

Imprisoned fathers, children deprived of rights: analysis of an incentive judiciary program of acknowledgement of paternity

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IMPRISONED FATHERS, CHILDREN DEPRIVED OF RIGHTS: ANALYSIS OF AN INCENTIVE JUDICIARY PROGRAM OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF PATERNITY

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years, Brazil has faced a complex phenomenon in the context of its Justice System, including factors such as increasing number of processes, access barriers, and delay in proceedings, characteristics of what is now known as “Judiciary crisis”. All these aspects refer back to a heavy, slow structure, unable to offer predictable, cost-accessible solutions within a reasonable time (Sadek, 2004).

The Brazilian Justice System ranges a diversity of organizations that act in very distinguished contexts in the scope of the constitutional roles and goals attributed to each of them. The judicial branch is the central element, however, the system also includes the Public Prosecution, Public Defenders, as well as private legal professionals, police organizations, and prison system (Guimaraes, Gomes, & Guarido Filho, 2018).

The flaws of the prison system encompass the non-compliance with basic principles, such as the dignity of the human person, individual rights, like physical and emotional well-being, prohibition of torture, and social rights, as education, health, and maternity protection (Brazil, 2015b).

Leal, Ayres, Esteves-Pereira, Sánchez, & Larouzé (2016) illustrate a good example of such scenario in a study with a sample of 241 imprisoned mothers in prison facilities of capitals and metropolitan regions of Brazil. The results demonstrated that 8% of those mothers were kept handcuffed even during childbirth, which violates both the Federal Constitution and the Binding Precedent 11 of the Federal Supreme Court.

Considering such severe violations of fundamental rights, the Federal Supreme Court acknowledged an Unconstitutional State of Things (ECI) by means of a Claim of Non-compliance with a Fundamental Precept (ADPF) No. 347 (Brazil, 2015a). The ADPF is the proper instrument in this case since, according to the content of article 1 of the Federal Law 9,882, as its own name suggests, its goal is to avoid or compensate for fundamental precept non-compliance resulting from acts performed by public authorities, either due to omission or commission (Brazil, 1999).

The right to paternity is among the rights denied as consequence of the arrest, whose effects extrapolate the sentenced individual since the children endure multiple effects of the lack of contact with their respective fathers (Boswell, 2002).

The first effect is observed immediately after birth due to the father’s impossibility to attend the registry for the acknowledgment of the child, one of the forms of patronymic inclusion foreseen in the current legislation (Brazil, 2002). Thus, even though the constitutional text expresses that the sentence cannot extrapolate the sentenced person, Boswell (2002) underlines that the children are forgotten and neglected victims of the arrest of their parents.

Sganzerla & Levandowski (2011) investigated the consequences of separating fathers and children in a study based on information about teenagers between 13 and 17 who experienced paternal absence. The results revealed the presence of characteristics such as insecurity, anxiety, depressive symptoms, difficulties in social relationships, in addition to other physical and esthetic manifestations. Therefore, the inability of those who should provide their children with positive emotions to do so also constitute an offence to the dignity and to the psychophysical wellbeing of the child.

Therefore, it could be argued that the sentence imposed to the person deprived of liberty would be transferred to their children by depriving them of their constitutionally protected rights in the family scope, a legal asset of utter importance to our legal order.

Corroborating such understanding, Lomeu (2010) addresses the importance of affection and the damages resulting from its deprivation. According to the author, who considers this form of abandonment to be a torture instrument, the personality of the individual is directly influenced by the affection received. Considering the relevance of this topic, the Federal Constitution of 1988 institutes paternity as a citizen right, such as dignity, health, and food, in addition to including the State in the list of those responsible for providing means of enforcing this right (Brazil, 1988).

However, despite this normative ruling, according to data available by the National Association of Civil Registrars of Natural Persons, administrator of the National Center of Civil Register Information, 161,758 people were registered in 2020 with only the mother's name in their birth certificates. Considering such social demand along with the legal support provided in the Brazilian legislation, the National Justice Council (NCJ) designed and implemented the Present Father Program (National Justice Council, 2012).

According to the Provision 16 of the NCJ, the goal of this public policy is to offer the possibility of voluntary paternity acknowledgment through a simplified administrative proceeding, including the performance of genetic mapping (DNA) and annotation of birth register to contain patronymic information (National Justice Council, 2012). One of the characteristics of this program is the universal nature of the attended individuals, allowing the participation of those who are currently inside prison facilities, either in the position of father or child (National Justice Council, 2012).

