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Maine's Women Offenders: What Do We Know?

Erica Hansen King
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Principle Aims of Research

1. Who are Maine's women offenders?

Illustrate the demographic characteristics of women involved with Maine's correctional system across 3 cohorts ('04, '05, '06)

2. At what rate do they recidivate?

Calculate recidivism rates for Maine's female offender probation population (prison, county jail and straight probation)

Research Sample

- Guided by what is accessible in Department of Corrections CORIS database
- Includes 2,092 women across 3 cohorts
- These are women who entered probation (from prison, jail or straight probation) in either 2004, 2005 or 2006

National Landscape

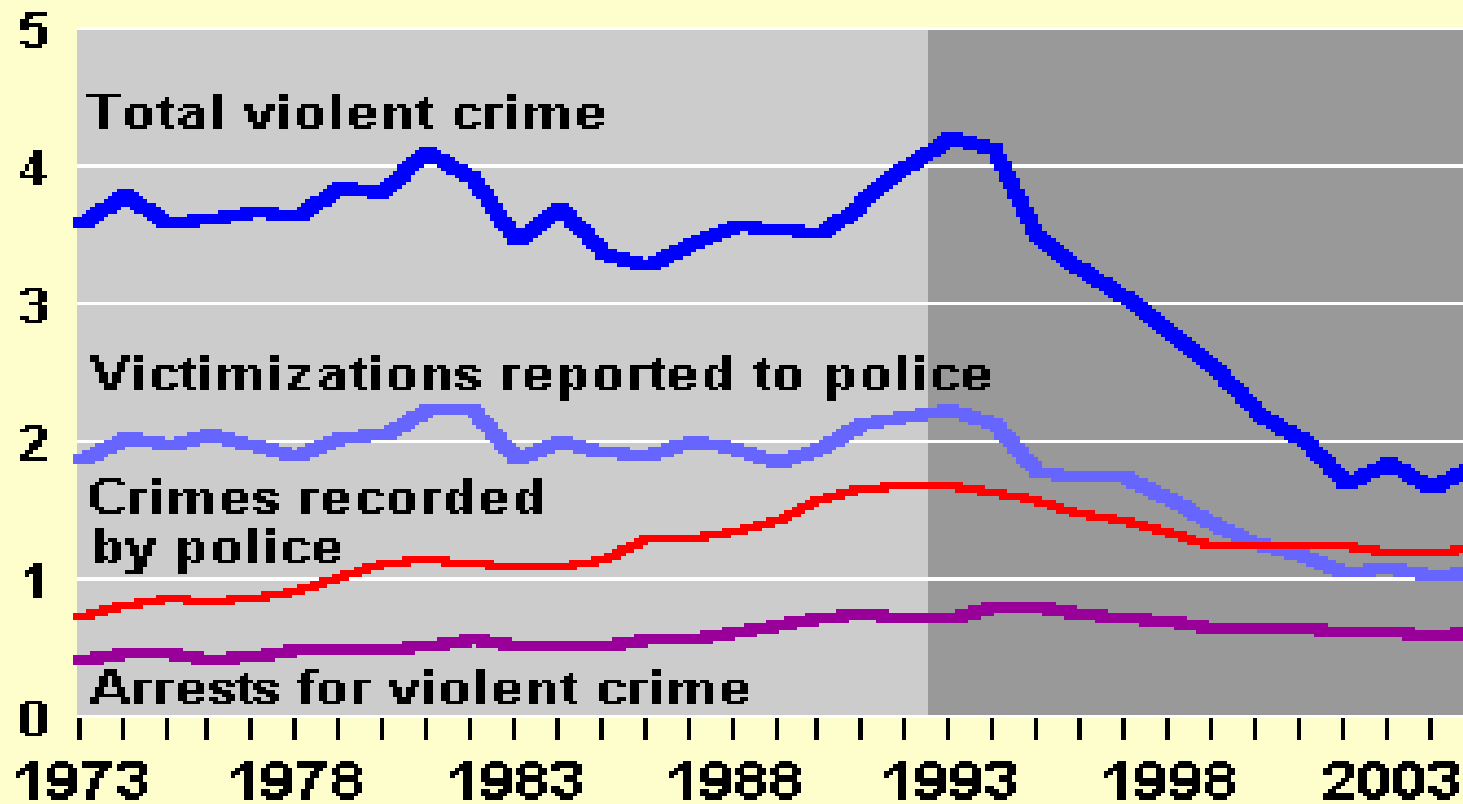
- From 1977 – 2004, there was a 757% national increase in women’s prison population, whereas the increase in males during that same period was 386%.
- 1977: 11,212, women imprisoned in the U.S.
2004: 11,408 women imprisoned in Texas alone

Source: Women’s Prison Association. “HARD HIT: The Growth In the Imprisonment of Women, 1977 – 2004.”

National Landscape

Four measures of serious violent crime

Offenses in millions



Source: **Four measures of serious violent crime, 1973-2005**, Bureau of Justice Statistics

National Landscape

- Female offending is qualitatively different than that of males, yet programs and policies are disproportionately designed for men.
- There is a qualitative difference in the way that women's incarceration impacts families, communities and taxpayers.
- Recidivism (defined in this study as any new arrest for a new crime) has been the primary outcome measure of success.

Maine in Context

2001	Approximately 25 women across Maine's five state prisons
By 2002	45 women , at the start of construction of the Women's Center
By 2003	At capacity, with 75 women
April 2007	Overcrowded with 140 women
April 10 th , 2008	158 women (124 at Maine Correctional Center, 34 at Women's Reentry Center) in our state prison system
	<i>*Data, history and counts provided by Becky Hayes Boober, Director of Women's Services, Maine Department of Corrections</i>

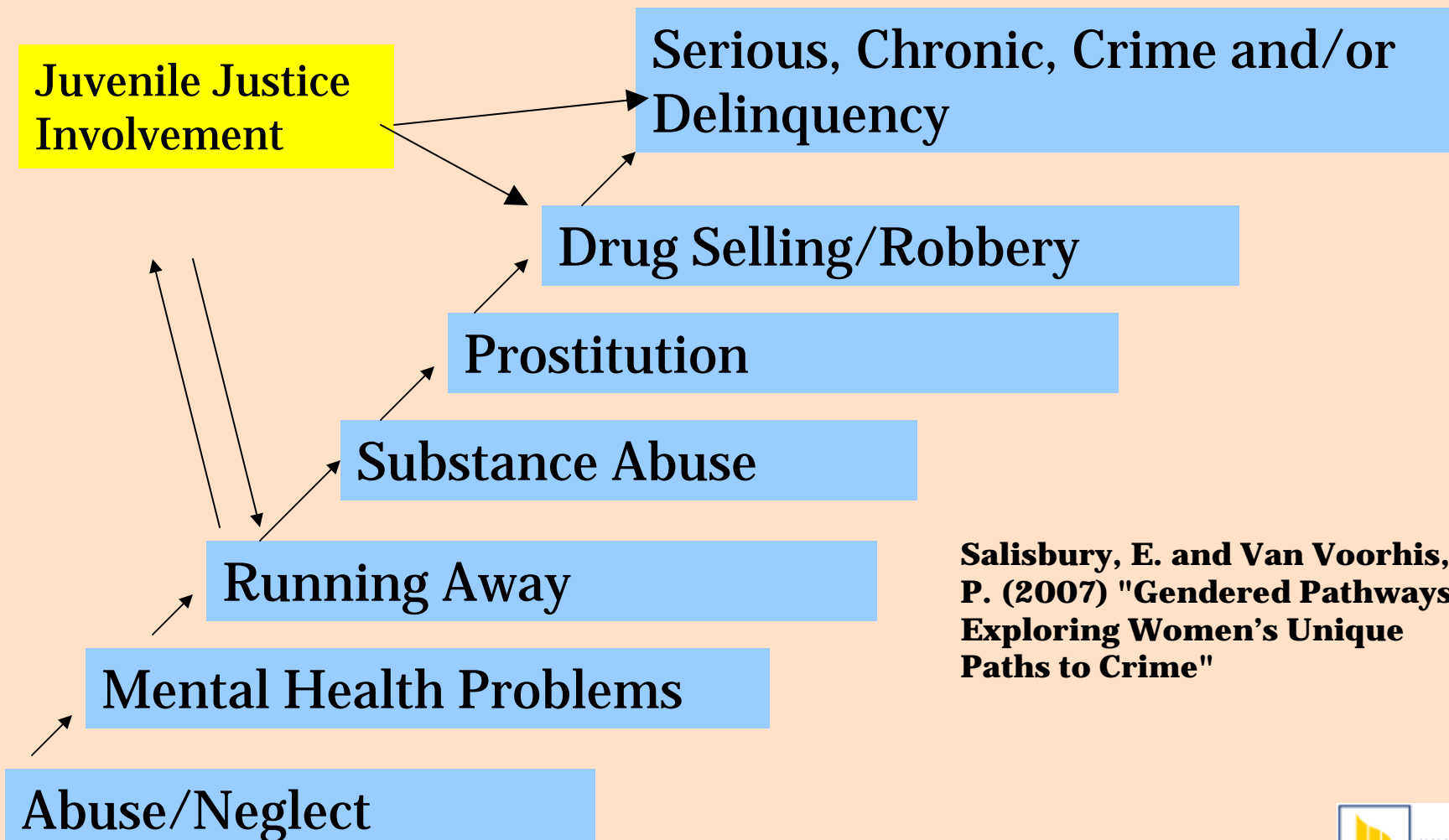
Maine in Context

- While Maine has one of the lowest per capita female incarceration rates, it experienced the largest increase (114%) in incarceration of women in the US between 1999 and 2004 (Frost, Greene & Pranis)
- A 21% increase in Maine's prison population is projected between the years of 2006-2011 (PEW Report)
- The Women's Center has drawn national attention for its innovative approach to providing gender responsive services
- Due to overcrowding and extensive media coverage, legislature appropriated funds for the development of a 38 bed Women's Reentry Center in Bangor, Maine
- An average of 44 women a year leave Maine's prison system

Relevance of this Study

- “The number of studies of female offenders, and in particular of incarcerated female offenders, adult female offenders and female offenders in a restorative justice context, is very small” (Andrews, D.A. & Dowden, C., 1998).
- A 1999 meta analytical study (Dowden, C. & Andrews, D., 1999) of ‘what works’ for female offenders noted that of sixty seven studies that looked at women’s programming, none of them linked recidivism to program components.

Pathways Model for Female Offenders



Salisbury, E. and Van Voorhis, P. (2007) "Gendered Pathways: Exploring Women's Unique Paths to Crime"

What is Gender Responsiveness?

- To be gender responsive means to demonstrate adherence to the guiding principles of a gender responsive program. Such principles include:
 - ✓ gender
 - ✓ environment
 - ✓ relationships
 - ✓ service & supervision
 - ✓ socioeconomic status
 - ✓ community



Bloom, Owen & Covington, 2003

Methodology

- Secondary data generated from the Corrections Information System (CORIS) database of the Maine Department of Corrections (MDOC) for the purposes of a National Institute of Corrections sponsored research project
- Contained basic demographic information (e.g. gender, age, race/ethnicity, etc.), sentencing, risk, recidivism, and case plan data

Methodology-continued

- For this study all 2,092 females from across the three cohorts were selected
- A new variable created to sort women by location (i.e. straight probation, county jail, state prison)
- Data was examined in such a manner that the women in the sample could not be readily identified

Data Analysis Levels

1. Univariate Analysis

- *Demographic features (frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviation)*

2. Bivariate Analysis

- *Factors that correlate with recidivism (crosstabulation, descriptive statistics)*

3. Multivariate Analysis

- *Actuarial risk domain scores, overall risk level & recidivism (binary logistic regression)*



