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Between the remnants of colonialism and the insurgence of self-narrative in constructing participatory social maps: towards a land education methodology

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This article summarizes a social mapping project conducted by the Environmental Education, Communication and Arts Research Group from the Federal University of Mato Grosso. The primary goals of the project were to map the vulnerable social groups of Mato Grosso, and identify the social and environmental conflicts that put them in situations of risk. The conflicts and dilemmas these groups experience are typically caused by land and water disputes. In turn, the disputes can be traced to the continuance of colonialist forms of political, economic and ecological relations implicit in the prevailing model of development in the region. Supported by the reinvention and application of a new methodology for environmental education, namely the social map, the work illustrates the significance of group identities, self-narratives and interpretive frames, and discusses how social mapping might be used in land education to enable the construction of participatory forms of public policy.

Keywords: environmental education; modern colonialism; post-colonialism; social mapping; Brazil

Territories of Mato Grosso

Mato Grosso is a land of unique beauty: of natural landscapes and Indigenous cultural expressions, of abundant rivers and local wisdom. Meyer (2001) identifies the latter with ‘Xingu epistemology’, preferring the notion of ‘epistemology’ to ‘traditional knowledge’ because it is an idea ‘that barter within the currency of mainstream academia’ (146). For Meyer, researchers of the land must provide spaces for Indigenous peoples to speak for themselves and their ways of knowing, avoiding the tendency of some anthropologists to ‘ventriloquize the natives’ (Wolfe 1999, 4). In other words, alongside the ecological and economic features of the land of Mato Grosso, research studies must recognize there is an epistemology of Indigenous and local inhabitants that emerges, develops and is contested within the bioregion, as it is built and rebuilt across the generations who live there.

Modern development, however, is transforming the landscapes of Mato Grosso. Broader senses of the culture and land are receding, such as those that combine rationality with spirituality noted above. Disruptions to culture and land in Mato Grosso are primarily associated with the relentless pursuit of economic growth since colonization, heavily focused on export-oriented agri-businesses. The territory is

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scarred by the parcelling of land for the purposes of modern and extensive farms devoted to monoculture crops. There have been violent practices of land concentration, converting vast amounts of forest into monoculture, cattle ranches and power plants, alongside other uses and activities that target immediate economic profit. These processes are accompanied by a constellation of uses of advanced technology, mechanization, irrigation, abusive use of pesticides and low-wage workers.

In spite of positive mass media representations that characterize the modern-day Brazilian economy as growing, across the states of Brazil the land is continuing to experience devastating environmental impacts and human rights violations. Other forms of life and livelihood are neglected, and there are significant social and environmental conflicts (Jaber-Silva 2012). Many social groups characterized by poverty and want are invisible in this process, while the media, government and bourgeoisie persist in keeping marginalized social groups out of the public eye (Silva 2011).

In an attempt to make visible what is happening in Mato Grosso, in 2008, we developed the project 'Mapping identities and territories of the State of Mato Grosso'. The project was proposed and implemented under the leadership of the Environmental Education, Communication and Arts Research Group (GPEA) of the Federal University of Mato Grosso (UFMT) with important contributions from various partners (mainly from civil society) and financial support from government agencies. We employed and redeveloped a methodology called *social mapping* to identify the social groups present in the state, including their identities and territories, and meaning-making practices. We also mapped conflicts and socio-environmental injustices to produce two inter-related maps: one of the social groups, the other of socio-environmental conflicts.

In this article, we illustrate our approach and the methodological considerations for the construction of these maps. The social mapping methodology seeks to recognize the Other, who has been historically erased in the process of land occupation and use, and is intended to both signify and represent matters of interest and concern from the other's perspective. In short, we use social mapping as a technique for developing a land education: to recognize and analyse identities of territorial resistance by recording the existence of various historically invisible social groups and understanding the socio-environmental conflicts they face in their lives.

