INCARCERATED ADULT WOMEN IN WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON STATE MINORITY AND JUSTICE COMMISSION SYMPOSIUM

Tatiana Masters, PhD, MSW

GROWING NUMBERS OF WASHINGTON WOMEN ARE INCARCERATED

Image from Reuters / Ueslei Marcelino)

INFORMATION FOCUSED ON WOMEN WAS NOT AVAILABLE

PROJECT GOALS

Describe women incarcerated in Washington State.

Examine whether women of color are over-represented in the incarcerated population.

Begin to address the absence of information focused on incarcerated women using existing data.

RESEARCH TEAM

Jennifer Bright, Freedom Education Project Puget Sound

Elizabeth Hendren, JD, Northwest Justice Project

Miranda Johnson, intern, Seattle Central College

Dr. Tatiana Masters, independent research consultant

Dr. William Vesneski, JD, University of Washington School of Social Work

GENDER AND JUSTICE COMMISSION

GENDER EQUALITY IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How many women, from what race-ethnicities, were convicted and sentenced in each offense category?

2. How many women, from what race-ethnicities, were convicted and sentenced in each of the four largest counties, and in two areas of special interest?

3. Were women of color convicted and sentenced disproportionally within each offense category?

4. Were women of color convicted and sentenced disproportionally within the counties examined?

CRITICAL TAKE-AWAYS

- A total of 4,994 women were convicted and sentenced in 2019.

- Black and Indigenous women were significantly over-represented in sentenced populations compared to Census data.

- Statistically significant racial disproportionality existed in all 6 offense categories…

- … and in five out of six geographic areas examined.

THE DATA

- Caseload Forecast Council (CFC) data:
  Felony judgement and sentence forms submitted to CFC by counties for fiscal years 2000, 2010, and 2019

- US Census data used for disproportionality analyses

- Differences between these data sets detailed in our report, but in brief

  - Could not analyze disproportionality as it affected Latinas due to different categorization methods

  - "Asian American" category may obscure differences for Pacific Islanders

  - Report includes recommendations to improve future data collection and enable better disproportionality analyses

QUESTION 1

HOW MANY WOMEN, AND FROM WHAT RACE/ETHNICITIES, WERE SENTENCED IN EACH OFFENSE CATEGORY?

WOMEN SENTENCED TO FELONIES IN 2019

4,994 WOMEN WERE SENTENCED IN 2019
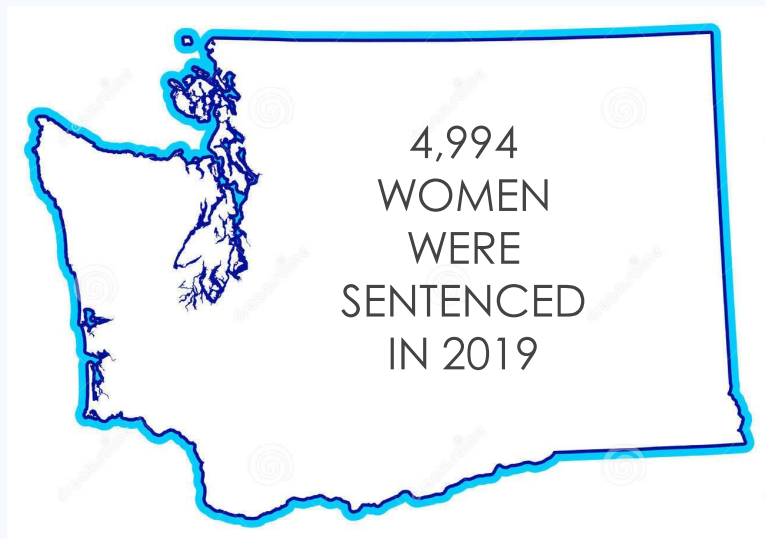
Race/ethnicities of women sentenced in 2019

5% Latina

3% Asian American

8% Black

4% Indigenous

80% white
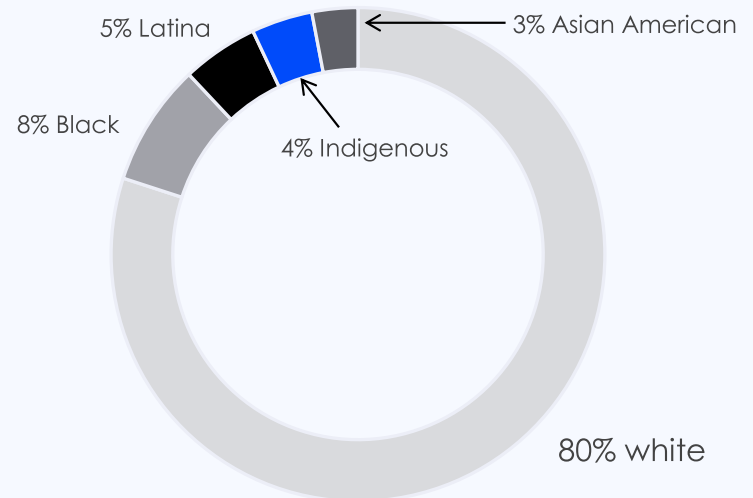
WOMEN SENTENCED TO FELONIES IN 2019