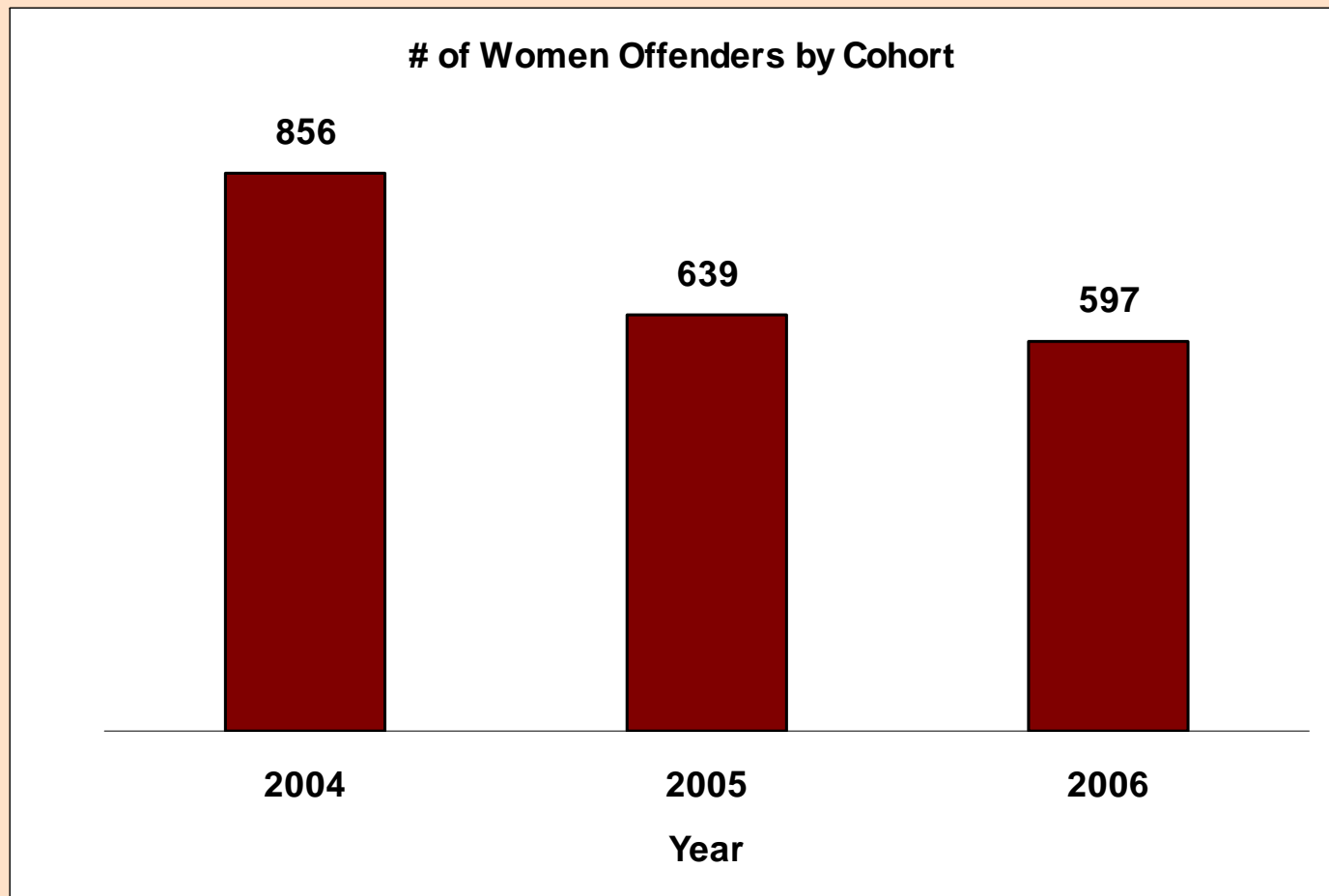
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Demographic Characteristics of Maine's Women Offenders

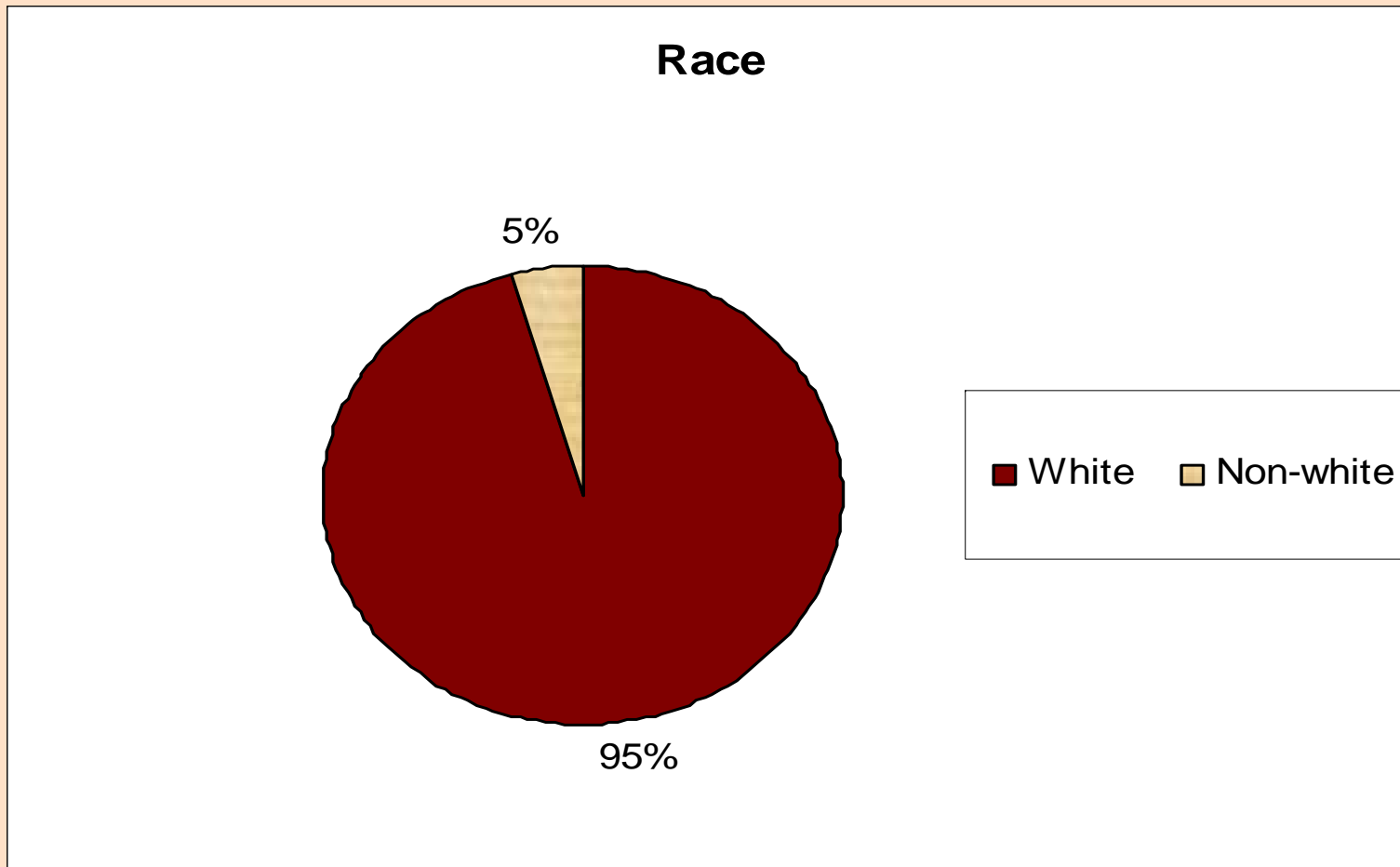


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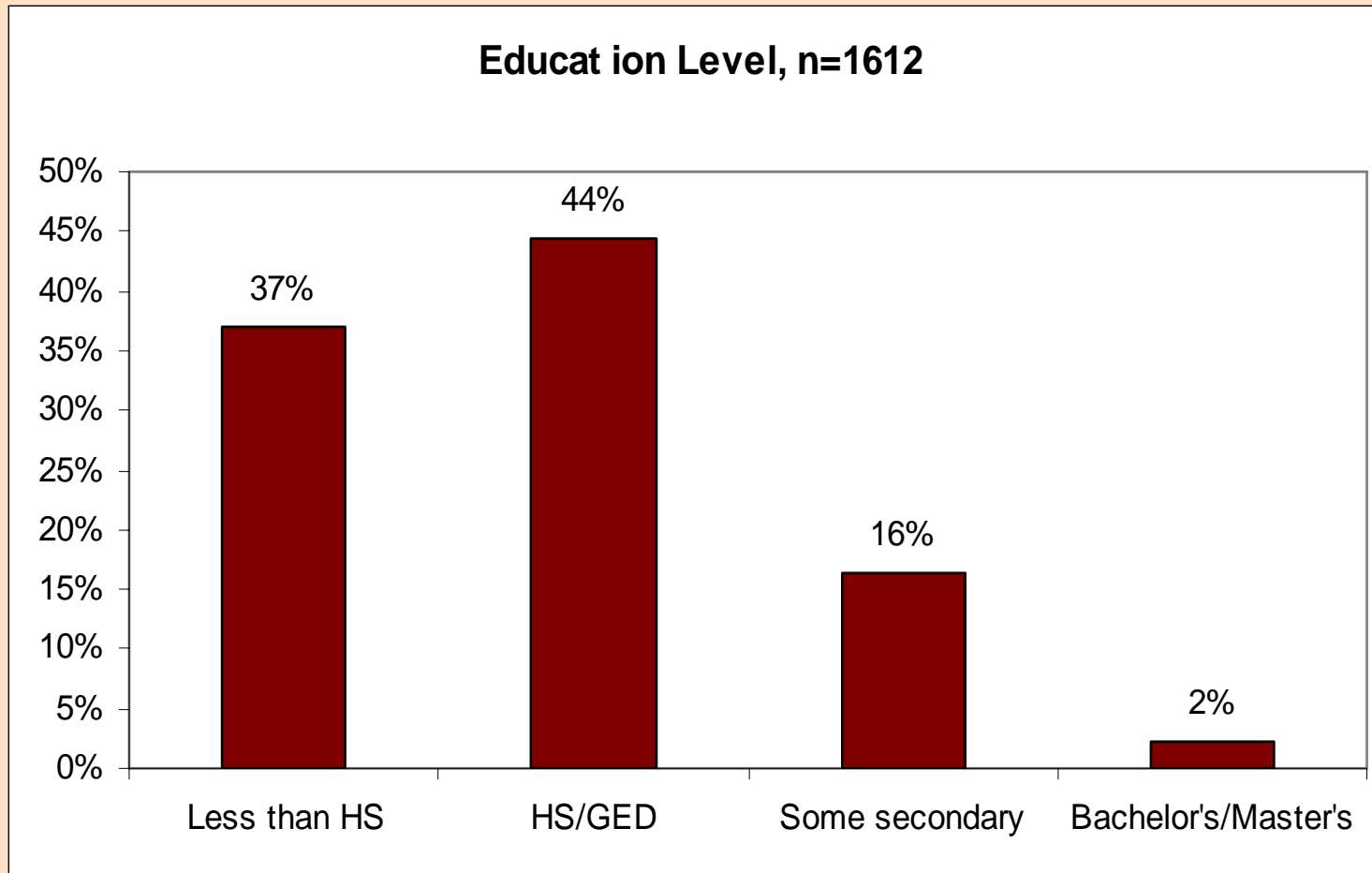
Women Offenders by Cohort-% of Overall Sample by Year (n=2092)



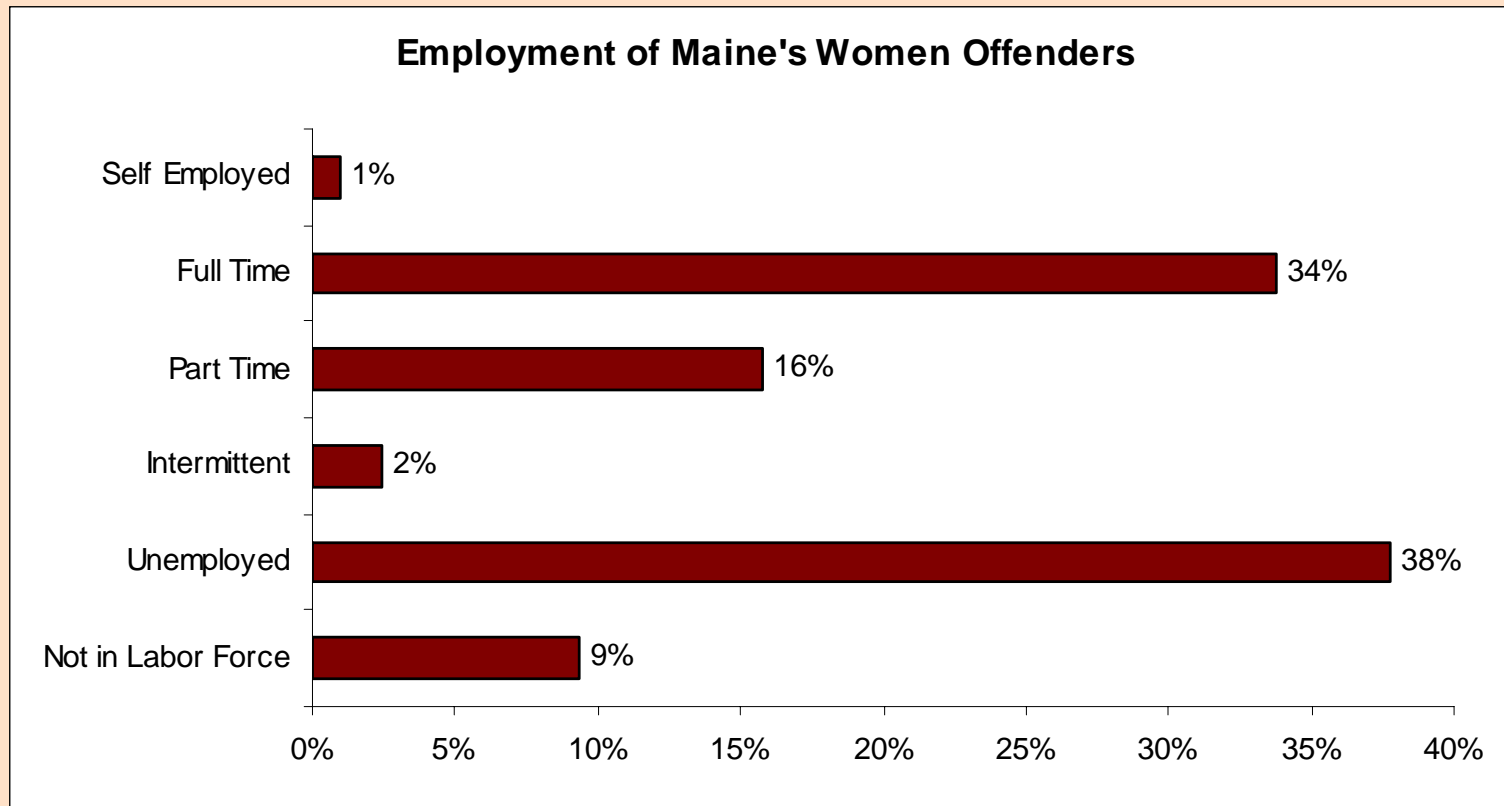
Race of Maine's Women Offenders (n=2051)



