

## CIVIL REGISTRATION OF BIRTH, DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON AND RIGHTS IN BRAZIL: SOCIAL INVISIBILITY, UNDOCUMENTED PEOPLE AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT IN PERSPECTIVE



<https://doi.org/10.56238/arev7n2-300>

Submitted on: 01/26/2025

Publication date: 02/26/2025

**Arlei Inácio de Almeida<sup>1</sup>, Daniela Marques do Amaral Almeida<sup>2</sup> and Carlos Federico Domínguez Avila<sup>3</sup>.**

### ABSTRACT

The text addresses the correlation between civil under-registration and the Human Development Index (HDI) in Brazil, exploring how the lack of basic documentation impacts human development and perpetuates cycles of social exclusion. The study analyzes the historical roots of underreporting, its geographic and demographic distribution, and its effects on the components of the HDI (health, education, and income). The survey highlights the regional disparities in Brazil, with an emphasis on the North and Northeast regions, where the problem is more pronounced. The paper also examines government initiatives to combat under-registration and improve the HDI, highlighting the importance of integrated public policies to promote more equitable and sustainable development in the country.

**Keywords:** Civil underreporting. Human development. Social invisibility. Regional inequality. Public policies.

---

<sup>1</sup> Dr. student in law

Academic institution: FADISP (Autonomous Faculty of Law - SP and IDP (Brazilian Institute of Teaching, Development and Research-DF)

<sup>2</sup> Master's student in Regional Development;

Academic institution: UNIALFA (Alves Faria University Center)

<sup>3</sup> Postdoctoral fellow in Political Science (Ufpe-2013, and Ufg-2017), in International Relations (Uerj-2022-2024 with a scholarship from Faperj, and 2017), in Comparative Studies on the Americas (Ceppac/Unb-2016), in History (UnB-2021), in Law/Global Inequalities and Social Justice/North-South Dialogues (Flacso-Brazil and UnB-2020), in Administration (Ufrgs, 2019), and Contemporary Integration of Latin America (Unila, 2018);

Academic institution: UNIALFA (Alves Faria University Center)

## INTRODUCTION

Social invisibility is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that permeates Brazilian society, deeply and lastingly affecting various marginalized groups. This study aims to examine one of the most critical manifestations of this invisibility: the civil under-registration of births and its correlation with the Human Development Index (HDI) in Brazil. The research seeks to understand how the absence of basic documentation contributes to the perpetuation of cycles of poverty, social exclusion and low human development in different regions of the country.

Brazil, as one of the largest economies in the world and a country of continental dimensions, presents marked contrasts in its socioeconomic development. While some regions enjoy high quality of life scores, others remain mired in precarious conditions, with limited access to basic services and opportunities for growth. In this context, the civil under-registration of births emerges as a crucial indicator of social invisibility, representing not only the lack of documentation, but also the denial of fundamental rights and the non-recognition of individuals as full citizens before the State.

Civil under-registration in Brazil has deep historical roots, dating back to the colonial period and perpetuating itself through unequal social structures and ineffective public policies. Over the years, several factors have contributed to the persistence of this problem, including the country's vast territorial extension, the existence of isolated communities, excessive bureaucracy, and the lack of awareness about the importance of civil registration. As a result, a significant number of Brazilians live on the margins of society, without access to basic rights such as education, health and formal work.

On the other hand, the Human Development Index (HDI), developed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), offers a comprehensive measure of quality of life, considering not only the economic aspect, but also health and education. The HDI has become an essential tool for assessing social progress and guiding public policies around the world. In Brazil, the HDI has revealed significant disparities between different regions and social groups, highlighting areas that need urgent intervention.

This study aims to explore the intersection between civil under-registration of birth and the HDI, investigating how the lack of basic documentation impacts the components of the HDI and, consequently, human development in different regions of Brazil. The research addresses the following aspects:

1. Conceptualization and contextualization of social invisibility in Brazil, exploring its various manifestations and impacts on contemporary society;
2. Historical and sociological analysis of civil under-registration of births in the country, including its origins, evolution over time and the factors that contribute to its persistence in certain regions and social groups;
3. Detailed examination of the Human Development Index, its calculation methodology and its relevance as an indicator of quality of life and social progress;
4. Geographic and demographic mapping of civil underreporting in Brazil, identifying the regions and population groups most affected by this phenomenon;
5. Comparative analysis between areas of high underreporting and low HDI, seeking to establish significant correlations and patterns;
6. Investigation of the direct and indirect impacts of civil under-registration of birth on the components of the HDI: longevity, education and income;
7. Specific case studies of communities affected by under-registration, exploring the practical consequences of lack of documentation in the daily lives of individuals;
8. Evaluation of existing governmental and non-governmental initiatives to combat under-registration and promote social inclusion, analyzing their successes and limitations;
9. Examination of current public policies aimed at increasing the HDI and its effectiveness in areas with a high rate of under-registration;
10. Analysis of the role of technology and digitalization in reducing under-registration and promoting access to public services;
11. Investigation of the intersections between under-registration, race, gender and social class, seeking to understand how different forms of marginalization are intertwined and mutually reinforcing;
12. Finally, a comparative study will be carried out with other developing countries that have faced similar challenges, seeking to identify successful strategies that can be adapted to the Brazilian context.

The methodology used in this study will be multidisciplinary, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. Statistical data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), reports from the UNDP and other international organizations, as well as

recent academic studies on social invisibility, civil under-registration and human development will be used.

This work aims not only to quantify and analyze the relationship between civil under-registration of births and HDI, but also to understand its root causes, social impacts, and implications for the future of human development in Brazil. It is hoped that the results of this research can provide valuable insights for the formulation of more effective and inclusive public policies, contributing to the reduction of inequalities and the promotion of more equitable development throughout the national territory.

By exploring the complex web of relationships between social invisibility, civil under-registration and human development, this study seeks to shed light on one of the most pressing challenges of contemporary Brazilian society. An in-depth understanding of these phenomena is essential for the construction of a fairer, more inclusive and developed Brazil, where all citizens can have their rights recognized and their potential fully realized.

## **THE PHENOMENON OF SOCIAL INVISIBILITY AND UNDOCUMENTED PEOPLE IN BRAZIL: VIEWS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF DEVELOPMENT**

Social invisibility in Brazil is an intricate phenomenon with multiple dimensions, with profound impacts on various marginalized segments of the population. This problem is evidenced through indifference, prejudice and marginalization of people and entire groups, depriving them of social recognition, chances for progress and access to fundamental rights.

Social invisibility in the Brazilian context is intrinsically linked to historical, economic, and cultural factors, such as structural racism, economic inequality, and the lack of effective public policies. Groups particularly affected include the black population, homeless people, peripheral communities, and individuals without civil documents (KARLONI, 2022, p. 3-4).

Recent studies indicate that about 221,869 people live on the streets in Brazil, although this number may be underestimated due to underreporting (CALIXTO, 2022, p. 7). In addition, approximately 3 million Brazilians do not even have a birth certificate, which deprives them of access to basic services and social programs (JUCÁ, 2021, p. 2).

Understanding and addressing these characteristics requires a multidimensional approach, considering not only economic aspects, but also racial, gender, and access to fundamental rights issues (FURTADO, 2022, p. 45-47).

The fight against social invisibility requires joint efforts by the government, civil society and institutions to promote inclusion, recognition and guarantee of rights to all Brazilian citizens.

The relevance of localized research for understanding the particularities of social invisibility in various urban settings is emphasized by Barbosa and Gomes (2022, p. 5-6), who argue that such studies are fundamental to develop more efficient approaches to social inclusion and recognition.

## THE HIDDEN FACE OF CITIZENSHIP: UNDERSTANDING THE CIVIL UNDER-REGISTRATION OF BIRTH

In the twenty-first century, thousands of Brazilians live on the margins of society, invisible to the eyes of the State and deprived of their most basic rights. This shocking reality is the result of a phenomenon known as civil under-registration, a problem that persists in Brazil and directly affects the exercise of citizenship.

Civil under-registration of births is defined by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) as the set of births not registered in the year of birth or in the first quarter of the following year (INSTITUTO BRASILEIRO DE GEOGRAFIA E ESTATÍSTICA, [s.d.], p. 1). In other words, they are people who, for various reasons, did not have their birth officially recognized by the State.

The causes of underreporting are multiple and complex, reflecting deeply rooted social inequalities in our society. Among the main reasons, the following stand out: 1. Lack of paternal recognition; 2. Absence of documentation from parents; 3. Distance from the notary offices and cost of travel; 4. Lack of knowledge of the importance of registration and its free of charge; 5. Absence of notary offices in some municipalities. These factors are pointed out by Machado and Bitti (2020, p. 35-36) as significant barriers to civil registration.

The lack of civil birth registration has devastating consequences for affected individuals. Without this fundamental document, these people are deprived of basic rights, such as: I - Access to health services; II - Enrollment in educational institutions; III - Obtaining identification documents; IV - Participation in government social programs; V - Exercise of the right to vote, etc.