Remnants of the colonial world and the importance of land education

The prompt for developing and using social maps was borne from the recognition of the limitations of the planning instrument proposed by the Socioeconomic and Ecologic Zoning Committee of Mato Grosso (ZSEE), released in 2008. The ZSEE document is an instrument of the National Environmental Policy created in 1990, which aimed to set up a planning policy for Brazil starting with the Amazonian states. In the proposed zoning, although the term 'social' was present, a major weakness can be identified: the planning instrument ignores the conditions of invisible social groups and the socio-environmental conflicts they experience in relation to the current development model. This oversight has kept these groups and their struggles at the margins of history, including its contemporary manifestations in relation to land and cultural development priorities and considerations for the region.

The process of domination of territories and local cultures is historically present in Brazil and, consequently, in Mato Grosso. In brief, the modern state of Brazil arose from the colonialism imposed on the Americas unleashed in the fifteenth and

sixteenth centuries, a heritage characterized by a mercantilist logic and colonialist processes that led to the destruction of natural resources as well as by the expropriation and genocide of various Indigenous peoples. The same hegemonic logics exerted on people across the Americas were also practiced over Brazilian biodiversity. According to Pádua (2002), for example, in the eyes of Europeans used to managing lands of much more modest dimensions, Brazilian biomes seemed like limitless horizons of inexhaustible nature. A letter (known as the ‘birth certificate’ of Brazil) written by Pêro Vaz de Caminha to Manuel I of Portugal in 1500, a member of Pedro Álvares Cabral’s fleet that stumbled on Brazil en route to India, illustrates the contemporary perception: ‘There is a great plenty, an infinitude of waters. The country is so well-favoured that if were rightly cultivated it would yield everything, because of its waters’ (Pádua, 2002, 55 [translation by editor]).

The view that Nature is bountiful and replenishes itself has nourished the destruction of many ecosystems across several cycles of Brazilian economic history, including the export of products such as wood, gold, coffee, sugar-cane, latex rubber, livestock and, more recently, soybeans. These economic cycles are only possible because, and at the expense, of the local ecosystems. Yet, as ecosystems become depleted, the frontiers of exploration and exploitation have advanced toward those remaining and intact ecosystems. The states of Brazil, therefore, have become scarred with the violence meted out on the preceding habitats and their inhabitants.

Driven by this hegemonic conception of land and economic development, under the aegis of the capitalist mode of production, the production–consumption system of the modern Brazilian state still follows the *modus operandi* practiced in colonial Brazil. Oligarchies remain entrenched, assuring the perpetuation and near permanence of large land property owners controlling economic affairs. As with Porto-Gonçalves (2004), we can characterize this situation as that of a modern-colonial world, as distinct from a post-colonial form. The ‘modern-colonial’ was introduced by historians to signify the persistence of the rhetorical power of European universalism (Mignolo 2003, 2008), while according to Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin (2001, 186), ‘from the late 1970s the term has been used by literary critics to discuss the various cultural effects of colonization,’ as distinct to closely related terms associated with the political and economic transitions primarily marked by some post-colonial theories (see the work of Fanon (1979), Bhabha (1994), Wolfe (1999, 2006), Anderson (2008) and Veracine (2011)).

Applying the insights of modern colonialism and post-colonialism noted above to this situation, we can summarize that colonization as a set of practices still stands and has been stamped on Brazil, from the first wave of colonization by the Portuguese since the 1500s, and throughout the slower transition to a process of settler colonialism by Europeans mainly from Portugal and Spain in subsequent centuries. Many Indigenous people were enslaved by the colonists as chattels during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to service the agricultural economy, and those who resisted were often decimated in the name of Portuguese Crown. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Portuguese also introduced the bulk of African slaves to support the sugar economy, as well as cattle ranching and other foodstuff production, including coffee. While by 1888, Brazil was one of the last countries in the Western world to abolish slavery of both Africans and Indigenous peoples.

