

Between school and experience: education and resistance in the Quilombo do Chumbo (MT)

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Como citar: CAETANO, Edson; DEL BEL, Haya; MOTA, Karla Rodrigues. Entre escola e experiência: educação e resistência no Quilombo do Chumbo (MT). **Revista de Educação Pública**, [S. l.], v. 35, n. jan/dez, 2026. DOI: doi.org/10.29286/217742026.

Abstract

This article analyzes the tensions and confluences between formal school education and the education of experience in the Nossa Senhora Aparecida do Chumbo Quilombola Community, in Poconé-MT. Grounded in historical materialism, we investigate how educational processes extend beyond the school setting amidst the expansion of agribusiness into traditional territories. The study highlights three central movements: the precarization of public schooling as a mechanism of identity erasure; the community's occupation of academic spaces; and the education of experience. It concludes that, within the concrete existence of the quilombo, formal school education and the education of experience constitute a totality aimed at resistance, identity self-affirmation, and permanence in the territory.

KeyWords: Quilombola School Education, Education Experience, Resistance.

Entre escola e experiência: educação e resistência no Quilombo do Chumbo (MT)

Resumo

O presente artigo analisa as tensões e confluências entre a educação escolar e a educação da experiência na Comunidade Quilombola Nossa Senhora Aparecida do Chumbo, em Poconé-MT. Fundamentado no materialismo histórico, investigamos como os processos educativos extrapolam a escola no contexto de avanço do agro sobre territórios tradicionais. O estudo evidencia três movimentos centrais: a precarização da escola pública como mecanismo de apagamento identitário; a ocupação dos espaços acadêmicos pela comunidade e a educação da experiência. Conclui-se que, na existência concreta do quilombo, educação escolar e educação da experiência constituem uma totalidade voltada à resistência, à autoafirmação identitária e à permanência no território.

Palavras-Chave: Educação Escolar Quilombola, Educação da Experiência, Resistência.

Entre escuela y experiencia: educación y resistencia en el Quilombo del Chumbo (MT)

Resumen

El presente artículo analiza las tensiones y confluencias entre la educación escolar y la educación de la experiencia en la Comunidad Quilombola Nossa Senhora Aparecida do Chumbo, en Poconé-MT. Fundamentado en el materialismo histórico, investigamos cómo los procesos educativos extrapolan la escuela en el contexto de avance del agronegocio sobre territorios tradicionales. El estudio evidencia tres movimientos centrales: la precarización de la escuela pública como mecanismo de borrado identitario; la ocupación de los espacios académicos por la comunidad y la educación de la experiencia. Se concluye

que, en la existencia concreta del quilombo, educación escolar y educación de la experiencia constituyen una totalidad orientada a la resistencia, a la autoafirmación identitaria y a la permanencia en el territorio.

Palabras clave: Educación Escolar Quilombola, Educación de la Experiencia, Resistencia.

Introduction

The Nossa Senhora Aparecida do Chumbo Quilombola Community, located in the municipality of Poconé (Mato Grosso), is a territory dialectically forged between tradition, violence, and re-existence¹. Just as in the traditional communities of the Baixada Cuiabana², the quilombo has its origins rooted in solidarity, mutual aid, and the communal use of land; however, over the last four decades, the encroachment of agribusiness has called this traditional way of sustaining life into question.

The community's origins date back to the late 19th century, established on land purchased by a formerly enslaved Black man who welcomed families to the site; historically, the community sustained itself through collective work efforts and mutual aid (Pereira, 2017; Mendes, 2020; Silva, 2023). However, this socio-spatial configuration underwent profound changes starting in 1984 with the establishment of the Pantanal Sugar, Ethanol, and Biodiesel Plant, which drove an intense migratory influx—particularly of people from the Northeast—thereby adding complexity to the local identity and transforming the area into a territory of plural "re-existence" (Fachin, 2019; Silva, 2023).

The process of regularizing quilombo lands with INCRA is slow; according to Silva (2020b), the document legitimizing possession is the certification as a Remnant Quilombo Community, issued by the Palmares Cultural Foundation. However, Silva (2023) states that self-recognition marked a turning point for the community, as it revitalized the residents' quilombola identity and sparked a "new perspective regarding education"

(p. 72)—one that came to be viewed as both a right and a tool for asserting identity in the face of violence and threats of erasure.

