Gender and Ethnic Bias in Sentencing – a Study using Brazilian Microdata

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- Optimising the value of Brazilian microdata

- Building networks between UK and Brazilian researchers

- Training and capacity building
  - Deliver a course for quantitative Brazilian criminologists
Substantive Work – Outline

- Measure racial and gender bias in custodial sentence length
  - Focus on state of Rio de Janeiro
  - Previous work in Brazil suffers from methodological inadequacies

- Measure differences that exist between these groups in terms of attitudes to sentencing fairness

- This will provide valuable insights into the relationship between treatment by the Criminal Justice System and attitudes to it
Sentencing data:

Module: OCCURRENCES
1.060,204 records (occurrences) that relate to 125,840 offenders.

Data on:
- Prison Entry
- Release from Prisons
- Number of Days worked in prison
- Number of Minutes Studied in Prison
- Schools; etc.

Module: OFFENDER’S PROFILE
137,150 records (defendants)

Data on:
- Name
- Nationality
- Date of Birth
- Sex
- Ethnic membership
- Schooling, etc.

Module: LEGAL PROCEEDINGS
185,657 records (legal proceedings)

Data on:
- Date of offence
- Date when charges were pressed
- Date of sentence
- Type of Crime, etc.

Module: CALCULATION OF TIME TO BE SERVED
136,938 records (calculations)

Data on:
- Length of Sentence
- Time Served
- Time Shortened (because of work or study)
Substantive Work – Data

Attitudinal data:

- ILANUD Victimisation Survey (United Nations Latin American Institute for Crime Prevention and Delinquent Treatment)
Substantive Work – Methodological Challenges

- Understanding the data banks
  - We have no documentation! It is not always easy to understand what the variables in the banks mean

- Linking data banks
  - Some of the information relating to an offence can vary between one bank and another

- Careful statistical modelling
  - Multi-level models to allow modelling of within and between-individual variation
  - Controlling for a wide range of important factors – E.g. type of crime; previous criminal history

By meeting these challenges this work will provide a blueprint for further research in this field