

A photograph of a prison cell with white metal bars and a door. The text is overlaid on the image.

The Meaning of Life for Those Convicted of Second Degree Murder in Canada

Debra Parkes

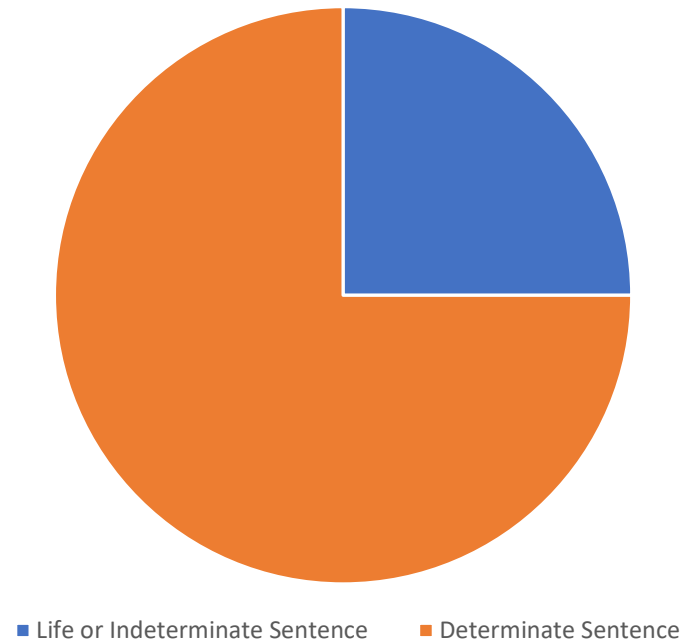
Peter A. Allard School of Law, University of British Columbia