In this context of vulnerability, school education is viewed as a strategic element for enabling residents to remain in the territory; it is a site of contestation not only regarding access to historically produced knowledge but also concerning the legitimacy of their own history, culture, and forms of knowledge, as well as the preservation of traditional ways of life. Here, education is understood in a broad sense—as expressed by Brandão (2007), who states that “there is neither a single form nor a single model of education” (p. 9), and by Cury (1986), who views it as a human activity integral to the totality of social organization, thereby not restricting the act of educating to the school environment or the figure of the teacher.

This article analyzes the tensions and confluences between formal schooling and education rooted in lived experience within the Chumbo Community, viewing education as a contested field that extends beyond the boundaries of the school. We proceed from the premise that education is not confined to the classroom but permeates everyday life. Unlike approaches that focus in isolation on land issues, community ethnography, or teacher training, this study seeks to understand the contradictory unity among the school, daily life, and resistance.

Theoretical-methodological trajectory

Methodologically, this study presents partial results from the research project Promotion of Healthy and Sustainable Territories in Mato Grosso, conducted at the Center for Environmental, Health, and Occupational Studies at the Federal University of Mato Grosso.

Our reflection is grounded in historical materialism—not as a dogmatic lens, but through an epistemological openness sensitive to the production of knowledge emerging from the subjects' social praxis. To this

end, we articulate three fundamental theoretical categories. The first is education in its broad sense, drawing on Brandão (2007), which allows us to perceive the tension between knowledge produced within the community and the knowledge systematically organized in schools and academic institutions.

The second category is Experience—understood, from the perspective of Thompson (2002; 2021), as an active social process through which men and women reflect on their existences, forming consciousness out of lived experience. Finally, we employ the category of contradiction, illuminated by Cury (1986), to examine the complex relationship between experience, quilombola re-existence, and school education.

A partir do referencial adotado, distinguimos os saberes da experiência e o conhecimento científico sem hierarquizá-los. Os saberes da experiência são elaborações socialmente produzidas por sujeitos que interpretam a realidade, compartilham aprendizagens e constroem respostas às necessidades concretas da existência.

Based on the adopted framework, we distinguish between experiential knowledge and scientific knowledge without establishing a hierarchy between them. Experiential knowledge consists of constructs socially produced by individuals who interpret reality, share what they have learned, and devise responses to the concrete needs of existence.

The axes structuring this work synthesize an analysis built upon the voices of Chumbo residents, who denounce the tension between the law guaranteeing the quilombola school and the bureaucratic reality that denies it; next, we discuss the residents' occupation of the university; finally, we reflect on education grounded in experience.

We highlight that the theoretical-methodological grounding of this article lies in historical materialism, operating primarily with the categories of contradiction, totality, and experience. The notions of autobiography, *escrevivência* (writing-lived-experience), and epistemic turn appear as

categories employed by the quilombola researchers themselves in their dissertations and, therefore, as objects of the analysis developed here.

The analysis corpus consisted of three sets of materials: a discussion circle held in 2022, involving eight participants (community leaders, workers, adults, and elders); records resulting from the researchers' engagement with the territory and the school; and academic works focused on the Chumbo Community. The master's theses by Silva (2023) and Oliveira (2024) received special attention because they were produced by researchers who are themselves members of the community.

The school the law guarantees and the school bureaucracy denies

The primary document regulating Quilombola school education in Brazil is Resolution CNE/CEB No. 8/2012, which establishes the National Curriculum Guidelines for Quilombola School Education. Article 9 states that this modality of basic education encompasses “schools serving students from Quilombola territories” (Brazil, 2012, p. 7), while Article 26 stipulates that, in rural areas—and in accordance with the Statute of the Child and Adolescent—early childhood education and the initial years of elementary education “must always be offered within the Quilombola territories themselves” (p. 11).

In alignment with national guidelines, Normative Resolution No. 002/2016-CEE/MT, which regulates Quilombola school education within the Mato Grosso State Education System, safeguards the specific nature of this modality and, in Article 4, highlights the subjects of this education:

Quilombola school education may be offered in:
I - Quilombola educational units—whether rural or urban—
recognized by public authorities; and
II - educational units serving students from Quilombola territories
(Mato Grosso, 2016, p. 2).

