

Racial Disparities in Tennessee Federal Sentencing: 2015 to 2019

Jennifer Whitson

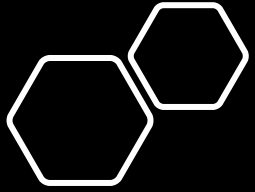
April 30, 2021

Additional Materials



Crime Categories by Race

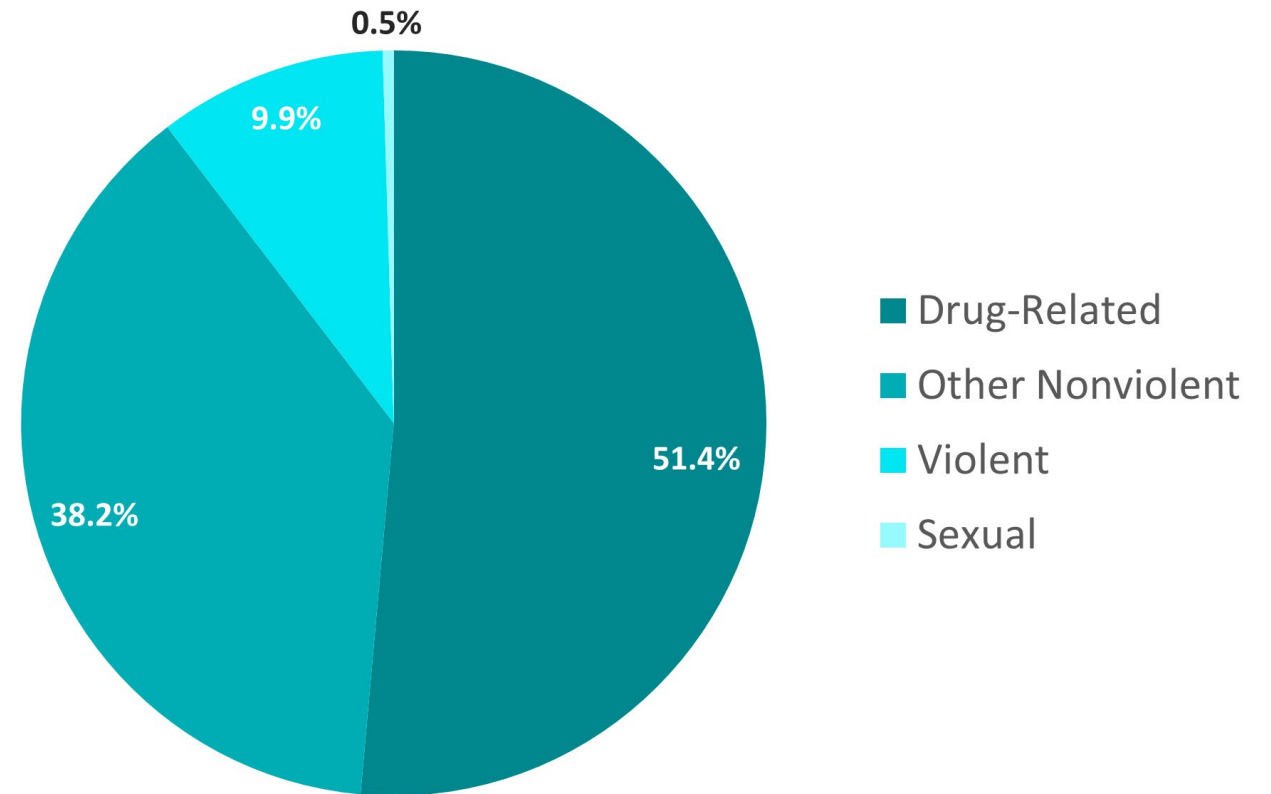


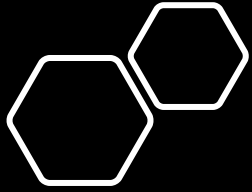


Crime Categories

- Half of offenses by white offenders are drug-related

