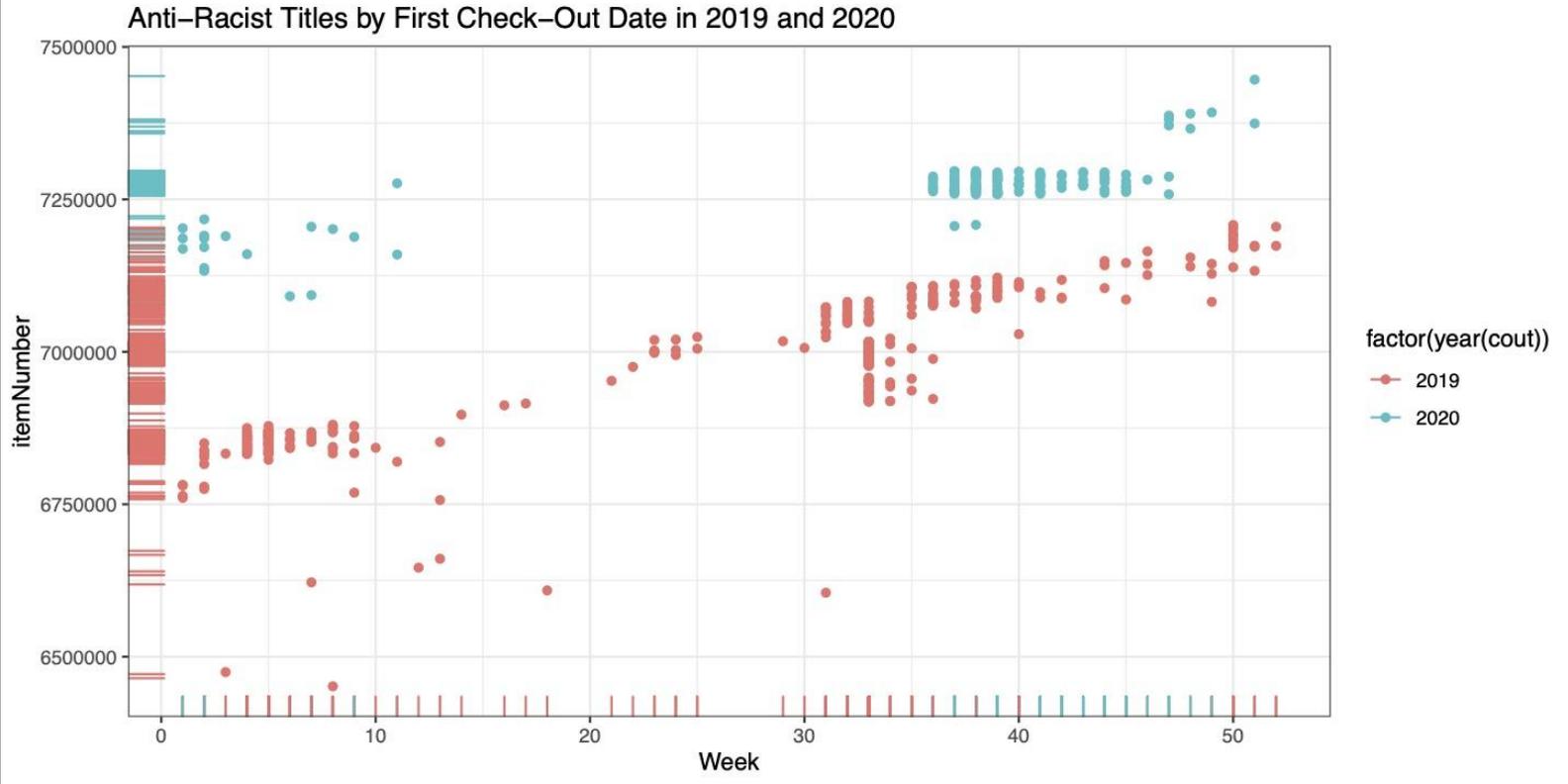
Query 3: First-Ever Checkout Date

```sql
1    # This query is to see how many anti-racist items were first checked out in 2020
2    # https://stackoverflow.com/questions/12102200/get-records-with-max-value-for-each-group-of-grouped-sql-results
3    # axiac's response
4  ● SELECT o.* #itemNumber, title, cout
5      FROM spl_2016.outraw o               # 'o' from 'earliest checkout date of itemNumber'
6        LEFT JOIN spl_2016.outraw b        # 'b' from 'earlier checkout date'
7          ON o.itemNumber = b.itemNumber AND o.cout > b.cout
8    WHERE b.cout is NULL # earlier checkout date not found
9      AND
10     o.title IN (anti-racist-titles)
11   LIMIT 30000
```

Query 3: Plot I

Anti–Racist Titles by First Check–Out Date Since 2010

Query 3: Plot II

Anti–Racist Titles by First Check–Out Date in 2019 and 2020

Conclusions and Limitations

Take-aways

- Increase in interest since BLM movement emerged (2013)
- Increased interest mainly driven by a few titles
- Peak interest in 2018
- Potential new purchases in 2020
- Impossible to tell effects of 2020 BLM protests because of a lack of data

Limitations and further steps

- Correlation to particular events needed
- Normalizing by overall check-out numbers and the number of anti-racist titles needed

Thank you