According to Oliveira (2025), the Nossa Senhora Aparecida Municipal School, located in Chumbo, “is the primary educational destination for students in the surrounding area; consequently, it serves many quilombolas, agrarian reform settlers, and the children of farmhands working on local ranches” (p. 171). Despite serving a student body composed largely of quilombolas, the Municipal Department of Education does not implement a diversified curriculum at the school.

Brandão (2007), in addition to arguing that education occurs at all moments and stages of human life, asserts that education possesses a dual nature, capable of being understood as either a strength or a weakness. For the author, its strength emerges when education is authentic—centered on the knowledge that constitutes and legitimizes a people—whereas its weakness arises when knowledge is imposed with the aim of dominating specific groups.

According to Pereira (2024), schooling in Chumbo has historically been characterized by neglect on the part of public authorities. The author notes that the school was established in the 1960s through the struggle and organization of local families, who improvised spaces, funded instruction, and held classes in their own homes under the guidance of lay teachers.

By refusing to transfer the school to state administration or implement a quilombol curriculum, and by neglecting the school’s structural conditions, the municipality is condemning the physical facility to ruin. Local professionals are aware of this situation, as illustrated by the following statement:

Every mayor who comes in says, “We want improvements for our school.” Our school is literally falling apart. Every year they say it’s coming—that 300,000 has arrived for the school renovation—but then a year goes by, two years, five years, and now the money is gone (Interviewee 3, Discussion Circle, June 22, 2022).

This neglect discourages not only school staff but also student retention, while simultaneously devaluing local culture. Brandão (2007, p. 103) states that “where unequal and, subsequently, antagonistic interests emerge, the educational process—previously unified—becomes fragmented and, later, imposed.” The tension between maintaining the standard curriculum and implementing the quilombola curriculum creates fissures where the actions of educators residing in the quilombo take on historical significance.

The university experience and the contest for the academic narrative

The Municipal Department of Education’s neglect and the school’s substandard conditions did not diminish the desire for education among the quilombolas of Chumbo; instead, they sparked an interest in accessing other educational settings. In attempting to confine basic education, the municipal authorities revealed a contradiction: schooling—which ought to foster critical reflection—was being used to control minds. Consequently, educators realized the need to seek support and theoretical grounding, whether by joining forces with non-governmental organizations or by engaging in dialogue and establishing a presence within universities.

Understanding this dynamic requires viewing the educational process as a social phenomenon situated within the dialectical tension between the dominant groups’ need to maintain order and the dominated groups’ attempt to transcend it. We perceive that this phenomenon can be understood through the lens of contradiction, for.

Contradiction, as both reality and an expression of reality, is capable of revealing to education not only its moment of integration into the project of domination—exerted through existing actions and policies—but also its potential moment of negation and resistance (Cury, 1986, p. 121).

The refusal expressed by education professionals regarding the imposition of a standard urban educational model on quilombola students arises—among other intersections—from the dialogue between residents and various university research and outreach groups.

In a survey³ of institutional repositories, we identified—up to the year 2025—eleven *stricto sensu* research projects dedicated to analyzing the territory's environmental, educational, and cultural dynamics⁴. Engagement with researchers enabled the documentation of and reflection on the quilombo's history; the challenges regarding the demarcation of the occupied territory; the exposure of socio-environmental conflicts caused by agribusiness; the valuing of traditional knowledge and of the community's elders; and the political and structural difficulties faced by the local school.

This dynamic led residents to realize that the university can serve as a space for speaking out, for emancipation, and for access to scientific knowledge—and, above all, as a platform for their own voices to be heard:

For us, as local residents, I view this university-community dialogue as a space where we can speak out. Perhaps that is why, when you come here, everyone is so eager to talk about their anxieties; we also see it as an opportunity for someone to help us, to really see us, and to consider what can be done for us—because we lack the specific knowledge that would make that possible ourselves. (Interviewee 2, Discussion Circle, June 22, 2022).

Drawing on the experience gained alongside researchers, these individuals recognized the need to move beyond the role of “research participants” and assume authorship of their own narratives.