White Sentencing Population

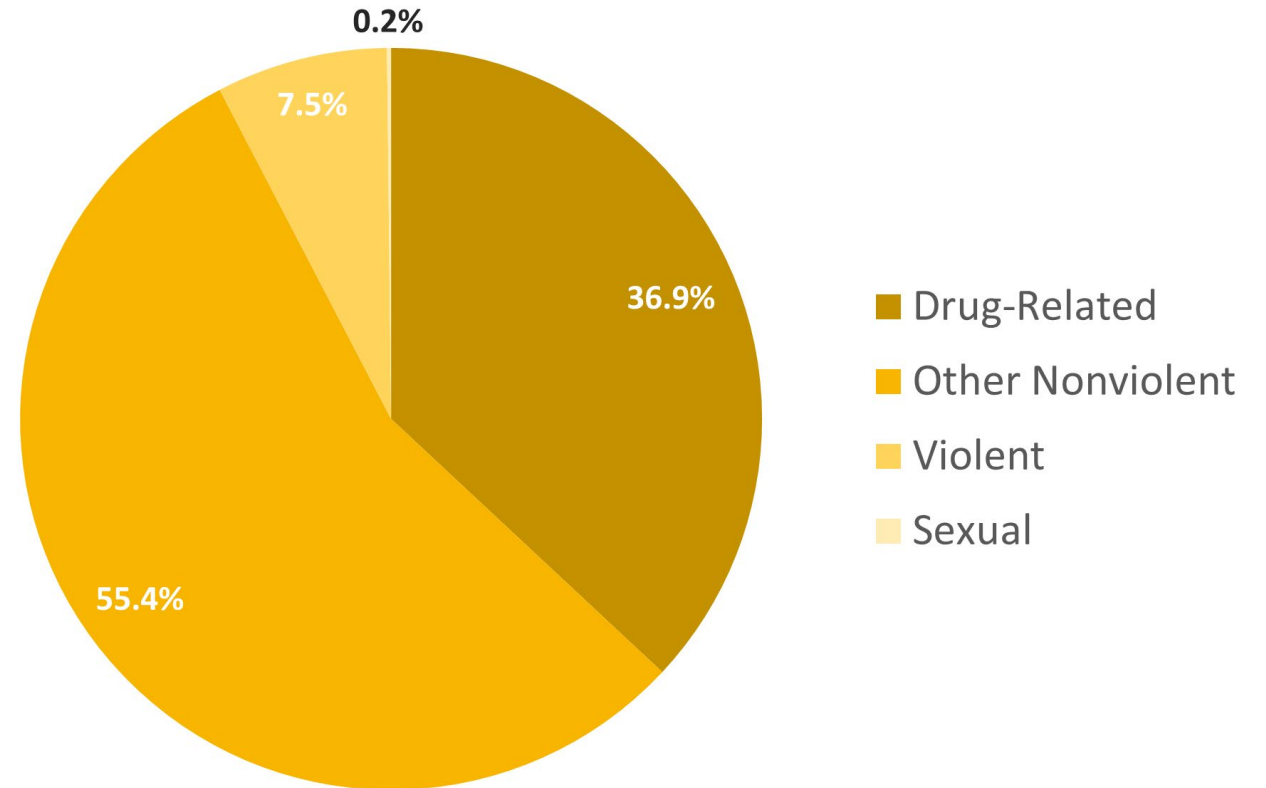


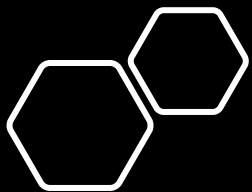


Crime Categories

- Over half of offenses by black offenders are not violent or drug related