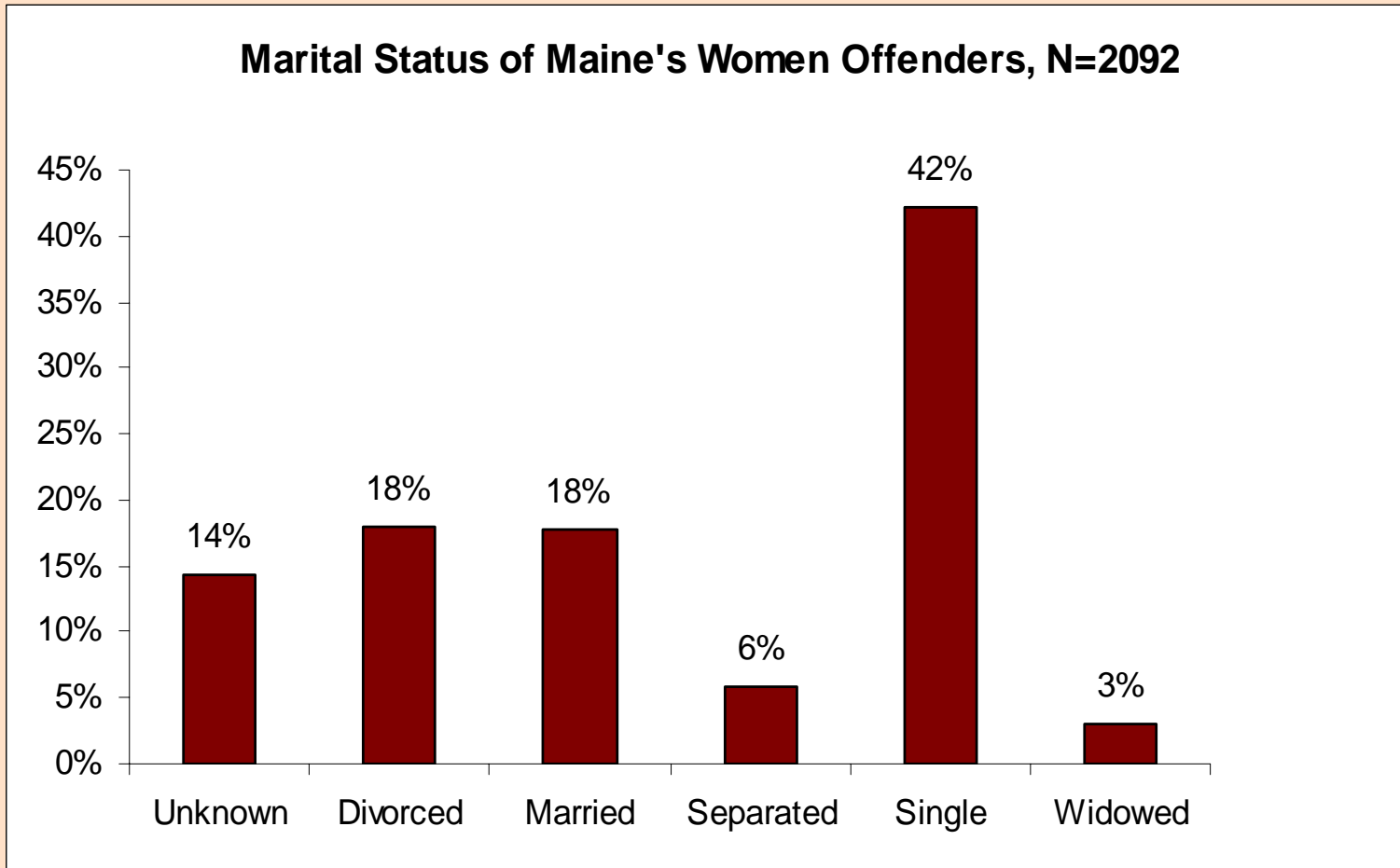
Education Level of Maine's Women Offenders (n=1612)



Employment of Maine's Women Offenders (n=1490)



Marital Status of Maine's Women Offenders (n=2092)



Criminal History of Maine's Women Offenders



Age at First Arrest

- Mean, 24 years old
- N=2,087
- Minimum, 10 years old
- Maximum, 72 years old

Number of Prior Convictions

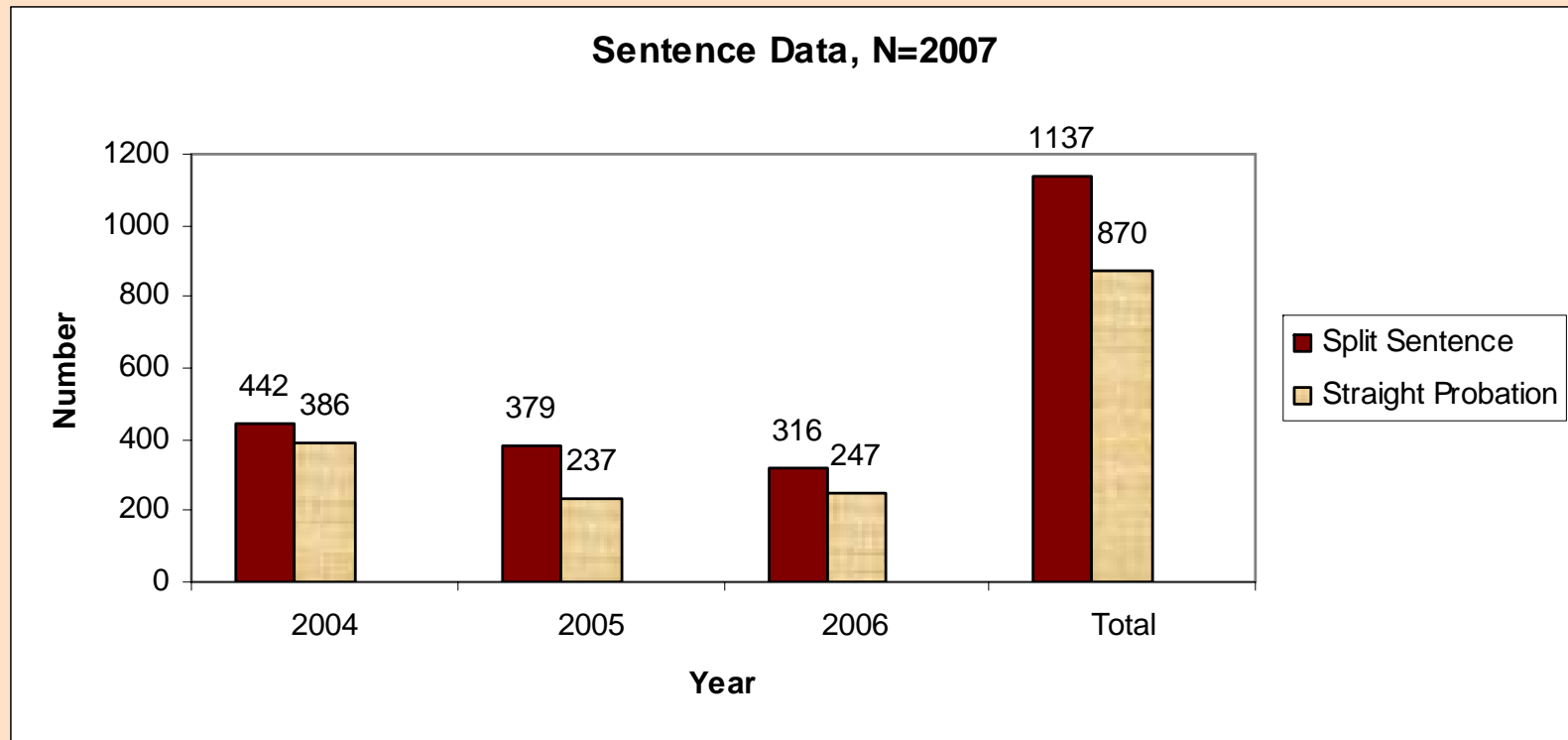
- Mean, 3.18
- N=1,902
- Minimum, 0 priors
- Maximum, 60 priors

Linkages with Juvenile Justice

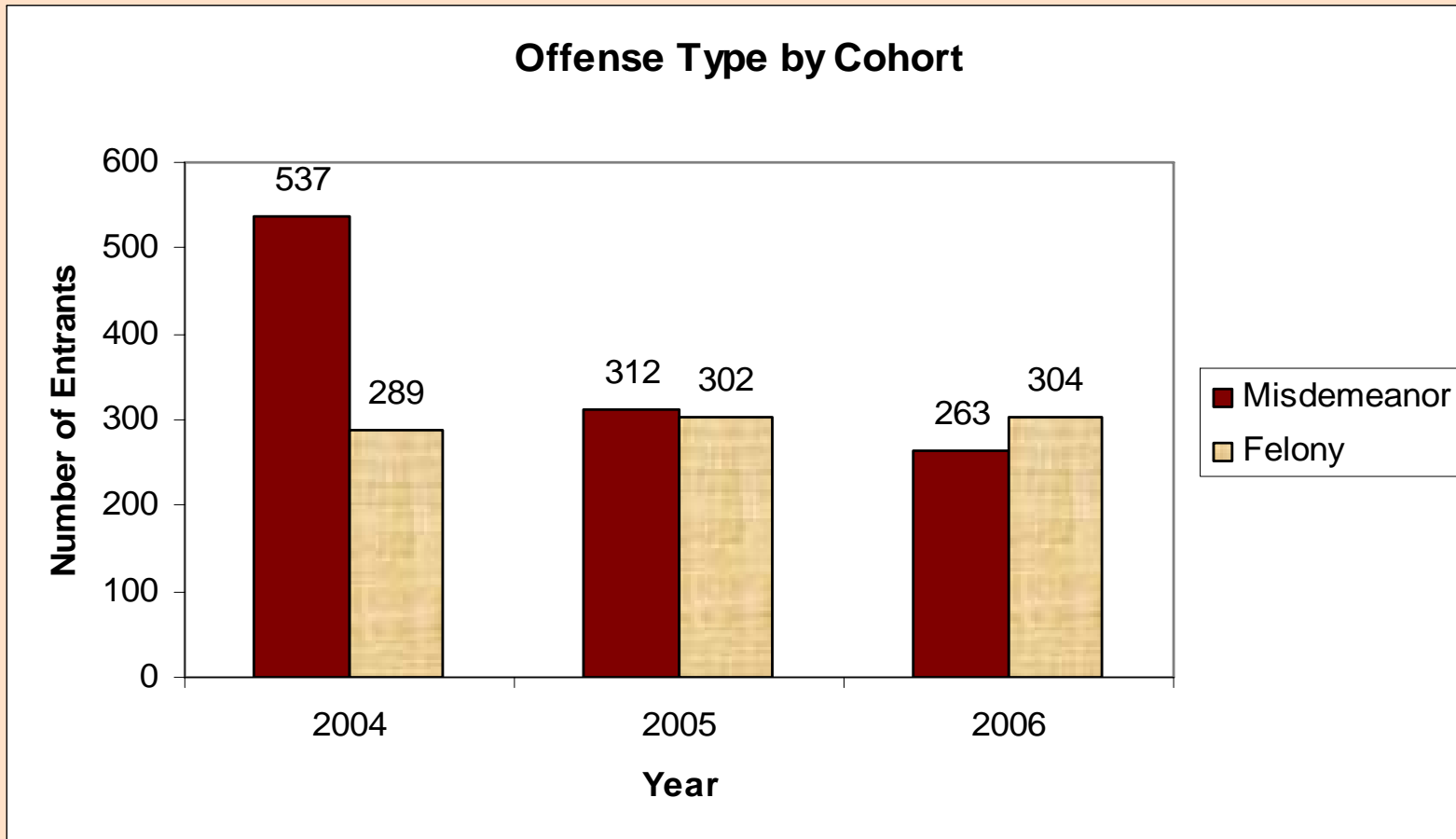
- **26.7%** of the sample were younger than 18 at the age of first arrest, indicating that slightly over a quarter of Maine's women offenders have had previous involvement with the juvenile justice system



