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THE SACRED SOUND OF CONGADO: PERFORMING SONGS OF DEVOTION, RACE,
AND GENDER IN AFRO-BRAZILIAN RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

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Abstract

This dissertation explores how Afro-Brazilian practitioners of popular Catholicism known as *congadeiros* exercise agency through sacred song to counteract a history of oppression and to create a sense of belonging as people with a shared history. Against a backdrop of historical, racial, and religious struggle, *congadeiros* engender dignity and belonging through the musico-religious rituals of *congado*. Living on urban and rural peripheries of the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais, *congadeiros* typically come from a poor, semi-educated class and work as farmers, housekeepers, instrument makers, and hairdressers, among other trades. Music making is one of the most efficacious tools that *congadeiros* have to counteract social and political exclusion. From vibrant drumming and spirited dancing to introspective polyphony, *congadeiros* shape music in diverse ways to sound emotions, to redress oppression, and to negotiate their place in the world. *Congado* as song enunciates survival. In the past as well as in the twenty-first century, *congadeiros* have used song as a way to stake claims to belonging in local, national, and global spheres.

Based on ten months of fieldwork with *congadeiros* across Minas Gerais in 2014, I explore how *congadeiros* cultivate particular rituals in purposeful and cohesive ways to not only say something about what it means to be poor, black, and marginalized, but also to say something profound about what it means to be religious, secular, and resilient. *Congadeiros* often sound their grievances and triumphs in loud, boisterous parades because they desire to engage in a process of religious, cultural, and musical translation. In many respects, *congado* as drumming, movement, prayer, and ecstatic song does the work of translation—of turning sensibilities into sound so that it recasts oppression as resiliency and myth as history. It is, furthermore, a process of translation that continues to reproduce *congadeiros*' sense of worth at a profound level. We witness this process of translation through movement, particularly with regard to their processions. *Congadeiros* not only translate their devotion into song through processional music, they also translate their desire to belong in society by occupying space through parading.

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Note on Translation

The translations of both scholarly texts and interviews from Portuguese to English are those of the author.

Introduction: Within and Beyond the Sacred

The Afro-Brazilian musicians who identify as *congadeiros* moved under the sacred banners raised in honor of *Nossa Senhora do Rosário* (Our Lady of the Rosary) as their procession wound through the sacred grounds of the brotherhood (*irmandade*) of Our Lady of the Rosary in Jatobá, a neighborhood in the outskirts of Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais.¹ They added their loud drumming and percussive jangling to the growing cacophony of song, dance, drumming, talk, and prayer created by dozens of groups (*guardas*) playing simultaneously. José Bonifácio da Luz (Zé Bengala), one of the captains of the participating groups, joined me as I was filming the *congadeiros* who created and sustained the ritual called *congado*. He explained that upon passing under the sacred banners (*bandeiras*) that float high in the sky, the *congadeiros* change their songs from ones of prayer and petition to ones of thanks and praise. They believe that in passing under and between the sacred banners, *Nossa Senhora do Rosário* and black Catholic saints like São Benedito and Santa Efigênia confer blessing on them.

Because the overlapping, boisterous music of the groups prevented a clear discernment of the songs, I had not previously observed that at particular ritual junctures, the musicians transitioned songs to reflect transformations in their spiritual states. Although initially struck by the beauty of such an intersection between changes in both song and spiritual state, I began to realize that its occurrence was not exceptional, but rather part and parcel of the (extra)ordinariness of *congado*. Indeed, *congadeiros* manipulate song and dance in a variety of ways to capture a diversity of feelings and meanings.

¹ The term *irmandade* is an umbrella term referring to several different kinds of lay people's organizations like lay confraternities, brotherhoods, and third orders (Salles 2007; Boschi 1986).

Although José Bonifácio da Luz known as Zé Bengala and I were engaged in conversation about congado, the video camera continued to record the *feira de Nossa Senhora do Rosário*, the multi-day ritual in honor of Our Lady of the Rosary. The camera captured waves of undulating melodies, timbres, rhythms, and harmonies as the groups moved in and out of the camera's field of vision and along the path of the procession. At one point, the group Moçambique de Treze de Maio de Nossa Senhora do Rosário slowly paraded by on route to the banquet. Grasping her daughter's arm with one hand, the queen (*rainha*) of the group and the elected queen of all the congado groups in Minas Gerais, Isabel Cassimiro das Dores Gasparino, motioned to me with her other hand to join them for lunch. Soon after, she paused to greet Zé Bengala, one of the captains in the congo group from the Black Community of the Arturos (Comunidade Negra dos Arturos).² Amidst the resounding scene, they briefly exchanged a few words. She then rejoined her group, but stopped shortly afterwards to embrace, chat, and laugh with Antônio Maria da Silva, the *capitão-regente* or the second most senior captain of the Black Community of the Arturos.

The interactions between senior members of different groups were brief, but nonetheless crucial for maintaining the congado community as well as for building a collective sense of dignity among Afro-Brazilian practitioners of popular Catholicism. The video drew to a close as we moved towards the banquet. This brief narration of dancing, drumming, singing, and interacting during the procession is intended to give readers a glimpse of the diverse ritual world of congado.

² The Arturos community is a quilombola community. Quilombola refers to a community whose inhabitants are descendants of Afro-Brazilians who escaped from slavery. Today, quilombola may also refer to any distinct community that takes its Afro-Brazilian heritage as a focal point of their identity. All persons that live on the Arturos' land must be descended from or married to people that descended from Artur Camilo Silvério and Carmelinda Maria da Silva.

It is evident that congadeiros aim to create beautiful music in honor of Nossa Senhora do Rosário, but as I show throughout the dissertation, they also endeavor to perform race, gender, and mobility through sacred music. Congado is a crucial aspect of their daily lives precisely because the music and the rituals, like the procession, represent congadeiros' efforts not to be silenced by centuries-old experiences of marginalization. As Afro-Brazilians who continually experience race and class discrimination, their song is a deliberate and pointed response to outsiders' attempt to *other* them. They sing in devotion to Nossa Senhora do Rosário because it is one of the most efficacious means for congadeiros to claim a private and public space of their own within a wider context of racial, gendered, and social exclusion.



Figure 1. Various congado groups participate in the procession that winds around the chapel at the festa de Nossa Senhora do Rosário hosted by the Jatobá brotherhood.



Figure 2. The Mocambique group from the Arturos community during the festa de Nossa Senhora do Rosário at the Jatobá brotherhood's sacred grounds.

Hearing Congado: Context and Social Framework

This dissertation is a story of sound, devotion, body politics, and dignity among Afro-Brazilian musicians of popular Catholicism. When congadeiros sing, dance, and drum in praise of Nossa Senhora do Rosário, black Catholic saints, and their African ancestors, it activates an engagement with the divine and brings them closer to one another in sacred conviction and community. The boisterous thudding of drums and the dense vocal polyphony of the outdoor processions not only define who they are individually and collectively, but also draw attention to what they do and how they represent themselves to outsiders. Through the performance of music,

participants engender a sense of pride in their ancestral history and contemporary reality. In this dissertation I show how music is the symbol of congadeiros' spirituality and dignity in the face of social and political exclusion. The following chapters provide the context and musical framework in which one might most fully comprehend congado as a confluence of the aural and the somatic. Indeed, the reader will come to know how sound encompasses congadeiros' ethos and habitus. Readers will also come to understand how the *Reinado de Nossa Senhora do Rosário* (the Reign of Our Lady of the Rosary)—widely known as congado—brings devotees closer to each other and to the divine.

There are compelling reasons to understand congadeiros' actions as being both musical interventions in the world of devotion and musical interventions into a history of oppression. Against a backdrop of racial struggle (Hanchard 1994; Telles 2004; Silva 2012), congadeiros counteract social exclusion by engendering feelings of belonging and status through the exercise of creative agency. Living on urban and rural peripheries of the Southeastern Brazilian state of Minas Gerais, congadeiros typically come from a poor, semi-educated class and work as farmers, housekeepers, instrument makers, and hairdressers, among other trades. While their communities are not exclusively Afro-Brazilian, they are predominantly composed of Afro-descendant peoples, which makes their black heritage a determining factor in how they identify. In fact, one cannot comprehensively understand the meanings that congado generates for practitioners without also understanding the extent to which music making serves as a tool for sounding pride in blackness and for counteracting racial exclusion. From vibrant percussion and spirited dancing to introspective polyphony, congadeiros shape music in diverse ways to sound emotions, to redress oppression, and to negotiate their place in the world. I carried out ten months of fieldwork during 2014 that consisted of participant-observation, interviews, and archival research

in Minas Gerais as well as archival research in Rio de Janeiro. In living with congadeiros, I learned that they perform songs about emancipation as well as songs of faith to construct a sense of autonomy and dignity in their lives. Hence, in this dissertation I endeavor to illustrate how congado is entextualized within multiple layers—that is, framed within the spiritual, social, political, racial, and gendered modalities of life (Ochoa Gautier 2006).

More than a musical genre, congado is a social and religious practice of sound and movement that helps congadeiros to convey their identities to outsiders who might otherwise disregard them if they recognize them at all. Indeed, it is precisely music's ability to intervene in and change human experience that makes rituals efficacious (Reily 2001; Zanith 1995). In this way, music helps to constitute people's social, religious, and cultural lives as well as motivates outsiders to think differently about them.

This is a story about devotion, but it is also a story about hearing congadeiros' psychosocial survival through music. Afro-Brazilians have intoned their experiences of displacement, contact, and interference since slaveholding times in colonial Brazil (Clifford 1997, 25). Today, Afro-Brazilian *mineiros*, people from the state of Minas Gerais, are acutely aware of what their ancestors endured as victims of slavery and, in particular, as victims of exploitation wrought by the eighteenth-century gold rush to the region now known as Minas Gerais ("general mines"). Although gold was discovered in Brazil in the late sixteenth century, it was not until the banner bearing explorers (*bandeirantes*) discovered deposits of gold in the Espinhaço Mountains in the late seventeenth century—1690s—that people flocked to this largely uninhabited area in the eighteenth century (Boxer 2000, 61).

Not only did thousands of people from Portugal, other European areas, and the scarcely populated coastal areas of the Brazilian colony come to participate in the gold rush (Zemella

1990, 47), but thousands of Africans and their descendants were enslaved and forced to work in the gold mines. After being torn from their homes in Africa, they endured both the Middle Passage and the overland journey to the interior of Brazil. The journey from Africa to Minas Gerais, covering thousands of miles, often took two to three years even to complete. Upon arrival, they faced deprivation and terror in the mines. Innumerable black slaves were also relocated to Minas Gerais from sugar plantations in the Northeast after that industry declined in response to the booming sugar economy in the Caribbean (Mintz 1985).

Writing in the eighteenth century, Jesuit priest André João Antonil suggests that by 1709, thirty-thousand people were involved in the excavation of gold in Minas Gerais (1997 [1711], 167). Mauricio Goulart (1975, 151) estimates that slaves arrived in Minas Gerais at a rate of 2,600 people per year in the initial years of gold mining extraction, exceeded 7,000 people per year by 1740, and then declined to 4,000 people per year after 1760 when gold production began to diminish. The rapid increase in these numbers in such a short period of time is even more sobering when one realizes that by 1735, the slave population had surpassed 100,000 people. At the same time, around eight to ten thousand metropolitans from Portugal arrived each year to work in the gold mining industry. With a total of 600,000 Portuguese citizens moving to the mines over the course of the initial sixty years of the gold rush (Vitorino Godinho 1971), Portugal's already small population became strained (Boxer 2000, 72). This moment of cultural contact between the Portuguese and various African ethnicities is part and parcel of what Suzel Ana Reily calls the "Golden Atlantic." The term captures the "space of multiple transcontinental routes of cultural production and resources that derived from struggles over gold" (Reily 2013, 224). Reily stresses how a distinct *mineiro* musical culture grew up around the consonance and dissonance of different peoples coming into contact with one another.