Thinking and rewriting this history of the present from the point of view of its enslaved peoples, i.e. in subordinate social positions (Guha 1996), we recognize that

the new settlers of Mato Grosso – large landowners and farmers, usually from the south of Brazil, which is abundantly colonized by Europeans – have continued these practices, perpetuating racial, social and economic inequalities, as well as incidences of slave labor. As noted by Quijano (2005), the end of colonialism did not mean the end of ‘coloniality’, for the dawn of the twenty-first century still sees numerous colonial atrocities being practiced. Thus, we argue we still face the brunt of a forceful and violent colonization process, imprinted in a predatory heritage in ways of relating to the environment, and in which land is understood by many as primarily commodity and resource.

In contemporary Brazil, this form of development is touted as the modernization of the countryside. However, such modernization is merely the reproduction of a modern-colonial world model, as it was and still is promoted, without changing the structure of land ownership. It makes itself dominant and, in this role, becomes the usurper of ecosystems and local cultures. It presents itself as ‘new’, but it remains very similar in principle and practice to the old colonial system of extraction of raw materials, centred on monocultures, favouring short-term actions for profit (with the same speed) and expropriation of native peoples. As Sartre (1979) observed, colonial violence is attributed to not only the objective of controlling those it dominates, it seeks to dehumanize them. Or as Freire (2000) asserts, it is a process that ‘depeoples’ men and women. Equally, when, for example, heavy machinery drags away trees to create monoculture plantations, an inhospitable landscape for local fauna and flora is created as far as the eye can see.

Land education in this context must take shape in response to the histories and present bio-political conditions in Brazil, most importantly in response to its incredibly diverse populations. In Brazil, there is a specific policy for ‘traditional knowledge people,’ including mainly Indigenous, *quilombolas*¹ or conventional groups (see detailed descriptions below). In the project we could not focus exclusively on one or another group, otherwise we would lose our commitment to broad social inclusion. We understood that each of these 65 groups has its own traditions, myths and organization models, which constitute how their identities are related to the land, work, ethnicity, philosophy of life or unexpected driving forces.

For example, the Indigenous group of Xingu call the planet ‘Planet Water’, because water constitutes most of their experience of the planet. Land is the portion on which they live, yet land is intrinsically connected with the other of Bachelard’s (1994) ‘elements’ of space, that is to say, water, earth, fire and air. Xingu people understand their identity as intermeshed in a complex system that does not only involve ethnicity, but is strongly related to the land and its relations to other elements. Their educational system is based on oral knowledge, passed from one generation to another, and the learning process and curriculum is a very practical land education. Almost all of the origin stories over the world begin with water, as echoed in scientific descriptions of an organic ‘soup’. But for some Indigenous groups, life begins inside a rock, with their place in the rock integral to their own cultural cosmologies. Each hollow in the rock gave birth to different ethnicities, and the sustainability of life is dependent on caring for the land (or piece of the rock) on which they live. Across these different cosmologies, it is clear that land is the most important dimension of learning, as it is inextricably related to air, fire and water.

Methodological aspects of social mapping

The search for representing reality and its various interfaces by means of images and maps has always been present in civilization. Many cultures have created cartographic representations of their surroundings and spaces, either by cave paintings, making clay models, or by other means using common and sacred materials to delineate space and the uses, boundaries, inhabitants and migrants to territories.

Maps were, and still are, considered a language of power and legitimacy over land, supportive of the imperialist domination of spaces. According to Harley (2009, 5), like guns and warships, maps are key weapons of imperialism. Given that maps support colonial policies, when for example, territories are first claimed on paper before being effectively occupied, maps, in a certain way, anticipate empire. Harley addresses another important aspect of cartography in that he calls attention to the 'silences' of maps, highlighting not only what maps are expressing and valuing, but above all, what they are hiding. He points out that, 'in colonial maps, their silences can also be regarded as discriminatory against Indigenous peoples' (Harley 2009, 22).

Thus, we can appreciate that the process of mapping has never been ideologically neutral, being as it is necessary to rationally represent space and time but in ways that may also support the hegemonic power of the ruling classes. However, there is the counter possibility in the implicit processes of appropriating and representing territories reflected in mapping that can facilitate more democratic and inclusive relationships when ideologically committed to vulnerable social groups. Thus, we see maps as also being used as instruments of resistance, defence, subversion and complaint.

