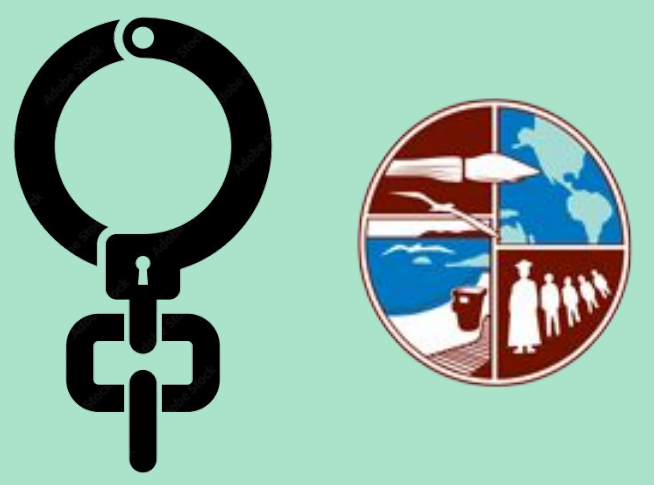


Sentencing and Imprisonment: Its Effects on Young Women and Their Communities

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INTRODUCTION

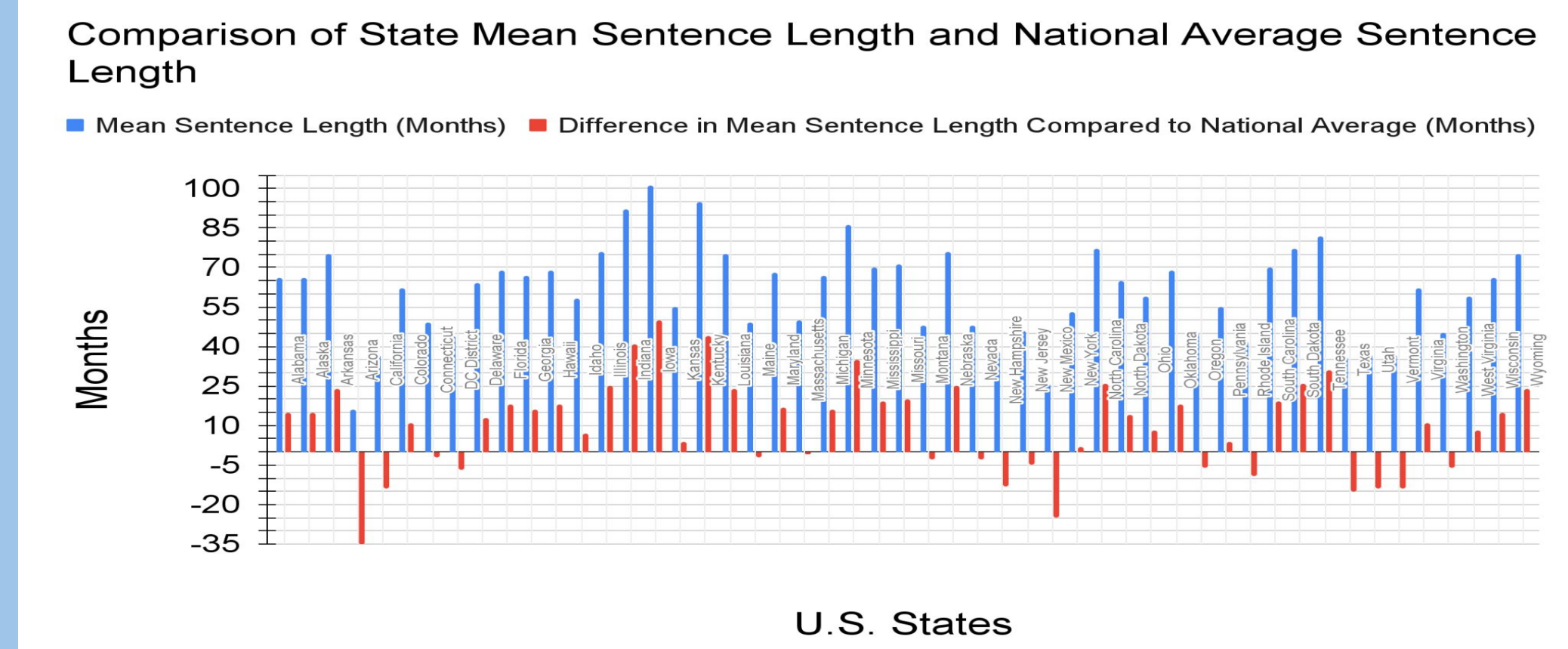
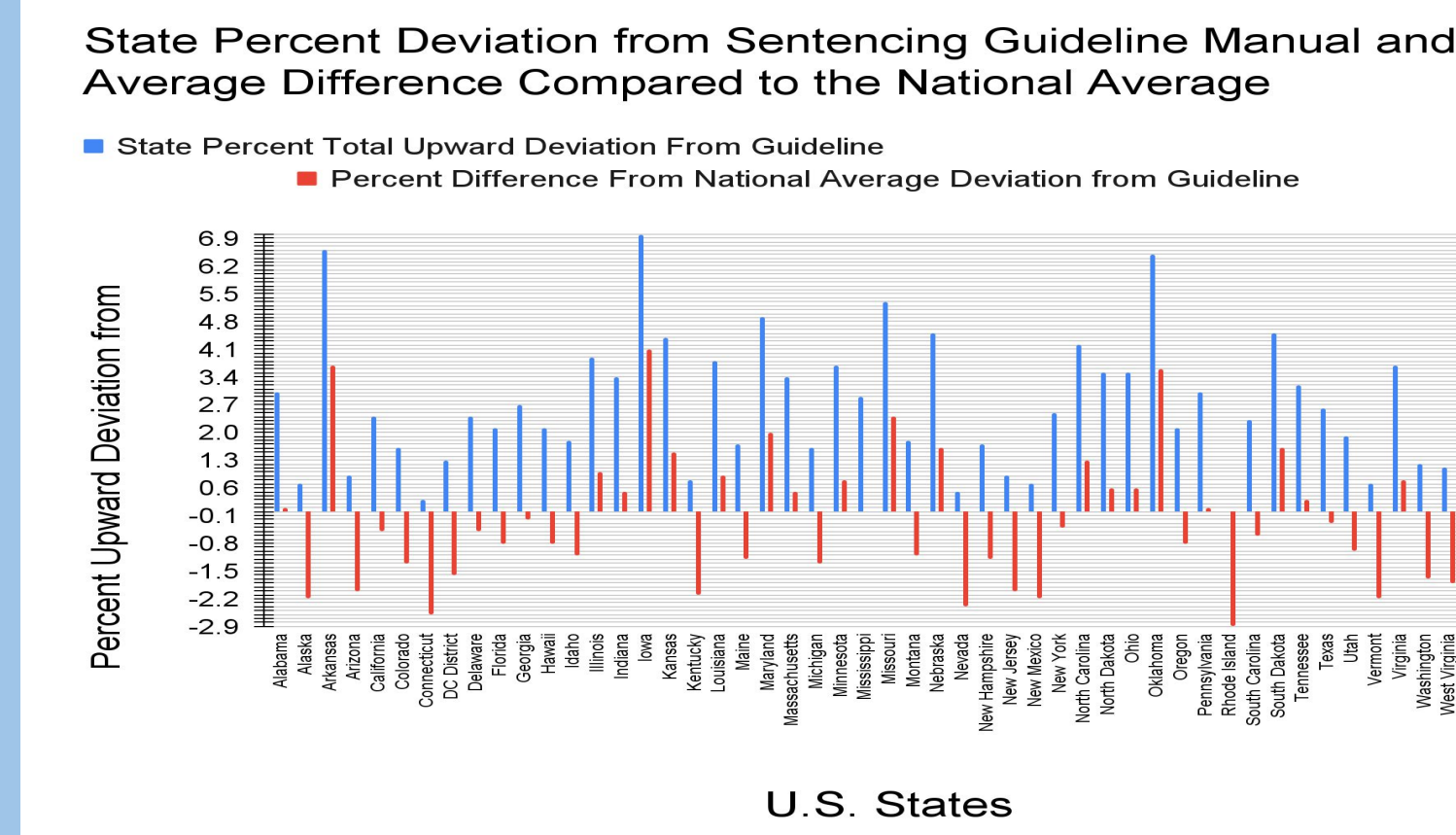
The main goals of sentencing are retribution, rehabilitation, deterrence, and incapacitation. The debate around sentencing largely involves excessive sentences that may not match the crime committed and are not effective in the previous goals. I hope to better understand the impact of sentencing and extended incarceration on the personal, familial, and professional lives of young women offenders. Sentencing reform and its impact do not get brought up often in the discussion of women's issues. Developing a deeper understanding of its impact on young women is the first step in creating a more equitable system of criminal justice in actuality, not just in words. Implications of this research I hope to be the creation of such an improved policy.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