September 30, 2022

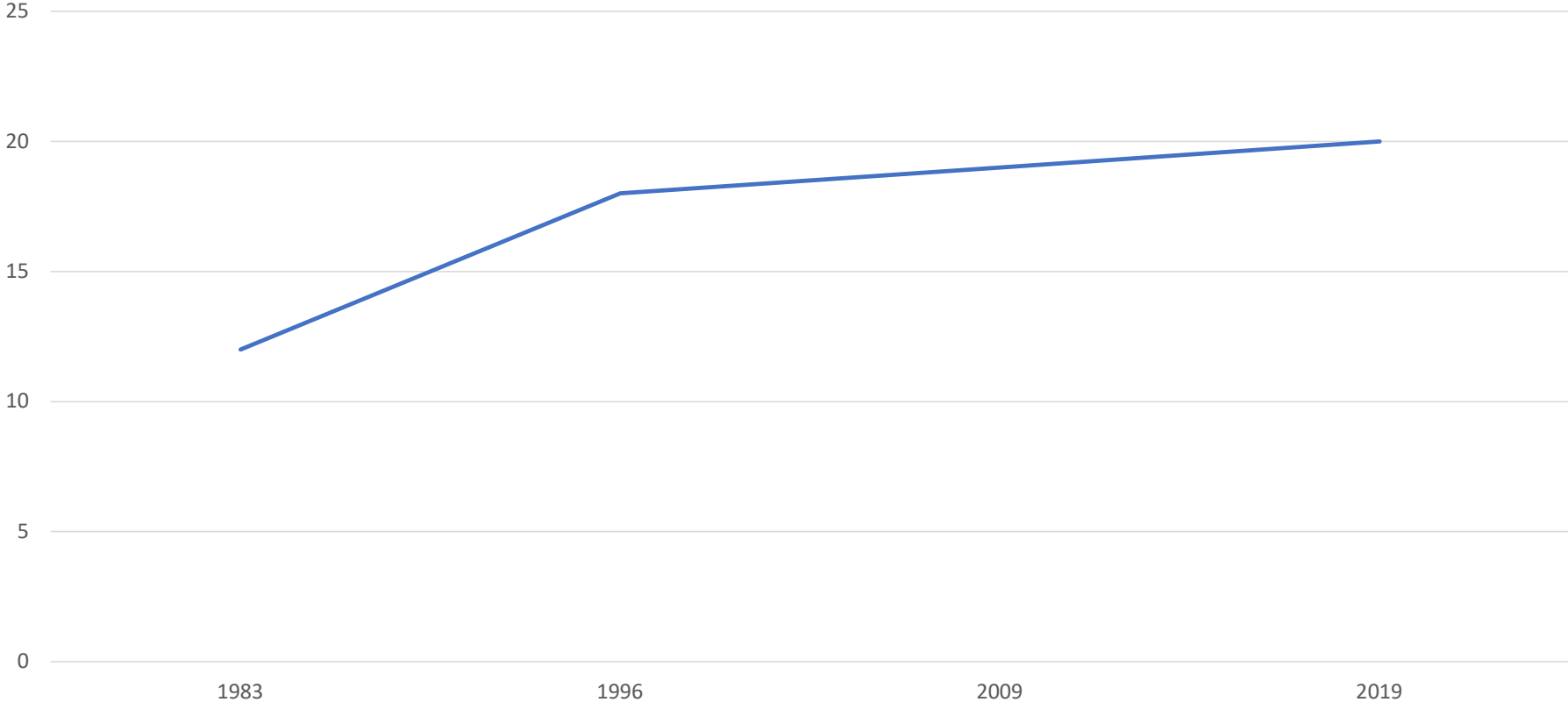
A Growing Population of Lifers

- 27% of those in-custody on a life or indeterminate sentence are Indigenous
- 38% of women admitted to prison for life from 2010-2020 were Indigenous
- 88% of life or indeterminate sentences are for murder