Women's Sentencing

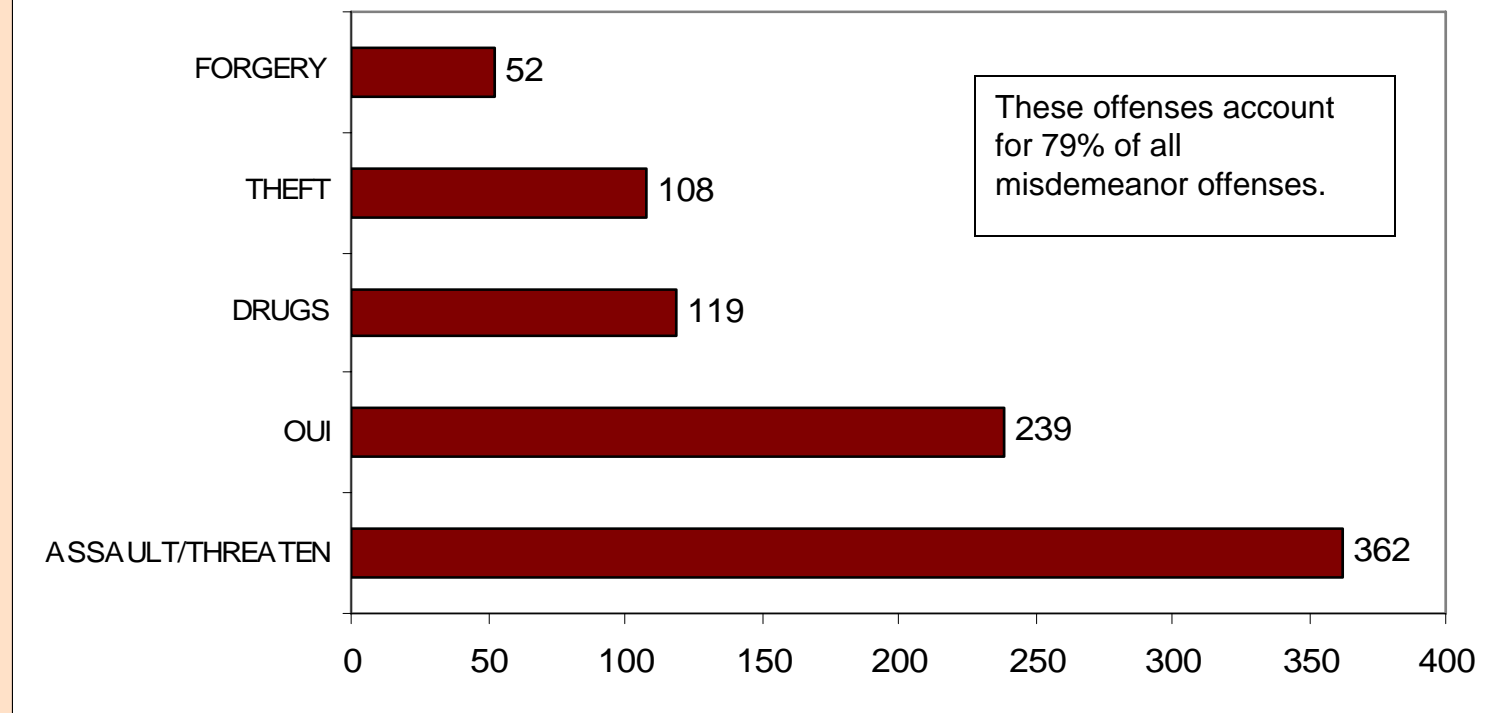


Misdemeanor & Felony Offenses



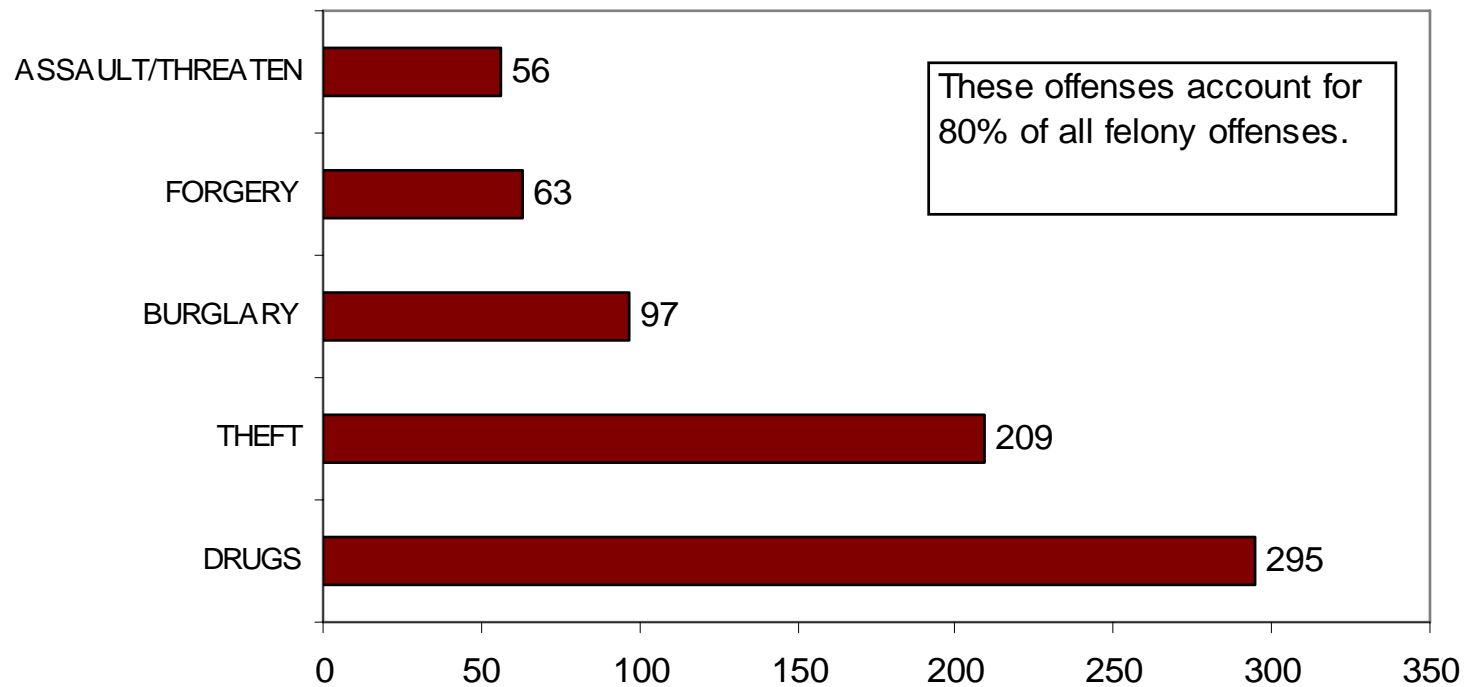
Most Prevalent Offense Types

Top 5 Misdemeanor Offenses for all 3 Cohorts (n=880)

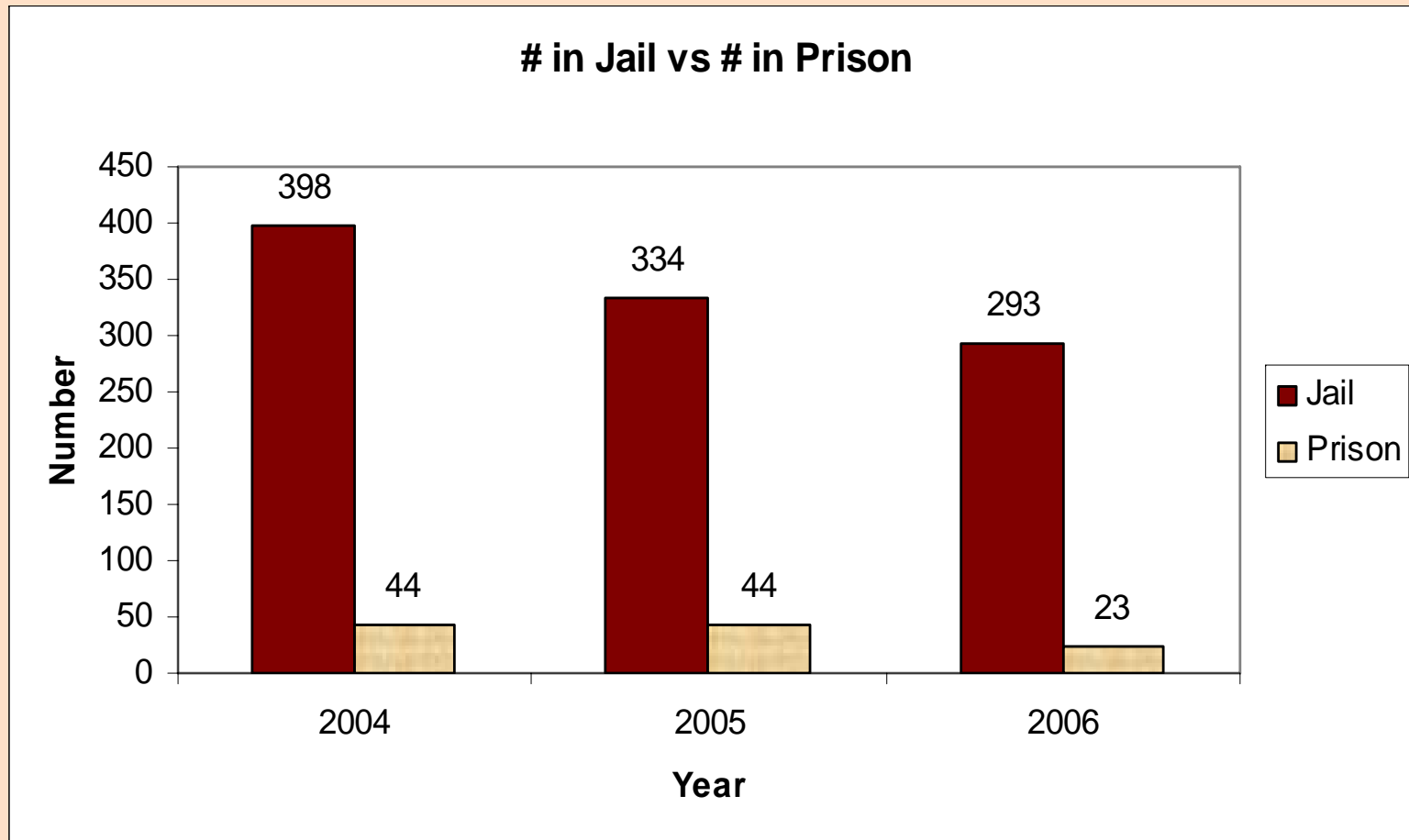


Most Prevalent Offense Types

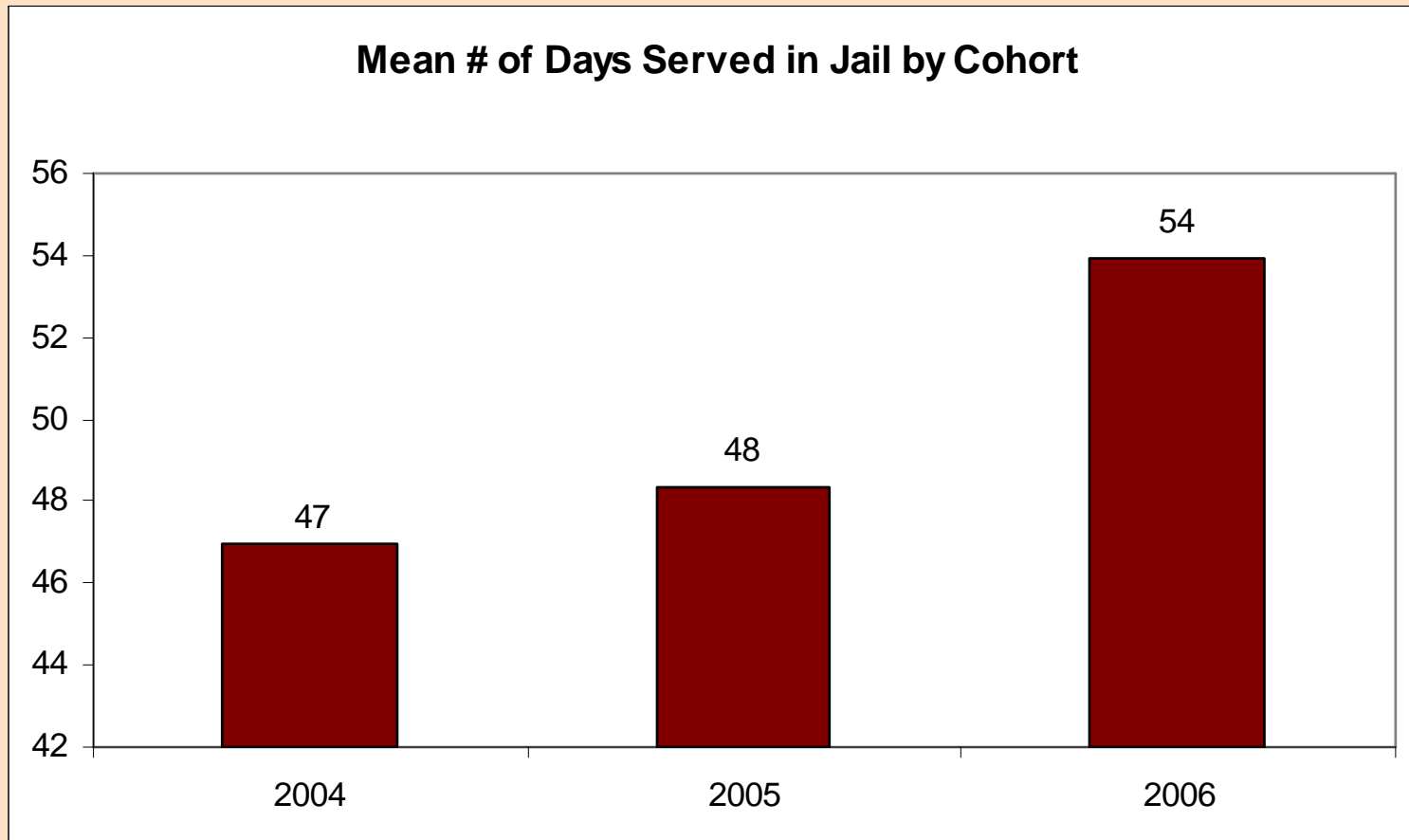
Top 5 Felony Offenses for all 3 Cohorts (n=720)