Today, congadeiros not only remember their ancestors through song, they say that the sacred song itself represents their psychosocial survival in sonic form. When they sing, they call down freed and enslaved ancestral spirits, both unknown and known to them, to gain confidence in facing the challenges of today. Congadeiros speak about how they move through time and space searching for conduits that allow them to not only make sense of the world, but also to matter in it.

It is in this sense that my dissertation addresses the religious, gendered, racial, and bodily work that the music of devotion accomplishes for congadeiros. Through the merging of musical analysis with theoretical inquiry, I show how practitioners create a sense of dignity through the sounding of faith. I ask, how does devotion “sound” for practitioners? Seeking answers to this question impelled me to also ask: How do practitioners intone faith through music as a way of intervening in the world to make themselves visible and audible? In declaiming song and drumming ecstatically in both public and private processions and ceremonies, congadeiros claim a space for themselves and demonstrate how and why they matter in this world. I argue that congadeiros’ religious ethos is embedded in their sonic ethos, which in turn, is embedded in an ethos of survival. Congadeiros endeavor to change their status in the world so that other people value them based upon terms that they have helped to constitute. To understand the ways in which congadeiros struggle for visibility and audibility in society, one must start with understanding the devotional music that practitioners sound with their bodies. This dissertation, then, seeks to explore how music articulates congadeiros’ construction of affect, race, gender, sexuality, class, and religious conviction on their own unique terms.

Indeed, I ask, how do musicians shape congado to activate and reflect their subjectivities and experiences of affect (Urban 2001; Porcello 1998)? I echo the call for understanding

listening and sounding as cultural practices through which people communicate feelings, affect, and subjectivities. This focus affords the scholar a way of understanding how music not only reflects affective states, but also brings them into being (Faudree 2012, 529). Moreover, not only does sound communicate affect, but also the orality and aurality of congadeiros' sacred song produce a kind of knowledge that becomes inscribed on the body. Hence, I attempt to analyze how musicians use music—style, form, timbre, melody, and rhythm—to act upon their bodies as well as upon other social, religious, and cultural phenomena.

Scholars have made inroads into understanding congado spatially, temporally, socially, religiously, and historically (Kiddy 2000; Martins 1997; Gomes and Pereira 1988; Mello e Souza 2006; Soares 2009; Garone 2008; Rubião 2010; Noronha Alves 2008; Katrib 2009; Fromont 2013). Similarly, adding a crucial dimension to ethnomusicological research, several scholars have devoted their attention to describing the constitutive components of congado as well as situating the music within wider historical and social contexts (Lucas 2002; Queiroz 2005; Camp 2006; Reily 2001; Zamith 1995). However, Glaucia Lucas' book, written in Portuguese more than a decade ago, is the only (ethno)musicological monograph that deals with congado. Even so, she mentions in the foreword that the book is a reproduction, with edits, of her master's thesis from 1999.

Scholars' forays into the field of congado are valuable, but their interventions stop short of being comprehensive, cross-cultural, and cross-disciplinary. Indeed, the larger literature and even the music-centered research on congado has overlooked how music affords the unfolding of its ritual practices. It is necessary to find alternative ways of encapsulating the worldly and otherworldly work that congadeiros enact through their music.

If music actualizes the faith of congadeiros, then by listening to its sound with fresh ears, scholars will come to hear what congadeiros are saying—racially, devotionally, and socially. Hence, I intervene in the literature about congado at the level of the sonic. In analyzing the spiritual work of musical melody, rhythm, harmony, form, and movement, readers will gain a more nuanced understanding of the meanings that practitioners ascribe to their performances of devotion. What I am not arguing is that ritual, race, and gender—the focus of other work—is unimportant to the multiple voices that congadeiros generate through their devotion. Quite the contrary, in this dissertation I illustrate that understanding race, gender, and faith is so important to congado that it must be done through the medium of music. Sound and dance reveal the subjectivities and realities of congadeiros in a far more nuanced and enduring way than any other single lens can offer.

The premise of this dissertation is not that a knowledge gap needs to be filled about congado, although this is certainly useful. Rather, I advocate for the strong need to understand congado because it demonstrates how rituals cross time, space, genre, religion, and context. To narrate the embeddedness of musico-spiritual performance in the politics of race, aesthetics, nationalism, and gender is to speak to a host of situations across the world that encapsulate these very same intersections.

Calling Congado

The public face of congado is emphatic, rambunctious drumming and singing, but congadeiros also exhibit a kind of sonic intimacy in private rituals that prove congado to be a complex phenomenon. Throughout the dissertation, I explore how loud drumming and introspective

singing at different ritual moments produce unique “soundmarks” (Schafer 1977, 10). I argue that these soundmarks are integral to congado’s functioning because of the spiritual and social outcomes that the diverse music affords.

Facing an array of similar, yet unique material constraints across the state of Minas Gerais—the Southeastern Region of Brazil—congadeiros have cultivated the rituals of the Reinado de Nossa Senhora do Rosário (the Reign of Our Lady of the Rosary)—known as *congado* in the vernacular—in ways that speak to the diversity of their African and European-derived influences. Even the fact that some practitioners have agreed upon the appellation congado, while others have chosen to call their rituals by other names, suggests that there is unity and diversity of form, function, and designation within congado. The following section outlines how practitioners create congado in converging and diverging ways, in addition to exploring the meanings that they attribute to its musical and spiritual contours.



Figure 3. This map demonstrates the location and size of Brazil in relation to other Latin American countries. Courtesy of the University of Chicago Library Map Collection.

Mário de Andrade posited in the 1930s that *congado*, *congos*, *l2ongado*, *cucumbi*, and *maracatu* were initially a unified musico-spiritual practice originating from the processions (*cortejos*) of the coronations of the kings and queens (*coroações de reis e rainhas*) (Andrade 1982, 35). He writes,

The Congos are a *dança dramática* (dance drama), of African origin, reminiscent of the behaviors and facts of tribal life. In its more primitive and generalized manifestation, it does not surpass a simple royal court, parading with sung dances. [...] Even in the most primary manifestation of the simple court of a black king, the texts of the dances, and even the vaguest part of the choreographies, always allude to religious practices, work, wars, and rituals (*festas*) of the collectivity. (Andrade 1982, 17)

Today, the meanings behind such designations have changed. For example, the term “congo” now refers to only one of the several groups (*guardas*) formed in devotion to Nossa Senhora do Rosário rather than the totality of the groups. Practitioners tend to refer to their musico-spiritual practices as a whole with interchangeable terms like *congado*, *reinado*, *reisado*, and *congada*.³ In

³ Although *reisado* can refer to *congado*, it predominantly refers to folk Catholic groups called *folias dos reis* who carry out music, dance, and religious rituals in praise of the Magi and Jesus around the epiphany.

many respects, the multiple variations on the word “congado” signal an attempt by people to capture the diverse and changing folk traditions of Afro-Catholicism over time.



Figure 4. This map of Brazil situates Minas Gerais, a state in Southeastern Brazil, in relation to Brazil’s other twenty-six states. Courtesy of the University of Chicago Library Map Collection.

Although appellations like *congo* and *moçambique* likely conjure up images of nation-states, these names are more metaphorical than genealogical. Indeed, the title “congo” is more a metonym that subsumes the diverse traditions and peoples originating from Central Africa and West Central Africa than an accurate statement about the uniform ethnic history of *congadeiros*. Moreover, *congadeiro* Antônio Cassimiro de Dore Gasparino argues that the appellation *moçambique* does not even designate the nation-state, but rather derives from the word “*mossambo*” meaning sacred dance (*dança sagrada*) because *moçambiqueiros* sing and perform sacred dances.

While it is generally accepted that *congado*, *reinado*, and *congada*, are synonymous appellations designating an annual cycle of religious festas, some practitioners make a distinction

between reinado and congado. They say that reinado refers to the totality of all the types of guardas as well as the royal court, which is comprised of kings, queens, and princesses—both perpetual (lifelong) and festive (rotating annually). Practitioners in the irmandade of Jatobá, for example, tend to favor the term reinado because it connotes the entirety of all the musico-spiritual rituals. According to them, congado refers solely to an individual guarda that represents part of the whole—the reinado. However, in the Arturos community, practitioners tend to favor congado as a comprehensive term that captures the religious rituals regardless of whether or not they are linked to an irmandade. These two examples demonstrate that, on an everyday basis, practitioners accept a wide variety of names by which to call to their annual cycle of festas in devotion to Nossa Senhora and other black Catholic saints.

While the designation congado largely finds currency throughout the state, this is not always the case. When conducting fieldwork in Montes Claros, a city in the north of Minas Gerais, I worked with practitioners from catopê, marujada, and caboclo groups. Practitioners here do not identify with the term congado nor do they have a comprehensive term that encapsulates the three different types of groups. I bring this point to light to situate congado as a term that both scholars and practitioners use, but which nonetheless has limits to its applicability when local, discrete terms are more apropos. Hence, since colonial times and continuing today, congadeiros have called their performances, processes, and meanings by consistent as well as changing names. Given this long history of popular musico-spiritual traditions in praise of Nossa Senhora since coloniality, it is no surprise that multiple appellations have been used by practitioners and academics alike to understand and convey the musical and contextual dynamics of Marian devotion. Indeed, the forms and practices of congado have been openly negotiated and consciously shaped since its inception. Thus, what congado *is* remains as unresolved as it is

patent. For this reason, it is necessary to consider the ways in which practitioners acting in similar, yet unique contexts across Minas Gerais have encouraged musical change and/or continuity.

Known as the seven siblings (*sete irmãos*), congado is an umbrella term that encapsulates seven different musico-spiritual types—*congo*, *moçambique*, *catopê*, *vilão*, *marujo*, *caboclo*, and *candombe*. These unique kinds of congado groups accommodate both musical and spiritual unity and diversity. From their musical structure to their uniforms, the groups are distinct from one another in form and organization. The diversity of the groups demonstrates the extent to which congado is a malleable object of religious use that can be reshaped according to local circumstance and taste. Each kind of group has their own unique forms of internal structures, rites, and musical matrixes of melody, harmony, and rhythm. For example, the captains in congo use a special head dress to signal their captaincy, while the captains in moçambique do not use head dresses to distinguish themselves from the other practitioners. Moreover, each group not only has its own specific rhythmic patterns, melodic frameworks, and declamatory styles, but also depending on the context, the groups will operationalize these elements differently. For example, in some parts of Minas Gerais, congadeiros believe it to be ritually acceptable to perform congado without instrumental accompaniment or dancing, but they say that it must always have singing. However, in other areas of the state, congadeiros are content with refraining from singing during the processions precisely because it inhibits them from carrying out animated dance and drumming choreographies. It is in this sense that the seven siblings sound and move in distinct ways depending on the type of congado group as well as on its geographical location. There are, moreover, several interchangeable ways of describing song among congadeiros such as: *cântico* (chant), *música* (denoting music in general as well as a

single song), *cantiga* (short song), *cantoria* (singing) and *canto* (song in general as well as an individual song).