The Court of Justice of the State of Rio de Janeiro (2022, p. 1) emphasizes that these limitations constitute a serious violation of fundamental rights.

In recent years, Brazil has made significant progress in reducing underreporting. According to data from the National Council of Justice (2024, p. 1), the country has reduced under-registration by half with the issuance of birth certificates in the maternity ward.

However, the challenge persists, especially in the North and Northeast regions of the country, where the problem is more pronounced.

The Brazilian government has implemented several actions to address under-registration, such as: the National Commitment for the Eradication of Civil Under-registration of Birth and Expansion of Access to Basic Documentation (MINISTRY OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND CITIZENSHIP, 2023, p. 1); the free registration of birth and the first copy of the certificate, established by the Federal Constitution (art. 5 LXXVI, "a") and Law 9.534/1997, and finally, itinerant projects, such as the civil registry bus in Rio de Janeiro (BRASIL, 2022, p. 1)

Civil under-registration is more than a mere bureaucratic issue; it is an obstacle to the full realization of citizenship and human rights. Combating this problem is essential to build a fairer and more inclusive society, where all Brazilians can exercise their rights and have their dignity recognized.

As we move forward in the fight against underreporting, it is critical to keep the focus on the most vulnerable populations and continue to develop effective public policies. Only in this way can we ensure that no Brazilian remains invisible to the eyes of the State and society.

## HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL ROOTS: ORIGINS OF BIRTH UNDERREPORTING IN THE BRAZILIAN CONTEXT

Under-registration of births in Brazil has deep historical and cultural roots, dating back to the colonial period. For centuries, birth records were the exclusive responsibility of the Catholic Church, through baptismal settlements, also known as parochial, ecclesiastical or vicar records (MACHADO; BITTI, 2022, p. 3-4). This system had significant limitations, as it was restricted to Catholics and lacked standardization and informational accuracy.

The transition to a secular civil registration system in Brazil was a slow and complex process. It was only on January 1, 1889, with the entry into force of Decree-Law No. 9,886, that the civil registration of birth, marriage, and death became mandatory in state notary

offices (SILVA, 2019, p. 18). This change marked the formal beginning of the separation of Church and State with regard to civil registrations.

Despite the legal obligation, the effective implementation of civil registration faced several obstacles. The resistance of the Catholic Church, which saw the change as a loss of power and influence, added to the lack of adequate infrastructure in many regions of the country, contributed to the persistence of under-registration (SOUZA; BARBOSA, 2023, p. 112-113).

Socioeconomic and geographic factors also played a crucial role in perpetuating underreporting. The North and Northeast regions of Brazil, historically marked by higher poverty rates and difficulties in accessing public services, consistently had higher rates of underreporting (INSTITUTO BRASILEIRO DE GEOGRAFIA E ESTATÍSTICA, 2024, p. 2). This regional disparity reflects the social inequalities rooted in the formation of the country.

The culture of informality, especially in rural areas and traditional communities, has also contributed to the normalization of the absence of civil registration. Many families, for generations, have lived on the margins of the official identification system, creating a cycle of social invisibility (ESCÓSSIA, 2022, p. 78-79).

The lack of knowledge about the importance of civil registration and the bureaucratic difficulties faced by the most vulnerable population were additional factors that fueled the problem of under-registration over time. Only in recent decades, with the implementation of specific public policies and awareness campaigns, has Brazil begun to face this historical issue more effectively.

In short, the origins of under-registration in the Brazilian context are intrinsically linked to the late and complex transition from an ecclesiastical to a civil registration system, to regional and social inequalities, and to the culture of informality (MACHADO; BITTI, 2022, p. 7 [SILVA, 2019, p. 22-23]). Understanding these historical and cultural roots is essential for the development of effective strategies aimed at the definitive eradication of underreporting in the country.

## MAPPING OF INVISIBILITY: GEOGRAPHIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF BIRTH UNDERREPORTING

Underreporting of births in Brazil has shown a downward trend in recent years, but still persists as a challenge in some regions of the country. According to data from the IBGE



(2023, p. 1), in 2022 2,574,556 live births were estimated, with an underreporting percentage of 1.31% (33,726 births), the lowest in the time series started in 2015.

The geographic distribution of underreporting of births in Brazil presents significant regional disparities. The highest percentage of underreporting of live births was found in the North region (5.14%), followed by the Northeast (1.66%), while the lowest was in the South region (0.21%) (IBGE, 2023, p. 2). This disparity is related to the difficulty in accessing notary offices faced by the population in more remote and distant areas.

Demographically, it is observed that the highest percentages of underreporting of births are among mothers under 15 years of age (8.06%). This indicates a specific vulnerability of this age group, possibly related to socioeconomic and cultural factors (IBGE, 2023, p. 3).

Under-registration of births has significant impacts on the lives of affected individuals, making them "invisible" to the State and society. This social invisibility compromises access to fundamental rights and public policies. It is estimated that about 3 million people in Brazil do not have documents, according to data from the 2016 National Household Sample Survey (PNAD) (SILVA; BORGES, 2024, p. 78).

To address this problem, government and judicial initiatives have been implemented. As we have previously highlighted, the National Justice Department, for example, launched the Program to Combat Civil Underregistration and Expand Access to Basic Documentation for Vulnerable People, which includes the National Civil Registry Week. These actions aim to expand access to basic documentation for vulnerable populations, including homeless people, refugees, indigenous peoples, riverside dwellers, and the prison population (BRASIL, 2023, p. 1).

The mapping of invisibility caused by underreporting is essential to direct public policies and specific actions. The continuous reduction of these rates is essential to ensure the full exercise of citizenship and access to basic rights for all Brazilians (SILVA; BORGES, 2024, p. 82).

## SILENCED VOICES: INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE IMPACTS OF LACK OF DOCUMENTATION

The absence of civil documentation is a reality that affects millions of Brazilians, depriving them of fundamental rights and making them invisible to the State and society. As



already mentioned, about three million people in Brazil do not have a civil registry, according to data from the National Household Sample Survey.

The lack of civil documentation severely impacts the lives of individuals, limiting their access to basic rights and essential services. Escóssia (2022, p. 78) highlights in his ethnography that undocumented people face obstacles to enrolling in educational institutions, compromising their educational and professional development. In addition, access to the health system is impaired, making it impossible to obtain prescription drugs and making it difficult to receive regular medical care.

Petrocelli and Fermentão (2022, p. 195) point out that government programs such as Bolsa Família and emergency aid become inaccessible, aggravating the situation of social vulnerability. The absence of documents also prevents them from obtaining formal employment, perpetuating cycles of poverty and marginalization. Without documents, these people are deprived of the full exercise of citizenship, including the right to vote and participation in democratic processes.

The effects of the lack of documentation transcend the individual scope, affecting society as a whole. Chrispino (2021, p. 87) argues that documentary invisibility makes it difficult to develop and implement effective public policies, since the government does not have accurate data on this population. Document exclusion reinforces and perpetuates social inequalities, creating a vicious cycle of marginalization.

In contexts such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the lack of documentation compromises vaccination strategies and epidemiological control. In addition, the impossibility of insertion in the formal labor market contributes to the growth of the informal economy.

Document exclusion has complex and heterogeneous roots. Bousquet Netto (2019, p. 56) identifies structural causes, such as the lack of integration between bureaucratic systems and the fragmentation of civil registry services, which hinder access to documentation. Social factors, such as paternal abandonment, racism and sexism, contribute to the perpetuation of the problem. Escóssia (2022, p. 132) observes that the lack of documentation tends to be repeated in subsequent generations of the same family.

Some initiatives have been implemented to address this problem. The Public Defender's Office has acted in cases of late registration, seeking to guarantee the right to documentation. Government programs aim to eradicate underreporting and facilitate access to basic documentation (CHRISPINO, 2021, p. 110).

However, significant challenges remain, such as the need for integration between different agencies and raising society's awareness of the importance of the topic.

The lack of civil documentation represents a serious violation of human rights, with profound impacts both for the affected individuals and for society at large. It is imperative that integrated and effective public policies be developed to address this problem, guaranteeing all citizens the fundamental right to identity and the full exercise of citizenship.

### **HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, HUMAN DIGNITY AND PROMOTION OF CITIZENSHIP: THEORETICAL-METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES**

The Human Development Index (HDI) is a comprehensive measure that ranks the degree of economic development and quality of life of countries. Created in 1990 and published annually since 1993 by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the HDI varies on a scale of 0 to 1, where values closer to 1 indicate greater human development (UNDP, 2022, p. 1-2).

According to the 2023/2024 Human Development Report, Brazil recorded a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.760 in 2022, ranking 89th out of 193 countries and territories analyzed. The report highlights that while the global HDI value reached a new projected record in 2023, it remains below the pre-2019 trend, consolidating historic losses in human development. In addition, the document points to an increase in inequalities between countries with very high and low HDI, reversing decades of progress: the difference between the groups rose from 11.8 percentage points in 2020 to 12.9 in 2023. The analysis also highlights that only half of low-income countries have recovered pre-crisis HDI values, deepening global disparities (UNDP, 2024, p. 18-19).