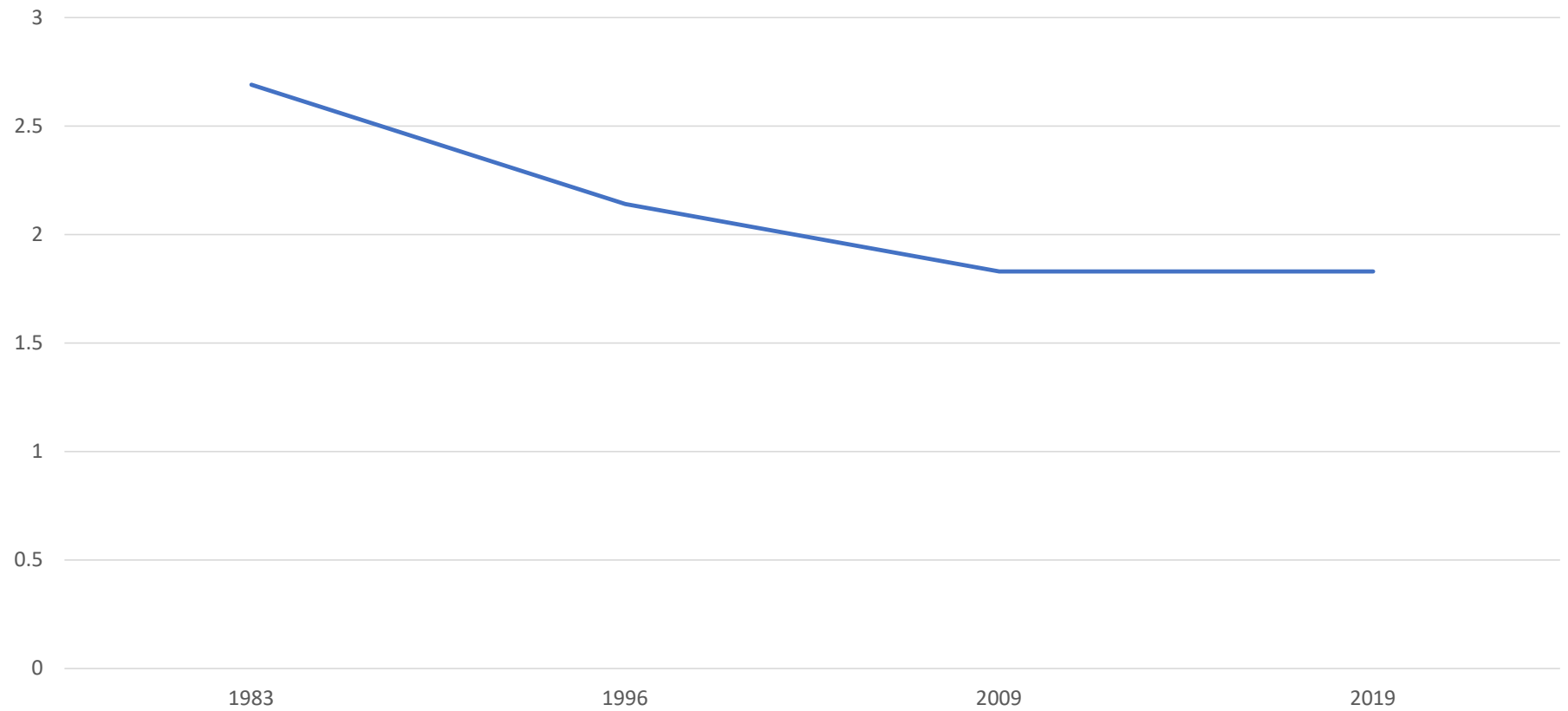
% of People Under Federal Sentence



% of People Under Federal Sentence Serving Life for Murder



Homicide Rate Per 100,000 Population in Canada





Parole Ineligibility Periods
