

International Journal of Human Sciences Research

THE PERFORMANCE AND VISIBILITY OF WOMEN IN THE REVELRIES OF GOIANA¹

Magna de Souza Moreira

Specialist; UEG; Master Student

Roberta Steward

Specialist; UEG; Master student

Maria Idelma Vieira D'Abadia

Doctor; UEG; Professor

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¹ Work linked to the Research Project: BODIES, RHYTHMS, VOICES AND SONGS: voice and performance in religious festivals in the ancient lands of Bomfim, PrP/UEG, 2022.

Abstract: This article aims to present and highlight the visibility of women in the festivities of Goiás. This is because it is understood that the female presence can significantly contribute to the maintenance and continuity of parties, especially the revelries in Goiás, since they are increasingly present in functions, which were mostly performed by men. For that, data collection and analysis were carried out through the re-reading of researchers who have already worked on the theme, field research, observation and registration with photographs, videos and recordings and the testimony of some regulars. From the collected evidence, it was possible to prove that the woman has a very important role in the popular festivals in Goiás, especially in the festivities, which is the stage of this study. Whether in the kitchen or in other activities developed, they are increasingly present, contributing in an expressive and creative way to the maintenance of the group.

Keywords: Visibility. Woman. Revelry. Goiás.

INTRODUCTION

Amidst the countless expressions of popular religiosity in Goiás, there are the revelries that revive faith by carrying forward the flag of various saints. Depending on the devotion of each place, for example, the devotions to the ``Divine Eternal Father``, the Marian invocations and to São Sebastião stand out among others. In this case, the flag is the greatest expression of the sacred and, sometimes, even provokes, at the moment of the meeting, emotion in the devotee because “by manifesting the sacred, any object is personified becoming something else and, however, continues to be himself because he still participates in the surrounding cosmic environment” (ELIADE, 2020, p. 26).

In addition to the flag, there are also gestures, prayers, songs and other performance practices that help the group pay homage

to the saints of devotion and also provide a favorable environment for the participants to get involved in the ritual of the revelry.

For a better understanding of the revelers' performance, a conceptual definition of the word is necessary, as evidenced in the text. Thus, it will start from the understanding of the concept of performance as vocal, body, facial expressions, choreographic gestures, musicalization in which “the real and the symbolic in the transport of facts to the public and to the fictional, new and indeterminate meanings are constructed, opening space for the simultaneous expression of aesthetic and social content” (SCHIFFLER, 2014, p. 92).

The general context of this research is the festivities that revolve in the savannah of Goiás, having as a thematic focus the performance participation and the visibility of women. Evidently it will not be possible to bring to this observation the reality of all the revelries of Goiás, however, a sample analysis will be made of some revelries participated in the field and data collected in bibliographic reviews of researchers who have already dealt with the proposed theme will also be used.

An effort will be made to investigate the female contribution in the festivities, starting with their performance in kitchen tasks, in prayers, as guardian of secrets and in other performative manifestations, such as singing and playing instruments, which traditionally, especially in the feast of Kings, are performed by men.

The feast of the kings basically consists of a group of people (men, singers and instrumentalists) who make a religious pilgrimage on the occasion of the feast of the kings. This pilgrimage is divided into daily journeys, interrupted at landings — where they pray, play, sing and ask for help to hold the feast of the Kings. the revelers, devotees of the feast of the kings, usually pay promises with their participation in the feast (MOREYRA, 1983, p. 144).

The objective is to investigate the performance and visibility of women in the festivities of Goiás by understanding that the female presence is of great importance for this celebration and that, although there are already studies on this subject, there is still room for dialogue that highlights their role, as a contributor and matriarch of this secular party so present in Goiás lands.

The issue-problem consists of understanding the place of women in the festivities of Goiás. From this, it will be reflected on the way in which this participation occurs. Hence, some questions arise: Is there an effective female participation in all the rituals of the revelry? How is the participation of women in Goiás revelries? Is there prejudice on the part of men in relation to the roles traditionally assumed by them that are eventually commanded by women? Are there festivities in which women already take on functions mostly performed by men?

Methodologically, we will try to carry out a research using the explanatory source by conducting a study with data collection and analysis, but relating theory and practice in the investigative process, aiming to theorize the subject, explaining the reasons and processes for behind the theme. For that, the following methods will be used: comparative bibliographic analysis, reviews, summaries and literature review. Will be used as source: interviews, testimonials, field diary and photographic records.

For a better understanding of the proposed theme, we tried to divide this research into a few moments: First, we will investigate the way in which the rites of the revelry are passed on to future generations, especially how they are taught to women who give continuity to the tasks they make up the party, and thus, an attempt will be made to investigate the female participation in food preparation. Afterwards, it will highlight the female participation in

the festivities, their contribution and roles in the turning and landing rituals. Finally, an analysis will be made in order to verify if there is a rivalry between men and women in roles assumed during the celebration.