The research path is primarily pure an analysis of how sentencing laws and excessive, harsher sentencing affect young female offenders. I plan to collect qualitative and quantitative data as a hybrid of these two, likely resulting in the most informed, holistic conclusions. Ideas surrounding what data will be collected include median state sentence length compared to the national average. I will then measure the average upward difference compared to the national sentencing average. This data will be collected from the United States Sentencing Commission of 2022. From this, I will determine those states with the both the highest and lowest deviation from the national average. I will examine those states further, diving into community factors such as birth rate, median female salary, etc. Because of these different locations, I expect some variation in the data collected and, therefore, adequate circumstances for significant comparison.

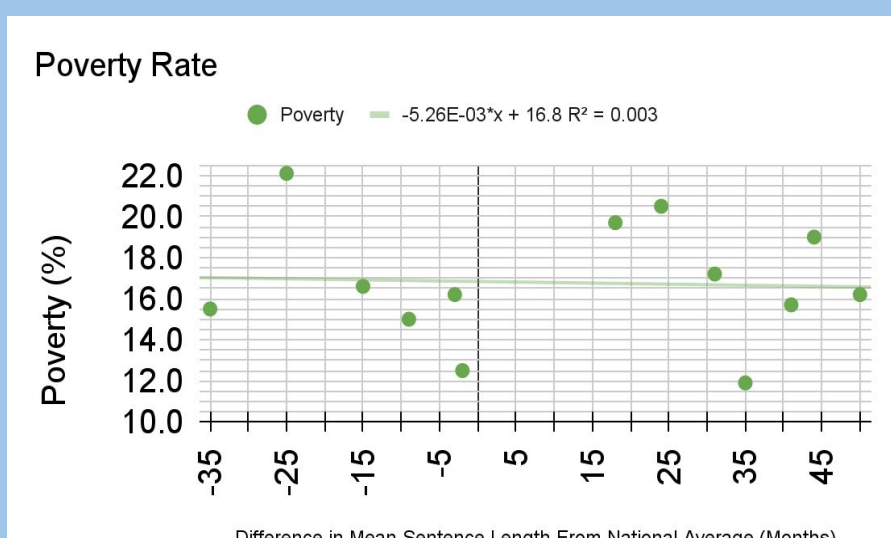
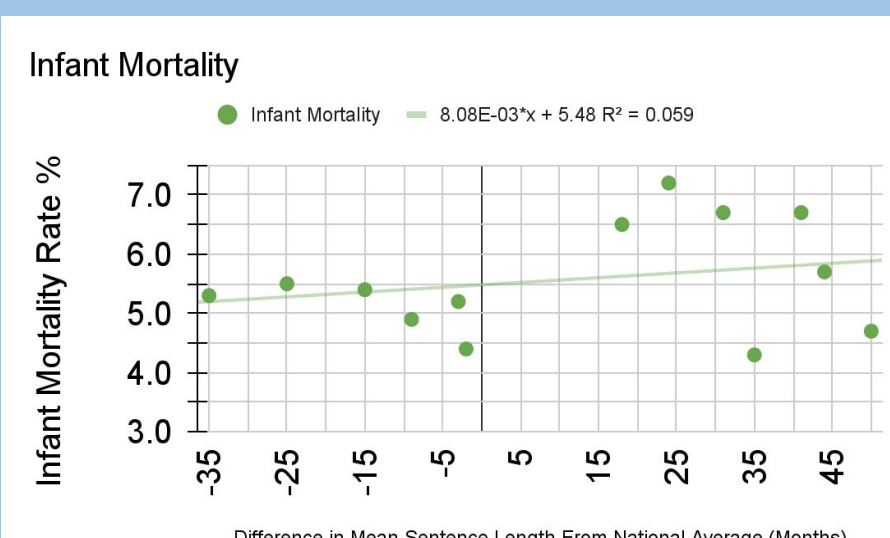