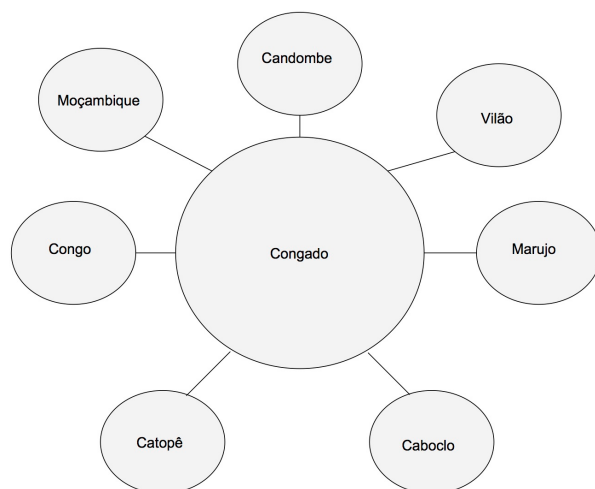


Figure 5. Congado is comprised of seven different musico-spiritual groups: congo, moçambique, candombe, vilão, marujo, catopê, and caboclo.

At the same time that they exhibit a multiplicity of ways to sound congado, their mutual recognition of one another suggests a type of underlying unity that crosses ritual and musical borders. Indeed, despite the fact that each group intones unique verses, melodies, and rhythms, one might argue that congadeiros carry out musical and spiritual expressions in collective and unified ways (Lucas 2002; Kiddy 2005). When various groups meet at a festa, the singing and devotional practices to Nossa Senhora do Rosário create an overlapping, boisterous soundscape. Indeed, while there is a distinctiveness to each group, practitioners and listeners alike recognize correspondences in singing style, call-and-response form, prayer, lyrics, and drumming across the groups. Congadeiros are also all united by the presence of the royal court (*corte real*), which is composed of the congo kings and queens (*reis congos*), who embody Nossa Senhora do Rosário and the African nations (*nações africanas*). In this way, they represent the most

consummate bearers of prestige, royalty, and divinity on earth. The intersection between unique, yet cohesive auralities serves to underscore the extent to which congadeiros form an individual and collective soundscape within Brazil's religious and cultural terrain.

While each group has their own royal court, there is one elected queen that reigns over the entire congado constituency across the state of Minas Gerais. Dona Isabel Cassimiro das Dores Gasparino was the elected and perpetual queen of all congadeiros until her passing in 2015. For many years she held the position without the accompaniment of an elected king because congadeiros did not choose another king after the previous one passed away.



Figure 6. Dona Isabel Cassimiro das Dores Gasparino was the perpetual queen of the moçambique and congo groups Treze de Maio de Nossa Senhora do Rosário as well as elected queen of all the congado groups in Minas Gerais until passing away in 2015.

Although not required, if groups choose to be part of a brotherhood (*irmandade*), they become part of a history of Afro-Brazilian devotion to Our Lady of the Rosary that has endured since the seventeenth century. According to Caio César Boschi (1986, 187), in colonial Minas Gerais, the sixty-two black brotherhoods devoted to Nossa Senhora far surpassed those of the Holy Sacrament, the brotherhood composed of wealthy white men, principally the *reinóis* or metropolitans from Portugal. Indeed, by 1720 all of the principal mining locales around Minas Gerais boasted a brotherhood dedicated to Nossa Senhora.

When congadeiros describe themselves as a brotherhood, community (*comunidade*), people (*povo*), and nation (*nação*), it is not inconsequential. Congadeiros cultivate a sense of internal camaraderie within the group as well as a sense of unity among the larger collectivity of congado groups across Minas Gerais, São Paulo, and Goiás. In doing so, they not only signal an internal community that spans from the individual group to the larger body of practitioners, but they also signal the desire to be a separate “nation” within national borders. In other words, the language that they use to indicate their group formation reveals a great deal about how they see themselves ideologically and religiously. Congadeiros perceive themselves to be musico-spiritual communities that move within wider social spheres while simultaneously cultivating a unique sense of in-group belonging.

Employing the term “community” is also meant to demonstrate the extent to which meaning in congado is predicated on people’s efforts to connect—to interact with one another by means of shared history, experience, performance, and culture. That is, I strategically use the concept of “community” to explore music’s generative role in building collectivities (Shelemay 2011). Hence, it is here that I argue that musical initiatives help to solidify community bonds that have already grown together by means of racial, religious, and regional assemblages.

While congadeiros foster a unique, bounded sense of collectivity among themselves, their in-group sociability is sustained more through the inclusion of willing participants than the exclusion of outsiders. That is, congadeiros tend to be drawn from disenfranchised Afro-Brazilian communities living on the peripheries of cities, but they welcome all persons regardless of race, age, gender, or sexuality. Indeed, the fact that congadeiros are a same-sex-friendly religious community reveals the extent to which their practices of folk Catholicism depart from Roman Catholicism. Moreover, while congado today is predominantly practiced by people of afro-descendent heritage, being Afro-Brazilian is not a prerequisite for participation in congado. Indeed, similar phenotypes and a shared history of oppression and emancipation tend to unite congadeiros, but musical performance and religious conviction also unite them. Hence, regardless of their race, gender, and/or sexuality, practitioners enter into a community of faithful when they enter into the realm of congado.

While congadeiros' sense of unity is overwhelmingly communalistic, it is important to note that privilege still intervenes at the level of the structural and interpersonal in congado communities. We witness this sense of hierarchy and deference even in the smallest gestures. For example, among congadeiros, every time a youth encounters an elder for the first time that day, they must ask for a blessing (*bênção*), to which the elder responds, "God bless you" (*Deus te abençoe*). Also, as briefly mentioned before, the designation of roles in the groups—queen, king, captain, and participant—highlights the presence of hierarchy within the communalistic setting of congado. I return later to how the intersection between egalitarianism and privilege/hierarchy in congado communities works in a paradoxical, yet functional way.

Cyclicity: The Opening and Closing of the Rosary

The religious cycle of congado customarily span eight to nine months a year, with some groups and brotherhoods keeping their religious cycle open until January. The cycle tends to begin on Easter Sunday or the following one and lasts until the end of October or early November. When the cycle concludes, the drums become silenced. During the months that congadeiros remain active, the members of the groups make and fulfill various promises by participating in several congado-related events like festivities commemorating the abolition of slavery, festivals, and festas.

Whether the festas are in honor of Our Lady of the Rosary, Saint Benedict (São Benedito), the Holy Spirit (Divino Espírito), or Saint Iphigenia (Santa Efigênia), the festas represent the most cherished moment of the rosary cycle. In many respects, because festas are seen as commonplace, congadeiros view their repetition as an opportunity to revitalize the music in the present. That is, the festa's repetition allows for renewing and transforming congado within a larger framework of constancy.

Participants, especially captains and the queens and kings, spiritually prepare themselves for the impending festa by abiding by certain ritual protocols like reciting prayers and fasting. Moreover, the sacred spaces of the community, particularly the chapel and the sacred objects within it, undergo ritual sacralization for the advent of the festa. A festa can last one day, span multiple days, or take place over the course of several consecutive weekends. Different groups, moreover, celebrate the festa at different times of the year. Some prefer to align the festa with the agrarian calendar, while others place it in October, the official month of Nossa Senhora. While each group hosts the festa in her honor only once per year, groups constantly travel to one

another's communities to celebrate the festa together. Because congadeiros perceive themselves to be a broad-based religious community, they judge the successfulness of a festa based upon the community solidarity and spirit that they cultivate. Thus, sacred music making fortifies internal cohesiveness and projects a sense of common identity to outsiders.



Figure 7. Gabriel da Silva Baeta Nedes looks toward the camera as he drums and sings in an event commemorating one hundred and twenty-six years of the abolition of slavery in Brazil. Led by captain Sílvio Augusto da Silva, this congo group from the city of Conselheiro Lafaiete helped to animate the festa that was hosted by the congo and moçambique groups Treze de Maio de Nossa Senhora do Rosário from the Concórdia neighborhood of Belo Horizonte.

During the holy days, participants engage in a multiplicity of rituals that not only fulfill different ceremonial functions, but also divide sacred time into discrete, constitutive parts.

Rituals like the procession (*procissão/cortejo*), congo mass (*missa conga*), coronation of the

kings and queens (*coroação de rei and rainha*), raising of the banner (*levantamento/hasteamento de bandeira*), payment of promises (*cumprimento/pagamento de promessas*), collective banquet (*banquete colectivo*), and prayers of the rosary (*reza do terço*) all contribute to making congado a space of sacrality and collectivity. For example, on the Sunday of the festa in the Arturos community (Comunidade Negra dos Arturos), the moçambique group awakens everyone with drumming just as dawn is breaking. They call this ceremony the *matina* or *alvorada* (dawn). The moçambique group travels the internal roads of the community, singing, dancing, drumming, and setting off sound rockets. The thunderous booms are meant to announce sonically the advent of an important musico-spiritual festa. They stop along the way at the houses of the queens and kings and then exit their community. They parade through the streets until reaching the outdoor cross at the city's main church, the Igreja de Nossa Senhora do Rosário. Upon parading back, they prepare for arguably the most important day of the festa—the time when they join with other groups to carry out various rituals in praise of Nossa Senhora.

In the following observation, Glaucia Lucas addresses the specificity of each ritual in the festa by speaking about how congadeiros shape the lyrics so that they correspond to the ritual's purpose. She writes, "The word issued from the congadeiros is, in this way, invested with force, which demands the great responsibility of making its use coincide with space/time. One should intone the right songs for each circumstance, in each ritual stage" (Lucas 2002, 77).⁴ Indeed, congadeiros perform an array of different rituals during the festa so that they have the space to match creatively the right words to the ritual's particular function. Hence, I argue that song and text operate together to make congadeiros' spiritual work legible.

⁴ "A palavra emitida pelo congadeiro está, assim, investida de força, o que exige dele grande responsabilidade para que seu uso esteja apropriado ao espaço/tempo. Ele deve entoar os cantos certos para cada circunstância, em cada etapa ritual" (Lucas 2002, 77).

Because festas usually last for several days and congadeiros cannot forego work, the host group might conduct some of the rituals alone. The other groups will then arrive on Sunday to participate in the procession and the congo mass. Sílvio Augusto da Silva, captain of a congo group from Conselheiro Lafaiete explained some of the logistics regarding celebrating festas. He conveyed,

Where there is a festa, there's an invitation for us. If we have the conditions to go, we go. We travel a lot in the state of Minas Gerais. We have a festa in Sete Lagoas, Ouro Preto, Mariana, Matozinhos, Ferros, Nova Era [towns in Minas Gerais]. We have a lot of invitations. Each *banda* [group] receives twenty, thirty invitations each year for us to go and perform at these cities' festas. But sometimes it's difficult because of the transportation. In Conselheiro Lafaiete, we have thirteen groups of congado. The city is small for this number of congado groups. The city offers a few trips, but it isn't enough to supply all of the groups. Every Sunday after the first Sunday of May—May, June, July, August, September, October—we have invitations. It's not possible to attend every one. Thus, we share the transportation costs. The people, the community. When we are a group like this [pointing to his group that stood beside him at the festa], we are a group of low income people—people that don't have the means to pay transportation. Whenever we have an opportunity, we are always celebrating [religiously] without ceasing. Today we are here. On the twenty-fifth we are in Lafaiete. On the first of June, we are also in Lafaiete. On the seventeenth we go to Mariana. Thus, there are various cities that we go to each year. Hence, during this season, from the month of May to the month of October, we don't spend Sundays at home. We are always celebrating. It's because depending on the places that we go, they celebrate the festa of Saint Iphigenia. In another local it's Saint Benedict; another local, it's Our Lady of the Rosary. Another local, it's Our Lady of Guides. When we go to Mariana, it's the festa of Saint Anthony. Thus, we celebrate all of the saints. We make a festa for all of the saints. (Augusto da Silva 2014)

Captain Sílvio Augusto da Silva's words reveal the constant interplay between opportunities and constraints experienced by congadeiros. Indeed, in addition to illuminating the ways in which congadeiros negotiate financial challenges, Silva also reveals the returning presence of congado throughout most of the year. For example, in the Jatobá brotherhood, the ritual called the visit of the crown (*visita de coroa*) occurs one month before the start of the festa. In the ritual, members—dressed in their uniforms—gather at their chapel and then parade throughout the streets singing and dancing until they reach the homes of the kings and queens. Here they bless

the crowns and remind the royal court that they must physically and mentally prepare themselves for the upcoming festa. As the homes might be a significant distance from one another, the groups may choose to rest from music making along their passage from one locale to the next.