Thus, based on the statement that each individual has the right of acknowledgment of paternity and considering the importance of evaluating the public policy instituted by the NCJ, we established the following research question: **What impact the procedures effected in the Present Father Program at the Court of Justice of the state of Goiás have on the fulfillment of the right to paternity for imprisoned persons?**

1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1.1 Imprisoned Father

Recent decisions of the Brazilian Judiciary, such as the decision rendered in the trial of Habeas Corpus No. 143.641 before the Brazilian Constitutional Court, demonstrate that the judiciary has directed efforts toward ensuring fundamental rights of mothers who are pregnant or whose children are younger than 12 years old, by allowing them to remain in home detention until the trial of the case (Brazil, 2018).

One of the arguments relies on the fact that these children undergo unnecessary suffering due to the arrest of their mothers. In this perspective, the father figure is also relevant for the development of the individual, which reinforces the need to conduct research from this point of view, that is, considering the impact of imprisoned fathers on the enforcement of the rights of children and teenagers.

Huan, Ang & Lim (2010) carried out a study in this scope investigating a sample of 382 youngsters aged between 13 and 16 years to analyze the relation between paternal criminality and criminal recidivism of young offenders. Their results demonstrated that the father's criminality acts indirectly since it is able to influence early criminal behavior, which

consequently influences criminal recidivism. The authors suggest that one of the factors that can trigger this type of behavior in children is not only the fact that the father committed a crime, but also the paternal absence resulting from the father's arrest.

In this context, Clancy & Maguire (2021) conducted a study demonstrating that it is possible for fathers to exercise paternity even when incarcerated and produce beneficial effects both for the father and the child. Prisoners and family, including children, of 82 penitentiaries were surveyed to understand their family relationships and maintenance of paternal identity. Being closer to their fathers provided the children with benefits such as improved well-being, as well as better behavior and higher school frequency.

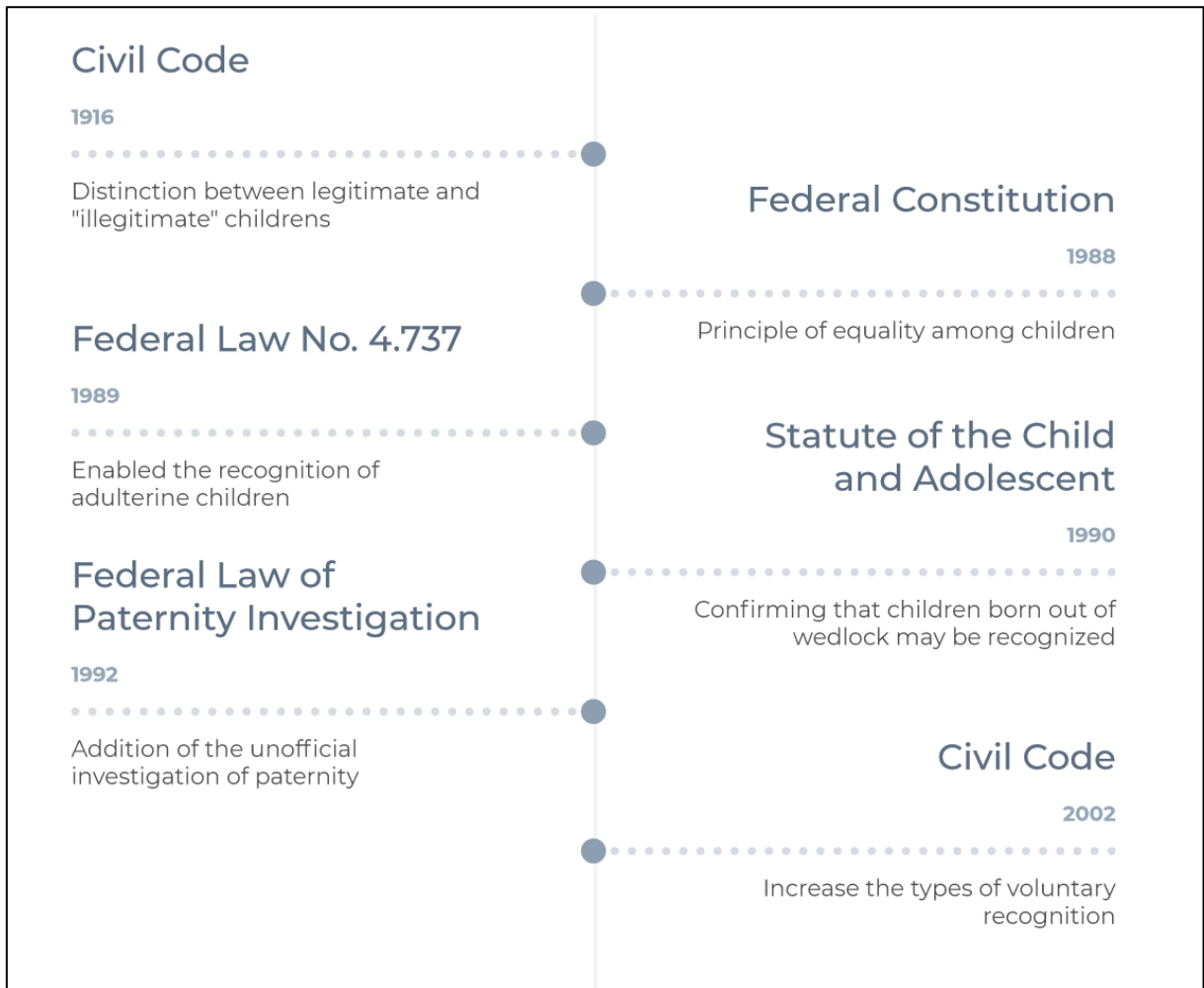
Boswell (2002) also analyzed children's perception on the father's arrest by conducting interviews with 25 individuals aged between 3 and 19 years who experienced the arrest of their fathers. One of the children in the study participated in the activities of a literacy program involving prisoners and children at pre-school-age, others expressed and demonstrated positive emotions provided by the opportunity to play with their fathers, even in a prison environment. The conclusions of the study point that although all respondents were affected by their father's arrest in some fashion, most of them appreciate the possibilities of contact, thus highlighting the importance of the father-child relationship.

