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JUVENILE COURT REFERRAL TRENDS, 1960-1975



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Chart I

There seems to be some concern about the continued rise of juvenile delinquency due to accompanying social upheaval, cultural changes and relaxed morality in our social milieu. Although a distinct rise was noted between 1960 and 1970, one cannot rely completely on reported figures. One can, however, look at 1970 to 1975 figures as a much more reliable indicator of the at risk population effects and delinquency incidences. From 1960 to 1970 the rise in delinquency cases was more pronounced than expected, if we can assume accurate reporting. While the population at risk (10-16 years of age) rose 24.1%, reported delinquency cases increased 270.0%. The figures, however, are suspect, as we have developed more sophisticated methods of computer tabulation and adequate staff for computations, both locally and on a state basis, and must suspect questionable reporting and compilation prior to 1970.

The years 1970 to 1975 probably reflect a more accurate trend of delinquent behavior as related to the population at risk. The trend during this six year period reflects a rather stable growth of the risk population of 10-16 years of age with a yearly increase of slightly over 1.0% from 1970 to 1973 and less than one percent for 1974 and 1975. It is important however that in 1970 the proportion of delinquency cases was 3.5% of the at risk population (10-16 years of age) and in 1975 although the population had increased 3.2% the delinquent population reduced in proportion to 2.8%. This is partially explained by the tendency of the courts to hear cases on an unofficial basis which rose from 4,866 in 1970 to 18,953 in 1975 (+289.5%)

Delinquency, as such, may be decreasing, however slightly, by the increased practice of handling cases on an unofficial rather than an adjudicating basis.

It appears that on the basis of past performance, unofficial cases will surpass official cases in 1976 and continue to increase in the future.

There may be some discrepancy in the 1974 and 1975 official and unofficial cases due to the necessity of estimating DeKalb County's unofficial hearings. In conference with the court it was estimated that approximately 30% of the cases were unofficial hearings. The actual difference (or error) in this estimate should not affect the total state figures appreciably.

Chart II

Cases disposed of by Juvenile Courts both official and unofficial have risen dramatically since 1960 at an erratic rate. Declines were noted in 1972, 74 and 75, due primarily to a steady increase of unofficial hearings since 1970 when the proportion of unofficial hearings constituted only 17.6% of the total cases processed by the courts. In 1975 there were approximately as many unofficial cases (49.6%) as official (50.4%).