Incarcerated Women by Location



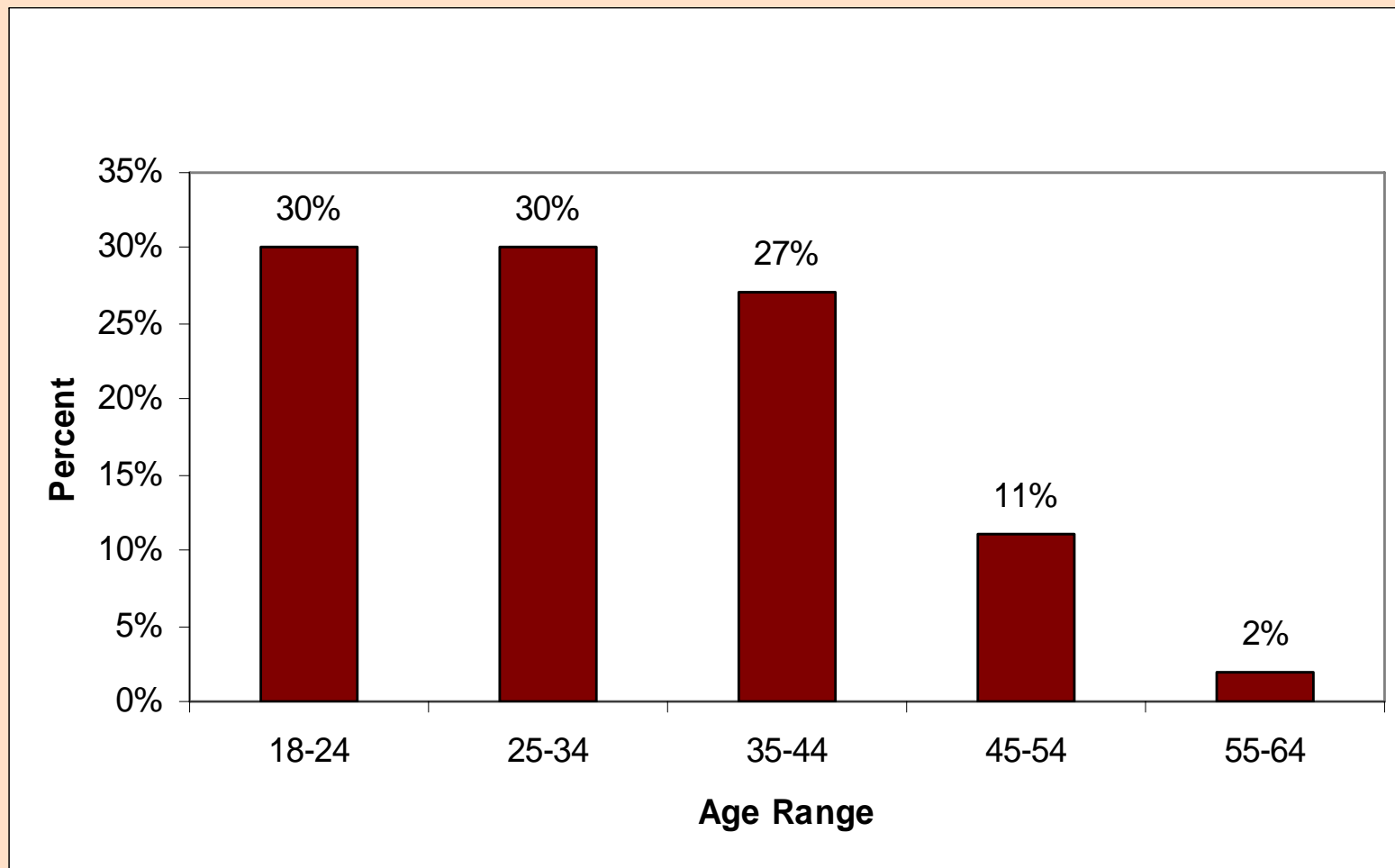
Average Time Served in Jail



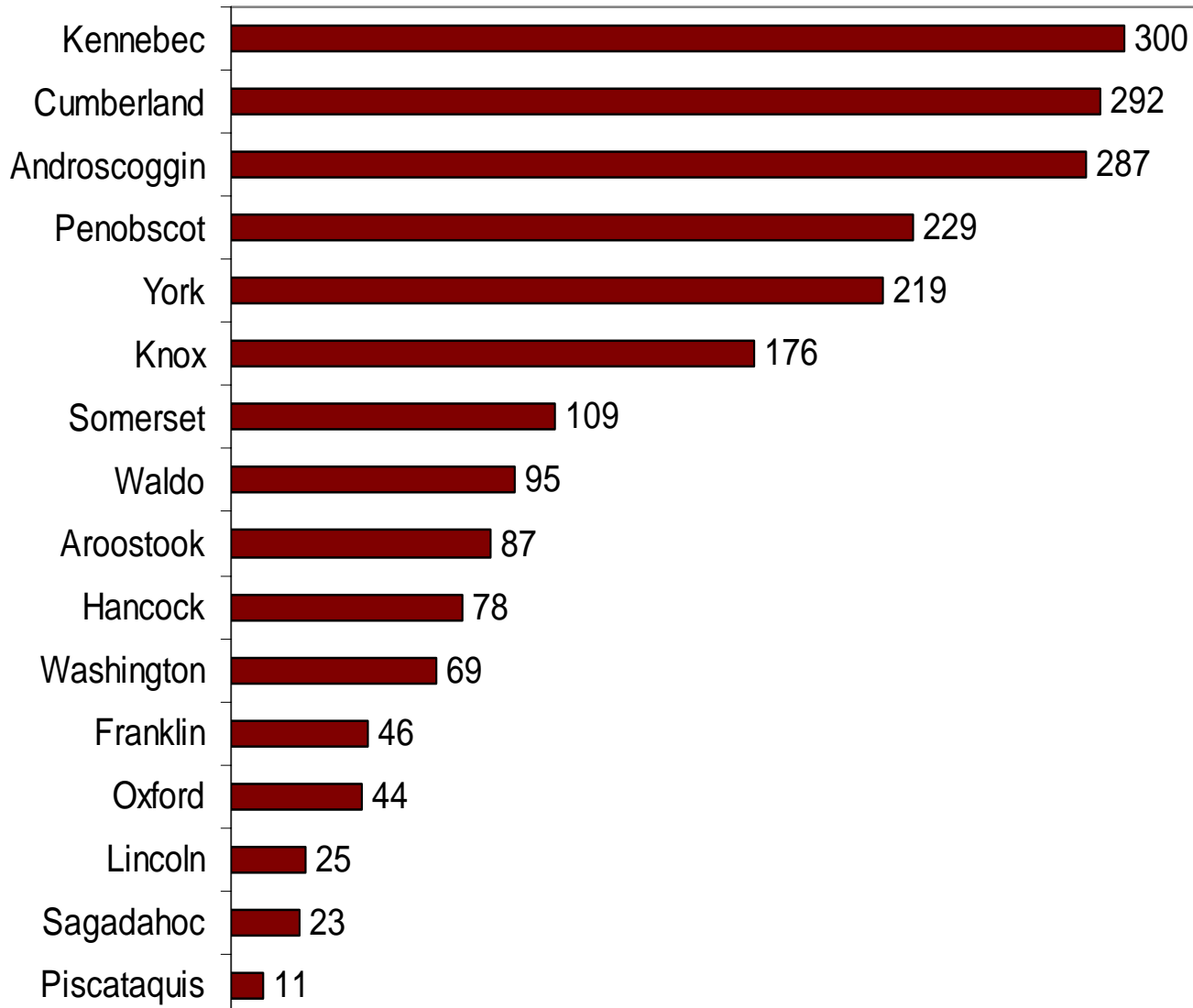
Average Time Served in Prison



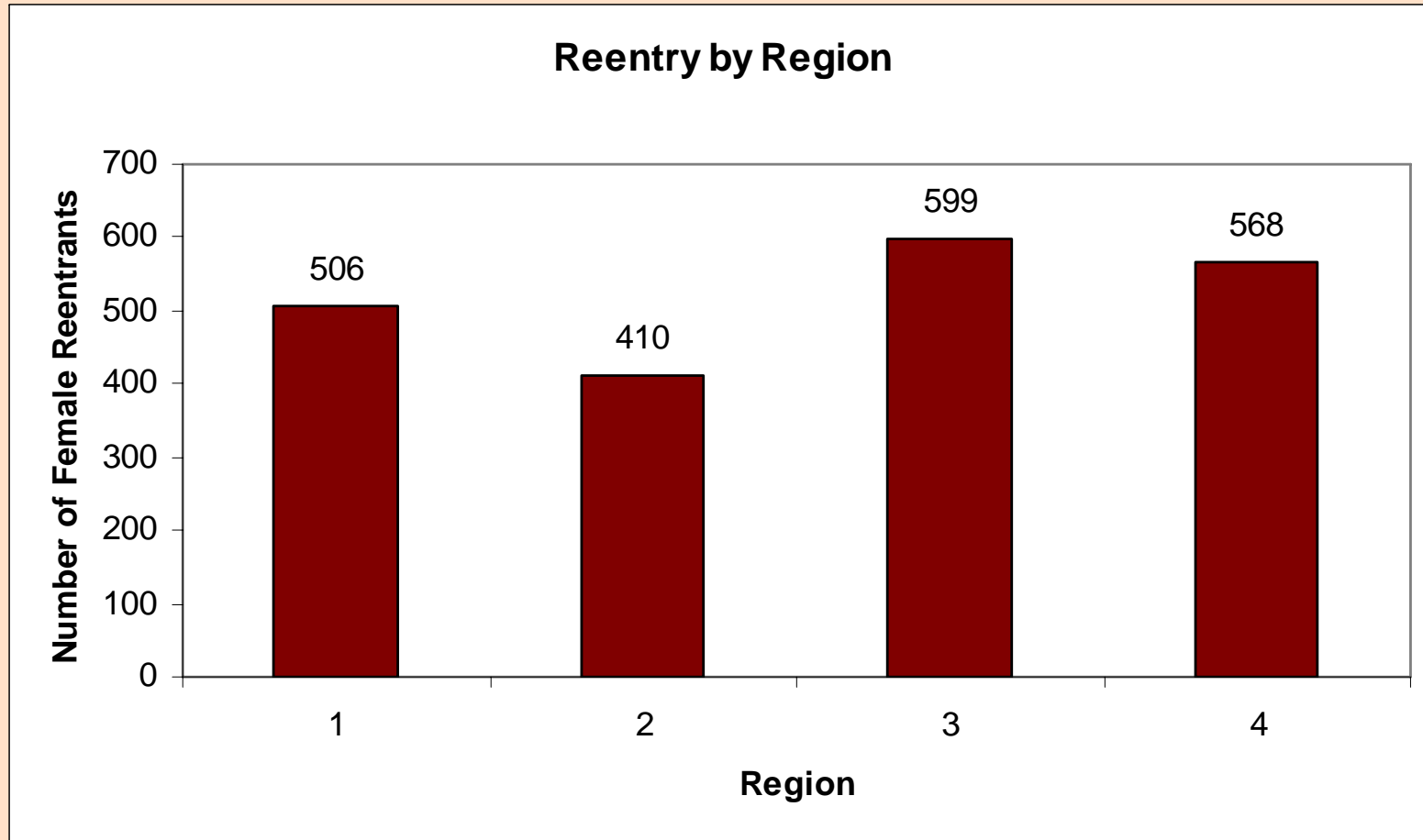
Age at Community Reentry (n=2,087)



Reentry by County (n=2,092)



Reentry by MDOC Region (n=2,092)





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Recidivism Rates of Maine's Women Offenders