Throughout their sacred journey, the groups punctuate the silence with various songs that are drawn from both longstanding, traditional repertoires as well as from newly formed canons. Not only do congadeiros make music meaningful through the interplay of songs that derive from the past and present, but congadeiros also readily adapt songs from religious sources like the Catholic Church and Umbanda. If the song can be musically and lyrically transformed to speak to themes embedded in congado, then practitioners accept it as their own. This action is congruent with their general receptivity towards other cultural and religious traditions.

Then one to two weeks before the start of the festa or on the Thursday night before its beginning, the groups perform a ceremony called the raising of the sacred banner/pole (*hasteamento de bandeira/hasteamento de mastro*). Atop the sacred poles are banners that carry iconic representations of their beloved saints. During one particular festa in the Arturos community, an annual festa that honors the abolition of slavery on May thirteenth, the congadeiros left their locale, paraded through the streets, reached the church, celebrated the congo mass, and raised the banner. Upon returning in song and dance to their sacred spaces, they raised the banner within their own sacred spaces. Throughout the several hours that elapsed to complete these religious duties, music making and movement practically never ceased.

During activities like the procession, congo mass, religious visitation, and payment of promise, congadeiros work toward a union with Our Lady of the Rosary by using the human voice as well as other rhythmic, melodic, harmonic, and kinesthetic elements. They sing compact songs during the festa like:

Hoje é dia de festa maior, ô viva
Today is the day of the biggest festa, ô hurray
Hoje é dia de festa maior, ô viva
Today is the day of the biggest festa, ô hurray
Hoje é dia da festa no céu, Sr. Rei, ô viva
Today is the day of the festa in the sky, Father King, ô hurray
Hoje é dia de festa na terra, Sá Rainha, ô viva
Today is the day of the festa in the land, Mother Queen, ô viva.

Figure 8. Traditional song sung in congo groups.

I argue that what frames these movements and song lyrics are an orientation towards the aural and the somatic. As Matt Sakakeeny illustrates, “One’s experience of a soundscape is dependent on an *orientation* towards sound, in terms of both physical proximity (near or far, loud or soft) and evaluative listening (music or noise, pleasurable or intrusive). Moving *through* space requires an orientation *to* space, and sound is one way that people orient themselves to one another and to the environments that they cohabit” (Sakakeeny 2010, 4). Expanding on this idea, I propose that congadeiros’ music and movement afford certain outcomes not only because practitioners orient themselves towards a unique soundscape, but also because they orient themselves towards a fundamentally sacred experience. That is, their orientation is directed towards the aural and the spatial as much as it is directed towards the astral.

We witness this orientation towards the physical and sacred planes in the ritual called the payment of promises (*pagamento/pagação/cumprimento de promessas*). This is a ceremony when people come seeking Nossa Senhora for familial, mental, economic, or physical reasons. They undergo arduous physical tasks in petition for and/or in praise of Nossa Senhora’s divine intervention. Indeed, practitioners can either perform acts of supplication or ones of thanks in honor of the saints. When larger governmental institutions fail to provide for practitioners’s social and mental well-being, they often turn to Nossa Senhora for physical and spiritual

fortitude. In addition to folk Catholicism, the presence of exchange-based interactions between humans and saints is also common in religions like Umbanda and Quimbanda (Bruneau 1982, 21; Greenfield 2001a; Reily 2002, 6).

Music is entirely necessary for the functioning of the payment of promises because it facilitates the cyclical nature of reciprocity. That is, music mediates between humans and supernatural divinities as it crosses material and astral boundaries. In situations when the payment of promise is physically draining, like walking on one's knees several times around the chapel, it is the communal singing and drumming that eases the person's pain and encourages her/him to maintain spiritual and physical strength.

In general, throughout the entirety of the festa, congadeiros' experiences of knowing and interacting with Our Lady of the Rosary comes via sensory overload. The soundscape is both messy and noisy. While there are many rituals where the individual group plays by itself in the intimacy of a private space, there are also an equal number of rituals where the groups join together to produce an aurally dense, overlapping soundscape. When standing a distance from the groups, their music making seems like an impenetrable wall of sound. Yet, upon approaching the groups, one realizes that each musical entity strives to maintain its own rhythmic pace and melodic cohesion even when playing at the same time as other groups. Indeed, individual congado groups never play the same song as the groups that surround them. Thus, in general, groups concurrently make music together during rituals, while simultaneously differentiating their rhythms and melodies from one another. To produce this kind of rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic cohesion amidst a dense sonic space is no small feat to accomplish.

Methodology

Throughout the dissertation, I use the normative statements of congadeiros, fieldwork anecdotes, and musical transcriptions of congado to demonstrate the efficacy of approaching congado through the optics of religiosity, performance, and survival. I believe that an approach based on the interaction between the scholar and the performers in musical contexts allows for a more profound investigation of the following threads: how congadeiros engender meaning through music, the musical criteria that they use to evaluate music, and the feelings that they generate from their sacred performances. Hence, the majority of my research derives from the ethnographic methods of participant-observation and interviews because this is the most fruitful avenue for understanding why congadeiros do what they do. It is also the surest way of ensuring that the narratives that I construct in this dissertation coincide with how my interlocutors describe themselves. When I analyze field recordings and create musical transcriptions from these ethnographic experiences, they are intended to illuminate and complement congadeiros' interactive engagement, not the other way around. While congadeiros are united by their Afro-Brazilian heritage, religious conviction, and regional experiences, there is still a heterogeneity of experiences among congadeiros that renders the community diverse even in its unity. I suggest that more nuanced attention to the modalities of gender, sexuality, and age would enhance our understanding of how individual practitioners perceive their place within the larger congado community.

At the same time that I am an ethnomusicologist whose responsibility it is to observe and interpret musicians' thoughts and actions, I am also cautious of telling narratives that might contravene the very narratives told by my interlocutors. In this dissertation, I have endeavored to

build a narrative that aligns with what matters most to congadeiros: devotion and performance in the context of Afro-Brazilian history and contemporary society. Through close listening, observation, formal interviews, informal discussions, and interpretation, I have striven to enter into a shared understanding with practitioners of what congado is about and how it signifies. What is congado's cultural, spiritual, racial, gender, and political function for performers? I have also attempted to balance my synchronic fieldwork with diachronic archival work to better grasp how history plays a role in the contemporary functioning of congadeiros' lives.

For my dissertation research, while I did not initially travel to Minas Gerais to fill a niche category in the academic literature, I was partially motivated by the knowledge that there were many interesting aspects of Brazilian culture and music that had received only minor attention in ethnomusicology and related disciplines. However, it was only after being immersed in the fascinating world of congado that I realized the extent to which the scholarly focus on certain traditions within Brazil like Candomblé and samba was more of a theoretical and contextual bias than an accurate portrayal of the rich diversity of practitioners' musical practices throughout Brazil. Congado merits attention not only because it is practiced by thousands of religious devotees through the Southeast, but also because it is rich in history. Congado represents a conduit through which practitioners carry out their daily struggles for racial, gender, and civic equality. Hence, my motivation for choosing congado as the core focus of my research was less about ensuring that I focused on an understudied topic (Reily 2000, 8) and more about exploring musical traditions that were vibrant, flourishing, and central to Brazilians' lives. My contribution here is to bring a fresh optic to ethnomusicology by offering Afro-Brazilian rituals a fresh audition. I argue that by hearing and analyzing congado, one can garner new insight into how its internal functioning reveals similarities with other musico-spiritual traditions the world over.

My identity as a young, female, white, Catholic, trilingual, North American graduate student from the University of Chicago surely affected how congadeiros perceived me. In the rural and urban interior of Brazil, a Portuguese-speaking woman from the United States was an anomaly that piqued congadeiros' curiosity and drew us closer together. While I was largely welcomed with open arms, I could not always predict how my identity would be received. For example, my identity as a woman often provided an immediate sense of affinity with other female congadeiros. In rare cases, however, it also served as a source of apprehension. Being a graduate student, for instance, allowed me a sense of liminality and provided the freedom to move between circles inhabited by adults and those occupied by children.

As a middle-class white person, I have not lived the daily experiences of discrimination and hardship that congadeiros endure. Despite the fact that we come from different cultures and have experienced different realities, congadeiros and I identified with one another on a profound level. I showed my willingness to understand who they were by speaking in Portuguese, learning the vocabulary particular to congado, and listening intently to their stories and songs. Congadeiros took pride in my esteem of their sacred song. In return, they demonstrated their care by generously offering their time as well as food, housing, and protection from a larger, and often inhospitable, Brazilian society. While the particular attributes of my identity made me both an insider and outsider in various contexts, congadeiros and I cultivated such a profound sense of affinity and respect because we identified with one another's search for meaning in life through sacred song.

Outline of Chapters

My fieldwork in Brazil from 2009-2014 spans over two years, with nine of those months being dedicated to conducting research in Minas Gerais with congadeiros. While my fieldwork with samba and forró musicians in Rio de Janeiro (six months) and São Paulo (three months) informs my critical thinking about Brazil writ large, my fieldwork with congadeiros forms the fundamental basis for this dissertation. Chapter 1 introduces the musical and extramusical logistics of congado. Offering a broad overview, the chapter familiarizes readers with the musical, hierarchical, social, economic, political structures embedded in Afro-Brazilian communities of folk Catholicism. Chapter 2 explores the extent to which congado is inseparable from an assemblage of outside actors—the Brazilian government and the Roman Catholic Church in particular. These social, political, and religious actors have historically impacted and continue to influence what congadeiros do in their everyday lives. Chapter 3 directly engages the musical elements of congado by showing how congadeiros manipulate music so as to afford particular sacred and secular experiences. I also delve into how the gifts of musical instruments represent a metaphor for building community among congadeiros. Chapter 4 examines how practitioners embody, mobilize, and think about movement. Here I consider how musical and physical motion affect congadeiros' worldviews. In doing so, I highlight the ways in which congadeiros perceive human and celestial movement as interrelational.

Chapter 5 draws attention to the performance of race. I suggest that congadeiros use music to actively construct a sense of self-worth and pride in their black bodies. In expressing racial dignity in their musico-religious forms, congadeiros not only esteem their ancestral heritage, they also project this historical narrative into the future. Chapter 6 builds on this notion

by showing how practitioners render their rituals possible time and again through the deployment of steadfastness and resistance.

Chapter 7 provides an understanding of gender within the context of congado. I highlight the impact that wider gender ideologies in society have on congadeiros' perception, construction, and evaluation of gender dynamics within their individual groups and vice versa. Chapter 8 provides further context for fruitfully understanding the differing ways in which women frame their participation in congado. The conclusion offers thoughts about how congadeiros harness the power of sacred song to say something both eminently profound and plainly evident about who they are as a community of people trying to make sense of their place in the world.