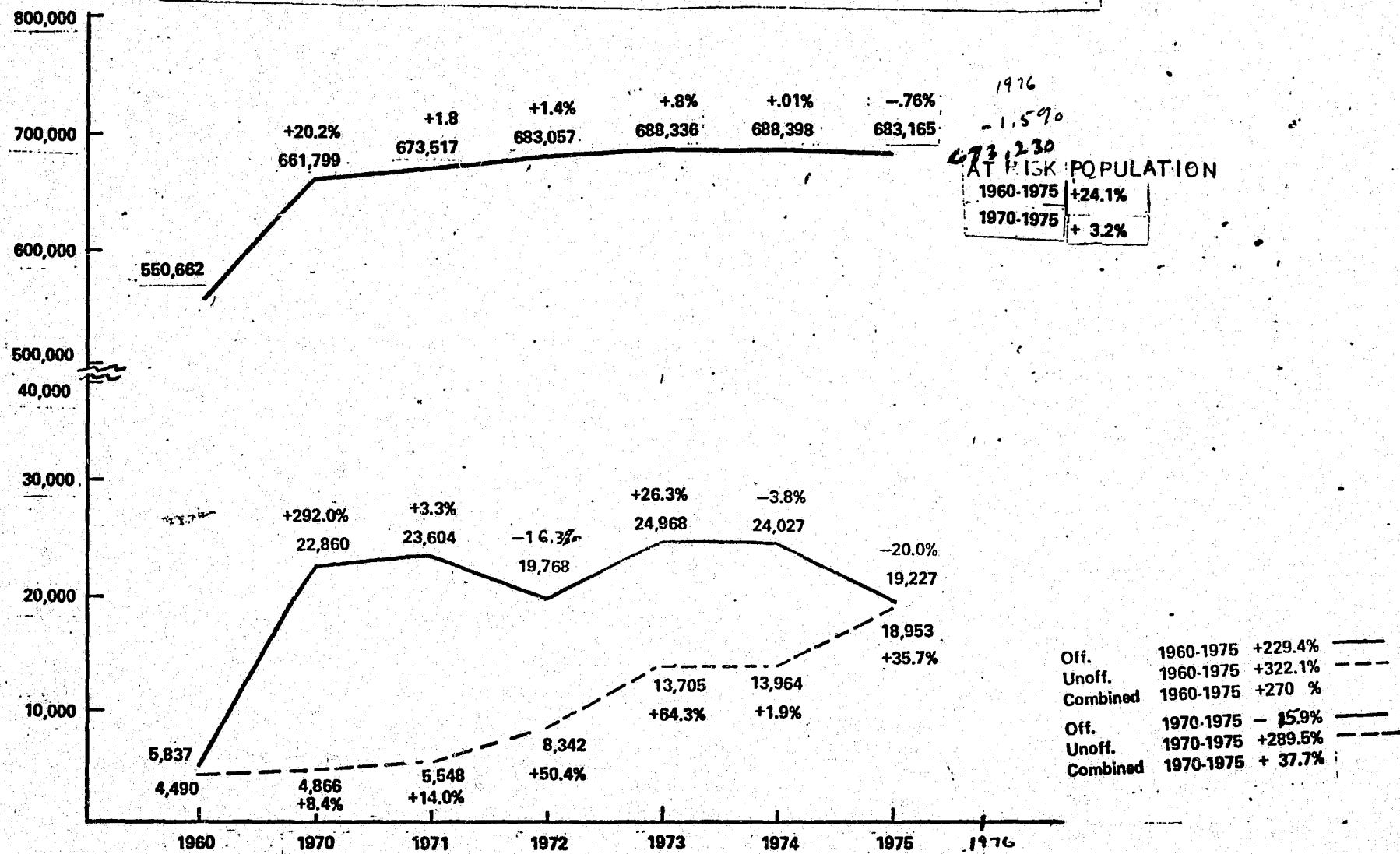
Chart III

Traffic cases disposed of by Georgia's courts present a most erratic pattern increasing most dramatically in 1963 from 445 official cases in 1960 to 3,173 in 1963 or +613.0%. Unofficial cases about equaled official cases in 1964 but since that time have maintained a rather low proportion. There is some indication of a decline in official cases since 1973 and an increase in unofficial hearings. In 1973 the proportion of unofficial cases was 12.5% of the total processed and in 1975 this proportion had increased to 36.5% of the total cases heard.