THE WOMAN, THE RITE AND THE FOOD OF THE FEAST

The roles of each reveler, as well as the rites developed, are defined by the ability of each member of the team. Moura and Doula (2012), quoting Brandão, consider that the religious rite of Folia “recreates, grandiosely and at the same time affectively, the order of relationships between people; parents, children, siblings, godparents, other relatives, neighbors and companions” (BRANDÃO, 2010, p.91). The rites of the festivities are taught to boys from an early age to be reproduced when the time comes.

Following the perspective of Brandão (2010), it can be said that the female functions in the festivities of Goiás, especially the ability to cook, are transmitted by older women to younger ones. Thus, they corroborate the testimonies presented by the cooks at the lunch meeting of the festivities, at the feast of São Sebastião in Silvânia Goiás, in July 2022: “the recipes made at this lunch were taught by the older cooks, many of them have already died and we follow the teachings without changing even the seasoning.”

It is noted that the women, in the Goiás revelries, participate effectively, however, developing their skills, according to the vocation of each one, in different functions, remaining their presence, mostly, in the kitchen preparing the food that is also a form of ritual that pays tribute to the sacred. They make the kitchen a blessed environment where commensality takes place. One must also consider the socialization environment that permeates the group that is dedicated to these jobs in the preparation of food, as well as

the singing of thanks when they are placed at the table to welcome the revelers.

The function of cooking is of equal importance in the revelry and very honored by the majority of the cooks, as supported by the testimonies collected in interviews in the revelry of `` Divine Eternal Father `` in the municipality of Petrolina de Goiás in the year 2022.

According to the cooks at the Feast of `` Divine Eternal Father``, when preparing a traditional dish from Goiás, rice with chicken and corn, the cook, amidst the flavors, holds a wooden spoon stirring the pots on the wood stove, leaving the typical foods with a unspeakable flavor. The food at Folia is plentiful and well-prepared, with a diverse menu. There are several days to prepare this revelry landing, about eighteen cooks prepare the food with great devotion. There is no sadness in the kitchen, only joy. The conversations and teachings are about recipes and years of living with Folia and her favorite saints.

The cooks prepare the food and talk about life and work in the fields, as the vast majority are rural workers and spend about a week at the donor's house during the process of preparing the food. They go every day. They don't talk about tiredness or neglect the details that will be served on the abundant table. The revelry pasta cannot be missing, as it is a simple dish that pleases the taste buds of revelers. Coleslaw is also another dish served constantly. Bean tutu and polenta are also on the table. While the cooks work, they explain how they made the recipe for the food, highlighting the seasonings that give it a special flavor. Each cook is responsible for a dish, or they work in pairs and each one invites the ethnographer to taste these flavors.

There is an exchange of work between these women who cook in the revelry. When food is prepared in the house of one of them,

the others help. Likewise, when the revelry lands at a friend's or neighbor's house, they also offer to help. These actions intensify the spirit of solidarity between these groups with mutual help.

The dedication to food preparation still seems to be one of the most important functions of women in the festivities, however, there is a manifest desire by many to also play other roles in the festivities. It was even found that some are already dedicated to tasks mostly performed by men, sometimes even taking turns between kitchen skills and participation in the living room, at the landing site or on tours along the roads that give access to the landing.

THE FEMALE PERFORMANCE AND OTHER RITUALS OF THE REVELRY

The female presence in the festivities currently goes beyond the kitchen and the organization of ornaments and props on altars, tables and other services that kept them outside the sacred rituals of these religious practices. Lôbo (2017), when studying the soundscape of the feast of the kings in the municipality of Pirenópolis-GO, found the significant presence of women as players of musical instruments, singers and ambassadors of the songs presented in the tours of these revelries in the listed municipality.

It was evident, through informal conversations with some women, in the feast of the kings in Goianópolis (2021), that in addition to their own tasks, as already mentioned, there is also a desire to participate in the other revelry rituals. It was found, in the field, that some already participate in the singing and stand out for the high voice that mixes with that of the men, however, they claimed to do only the second voice, the first being pulled by the men which is justified by the need to stronger and louder voice.



Photo 1 and 2: Lunch at Feast of the kings – Farm: Samambaia - Municipality of Petrolina de Goiás, 2021.



Photos 3 and 4: (Feast of São Sebastião - Silvânia – GO). Source: Author: 07.16.2022

It was noticeable that there is a harmonic partnership and at no time was there evidence of resistance on the part of the men who kindly shared the space with them. In this revelry, it was not noticed the presence of prejudice in relation to their participation in the singing. In testimony, one participant expressed the desire to found a revelry led by women, in which they could play the snare drum, violas and other instruments, take on the singing and compose verses.

It is also important to exemplify the feast of São João that takes place in June in ``Lagolândia``, district of Pirenópolis, Goiás. According to data collected in a video published on Youtube, this revelry is commanded by a group of women (also called “maidens” or “players”) who begin the rituals by going around the bonfire three times in front of the ``Santa Dica`` house. Then, on a prepared altar, they sing the hymn of São João that opens the revelry. The schedule follows:

“The following day, the cycle of the journey is repeated from house to house, on the route called the ``giro``. The women assume a position of humility, holding a flag, collecting donations and, as the highlight of the visit, singing with the owners of the house. In some cases, there is a fraternization with snack”. (LUZ, 2020, p. 94).