According to Thompson (2002, p. 13), “any education worthy of the name involves a relationship of mutuality, a dialectic”—that is, an exchange. This perspective values the dialogue between different forms of knowledge that do not supersede one another, and it reaffirms the university's engagement as a significant undertaking:

It makes sense—I always tell the women that we need to write our own articles too, that we need to have a presence in the scientific community, because we are teachers as well. So, whenever I speak about opportunities with the university, I always ask for training for us—training that teaches our teachers how to write experience reports and scientific articles, so that they can grow and have opportunities within the realm of science. *We can share our stories with you, and you can write about your impressions of us; but we can also write our own history.* (Interviewee 2, Discussion Circle on June 22, 2022; emphasis added).

The testimony above highlights that education workers view the university as a space for reflection, emancipation, and professional growth, challenging the logic of epistemological extractivism that has traditionally divided academic labor between those who formulate theory and those who merely supply “empirical raw material.”

While they do not deny the relevance of sharing their lived experiences to enable external researchers to conduct studies, they also recognize the need to write their own stories. This transgressive move against what is conventionally termed “science” resonates with Thompson’s (2021) reflections on the importance of experience in the formation of consciousness. For the historian, “experience arises spontaneously within social being, but not without thought; it arises because men and women—and not merely philosophers—are rational beings who reflect on what happens to them and their world” (p. 29).

It is worth noting that experience does not arrive in an obedient or linear fashion; rather, it develops from the “mental and emotional response of an individual or social group to many interrelated events or to repeated occurrences of the same type of event” (Thompson, 2021, p. 28). This process involves the subject—having been affected by the experience—formulating an understanding of what has been lived, thereby conceptualizing reality through a reinterpretation of the experience itself..

We understand that these concerns and aspirations arise from changes in social relations and in the subjectivities of quilombolas. From

Thompson’s perspective (2021, p. 29), this dialectical movement gives rise to “a modified *experience*; and this experience is *determinant*, in the sense of exerting pressure on existing social consciousness, posing new questions, and providing much of the material that forms the object of more elaborate intellectual exercises.”

We infer that this experience is mediated by an educational process that takes place outside the school system. We agree with Brandão (2007, p. 7) that “no one escapes education”; however, we are referring to the education that occurs through ordinary interactions and in everyday spaces, moving in tandem with the flow of life.

The occupation of this academic space—and the ensuing contest over the narrative—is embodied in the trajectories of women such as Marinete and Nirda. Both are quilombolas born and raised in Chumbo who defended dissertations focused on their community (Table 1). An analysis of their work reveals that their methodological choices break with traditional academic conventions. It is in this sense that the so-called “epistemic turn” takes shape within the territory: through locally authored research that repositions quilombola subjects within academic knowledge production.

Table 1 – Systematization of stricto sensu research on lead, with local authorship.

Title		Year	Author	Program	Nature
	The Quilombola Identity and Narratives of Family, Education, and (R)existences in the Chumbo Community, Poconé, Mato Grosso	2023	Marinete de Almeida Lima e Silva	Graduate Program in Teaching (IFMT)	Dissertation
	Mulheres quilombolas do Chumbo: “quero colocar a comunidade no papel”	2024	Nirda Rosa de Oliveira	Postgraduate Program in Contemporary Culture Studies (UFMT)	Dissertation

Source: Compiled by the authors.

Silva (2023) explores the quilombola experience and investigates how traditional knowledge and local identity shape a distinct quilombola form of education. Historically, traditional academia demanded researcher neutrality and detachment from the reality under study; however, the

author's methodological approach challenges this paradigm. By drawing on the testimonies of community elders and teachers—and weaving them dialectically with her own autobiographical narrative—the quilombola researcher documents the community's oral history. She analyzes local knowledge and practices (such as the use of medicinal plants, traditional cuisine, religious festivals, and *cururu*⁵) as pedagogies that both teach and preserve the quilombo's identity in the face of racism and pressure from agribusiness.

The author asserts the occupation of academia as a form of identity and epistemological demarcation, stating that the importance of her writing:

...lies in the fact that it presents the culture, history, and resilience of a people who need to see and understand themselves, and to realize that their lived history was—and continues to be—essential to the construction of individual, familial, and collective identity. Once people see that their ways of speaking, cooking, farming, and handling various everyday situations are important, they will also come to value themselves, allowing themselves to dream and occupy spaces without feeling inferior to others (Silva, 2023, p. 131).