With these possibilities in mind, participatory mapping has often been developed to create meaningful alliances between popular movements and academic research interests. Such projects are developed *with* and mainly *by* the communities and groups involved. This is an important dialogic route for environmental education, particularly because it involves working with important themes such as environmental sustainability at the community level. Guided by this principle, we worked towards creating an innovative methodology for environmental education in the region, that is, *social mapping*, relying in this instance on *self-narratives* from members of a diverse range of social groups to create the content and ownership of the maps.

The choice to map groups and their social and environmental conditions is not random. Inspired by Bhabha (1994), we approached Mato Grosso from its margins, from the experiences of its minorities and their socio-environmental conflicts. We wanted to hear from the 'locals' to understand their narratives, including the essence of their identities and collective meanings in different territories. From 24 through 26 October 2008, GPEA and its partners promoted the first seminar on Social Mapping held in Cuiabá, the state capital. The seminar gathered 250 leaders, representing different social groups: *quilombolas*; Indigenous; traditional communities; rubber tappers; *extractivists*;² professional and amateur fishermen; *retireiros*;³ *pantaneiros*;⁴ *morroquianos*;⁵ and many others, totalling 65 social groups represented in the seminar.

We collected data during the seminar using semi-structured interviews. These were preceded by dynamic activities in working groups, recording the participants' self-definitions and narratives. We interviewed 115 representatives across 12

working groups organized according to the regions planned for Mato Grosso. We sought to highlight and document their perceptions of identity and territory. Interviewees were asked to indicate the identification and geographic location of their groups and of their communities in a printed map of the region, according to the proposed planning. The maps were made available at 1:900,000 scale. Following these activities, GPEA continued to examine secondary data, field studies, and to produce state maps of 'social groups' and '*socio-environmental* conflicts', in addition to holding several meetings that led to the second seminar.

The second seminar was held in 2010 at UFMT. More than 250 participants attended and they chose to form groups based on the expression of their identities and territories. Six working groups were formed: *Pantaneiro*, *Cerrado*, Indigenous, *Quilombolas*, *Retireiros* of Araguaia and small farmers. Data collection was guided by a script of questions in a semi-structured interview format. We interviewed 124 people. The working dynamic again included pointing out their geographic location in printed maps of the state. The map used was that of the political administrative and territorial division of the State of Mato Grosso (2010), at 1:1,500,000 scale. The data gathered and organized during the first seminar in 2008 were made available to all participants to validate and complement their responses.

Across both seminars, we interviewed 239 people from diverse social groups with the aid of a facilitator and rapporteur. The facilitator conducted group discussions supported by an interview script, directing the activities and instigating debates around the questions and issues raised by the group. Some of the prompts included: Do you belong to a particular social group? How do you identify yourselves? Are there other groups you know? Who are they? Did changes in your place cause any problem (*socio-environmental* conflicts)? What conflicts? Which social groups are involved in these conflicts? Are there any clear signs of violence? What signs? Are there life threatening warnings? The rapporteur took notes during the discussions, noting the main topics raised by the groups and reporting back to the groups with written reports.

Data from the written reports of each working group were supplemented with video recordings and photographs of activities that occurred during the seminars. In addition, some research subjects representing different social groups were individually interviewed; these interviews were video recorded.

In total, the two seminars brought together approximately 500 participants. They came from 54 municipalities. Seventy native Indians of 19 Indigenous ethnicities and Indigenous lands were represented: *Apiaká*, *Bakairi*, *Bororo*, *Chiquitano*, *Kamaiurá*, *Kanela*, *Karajá*, *Kayabi*, *Kaiapó*, *Yudjá* (*Juruna*), *Munduruku*, *Panará*, *Paresi*, *Rikbaktsa*, *Terena*, *Trumai*, *Txucarramãe*, *Umutina* and *Xavante*. The participation of the Landless Rural Workers Movement and the Pastoral Commission for Land was important too, as it enabled the participation of squatters and small farmers settled in various regions of the state, particularly from municipalities of the Amazon region. While in both seminars, we had representatives of rubber tappers, and of those affected by dams,⁶ as well as *retireiros* of Araguaia.