OFFENSE CATEGORIES

Represent the highest-level offense for which each individual was convicted

Type of Offense	Number of women sentenced
Drug	1,680
Property	1,575
Fraud	714
Public Order	520
Violent	468
Sex	32

OFFENSE CATEGORIES BY RACE/ETHNICITY (2019)

RACIAL DISTRIBUTION OF FELONY-SENTENCED WOMEN

■ white ■ Black ■ Latina ■ Indigenous ■ Asian American

Offense Category	white	Black	Latina	Indigenous	Asian American
VIOLENT (N=468)	70%	14%	6%	6%	3%
PUBLIC ORDER (N=520)	76%	11%	4%	5%	4%
FRAUD (N=714)	81%	7%	5%	3%	4%
PROPERTY (N=1575)	78%	9%	5%	5%	3%
DRUG (N=1680)	85%	5%	4%	4%	2%
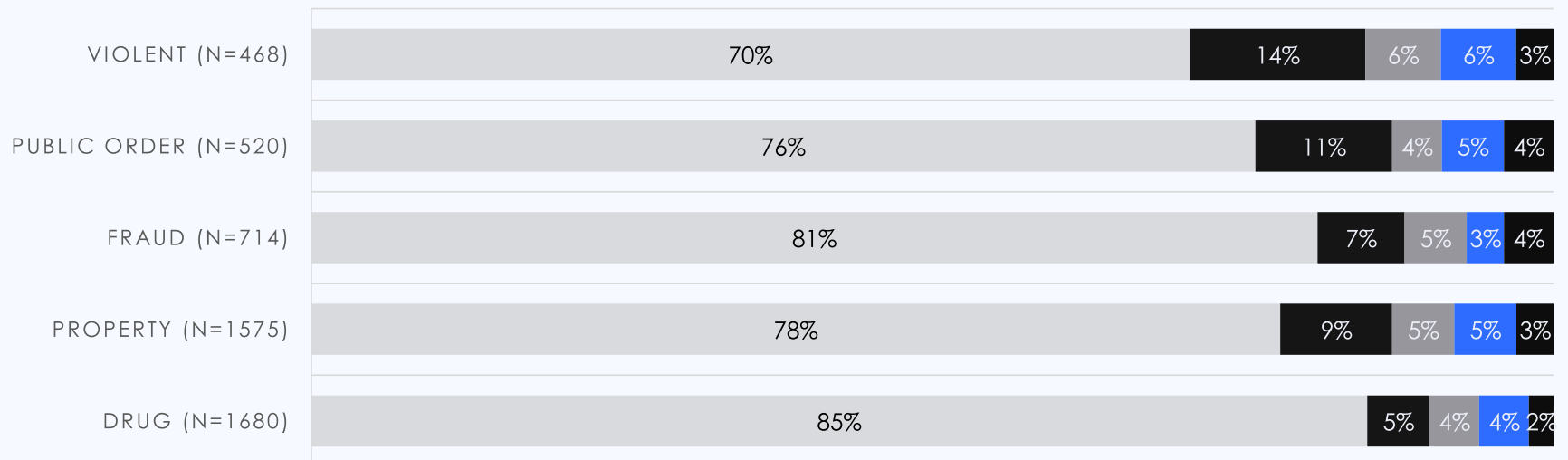
QUESTION 2

HOW MANY WOMEN, AND FROM WHAT RACE/ETHNICITIES, WERE SENTENCED IN THE GEOGRAPHIC AREAS OF FOCUS?

RACE/ETHNICITY OF SENTENCED WOMEN BY COUNTY (2019)

	King (n=385)	Pierce (n=573)	Snohomish (n=438)	Spokane (n=529)	Yakima (n=245)	Benton-Franklin (n=233)
white	57%	65%	88%	84%	55%	80%
Black	29%	19%	9%	6%	4%	3%
Latina	2%	4%	<1%	1%	31%	10%
Indigenous	4%	4%	1%	7%	8%	1%
Asian American	8%	7%	2%	1.5%	2%	1%
Unknown						5%

QUESTION 3

WERE WOMEN OF COLOR SENTENCED DISPROPORTIONALLY WITHIN EACH OFFENSE CATEGORY?

