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

- ♣ Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) 'Pathfinder' project
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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: **Identity** number of offender **Module: OCCURRENCES** Module: OFFENDER'S PROFILE 1.060.204 records (occurrences) that 137.150 records (defendants) relate to 125.840 offenders. Data on: Data on: Name Prison Entry Nationality Release from Prisons Date of Birth Number of Days worked in prison Number of Minutes Studied in Prison Sex Schools,; etc. Ethnic membership Schooling, etc. Module: CALCULATION OF TIME TO BE **Module: LEGAL PROCEEDINGS SERVED** 185.657 records (legal proceedings) 136.938 records (calculations) Data on: Data on: Date of offence Length of Sentence Date when charges were pressed Time Served Date of sentence Time Shortened (because of work or study) Type of Crime, etc.

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