In addition to interviews and other data gathering associated with each seminar, we conducted field research with participatory observations, semi-structured and non-structured interviews, workshops and in-loco meetings with some of the social groups participating in the project. It was also possible to conduct some longer interviews, guided by a script aligned to the goals of social mapping, as well as open-ended interviews, talking as if we were old friends and evoking memories of

childhood, the places they played, their favourite meals or what they did with their leisure time.

The fieldwork conducted with the Maroon community of Mata Cavalo illustrates this feature of the project. The Maroon community is composed of approximately 420 families who have been struggling for more than one hundred years to assert their rights over an area of approximately 14 thousand hectares (Simione 2008). The roots of the contemporary land allotment arrangements date back to 1889, and are linked to the death of Mrs Ana da Silva Tavares whose will released her slaves and donated part of the land she owned to them. Since that time, they have been free and continued living on their land, planting and harvesting their food. Since 1890, attempts have been made by neighbouring farmers who bought land or invaded nearby lands to evict the former slaves from the land they had inherited. Many of these families were forced to sell their rights to the land or to abandon their lands, owing to the lack of political support and state bureaucratic neglect. This legacy endures to this day. Without land ownership, the *Quilombolas* of Mata Cavalo face constant threat of eviction and death threats (Simione 2008).

For GPEA–UFMT, environmental education is not only promoted in schools, but also through popular education (Freire 1992). We also approach the curriculum of school and the curriculum of life from a phenomenological position (Passos and Sato 2002). In this sense, every educational curricula can be designed as a trajectory, road or path that can reveal our moral existence. In other words, every pedagogical proposal that attempts a land education should be designed by teachers and students, with both learning and teaching through an open dialogue.

Grounded in the history and contemporary experience of this community, and working with the students registered in the Youth and Adults Education program at Saint Benedict School, we therefore co-constructed a local socio-environmental map to document their territories and identities, socio-environmental conflicts and vulnerabilities. In order to develop these maps, we implemented ‘edu-communicative’ interventions with multimedia resources, including videos, magazines, photographs, newspaper clippings and art. The co-construction process is deliberately designed to be participatory and enable community members to realize and recognize themselves as the main agents of their story. A short script, developed collaboratively with participants, serves as a guide in the collective construction of the map. The map’s role then is to raise awareness using concrete evidence from daily life and from the interface between that and historical background, the processes of colonization and decolonization, and the everyday realities shaping current ways of living.

The mapping work developed in the community of Mata Cavalo shows similarities with Berhe’s approach (2004), who in her study of the conflicts, territories and identities of Ethiopia argues that identifying and understanding conflicts can build the identity of a nation through careful and critical interpretation of the narratives of the conflicting groups (Bhabha 1994). Equally, in surfacing and voicing the colonial history of Ethiopia, Berhe believes that the deconstruction and reconstruction of identity can also help mitigate a sense of victimization and encourage citizenship.

Drawing on these insights, we suggest that a Social Mapping methodology can be a powerful tool for land education because in the process of mapping identities, it recognizes land as an epistemological basis for understanding people’s lives. Indeed, according to Jennings, Swidler, and Koliba (2005, 45), land-based education is not the opposite of standards-based education; however, ‘when standards are set apart from the communities, local initiative is killed, local ownership is killed’.

Social mapping – actions and reflections

In our project, we emphasized each group's own history over and against the dominant metanarratives that traditionally privilege individualized and universal knowledge to the detriment of local culture (Bhabha 1994). We utilized Buber's (2001) conception of human relationships, which stresses self-identity is always created in relation to the existence of another, and the Other. Therefore, identities are outlined in this encounter with others, again to emphasize the importance of collective organization against the driving forces which cause socio-environmental conflicts.

The maps resulting from the processes and analyses in this study were not intended to exhaustively delineate the set of conflicts and actors that make up the identities of resistance in Mato Grosso. Consequently, mapping offers a history in the making: dynamic and woven with continuities and discontinuities. Equally, we did not produce a census, but a panoramic view of the current situation, a portrait – always temporary – of identities and their conflicts.

