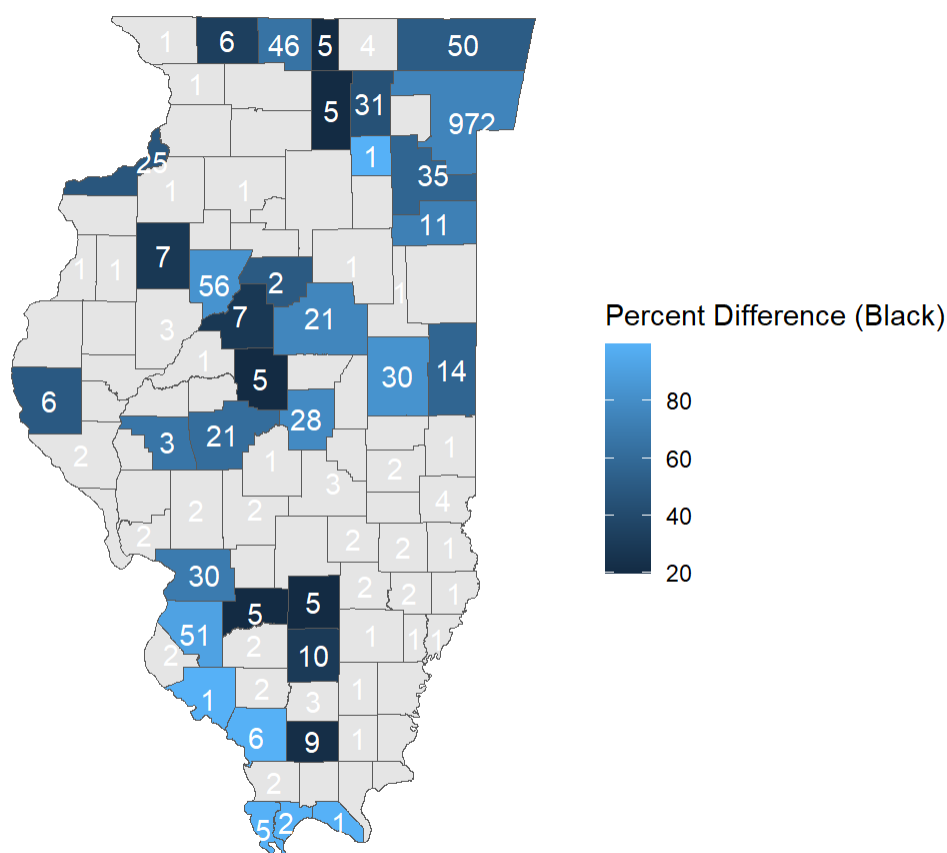


RJ_Website_Who We Serve

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In Illinois today, there are 1610 people who were taken into custody before the age of 26 serving sentences of life and de facto life in state prisons. De facto life is defined by the United States Sentencing Commission as termed sentences longer than 40 years. These people represent about 6 percent (29245) of Illinois's prison population.

Each case and person is unique, and few statements can describe all individuals serving extreme sentences. That said, knowing at a broad level who bears the burden of the state's most extreme sentences helps us understand the issues, craft more nuanced policies, and build common ground for dialogue between communities, advocates, and legislators.

Here's what we know about this group of individuals.