In line with the aim of transcending traditional academicism, Oliveira (2024) adopts *escrevivência*—writing rooted in lived experience—as a subversive method, drawing upon her own life experiences and those of other women (herbalists, traditional healers, and midwives) to break with the hegemonic logic of knowledge production. The researcher highlights that her motivation to conduct research within her own quilombo stemmed from experiences with outside researchers who extracted data from the community without providing any feedback or results in return. Faced with this scenario, and as a conscious choice to assert authorship and "re-existence" within graduate studies, she states:

[...] I, as a quilombola, also wanted to be the protagonist of the research, that is, I do not want to be researched but rather to carry out research on my people, where I can explain the ways of life,

experience, knowledge and practices within the quilombola community and contribute in a better way to the visibility and legitimization of the rights of the quilombola people (Oliveira, 2024, p. 224).

Based on these two research projects, we identify the development of a critical perspective regarding reality. At a certain point in their lives, the two quilombola researcher-educators realized they could move beyond being mere “objects of study” to become subjects who produce knowledge—that is, individuals who hold and organize experience by linking it to theory, thereby transforming lived experiences into political praxis and legitimate knowledge.

However, navigating the academic space is no easy task. According to the accounts, students are reluctant to give up their jobs in favor of long-term education:

You call them, and they say: "No, I'm working! No, it's not worth it—it's not worth giving up my paycheck. I'm earning 2,000 reais, 3,000 reais. How am I supposed to give that up to go to college? It's not worth it!" There's even a young woman from here who got into the nursing program. She isn't going! Two young women got in—they signed up—but they aren't going. Why? Because it's not worth it. (Interviewee 2, Discussion Circle, June 22, 2022).

This refusal is justified, as material conditions, the struggle for survival, and the need to quickly enter the labor market impose concrete barriers to the academic aspirations of quilombola youth. These students face obstacles regarding both access to and retention in university.

Despite the existence of specific admission policies—such as UFMT's PROINQ—staying in university remains a challenge, as the disparity in foundational education between quilombola and non-quilombola students is vast. Furthermore, the value of student stipends often proves insufficient to cover the cost of urban living.

The education of experience and the formation of critical consciousness

For the women educators of the quilombo, the university presents itself as a powerful space where individual and collective projects take shape. Entering graduate programs enables them to obtain academic degrees—offering better job market opportunities—while also allowing for the written documentation of the quilombo's history, knowledge, struggles, and resistance from local voices and perspectives.

While we acknowledge the power of the school environment, we understand education in a broader sense, as it manifests and materializes beyond classroom walls. As Brandão (2007, p. 9) notes, "every day we blend life with education"; in other words, learning is not the exclusive domain of the school, nor does it require the constant presence of a teacher.

Along these lines, Thompson (2021, p. 30) states that "outside university facilities, a different kind of production and knowledge is constantly taking place." By proposing this transgression, Thompson (2021) invites us to challenge the rigid boundaries of what has historically been legitimized as scientific knowledge. While modern scientific rationality established the university as the privileged site of science—often marginalizing knowledge produced in traditional communities—the concrete praxis of Chumbo demonstrates that a rigorous interpretation of reality also emerges from within the territory itself.

In line with the author's perspective, we argue that learning and the development of consciousness are never limited to formal schooling or academic settings, however powerful those spaces may be. We maintain that consciousness and knowledge production also unfold during ordinary, everyday moments—whenever human beings reflect upon and reinterpret their experiences in the struggle for land, education, and life.

In Chumbo, capital operates ideologically by co-opting quilombola youth, replacing traditional practices of violence with professional training:

(Interviewee 3) – There's a farmer right here. He runs training courses—Senar holds courses there almost every month. He's even trained several of his own employees for agricultural work. One guy started out as a mason's helper and is now a machine operator. (Interviewee 4) – They become "agro" workers. It's really sad, because the farmers are very persuasive. They say, "Here's an opportunity," and make you an offer—especially when you're living here with no prospects. So, you take the course. Suddenly you're earning 3,500... and you think, "Oh, now I'm an 'agro' worker." (Interviewee 3) – Yeah, and then a while later, you've got cancer or headaches. (Interviewee 1) – Yeah, and they just keep bringing more poison into society. (Discussion Group, June 22, 2022).