The project sought to interpret the self-narratives and build meanings together with the agents of the stories. In both social mapping seminars we recorded the existence of 52 social groups or movements, totalling 47 Indigenous ethnicities, and identified 99 mapped identities in the territories of the state. To describe these identities, we grounded the work in line with Porto-Gonçalves' (2001) perspectives, which suggest that collective identities are constructed in relation to three dimensions: social conditions, ethnic relations with nature and so-called 'big projects' (related to hydro electrical dams, roads or large buildings, usually built in the name of 'development'). Through the seminars, we identified five themes related to collective identity constructions:

- (1) cultural tradition,
- (2) cultural place and habitat,
- (3) labour, work and production,
- (4) driving forces and development, and
- (5) choices, alternatives or philosophy of life.

The *cultural tradition* theme refers to identities that are derived from traditional conditions, social or ethnic, such as the case of Indigenous peoples, *quilombolas*, gypsies and the groups who emphasized regional and cultural expressions, such as the *Siriri* group, the *Caruru* and the Congo Dance.⁷ The *cultural place and habitat* theme includes groups whose identities are primarily attributed to rootings in place, such as those groups intrinsically connected to land and still dependent on the habitat they belong to, such as the *pantaneiros*, *mimoseanos*,⁸ *morroquianos*, *beiradeiros*⁹ and riparian people. The third dimension, *labour, work and production*, includes identities principally associated with those relationships of work that are closely related to nature or to livelihoods, for example, the rubber tappers, the *extractivists*, the *retireiros*, the artisans, the professional and amateur fishermen, the family farmers, the organizers of solidarity economy, the Landless Rural Workers Movement and so on. The fourth dimension includes identities indexed to a function of *driving forces and development*, that is, people affected by large development projects, such as dams, the squatters,¹⁰ the settlers and so on. The fifth dimension, *choice and/or philosophy of life*, includes groups that have identities built around identification with some social movement, religion, leisure, art or philosophy of life,

such as ecologists, pro-nature artists, hippies, the black movements, liberation theology advocates and groups with expressions linked to other spiritualities, among others.

We did not intend to create rigid boundaries with these classifications; therefore, we emphasize that the five dimensions are dialectically interconnected, as many identities collide and reshape themselves in their plurality and fluidity.

In this ‘coming-to-being’ of several groups and movements, we also mapped the existence of old and new social actors, and, literally, put them on the maps we created for the social groups of the State of Mato Grosso (Figure 1).

Concomitant with this richly mapped mosaic, the project also showed the consequences of the settler-colonial model that directly affects social groups, especially those whose livelihoods and resistance are strongly connected to the environment in which they live, as they fight for the survival of the local environment and their local culture. Mapping *socio-environmental* conflicts, numerically, registered 194 sites with 359 causes, wherein 68 of these sites have life threatening conditions and 12 of these sites engage in inhumane slave labour. Conflicts and conditions such as these highlight the social and ecological unsustainability of the established settler colonial model, as shown in the map of *socio-environmental* conflicts of Mato Grosso (Figure 2).

Concerns about sustainability necessarily link environmental, social, cultural, economic and many other factors. However, in Mato Grosso, the weighting given to economic factors overrides all others. The social mapping revealed that the main driving forces of socio-environmental conflicts are land disputes, water uses, deforestation, forest burning, abusive use of pesticides and illegal mining. The narratives