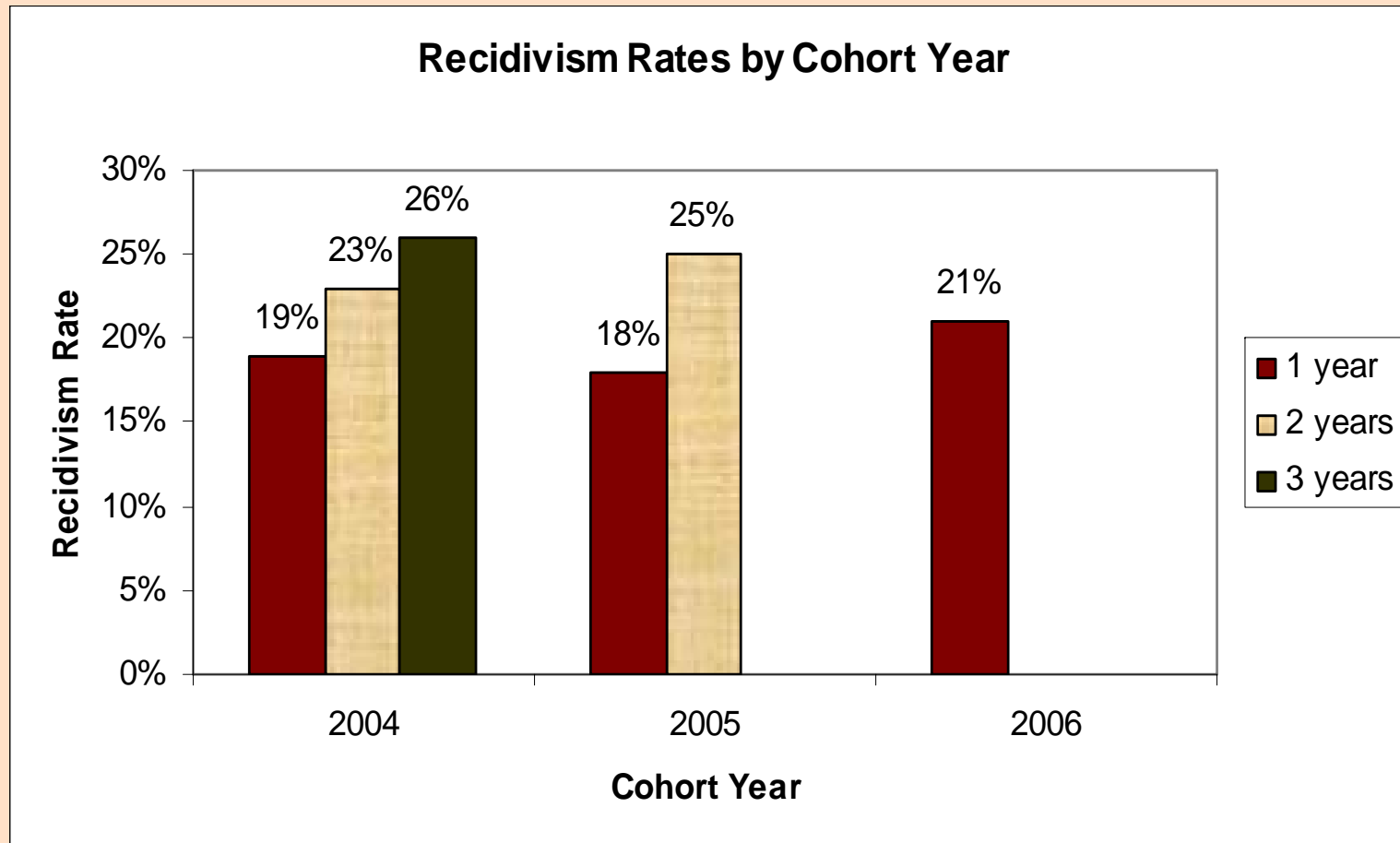


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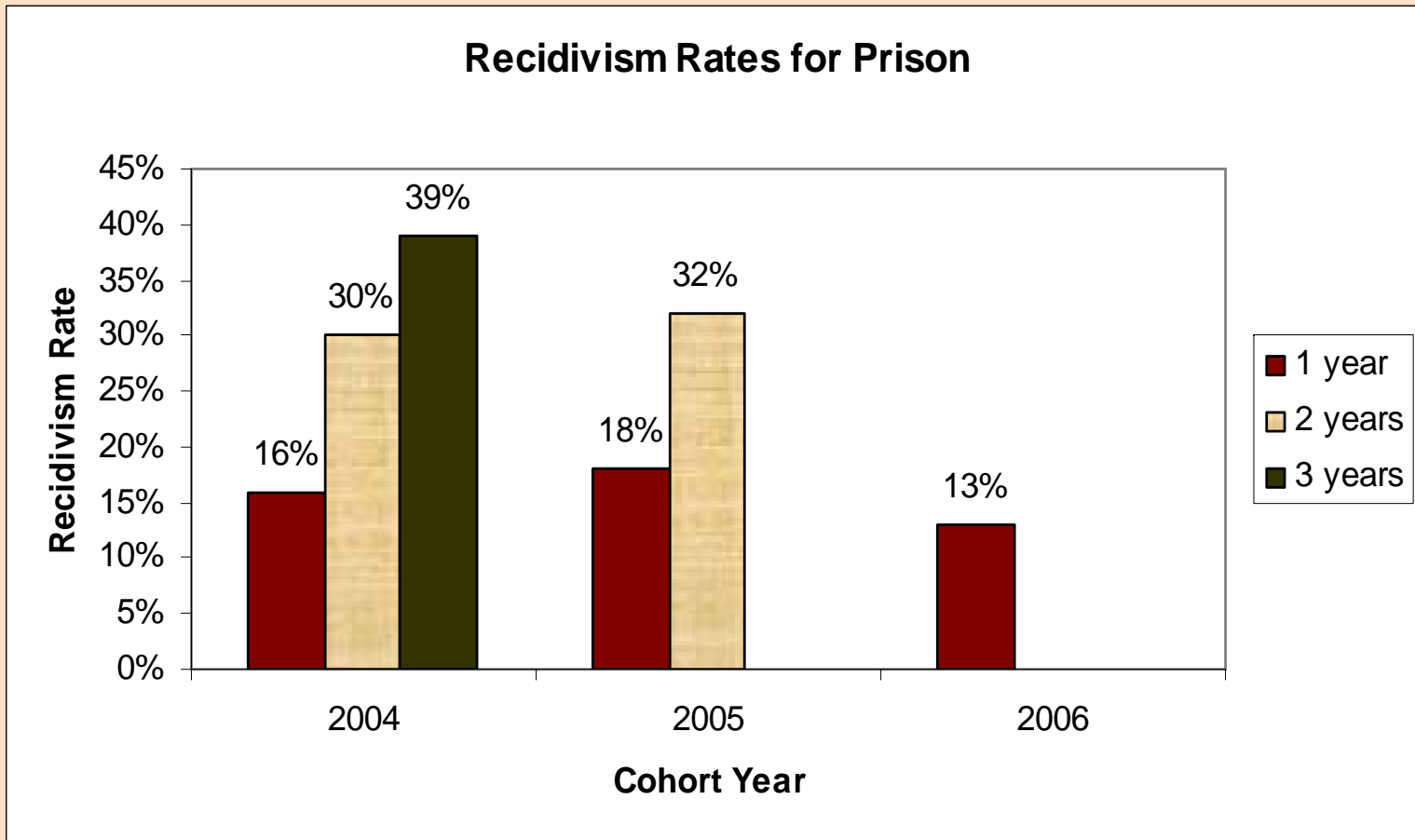
Measurement of Recidivism

- Recidivism provides a measure to evaluate correctional program effectiveness
- Recidivism may also indicate other challenges to the process of reentry (e.g. limited resources, barriers to employment, 'collateral sanctions')
- Recidivism is defined as any new arrest for a new crime (misdemeanor or felony). This does not include technical violations.