In the context of this discussion, it is worth emphasizing that although the legislation approves and allows the interaction of children, teenagers, and imprisoned fathers (Brazil, 2014), the preliminary acknowledgment of paternity is indispensable for the exercise of this right since paternity can be proven by presenting the birth register containing the data referent to patronymic. Therefore, enabling the prisoners to perform the acknowledgement of paternity is essential to ensure that the children have their visitation rights enforced.

1.2 State normative action to enforce the right to paternity

All persons rely, especially at the early stages of life, on family support to develop their potential and being able to guide their own lives. In this sense, filiation is an essential aspect since it is the legal bond that unites parents and children and reflects on their rights and duties, regardless of blood or affective ties (Diniz, 2005). In the Federal Constitution of 1988, filiation is guided by the principle of equality, being expressly prohibited the discrimination among children (Brazil, 1988), however, along the historical development of this concept and the classification of filiation, it has not always been the case, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Evolution of Brazilian legislation regarding filiation



Source: Elaborated by the authors, based on Brazil (1916, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1992, 2002).

The Civil Code of 1916 reflects the patriarchal values of its time by favoring the so-called rightful family, understood only as that resulting from marriage, thus marginalizing family entities that did not derive from matrimony and disregarding the rights of illegitimate children (Venosa, 2017). The filiation was classified according to its origin, with a distinction between children resulting from the marriage, called legitimate, and children born extra-marital relationships, the "illegitimate". The latter were subdivided in the following categories: natural, when the parents were unable to get married, and spurious, when the parents marital union was barred by law, either because both were already married (illegitimate) or for being close relative (incestuous) (Gonçalves, 2012).

Gagliano & Pamplona Filho (2017) emphasize that the effects of the type of bond between parents and children surpass the personal relation and encompass their social relations as well, considering the occurrence of clearly discriminative actions towards those regarded as illegitimate, such as by not recognizing their rights. It is worth mentioning that the article 353 in the Civil Code of 1916 enabled parents to marry as a possibility to legitimate extramarital children, which naturally did not range the spurious category (Brazil, 1916).

Despite minimized by the Federal Law 4.737 of 1989, whose interpretation allowed the acknowledgment of illegitimate children, and the Federal Law 883 of 1949, which allowed the acknowledgment of illegitimate children after the dissolution of the marital society, this device was expressly revoked only in 1989 by the Federal Law 7.841 of 1989 (Venosa, 2017).