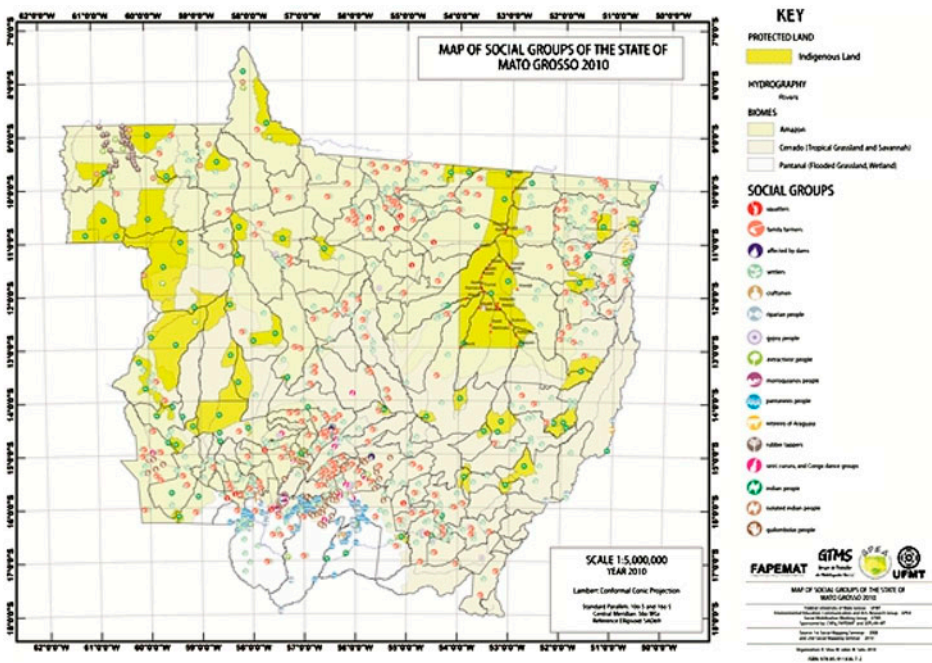


Figure 1. Mapping of social groups of the State of Mato Grosso, 2010.

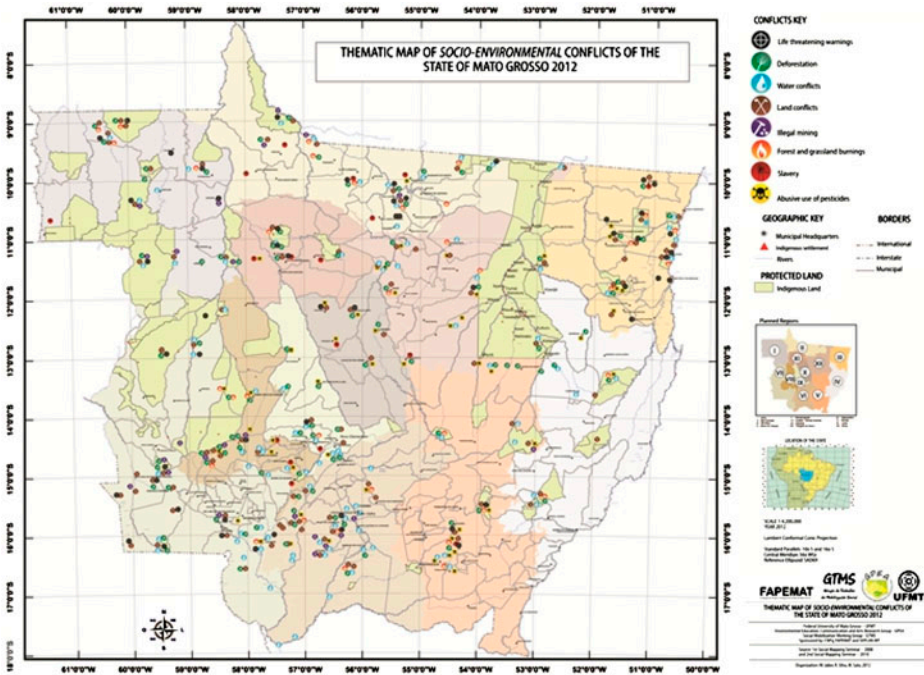


Figure 2. Thematic mapping of socio-environmental conflicts of the State of Mato Grosso, 2010.

indicate that the agents who incite conflict are, in most cases, related to agribusiness activities such as large farms. In contrast, the agents of resistance are mainly Indigenous, *Quilombolas* and small farmers.