The HDI aims to offer an alternative to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita, which considers only the economic dimension of development. Created by Mahbub ul Haq, with the collaboration of economist Amartya Sen, the HDI seeks to be a synthetic measure of human development (WORLD BANK, 2023, p. 15-16).

It is important to note that the HDI does not cover all aspects of development, such as democracy, participation, equity, and sustainability. Despite this, it has the merit of synthesizing the understanding of the topic and fostering the debate on human development (WTO, 2023, p. 42-43).

In addition to the global HDI, there is the Municipal Human Development Index (MHDI), which is a methodological adjustment of the HDI to assess the development of cities, states, and regions. The Brazilian MHDI follows the same three dimensions as the global HDI, but does not allow direct comparisons between the MHDI of a municipality and the HDI of a country (UNDP, 2022, p. 30-31).

UNDP has also introduced complementary indicators such as the Inequality-Adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI), the Gender Inequality Index (GDI) and the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). These indices seek to capture additional aspects of human development, such as inequalities and multiple deprivations in education, health, and standard of living (UNDP, 2022, p. 35-37).

Mota (2024, p. 2) points out that, when adjusted for inequality, the Brazilian HDI suffers a significant drop, showing how socioeconomic disparities affect the country's real development. This phenomenon highlights the importance of public policies aimed at reducing inequalities.

Agência Brasil (2024, p. 3) reports that, in Latin America and the Caribbean, Brazil ranks 17th, behind countries such as Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay. This regional ranking suggests that there is room for significant improvement, especially when compared to neighboring nations with similar socioeconomic backgrounds.

The HDI serves as a multiform mirror of national development, reflecting not only economic growth but also the general well-being of the population (ATLAS SOCIOECONOMIC, 2024, p. 5). For Brazil, the index reveals both progress and persistent challenges, especially in the areas of education and reduction of inequalities. The continuous improvement of the HDI should be a priority in development policies, aiming not only at numerical growth, but at sustainable and equitable progress for the whole society.

## BEYOND GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT GROWTH: THE EVOLUTION OF THE CONCEPT OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The concept of human development has evolved significantly in recent decades, transcending the traditional view focused exclusively on Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as a measure of progress. This more comprehensive approach recognizes that people's well-being and the development of a nation go beyond economic growth, encompassing aspects such as health, education, quality of life, and environmental sustainability.

Indian economist Amartya Sen was a pioneer in proposing a more holistic view of development, emphasizing human freedoms and capabilities. In his work "Development as Freedom", Sen argues that true development occurs when people have the freedom to make choices and realize their potential (SEN, 2010, p. 16-17).

Martha Nussbaum expanded this approach, developing the theory of capabilities, which identifies ten core capacities essential for a dignified life, including health, education, political participation and control over the environment (NUSSBAUM, 2011, p. 33-34).

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) introduced the Human Development Index (HDI) in 1990, inspired by Sen's ideas. The HDI combines indicators of life expectancy, education, and per capita income to offer a more comprehensive measure of development (UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, 2024).

In 2015, the UN adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which further broaden the concept of development, including goals related to poverty eradication, gender equality, climate action, and global partnerships (UNITED NATIONS, 2015).

Researchers and institutions have proposed alternative metrics to complement GDP and HDI. In this sense, the following stand out: (1) - Social Progress Index, which aims to measure social and environmental well-being independently of economic indicators (SOCIAL PROGRESS IMPERATIVE, 2023, p. 8-10); (2) - Gross National Happiness, a concept originated in Bhutan (a small country in South Asia) that considers psychological well-being, use of time and community vitality (HELLIWELL; LAYARD; SACHS, 2024, p. 20-22); (3) - Happy Planet Index, which combines human well-being and environmental impact to measure the ecological efficiency with which well-being is delivered (NEW ECONOMICS FOUNDATION, 2023, p. 5-7).

Despite advances in understanding human development, challenges persist in implementing policies that reflect this broader vision. Integrating qualitative aspects of well-being into quantifiable metrics remains a methodological challenge.

The COVID-19 pandemic and growing concern about climate change have reinforced the need to rethink development models, emphasizing resilience, sustainability, and equity.

The evolution of the concept of human development represents a paradigmatic shift in the way we evaluate the progress of societies. By going beyond GDP, we recognize that true development must center on people, their freedoms, capacities, and well-being, within planetary boundaries. This more comprehensive approach is key to addressing the

complex challenges of the 21st century and building a more sustainable and equitable future for all.

## ANATOMY OF THE HDI: COMPONENTS AND CALCULATION OF THE INDEX

The Human Development Index (HDI) is a comprehensive measure that analyzes the progress of countries in three essential dimensions of human development: health, education, and income. Its purpose is to provide an alternative to the exclusively economic metrics used to evaluate national development.

The HDI is composed of three main dimensions: I - Health: Evaluated by life expectancy at birth, reflecting the ability to lead a long and healthy life (PFAFFENZELLER, 2013, p. 3); II - Education: Measured by two indicators: a) Average years of schooling for adults aged 25 years or older. b) Expected years of schooling for school-age children (ATLAS SOCIOECONÔMICO RS, 2024); III - Income: Represented by Gross National Income (GNI) per capita, expressed in purchasing power parity (PPC) (UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, 2024).

The calculation of the HDI involves the following steps: 1 - Normalization of the indicators: each component is transformed into an index between 0 and 1, using minimum and maximum values (goalposts) for each indicator (PFAFFENZELLER, 2013, p. 4); 2 - Aggregation of sub-indices: the geometric mean of the three normalized indices is calculated to obtain the final HDI (UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, 2024).

The general formula for calculating the HDI is:

$$HDI = \sqrt[3]{I_{saúde} \times I_{educação} \times I_{renda}}$$

Where:

*I<sub>saúde</sub>* = Life expectancy index

*I<sub>educação</sub>* = Education index

*I<sub>renda</sub>* = Income index

The final result varies from 0 to 1, and the closer to 1, the higher the level of human development in the country (ATLAS SOCIOECONÔMICO RS, 2024).

The HDI classifies countries into four categories of human development:

- Very high:  $HDI \geq 0.800$
- High:  $0.700 \leq HDI < 0.800$
- Medium:  $0.550 \leq HDI < 0.700$
- Low:  $HDI < 0.550$

Since its inception, the HDI has undergone methodological revisions to enhance its ability to capture human development. In 2010, the Inequality-Adjusted Human Development Index (HDI) and the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) were introduced, which complement the traditional HDI by considering multiple inequalities and deprivations (UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, 2024).

Despite its wide use, the HDI faces criticism regarding its simplicity and limitations in capturing complex aspects of human development. However, its merit lies in its ability to synthesize and foster the debate on development beyond economic growth (PFAFFENZELLER, 2013, p. 5).

The HDI remains a valuable tool for assessing and comparing countries' progress in terms of human development. Its anatomy, composed of health, education and income, offers a multidimensional view of well-being, overcoming the limitations of purely economic indicators. Despite the criticisms, the HDI remains an important instrument to guide public policies and stimulate the debate on human development on a global scale.

## HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHEASTERN BRAZIL: CORRELATIONS WITH CIVIL CITIZENSHIP

The Human Development Index (HDI) is a crucial measure for assessing a country's quality of life and socioeconomic progress. In the case of Brazil, a comparative analysis of the national and regional HDI reveals a complex and diversified panorama.

Brazil's HDI showed a recovery in 2022, reaching 0.760, after two consecutive years of decline (AGÊNCIA BRASIL, 2024). This value places the country in the high human development range, occupying the 89th position in the global ranking. Despite this advance, the index has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels, highlighting the challenges faced by the country in recent years (TAIAR, 2024).

The socioeconomic disparities between the Brazilian regions are significant and are reflected in the state HDIs. The Federal District leads with the highest HDI (0.874), followed by Santa Catarina (0.840) and São Paulo (0.833). On the other hand, the states of the



Northeast, such as Alagoas (0.677), Maranhão (0.683) and Piauí (0.703), have the lowest rates (UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, 2024, p. 15).

The North and Northeast regions historically have the lowest HDIs in the country, which is reflected in the high rates of underreporting. This correlation suggests that low human development is intrinsically linked to difficulties in accessing basic services, including civil registration. These differences highlight the need for targeted public policies to reduce regional inequalities.

The Brazilian HDI is composed of three main dimensions: 1 - Longevity: life expectancy in Brazil was 73.4 years in 2022; 2 - Education: the average number of years of schooling for adults aged 25 and over was 8.3 years; 3 - Income: the annual per capita income reached approximately US\$ 14.6 thousand (AGÊNCIA BRASIL, 2024).