In opposition to the Civil Code of 1916, article 227 in the Federal Constitution of 1988 §6 extinguished the distinct categories of filiation and instituted the *principle of equality of children*, consequently, the children born inside and outside marriage, including those whose filiation derived from an adoption procedure, have the same rights and qualifications (Brazil, 1988). To the same end, by disassociating filiation from the existence of marriage, the Magna Carta extended the concept of family and recognized stable unions and single-parent families as family entities, thus stepping aside from former patriarchal and individualist values. Thus, the institute of filiation becomes an instrument to ensure the development of human personality (Farias & Rosenwald, 2016).

Consonant with the Magna Carta, the Statute of the Child and Adolescent, of July 13, 1990, also introduced innovations with the instituting of filiation by confirming the principle contained in the constitutional text, whose art. 26 established that the children born outside marriage can be acknowledged by fathers regardless of the filiation origin (Brazil, 1990). Finally, the advent of the Civil Code of 2002 confirms the principle of equality of children by establishing that “children, born or not in the context of marriage, or adopted, have the same rights and qualifications, being prohibited any discriminatory designations related to filiation” (Brazil, 2002). Thus, the current private code excludes the impediment that hindered the acknowledgement of paternity for a significant part of the society definitively.

In 1992, the Federal Law of Paternity Inquiry was published – Federal Law 8.560 – to regulate the acknowledgment of children born outside marriage. In line with the Magna Carta, the legal text no longer used the expression “illegitimate” to refer to this type of filiation (Brazil, 1992). This same legal text was maintained in the Civil Code of 2002, whose art. 1,609 addresses the types of voluntary acknowledgment (Brazil, 2002). Gagliano & Pamplona Child (2017) highlight that the voluntary acknowledgment is a “formal, willfully, irreversible, unconditional, and strictly personal initiative ordinarily practiced by the father”.

The innovations introduced in this normative rule includes the addition of a new category of spontaneous acknowledgment – officious inquiry of filiation (Brazil, 1992). In cases of registers including only the acknowledged maternity, the official of the registry sends to a certified judge the integral content of the register along with the mother’s declarations with the alleged father’s information. The judge orders to notify the alleged father to manifest on the attributed paternity and, in case of acknowledgment, a term of spontaneous acknowledgment is issued and sent to the registry of civil status for annotation. If the alleged father denies the paternity, the case files are sent to the Public Prosecution, which can promote a paternity inquiry process (Venosa, 2017).

2. METHOD

This topic describes our planning to meet the research goals with the introduction of the research design, research strategy, empiric context, evidence sources, data collection, case selection criterium, and criteria of validity and reliability. This research is a quantitative study with descriptive design that allow to describe and expose the characteristics of the Present Father Program in the scope of the Court of Justice of the state of Goiás.

The context in study encompasses 127 districts integrating the organizational structure of this court, a choice based on three reasons. The first of them is the report made available by the NCJ containing information on the Present Father Program results achieved by 19 Courts of Justice, but not including the data of the TJ-GO (National Justice Council, 2015). The second reason is the lack of studies using this information unit. Our searches on the databases of Sage, Science Direct Elsevier, Springer, Scielo, and Emerald found no paper addressing the Present Father Program. An expanded search on the Google Scholar found only 7 articles and 5 theses that investigated some aspect of the program in the Courts of Justice of the following states: Alagoas, Ceará, Espírito Santo, Minas Gerais, Paraná, Paraíba, Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina, São Paulo, and Tocantins.

The third reason is that this court in question is where the researcher performs her professional activities, including procedures related to the Present Father Program, which facilitated accessing the information. Furthermore, consistent with our theoretical background, Jannuzzi (2011) conveys that it is interesting for the evaluator of the public policy to have empiric experience in its object of study to better guide the questions and interpret the results.

Considering the absence of systemic analyses of the results by this body, which implies lack of information on the level of maturity of the program, we used secondary data related to the indicators of the program, defined by the governing bodies of the Court of Justice of the state of Goiás, to verify its efficiency. This analysis provides subsidies for further broader, deeper analyses.

In the TJ-GO, the data collection occurs quarterly by means of an official letter sent by each one of the districts to the Coordinating Body of the Present Father Program, whose results are represented by the indicators in Table 1. It is worth mentioning that no current standardization is available for indicators on a national level established by the National Justice Council. Thus, the indicators defined by the governing bodies of this court are supplied with the tabulated and grouped data sent by the districts.

