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(IN)JUSTICE IN RURAL WORLDS

**O PARADOXO DA ASSISTÊNCIA: FOMENTO PRODUTIVO E
INFORMALIDADE HÍDRICA NA AGRICULTURA FAMILIAR DO TOCANTINS**

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This article investigates "institutional blindness" in water management in Tocantins, analyzing the disconnect between rural extension policy and environmental regulation. Based on data from 1,219 family farms, the study demonstrates that the requirement for water use permits (outorga), dissociated from land tenure reality, has created a scenario where 91.1% of producers operate illegally. The results expose "Hidden Consumption": a water demand invisible to management agencies, driven by a technified minority that, despite being assisted by the State, places pressure on watersheds without monitoring. The research evidences that the reported scarcity is not merely physical, but induced by a governance model that modernizes production while maintaining legal clandestinity. The study concludes there is an urgent need to overcome the

punitive bureaucratic model, prioritizing simplified regularization for small users and smart enforcement focused on large hidden consumers.

Palavras-chave: extensão rural; água; outorga; agricultura familiar; tocantins.