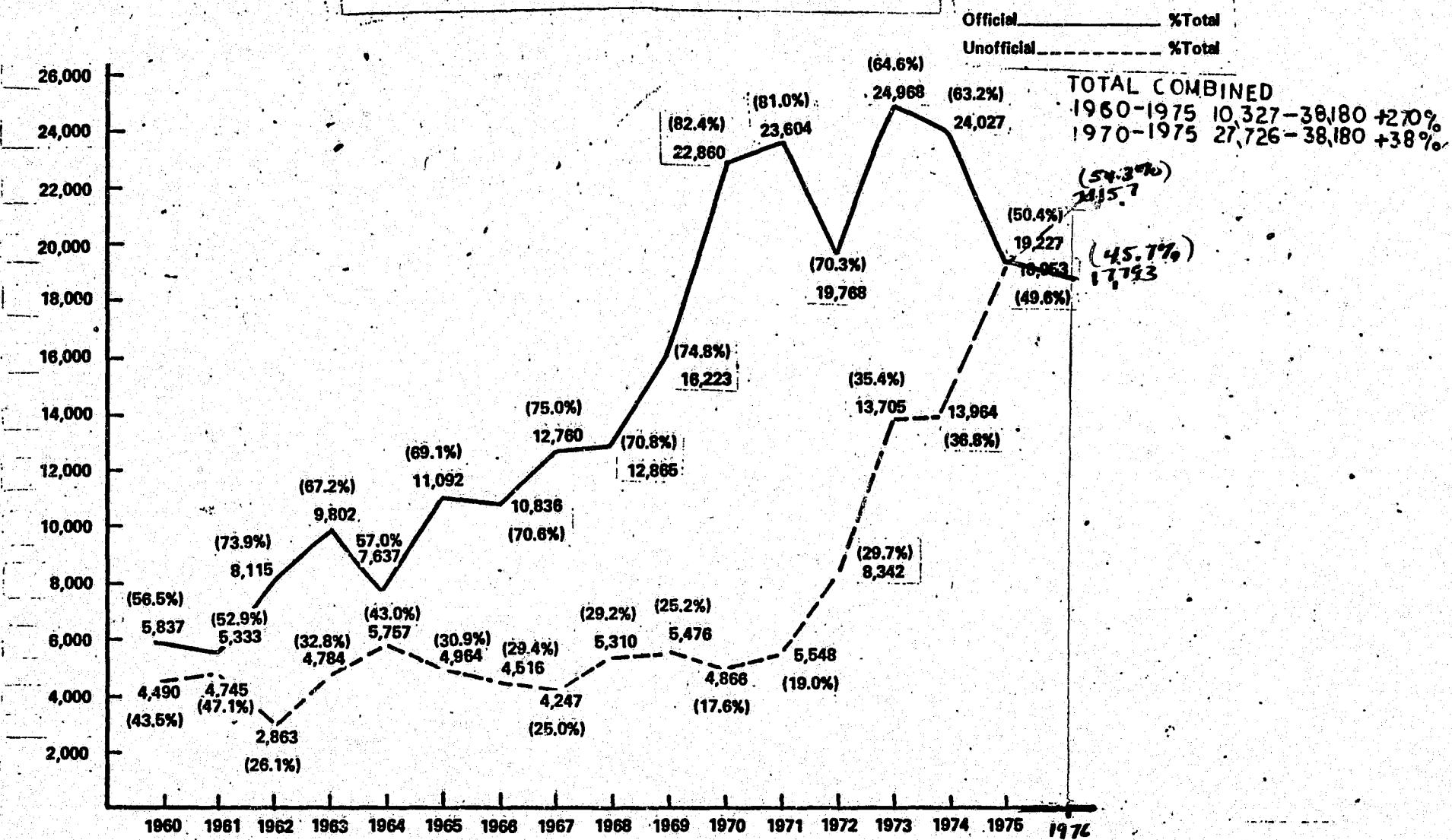
Chart IV

Although male delinquents have consistently dominated official cases disposed of by the juvenile courts, there is some indication that female delinquents are slowly closing the gap. Whereas males constituted 85.3% of the cases disposed of by the courts in 1960, in 1975 they constituted 73.6% of the cases. In 1973 females accounted for 29.2% of the total official cases heard constituting the highest numerical figure (7,364) for females as well as the highest proportion of female delinquents that are officially handled by the courts.