Table 1: Indicators used to measure the results of the Present Father Program in the scope of the Court of Justice of the state of Goiás

Variable		Description
Dependent	procedures successfully completed	Number of processes involving the acknowledgement of paternity and consequently register annotation.
Predictive	conducted interviews	Times of appearance at the judicial unit to provide information regarding the alleged father, an imperative info for the process to continue.
	ongoing procedures	Current demand of processes, either awaiting interview, hearing, sentence, annotation of birth register or the mother's appearance to withdraw the updated birth certificate containing the patronymic information.
	acknowledgment of imprisoned father	Number of cases that, considering that the alleged father is imprisoned, required interlocution with prison system institutions to transport the father for the hearing.
	DNAs performed	Number of cases in which the genetic test was requested for the paternity inquiry.

procedures unsuccessfully completed	Number of cases in which: (1) no contact could be made with the mother, either due to insufficient data or lack of interest in the acknowledgment; (2) data were insufficient for the father's notice; (3) the father failed to appear at the hearing or DNA test, and (4) negative result of the DNA test for paternity.
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Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Seeking to investigate the influence of the predictive variables on the dependent variable, that is, amount of processes successfully completed, we applied a model of multiple linear regression based on the method of ordinary least squares. We performed the following tests to validate the assumptions of the model of multiple linear regression: (1) residual independence, Durbin-Watson test, (2) heteroscedasticity, Breusch-Pagan test, (3) normality of residuals, Shapiro test, (4) absence of multicollinearity, VIF (Greene, 2012).

3. RESULTS

3.1 Present Father Program

Even though the Federal Law 8,560 of 1992 provides the officious inquiry of paternity, until 2012 the judicial courts and extrajudicial services in the country still executed an exceptionally low number of this type of procedures. Data of the EducaCenso 2009 pointed that the number of birth certificates of students without information regarding paternity reached 4,869,363, including 3,853,971 under the age of 18 years (National Justice Council, 2010).

Therefore, in order to regulate and enforce the legislation, in 2010 the National Justice Council (NCJ) issued Provision 12, which established the Present Father Program seeking to facilitate the voluntary paternity acknowledgment (National Justice Council, 2010). Through this normative rule, the NCJ determined the shipment of CDs containing information of students without acknowledged paternity gathered from the EducaCenso database.

According to Provision 16, upon receiving the data, the judge summons the mother to appear in court in order to indicate the alleged father (National Justice Council, 2012a). The normative ruling also established that in case the information provided is sufficient to identify and locate the alleged parent, the individual should be notified to appear at the hearing and manifest on the acknowledgment of paternity. Following this notification, the procedure would be served, and the mother is summoned to appear at the acknowledgement of paternity hearing.

In case of spontaneous acknowledgement of paternity, a term of acknowledgment is registered and sent to the civil registry for the annotation of the child's register. Nonetheless, if the alleged father has doubts about the paternity, the Provision established the performance of DNA tests. It is important to emphasize that according to the Law of Paternity Inquiry and the Civil Code, the Provision expresses that the mother of the minor's consent is imperative for the procedure to initiate, while the child's consent is indispensable in case the acknowledged child is over 18 years (Brazil, 1992, 2002). However, if the alleged father is relatively unable, the acknowledgment of paternity does not depend on the support of the parents or tutor. Still, if completely unable, the acknowledgment depends on legal decision, which can be stated in the administrative sphere.

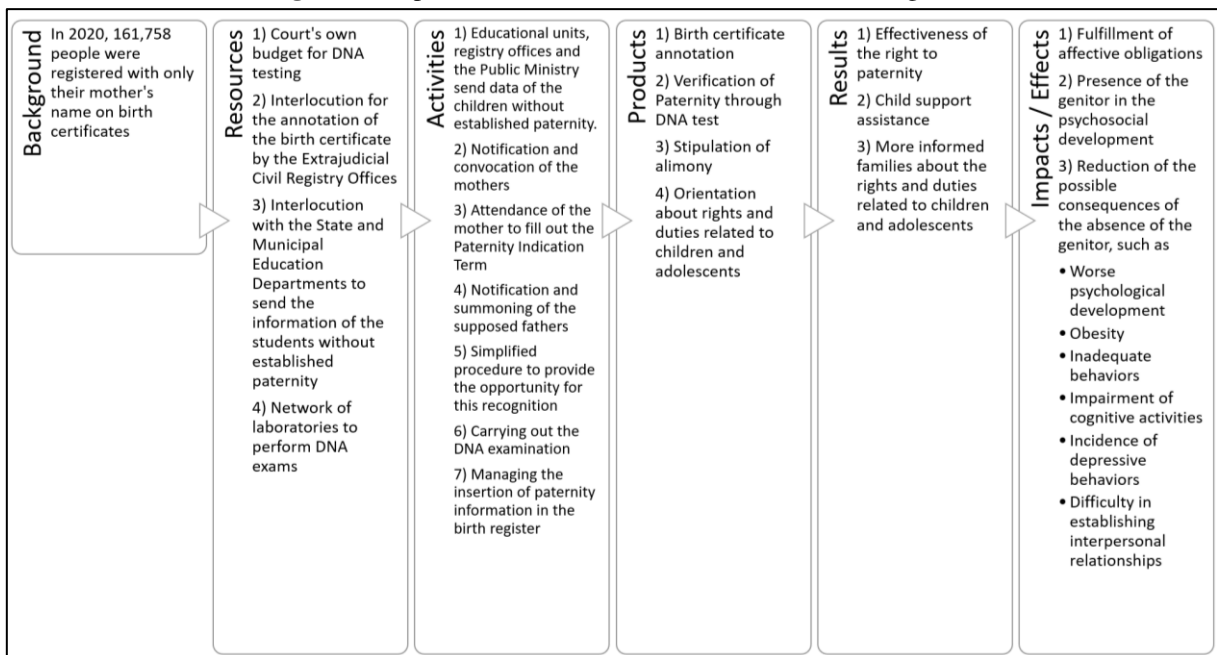
Considering the straightforwardness and willingness of the procedure, the participation of an attorney or representative of the Public Prosecution is optional, as well as the marital