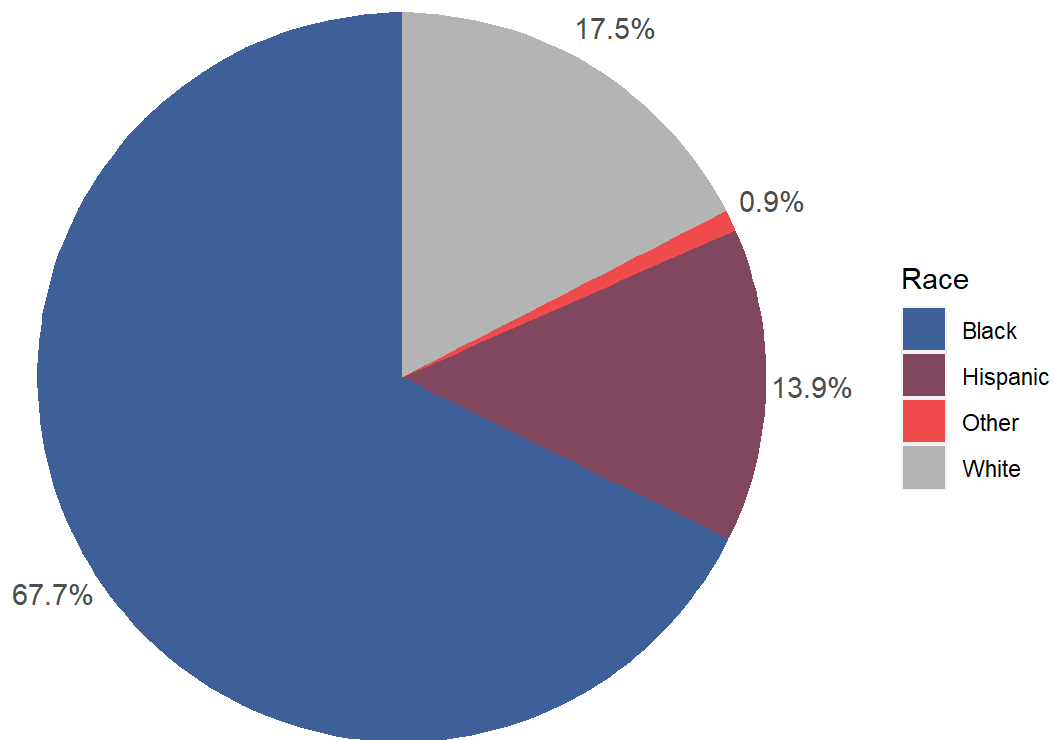
Who They Are

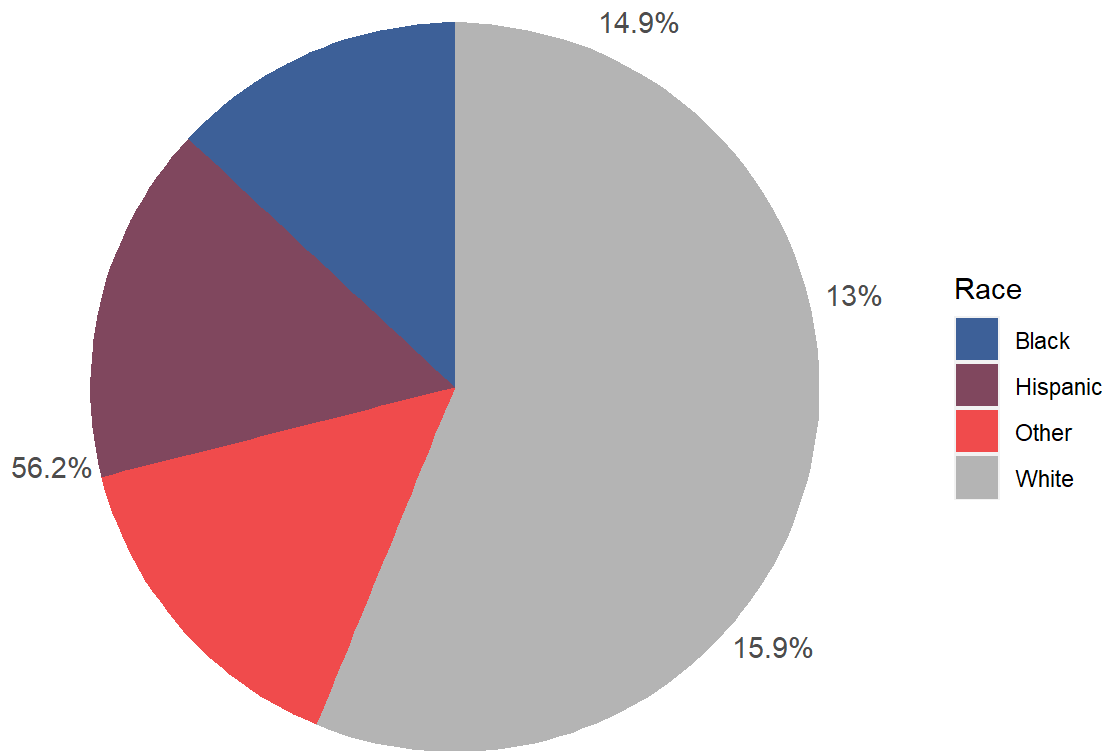
Overwhelmingly, the people in Illinois serving life and de facto life for offenses that occurred before the age of 26 are young Black men from Cook and its neighboring counties. Figure 1 shows the distribution of sentences by race, compared with Illinois demographics.