AT RISK POPULATION (10-16 yrs.) 1960-1975, OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL DELINQUENCY CASES 1960-1975

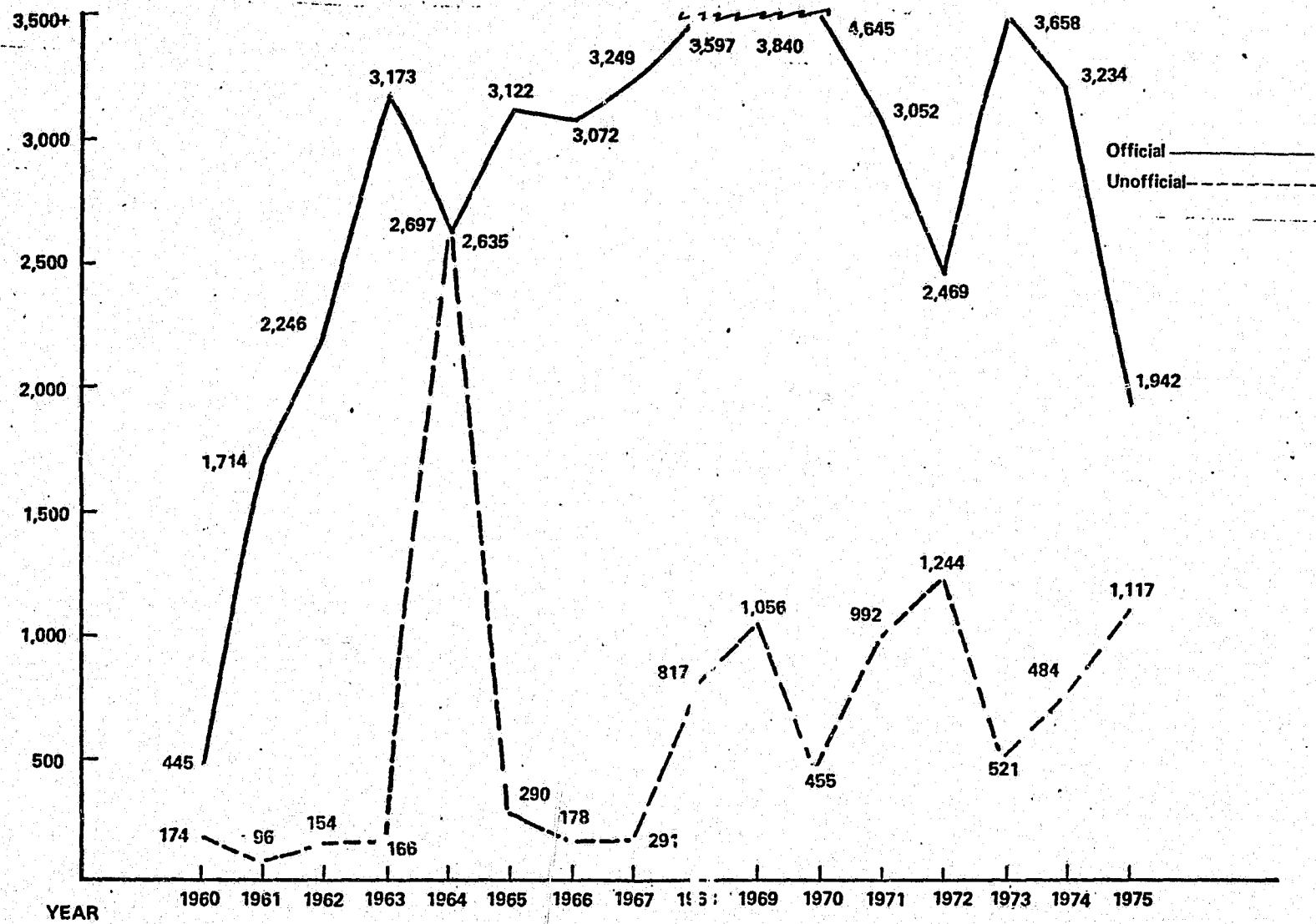


II
CASES DISPOSED OF BY GEORGIA'S JUVENILE COURTS 1960-1975