status of the parents or potential kinship between them are irrelevant for the paternity to be acknowledged. Finally, the possibility of the alleged father not responding to the notice to manifest on the paternity, or refuse to acknowledge it, the case files are sent to the Public Prosecution or the Public Defenders Department to initiate a paternity inquiry proceeding in case the elements contained are sufficient.

It must be said that the impacts expected in the scope of the program, according to illustration in Figure 2, relate to minimizing the effects of the absence of father figure, late acknowledgement of paternity, and associated issues. Thus, it is expected that the acknowledgement of paternity allows to mitigate problems like insecurity, anxiety, depressive symptoms, difficulties in social relationships, in addition to other physical and esthetic manifestations (Sganzerla & Levandowski, 2011).

The preliminary data of the Present Father Program proved so promising that in 2012, the NCJ issued Provision 16, providing the program with a permanent condition and establishing that its procedure should be adopted at any given situation when the mother of the unacknowledged child appear to register the child and indicate the alleged father's name, in case the child is a minor; or, in case the child is 18 or older upon appearing before the registry office (National Justice Council, 2012a).

Figure 2: Map of Process and Results of Present Father Program



Source: Elaborated by the authors based on Gomes and Resende (2004), Dubowitz et al. (2001), Gibson et al. (2016), Verschueren and Marcoen (1999) and National Council of Justice (2012).

With this change, the mother no longer requires waiting for the notice to appear before the Judiciary or registry to indicate the alleged father, which can be now done on his own initiative. This facilitated the access of the interested parties to the Present Father Program.

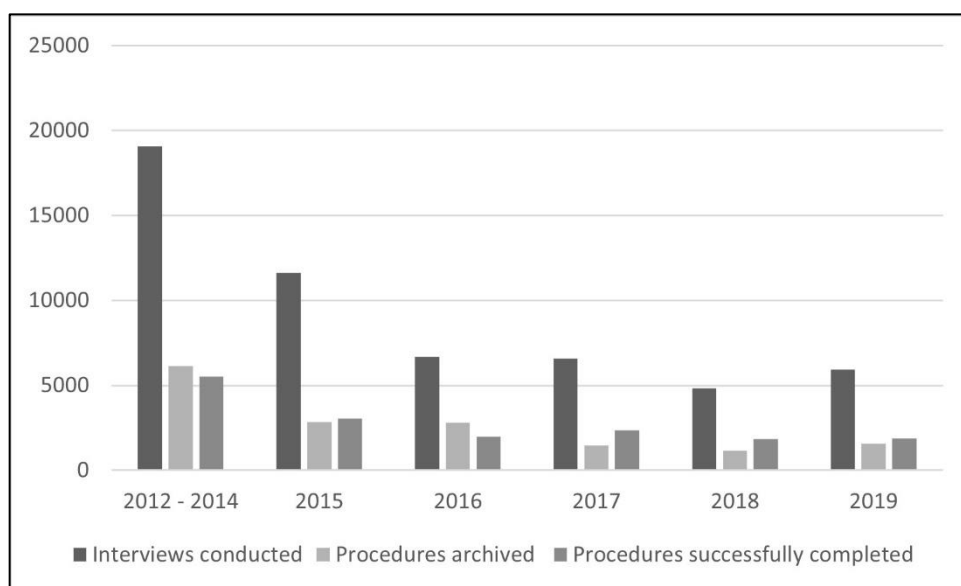
Providence n° 19 of 2012 brought an important advance in terms of the program's accessibility by establishing that the recognition of paternity in the birth certificate, if requested by an admittedly poor person, would be totally free of charge (National Justice Council, 2012b). The proof of poverty should be submitted by means of a simple declaration signed by the applicant and does not require any other formal procedure. The provision is based on the understanding of the plenary council of the NCJ that the annotation of acknowledged paternity and the gratuity of the civil register are inextricable for being contained in the rights of personality that offer the dignity of human person.