Closing Thoughts

Congadeiros sing, dance, drum, and worship Nossa Senhora do Rosário for reasons of religious conviction and self-representation. For congadeiros, their music, uniform, movement, and social interaction all work in conjunction with one another to signal their unique socio-religious position in society (Herzfeld 1987). They understand congado to be an instrument for enacting religious beliefs as well as for crafting social realities because their musical actions create, sanctify, and respond to the myriad potentials of sacred and social conviction. In this way, their expressions are as much concerned with ensuring the state of their souls in the future as they are about creating self-worth in the here and now. They call upon Nossa Senhora do Rosário to protect and fortify them in maintaining their unique identity in the face of discrimination. In many respects, congadeiros intone sacred songs of Afro-Brazilian religiosity to overcome processes of systematic exclusion and to engender a sense of permanent emplacement in society.

Congado is not the only way in which Afro-Brazilians relate to and move through the world, but it is an enduring and significant testament to those who have found spiritual connection and social expression in its sounds and meanings. Practitioners cultivate congado to fulfill multiple objectives, both worldly and otherworldly (Camp 2006; Zanith 1995). Through music, participants assert dignity, counteract discrimination, and exercise agency as well as create fellowship among peers and embody the sacred (Gumbrecht 2013, 18; Berlant 1998, 285). Congado, in this way, represents more than an expression of faith. Congadeiros harness music to actively participate in the making of an identity that intervenes at the intersection of the sonic, social, and political.

Chapter 1

Expressing Congado

The following chapter outlines the mechanics of congado. While knowledge about congado might seem straightforward and basic, to learn the basics of congado was a challenging process of observation, inquiry, and fact-checking. As willing and gracious as congadeiros were to teach me about congado, there was no codified way of expressing the essentials of congado. Only through curiosity and patience did I begin to perceive the world of congado. Part of the challenge that I faced in understanding the mechanics of congado was not only learning the nuts and bolts of congado through an informal, non-codified transmission system, but also learning how the constitutive elements of congado signified to congadeiros. Indeed, over time, I came to understand that what congadeiros generated for the eye and the ear to see and hear were largely responses to what they perceived with the body—the invisible forces that circulated in the human and the supernatural worlds.

Invisible, but not Inaudible

When congadeiros bound forward in the procession, sounding their shakers and proclaiming their song, but pause at doorways, crossroads, and overpasses to turn in a circle, they say that they are responding to the invisible, yet formidable forces pervading the universe. They turn in circles at crossroads because they believe that these actions ward off inauspicious forces and counteract the spiritual vulnerability of the place. Along their spiritual journey during the festa,

congadeiros go to great length to ensure the safe passage of their bodies and souls. From snipping off particular plant leaves and tucking them into their head dresses before the beginning of the festa, to twirling their bodies at spiritually susceptible junctures so as to safeguard themselves, congadeiros are concerned with attracting good forces and averting bad ones. Spiritual forces and history intersect in the songs that congadeiros intone and the dances that they perform. In the early twentieth century, congadeiros musically reenacted a historical battle between the Christians and the Moors to symbolically portray the universe as an arena where forces of good and evil jockey for power. The metaphorical re-enactment of this allegorical battle is not unique to congado, but rather intersects with similar traditions across time and space. From the time of Al-Andalus (711-1492) to Europe during the 14th century and continuing on into the Renaissance, the stylized encounter between Moors and Christians has been performed for centuries. The dance that encapsulates this encounter has been called by different names and exhibited different varieties—*moresca* in Italian, *morisca* in Spanish, and *moorish dance* in English (England). Despite the variances in appellations and stylistic differences, the dance continues to be a metaphor for the medieval wars in Spain between Moors and Christians (Brown and Cardamone 2016). Understanding the struggle between Christians and Moors as a symbolic fight between good and evil has obvious, unsettling undertones that I do not wish to reinforce. Indeed, this is a pairing to which congadeiros no longer ascribe. In our interviews, no one spoke about evil forces in relation to Moors nor did they perform any reenactments of battles between the two religions during their rituals. Today congadeiros perceive harmful forces to be general as opposed to linked to specific ethnicities and religions.

Although it is rare for congadeiros to perform the metaphorical battle today, congadeiros used to perform it in the early twentieth-century. One particularly salient example from this time

period comes from Alice Chaves de Melo's fieldnotes about the Festa do Rosário that took place in the small municipality of São Gonçalo do Sapucaí, Minas Gerais in 1938.¹ Although I uncovered little about her as a researcher, her work has nonetheless served as an essential tool for helping contemporary scholars to understand the changing contours of congado over the decades. In her fieldnotes and accompanying musical transcriptions, Melo began by describing a scene from a festa in which congadeiros danced choreographic numbers and sang various songs that narrated an allegorical battle between "Christians" and the "Turks" or "Moors"—read Muslims. They used guitars (*violas*), *cavaquinhos* (ukulele-like instrument), machetes (*marchêtes*), drums (*caixas*) (the *surda*—big drum—and the *pequena*—small one), *reco-reco* (scraper-type instrument), *adufe* (small double-sided drum), and triangle. According to the story that they told through song, dance, and dialogue, the two religious parties engage in a long and devastating war. Ultimately, the Christians—representing "the good forces"—defeat the Muslims—embodying "the bad forces." To dramatize this occurrence, the group of "Christian" congadeiros who are dressed in blue and white strike down the "Muslim" congadeiros who are dressed in red. The Christian congadeiros parade around the plaza, dragging the conquered behind. All the while, the triumphant cohort sings songs of victory and praise to Nossa Senhora do Rosário. In the appendix, I have translated Melo's detailed fieldnotes from Portuguese to English and one can read how the scene unfolds. But, suffice it to say that at the end, everyone

¹ Interestingly enough, I found Melo's fieldnotes about congado in the Arthur Ramos collection of the National Library of Brazil (Biblioteca Nacional do Brasil) in Rio de Janeiro as opposed to an archive in Minas Gerais. In many respects, it illustrated the extent to which materials from the periphery are often brought to the political and economic center of Brazil. According to the 2015 estimates from the IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics—Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística), Minas Gerais is the second most populous state in Brazil (20,869,101 people) after São Paulo (44,396,484 people) (www.ibge.gov.br). Despite outnumbering Rio de Janeiro's population of 16,550,024 people, Minas Gerais remains peripheral to Rio de Janeiro, culturally, politically, and economically.

receives the defeat of the Muslims by the Christians with much excitement and noise making. They shout "Vivas" in the air and set off fireworks. Perhaps what is most revealing about the scene is that the Muslims are not only defeated, they are also converted to Christianity. As Melo says in the closing paragraphs of her fieldnotes, "Finally, the losers accept baptism and they all dance, now intermixed, in praise of Our Lady of the Rosary."

Figure 9. Page one of Alice Chaves de Melo's fieldnotes about the Festa do Rosário. São Gonçalo do Sapucaí, Minas Gerais, 1938. Biblioteca Nacional, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

A EMBAIXADA DOS NEGROS DE S. GONÇALO DO SAPUCAÍ, MINAS GERAIS.
(Festa do Rosário)

---A festa se inicia no Domingo do Espírito Santo e dura tres dias.
---A "embaixada"---~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ especie de auto---é representada no adro da Igreja de N.S. do Rosário. ~~xxxx~~ tomam parte os cristãos (vestidos de azul e branco, as cōres de N.S. do Rosário) e os "turcos", ou "mouros" trajados de vermelho), com suas bandeiras e pendões. O auto começa pelos versos da "Nau Catarineta". Depois de repetidas evoluções coreograficas, nas quais os dois bandos não se misturam, o "Almirante", em altas vozes, ordena ao "gagáirinho", ou "calafatinho" que procure ver "terras de Espanha" ou arcas de Portugal:

---Arriba, arriba Chiquito
Meu gagáirinho ~~xxxx~~ riá
Vê se vê terra d'Españha
Ou areia de Portugal...

O calafatinho percorre com o seu oculo de alcance a vastidão...da praça. (O óculo é um pau todo enfeitado de fitas.) Terminado o circulo, o calafatinho declara:

(canto fixado por Alice Chaves de Melo)

10 --Avistei, avistei meu capitão generá *Solo instrumental*
Avistei as trez donzêla *Coro vivo*
Ebaixo dum parreirâ.

As tres ~~xxxxxxx~~ donzêlas são filhas do Almirante, que as oferece ao calafatinho, não se sabe bem porque.

---Uma para contigo se casá.
---Outra p'ra te ~~casar~~ *casar*.
---Outra p'ra te ~~casar~~ *casar*.

E não é só isso que o Almirante oferece ao seu grumete.

--Dar-te-ei meu cavalo branco
P'ra tú em França passeiá...
Dar-te-ei tanto dinheiro
O qual não possas contá...

Mas o calafatinho é "incorruptível". Não quer nada. Ademais, são---ou deviam ser proibidas, já naqueles dias, as accumulações...O calafatinho recusa aquilo tudo e diz que quer apenas

---A tua alma
p'ra comigo carregá.

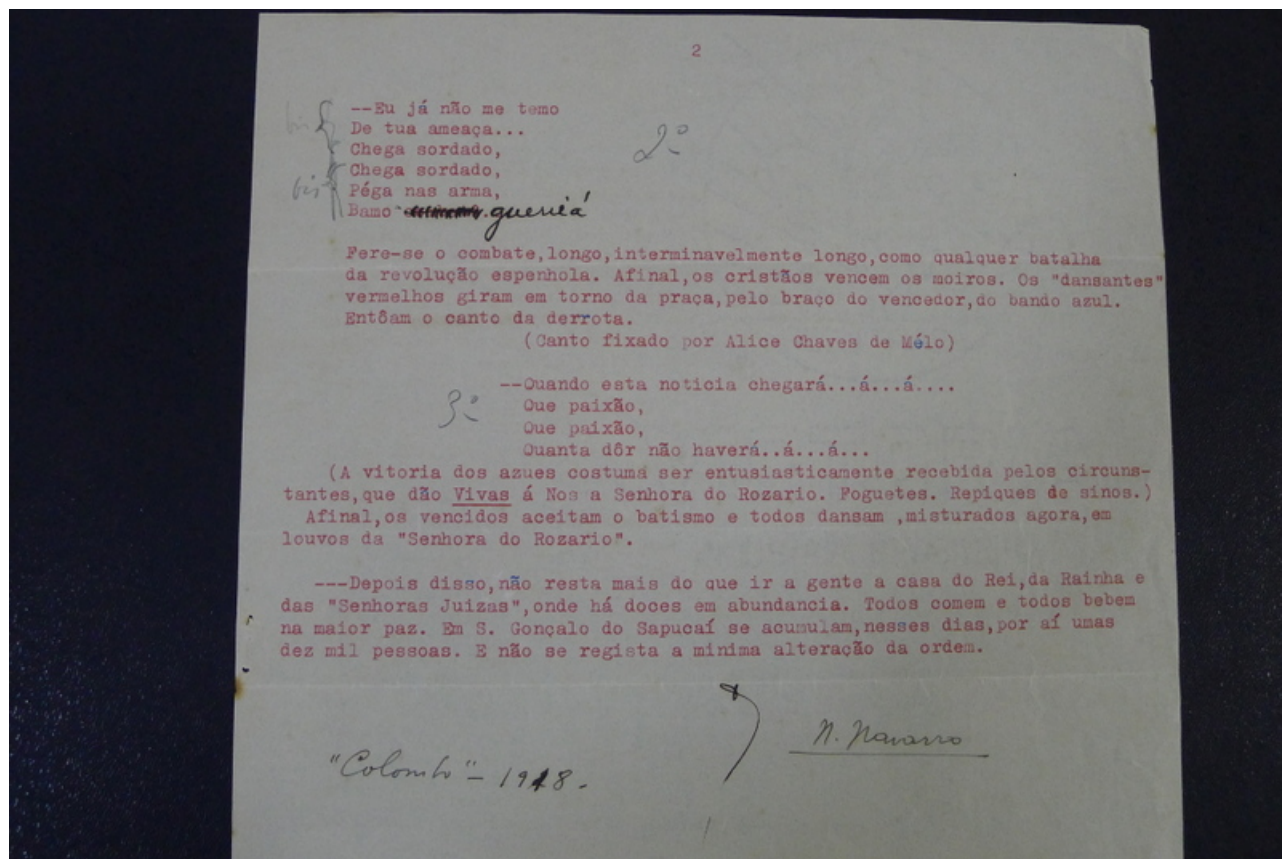
Aí, o "Almirante" fica brabo:

--Minh'arma foi Deus que deu
Só a Ele posso entregá

Recomeçam as evoluções coreograficas, ao som das violas, cavaquinhos, marchê-tes, caixas (a surda e a pequena), rēco-rēcos, adufos e triângulo. Refeitas as filas, o Almirante passa a ser Carlos Magno com os seus Doze pares, na Espanha, ocupada pelo infiel. Ouve-se o desafio de Ferrabraz aos doze pares. Madrocos, não o aceitam Qui de Borgonha, ~~xxx~~ Galalão e os demais. Apenas Rodão, ou Rodão tōpa a briga e vence o "turco" em batalha singular, levando-o prisioneiro. Balão, pai de Ferrabraz, envia os seus embaixadores a "Carlos Magano", pela libertação do filho. Embaixada vai, embaixada vem, o tempo vai passando e Ferrabraz se apaixona por Floripes e se passa de armas e bagagens para as hostes de Carlos Magano. Isso equivale a uma declaração de guerra. Desafio mutuo. Os "danzantes" sacam dos lenços e o sacódenos narizes dos adversarios:

(canto fixado por Alice Chaves de Melo)

Figure 9. (Continued) The second of three pages from Alice Chaves de Melo's fieldnotes about the Festa do Rosário. São Gonçalo do Sapucaí, Minas Gerais, 1938. Biblioteca Nacional, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.



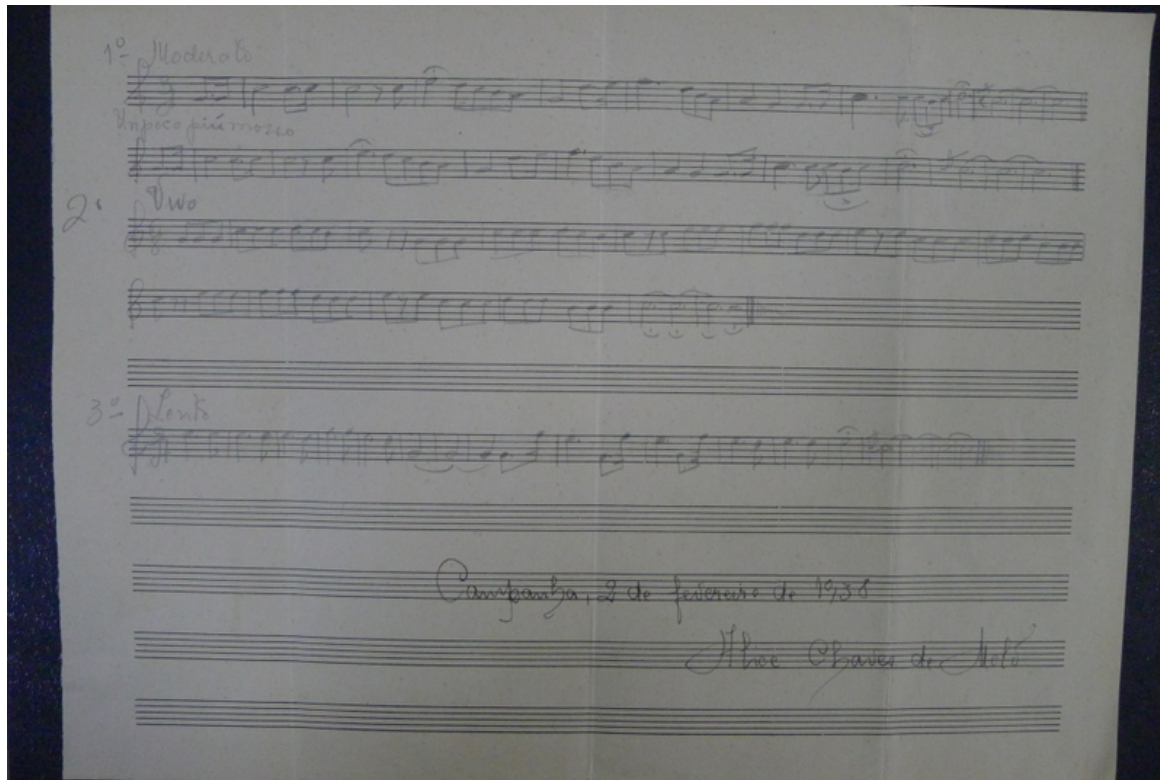


Figure 10. The third of three pages from Alice Chaves de Melo's fieldnotes about the Festa do Rosário. São Gonçalo do Sapucaí, Minas Gerais, 1938. These three notated melodies coincide with the following three song lyrics. The songs are interspersed in Melo's description of the musical event. Biblioteca Nacional, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Figure 11. These three song lyrics coincide with the three melodies transcribed in Alice Chaves de Melo's fieldnotes.

Song #1

Avistei, avistei meu capitão generá,
Look, look my captain,
 Avistei as trez donzêla,
Look at the three maidens,
 Embaixo dum parreirá
Underneath the vine.

Song #2

Eu já não me temo,
I am not afraid any more,
 De tua ameaça,

Figure 11. (Continued)

*Of your threat,
Chega sordado,
Come soldier,
Chega sordado.
Come soldier,
Péga nas arma,
Pick up your arms,
Bamo guerriá
Let's go make war.*

Song #3

*Quando esta noticia chegará...á...á...
When this notice arrives...á...á...
Que paixão,
What passion,
Que paixão,
What passion,
Quanta dôr não haverá...á...á...
How much pain there will not be...á...á.*

In narrating a metaphorical battle between Christians and Moors, Alice Chaves de Melo captured an allegorical performance that resonates profoundly with themes of domination and conversion in the Brazilian popular imaginary (Reily 2013, 226). She showed how congadeiros harnessed the power of music to mediate between good and evil during the mid-twentieth century. Today, while congadeiros continue to musically and choreographically perform the encounter between good and evil, the performances have taken on different forms over the decades. Indeed, rather than ascribe any ethnic or religious particularities to the forces of good and evil, congadeiros now talk in more general terms about how their encounters with invisible forces have shaped who they are and how they act.

In the following passage, Kátia Silvério Augusto and William Augusto de Passos discuss how they believe that the spiritual power inherent in music can generate positive and negative

outcomes. Congadeiros use music to call upon the divine for protection from spiritual adversaries. They also use the spiritual forces embedded in songs to symbolically defeat an adversary. In the passage that follows, Kátia Silvério Augusto and William Augusto dos Passos explained to me how they contend with human adversaries who send negative influences via song:

Kátia Silvério Augusto: Here in our region [Ouro Preto], there is a lot of witchcraft, that thing of the spell (*demanda*). But this happens more with moçambique. They are more of the sacred spaces of candomblé. This is the case in some places that we go: Uberlândia, Formiga. Because one wants to be better than the other. (S)he is sending a spell to another one. They are the sung spells (*pontos cantados*). The sung spells of candomblé's sacred grounds (*pontos do terreiro*). They involve forces to defeat someone in the other group. [...] They send negative forces to someone so that she becomes sick. For the group to become disharmonized. It's logical that the group will disharmonize. Let's suppose. You are at a congado festa. If there is someone who suddenly faints, who suddenly gets sick, it's obvious that we, as leaders in the group, are going to become unfocused. We are going to become preoccupied with that person. When you become preoccupied, you lose focus and your group becomes weaker. For some places before we go to them, we take a bath of rue.

Genevieve Dempsey: You used a word that I didn't understand very well—the word *demanda*. Would you be able to explain this?

Kátia Silvério Augusto: It's called demanda because let's suppose, the moçambique group sends a spell to another moçambique. The captain feels, he feels that he [the other captain] sent a spell to him. What does he do? He listens to the song that was sent and then he sends a song back. From there it begins. Who has more force? The only things that they respect are the banners. They always send the songs and spells from the banner backward.

Genevieve Dempsey: I didn't quite understand.

William Augusto dos Passos: There are two banners in the front and the rest of the groups in the back. They allow the banner to pass by and the people that are behind the banner are the ones that receive the bad energy. The banner does not receive this energy because people have respect for the banner (Augusto dos Passos 2014).

Genevieve Dempsey: Ah, I understand. Yes, very good.

Kátia Silvério Augusto: One time we went to a festa in Santo Antônio do Salto and Rodrigo [one of the captains] received a spell. Innocently, he sang a song and another group thought that he was sending him a spell. The captain received it and sent a spell

back to him. Rodrigo became very sick. He went to the parish's house and they called a nurse. She said that he was alright. But he continued to sweat, sweat, sweat. He looked like he was going to faint, but he didn't have anything. That same day, there was an older captain there. I didn't know how to deal with the situation. I called him. The captain took the rosary of my mother and took Rodrigo's rosary. He passed the rosary of my mother to Rodrigo. Then some minutes passed and Rodrigo got better. When my mother touched Rodrigo's rosary for the first time, the rosary completely burst. (Silvério Augusto 2014)

Kátia Silvério Augusto's words attest to the spiritual power of songs. The spell is identical in form to the standard congado songs, but its lyrics and spiritual intentions are antithetical to the primarily peace making actions of congadeiros. Indeed, if powerful enough, a spell can have injurious effects on people's health. In many respects, spells (*demandas*) among congadeiros are analogous to *pwen* in Haitian contexts (Brown 1987, Dirksen 2006, McAlister 2002, Richman 2005a). Indeed, both are used as "a class of 'magical' spells whose power works over distances" (Averill 1997, 15). Thus, during festas, congadeiros not only employ music to communicate with benevolent divine entities in the astral plane, they also use music to either protect against or triumph over unseen adversaries. Melvin L. Butler captures this sentiment when he states, "Musical practice serves as a means of enacting identities that stand in opposition to a host of social and spiritual adversaries" (Butler 2008, 53). Likewise, congadeiros see the universe as a battlefield between good and evil. What they do and what they sing operate on multiple registers. Not only must they concern themselves with the proper sonic aesthetics for communicating with the divine, but they must also deal with people whose hostility stands in the way of their health and devotion.



Figure 12. Kátia Silvério Augusto (center) dances and sings as she leads the congo group Nossa Senhora do Rosário and Santa Efigênia from Ouro Preto during a festa.