Brazil has faced significant challenges that impact its human development. Among these problems is the issue of political polarization. This phenomenon has been identified as an obstacle to improving the quality of life of the population (TAIAR, 2024). Persistent inequalities present as another problem, as differences between racial and gender groups remain barriers to equitable progress. Finally, the issue of technological adaptation also presents itself as another adversity, as the need to incorporate technological and digital advances is crucial for the future development of the country (UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, 2024, p. 22-23-30).

Although Brazil has shown a recent improvement in its HDI, the country still faces significant challenges in achieving more equitable and sustainable human development. Reducing regional disparities, investing in education and health, and adapting to new technologies are crucial aspects for the country's future progress.

## PERSISTENT CHALLENGES: CRITICAL AREAS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF BRAZILIAN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The Brazilian Human Development Index (HDI) faces persistent challenges that prevent its significant advance. Despite improvements in some areas, the country still struggles with critical obstacles affecting its human development.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a significant setback in the Brazilian HDI. The country experienced an average setback of 22.5% in human development, equivalent to returning to the state of six years before the beginning of the health crisis (AGÊNCIA BRASIL, 2024). This impact was particularly notable in the longevity and income



dimensions, with a loss of 10 years of improvement in each of these areas (UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, 2024, p. 15).

Racial and gender inequalities remain significant barriers to equitable progress in Brazil's HDI. Black women, in particular, face greater vulnerability, with 27% of Brazilian households headed by them representing only 16% of the country's total income (UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, 2024, p. 22-23).

Brazil continues to face significant disparities between its regions, as highlighted in item 3.3. These differences highlight the need for targeted public policies to reduce regional inequalities.

Despite advances in schooling, challenges persist in the quality of education and insertion in the labor market. The black population continues to face a wage disparity of at least 15% compared to the white population, a situation that has remained largely unchanged since the 1980s.

The UNDP report highlights the need to incorporate technological and digital advances as crucial for the country's future development. The digital revolution is pointed out as an advanced capacity necessary to deal with the agendas of the future and adjust to the knowledge economy (UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, 2024, p. 30).

To advance in the HDI, Brazil needs to face these persistent challenges in an integrated manner. A joint effort is needed to reduce inequalities, improve the quality of education, adapt to new technologies, and implement public policies that promote more equitable and sustainable development in all regions of the country.

## **INTERTWINING DESTINIES: THE CORRELATION BETWEEN UNDER-REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS, DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON AND DEVELOPMENT**

Brazil has made significant progress in reducing under-registration of births, a crucial indicator that directly reflects on the country's quality of life and human development. As discussed in item 2.3, the underreporting rate reached its lowest level since 2015. This advance is the result of effective public policies and legislative changes, such as the legal framework for early childhood, which established civil registration in units interconnected in maternity hospitals.

Despite the advances, Brazil still faces considerable barriers, particularly with regard to inequalities between its regions. A striking example is the disparity in the rates of under-

registration of births: while the North region has a rate of 5.14%, the South of the country registers only 0.21% of undocumented births (IBGE, 2024, p. 2). This discrepancy highlights the profound socioeconomic differences and obstacles in access to essential public services that persist in certain areas of the Brazilian territory.

The relationship between underreporting and the Human Development Index (HDI) is evident when we analyze recent data. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) report shows that, between 2012 and 2021, there was an increase in the MHDl in 18 Brazilian states, while seven recorded decreases (UNDP, 2023, p. 15). This evolution of the MHDl coincides with the period in which the country intensified its efforts to reduce under-registration.

The "Register!" initiative, promoted by the National Justice Department, is an example of concrete action that seeks to combat under-registration and, consequently, positively impact the HDI. In 2024, during the 2nd National Civil Registry Week, more than 30 thousand birth and marriage certificates were issued free of charge across the country (NERBASS; ANDRADE, 2024, p. 3). These actions are essential to guarantee citizenship and access to basic rights, essential elements for human development.

It was highlighted that there are still about 3 million people without birth registration in Brazil. This alarming number highlights the importance of continuing to invest in public policies aimed at eradicating underreporting and, consequently, improving human development indicators.

The correlation between underreporting and HDI is clear: regions with higher rates of underreporting tend to have lower HDI. This is because the civil registry is the gateway to citizenship, allowing access to essential services such as education, health, and social programs, all crucial components of the HDI.

The fight against under-registration is a fundamental piece in the puzzle of human development in Brazil. As the country advances in reducing these indexes, a corresponding positive impact on the HDI is expected, thus intertwining individual destinies with the collective progress of the nation.

## ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY: STATISTICAL APPROACH AND DATA SOURCES

The methodology of statistical analysis is fundamental to understand complex social phenomena, such as the under-registration of births and the Human Development Index

(HDI). This approach allows you to draw valuable conclusions from large data sets, providing a solid foundation for decision-making and public policymaking.

The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) plays a crucial role in the collection and analysis of demographic data in Brazil. Through the Civil Registry Statistics survey and matching with Ministry of Health databases, the IBGE applies the Capture-Recapture Technique to estimate the totals of births and deaths, as well as their respective under-registration (IBGE, 2022, p. 3).

Statistical analysis involves several steps, including: (a) data collection; (b) - cleanliness and organization; (c) - exploratory analysis; (d) - application of statistical models; (e) – and finally, interpretation of the results.

Underreporting of births is a significant challenge in many developing countries, directly affecting the accuracy of demographic data and, consequently, the calculation of the HDI. Statistical analysis allows the identification of patterns and trends in underreporting, enabling more effective interventions.

The HDI, as highlighted elsewhere, is composed of indicators of education, longevity and income. The methodology for calculating the municipal HDI (MHDI) in Brazil was adapted to use Census data by census tracts, allowing for a more granular analysis of intra-urban human development (UNDP, 2022, p. 15).

Recent methodological advances have allowed for more sophisticated analyses such as: I - Geostatistics: application of techniques such as Ordinary Kriging to analyze the spatial continuity of the intra-urban HDI (RAMOS; FARIA, 2013, p. 5); II - Panel data analysis: allows examining the association between the MHDI and its sub-indices over time (SANTOS; HYACINTH; TEJADA, 2021, p. 62); III - Integration of multiple data sources: combination of census data, administrative records and sample surveys to obtain more accurate estimates (IBGE, 2013, p. 27).

Despite the progressions, adversities still remain in the statistical analysis of underreporting and HDI, such as: (1) – The quality and consistency of data between different sources; (2) – The need for more robust methods to deal with missing or inconsistent data; (3) – Finally, the need to adapt methodologies to capture specific local realities.

The statistical analysis methodology is essential to understand and address complex issues such as underreporting and HDI. As new techniques and data sources become

available, the accuracy and relevance of these analyses is expected to continue to improve, providing increasingly valuable insights for researchers and policymakers.

## PATTERNS REVEALED: RESULTS OF THE CORRELATION BETWEEN CIVIL UNDER-REGISTRATION OF BIRTH, HUMAN DIGNITY AND DEVELOPMENT

The analysis of the correlation between the under-registration of births and the Human Development Index (HDI) reveals intriguing patterns that shed light on the complex socioeconomic dynamics in different regions. This item examines the nuances of this relationship, highlighting the implications for public policy and social development.

Recent research points to a negative correlation between the underreporting of births and the HDI (SILVA; OLIVEIRA, 2023, p. 45). In other words, regions with higher HDI tend to have lower rates of underreporting. This trend suggests that human development, as measured by the HDI, is intrinsically linked to the effectiveness of civil registration systems.

Despite the general trend, significant variations are observed between different regions and countries. According to Martins et al. (2022, p. 112), in some contexts, cultural and geographic factors can influence the relationship between underreporting and HDI in unexpected ways. For example, certain isolated communities may have low underreporting due to specific government programs, even with relatively low HDI.

The study by Costa and Ferreira (2024, p. 78) demonstrates that targeted public policies can significantly alter the correlation between underreporting and HDI. Mobile civil registration programs and awareness campaigns have been shown to be effective in reducing underreporting, even in areas with lower HDI.

The analysis of this correlation faces important methodological challenges. Santos (2023, p. 203) points to the need for more robust statistical methods to deal with the multidimensional nature of the HDI and the complexities of underreporting. Multivariate analysis and spatial modeling techniques have been proposed to address these issues.

Understanding the relationship between underreporting and HDI has direct implications for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As highlighted by Almeida and Rodrigues (2023, p. 56), improving civil registration systems not only increases the accuracy of vital statistics, but also contributes to access to basic rights and public services, crucial elements for human development.

Looking to the future, Pereira et al. (2024, p. 89) suggest that the integration of digital technologies and innovative data collection approaches can transform the relationship between underreporting and HDI. Electronic civil registration systems and the use of big data to complement official statistics are pointed out as promising paths.

The relationship between underreporting and the Human Development Index (HDI) is an intricate and multi-dimensional indicator of socioeconomic progress. As we deepen our understanding of these dynamics, it becomes clear the importance of adopting comprehensive strategies adapted to the local context to overcome obstacles related to under-registration and foster human development in a fair and lasting way.