A characteristic of the Present Father Program is the absence of a unified, standardized evaluation procedure instituted by the NCJ to evaluate the results; therefore, it is performed by each one of the Courts according to what is defined by their governing bodies. Nonetheless, despite the absence of a regimentation of this nature, the evaluation of this public policy can benefit the offer of subsidies for decision makers, information on the public served, data on the results achieved directly and indirectly, topics for enhancement, adjustments, and improvement, in addition to the merits of the program (Jannuzzi, 2020a). Furthermore, it demonstrates diligence and compliance with the outcome of the Democratic State of Law, such as the transparency that orchestrate accountability and social control (Jannuzzi, 2020b).

3.2 Quantitative Analyses

In the Court of Justice in the state of Goiás, we analyzed the increase in the number of individuals who accessed the program since its implementation until the year of 2019 based on the official data provided by the Coordinating Body of the program, according to Figure 3. The analysis of the results enabled to find that 16,623 (19.5%) of a total of 87,242 processes entrusted to this court resulted in acknowledgement of paternity.

Figure 3: Processes that resulted in an interview, recognition of paternity and unsuccessful filing between 2012 and 2019.



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

It is worth highlighting that all the indicators gathered presented a rather variable profile, for example, the number of conducted interviews had a dispersion of 381.78%, while the amount of ongoing procedures had a variation of 298.67%, and the amount of acknowledgement procedures performed, 379.10%. The measurements in Table 2 show the heterogeneity of the sample.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of sample indicators.

Variables	Average	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Conducted interviews	14	275.07	0	4.859
Ongoing processes	5	81.79	0	851
Completed processes	21.5	94.9	0	1.470
Successfully completed	4	83.02	0	1.555

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Considering that the minimum amount has values set to zero, we analyzed the participation and adhesion of the districts to the program and found that 10 districts did not conduct any interview or respond to the official letter requesting the information quarterly for four years or more, 11 other districts did not do so for a period of three years, while other 14 districts for two years, a total of 27.55% of the districts in the State. This corroborates the concepts of Exworthy, Berney & Powell (2002) when stating that the priorities defined on a national hierarchical level may not conform to the priorities on a regional scale.

In contrast, our results demonstrate the representativeness of the Goiânia district in the sample. Altogether, 17,130 procedures were submitted to this district, representing a percentage of 20.63% of the total of interviews conducted and 20.57% of the total of processes successfully completed. Furthermore, the maximum value of interviews conducted during the period (4,859), as well as the number of procedures successfully completed (1,555), took place in Goiânia.

Since 2019, two extra indicators were added: amount of genetic mapping tests (DNA) and number of processes involving an imprisoned father. Considering the relevance of such information and the unavailability of data in previous periods, the subsequent analyses regarded only the information referent to the year of 2019 and the districts of initial and intermediate appeal (that is, the Goiânia district was removed from the analysis) since the inclusion of the district of initial appeal would cause distortions in the results.

These data led us to create a model of multiple linear regression to verify the influence of the variables of interviews conducted, ongoing procedures, acknowledgement of paternity by an imprisoned father, and DNA tests performed (predictive variables) on the amount of acknowledgement procedures performed (dependent variable). Initially, we conducted statistical tests to establish whether the model containing the variables met the assumptions used in the linear regression.

The goal of the first test was to verify the independence between the residuals of least squares, demonstrated through the Durbin-Watson method with a coefficient of 2.10 and p-value of 0.474 (Greene, 2012). In turn, the second test verified heteroscedasticity by applying the Breusch-Pagan test, with a p-value < 0.01, thus allowing to reject the null hypothesis of homoscedasticity (Maroco, 2007).