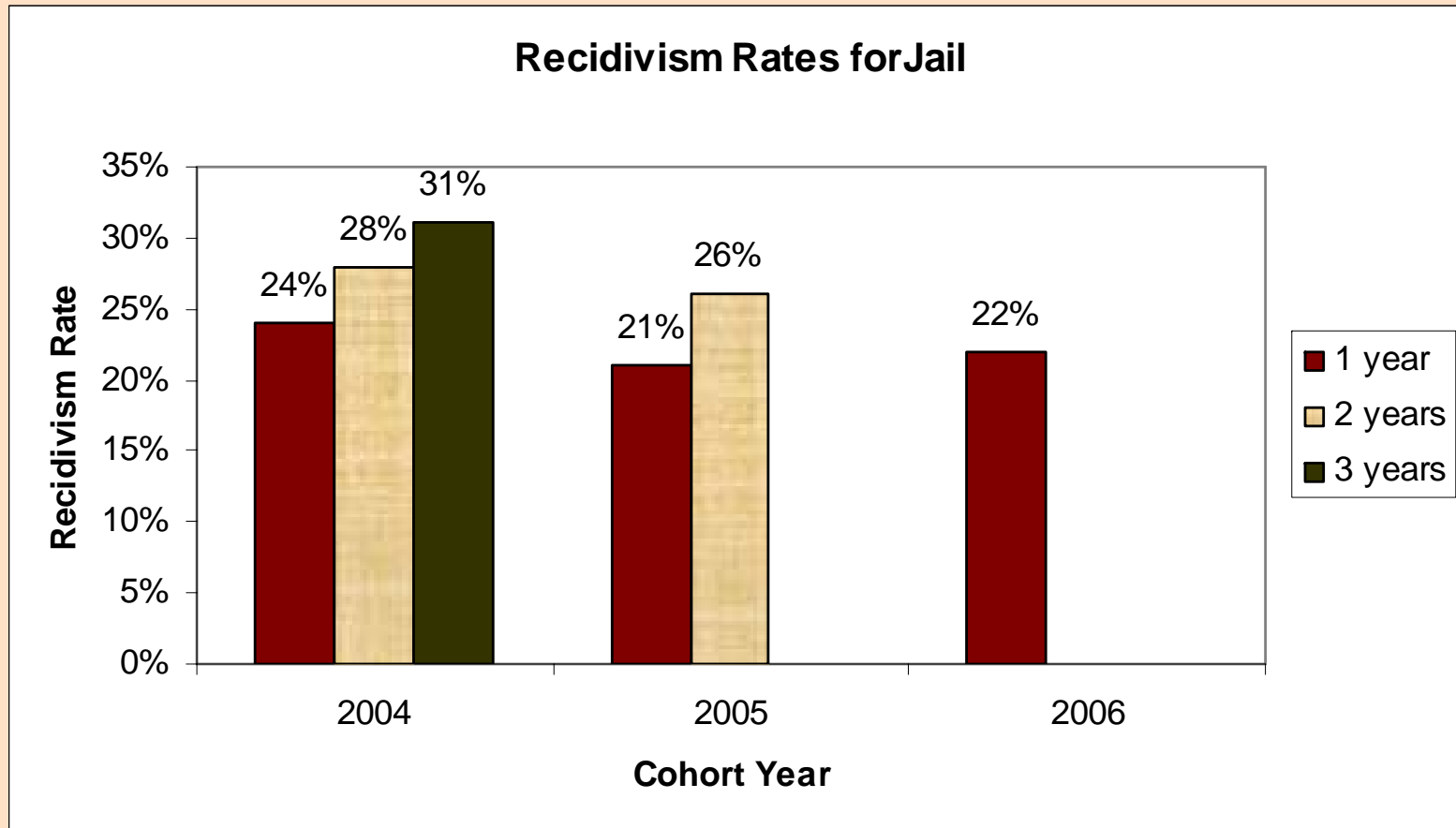
Women Offender Recidivism Rates



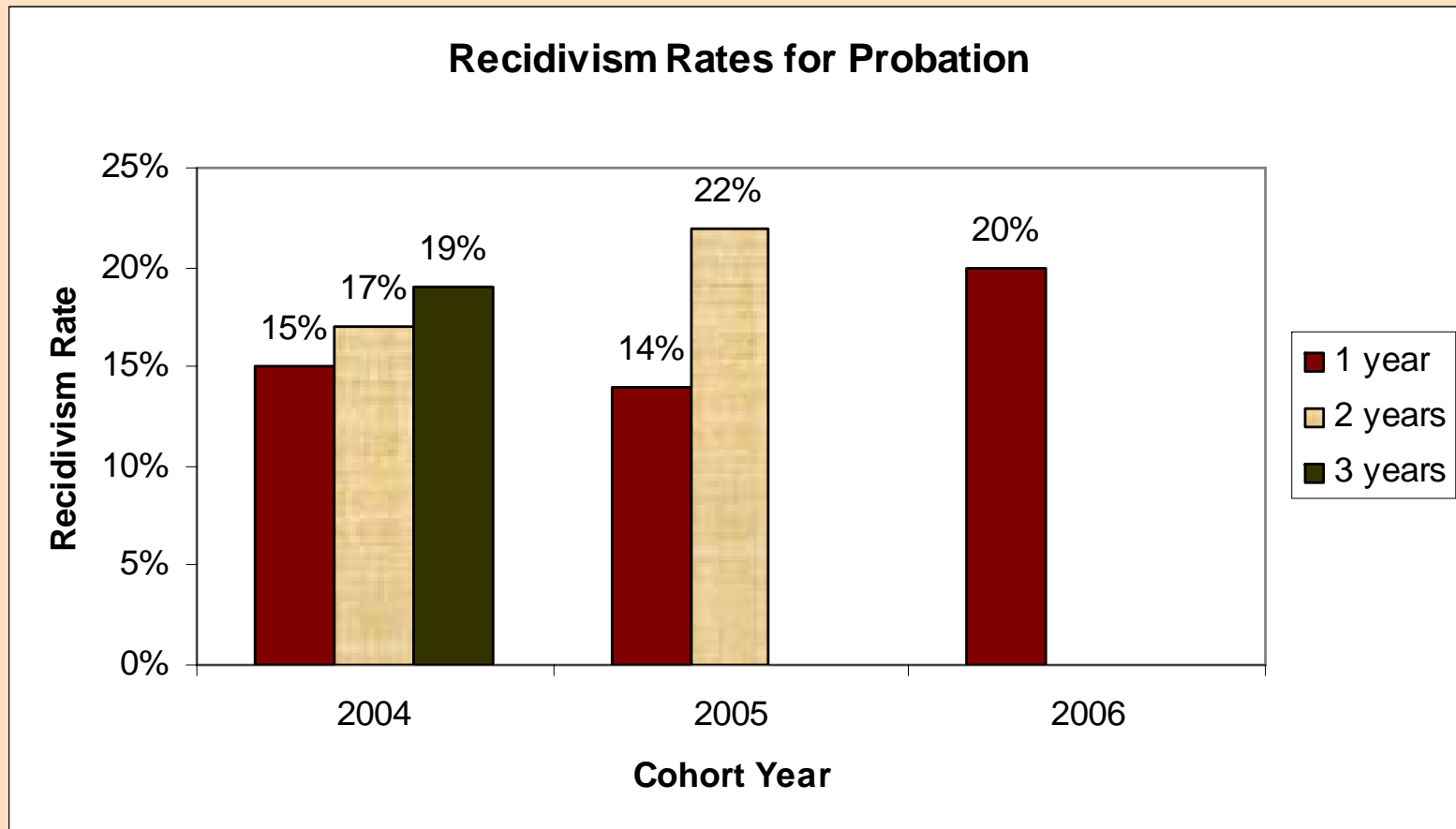
Women Offender Recidivism Rates



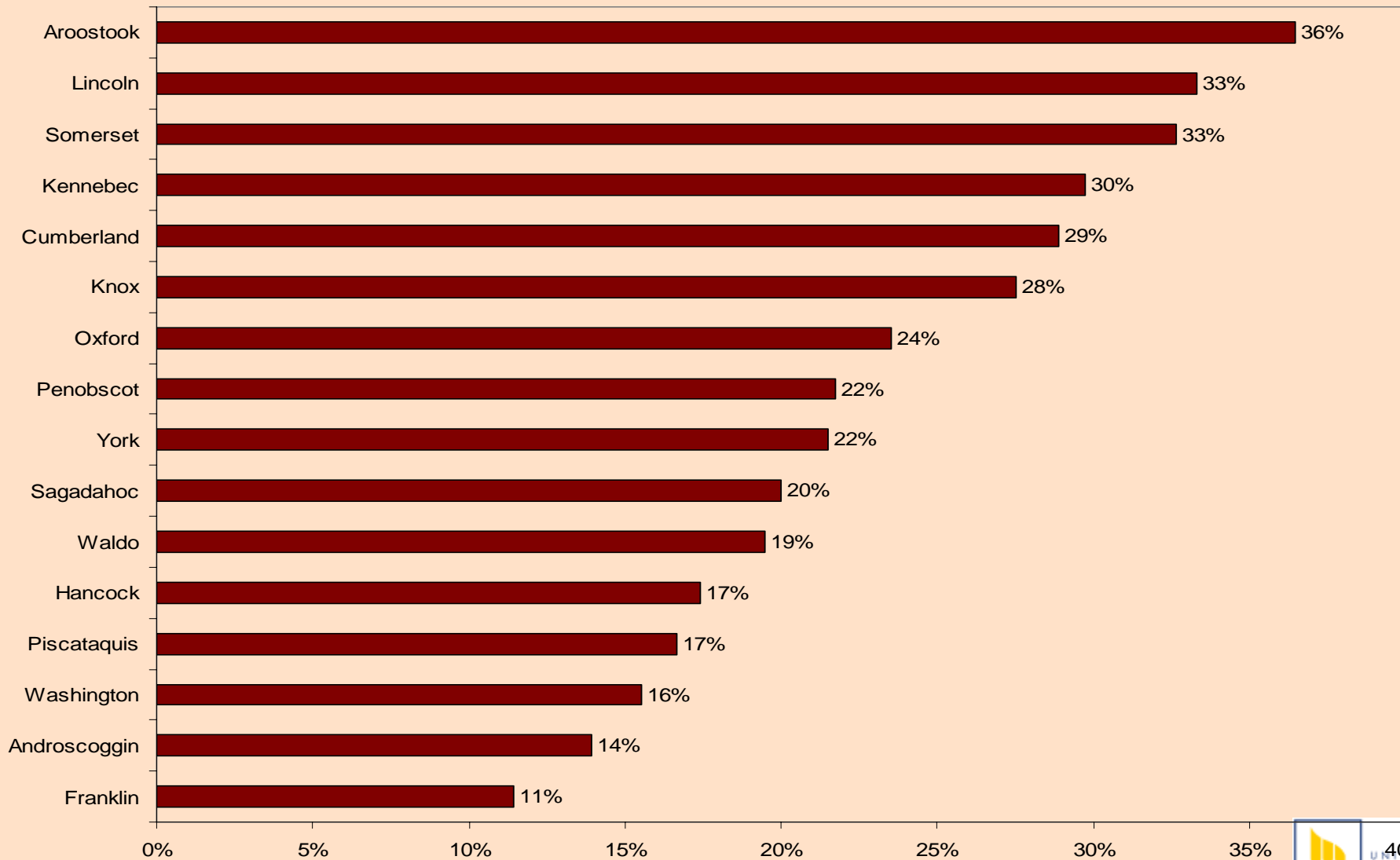
Women Offender Recidivism Rates



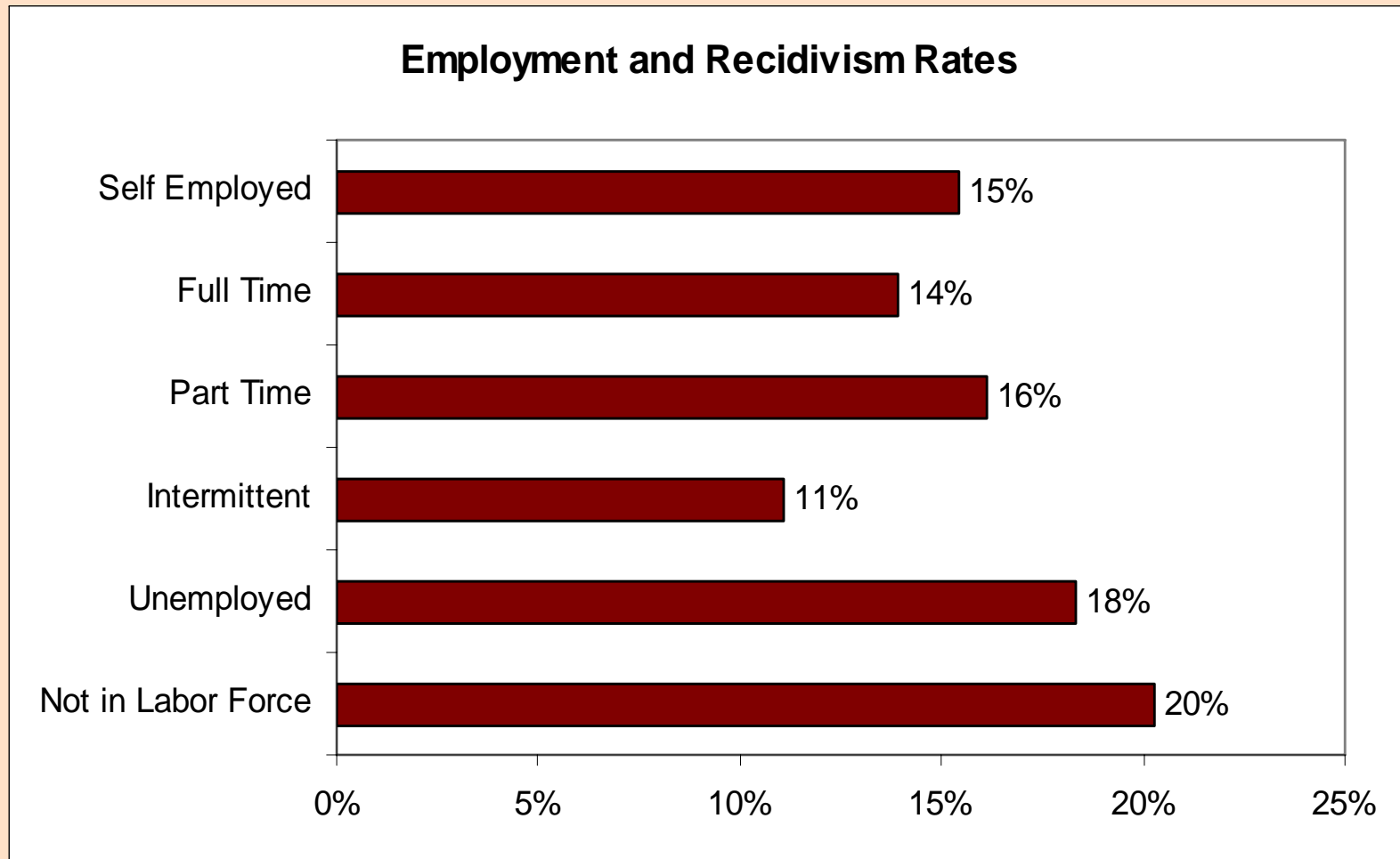
Women Offender Recidivism Rates



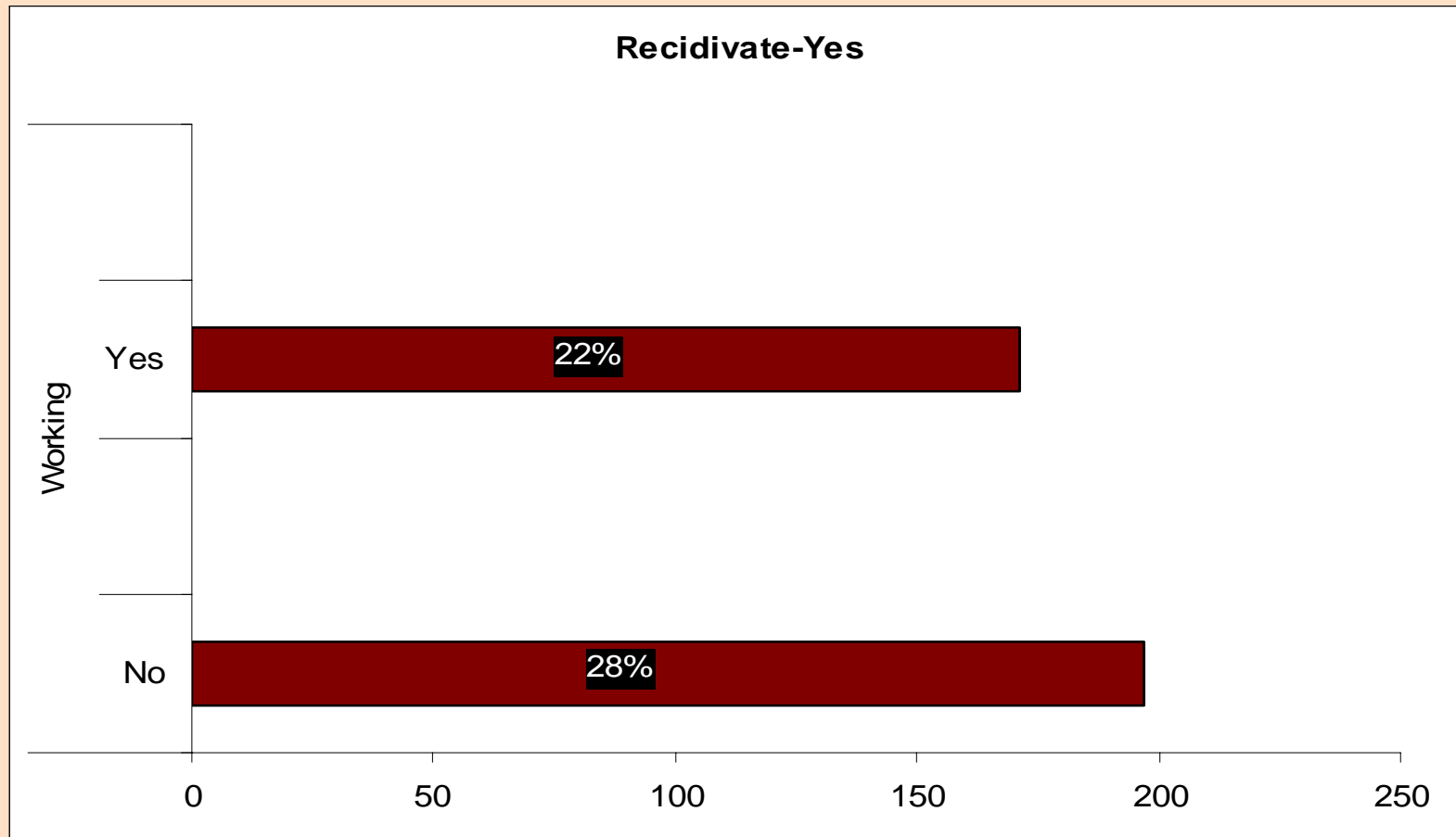
Recidivism Rates by County (n=1,708)