74 of Illinois's 102 counties have sentenced at least one person to life or de facto life (among the people still serving these sentences) for an offense that occurred before the person's 26th birthday. 0.3648649 percent (27) of the people currently serving life or de facto life for crimes that occurred before they turned 26 are from Cook County.

About 87 percent of youth life and de facto life sentences are for homicide-related offenses.

67 percent (3240) people serving life or de facto life for crimes that occurred in their youth are Black.





When They Enter

Almost half (33) of all people sentenced to life and de facto in Illinois entered custody before the age of 26.

About 1 in 3 (34) entered custody before the age of 21, some as young as 12 years old, much too young to drive a car or vote.

More than half (56) of the people currently serving youth life or de facto life received their sentences before 2004.

Figure 2 shows the distribution of ages when individuals were taken into custody.

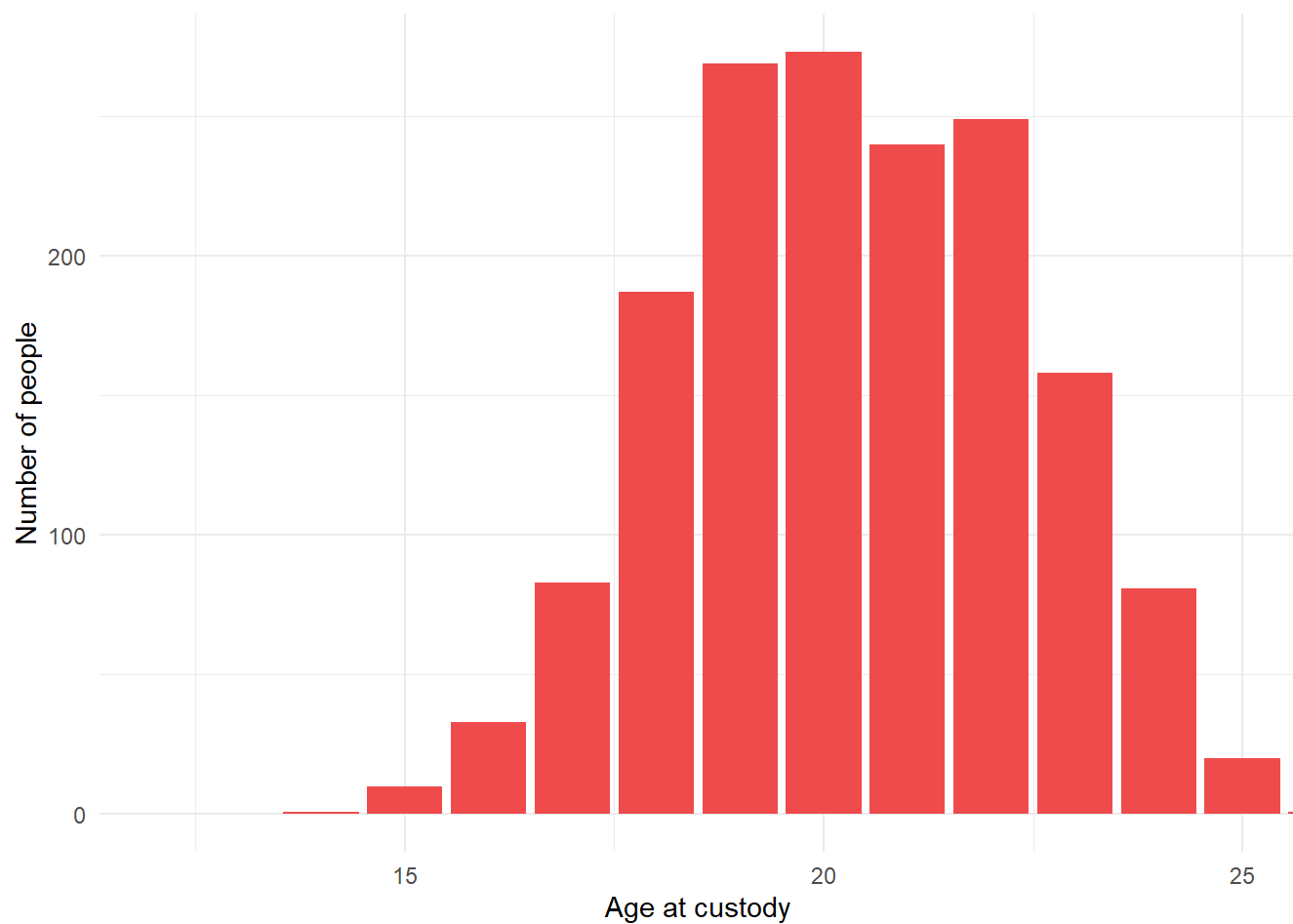


Figure 3 shows the distribution of sentence year for the current population of serving individuals.