Kátia Silvério Augusto's comments are also noteworthy because throughout these moments of spiritual friction, *congadeiros* respect the power of the banner. The banner is carried by people called banner bearers (*bandeireiras*). Commonly entrusted to the protection of older women, they carry the banner while marching in front of the group during processions. Painted, sew, and drawn on the banner are images of the patron saints of the group like Nossa Senhora do Rosário, São Benedito, and Santa Efigênia. People ascribe divine power to the banners, which is why they act reverentially toward it. They make sure to send their inauspicious spells (*demandas*) beyond its spiritual borders. Wherever the group travels, the banner bearer

accompanies, proudly displaying the banner. When a person encounters a group's banner for the first time, proper etiquette is to kiss it and make the sign of the cross. Congadeiros cannot interact with the banner when groups meet face-to-face because they are playing their instruments, so while the captains greet each other, the banner bearers of each group exchange banners. They pass them over the heads of the congadeiros as they bow in reverence. Congadeiros attribute significant meaning to the banners because they usually date to the beginning of the group itself, meaning that some are almost a hundred years old. The banners represent the longevity of the congado tradition as well as the maintenance of a strong religious conviction among its practitioners. Exchanging the banners, moreover, is a symbolic gesture of respect and acknowledgement meant to bring the groups together in spatial and spiritual proximity.

By outlining Alice Chavez de Melo's fieldnotes about the battle between good and evil, interviewing Kátia Silvério Augusto about competition among groups, and offering observations about the exchange of banners and goodwill between groups during processions, I endeavor to show that congadeiros perceive the (super)natural world as imbued with invisible, yet real forces of both moral and malevolent valences. This is important because as readers learn about the mechanics of congado in the following sections, they must bear in mind that the particularities of congado are not arbitrary, but rather strategically chosen to channel auspicious forces, to activate certain ideologies, and to fulfill particular aesthetic, social, religious, racial, and/or gendered functions.

The Forms and Functions of Congado

Congado groups have captains (*capitães*) and subjects (*vassalos*)—dancers and instrumentalists. With regard to congo, there are two lines of dancers and drummers (*caixeiras*) that lead the front of each line. At the very head are the first drummers (*primeiros caixeiros*) or guide drummers (*caixeiros de guia*), who are then followed by secondary guide drummers (*caixas de contraguia*). The captains, also known as *comandantes*, parade in the center of the two lines.² Traditionally, the number of drummers and captains in a group should not equal an even number and three is an especially auspicious number because it represents the Holy Trinity—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. However, in reality, drummers and captains often parade in even numbers depending on the group's membership and the availability of drums during the festa.

If a member has the opportunity to lead the group in song, (s)he moves to the very middle of the two lines, being flanked on each side by other instrumentalists that play the *reco-reco* (scraper), *meia-lua* (half-moon tambourine), and *sanfona* (accordion). The moçambique, in contrast, does not have two choreographed lines, but rather moves forward in the procession as an amorphous unit. They do, however, correspond with congo in the sense that the drummers parade at the very front of the group. Then the players of patangomes and gungas follow, nestling the captain in the center. If one were to expand the lens outward from the individual group to try and capture the geographic placement of the groups, one would notice that the congo group parades in front and the moçambique follows behind, leading the royal court. We will return to the theme of hierarchy and geographic location in later chapters.

² Comandante is a term used interchangeably with the word captain in particular regions of Minas Gerais; in the Central West part of Minas Gerais, comandante predominantly denotes the position of capitã(o)-mor, the most senior captain of the group.

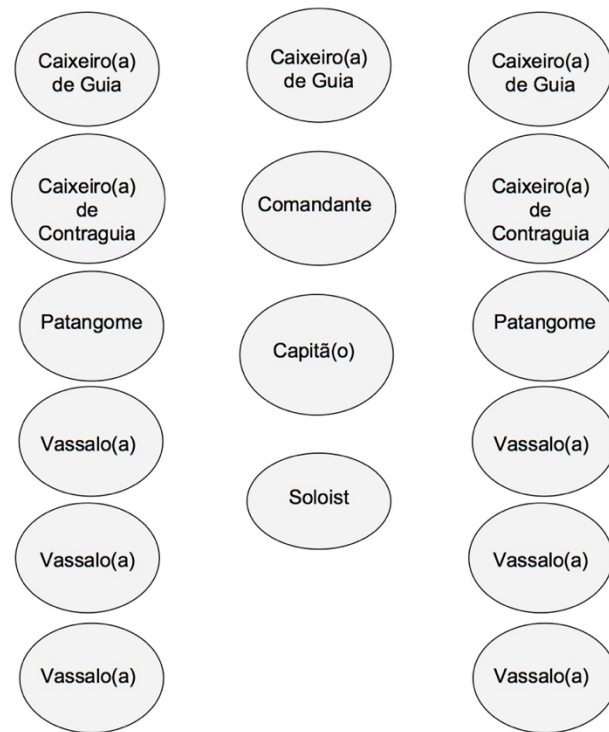


Figure 13. This chart visually maps the positions of congadeiros when they parade in the procession.

Not only are there hierarchies between captains and participants within congo and moçambique, but distinctions exist among captains. From greater to lesser prestige, the captains are hierarchically ranked as follows: capitão-mor, capitão-regente, and general captains. Captains are revered in congado communities because practitioners believe them to exemplify devotion and superior musical skill. As Núbia Gomes and Edimilson Pereira explain, “In the religious hierarchy, the captains stand out because they guard the secrets of the Rosary and direct the song.

They are the ones who are initiated in the faith, having received this mission because of their knowledge and devotion” (1990, 17).³

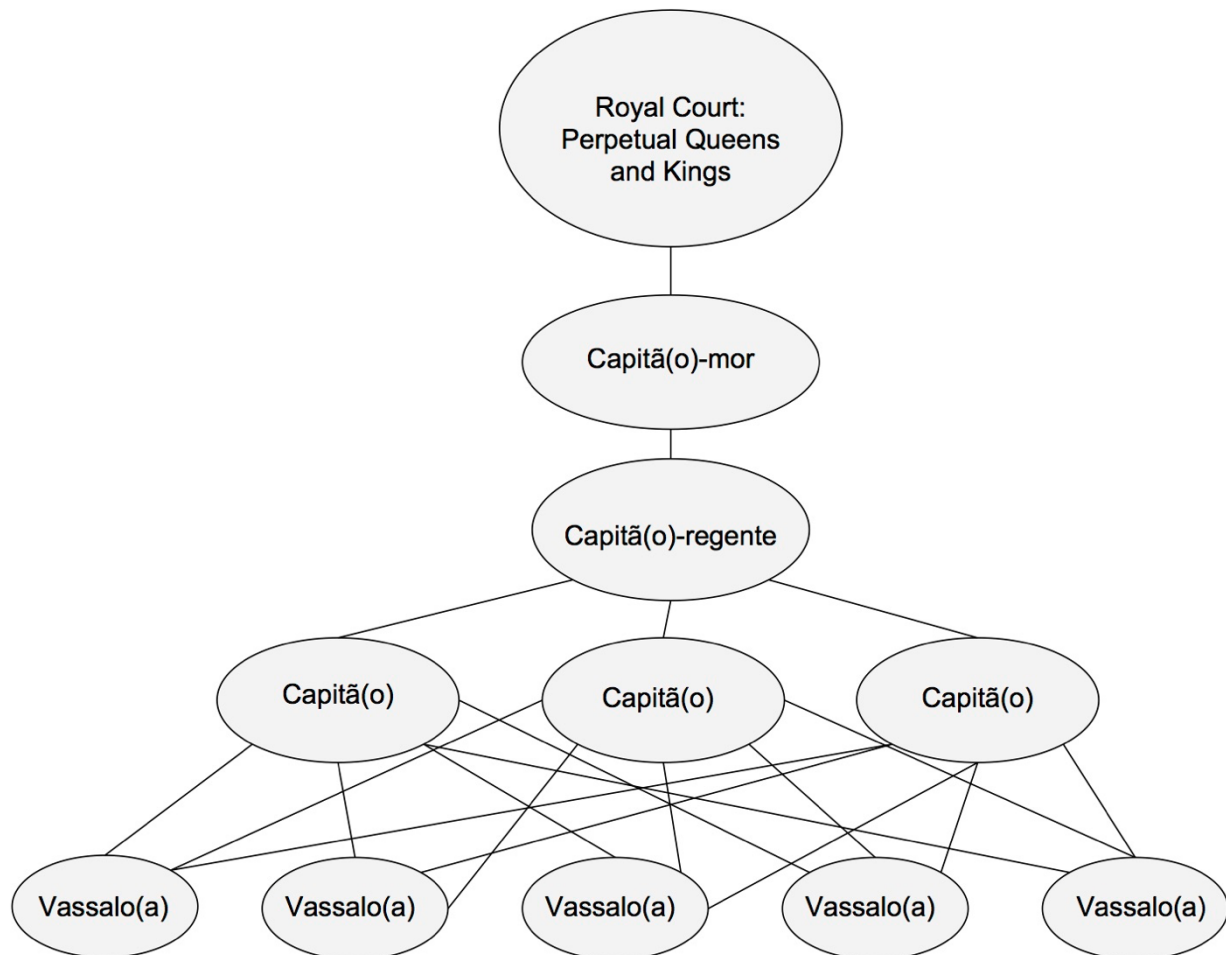


Figure 14. This chart illustrates the leadership positions and hierarchies within congado groups.

³ “Na hierarquia religiosa, destacam-se os capitães, que guardam os segredos do Rosário e conduzem o canto. São eles os iniciados na fé, recebendo essa missão por conhecimento e devoção.”

Sacred Instruments

All congado instruments are characterized as inherently sacred. Congadeiros believe that the combination of instruments used for music making brings forth the spiritual forces of divine icons (Arroyo 1998). In this way, congado instruments become sounding boards of sacredness, embodying practitioners' religious convictions. For example, congadeiros often use the term *ngoma*, meaning tambor (drum) among Bantu speaking peoples. When congadeiros employ the term *ngoma*, they are referring not to a specific drum, but rather to other ideational threads. Congadeiros invoke the concept to *ngoma* to refer to a group of dancers, to encapsulate a heritage passed down from their ancestors, or to call for a reestablishment of the musical order if the song becomes destabilized through greater focus and attention. Hence, across time and space, congadeiros resignify terms like *ngoma* to speak to a host of changing contexts.

The forty days of Lent represent the only time during the year that the drums and other percussion instruments are officially silenced. Outside this period of prayer and repentance, congadeiros freely play their drums. Drums, percussive instruments, and congadeiros' voices are arguably the most important mediums for communicating with the divine. In addition to drums, practitioners also use percussion instruments called *gungas* or *campanhas*, metal shakers that are crafted from empty food cans and sealed with black seeds inside. To congadeiros, *gungas* are not merely rhythmic support—they echo the sounds of the heavy chains worn by their ancestors. In this way, *gungas* represent the co-presence of their ancestors in material form. A distinguishing feature between moçambique participants and other types of congadeiros is that *gungas* are only worn by members of moçambique. Traditionally, men were the sole components of moçambique groups, but today women are active participants. In fact, Pedrina de Lourdes Santos a well-

respected female leader of the moçambique group Guarda de Nossa Senhora das Mercês was one of the pioneers in opening moçambique to women.



Figure 15. The congadeiro who stands on the right holds a *tamboril* in his right hand as a sign of leadership. Congadeiros use other drums like the *tamboril* not so much for drumming but rather as symbols of leadership. The accordionist (*sanfoneiro*) who stands on the left also exhibits a kind of distinguished leadership because congado traditionally has only one accordion player per group. Photo by author at the festa de Nossa Senhora do Rosário in Conselheiro Lafaiete, 2014.