According to Danilo Camargo (musician of the group), the women arrive at the landing site at the end of the afternoon, take a break to take a shower and then proceed with the food thanksgiving ceremony. The singing in this ceremony is commanded by the women. The morning after landing, activities begin with prayers offered by the women, followed by breakfast prepared early in the morning by the cooks.

Demonstrating the presence of women in the festivities of Goiás, it is also worth mentioning the revelry of São Sebastião in Silvânia - Goiás. When visiting this festival in

July 2022, the female presence in other rituals of the revelry was evident in the field, such as singing, guarding the flag and dancing the catira. In testimony, young Alyne², reported being a sub-lieutenant and inheriting, with this function, the devotion of his deceased grandfather. It is necessary to emphasize the importance of the flag for the festivities, and, as stated by Brandão (2010, p. 31), “no revelry goes on a journey without its flag: the guide”. In photos 3 and 4, the girl proudly displays the flag, whose guard she had during her tour of the farms in the region.

Mostly, the role of lieutenant would be assumed by men, however, it is already held by some women (as can be seen in Silvânia) who have the desire to carry the flag of the patron saint and thus be able to fulfill a promise made to the saint or honor and honoring a member of the family, deceased or not, who has played this role at parties in previous years, as is the case of the young woman in our interview who repeated the role performed by her grandfather.

It was evident, in the field research carried out, that the participation of the youngest in the revelries is given, especially, by family inheritance transmitted by the elders. Thus, they corroborate that:

“these veiled cultural practices that take place within families or communities always refer to a legacy passed down from generation to generation, through which, over time, neighbors, cousins and friends who sympathized were added to the festivities, constituting a festive network, whose tangle configures what is meant by the culture of the place (Lôbo and D’Abadia 2017).

The women who dance the ``catira`` on the feast of São Sebastião claim to have received teachings from more experienced people, fathers, uncles, grandparents, brothers... real, at the time of the presentation.

No woman was seen at this party playing

2 Informal conversation with the young Alyne at the feast of São Sebastião in Silvânia – GO, July/2022.

a musical instrument, however, the presence of several women in the field was witnessed in the corner, doing the second voice and harmonizing the chorus with the male voice.

This time, the expressive and evident female participation in the revelry spin is considered. When speaking of “giro”, attention is drawn to the sequence of rituals present in this journey of the Magi in search of the Baby Jesus, according to Catholic tradition. At first, we have the raising of the flag, in which the revelry will start, that is, the beginning of the turn, which will take place with the direction of the flag and the walk facing to the right, so that the route does not make intersections. This moment consists of promoting the singing and collection of gifts given by those who will receive the flag in their homes. Whether in the rural or urban zone, the visit to the residents, the neighborhood is the practical dynamics of a revelry. After the end of the day trip, the revelry makes a stop for landing.

The landing is the ritual moment of stopping the revelers' walk, there are some very evident ritual processes: the arrival of the flag, in the house that hosts the landing, is preceded by specific singing and with the stops at the arches built by the residents responsible for the landing of revelers. After the residents receive the flag or flags, they follow the singing to the altar, where these flags will be placed. If it is a nativity scene, the song will be long, if not, it will end soon. Generally, after packing the flag/s, a rosary will be recited at the altar followed by dinner, preceded by prayers or singing of thanks for the food. At the end of the meal, the ritual of gratitude at the table is performed through the chant of the blessed. Afterwards, there is the singing of alms requests in which the devotees will hold the flag and receive an exclusive musical blessing, usually at the end of the alms requests, the participants and the resident of the house are offered the catira dance by the revelers,

it is worth mentioning also the participation of women in this dance that was exclusively male. Thus, it ends the rituals of religious celebration in a revelry landing. Pessoa (2007, p. 204), states that the “landing is one of the most important events in most revelries” as it provides an intense interaction between devotees and revelry practitioners.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this study, it was verified the position of visibility obtained, in the revelries of Goiás, by the participating women. They are gaining this devotion alongside men, however, playing their roles according to their own abilities. It was also evident that little by little they discover their gifts and develop their performance, according to these gifts, thus contributing to the consolidation of the countless rituals that make up the festivities. Whether in the kitchen, in traditional prayers or in other rites, the female presence becomes important and one task does not stand out from the other, detracting from this or that because in the revelry there is no separation between living room and kitchen, there is a complementation that culminates in a party of honor and love for the patron saints.

It was also possible to prove the very evident presence of the affective memory that is rescued by the women from Goiás when playing roles in the festivities. There is always a lesson from older people who attended or still attend feasts devoted to saints. It is possible to contact that this fact influences a lot for the maintenance of the festivities and, evidently, for the greater participation of the women who are the mainstay of the tradition and have been standing out more and more.

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