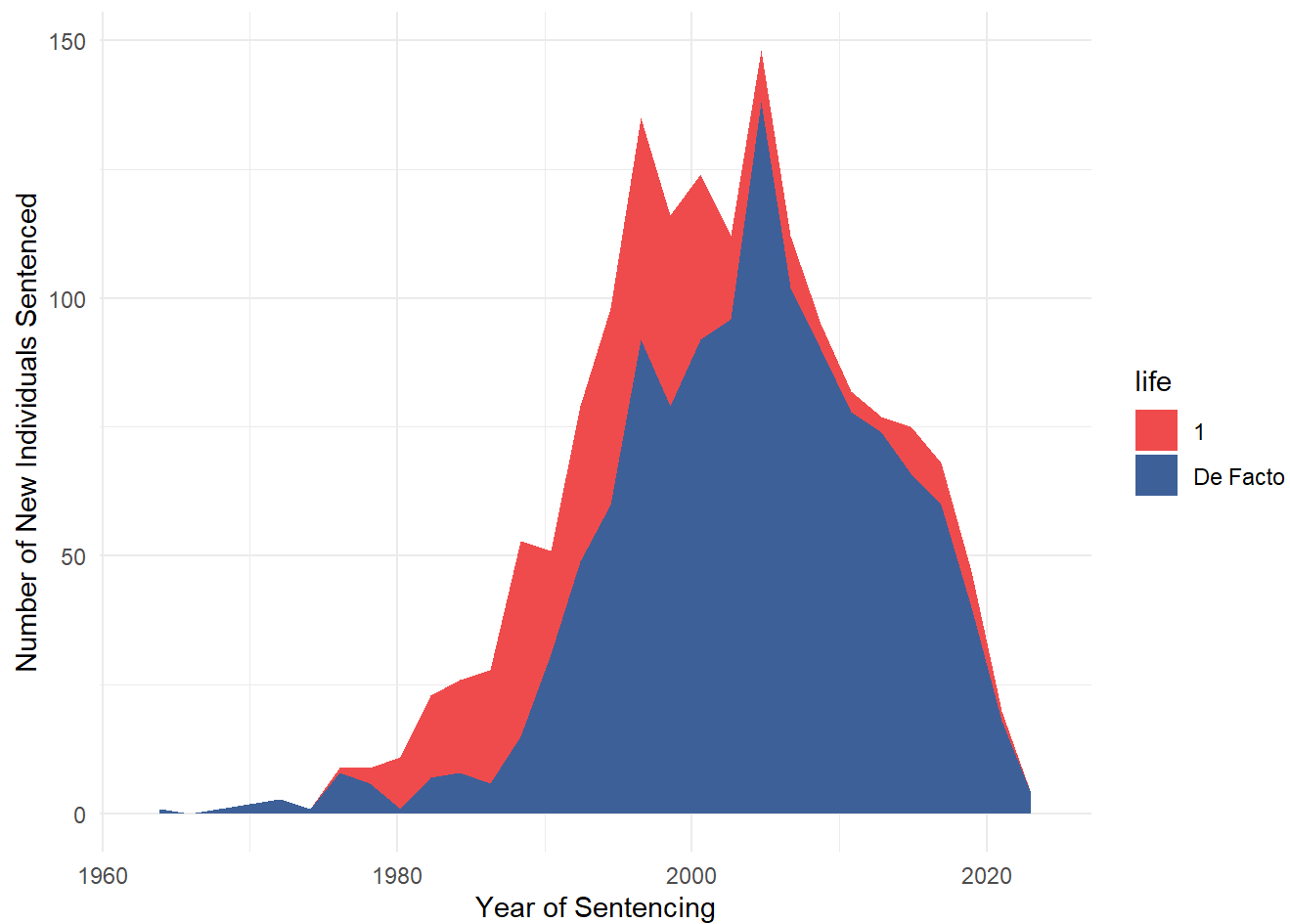


Figure 4. Distribution of Youth Life and De Facto Life Sentences by Length and Type