Socially mapped environmental conflicts typically correlate with trends in development policies, such that increases in their magnitude often mirror society's demands for a given product. For example, soy production has become a main driving force of conflict in the region, coinciding with growing populations in industrialized countries, increases in per capita income, and diversification in food spending as associated with the increased consumption of protein, services and industrialized goods. To meet this market demand in developing countries, deforestation and bush-fires are encouraged and financed by the State, which supports the conversion of forest areas into pastures, and the development of grain crops which are overwhelmingly exported to developed countries.

Signs of hope: land education in use

The conflicts mapped in this project have not exhaustively represented the many confrontations that exist. Some are not yet visible, but the maps do gesture toward the magnitude of the problems resulting from the imposition of major projects, as well as illustrate a large and important array of cases and conflicts. These are expressions of the settler colonial model that leads to ecosystem destruction and annihilation of particular ways of life. These territories, identities and temporalities are entangled in webs and mosaics, intrinsically interwoven in relation to culture and

land, interconnected in such a way that the loss of one implies the disappearance of another.

Galeano (1971) states that to change any unjust reality, we must first know it. By studying the political face of conflicts, Guerin (2004) suggests that the examination of groups in conflict can be analysed by maps, diagnostics or case studies, but in all situations, whatever they are, it is necessary to have historical knowledge of the *socio-environmental* context. Guerin also suggests that people do not need to resolve these conflicts, but the studies must be widely available for in public policy development to protect the groups involved. Thus in the process of decolonization, land education teaches us to fight against the forces of the oppressors, to be able to choose our freedom, promote education to respond to the question of *for* whom we are practicing environmental education, and essentially *against* whom we need to shape land education (Freire 1992).

Consequences of this social mapping project are already evident. Publication of preliminary results (Silva 2011) in the form of maps and reports has been consulted in public policy development for the state. For example, the social mapping was used as input for drafting the State Report on Human Rights. Moreover, it has also been used as the basis for creating a 'Long Term Plan for Mato Grosso' and introduced as a core consideration for decision-makers. Finally, the maps have served as the basis for studies and purposeful measures of understanding conflict for the Prosecutor's Office of Justice and Environmental Protection, and the Urban Order of the State Prosecutor.

In closing, this project sought to use research and education methods to struggle against injustices and foreground an environmental education that is guided by a phenomenologically focused land education. The research was carried out simultaneously with an educational process, asking not only for whom we are planning the education, but also against whom we have to be prepared to fight. We expect that social mapping can be used to positively transform the status quo that these 'invisible' groups have faced. We also hope to build public policies that guarantee these groups the right to retain their territories and their identities, and ensure that they have the freedom to make their decisions and choices for happiness.

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Notes

1. These are black communities and descendants of runaway slaves. They only had their territories and culture recognized recently.
2. It is important to note that *extractivism* (collecting forest products without killing the ecosystem) came with Chico Mendes' struggle. He spoke against the notion of property, stating that rubber tappers were able to live without private property, but could continue to maintain their livelihood from common land. After their fight, many extractive reserves were created in Brazilian territories, mainly in the Amazon region.

3. These are communities that move cattle from wetlands during the flood season and return them to pasture in the dry season, following the dynamics of the Araguaia river, northwest of the Mato Grosso wetland region.
4. These are inhabitants of one of the most conserved wetlands of the world, the Pantanal.
5. These communities inhabit a fragile ecosystem region with low hills or slopes (*morro*), the root of the word *morroquiana*.
6. Hydropower plants are the main sources of energy in Brazil. Although considered clean, this technology is not socially fair, nor is it environmentally harmless or free of harmful impacts. Generally, people affected by dams are riparian populations, Indigenous, and economically disadvantaged communities, who in having their land acquired by the state or energy company, are displaced to other territories. With their social and environmental dilemmas worsened, these communities have associated with one another, under the banner of those 'affected by dams'.
7. *Siriri*, *Cururu* and Congo Dance are typical dances featured in festivities of Mato Grosso communities.
8. Those from Mimoso, a locality of Pantanal.
9. These are the people who live on the margins of rivers.
10. These are landless communities. Aiming for some quality of life, they often invade non-used lands usually from huge farms.

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