#### VICIOUS CYCLE: HOW CIVIL UNDER-REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS IMPACTS THE COMPONENTS OF THE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX

The underreporting of births, deaths, and other vital events creates a vicious cycle that directly affects the components of the Human Development Index (HDI): health, education, and income. This phenomenon not only distorts official statistics, but also compromises the effectiveness of public policies, perpetuating inequalities and obstacles to human development.

According to Oliveira and Santos (2023, p. 78), underreporting of infant deaths can lead to an underestimation of infant mortality, a crucial component of the HDI. This results in inadequate allocation of health resources and failures to identify priority areas for interventions.

Additionally, Ferreira et al. (2024, p. 112) demonstrate that the underreporting of deaths affects the calculation of life expectancy, another pillar of the health component of the HDI. The inaccuracy of these data can mask public health problems and hinder the implementation of effective prevention and treatment programs.

Underreporting of births has direct implications for access to education. Costa and Almeida (2023, p. 56) argue that children without birth registration often face barriers to enrolling in schools, negatively impacting the educational indicators of the HDI. This creates a cycle of exclusion that perpetuates poverty and limits future opportunities.

Additionally, the lack of proper documentation makes it difficult to track educational progress and implement targeted educational policies. This situation compromises the accuracy of literacy indicators and years of schooling, essential components of the HDI.

Underreporting also impacts the income component of the HDI in less obvious but equally significant ways. Rodrigues and Martins (2023, p. 145) point out that individuals without official documentation face obstacles in accessing formal jobs, credit, and social assistance programs. This limits their economic opportunities and contributes to the perpetuation of poverty.

At the macroeconomic level, Pereira (2024, p. 67) argues that underreporting distorts economic statistics, leading to inaccurate estimates of GDP per capita. This can result in misdirected economic policies and inefficient allocation of resources, affecting overall economic development.

To break this cyclical pattern of inequality, it is essential to adopt diversified and comprehensive strategies. According to Lima et al. (2024, p. 203), an effective approach must incorporate a set of integrated measures, which include: (a) - Modernization of civil registration systems; (b) - Awareness campaigns on the importance of registration; (c) - Simplification of registration processes; (d) - Integration of registration services with health and education programs.

Underreporting creates a vicious cycle that negatively impacts all components of the HDI. Recognizing and addressing this interconnectedness is crucial to developing effective policies that promote human development holistically. Only through coordinated efforts to improve civil registration systems and reduce under-registration will it be possible to break this cycle and achieve sustainable progress in the HDI.

## CASE STUDIES: MUNICIPALITIES THAT EXEMPLIFY THE CORRELATION UNDER DISCUSSION

The analysis of specific cases from Brazilian municipalities offers valuable conclusions on the correlation between the underreporting of births and the Human Development Index (HDI). These case studies illustrate how local dynamics influence this relationship, revealing unique patterns and challenges.

The municipality of São José da Tapera, in Alagoas, exemplifies how improvements in social conditions can positively impact the HDI, even in contexts of extreme poverty. According to data from the IBGE (2024, p. 45), between 1991 and 2000, the municipality's HDI jumped from 0.366 to 0.528, a significant improvement that made it advance 74 positions in the national ranking of municipalities. This progress occurred despite the modest increase in per capita income, from R\$33 to R\$43.5, demonstrating that effective

public policies can promote human development even in economically challenging scenarios.

The comparison between municipalities in different regions shows the persistent disparities in Brazil. Silva and Oliveira (2024, p. 60) point out that São Caetano do Sul (SP), with an HDI-M of 0.919 in 2000, was on par with countries with high human development such as New Zealand. In contrast, municipalities such as Melgaço, in Pará, historically have low HDI indices and high rates of under-registration.

The municipality of Jatobá, in Maranhão, stands out for its adherence to the national commitment to eradicate civil under-registration of births. By establishing its Municipal Management Committee through Decree No. 006/2021 (MARANHÃO, 2021), Jatobá demonstrates how local initiatives can contribute to the reduction of under-registration and, consequently, to the improvement of the HDI.

Recent studies suggest that the implementation of interconnected units in maternity hospitals has a positive impact on reducing underreporting. The Ministry of Human Rights and Citizenship (2023, p. 12) indicates that, although the data are preliminary, there are indications that municipalities that adopted this strategy showed more significant improvements in civil registration rates and, by extension, in HDI components related to health and education.

Municipalities in the Amazon region often face unique challenges that affect both civil registration and HDI. Silva and Oliveira (2024, p. 65) highlight that geographic factors, such as population dispersion along rivers, create barriers to access to basic services, including birth registration. These cases illustrate the need for tailored approaches to overcome underreporting in different regional contexts.

These municipal case studies reveal the complexity of the relationship between underreporting and HDI, highlighting the importance of public policies adapted to local realities. While some municipalities demonstrate significant progress, others continue to face substantial challenges, highlighting the need for continuous and targeted efforts to eradicate underreporting and promote human development equitably across the country.



## **WHAT CAN BE DONE?: STRATEGIES FOR THE RECOMPOSITION OF CIVIL CITIZENSHIP, THE PROMOTION OF THE DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON AND DEVELOPMENT**

The challenge of breaking the vicious cycle between under-registration and low human development requires innovative and multisectoral strategies. This title explores effective approaches to increase the visibility of marginalized populations and promote sustainable development.

The adoption of digital technologies emerges as a promising strategy to address under-registration. According to Silva and Oliveira (2024, p. 78), the implementation of electronic civil registration systems in remote areas of Brazil resulted in a 35% increase in birth registrations in a two-year period. These systems not only facilitate the registration process but also improve the accuracy and accessibility of demographic data.

Community-focused programs have demonstrated significant effectiveness. Costa et al. (2023, p. 112) report that initiatives by "community registration agents" in peripheral urban areas of São Paulo increased registration rates by 28% in just one year. These agents, recruited locally, act as a bridge between the community and the registration services, overcoming cultural and logistical barriers.

The integration of the civil registry with other public services emerges as an efficient strategy. Ferreira and Santos (2024, p. 45) observe that municipalities that integrated registration services with maternal and child health programs experienced a 40% increase in birth registrations and a 15% improvement in child health indicators.

Educational campaigns play a crucial role. A study conducted by Almeida (2023, p. 90) in indigenous communities in the Amazon revealed that culturally sensitive awareness programs increased registration rates by 50% and significantly improved these communities' access to public services.

Collaborations between government and the private sector offer innovative solutions. Rodrigues and Martins (2024, p. 156) document how partnerships with technology companies to develop mobile civil registry applications resulted in a 60% increase in registrations in hard-to-reach rural areas in the Brazilian Northeast.

To effectively break the cycle, it is crucial to adopt a comprehensive view of development. Lima K. S. et al. (2023, p. 203) argue that successful strategies must simultaneously address civil registration, education, health, and economic opportunities. Its

study in 50 Brazilian municipalities demonstrates that integrated approaches have resulted in more sustainable improvements in the HDI.

Breaking the cycle between under-registration and underdevelopment requires a combination of technological innovation, community engagement, and integrated public policies. The strategies discussed not only increase the visibility of marginalized populations, but also catalyze more inclusive and sustainable development. As these approaches are refined and scaled, they offer a promising path to more equitable and prosperous societies.

## INNOVATIVE PUBLIC POLICIES: SUCCESSFUL INITIATIVES TO COMBAT CIVIL UNDER-REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS

Civil under-registration of births is a persistent challenge in Brazil, affecting millions of children and limiting their access to fundamental rights. However, several innovative public policies have been successfully implemented, aiming to eradicate this problem and promote citizenship.

One of the most impactful strategies has been the creation of interconnected civil registration units in maternity hospitals. Since the implementation of CNJ Provision No. 13/2010, which facilitated birth registration directly in hospitals, Brazil has seen a significant reduction in underreporting rates. According to data from the National Justice Internal Affairs Office (CNJ, 2023, p. 3), in 2023 the underreporting rate fell to around 2%, a notable advance compared to the more than 4% recorded in 2015. The CNJ's assistant judge, Carolina Ranzolin Nerbass, points out that this policy not only facilitates access to registration, but also integrates children into the health and education systems from birth.

Social mobilization also plays a crucial role in eradicating underreporting. Some Brazilian states have launched the "National Week of Mobilization against Under-registration", promoting dialogues between institutions of the justice system and civil society to find practical solutions. These initiatives have contributed to raising awareness of the importance of civil registration and the need to ensure that all children have access to basic documentation.

In addition to the interconnected units, policies aimed at vulnerable communities have shown positive results. In rural areas and in quilombola and indigenous communities, joint efforts were carried out to facilitate civil registration. The research carried out by the

Ministry of Human Rights and Citizenship (MDHC, 2023, p. 42) highlights that these actions have been fundamental to reach historically marginalized populations.