Black Sentencing Population

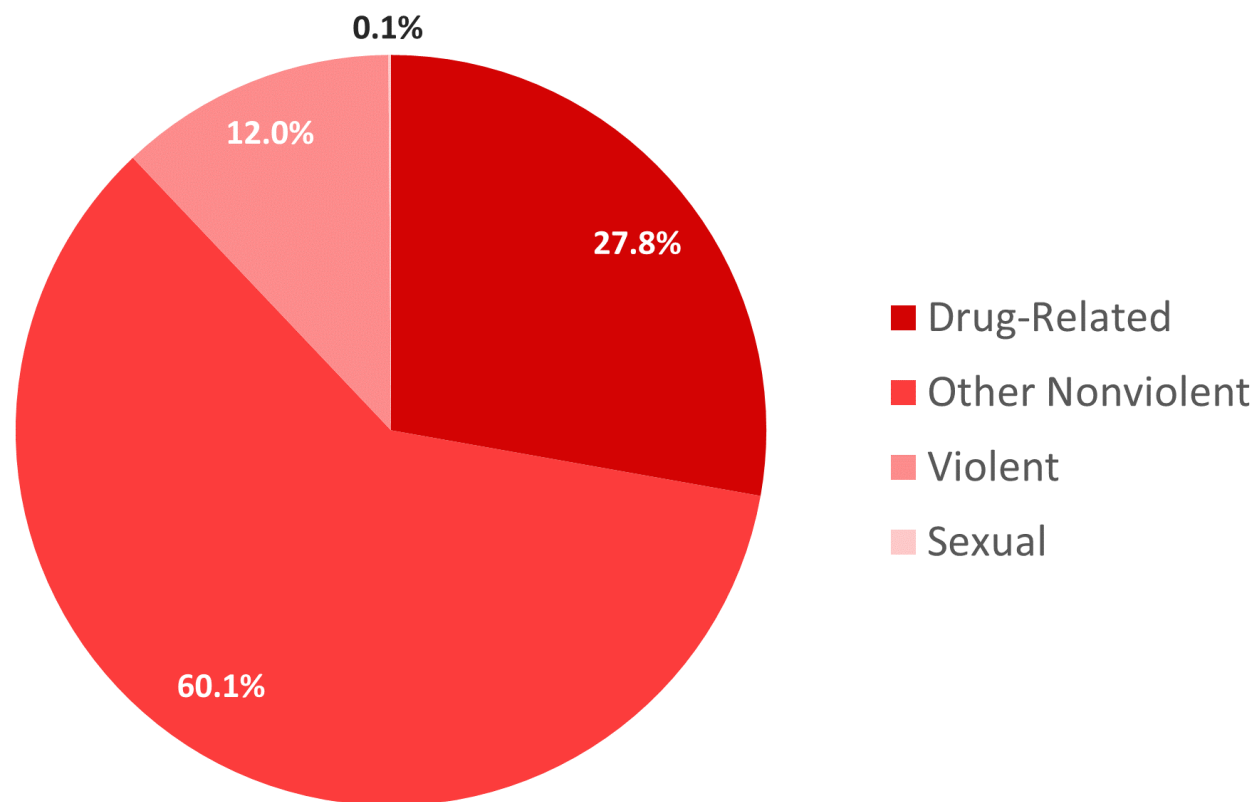




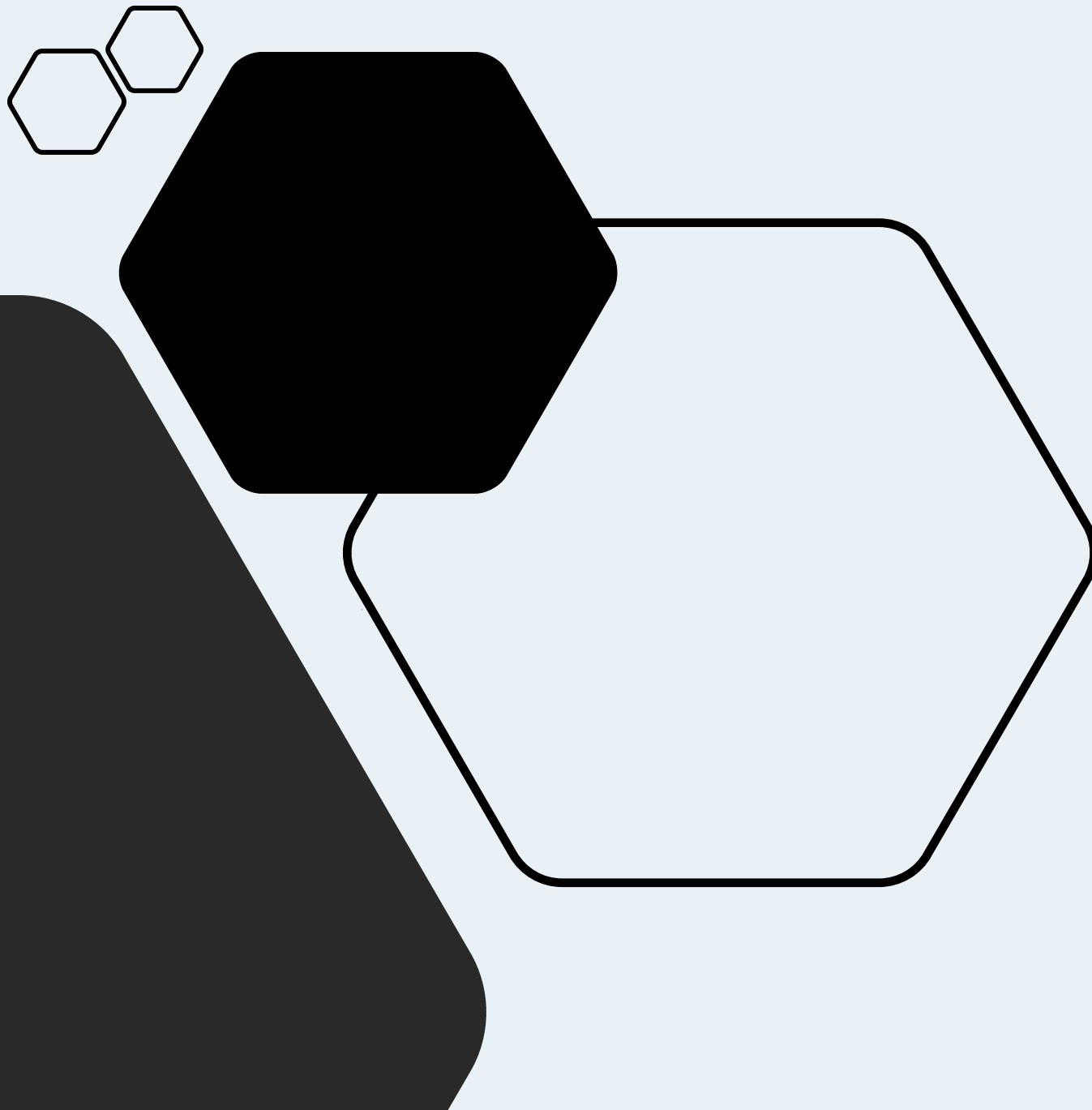
Crime Categories

- Nearly 2/3 of offenses by Hispanic