The criticisms raised above indicate that the pedagogy of capital attempts—through technical training—to erase the identity of this youth, alienating them and incorporating them into the skilled workforce essential for its own self-reproduction. However, the education derived from the lived experience of the residents of Chumbo reveals that the very agribusiness sector that offers training and creates an illusion of inclusion is, in reality, synonymous with contamination, illness, and death.

To understand the origins of this knowledge, we draw upon the concept of experience—as articulated by Thompson (2021)—affirming that experience is valid and effective, enabling the interpretation and formulation of responses that explain one's being in the world, given that all individuals produce and share knowledge. Therefore, the explanations the residents of Chumbo develop regarding their own lives are not merely instinctive but are mediated by varying degrees of abstraction. According to Thompson, this process occurs because concrete reality imposes itself upon the subject, compelling them to reflect on that reality based on their own experiences:

Experience does not wait discreetly outside one's study for the moment when the discourse of demonstration summons its

presence. Experience walks in uninvited and announces deaths, subsistence crises, trench warfare, unemployment, inflation, and genocide. People go hungry: the survivors develop new ways of thinking about the market. People are imprisoned: in prison, they think differently about the law. Faced with such widespread experiences, old conceptual systems may crumble, and new issues may insist on asserting their presence (2021, p. 17).

The experience born of conflict teaches residents to challenge the oppressor's generosity; by highlighting the contradictions inherent in the capitalist mode of production, they come to perceive the class antagonism separating them from the landowners. They learn that survival depends on standing firm, with the task falling to the elders to impart the lessons of resistance and share them with the less experienced.

So, regarding the issue of resistance, we can't just think about the present moment; we have to look to the future. After all, we are here because of resistance—in the face of so much oppression. And that resistance strengthens us for the outside world, too, right? Because out there, only those who know how to resist survive. I tell my daughter: You're going to have to resist what you see in shop windows—so many beautiful and tempting things. That is a form of resistance, too—dealing with the fact that others can have things while you can't. And that resistance starts right here. (Interviewee 4, Discussion Circle, June 22, 2022).

From the statement above, it is evident that in Chumbo, resistance is not an abstract concept but an everyday educational practice. The elders introduce the youth to the exclusion and inequality that characterize the quilombo community's struggle for continued existence.

In the quilombo, the fight for land and the fight to implement Quilombola school education are inseparable. For traditional communities and Indigenous peoples, it is impossible to decouple the school curriculum from the territory; securing Quilombola identity and land tenure—regarding lands traditionally occupied—is just as important as access to scientific knowledge. They aspire to a form of schooling that reaffirms their way of life, values, local knowledge, and traditional practices.

The residents of Chumbo do not view themselves as victims, but rather as historical agents who transform the experience gained through daily struggles into action—for, as Thompson (2021, p. 254) points out:

Men and women also return as subjects within the scope of this expression—not as autonomous subjects or free individuals, but as people who experience their situations and relations of production—determined as needs, interests, and antagonisms—and then grapple with this experience in their consciousness and culture (two other terms excluded by theoretical practice) in the most complex ways (yes, “relatively autonomous” ones), and then (often, though not always, through resulting class structures) act, in turn, upon their determined situation.

It becomes evident that education takes place in the movement between the various dimensions of human existence. In Chumbo, the realization that the agribusiness sector is oppressive—and that its representatives belong to a different social group—did not come from a redeeming external agent, but rather from experience and a consciousness forged daily in the struggle against the oppressor.

Some considerations

The reflections woven throughout this manuscript reveal that education is a complex phenomenon extending far beyond the school environment. Through non-school education, the individual is integrated into society and learns about values, norms of conduct, traditions, and local customs; meanwhile, through schooling, they gain access to historically accumulated knowledge which, in theory, enables them to reflect upon and transform the reality in which they live. It is through these varied, complex, and contradictory educational processes that men and women learn to read the world.

In the context of the Chumbo Quilombola Community (Poconé, MT), education serves as a battleground where the curriculum and operational

model of the Nossa Senhora Aparecida Municipal School are contested—and, ultimately, the identity formation of local children and youth. The Poconé municipal government disregards the community's ethnic self-affirmation when determining the school's educational framework, imposing a standard curriculum on the institution against the wishes of educators and quilombo leaders.