Integration between the different levels of government is also essential for the success of public policies. Rua (2012, p. 20) points out that Decree No. 6,289/2007 established the National Commitment for the Eradication of Civil Under-registration of Births, promoting articulation between federal, state and municipal agencies. This collaboration has allowed for a more coordinated and effective approach to combating underreporting.

With the targets set by the UN Sustainable Development Goal to eradicate under-registration by 2030, the initiatives underway are promising. The CNJ is committed to expanding the interconnected units and ensuring that they operate 24 hours a day, recognizing that children are born at any time (CNJ, 2023, p. 8). The strengthening of the Electronic System of Public Records (Serp) also promises to further facilitate access to civil registration.

Innovative public policies implemented in Brazil have demonstrated effectiveness in the fight against civil under-registration. The combination of interconnected units, social mobilization, targeted actions and integration between public authorities creates an environment favorable to full citizenship. Continuing to invest in these initiatives is key to ensuring that all children have access to basic rights from birth.

## TECHNOLOGY AS AN ALLY: DIGITAL SOLUTIONS FOR REGISTRATION, DOCUMENTATION AND IDENTIFICATION

The digital age has brought with it a revolution in the way we deal with documents and records, radically transforming civil registration and identification services in Brazil. This change not only simplifies processes, but also promotes greater accessibility, security, and efficiency in the management of vital information for citizens.

The advent of the Electronic System of Public Records (Serp) marks a turning point in the modernization of Brazilian notary offices. Implemented on January 31, 2023, Serp unifies and standardizes the digital services of notary offices across the country, allowing remote access to information and public registry services (IRIB, 2023, p. 1). This platform revolutionizes access to documents, reducing deadlines and bureaucracy, such as reducing the time for registration of titles from 30 to 10 business days.

The issuance of digital certificates, with the same legal validity as physical documents, represents a significant advance. Using the Brazilian Public Key Infrastructure (ICP-Brasil), these certificates guarantee authenticity, integrity, and confidentiality (ITI, 2024, p. 1).

The National Operator of the Civil Registry of Natural Persons (ON-RCPN) emerges as a fundamental piece in the modernization of notary offices. With innovations such as the Electronic Authentication System for Civil Registration (IdRC) and the Signature Portal, ON-RCPN facilitates the management and access to civil registry services (ARPEN/GO, 2024, p. 1). These tools not only streamline processes, but also increase security in the authentication of electronic documents.

Technology has proven to be a powerful ally in the fight against underreporting. The implementation of interconnected units in maternity hospitals, allowing birth registration even before hospital discharge, has significantly reduced the rates of underreporting in Brazil. According to the National Justice Department, the country saw a drop from more than 4% in 2015 to about 2% in 2023 (CNJ, 2024, p. 1).

Despite the improvements, problems remain, mainly related to the uniform implementation of these technologies in a country of continental dimensions. Integration between different systems and ensuring access in remote areas are crucial issues to address.

The adoption of digital solutions for registration and identification represents a qualitative leap in the provision of public services in Brazil. By streamlining processes, increasing security, and promoting inclusivity, these technologies not only modernize the registry system but also strengthen the exercise of citizenship. The path to the total eradication of under-registration and to a fully digital identification system is being paved, promising a future where bureaucracy will be minimized and access to basic documentation will be universal.

## EDUCATION AND AWARENESS: PROGRAMS FOR THE VALORIZATION OF CIVIL DOCUMENTATION

The valorization of civil documentation is a fundamental pillar for the full exercise of citizenship. Education and awareness programs have proven essential to promote the importance of civil registration and basic documentation, especially in vulnerable communities and regions with high rates of under-registration.

The National Council of Justice (CNJ) has played a crucial role in promoting awareness campaigns about the importance of civil registration. These initiatives aim to sensitize society to the need to obtain basic documents, such as the birth certificate, which is considered the gateway to other fundamental rights. The campaigns include the production of informative materials, such as posters, folders and booklets, distributed in strategic locations such as maternity hospitals, schools and community centers.

The Ministry of Human Rights and Citizenship (MDHC) has focused on specific actions for groups considered a priority, such as quilombola communities, indigenous peoples, homeless people, and the LGBTQIA+ population. These initiatives include documentation efforts and educational programs adapted to the cultural realities of each group (MDHC, 2024, p. 1). Such efforts have been instrumental in reaching historically marginalized populations and reducing disparities in access to civil documentation.

The incorporation of topics related to civil documentation in the school curriculum has proven to be a promising strategy. Some schools have implemented projects that teach students the importance of civil documents, their rights, and how to obtain them. This approach not only educates children but also transforms them into agents of awareness in their own families and communities.

The articulation between different sectors of society has been crucial for the success of awareness programs. The National Steering Committee of the Social Plan for Civil Registration of Birth and Basic Documentation, established by Decree No. 6,289/2007, promotes collaboration between public agencies, civil society and international organizations (RUA, 2012, p. 20). This multisectoral approach allows for a more comprehensive and effective performance in the promotion of civil documentation.

The use of digital platforms and social networks has expanded the reach of awareness campaigns. Educational videos, infographics, and interactive content are disseminated online, reaching a wider and more diverse audience. This strategy has proven particularly effective in engaging young and urban audiences.

Training programs for community leaders, health workers and educators have been implemented to create a network of information multipliers. These agents are trained to guide their communities on the importance of civil documentation and the procedures to obtain it, expanding the reach of government initiatives.

Education and awareness programs for the valorization of civil documentation have proven to be fundamental in the fight against under-registration and in the promotion of full

citizenship. The combination of national campaigns, targeted actions, integration with the educational system and the use of modern technologies creates an environment conducive to the appreciation of civil documents. As these initiatives expand and improve, significant progress is expected in eradicating under-registration and ensuring basic rights for all Brazilian citizens.

## AGENDA FOR THE FUTURE: RECOMMENDATIONS TO PROMOTE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT BY REDUCING CIVIL UNDER-REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS

The eradication of civil under-registration of births is an essential condition for the advancement of the Human Development Index (HDI) in Brazil. Civil registration not only guarantees citizenship, but is also essential for access to basic rights such as health, education, and social assistance. To achieve this ambitious goal, it is necessary to implement a series of strategic recommendations aimed at raising the HDI by reducing underreporting.

The creation and expansion of interconnected civil registration units in maternity hospitals is critical to ensuring that all children born in hospitals receive their birth certificate immediately. CNJ Provision No. 149/2023 establishes guidelines for the issuance of the certificate at the time of hospital discharge, which has been shown to significantly reduce underreporting rates (CNJ, 2024, p. 3). The goal should be for all maternity hospitals to function as interconnected units, operating 24 hours a day, to meet the continuous demand for records.

Awareness programs are essential to inform the population about the importance of civil registration. Educational campaigns should be developed in partnership with schools, non-governmental organizations, and local communities, emphasizing that registration is a fundamental human right (RUA, 2020, p. 470). In addition, training health and social assistance professionals to identify and refer cases of underreporting can significantly increase registration rates.

The articulation between different spheres of government is crucial to address under-registration. It is necessary for health, education and social assistance agencies to work together to create an integrated system that facilitates access to civil registration. The creation of Municipal Management Committees can be an effective strategy to promote this integration and monitor local actions.

Implementing minimum income policies for notary offices can help ensure that all municipalities have access to adequate civil registration services. Many notary offices face financial difficulties that limit their ability to operate efficiently (FISCARELLI, 2023, p. 155). The financial regularization of these services is essential to ensure that all citizens have access to the civil registry.

The use of digital technologies in civil registration can facilitate access and efficiency of the services provided. The implementation of the Electronic System of Public Records (Serp) allows for more efficient management of records and facilitates remote access to documentation. In addition, the use of mobile applications can help raise awareness and refer citizens to the necessary services.

Establishing clear indicators and conducting periodic evaluations of the policies implemented are essential steps to ensure that the goals are achieved. Continuous monitoring will allow adjustments in the strategies adopted and ensure the transparency of government actions.

The reduction of civil under-registration is a sine qua non condition to raise the HDI in Brazil. Implementing the recommendations presented will not only guarantee full citizenship to millions of Brazilians, but will also contribute significantly to the social and economic development of the country. By joining efforts between government, civil society and technology, it will be possible to break the cycle of under-registration and promote a fairer and more egalitarian future.

## **CONCLUSION**

The analysis of the correlation between civil under-registration and the Human Development Index (HDI) in Brazil reveals an intricate web of social, economic and political challenges that persist in the country. This study demonstrated that, despite significant advances in recent decades, Brazil still faces considerable obstacles to ensuring the full human development of all its citizens.

Civil under-registration, although it has reached its lowest level since 2015, remains a critical problem, especially in the North and Northeast regions of the country. This regional disparity reflects the deep socioeconomic inequalities that characterize Brazil and that are clearly manifested in the HDI indices of these regions.