offenders are not violent or drug related

Hispanic Sentencing Population



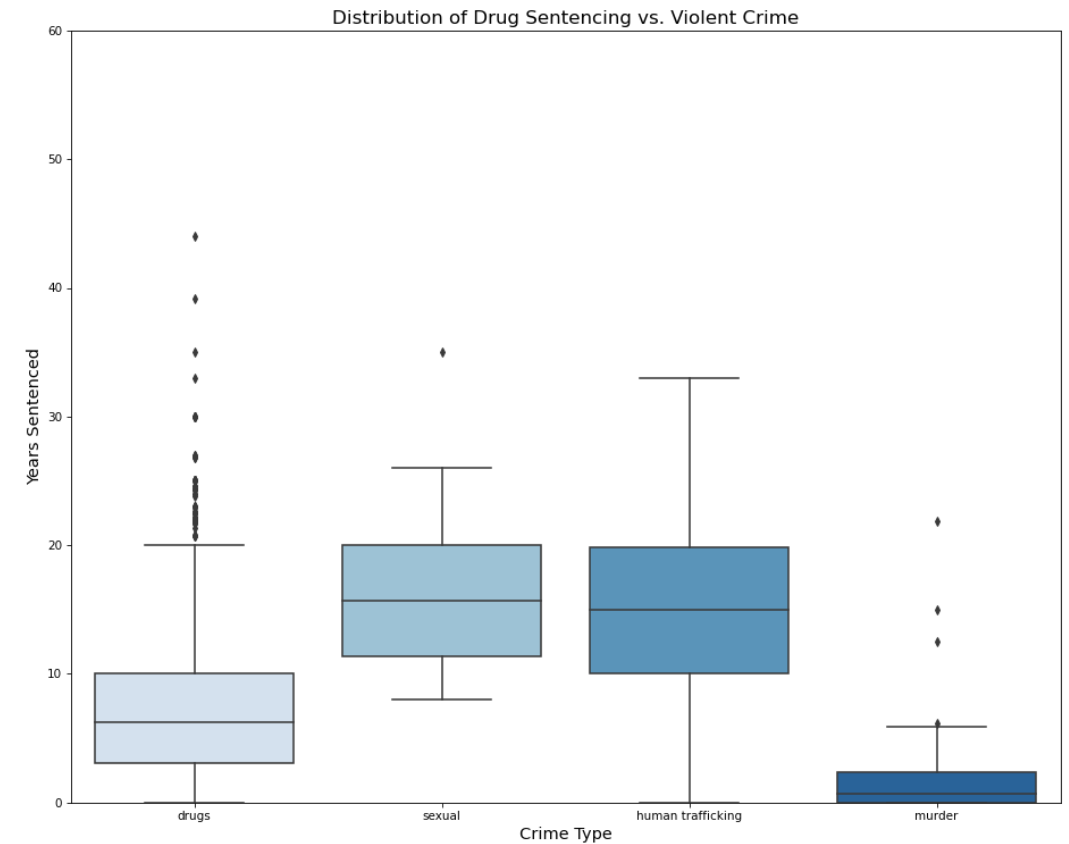
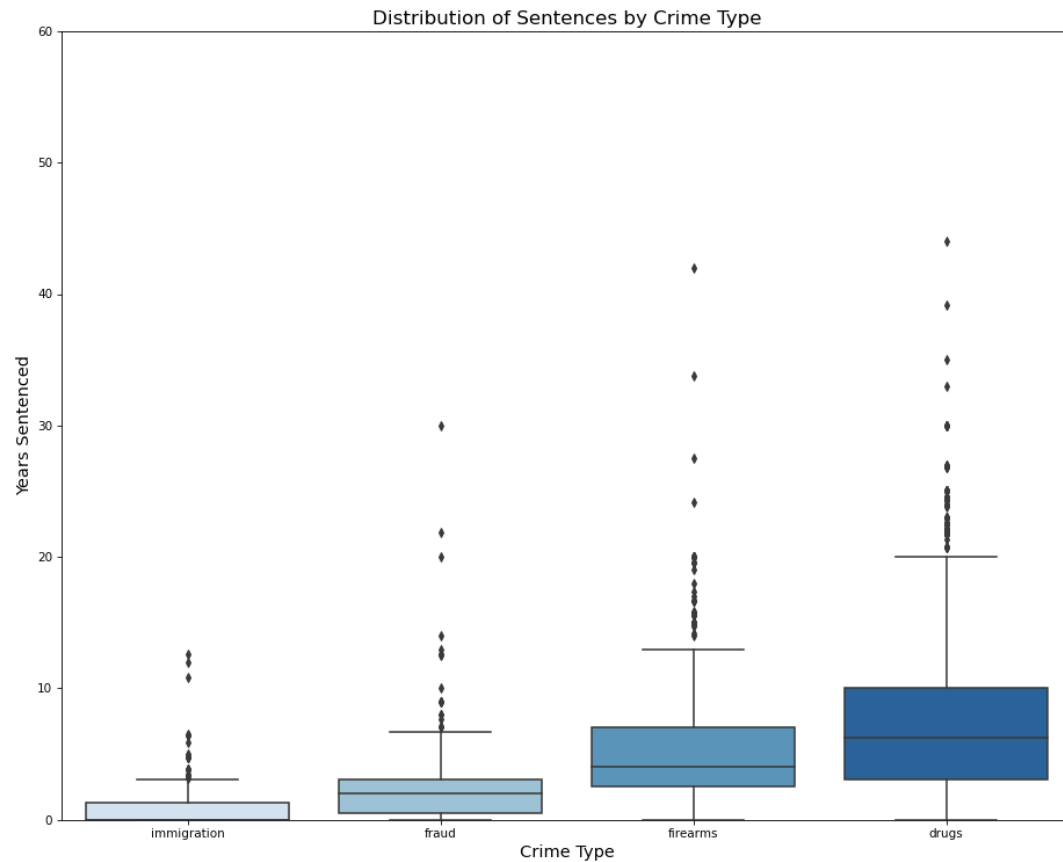
Sentence Lengths