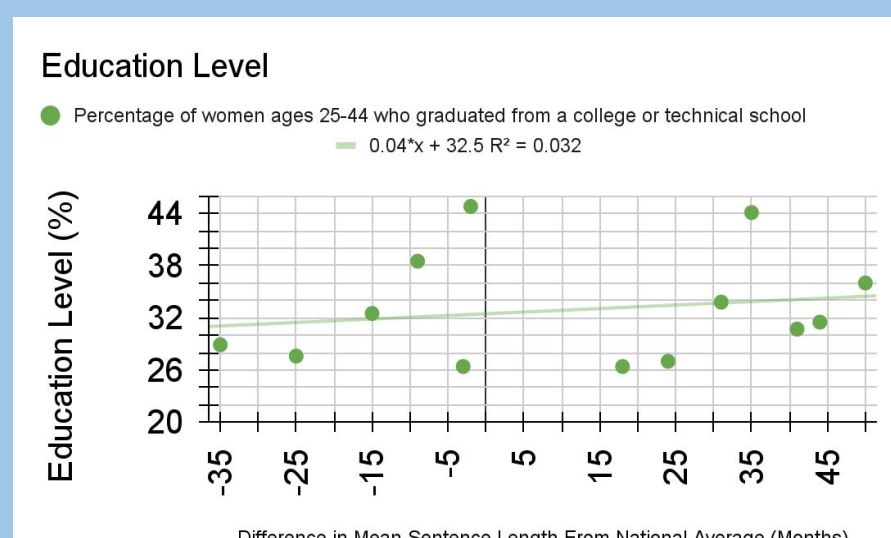
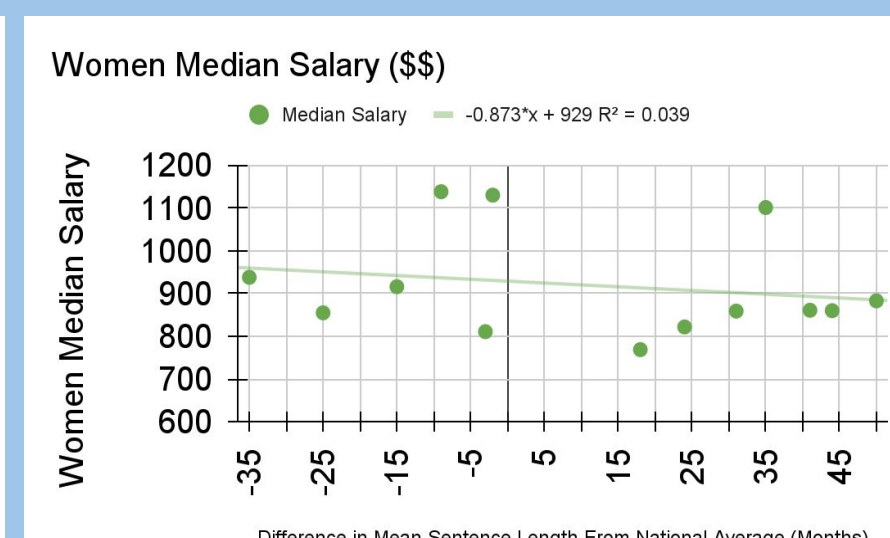
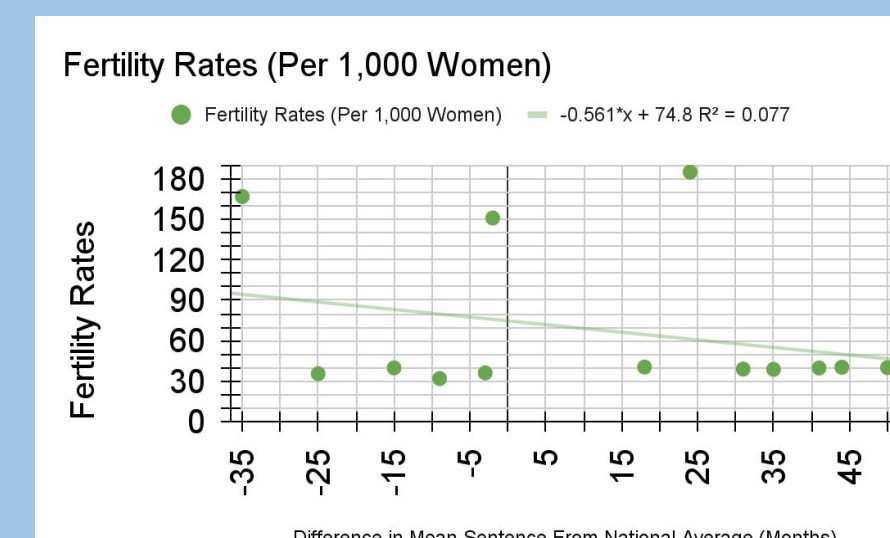
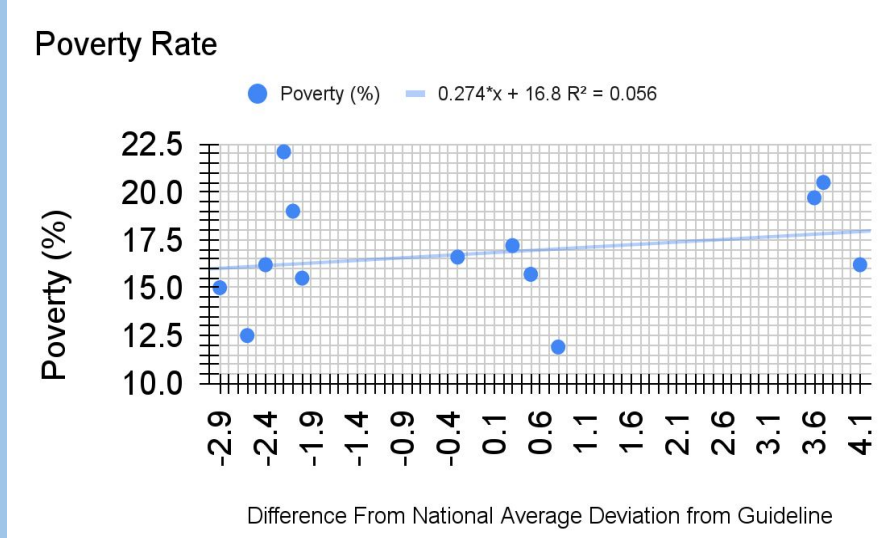
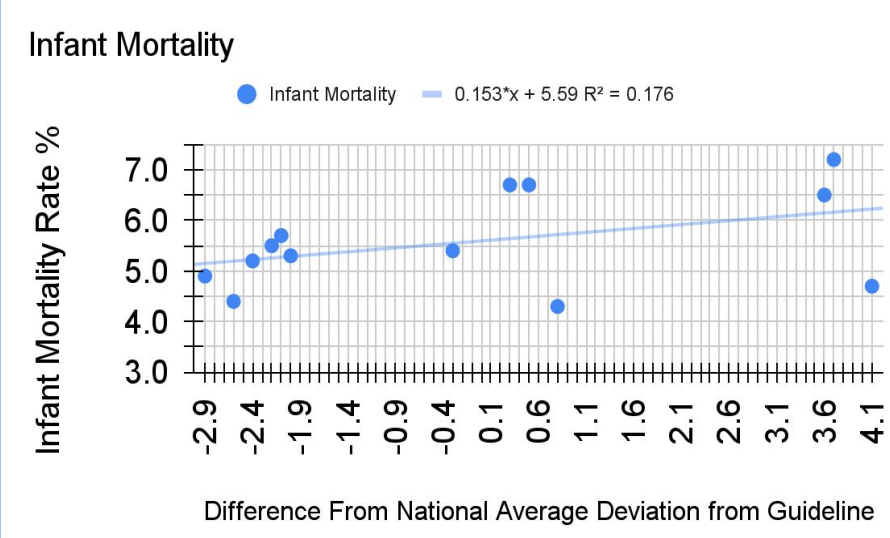
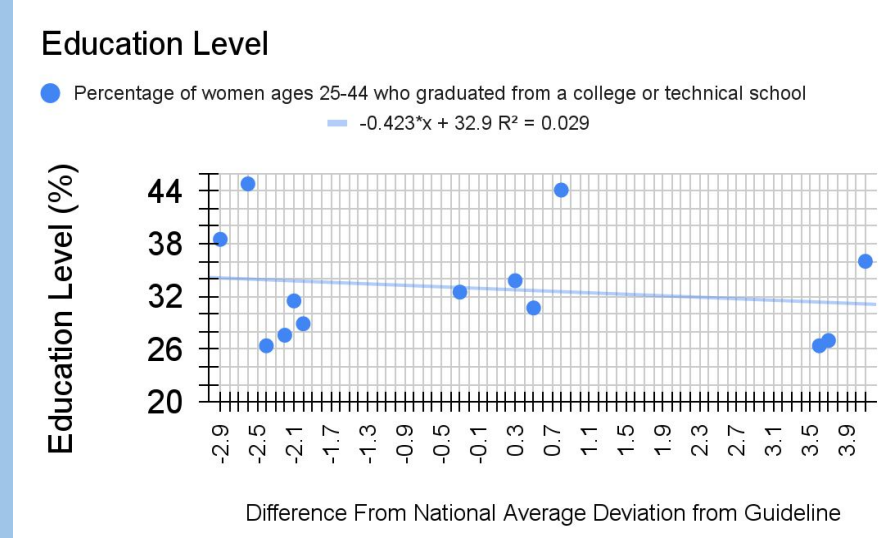
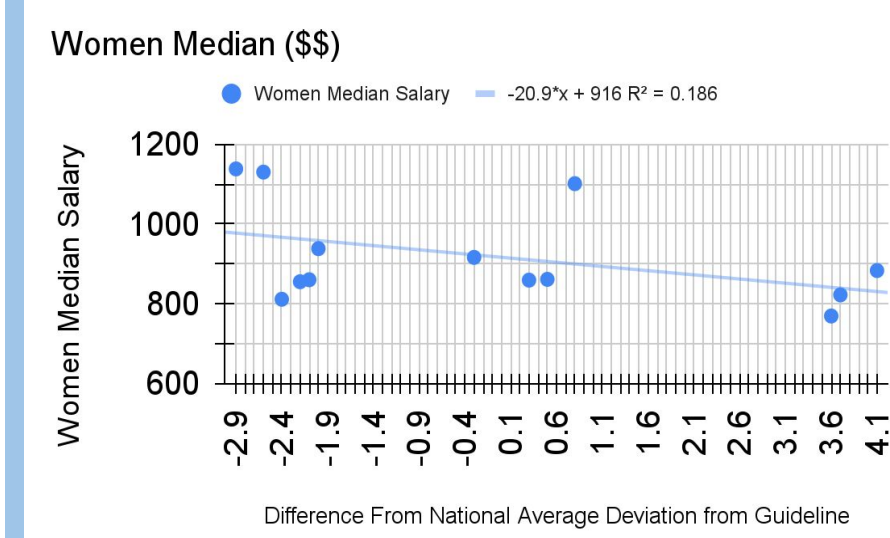
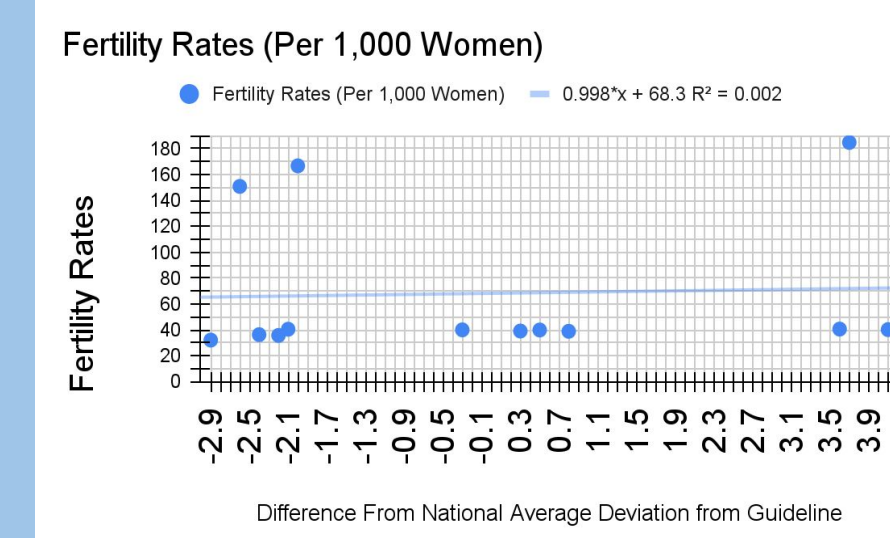