Set by Courts

Figure 1: Parole ineligibility periods set by judges over time

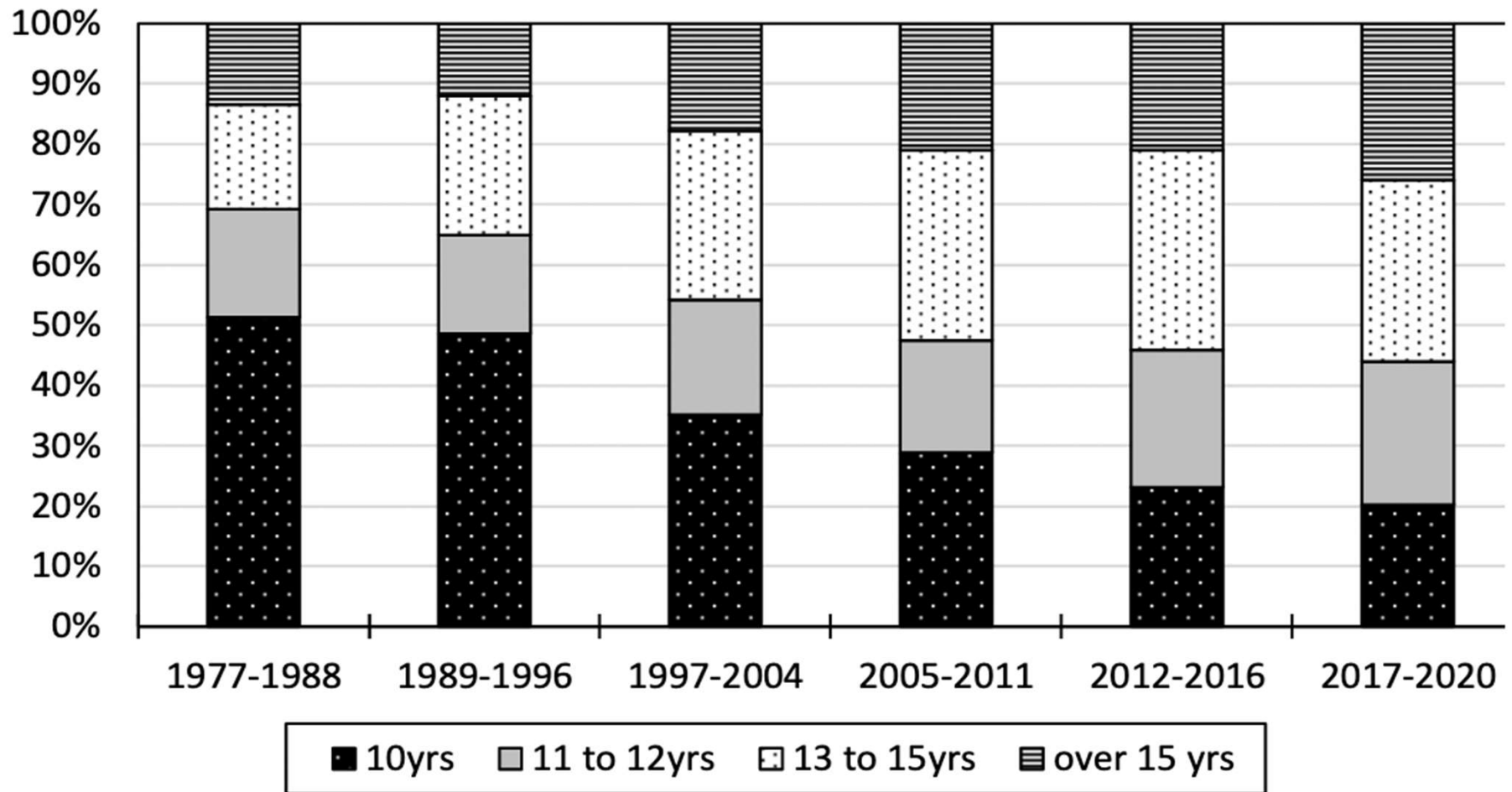


Figure 2: Indigeneity and parole ineligibility periods set by judges (2005–2020)