Sentences by Crime

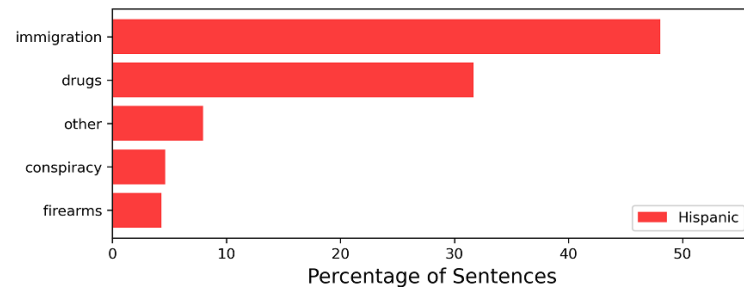
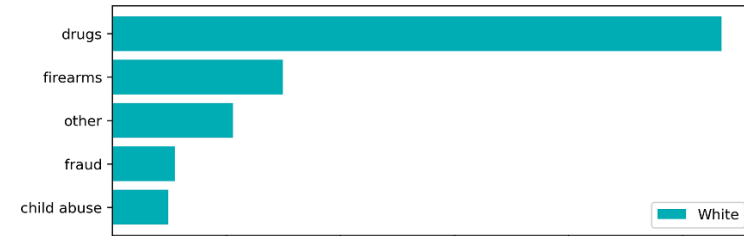
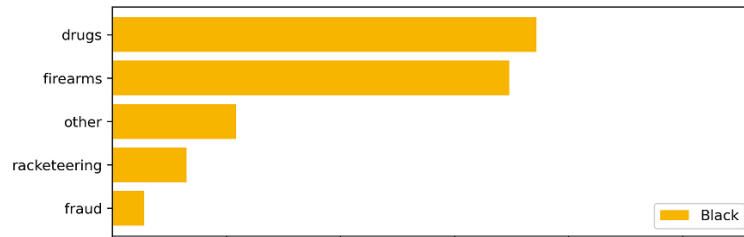
Closer Look