We tested the collinearity using the VIF values – variance inflation factors –, whose mean value of 3.77 (below 10) did not indicate the presence of multicollinearity between the variables (O’Brien, 2007). Finally, the Shapiro test confirmed the normality of residuals since the resulting p-value was below 0.05 (Maroco, 2007). Table 3 presents a general view on the assumptions, applied tests, null hypotheses considered, and the result achieved by the proposed model.

Table 3: Tests of assumptions

Assumption	Applied test	Null hypothesis	Conclusion
Independence of residuals	Durbin-Watson	Not rejected	No correlation between the residuals
Normality of residuals	Shapiro	Not rejected	Normality of residuals
Multicollinearity	VIF	Not applicable	No significant correlation between the variables
Heteroscedasticity	Breusch-Pagan	Rejected	Heteroscedastic residuals

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

We performed an analysis of the model to investigate how the assumptions of the multiple linear regression were met. Initially, we analyzed the adjusted determination coefficient (adjusted R²), with a value of 0.711, revealing that 71.1% of the variations in the amount of acknowledgement procedures performed are explained by the combined variation of the variables used in the model. Finally, we analyzed the beta coefficients presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Beta coefficients of the model.

Variable	Beta coefficient	Test statistics	p-value	Significance
Conducted interviews	-0.12	-5.804	0.00000005	***
Ongoing procedures	0.03	2.520	0.0131	*
Imprisoned father	5.58	7.566	0.000000000008	***
DNAs performed	1.51	4.833	0.000004	***

* Statistically significant at level 0.05

*** Statistically significant at level 0.001

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

The values of the beta coefficients enabled to evaluate the importance of each of the variables in the general forecast of the procedures successfully completed. In the context of the procedure, the most relevant variable is the one that points that the individual indicated as alleged father is imprisoned (variable Imprisoned Father), followed by the DNA test for proof of paternity. A point for particular attention in this analysis is the indication in the variable Interviews Conducted, suggesting that its increase has a negative influence on the amount of acknowledgement procedures performed.

4. FINAL REMARKS AND CONSIDERATIONS

In the state of Goiás, we analyzed the increase in the number of individuals served by the Present Father Program in the Court of Justice of the state of Goiás from its start to the year of 2019, according to official data provided by the Coordinating Body of the Program and found a relation of 19.5% between the number of interviews conducted and acknowledgement procedures performed. It is worth pointing out that such result appeared even with a low participation of 27.55% in the districts of the State, information that can be used by the management bodies to investigate the causes, and if possible, relieve them.

Thereafter, the analysis of the several activities conducted during the process regarding the efficiency of the program revealed the importance of the variables indicating that the alleged father is imprisoned and the DNA test performance for proof of paternity. The relation found between these variables expresses that the program has ensured not only the children's right to paternity, but also the fundamental rights of those individuals who are in prison facilities regarding the dignity of the human person and equality, materialized in the opportunity for them to acknowledge their children.

Furthermore, the verifying examination of the genetic material also reveals another aspect since in case of doubt, the father also has the right to confirm the paternity before the acknowledgment per se. It is worth highlighting that considering the existence of other variables unforeseen in the research model, as well as indicators and information that are not gathered by the Court of Justice of the state of Goiás currently, we can affirm that our findings constitute important elements to understand our research question and contribute to further studies.

In this sense, suggestions for the improvement of such indicators include information regarding the following aspects: (1) result of the DNA tests performed; (2) number of processes sent to the Public Prosecution; (3) amount of sentences prescribing child support (4) loss of contact with the parents, (5) non-attendance to the hearings. Another suggestion is that the database is constituted on the procedure level, thus allowing analyses according to age group and locality, subsidies to guide information campaigns.

According to Jannuzzi (2020c), developing evaluations in the scope of other dimensions, such as the effectiveness of the program, would be of great interest of providing information on the impact perceived by the society. Therefore, the demands that triggered the creation of this public policy should be investigated, for example, by understanding if the affective abandonment resulting from the absence of father figure has been compensated with the program actions, in this case, the acknowledgement of paternity.

Finally, we suggest that further studies address the following aspects: (i) to investigate the reasons that led the father to not comply with the acknowledge of paternity, (ii) investigate the reason that led some districts to not perform interviews for long periods of time, and (iii) the impact of COVID-19 on the program.

We also suggest that further studies direct their efforts towards understanding the cultural impacts of a given locality on the procedure result, either regarding the cultural issues of a certain judicial court or the actors involved in the process. In this context, it is necessary to further investigate the structure of cultural, organizational, and individual impacts able to interfere with the results of the program.

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