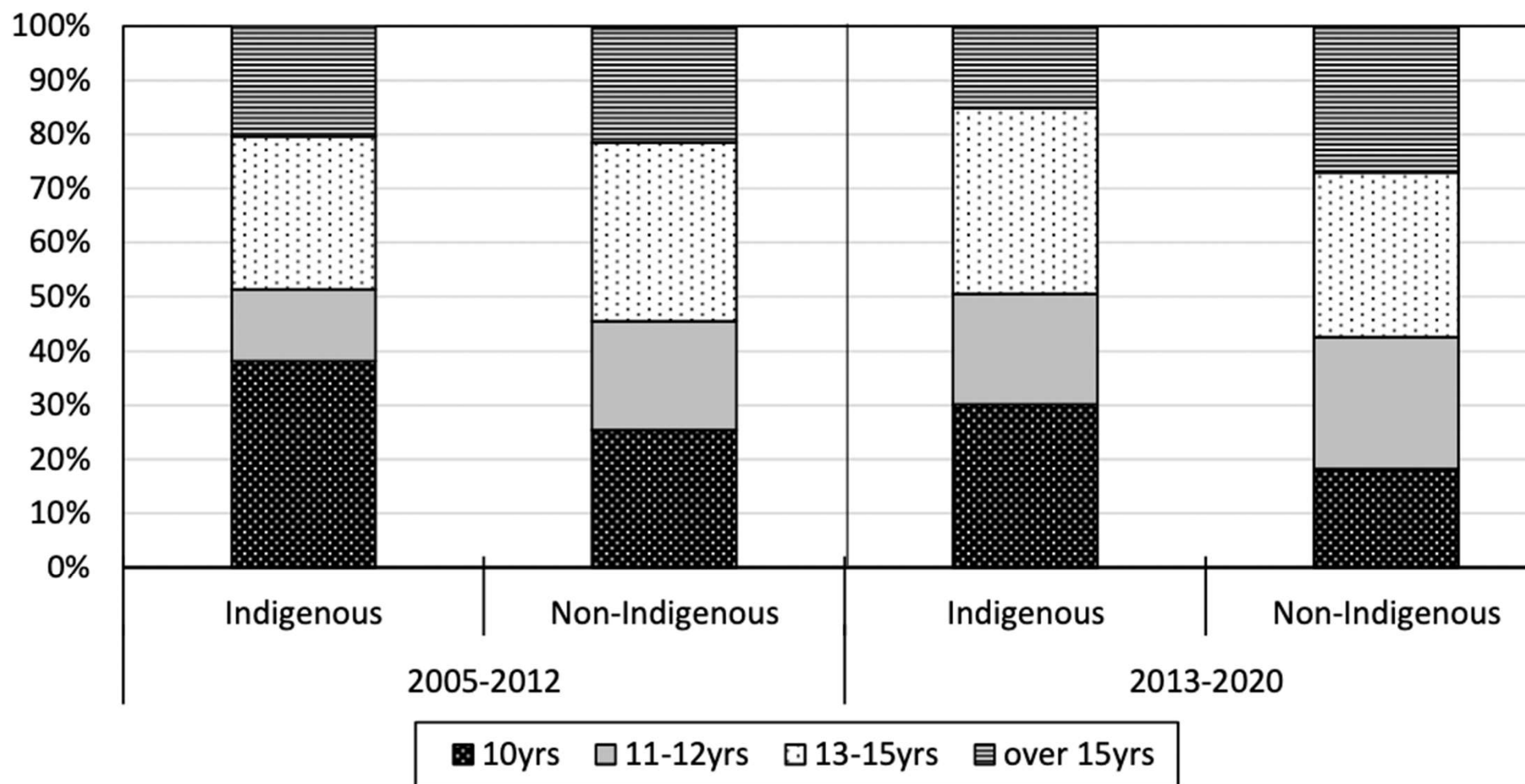
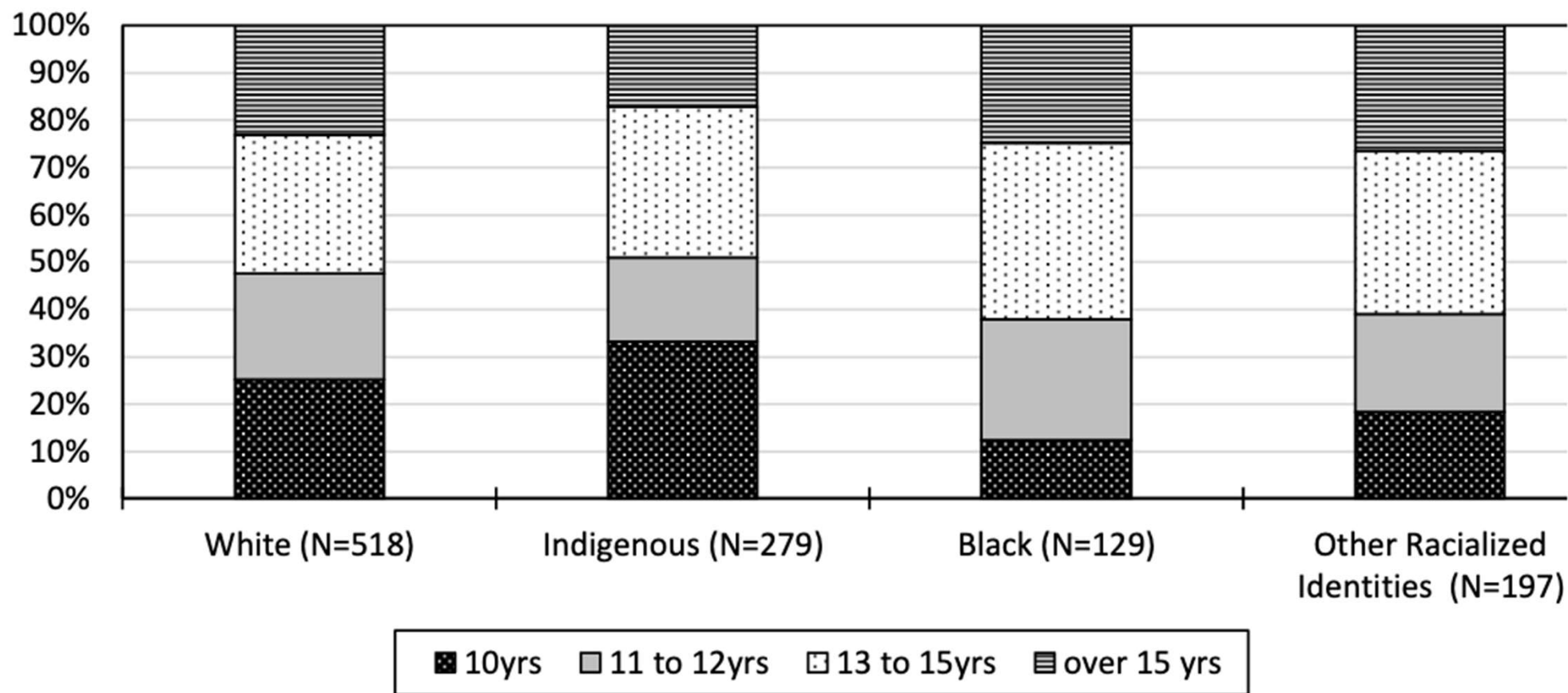