RACIAL DISPROPORTIONALITY IN SENTENCING DIFFERENT ACROSS OFFENSES

2019 data	white		Black		Indigenous		Asian American	
	Census	CFC	Census	CFC	Census	CFC	Census	CFC
Drug (n = 1607)	79%	85%	4%	5%	2%	4%	9%	2%
Property (n = 1484)	79%	78%	4%	9%	2%	5%	9%	3%
Fraud (n = 677)	79%	81%	4%	7%	2%	3%	9%	4%
Public Order (n = 498)	79%	76%	4%	11%	2%	5%	9%	4%
Violent (n = 433)	79%	70%	4%	15%	2%	6%	9%	3%

QUESTION 4

WERE WOMEN OF COLOR SENTENCED DISPROPORTIONALLY WITHIN THE COUNTIES EXAMINED?

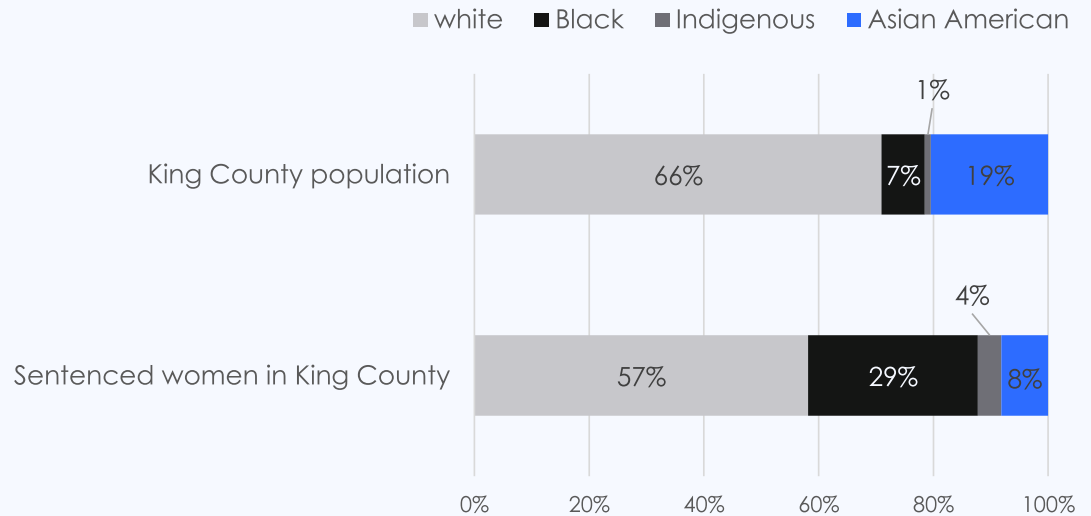## SUBSTANTIAL RACIAL DISPROPORTIONALITY IN SENTENCING ACROSS REGIONS

- Statistically significant differences in proportions of racial groups between 2019 CFC and Census data in 5 of 6 areas: King, Pierce, Snohomish, Yakima, and Spokane counties

- Black and Indigenous women were sentenced at a higher rate than we would expect based on their proportion of the population

  - Black women: Two to three times more

  - Indigenous women: Two to four times more

KING COUNTY (2019)

	Census population	Sentenced women
white	66%	57%
Black	7%	29%
Indigenous	1%	4%
Asian American	19%	4%

No comparison for Latinas due to inconsistencies between data sets

Racial Disproportionality in Sentencing

■ white ■ Black ■ Indigenous ■ Asian American

King County population: 66% | 7% | 1% | 19%

Sentenced women in King County: 57% | 29% | 4% | 8%

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

THE COMPLETE REPORT

- Presents data from all three fiscal years (2000, 2010, and 2019)

- Racial group comparisons for all six regions

- Descriptive data on men compared to women

- In-depth explanation of our analysis methods and the limitations of the data

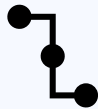- Recommendations for future research questions and improved data collection

Not everything that is faced can be changed,
but nothing can be changed until it is faced.

- James Baldwin

Questions?

PLEASE REACH OUT WITH YOUR FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

LINKEDIN
TATIANA-MASTERS-PHD

EMAIL
MASTERSTATIANA@GMAIL.COM

PHONE
206-380-5921