DATA AND FINDINGS



State	Difference From National Average Deviation from Guideline	Difference in Mean Sentence Length Compared to National Average (Months)	Fertility Rates	Women Median Salary	Education Level (Percentage of women ages 25-44 who graduated from a college or technical school)	Infant Mortality	Poverty
Alabama	3.7	24	184.9 per 1,000 women	622	27	7.2	20.30%
Arizona	-2	-25	166.9 per 1,000 women	598	38.9	5.3	15.30%
Arkansas	-2.6	-2	150.9 per 1,000 women	1130	44.8	4.4	12.30%
California	0.5	41	39.9 per 1,000 women	861	30.7	6.7	15.70%
Colorado	4.1	50	40.2 per 1,000 women	883	36	4.7	16.20%
Connecticut	2.1	44	40.3 per 1,000 women	960	31.5	5.7	19.00%
Delaware	0.8	35	38.9 per 1,000 women	1001	44.1	4.3	11.90%
District of Columbia	-2.4	-3	36.3 per 1,000 women	811	26.4	5.2	16.20%
Florida	-2.2	-25	35.7 per 1,000 women	855	27.6	5.5	22.20%
Georgia	3.6	18	40.6 per 1,000 women	799	25.4	6.5	15.70%
Hawaii	-2.9	-9	32.1 per 1,000 women	1138	38.5	4.9	15.00%
Idaho	0.3	31	39.1 per 1,000 women	859	33.8	6.7	17.20%
Illinois	6.3	45	40.0 per 1,000 women	916	32.5	5.4	16.80%

Key: Red: states with a noticeably positive percent difference of deviation from the national average. Yellow: states with a noticeably negative difference in mean sentence length in months compared to the national average sentence length in months. Blue: state with a noticeably negative percent difference of deviation from the national average. Orange: states with a noticeably positive difference in mean sentence length in months compared to the national average. Some states fall within multiple categories (e.i. having both a negative deviation and negative mean). The category in which they were placed was based on the state's most significant piece of data.