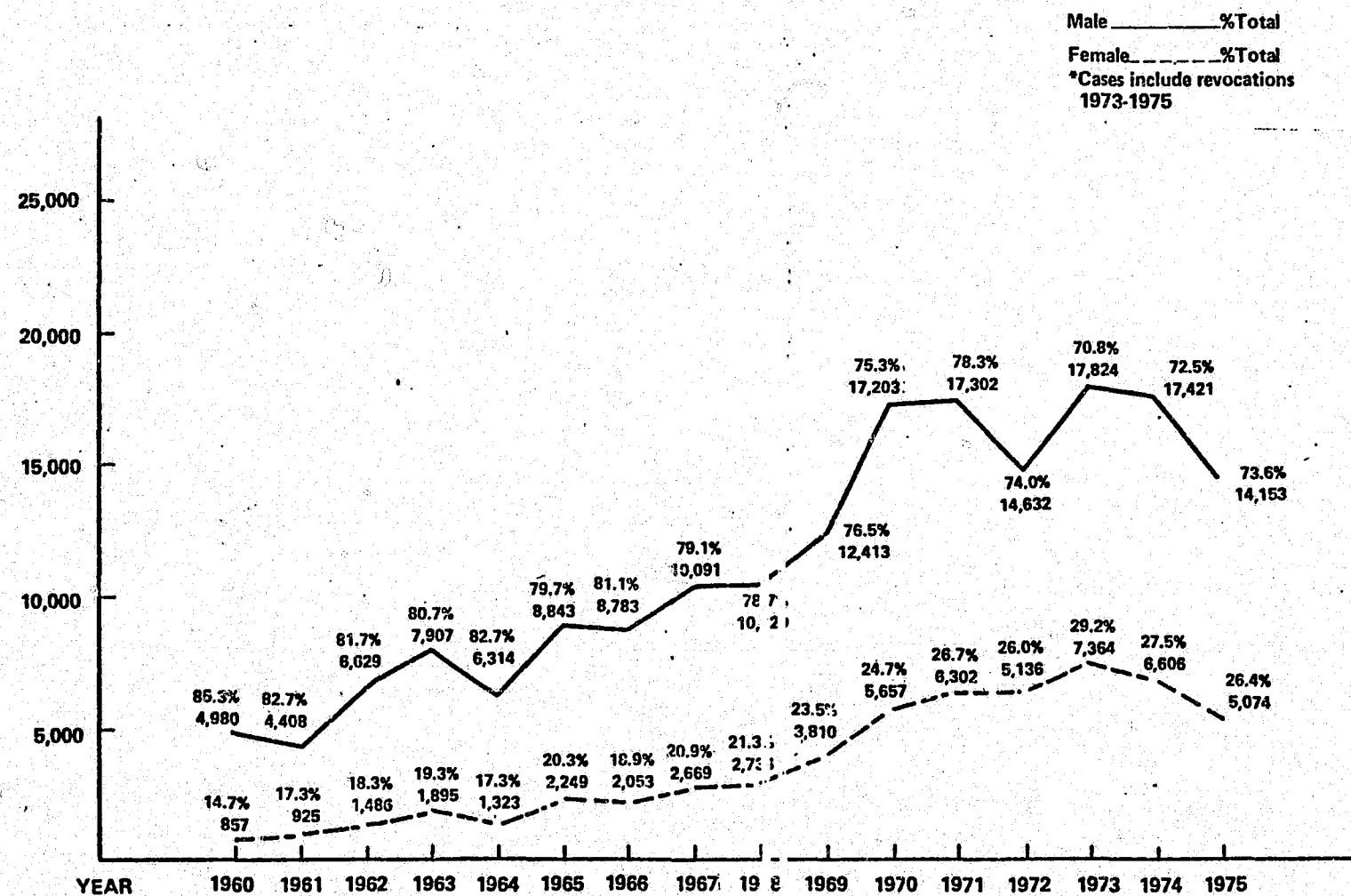
III

TRAFFIC CASES DISPOSED OF BY GEORGIA'S JUVENILE COURTS 1960-1975



IV

CASES DISPOSED OF BY GEORGIA'S JUVENILE COURTS 1960-1975 BY SEX



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