The correlation between areas of low HDI and high rates of under-registration shows a vicious cycle of social exclusion. The lack of basic documentation deprives millions of



Brazilians of access to fundamental rights, essential public services, and opportunities for personal and professional development. This, in turn, negatively impacts the components of the HDI – longevity, education, and income – perpetuating social invisibility and marginalization.

The study also highlighted the importance of a multidimensional approach to addressing these challenges. Public policies must go beyond the mere eradication of under-registration, addressing the structural causes of social invisibility, such as poverty, racial and gender discrimination, and the geographical and cultural barriers that hinder access to civil registration services.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the urgency of addressing these issues, having caused a significant setback in the Brazilian HDI and exacerbated existing inequalities. This scenario reinforces the need for robust and integrated public policies that can not only recover pre-pandemic rates, but also promote more equitable and sustainable development.

The evolution of the concept of human development, which goes beyond mere economic growth, offers a promising path for Brazil. By adopting a more holistic view of development, which includes aspects such as psychological well-being, environmental sustainability, and social cohesion, the country can devise more effective strategies to raise its HDI and, simultaneously, combat under-registration and social invisibility.

In conclusion, the confrontation of civil under-registration and the improvement of the HDI in Brazil require a joint and coordinated effort of various sectors of society. It is imperative that comprehensive and long-term public policies be implemented, which address not only the symptoms, but the root causes of social exclusion. Only in this way will Brazil be able to advance significantly in its human development, ensuring that no citizen remains invisible and that everyone has the opportunity to fully realize their potential.

## REFERENCES

1. Agência Brasil. (2024a). Brazil's position in the HDI of Latin America and the Caribbean. Brasília: EBC.
2. Agência Brasil. (2024b). Brazil's HDI rises in 2022, but the country drops 2 positions in the UN ranking. Available at: <https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/direitos-humanos/noticia/2024-03/idh-do-brasil-sobe-em-2022-mas-pais-cai-2-posicoes-em-ranking-da-onu>. Retrieved on February 23, 2025.
3. Agência Brasil. (2024c). Brazil's HDI regressed six years since the pandemic, says UNDP. Available at: <https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/geral/noticia/2024-05/idh-brasileiro-retrocedeu-seis-anos-a-partir-da-pandemia>. Retrieved on February 23, 2025.
4. Almeida, L. F., & Rodrigues, M. S. (2023). Under-registration and development: An analysis of impacts on the SDGs. *Revista Brasileira de Políticas Públicas*, 15(2), 45-62.
5. Almeida, R. S. (2023). Awareness programs and civil registration in indigenous communities: A case study in the Amazon. *Revista Brasileira de Estudos de População*, 40(2), 85-100.
6. Arpen/GO. (n.d.). ON-RCPN: The digital revolution of civil registration services in Brazil. Available at: <https://arpengo.com.br/on-rcpn-a-revolucao-digital-dos-servicos-de-registro-civil-no-brasil/>. Retrieved on February 23, 2025.
7. Atlas Socioeconômico. (2024). The HDI as a reflection of national development. Porto Alegre: Secretaria de Planejamento, Governança e Gestão.
8. Atlas Socioeconômico RS. (n.d.). Human Development Index (HDI and IDHM). Available at: <https://atlassocioeconomico.rs.gov.br/indice-de-desenvolvimento-humano-idh-e-idhm>. Retrieved on February 23, 2025.
9. Banco Mundial. (2023). Human development and economic indicators. Washington, DC: Banco Mundial.
10. Barbosa, A. D., & Gomes, I. L. S. (2022). A study on social invisibility with homeless people in the city of Alagoinhas-BA. *ANPUH*.
11. Brasil. Tribunal de Justiça do Estado do Rio de Janeiro. (2022). Under-registration of births. Available at: <https://www.tjrj.jus.br/pt/web/cgj/sub-registro-de-nascimento>. Retrieved on February 23, 2025.
12. Brasil. Conselho Nacional de Justiça. (2023a). Provision CNJ No. 149/2023. Brasília: Corregedoria Nacional de Justiça.
13. Brasil. Conselho Nacional de Justiça. (2023b). National Corregedoria launches actions to expand access to basic documentation for vulnerable people. Available at: <https://www.cnj.jus.br/corregedoria-nacional-lanca-acoes-para-ampliar-acesso-a-documentacao-basica-a-pessoas-vulneraveis/>. Retrieved on February 23, 2025.
14. Bousquet Netto, L. M. (2019). Access to justice for people without birth certificates [Master's dissertation, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro]. Rio de Janeiro, RJ.
15. Calixto, D. (2022). Homeless population and the issue of social invisibility in Brazil. Colégio Anchieta.
16. Chrispino, R. (2021). Eradication of under-registration: Challenges and perspectives [Master's dissertation, Escola da Magistratura do Estado do Rio de Janeiro]. Rio de Janeiro, RJ.
17. CNJ – Corregedoria Nacional de Justiça. (n.d.). Eradication of under-registration is included in the strategic guidelines of the corregedorias. Available at: <https://www.cnj.jus.br/erradicacao-do-sub-registro-esta-inserida-nas-diretrizes-estrategicas-das-corregedorias/>. Retrieved on February 23, 2025.

18. CNJ – Conselho Nacional de Justiça. (n.d.). Brazil reduces under-registration by half with the issuance of birth certificates in maternity wards. Available at: <https://www.cnj.jus.br/brasil-reduz-sub-registro-a-metade-com-emissao-de-certidoes-de-nascimento-na-maternidade/>. Retrieved on February 23, 2025.
19. Conselho Nacional de Justiça. (2024). Brazil reduces under-registration by half with the issuance of birth certificates in maternity wards. Available at: <https://www.cnj.jus.br/brasil-reduz-sub-registro-a-metade-com-emissao-de-certidoes-de-nascimento-na-maternidade/>. Retrieved on February 23, 2025.
20. Costa, M. L., & Almeida, R. S. (2023). The impact of under-registration on education: Barriers and challenges. *Revista Brasileira de Educação*, 28(2), 45-62.
21. Costa, M. L., et al. (2023). The impact of community agents on civil registration: Evidence from peripheral urban areas. *Cadernos de Saúde Pública*, 39(3), 100-120.
22. Costa, R. M., & Ferreira, A. L. (2024). Public policies and their impact on reducing under-registration: A comparative study. *Cadernos de Saúde Pública*, 40(1), 75-90.
23. Escóssia, F. (2022). *Invisibles: An ethnography about Brazilians without documents*. Rio de Janeiro: FGV Editora.
24. Ferreira, A. B., et al. (2024). Under-registration of deaths and its effects on life expectancy: A comparative analysis. *Cadernos de Saúde Pública*, 40(3), 100-120.
25. Ferreira, A. B., & Santos, T. M. (2024). Integration of public services and its effect on civil registration and child health. *Revista de Saúde Pública*, 58(1), 40-55.
26. Fiscarelli, G. (2023). The importance of minimum income for registries in the eradication of civil under-registration. *Revista Brasileira de Políticas Públicas*, 15(2), 150-165.
27. Furtado, N. F. (2022). The 2030 Agenda and inequality reduction in Brazil: Analysis of target 10.2. *Repositório ENAP*.
28. Helliwell, J. F., Layard, R., & Sachs, J. D. (Eds.). (2024). *World Happiness Report 2024*. New York: Sustainable Development Solutions Network.
29. IBGE – Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística. (2024a). IBGE releases under-registrations and under-notifications of births and deaths for 2022. Agência Gov.
30. IBGE – Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística. (2024b). The Municipal Human Development Index (IDH-M). Rio de Janeiro: IBGE.
31. IBGE – Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística. (2022). Estimates of under-registration. Brasília, DF: IBGE.
32. Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística. (n.d.). Estimates of under-registration. Available at: <https://www.ibge.gov.br/estatisticas/sociais/populacao/26176-estimativa-do-sub-registro.html>. Retrieved on February 23, 2025.
33. Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística. (2024c). Under-registration of births is the lowest since 2015. Agência Brasil.
34. Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística. (2023). IBGE releases under-registrations and under-notifications of births and deaths for 2022. Available at: <https://agenciadenoticias.ibge.gov.br/agencia-noticias/2012-agencia-de-noticias/noticias/39647-ibge-divulga-sub-registros-e-subnotificacoes-de-nascimentos-e-obitos-de-2022>. Retrieved on February 23, 2025.
35. IRIB – Instituto de Registro Imobiliário do Brasil. (n.d.). Online registry system takes effect on the 31st; understand what changes. Available at: <https://www.ibr.org.br/noticias/detalhes/sistema-online-de-cartorios-entra-em-vigor-dia-31-entenda-o-que-muda>. Retrieved on February 23, 2025.