Federal drug sentences are higher on average than federal murder sentences

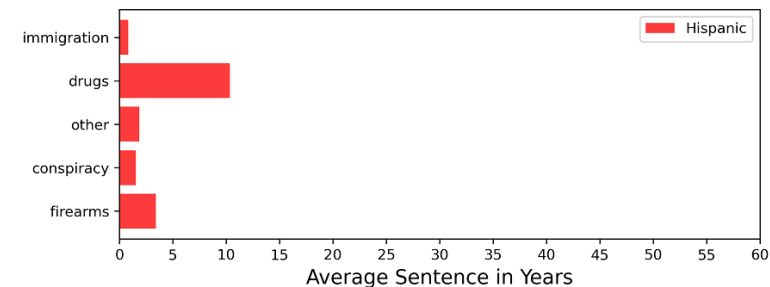


Most Common Crime Types & Corresponding Sentences

Most Common Crime Types



Corresponding Sentences

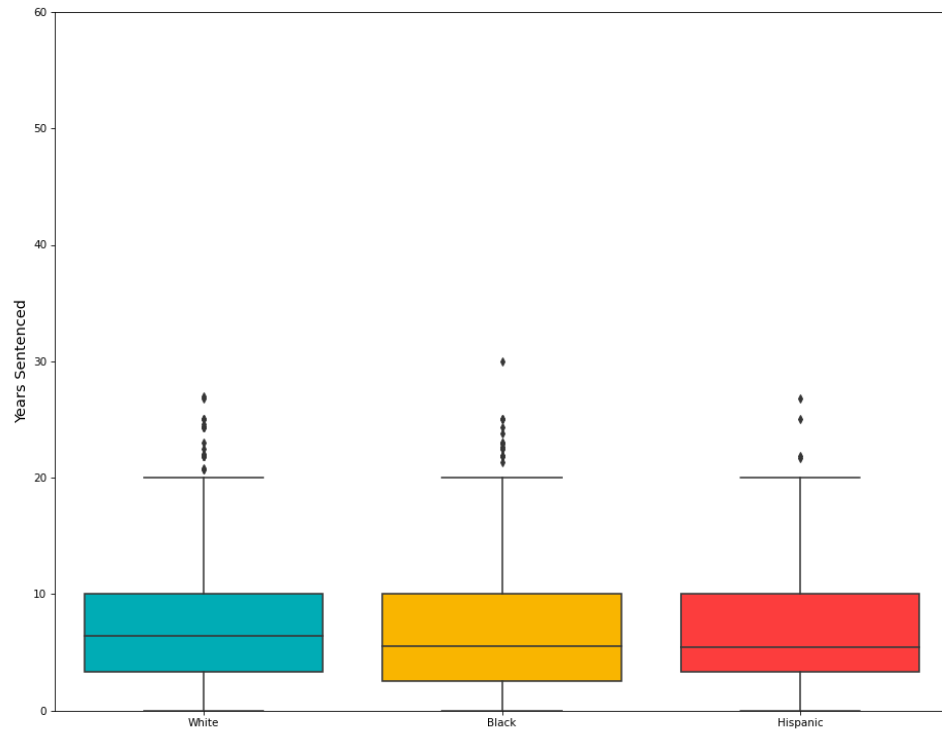


Sentences by Race:

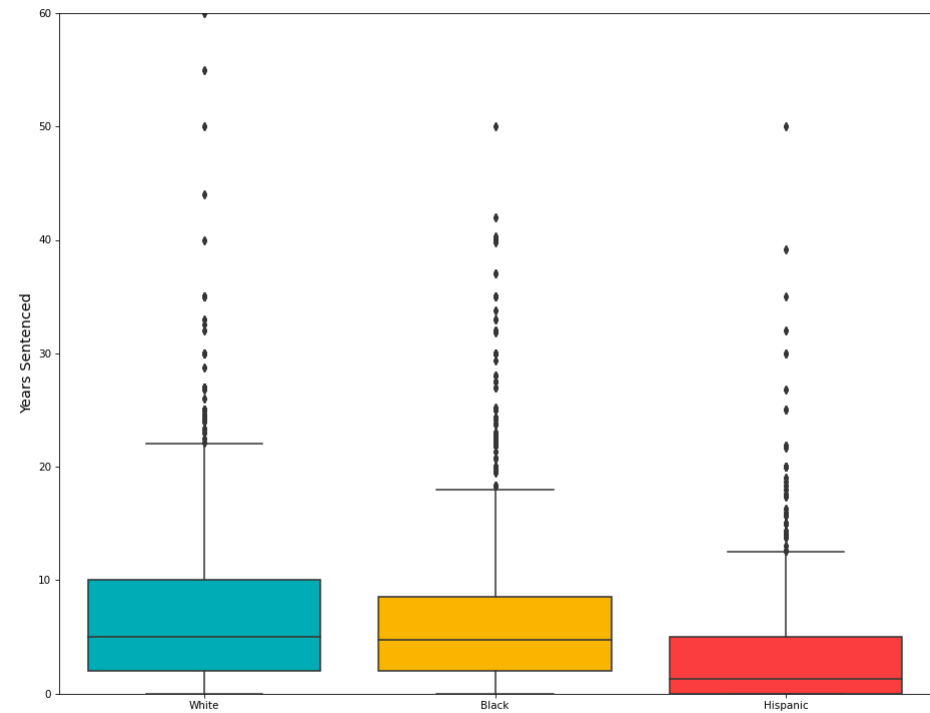
Drug Crime v. White-Collar Crime

- Drug sentences are relatively stable across racial lines, most likely due to the rigid sentencing guidelines for drug offenses
- White defendants have slightly longer sentences for “white-collar crime” than black or Hispanic defendants