Due to this mandate from the Municipal Department of Education, the school in question is forced to live with a painful contradiction: it confines students within a substandard building and to an official curriculum that neither embraces nor values their knowledge, practices, customs, and traditions.

However, the contestation of formal educational spaces is not limited to basic education. After the community gained prominence within the realm of *stricto sensu* graduate studies—establishing itself as a site for diverse master's and doctoral research—residents recognized the importance of moving beyond the role of mere “informants.” Without undermining the value of external investigations, quilombola residents adopted the stance of epistemic subjects, asserting not only authorship of their own experiences but also their validity as producers of legitimate scientific knowledge. The effort by local residents to engage in academic writing constitutes an act of safeguarding memory and a form of self-defense against the marginalization of their knowledge systems and the people who truly generate them.

The quilombolas of Chumbo are not passive victims; they are historical agents who—drawing on the inseparability of education and experience—transform the oppression and violence they have endured into political wisdom and the affirmation of their identity. Ultimately, we learn from the quilombo that formal schooling and the education derived from experience are neither mutually exclusive nor merely overlapping. They are two dimensions of a single whole that coexist, at times negating one another, at

times incorporating elements from each other, and at times transcending their differences. This movement does not lead to a synthesis, but rather to confronting and transforming the contradictions pulsating within concrete existence—contradictions that constitute, in themselves, an ongoing educational process.

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Funding: We thank the Labor Prosecution Service of Mato Grosso (MPT-MT/23rd Region) for the funding provided (Technical Cooperation Agreement No. 07/2020), which was fundamental to the conduct of this investigation.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare that there are no commercial or associative interests representing a conflict of interest regarding this manuscript.

Author contributions:

Author 1 – Co-authorship, with active participation in drafting the text.

Author 2 – Co-authorship, with active participation in drafting the text.

Author 3 – Co-authorship, with active participation in drafting the text.

Received: June 16, 2026

Accepted: July 30, 2026

Published: October 21, 2026



<https://periodicoscientificos.ufmt.br/ojs/index.php/educacaopublica>

¹ I conceive of re-existence as the devices that communities create and develop to invent life on a daily basis and be able to confront the reality established by the hegemonic project that has been inferior, silenced and negatively visible to the existence of Afro-descendant communities since the colonia. Re-existence aims to decenter established logics to search in the depths of cultures – in this case indigenous and Afro-descendants – the keys to organizational, production, food, ritual and aesthetic forms that allow them to dignify life and reinvent it to remain transformed. The re-existence points to what the community, cooperative and union leader Héctor Daniel Useche Berón “Pájaro”, hired in 1986 in the Municipality of Bugalagrande in the center of Valle del Cauca, Colombia, once said: “What are we going to invent today to continue living?” (Achinte, 2009, p. 455, our translation).

² According to the Territorial Plan for Sustainable Rural Development, the Baixada Cuiabana is a region in the state of Mato Grosso comprising 13 municipalities: Acorizal, Barão de Melgaço, Chapada dos Guimarães, Cuiabá, Jangada, Nobres, Nossa Senhora do Livramento, Nova Brasilândia, Planalto da Serra, Poconé, Rosário Oeste, Santo Antônio de Leverger, and Várzea Grande (Brazil, 2010).

³ The survey was conducted by consulting the following databases: the Brazilian Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations, available at <https://bdtd.ibict.br/vufind/>; the Federal University of Mato Grosso Institutional Repository, available at <https://ri.ufmt.br/>; and the CAPES Catalog of Theses and Dissertations, available at <https://catalogodeteses.capes.gov.br/catalogo-teses/#/>. Accessed: Jan. 2026.

⁴ This involves two doctoral theses—Mendes (2020) and Oliveira (2025)—and nine master's dissertations: Bieski (2010), Pereira (2017), Martine (2019), Fachin (2019), J. Silva (2020a), M. Silva (2020b), Arruda (2021), Silva (2023), and Oliveira (2024).

⁵ Cururu is a cultural expression typical of the Baixada Cuiabana, frequently performed in contexts of popular religiosity and saint festivals. According to Silva (2023, p. 29), the genre features “rhythm and caipira musicality, involving music and circle dancing with verses—whether improvised or not—created in keeping with the specific festivities.”