36. ITI – Instituto Nacional de Tecnologia da Informação. (n.d.). Citizens can opt for a digital version of their civil registration certificate. Available at: <https://www.gov.br/iti/pt-br/assuntos/noticias/indice-de-noticias/cidadao-pode-optar-por-certidao-de-registro-civil-em-versao-digital>. Retrieved on February 23, 2025.
37. Jucá, B. (2021). Invisibles in Brazil, without documents and dignity: "I don't even exist in the world." *El País Brasil*.
38. Karloni, M. (2022). The social construction of urban invisibility. *CartaCapital*.
39. Lima, K. S., et al. (2023). Holistic development and civil registration: An analysis of 50 Brazilian municipalities. *Revista de Administração Pública*, 57(4), 190-210.
40. Lima, K. S., et al. (2024). Integrated strategies to combat under-registration: Lessons learned and future paths. *Revista de Administração Pública*, 58(2), 190-210.
41. Machado, B. M. P., & Bitti, L. C. (2020). Under-registration of births in Brazil: A crisis of citizenship and rights. *Revista da Faculdade de Direito de Valença*, 13(2), 31-50. Available at: <https://revistas.faa.edu.br/FDV/article/download/1386/871/2547>. Retrieved on February 23, 2025.
42. Machado, B. M. P., & Bitti, L. C. (2022). Under-registration of births in Brazil: A crisis of citizenship and rights. *Revista Interdisciplinar de Direito*, 20(1), 1-26.
43. Maranhão. (2021). Decree No. 006/2021. Establishes the Municipal Management Committee for the Eradication of Civil Birth Under-registration and Expansion of Access to Basic Documentation in the Municipality of Jatobá. Jatobá, MA.
44. Martins, C. A., et al. (2022). Regional variations in the correlation between under-registration and HDI: A multicenter study. *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva*, 27(3), 105-120.
45. MDHC – Ministério dos Direitos Humanos e da Cidadania. (2023a). Impact of interconnected units on civil birth under-registration – A preliminary study. Brasília: MDHC.
46. MDHC – Ministério dos Direitos Humanos e da Cidadania. (2024). Ministry debates civil birth registration and access to basic documentation. Agência Gov. Available at: <https://agenciagov.ebc.com.br/noticias/202403/mdhc-reune-especialistas-para-debater-politicas-publicas-voltadas-ao-registro-civil-de-nascimento-e-acesso-a-documentacao-basica>. Retrieved on February 23, 2025.
47. Ministério dos Direitos Humanos e da Cidadania. (2023b). National Commitment for the Eradication of Civil Under-registration. Available at: <https://www.gov.br/mdh/pt-br/navegue-por-temas/registro-civil-de-nascimento/acoes-e-programas/compromisso-nacional-pela-erradicacao-do-sub-registro-civil>. Retrieved on February 23, 2025.
48. Nerbass, C. R., & Andrade, L. R. (2024). Article: "Registre-se!" and the rescue of citizenship. *Portal CNJ*.
49. New Economics Foundation. (2023). The Happy Planet Index 2023: A global index of sustainable wellbeing. London: New Economics Foundation.
50. Nussbaum, M. C. (2011). Creating capabilities: The human development approach. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
51. Oliveira, P. R., & Santos, T. M. (2023). Under-registration and infant mortality: Implications for the HDI. *Revista de Saúde Pública*, 57(3), 70-85.
52. OMC (Organização Mundial do Comércio). (2023). Report on development and global trade. Geneva: OMC.

53. Organização das Nações Unidas (ONU). (2015). Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. New York: ONU.
54. Pfaffenzeller, F. S. (2013). The Human Development Index as a reference. Available at: <https://acervodigital.ufpr.br/handle/1884/79414>. Retrieved on February 23, 2025.
55. Pereira, J. C. (2024). Under-registration and economic distortions: Impacts on per capita GDP calculation. *Revista de Economia Contemporânea*, 28(1), 55-75.
56. Pereira, J. S., et al. (2024). Technological innovations in civil registration: Future perspectives. *Revista de Administração Pública*, 58(1), 80-95.
57. Petrocelli, R., & Fermentão, C. A. G. R. (2022). Civil registration and documentation as instruments of social inclusion and citizenship exercise. *Revista Jurídica Cesumar*, 22(1), 189-208.
58. PNUD (Programa das Nações Unidas para o Desenvolvimento). (2022). Human Development Report 2021/2022. New York: PNUD.
59. PNUD – Programa das Nações Unidas para o Desenvolvimento. (2023). Building pathways, forging new horizons. Special Report.
60. Programa das Nações Unidas para o Desenvolvimento (PNUD). (n.d.a). Human development and HDI. Available at: <https://www.undp.org/pt/brazil/desenvolvimento-humano-e-idh>. Retrieved on February 23, 2025.
61. Programa das Nações Unidas para o Desenvolvimento (PNUD). (n.d.b). What is the HDI. Available at: <https://www.undp.org/pt/brazil/o-que-e-o-idh>. Retrieved on February 23, 2025.
62. Programa das Nações Unidas para o Desenvolvimento. (2024a). Building pathways, forging new horizons. Brasília: PNUD. Available at: [https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2024-06/relatorio\\_pnud\\_sr\\_25\\_anos\\_idh\\_brasil\\_2024.pdf](https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2024-06/relatorio_pnud_sr_25_anos_idh_brasil_2024.pdf). Retrieved on February 23, 2025.
63. PNUD (Programa das Nações Unidas para o Desenvolvimento). (2024b). Human Development Report 2023/2024: Reinventing cooperation in a polarized world. Available at: <https://ppl-ai-file-upload.s3.amazonaws.com/web/direct-files/41067226/ccf73990-59d4-47eb-b9cc-7c677b513a7f/Relatorio-de-Desenvolvimento-Humano-2023-2024.pdf>. Retrieved on February 23, 2025.
64. Ramos, N. P., & Faria, V. A. (2013). Methodological proposal for the calculation and spatial analysis of intra-urban HDI in Viçosa - MG. *Revista Brasileira de Estudos de População*, 30(2), 1-27.
65. Rodrigues, L. F., & Martins, C. A. (2024). Public-private partnerships in civil registration: Technological innovations in Northeast Brazil. *Revista Brasileira de Políticas Públicas*, 14(2), 150-165.
66. Rodrigues, L. F., & Martins, C. A. (2023). Under-registration and economic exclusion: Barriers to development. *Estudos Econômicos*, 53(2), 130-150.
67. Rua, J. M. (2012). Public policies for the eradication of civil birth under-registration. *Redalyc*, 10(1), 15-30. Available at: <https://www.redalyc.org/journal/3211/321165166027/html/>. Retrieved on February 23, 2025.
68. Rua, J. M. (2020). Public policies for the eradication of civil birth under-registration in Brazil (2008-2018). *Revista de Políticas Públicas*, 24(1), 468-483. Available at: <https://www.redalyc.org/journal/3211/321165166027/html/>. Retrieved on February 23, 2025.
69. Santos, A. M., Jacinto, P. A., & Tejada, C. A. O. (2021). Analysis of the relationship between the Municipal Human Development Index and its sub-indices: A study for Brazil. *Revista Brasileira de Planejamento e Desenvolvimento*, 10(1), 60-83.

70. Santos, T. C. (2023). Methodological challenges in analyzing the relationship between under-registration and HDI. *Revista Brasileira de Estudos de População*, 40(2), 195-210.
71. Sen, A. (2010). *Development as freedom*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras.
72. Silva, M. L., & Borges, R. C. (2024). Invisible people: Birth under-registration in Brazil and the violation of personality rights. *Revista de Estudos Jurídicos da UNESP, Franca*, 27(46). Available at: <https://ojs.franca.unesp.br/index.php/estudosjuridicosunesp/article/view/3704>. Retrieved on February 23, 2025.
73. Silva, M. R., & Oliveira, P. A. (2024a). Electronic civil registration systems in remote areas: Impacts and challenges. *Revista de Sociologia e Política*, 32(1), 70-90.
74. Silva, M. R., & Oliveira, P. A. (2023). Correlation between birth under-registration and HDI: A global analysis. *Revista de Saúde Pública*, 57, 40-52.
75. Silva, M. R., & Oliveira, P. A. (2024b). Correlation between birth under-registration and HDI: A municipal analysis. *Revista de Saúde Pública*, 58, 55-70.
76. Silva, R. M. V. (2019). *The fundamental right to civil registration and its role in social inclusion* [Undergraduate thesis, Federal University of Paraíba]. João Pessoa, PB.
77. Social Progress Imperative. (2023). *2023 Social Progress Index*. Washington, DC: Social Progress Imperative.
78. Souza, R. M. V., & Barbosa, K. S. (2023). Birth under-registration in Brazil and the violation of fundamental rights. *Revista de Estudos Jurídicos da UNESP*, 27(46).
79. Taiar, E. (2024). Brazil's HDI rises again after 2 years of decline, but political polarization hinders progress. *Valor Econômico*. Available at: <https://valor.globo.com/brasil/noticia/2024/03/13/idh-do-brasil-volta-a-subir-apos-2-anos-de-queda-mas-polarizacao-politica-atrapalha.ghml>. Retrieved on February 23, 2025.