Drug-Related Sentences



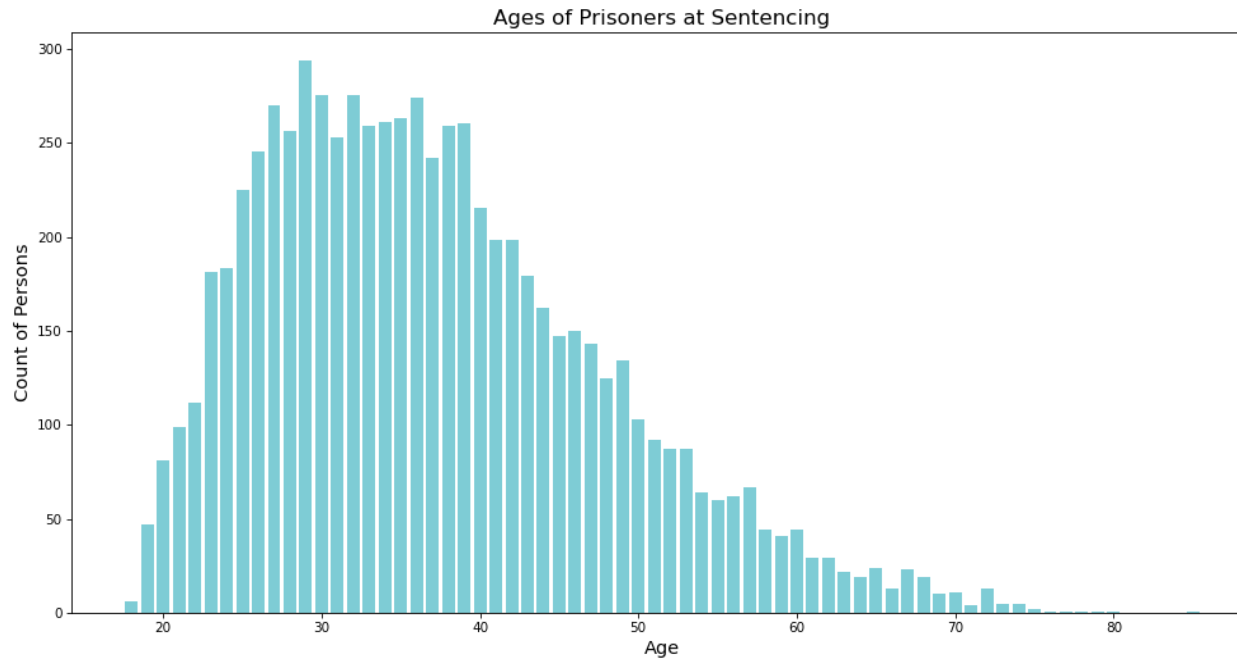
White-Collar Sentences



Age at Sentencing



Age at Sentencing



- In *Prisoners of Politics*, Rachel Elise Barkow explains that most people age out of crime around age 40
- The numbers for Tennessee show a sharp decline around age 40 and a downward trend throughout the rest of an average lifespan

Further Resources

- Barkow, Rachel Elise. [*Prisoners of Politics: Breaking the Cycle of Mass Incarceration*](#). Harvard University Press, 2019.
- U.S. Sentencing Commission. “[Inter-District Differences in Federal Sentencing Practices](#),” 2020.
- U.S. Sentencing Commission. “[Demographic Differences in Sentencing](#),” 2017.
- The Sentencing Project. “[State-by-State Data](#),” 2019.