Figure 3: Parole ineligibility periods by race (2005–2020)





Parole Eligibility and Timing of Release

Figure 4: Timing of release by the PBC over time for those with parole eligibility date of 31 December 2015 or earlier

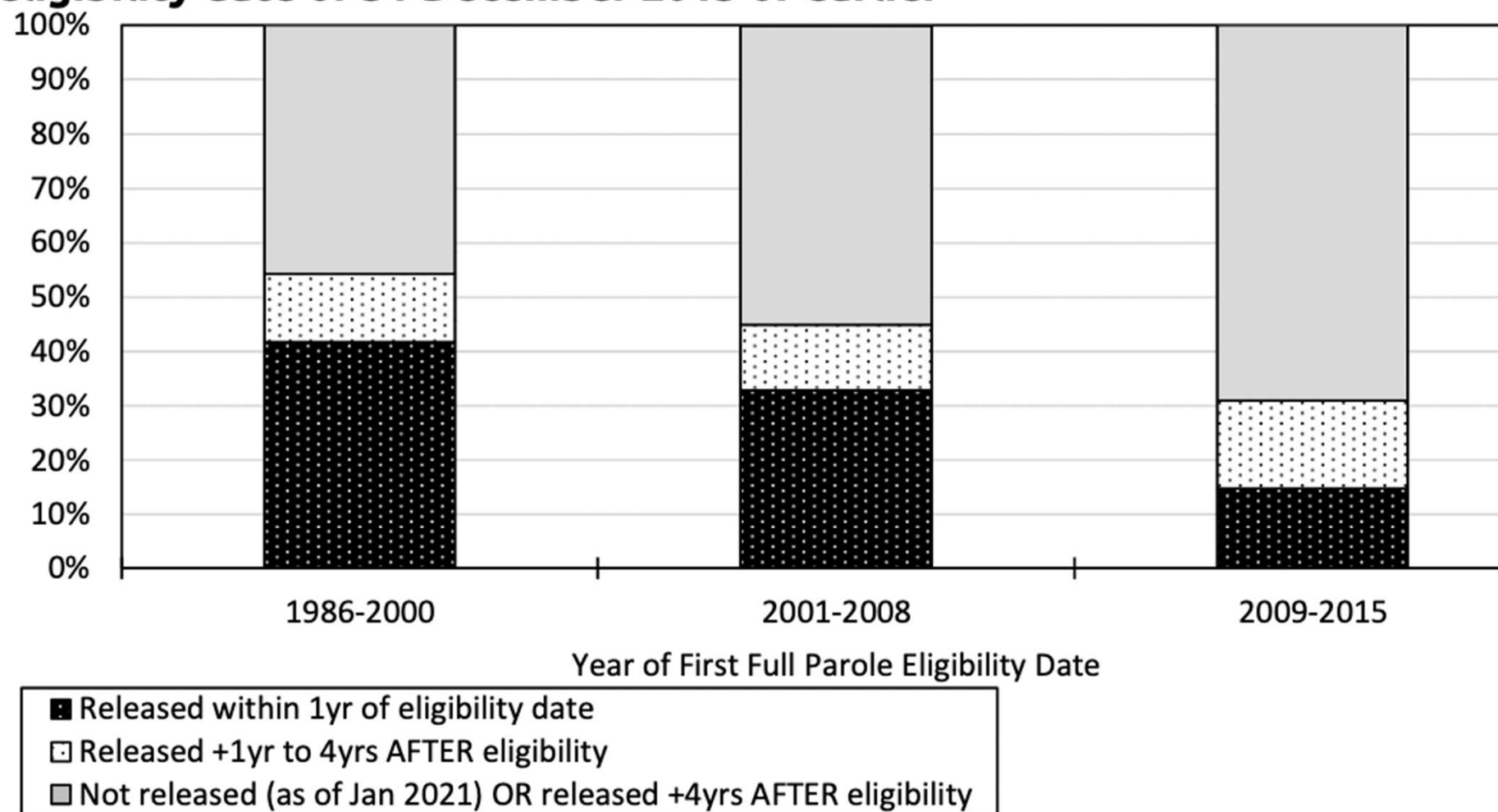
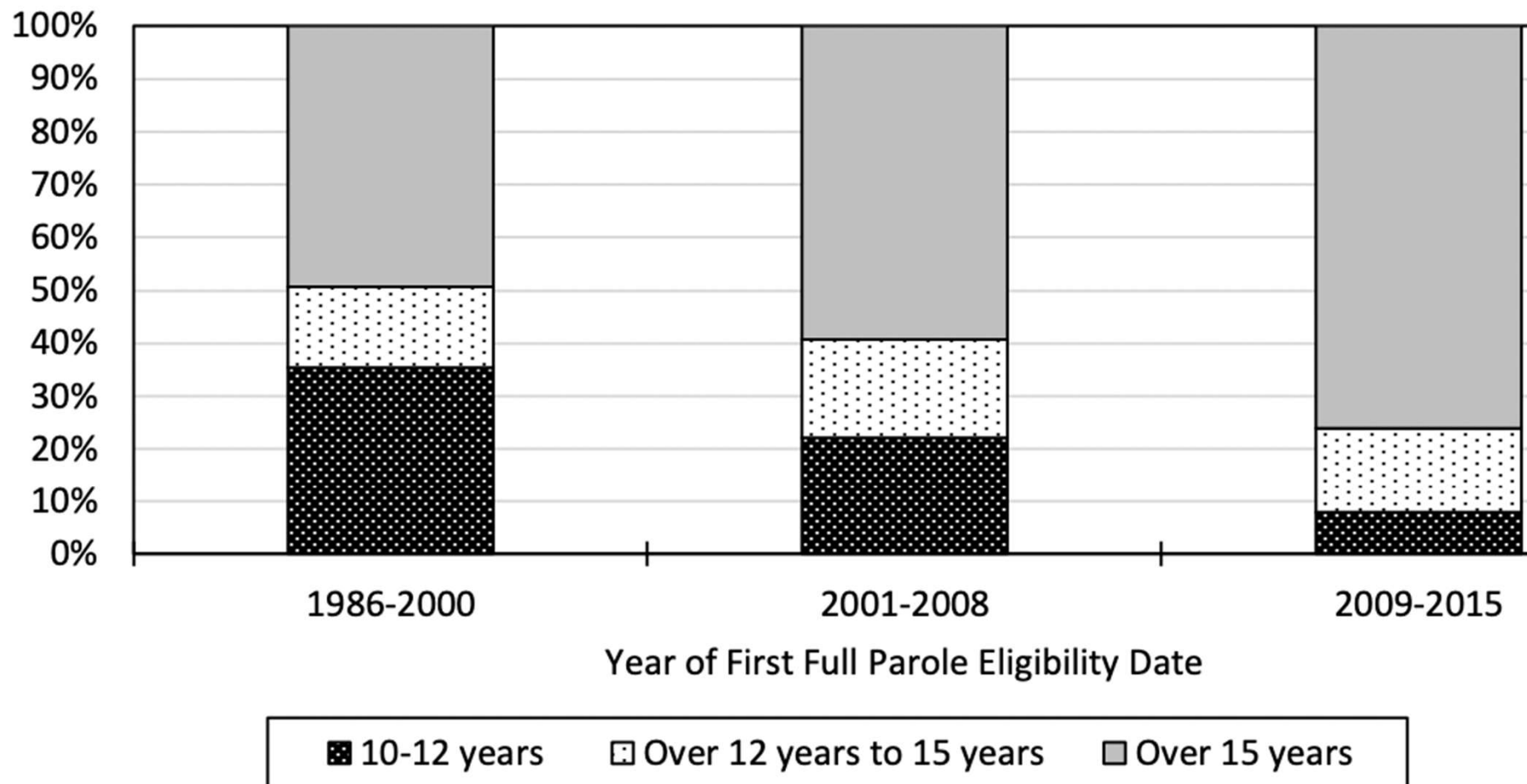


Figure 5: Time in prison (either until first released on full parole, or, if not released, up until 31 Dec 2020)



Debra Parkes, Jane Sprrott & Isabel Grant, “The Evolution of Life Sentences for Murder: Parole Ineligibility and Time Spent in Prison” (2022) 100:1 *Canadian Bar Review* 66-94.