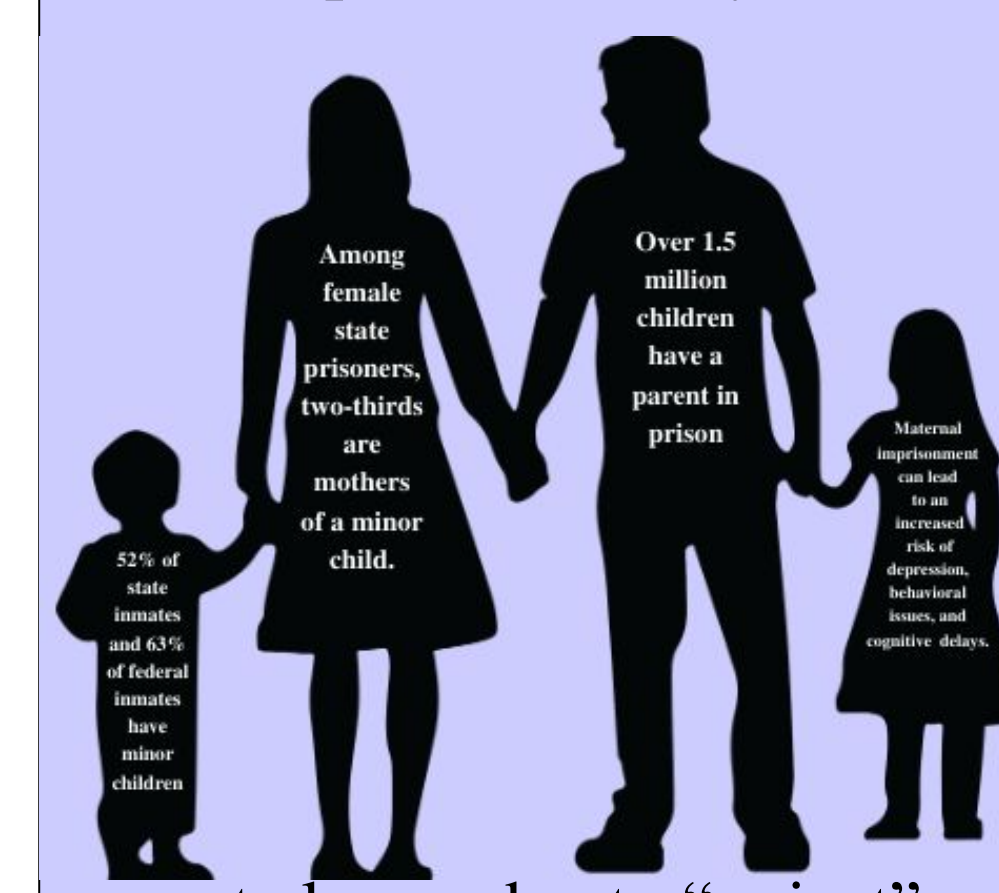
DISCUSSION, ANALYSIS, AND EVALUATION

There are clear differences in average upward deviation and mean sentence length from the national averages among states. Of the 50 measured U.S. states, 13 were selected for their unique or extreme nature of their data (whether that extremity be strongly above or below the national averages for sentence length or deviation). Further women related aspects of those states were studied. Below are some notable trends or patterns seen.

- **Fertility Rates** (Per 1,000 Women)
 - Slight negative relationship between difference in mean sentence length from the national average and fertility rate. As mean difference sentence length increases, fertility rates tend to increase slightly.
 - No clear trend between fertility rate and difference from average upward deviation from sentencing guidelines.
- **Median Salary for Women**
 - In both scatter plots comparing median salary to either mean difference from the national average in sentence length or average difference in upward deviation from sentencing guidelines can be seen to have a negative relationship
 - As difference from national average increases (in sentence length or upward deviation), median salary for women tends to decrease.
- **Education Levels of Women**
 - Slight negative relationship between difference in national average deviation from sentencing guidelines and women education levels.
 - As difference of upward deviation from guidelines increases, education levels of women tend to decrease slightly.
 - Seems to be a very slight positive relationship between difference in mean sentence length and education levels.
- **Infant Mortality Rates**
 - Somewhat positive relationship between infant mortality and either difference in deviation or difference in sentence length. Difference for deviation more positive than seen in difference in mean sentence length
 - For both data sets, as difference increases, infant mortality rate tends to increase slightly.
- **Poverty Rates Among Women**
 - Slight positive relationship between poverty rates among women and difference from national average deviation.
 - As difference from the national average deviation increases, poverty rates tend to increase slightly
 - No clear relationship between poverty rates and difference in mean sentence length

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND NEXT STEPS

Multiple confounding factors, yet using the patterned data from the various sources I've read, we can see issues arising from mass/increased incarceration of women, young women, mothers, young mothers, etc. especially when looking at the impact on their children and dependents. Drug related crimes often involve females. An increasing trend of female incarceration has been seen since the "war on drugs" of the 1970s. Because my data is limited to U.S. states, implication of my research are general and fairly broad in nature.



Additionally, the sentencing data also includes male sentencing and incarceration levels--not solely female. It is clear that male extended incarceration would also have an affect on the measure aspects of a community, such as birth rate and poverty, along with other factors I did not research, varying factors based on the different states. What's more, deviation from the sentencing guidelines are not always due to "unjust" sentencing, deviation can be warranted. Ultimately, I hope that this research acts as a stepping stone for future research. Because of the extremely limited data on a local scale, especially with minimal research on female offenders, I found it difficult to reach the level of detail I had previously hoped for. There are inferences I have made by cross-analysis, like the possible psychological effects of maternal incarceration on a child, although I did not collect my own research on this topic.

Special thanks to Mr. Shen, my AER peers, Mr. Azadian, and Mr. Warren for helping make this project possible and the best version it could be!

QR Code To Works Cited and Sources:

