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PARLIAMENTARY AMENDMENTS
AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF
TOCANTINS: AN ANALYSIS WITHIN
THE SCOPE OF THE PPA 2016-2019**

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ALOCÇÃO DE EMENDAS PARLAMENTARES INDIVIDUAIS ESTADUAIS E O DESENVOLVIMENTO REGIONAL DO TOCANTINS: UMA ANÁLISE NO ÂMBITO DO PPA 2016-2019

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ABSTRACT

This article presents an analysis of the distribution of individual state parliamentary amendments proposed by members of the Legislative Assembly of the State of Tocantins, correlating them with the thematic programs of the strategic dimension of the PPA (Multi-Year Plan) 2016–2019 associated with regional development. Documentary research and descriptive statistical analysis were used to gather and compare data on individual parliamentary amendments, providing a critical evaluation of the results, highlighting distribution patterns, limitations, and potential impacts on regional development. The results from the data analysis indicated that the area of popular events received the highest number of parliamentary amendments, followed by health, sports, infrastructure, the agricultural sector, education, public security, social action, and culture. The study found that public governance is essential for the collective action of state deputies, enabling an effective dialogical context with other social actors to define strategies aimed at better selecting and directing parliamentary amendments with the potential to contribute to regional development.

Keywords: Individual parliamentary. Regional development. Public governance.

RESUMO

Este artigo apresenta uma análise da distribuição de emendas parlamentares estaduais individuais, de autoria dos deputados da Assembleia Legislativa do Estado do Tocantins, correlacionando-o com os programas temáticos da dimensão estratégica do PPA 2016-2019 associados ao desenvolvimento regional. Foi utilizada pesquisa documental e análise estatística descritiva para levantar e comparar dados sobre emendas parlamentares individuais, com avaliação crítica dos resultados, destacando padrões de distribuição, limitações e potenciais impactos no desenvolvimento regional. Os resultados, decorrentes de análise de dados indicaram que a área de eventos populares foi a mais contemplada com emendas parlamentares, seguido por saúde, esporte, infraestrutura, setor agropecuário, educação, segurança pública, ação social e cultura. Verificou-se necessário o exercício de governança pública para atuação de deputados estaduais em bloco, podendo existir um contexto dialógico eficaz com os demais atores sociais para definição de estratégias com vista à melhor escolha e direcionamento de emendas parlamentares com potencial de contribuir para o desenvolvimento regional.

Palavras-chave: Emendas parlamentares. Desenvolvimento Regional. Governança.

INTRODUCTION

Within the Brazilian federative context, the Legislative Branch plays a crucial role in regional and local development, particularly through the use of parliamentary amendments. These amendments enable the decentralization of a portion of the public budget, bringing resources closer to community-specific needs and helping to address local demands in areas such as infrastructure, health, education, and cultural or recreational events. However, the subjective nature of project selection and the absence of clear criteria for resource allocation often result in fragmented investments, thereby diminishing the potential impact on more strategic, long-term initiatives.

In the state of Tocantins, in particular, studies such as those by Cilli (2013) and Sabará (2020) highlight key challenges in this process, including the lack of strategic planning, weak coordination among institutional actors, and limited dialogue with society. When institutional integration and public participation are strengthened, the potential of parliamentary amendments to promote regional development increases, allowing for more efficient and sustainable use of resources. Thus, the Legislative Branch — by exercising its representative and regulatory functions — can either align its actions with regional priorities and contribute to progress, or divert from them, hindering development efforts.



The Constitution of Tocantins state (1989) assigns the Executive Branch the responsibility for drafting and implementing regional land-use and socio-economic development plans. Within this constitutional and institutional framework, the Legislative Branch operates alongside the Executive and Judiciary, with its powers exercised by 24 state deputies who serve four-year terms in the Legislative Assembly of Tocantins.

It is the prerogative of the legislature to contribute, directly or indirectly, to the formulation of public policies—defined as “the stage at which democratic governments translate their purposes and electoral platforms into programs and actions that will produce real-world results or changes” (SOUZA, 2006).

The public budget is the central planning instrument of the state. It is prepared by the Executive Branch and subsequently reviewed and approved by the Legislative Branch. The budget estimates the revenue the state expects to collect in the upcoming year and outlines how the Executive and other branches intend to allocate expenditures accordingly. Once submitted to the legislature, the budget bill may be modified through parliamentary amendments, which are intended to direct funds toward specific objectives. Ideally, these amendments reflect local social demands and ensure more responsive public investment. Currently, 1.2% of Tocantins’s annual budget is allocated through such parliamentary amendments.

Against this backdrop, this study seeks to analyze the allocation of individual state parliamentary amendments and their contribution to regional development in the state of Tocantins. The analysis focuses on the intended purpose of these amendments, without addressing the full execution cycle—including authorization, commitment, liquidation, and payment. Consequently, it is not possible to determine whether the amendments mapped in this research were effectively implemented, committed, or disbursed.

INDIVIDUAL PARLIAMENTARY AMENDMENTS: LEGAL AND POLITICAL ASPECTS

Understanding parliamentary amendments requires an understanding of budgetary dynamics and the Annual Budget Law, which serves as the legal instrument that formalizes revenue and expenditure projections. The public budget is a planning tool that, through estimated forecasts of revenues and expenses, enables the implementation of public policies. It reflects governmental strategy, outlining investment priorities theoretically grounded in the popular will. The budget is a plan that sets out pre-approved expenditures and revenues for a given period and mirrors the economic life of the nation, serving as a key guiding instrument for state action in the economy and in addressing societal interests (HARADA, 2016).

The proposal of budget amendments occurs during the authorization phase, when the Legislative Branch reviews the proposed budget and its revenue projections. At this stage, legislators may modify work programs through amendments. Parliamentary amendments are thus interventions in the budget bill submitted by the Executive, whereby lawmakers introduce changes to programs based on their own discretion and value judgments, whether individually, through party caucuses, committees, or rapporteurs.

Constitutional Amendment No. 86, enacted on March 17, 2015—known as the “Mandatory Budget Amendment” —altered Articles 165, 166, and 198 of the 1988 Federal Constitution. It redefined the legal framework surrounding parliamentary amendments by requiring the Executive Branch to execute them up to a limit of 1.2% of the Net Current Revenue (RCL) realized in the previous fiscal year, with half of this percentage mandatorily allocated to the healthcare sector.

The mandatory character introduced by this amendment diminished, within the Executive-Legislative dynamic, the principle of consensus, which presupposes a minimally dialogical relationship between branches to achieve shared social goals. Consensus in public administration implies a network-based logic, with integrated, plural, and horizontally structured actions, where, as Centeno and Santos (2018) argue, “the logic of consensus under the primacy of democracy is highly desirable and often more effective in achieving public purposes.”

The literature on Brazilian politics frequently highlights the imbalances within the federal system—especially the economic dependency of subnational units on higher levels of government,



whether the Union or the States in relation to municipalities. These are compounded by the incentives of Brazil's open-list proportional electoral system, in which seats won by a party or coalition are assigned to the most-voted candidates. This electoral structure encourages legislators to foster personalistic ties with voters, often through the provision of geographically targeted benefits—an approach widely referred to as pork-barrel politics (BIJOS, 2018).

The term *pork barrel* is commonly used in analyses of parliamentary amendments. According to Maxey (1919), the expression originates from the era of American slavery, when salted pork was stored in barrels and distributed to enslaved people, who competed fiercely for the largest shares. Maxey draws a parallel with the behavior of U.S. congressmen, who scrambled to insert appropriations into legislation as a means of gaining favor with their constituents—akin to fighting over pork barrels.

In the Brazilian context, pork-barrel politics has become a frequent explanation for how legislators, in pursuit of electoral success, use parliamentary amendments to promote their names and images in targeted areas that may evolve into strongholds of voter support. Mendonça (2015) notes that allocating funds to potential electoral strongholds is relatively intuitive, given the competitive advantages such a strategy offers during campaigns, as well as the perceived closeness and representativeness it fosters. Ames, Baker, and Rennó (2008) argue that parliamentary amendments are among the key factors influencing voter decision-making.

This context presents two potential outcomes for legislators when allocating amendments: first, when amendments are meaningful and enhance quality of life for the population; second, when resources are allocated to inefficient projects with limited social return but strong populist appeal.

Legislators are elected to serve the public interest, allocating resources through amendments to essential sectors such as infrastructure, health, education, and sanitation. These initiatives tend to be positively received by voters, who recognize and legitimize the work of their representatives through democratic elections. On the other hand, supporting projects with broad popular appeal, even if of low technical relevance, remains a legitimate parliamentary prerogative—and can serve as a powerful electoral strategy. In such cases, parliamentary amendments may represent pork-barrel politics in its clearest form: when vote-seeking outweighs the commitment to deliver high-quality public goods.

According to Mourão and Cunha (2011), political actors often feel pressured to demonstrate tangible contributions to their geographically concentrated constituencies. As a result, they allocate resources to areas of high electoral interest, even if those projects are inefficient or unnecessary from an economic or social standpoint.

Nonetheless, there is no academic consensus on the electoral effectiveness of parliamentary amendments—even when applied strategically within a pork-barrel framework. Baião and Couto (2017), through a rigorous statistical analysis, demonstrated that although amendments may generate votes, their impact is not sufficiently significant to guarantee decisive electoral advantage.

Regardless of how legislators allocate amendments, one fact remains: the public budget is governed by the principle of unity. From this principle, as Sabbag (2007, p. 26) observes, emerge tools for monitoring fiscal policy and “assessing whether the essential objectives of the State are ultimately being pursued or achieved by those in power.”

From this perspective, it becomes clear that the state of Tocantins lacks a formal public governance system focused on regional development, as envisioned by the National Regional Development Policy. Through interinstitutional governance between the Executive and Legislative Branches, the informational foundation regarding regional problems and potential solutions could become more fluid and legitimate, recognizing the environmental, social, cultural, and economic diversity of the state’s territories. By coordinating sectoral policies to converge on priority areas, it would be possible to more effectively structure an integrated regional development financing policy—one that includes, among its instruments, the strategic use of parliamentary amendments.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT, GOVERNANCE, AND PARLIAMENTARY AMENDMENTS

To promote development, it is not enough to ensure decent work and income; it is also essential to guarantee the population satisfactory levels of education, health, culture, housing, access to natural resources, and other key dimensions. The sustainability of communities is closely linked to the fulfillment of rights related to quality urban services, adequate housing, employment, and leisure—in short, all the conditions that contribute positively to achieving a better quality of life (RODRIGUES et al., 2012).



Ferreira de Lima (2016) conceptualizes regional development both as a stage and a process. It is a stage insofar as it reflects the level of progress and improvement in living conditions, encompassing productive factors and social well-being. It is also a process, as achieving such stages requires a series of actions, policies, and coordinated movements. These can occur either spontaneously or be induced by endogenous or exogenous forces within the regional space. Parliamentary amendments, as exogenous interventions, have the potential to generate tangible outcomes when directed toward municipalities or civil society entities oriented toward collective goals—provided that the locality has the capacity to absorb and respond to the initiative, taking into account its specific socio-territorial conditions.

Parliamentary amendments are embedded in the broader public budget and are thus guided by the pillars of the Multi-Year Plan and the corresponding annual budget laws. The design of the public budget—and, by extension, of the amendments—is part of a broader governance process within the Executive Branch. This process is fundamental to structuring public policy through programs and actions that reflect strategic state priorities.

The execution of parliamentary amendments arises from the reality that, despite their relevance in improving public service delivery, there is no exact formula for their optimal allocation. Governance, in this sense, is an adaptive and systemic process that must be tailored to local contexts. It should aim to assess current practices, promote new behaviors and approaches, and incorporate external best practices that may improve government performance.

It is worth noting that in 2020, Brazil was recognized by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for its adherence to the Recommendation on Budgetary Governance. The OECD considers robust budgetary governance essential to broader public governance, as it promotes transparency, strategic alignment, data openness, and public trust (DOS SANTOS, 2020). The Recommendation emphasizes that public budgets should enable both legislators and citizens to understand not only where money is being spent but also what public services are being delivered—and to what degree of quality and effectiveness.

Moreover, the 2016–2019 Multi-Year Plan, in its Tactical Dimension, stated that the State Executive had adopted a new model of Public Governance for the period—based on a “dual approach involving short-term emergency measures to mitigate the fiscal crisis, alongside long-term structural strategies



focused on generating sustainable public value.”

From this standpoint, multilevel and networked institutional dialogue—whether formal or informal—conducted by context-specific actors and grounded in the co-construction of ideas and open information flows, can contribute significantly to the process of selecting budget programs and beneficiaries of parliamentary amendments. This holds true even though the final decision remains subject to the discretionary power of parliamentarians.

METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the methodological framework used to investigate key questions concerning the allocation of parliamentary amendments in Tocantins and their potential role in advancing regional development. The central research question explores whether the behavior of state legislators in allocating amendments aligns with a regional development logic or reflects a pattern more closely associated with *pork-barrel politics*—a dynamic in which public resources are channeled to localized and individualized interests at the expense of broader territorial development strategies.

The geographical scope of this research is the state of Tocantins. Oliveira (2016) analyzed the economic and social development of Tocantins’s municipalities between 2000 and 2010, highlighting persistent regional disparities. While Palmas, Araguaína, and Gurupi emerged as economic centers, numerous municipalities remained highly dependent on federal income transfer programs and exhibited elevated poverty levels. The BR-153 highway corridor fostered development along its route but further excluded peripheral areas. Despite some progress by 2010—such as poverty reduction and improved employment rates—significant structural barriers to equitable development persisted.

In subsequent years, the expansion of agribusiness—driven by the North-South Railway—introduced new economic dynamics. However, persistent income and land concentration remain structural impediments, requiring targeted policy strategies to reduce inequalities and foster inclusive, sustainable growth.

To structure the study, the analysis was anchored in the 2016–2019 Multi-Year Plan (PPA) for three primary reasons:



1. It was the first PPA issued after the enactment of Constitutional Amendment No. 86/2015, which established the Mandatory Budget Amendment;
2. It represents a budgetary cycle unaffected by the COVID-19 pandemic (declared only in 2020);
3. It provides access to more consolidated and complete data for analysis.

The study includes a conceptual discussion of regional development and an examination of Law No. 3.051 of December 21, 2015 (TOCANTINS, 2015), which outlines institutional references and prospects for regional development in Tocantins. It also provides an overview of public and budgetary governance, especially the interaction between the Executive Branch and state legislators in negotiating and selecting projects and beneficiaries of individual amendments.

The primary data were collected from the electronic portal of the State Secretariat for Planning and Budget and administrative records maintained by the agency, which manages the amendment process and acts as a liaison between state deputies and implementing units (state agencies or municipal governments). In total, 2,205 individual state parliamentary amendments were identified between 2016 and 2019.

Initial data processing involved compiling the following variables: proponent, purpose, amount, and beneficiary. Based on both normative and empirical parameters, the research adopted a strategy of systematization and interpretive analysis to map the landscape of parliamentary amendments and assess their alignment with regional development goals.

The methodological steps adopted in this study followed a logical sequence and were defined as follows:

1. Documentary Research – Collection of data from the Annual Budget Laws (LOAs) and the Budget Guidelines Laws (LDOs) of Tocantins from 2016 to 2019, to establish the normative and financial frameworks surrounding parliamentary amendments.
2. Data Collection on Amendments – Detailed review of all individual parliamentary amendments approved by the Legislative Assembly of Tocantins (ALETO), corresponding to approximately 1% of the state's Net Current Revenue (RCL) each year. The study also included analysis of the 24 deputies' amendment behavior and resource distribution.
3. Descriptive Statistical Analysis – Organization and comparison of amendment data across thematic areas using descriptive statistics. Tables were developed to illustrate the total funds allocated, average per legislator, number of amendments submitted, and beneficiaries by category.

4. Data Mapping and Consolidation – Mapping of total funding by area and year, and generic description of the types of supported projects. This step provided a broader perspective on distribution trends and potential impacts.

5. Critical Data Analysis – Evaluation of amendment distribution patterns to identify regional socioeconomic impacts and structural limitations, particularly concerning the efficiency and effectiveness of allocations in fostering regional development.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

THE DISTRIBUTION OF PARLIAMENTARY AMENDMENTS IN TOCANTINS

By virtue of Constitutional Amendment No. 43, dated December 15, 2021, the State Constitution of 1989 (CE/1989) established that individual amendments to the budget bill shall be approved within the limit of 1.2% (one point two percent) of the net current revenue (RCL) projected in the proposal submitted by the Executive Branch. However, unlike the Federal Constitution (CF/1988), it does not specify a mandatory percentage to be allocated to the health sector.

It is important to highlight that, under the current budget execution framework of the state, 1% of the net current revenue is allocated to parliamentary amendments.

The calculation of this percentage, for the purpose of measuring individual parliamentary amendments, is based on the amount projected in each Annual Budget Law (LOA) and the respective net current revenues. The amount allocated to each deputy is obtained by dividing the total amount (1% of the net current revenue) by the total number of members of the Legislative Assembly, which, in the case of Tocantins, totals twenty-four.

Table 1 presents a descriptive overview showing the estimated values from the LOA, the net current revenue (RCL), and the amount guaranteed to each state deputy of the Legislative Assembly of Tocantins (ALETO):

Table 1 | Total Value of Parliamentary Amendments by Tocantins State Deputies versus Net Current Revenue (NCR) – Legislative Assembly of the State of Tocantins – 2016–2019

ANO	NCR (R\$)	TOTAL AMOUNT IN AMENDMENTS (R\$)	AMOUNT PER DEPUTY	NUMBER OF AMENDMENTS
2016	7.176.000.000,00	71.760.000,00	2.290.000,00	592
2017	7.524.000.000,00	75.240.000,00	3.135.000,00	595
2018	8.099.000.000,00	80.990.000,00	3.374.583,00	430
2019	7.747.009.371,00	77.470.094,00	3.227.921,00	588

Source: Own elaboration based on research data (Seplan TO).

The respective Budget Guidelines Laws (TOCANTINS, 2016–2019) established that, for the fiscal years of 2016 to 2019 in Tocantins, the minimum amount for parliamentary amendments aimed at construction works was set at R\$ 100,000.00, while for other services and acquisitions, the minimum reference amount was R\$ 50,000.00.

Parliamentary amendments are of a budgetary nature, only acquiring financial status after their operationalization, execution, and payment, according to the legal instrument chosen at the discretion of the parliamentarian. Their implementation depends on formal action by the parliamentarian, who is responsible for officially notifying the planning agency, indicating the beneficiary entity, the name of the project, and the amount to be transferred.

Next, tables are presented for each year of the 2016–2019 PPA, indicating the area of allocation of the parliamentary amendment, the types of recurring objects, the beneficiaries, and the total amount. The objects are presented according to their general nature, as the aim is to assess which types of projects were supported through amendments. Following the tables, analyses of the mapped information will be conducted, highlighting how these allocations contributed directly and indirectly to regional development.

Table 1 | Distribution of Parliamentary Amendments for Infrastructure in Tocantins (2016–2019)

Year	Amendments	Amount (R\$)	Object	Beneficiary
2016	21	4.505.000,00	1. Construction of sanitary modules 2. Construction of squares and paving of streets 3. Construction of a bus terminal	Municipalities
2017	50	10.836.800,00	4. Earthmoving, drainage, and paving of public roads 5. Construction of a bridge 6. Drilling of an artesian well	
2018	22	4.160.000,00	7. Landscape revitalization 8. Sewage network project 9. Construction of entrance gates	
2019	41	10.100.000,00	10. Renovation of housing units 11. Installation of public lighting	

Source: Own elaboration based on research data (Seplan TO).

The proposed objects, by their nature, contributed to improving the living conditions of the local population by promoting sanitation and water supply, improvements or construction of urban roads, and enhancement of the flow of people and services.

Table 2 | Distribution of Parliamentary Amendments for Health in Tocantins (2016–2019)

Year	Amendments	Amount (R\$)	Object	Beneficiary
2016	15	2.315.000,00	1. Acquisition of ambulances 2. Acquisition of equipment for ICU and APAEs 3. Purchase of computer equipment for the primary care network	State and municipal health funds, health institutions, and foundations.
2017	59	7.224.600,00	4. Renovation of health centers 5. Construction of the Cancer Hospital (Hospital do Amor) in Palmas (2018, 2019)	
2018	41	8.277.000,00	6. Support for health support institutions 7. Acquisition of medicines for public healthcare services (2019) 8. Funding for Small-Scale Hospitals in municipalities (2019)	
2019	187	25.018.975,00	9. Installation of an X-ray room (2019) 10. Purchase of surgical equipment	
			11. Organization of surgery task forces Acquisition of motorcycles for Municipal Community Health Agents	

Source: Own elaboration based on research data (Seplan TO).



These allocations provide the population with greater access to healthcare services, ensuring, in the case of ambulance acquisitions, the transportation of patients to larger hospital centers. Notably, the construction of the *Hospital do Amor*, which received significant support from parliamentarians through parliamentary amendments, will, once completed, facilitate the treatment of cancer patients from Tocantins. This will eliminate the need for patients to travel to the renowned *Cancer Hospital* in Barretos/SP for treatment.

Table 3 | Distribution of Parliamentary Amendments for Education in Tocantins (2016–2019)

Year	Amendments	Amount (R\$)	Object	Beneficiary
2016	22	1.660.000,00	1. Renovation, expansion, and installation of air conditioning in municipal and state schools 2. Acquisition of computer equipment 3. Acquisition of vehicle, furniture, and computer equipment for Unitins (State University of Tocantins)	Universities, institutes, and associations.
2017	18	1.120.000,00	4. Teacher training and professional development 5. Drug prevention lectures 6. Acquisition of school buses and vans	
2018	35	6.380.970,00	7. Renovation of the Student Housing Center (House's School) 8. Implementation of a Specialization Course in Mathematics for State Public School teachers	
2019	19	2.720.000,00	9. Installation of a 150KVA substation, electrical distribution, and painting of a State School	

Source: Own elaboration based on research data (Seplan TO).

Projects were identified that aimed to provide structural and equipment improvements for school facilities, enhance the training of teachers in basic and higher education, support higher education, and acquire school buses to facilitate student access to schools. These actions are intended to improve learning conditions, promote the development of citizens for life and the job market, and contribute to local development.

Table 4 | Distribution of Parliamentary Amendments for Popular Events in Tocantins (2016–2019)

Year	Amendments	Amount (R\$)	Object	Beneficiary
2016	297	32.798.000,00	1. Exhibition park, livestock fair, rodeo, and vaquejada (traditional cattle-herding competition)	Institutes, associations, rural unions, APAE (Associations of Parents and Friends of People with Disabilities), and municipalities.
2017	316	34.112.200,00	2. Municipality friends' gathering	
			3. City anniversary celebration	
			4. Beach season festivities	
			5. Mother's Day tribute	
2018	152	15.815.000,00	6. Arraial, folk dance (quadrilha), and June festival (Festa Junina)	
			7. Micareta (off-season carnival)	
			8. Sound, stage, and lighting setup	
2019	201	22.571.000,00	9. Christmas and New Year's Eve celebrations	

Source: Own elaboration based on research data (Seplan TO).

The area of popular events was the main choice of state deputies, who, during the four years of the 2016–2019 PPA, allocated 967 parliamentary amendments, totaling R\$ 105,296,200.00.

Table 5 | Distribution of Parliamentary Amendments for Youth and Sports in Tocantins (2016–2019)

Year	Amendments	Amount (R\$)	Object	Beneficiary
2016	85	10.723.000,00		Institutes, sports federations and associations, and municipalities.
			1. Renovation of multi-sport gymnasiums	
			2. Sports competitions and tournaments	
2017	75	9.165.000,00	3. Sports projects in municipalities	
			4. Sports events, recreational activities, and games	
			5. Revitalization of stadium lighting	
			6. Acquisition of playground equipment	
2018	37	5.655.000,00	7. Acquisition of sports equipment	
			8. Funding for travel, accommodation, and meals	
			9. Construction of soccer fields	
19	38	5.320.000,00		

Source: Own elaboration based on research data (Seplan TO).

The promotion of sports is closely linked to health and improved quality of life, and the development of sports facilities helps make this dynamic possible. Support for socio-sports projects aimed at children and youth serves as a potential tool for personal growth and collective awareness through sports, which may foster the emergence of local leaders and young entrepreneurs.



Table 6 | Distribution of Parliamentary Amendments for Agriculture and Livestock in Tocantins (2016–2019)

Year	Amendments	Amount (R\$)	Object	Beneficiary
2016	29	6.285.000,00	1. Events (fairs) focused on livestock and family farming	Community associations, institutes, EMBRAPA (Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation), and municipalities
2017	21	2.700.000,00	2. Training for farmers, fishers, and family farming	
			3. Acquisition of agricultural machinery and vehicles	
2018	27	5.405.000,00	4. Implementation of irrigation systems and community gardens	
			5. Renovation of covered markets	
			6. Drilling of artesian wells	
2019	37	4.795.000,00	7. Establishment of agricultural parks	
			8. Integrated production projects	
			9. Acquisition of vehicles for unions	
			10. Support for fishing colonies	
			11. Installation of a small dairy processing plant	

Source: Own elaboration based on research data (Seplan TO).

The agricultural sector is one of the most important pillars of the 2016–2019 Multi-Year Plan, and it can be seen as one of the main driving forces of the state's development. Parliamentary amendments were directed toward issues related to family farming, especially in terms of supporting the implementation of projects such as fish farming, and promoting processes that contribute to the design and execution of sustainable rural development strategies.

Table 7 | Distribution of Parliamentary Amendments for Public Security in Tocantins (2016–2019)

Year	Amendments	Amount (R\$)	Object	Recipient
2016	16	1.100.000,00	1. Acquisition of patrol vehicles, automobiles, furniture, and IT equipment;	Military Police, Fire Department, and State Secretariat for Public Security
2017	13	1.326.400,00	2. Maintenance and upgrading of public security units;	
			3. Acquisition of pistols and sights;	
			4. Acquisition of patrol vehicles;	
2018	15	2.360.000,00	5. Acquisition of office supplies, furniture, and IT equipment;	
			6. Acquisition of vehicles for public security units;	
2019	28	3.310.000,00	7. Implementation of a security system;	
			8. Re-equipping of the Metropolitan Guard;	
			9. Renovation of a canine unit.	

Source: Compiled by the author based on research data (Seplan TO).



The area of public security was supported through amendments aimed at objectives such as the acquisition of firearms and vehicles, the structuring of police stations, and allocations to the state's security forces (Fire Department, Civil Police, and Military Police). These allocations are aligned with the 2016–2019 Multi-Year Plan, which established the need to expand the services provided in the field of public security. This expansion would be achieved through the interconnection of systems via communication networks and databases, integrating them into a centralized information unit to optimize administrative, civil, and criminal operations, as well as to improve citizen services.

Table 8 | Distribution of Parliamentary Amendments for Social Assistance in Tocantins (2016–2019)

Year	Amendments	Amount (R\$)	Object	Recipient
2016	41	3.887.000,00	1. Projects for the recovery of individuals with substance dependency and drug prevention;	Associations, APAE, institutes, and municipalities
2017	16	1.960.000,00	2. Projects focused on women and the elderly;	
2018	8	900.000,00	3. Strengthening of municipal councils;	
			4. Construction of community centers and support centers for children and adolescents;	
			5. Job training for youth and general public courses;	
			6. University of Maturity project (lifelong learning for seniors);	
			7. Development of housing unit projects;	
2019	7	830.000,00	8. Implementation of social projects;	
			9. Construction of APAE headquarters and acquisition of permanent equipment;	
			10. Training of health agents;	
			11. Construction of a funeral home;	
			12. Construction of an industrial kitchen;	
			13. Renovation and expansion of Social Assistance Reference Centers (CRAS);	
			14. Acquisition and distribution of food baskets..	

Source: Compiled by the author based on research data (Seplan TO).

Encompassing the areas of social assistance, food security, and employment—key contexts that underpin human dignity and quality of life—the Multi-Year Plan established guiding principles for the allocation of parliamentary amendments, which were directed toward actions aligned with its objectives.



Table 9 | Distribution of Parliamentary Amendments for Culture in Tocantins (2016–2019)

Year	Amendments	Amount (R\$)	Object	Recipient
2016	32	2.746.000,00	1. Cultural events, festivals, fairs, and exhibitions; 2. Air conditioning and renovation of cultural centers; 3. Hiring of music instructors; 4. Cultural support for the artistic production of <i>quadrilhas juninas</i> (traditional June folk dance groups); 5. Celebration of the Divine Holy Spirit and religious pilgrimage; 6. Purchase of furniture for cultural centers; 7. Tourist and historical signage; 8. Acquisition of sound systems, musical instruments, tents, lighting, and other equipment aimed at promoting the production, circulation, and promotion of culture and tourism; 9. Renovation of the roof of 'Nossa Senhora das Mercês' Cathedral (Porto Nacional); 10. Production of a documentary film.	Institutes, associations, and municipalities
2017	24	2.545.000,00		
2018	13	2.055.000,00		
2019	17	1.595.000,00		

Source: Compiled by the author based on research data (Seplan TO).

The allocation of resources to the cultural sector—such as the organization of festivals, fairs, and cultural exhibitions, as well as the renovation of cultural centers or spaces—serves the purpose of strengthening cultural roots and the identity of the people. Culture is a tool for the development of a society, as it enables the recognition and appreciation of cultural, ethnic, and regional diversity. It also stimulates critical thinking, fosters the cultural economy, boosts the domestic market, promotes cultural consumption, and supports the export of cultural goods, services, and content, among other possibilities.

ANALYSIS OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF PARLIAMENTARY AMENDMENTS AND THEIR (LACK OF) RELATIONSHIP WITH REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

When observing the distribution panorama of individual state parliamentary amendments in the State of Tocantins, it is noted that only a small portion of the budget—corresponding to 1% of the Net Current Revenue (RCL) from the previous year—was allocated for this purpose. What is already proportionally small becomes even more limited when subdivided among the 24 state deputies of ALETO, each of whom may choose how to fragment the allocated resources.



Between 2016 and 2019, each deputy was able to allocate between R\$ 2,290,000.00 and R\$ 3,227,921.00, following the rule that no amendment could be allocated in an amount below R\$ 50,000.00 (and, in the case of public works, below R\$ 100,000.00).

Although the amount allocated for the mandatory implementation of parliamentary amendments may appear relatively small in the context of the overall state budget, it can represent significant relief at the local level—particularly for small municipalities with low populations, limited MPF (Municipal Participation Fund) resources, and other mandatory transfers. In such cases, amendments can help enhance the sense of dignity among local populations.

The socio-economic relevance of parliamentary action lies in the ability to map out the most urgent local needs and direct available resources accordingly. As a general rule, and except for technical limitations, deputies have full discretion to select the beneficiaries of their amendments without interference from the Executive Branch.

One area that stood out over the four-year period was the funding of popular events, which accounted for 967 amendments totaling R\$ 105,296,200.00. These resources were directed to the organization of agricultural fairs, rodeos, *vaquejadas* (traditional cattle-herding competitions), city anniversaries, beach season events, religious festivals, June festivities (*festas juninas*), off-season carnivals (*micaretas*), and Christmas and New Year celebrations. It is difficult, however, to assess to what extent these allocations contributed effectively to the growth and development of the municipalities and regions involved.

In contrast to other areas analyzed, which are more objectively measured, the 2016–2019 Multi-Year Plan presents the area of popular events in a vague and poorly defined manner, leaving room for abstract interpretations. The popular events funded tend to fall more accurately under the category of mass entertainment events rather than cultural manifestations. Actions that genuinely promote visibility and cultural diversity in Tocantins are those that involve traditional, popular, and regional cultural expressions, or contemporary productions from creative sectors.

Nonetheless, it is worth considering that parliamentary amendments may contribute to tourism development by stimulating seasonal economic activity and generating employment

through events such as agricultural fairs and beach seasons. These occasions can boost the local economy by increasing foot traffic, hotel and restaurant occupancy, service contracts, and municipal tax revenue, which in turn may expand the provision of public services in the region. On the other hand, events such as city anniversaries, Christmas, and New Year celebrations do not appear to produce meaningful impacts from a regional development perspective.

Events supported by parliamentary amendments can be considered relevant when they aim to promote social, cultural, educational, and economic development—especially when based on evidence and feasibility studies to ensure that resources are allocated efficiently and effectively.

Conversely, the misuse of parliamentary amendments—though this is not a conclusion reached regarding popular events—can occur when they are allocated under a pure pork-barrel logic, in which resources are directed primarily to serve political or electoral interests rather than real public needs.

Institutional dialogue—through the exchange of information, which is often not accessible to other institutional actors—could support state deputies in selecting projects capable of contributing to regional development and fostering a more democratic distribution of resources. Since municipalities have diverse realities, it is essential to strengthen the informational base by considering demographic, geographic, and cultural contexts, which influence how allocated resources will impact local realities.

Regional inequalities tend to become entrenched when equitable mechanisms for development—tailored to local realities—are not pursued, as is proposed in the Multi-Year Plan. In this regard, it becomes clear that there is no formal public governance system at the state level dedicated to regional development, as outlined in the National Policy for Regional Development.

Development strategies cannot be measured with the same “ruler,” as each region requires different measures. This makes it necessary to have local knowledge and information to design appropriate strategies for each territory. Based on this premise, institutional actors from the State Executive and the Legislative Assembly, as agents of governance, could engage in more effective dialogue with other social actors to define strategic criteria for allocating parliamentary amendments that have the potential to contribute to regional development.



Even while acknowledging the legitimacy of parliamentary discretion in allocating amendments under constitutional provisions, it is worth emphasizing that the existence of a formal state-level public governance system focused on regional development—as proposed by the Regional Development Policy—could enhance both the effectiveness of management and the efficiency of decentralized resource allocation. Through inter-institutional governance, the informational basis regarding regional challenges and potential solutions would become more fluid and legitimate, considering the environmental, social, cultural, and economic diversity of the regions. From this point of view, through the articulation of sectoral policies and the convergence of actions in priority areas, it would be possible to structure a more integrated regional development financing policy, including resources from parliamentary amendments.

CONCLUSION

Until the enactment of Constitutional Amendment No. 43, dated December 15, 2021, the Constitution of the State of Tocantins stipulated that individual parliamentary amendments were to be approved up to the limit of one percent of the net current revenue estimated in the draft annual budget law. Unlike the federal requirement, it did not mandate that half of this percentage be allocated to the health sector.

As a result, the research conducted revealed that the health sector—which safeguards the most fundamental right, life—was not the main beneficiary of amendment allocations. Instead, the area that received the most resources was popular events. In descending order, the areas that received the highest number of amendments between 2016 and 2019 were: popular events; health; sports, leisure and youth; infrastructure; agriculture and livestock; education; culture; public security; and social assistance and citizenship.

It is worth highlighting that parliamentarians enjoy the prerogative of freely and discretionarily choosing the beneficiaries and purposes to be funded by their amendments, with the only restriction being technical impediments. Given this scenario, it is not possible to identify objective criteria for the decision-making process of each state deputy, which opens space for questioning the actual

purpose of the allocation—often prioritizing direct or indirect vote-seeking over the public interest. This dynamic aligns with what the literature defines as *pork barrel politics*, a distributive practice aimed at securing the votes of beneficiaries.

It is also evident that the resources allocated through amendments, in addition to being insufficient to meet the most urgent needs, do not follow a continuity plan. That is, if a municipality receives funding in a given year to train municipal public school teachers, it is unlikely to receive additional resources for the same purpose in the following year. These funds are fragmented and primarily directed toward addressing immediate demands.

As a strategy to enhance the effectiveness of legislative action, one possible recommendation would be a coordinated parliamentary approach: the convergent allocation of amendments to the same objective and beneficiary. Amendments that would otherwise be insufficient due to limited individual value could have greater impact when combined. Two notable examples identified in this study concern the health sector: the construction of the *Hospital do Amor de Palmas* (Fundação Pio XII), which received 17 amendments in 2018 and 18 in 2019; and the implementation of the *Opera Tocantins Elective Surgery Project* (State Health Fund), which received 14 amendments in 2019.

Collective parliamentary action signals the establishment of agendas informed by governance practices. This is a key factor in enabling the implementation of socially relevant projects. The coordination of efforts—led by governance agents from the Executive Branch in dialogue with state deputies, as occurred in the *Opera Tocantins Project*—can enhance the impact of parliamentary amendments by addressing urgent problems. Similar strategies in other areas, such as basic sanitation and education, could increase the relevance and social impact of these amendments, thereby promoting regional development.

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