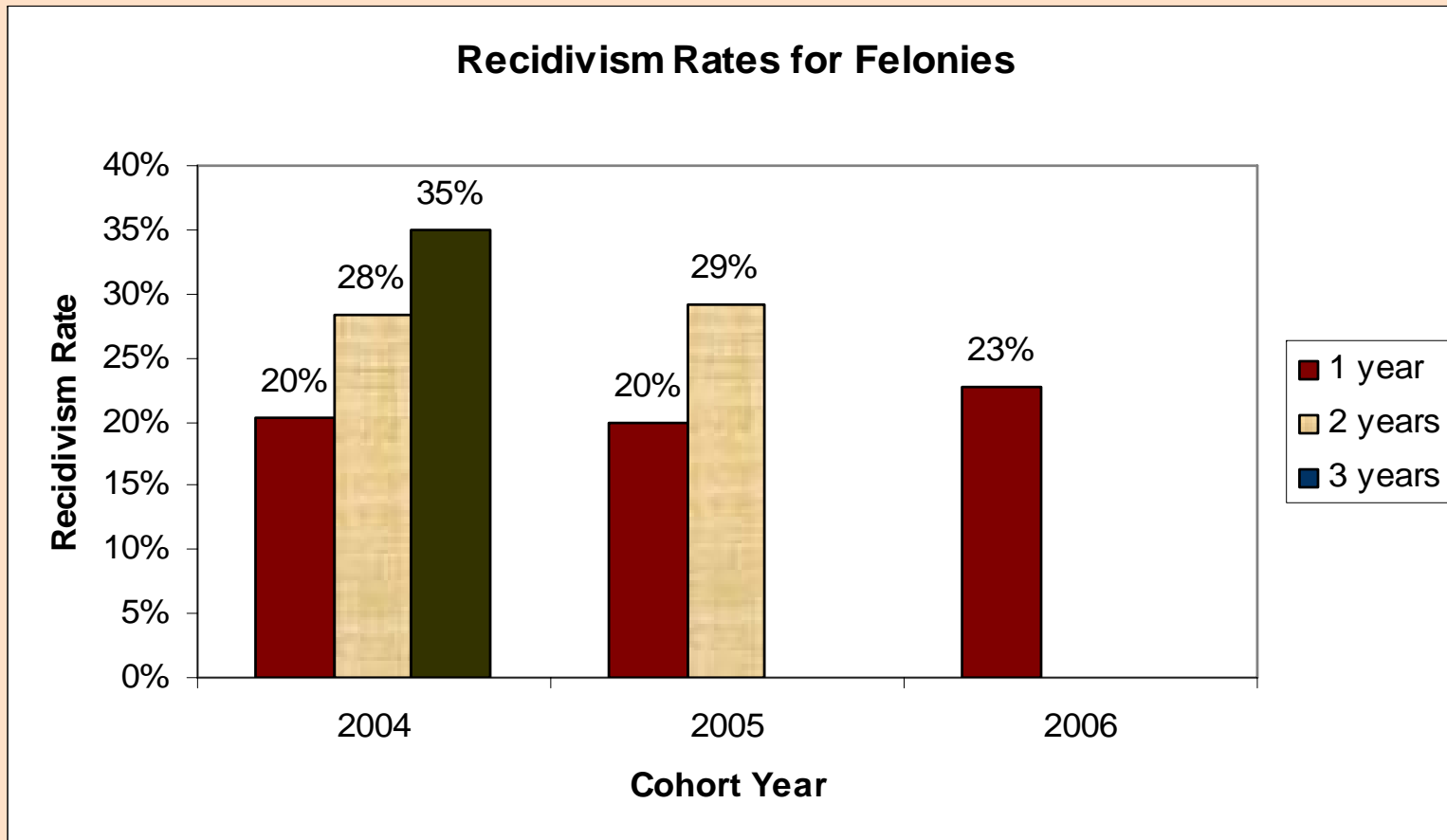
Recidivism & Employment (n= 1,490)



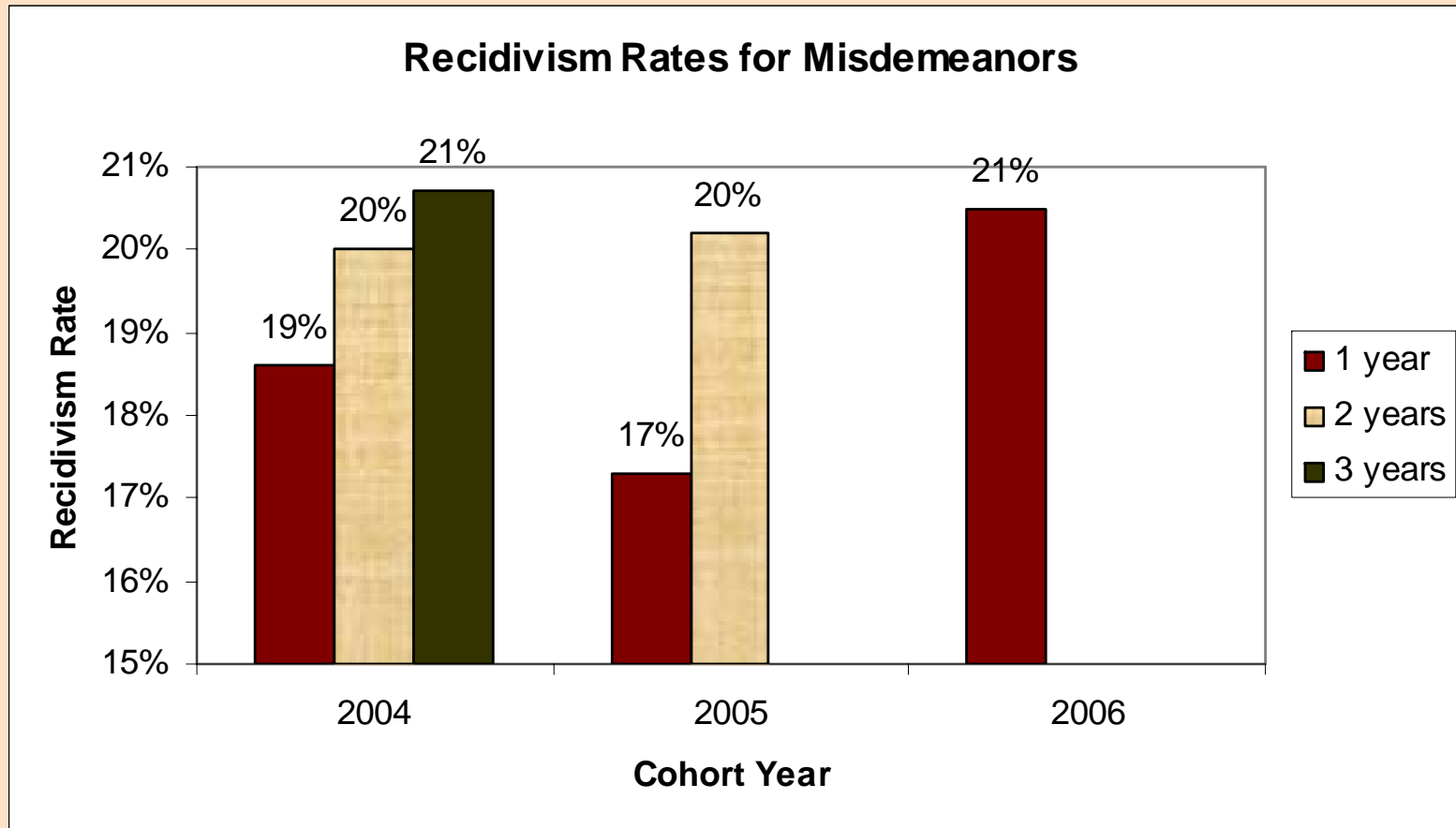
Recidivism & Employment (n=1490)



Recidivism Rate by Offense Type



Recidivism Rate by Offense Type



Actuarial Risk for Recidivism

- Formal methods for assessing risk are categorized as either actuarial or clinical.
- Actuarial methods base their predictability on reliably observed relationships between re-offending and factors centered on criminal thinking, attitudes, and behavior (called criminogenic needs).
- The Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R) is the actuarial assessment tool used by Maine Department of Corrections (and many other jurisdictions internationally) to determine appropriate contact levels and to drive the process of correctional case management.

Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R)

Risk is determined according to the following categories:

1. Administrative
2. Low
3. Moderate
4. High
5. Maximum

Measures within the following subscales are assessed to score the instrument:

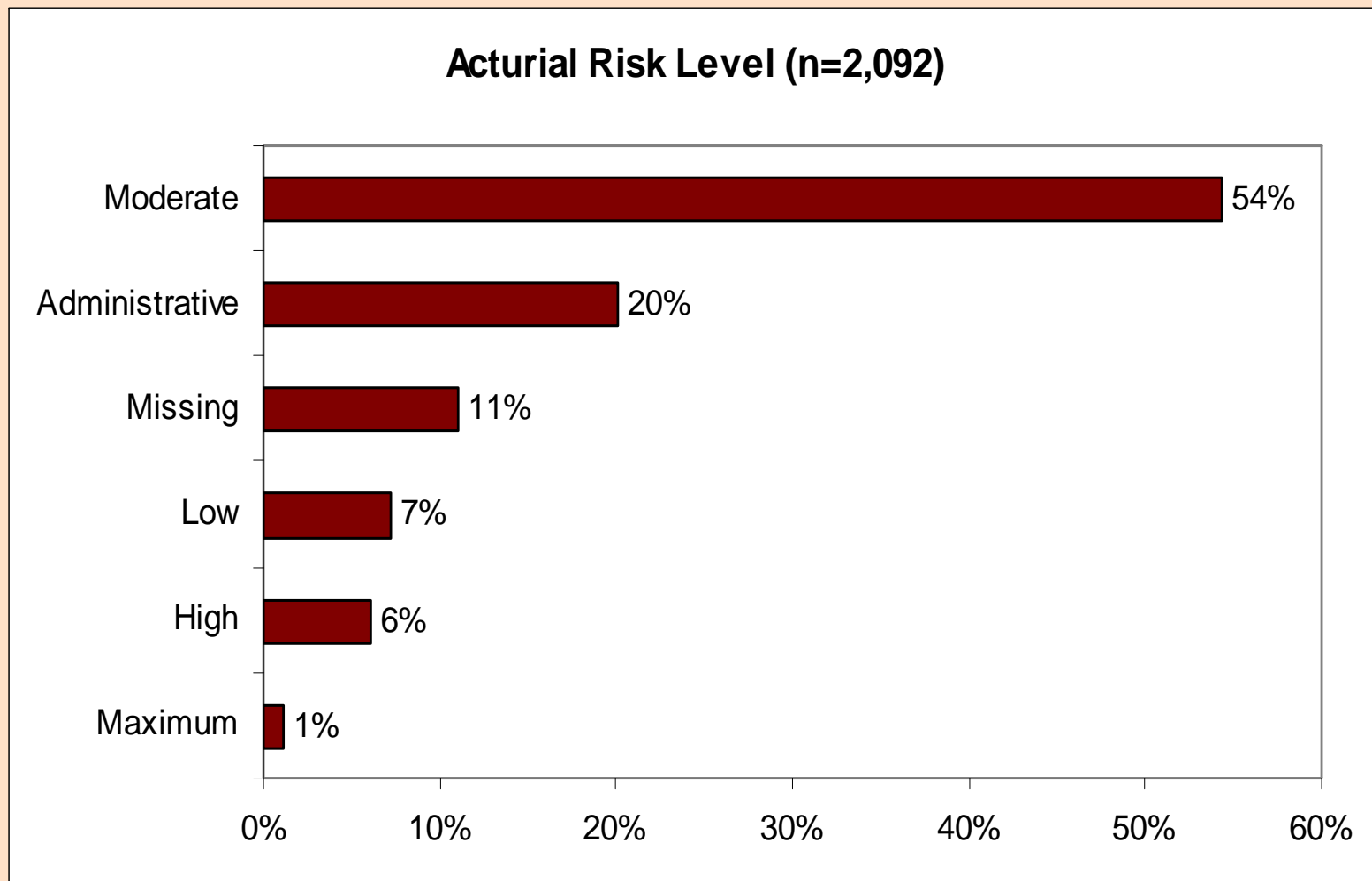
- Criminal History
- Financial
- Accommodations
- Companions
- Emotional/Personal
- Education/Employment
- Family/Marital
- Leisure/Recreation
- Alcohol/Drug
- Attitudes/Orientation

Feminist Critique of Current Risk Offending Tools

- Many 'gender-neutral' assessment processes over classify women's risk levels.
- Most classification systems have been designed to assess white males and don't adequately reflect diversity in gender, culture, etc.
- Because of this, most actuarial assessment tools disproportionately reflect male behavior & risk factors "that have only a tenuous relevance to female offenders".

Source: Kelley Blanchette, Ph.D, Integrating Evidence-based Practice and Gender-responsive Strategies for Women, 2007 presentation at 12th National Workshop on Adult and Juvenile Female Offenders, Baltimore, MD

Actuarial Risk Level



Predictive Factors by Risk Level

<i>Risk Level</i>	<i>LSI Subscale</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>R²</i>
<i>Administrative</i>	<i>Leisure/ Recreation*</i>	27 3	.051
<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Criminal History**</i> , <i>Financial**</i> <i>Alcohol & Drug**</i>	81 8	.047
<i>High</i>	<i>Companions*</i> <i>Family/Marital*</i>	10 9	.133
<i>*Maximum and low are too small in sample size to analyze, not enough iterations to make determinations</i>			
<i>* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$</i>			

Key Findings-Discussion

- Average # of days served for Maine women has increased in both jail and prison settings, which indicates need for analysis of statewide sentencing policy.
- At the county level, Aroostook, Kennebec, Lincoln and Sagadahoc have the highest recidivism rates (all at or above 30%).
- Franklin, Androscoggin, Washington, Piscataquis and Hancock counties have the lowest recidivism rates (all at or below 17%).

Key Findings-Discussion

- The one year recidivism rate for women in prison is suggestive that the gender responsive Women's Center may have a role in mediating factors that may have otherwise led these higher risk women to recidivate at a higher rate (as the data tells us that the women in prison are at higher risk to recidivate than those in county jail or on probation).
- Maine's women offenders, when analyzed according to risk level, are quite diverse. Different levels of risk predict different criminogenic needs that correlate with recidivism. Therefore, services should be targeted to dynamic needs accordingly.

Conclusion

For more information about the study:

Erica Hansen King

eking@usm.maine.edu

207.228.8318