While moçambique groups signal their distinctiveness through visual cues of white, purple, and blue outfits, the singular markers that announce their presence are the instruments that clasp their legs. They attach the gungas to their ankles and stomp and jump in rhythm. The basic step to sound the gungas is a right, left, right pattern with one's feet. Upon this foundation, moçambique congadeiros are encouraged to improvise creatively, either independently or in

conjunction with other members to produce a call-and-response pattern. The goal is to engender a buzzy soundscape that interlocks on a larger scale with the tambores and patangome. In a kind of dance, with each foot creating a different rhythmic pattern, they raise a foot slightly above the ground and then rhythmically pound it down. At the same time, the other foot responds, creating a different, but interlocking pattern. Fervent, jostling sounds rise up from the feet to intersect with the sacred song of their voices.

The congo group not only uses many instruments, often in multiples of three, but they also rarely sing without the accompaniment of such sacred objects. The instruments are: large bass drums known as *treme-terra* (literally earth-quake) or *surdão*, various *caixas* (*tambores*) (cylindrical double-headed drums) of different sizes, *tamboril/tamborim* (square, double-sided drum of capitães—captains), *patangome* (metal hand shaker), *tarol* (snare drum), *pandeiro* (tambourine), *reco-reco* (cylindrical scraper; also known as *canzalo* when made of bamboo), and *caxixis* (bamboo shakers of various sizes).



Figure 16. Women from the Jatobá congo group play reco-reco during the festa of Nossa Senhora do Rosário hosted by the Arturos community. Photo by author, 2014.

Complementing the percussive instruments are string instruments like the *viola* (a five double-coursed instrument more petite than guitars), guitar, *bandolim* (a four double-coursed instruments similar to a mandolin), banjo, *acordeon de oito baixos* (button accordion), and *sanfona* (accordion). Glaura Lucas notes that,

The congo can include the sanfona and viola, but they are occasional presences and not obligatory for these communities. According to some captains of both Irmandades [Arturos and Jatobá], the viola is part of the tradition of congo, while the sanfona is a more recent inclusion. The masculine and feminine congos [*congos masculinos e femininos*] of Jatobá have a sanfona with more regularity. The Arturos once had one, but since the passing of their accordionist, he was not replaced. The viola today is not typical of congo from these communities, being very important for the congos of the region of Sete Lagoas, Lagoa Santa, Pedro Leopoldo and adjacent regions, for this reason being called the *congo de viola* (congo of the viola) by congadeiros from Belo Horizonte. (Lucas 2002, 88)⁴

In contrast, moçambique carries larger drums than that of the congo, which produces a deeper, more resonant sound. Moreover, one percussion instrument unique to moçambique is the *gunga* or *campanha* (metal ankle shaker).

More than merely providing a list of instruments used by congadeiros, I wish the readers to understand the extent to which congadeiros employ instruments for social and religious reasons, in addition to deploying them for musical ones. As Eliot Bates writes,

I argue for taking objects, and particularly musical instruments, seriously—but not simply as things that humans use or make or exchange, or as passive artifacts from which sound emanates. Much of the power, mystique, and allure of musical instruments, I argue, is extricable from the myriad situations where instruments are entangled in webs of complex relationships—between humans and objects, between humans and humans, and between objects and other objects. (Bates 2012, 364)

⁴ O Congo pode incluir ainda a sanfona e a viola, mas são presenças ocasionais e não obrigatórias para essas comunidades. Segundo alguns capitães de ambas as Irmandades, a viola faz parte da tradição do Congo, enquanto a sanfona é uma inclusão mais recente. Os Congos masculino e feminino do Jatobá contam com uma sanfona com mais regularidade. Os Arturos já a tiveram, mas desde que o sanfoneiro faleceu, não foi substituído. Já a viola, hoje, não é típica do Congo dessas comunidades, sendo muito importante para os Congos da região de Sete Lagoas, Lagoa Santa, Pedro Leopoldo e adjacências, por essa razão chamados de Congo de Viola pelos congadeiros de Belo Horizonte.

Drawing on Bates' work, I add another dynamic to the web of complex interrelationships—the intersection between instruments, humans, and the divine. I argue that sound's sacrality comes from the constant feedback loop between a devotee's body and the vibrations emanating from the sacred instrument. When congadeiros pound, strike, and play their instruments, humans and musical objects vibrate together. Musical objects in this light not only have a social life. In being conduits of sacred expression, instruments also become integral to people's religious life.

Materiality of the Sacred and the Secular

In addition to believing that instruments bring them closer to the divine, congadeiros also believe that the materials used in constructing instruments bring them closer to their ancestors. In a discussion regarding instrument making, I asked fourteen-year old João Silvério Estevam about why congadeiros play particular instruments as opposed to other ones.

Genevieve Dempsey: Why do you use these instruments?

João Henrique Silvério Estevam: When the slaves, well first came the drum. When they saw the image of Nossa Senhora in the sea, well, they went and made the drums. They tied the leather, you see, they took leather. They did not even nail it. They tied it. They made the instruments that they knew how to make. It was like that. (Silvério Estevam 2014)

João Henrique Silvério Estevam's ancestors took the leather, bound it, and made a drum to sing praises to Nossa Senhora. In this story, he cites the craftsmanship of his enslaved ancestors as the reason why congadeiros continue to use these instruments today. They honor the memorial presence of their ancestors by making hand-made drums in similar ways. The resourcefulness of his ancestors that João Henrique Silvério Esteveam cites remains a key component of congadeiros' lives today. For example, the patangome is an instrument created by placing seeds

in between two pieces of welded metal—usually car hubcaps. The patangome are said to represent the gold pans that their enslaved ancestors used in the gold mines. These material objects become avenues for helping congadeiros to know themselves through an understanding of their ancestors' trials and triumphs.

Just as their ancestors did, congadeiros continue to construct instruments in non-industrialized, handcrafted forms. For example, Antônio and Ricardo Cassimiro Gasparino worked to strip the blue paint off the spindles of a baby crib to refashion as mallets for their tambores during one of my interviews with them. Listening again to the recording, one can hear the sanding of wood, the tearing of recycled fabric to make the padded tip, and the sizzling of glue on the stovetop. They described how through inter-generational systems as well as instrument-making workshops by local craftspeople, they learned to create instruments. Antônio and Ricardo Cassimiro Gasparino cited expense as a reason for finding alternative ways for making instruments, but they also spoke about aesthetics. Machine made instruments constructed with synthetic materials are considered by many congadeiros to be more physically durable, yet resonate with a tinny, ephemeral sound. Handmade instruments, in contrast, are valued for their reverberating and rich sound. Given their material constraints, congadeiros are resourceful in making musical instruments, but they also handcraft the instruments to manipulate the acoustic details of the tambor and thus produce pleasing sounds. Making effective ritual music, in other words, starts with raw materials. Raw materials are crafted for useful purposes, and in making these instruments useful, questions of aesthetics return to the forefront. However, it should be noted that while the majority of instruments are hand-made, pandeiros (tambourines) and reco-recos (metal/wood shakers) can be factory made. Regardless of their origin, once the instruments

are blessed and become part of the ritual, they belong solely to congado as sacred instruments within a sacred space.

Times and the Timing of Sacred Rhythms

Just as congado instruments are sacred, so too are the melodies and rhythms that congadeiros intone. Spiritual guides and leaders in the Arturos community, married couple Maria Auxiliadora da Luz (Dodora) and Mário Brás da Luz spoke to me about the ways in which congado music can come from different sources as long as it remains sacred. Mário Brás da Luz acts as the patriarch (*patriarca*) of the Arturos community, a captain of the congo group, and the community's healer or *benzedeiro*. Mária Auxiliadora da Luz is known as the May 13th queen (*rainha treze de maio*).⁵ In our conversation, they articulated how they are not overly concerned with the music's moment of inception—whether the song has endured the test of time or been recently incorporated into their repertoire—but more so with sacred musical elements.

Mário Brás da Luz: For example, the captain goes to another festa and he sees a song (*canto*) there and he saves it. Then he comes and brings it here.

Mária Auxiliadora da Luz: He brings it to sing in this *casa* (house/community), but in the rhythm of Nossa Senhora.

Mário Brás da Luz: Within the very rhythm (Brás da Luz 2014).

Genevieve Dempsey: When you say, within the rhythm of Nossa Senhora, what do you mean by this?

Mária Auxiliadora da Luz: It's a thing of religion. It's Nossa Senhora. We speak here more of Nossa Senhora because she is the principal [focus]. (Auxiliadora da Luz 2014)

⁵ On May 13th of each year, the congadeiros celebrate the abolition of slavery with congado rituals.



Figure 17. Mário Brás da Luz and Mária Auxiliadora da Luz sitting on the benches between their home and the chapel in the Arturos community, 2014. Photo by author.

While the conversation continued before I could better understand what it meant for the music to be in the rhythm of Nossa Senhora, this passage speaks to wider notion of musical influence and innovation. The fact that congadeiros seek to adapt songs heard in other festas to be played in their own festas demonstrates the extent to which innovation is seen as a necessary element for the continuation of the tradition. Congadeiros are openly candid about how they take advantage

of the festas and processions, where multiple groups come together to play, to gain fresh ideas regarding melodies and lyrics. They reiterate, time and again, the idea that regardless of its origin or dissemination, a song can be used in ritual settings given that it fits within the overarching spiritual parameters of congado. Indeed, there is an intuitive sentiment that what is pleasing to divine entities and capable of engendering felt connections among participants is “in the rhythm of Nossa Senhora do Rosário.” Moreover, in addition to transforming songs from other groups to coincide with the individual group’s aesthetics and ritual functions, melodies can, for example, move rhythmic templates, switching from moçambique to congo. When one group takes on another group’s song, the basis for judging sameness derives from whether or not the lyrics were maintained even when they changed the song’s other musical elements like melody, harmony, tempo, meter, rhythm, and tessitura.

Processes of Learning

For congado youth to learn the musical repertoire and to understand the significance of the community’s rituals, they not only learn by watching their elders, they also learn experientially. Indeed, the younger generations attain knowledge by observing and listening to the elders as well as by doing and experimenting. Children know how to dance and play instruments because they walked alongside their parents as they witnessed them dancing and playing in the streets. Even in one group, it is not uncommon to witness three or four generations together. Mothers carry their babies as they dance. When toddlers tire from drumming and walking, they fall asleep on the jumping and jostling shoulders of their fathers. Young congadeiros learn the elements of the music and dance in rituals through observation, participation, and experimentation.



Figure 18. César Augusto da Silva teaching his daughter during the festa de Nossa Senhora do Rosário in the Arturos community, 2014. Photo by author.

Children, for example, who have just learned to walk, are often given child-size drums, and play under the watchful eyes of the elders. They walk along and strike their drums in oftentimes unsynchronized but fully participatory ways. For the most part, congadeiros consciously and generously transfer knowledge from generation to generation to preserve the musical and religious archives of memory (Campos 2012; Garone 2008; Queiroz 2005). It is, however, taken as a cultural given that many senior captains will choose to share knowledge only

with select youth who have proven themselves worthy of such instruction. Much information can be gleaned in congado communities through enculturation and the ear, but sometimes elders must explicitly state ritual meanings to the youth and they choose their recipients selectively. It is this knowledge kept secret by elders that has become highly prized because with more knowledge comes greater competency, prestige, and social standing in the community (Neuman 1990 [1980]). What makes congado so sacred, in part, are the secrets and mysteries imparted to the protégé as confidence and trust are gradually built between the parties. Hence, in a tradition composed of amateur musicians, musico-spiritual knowledge not economics determines hierarchies of leadership within congado groups.

However, in the largest sense, the elders recognize that the youth will inherit the tradition and therefore, are willing to teach congado to ensure its continuity. Part of teaching includes correcting. Captains like Zé Bengala of the Arturos community, for example, does not hesitate to redirect adolescent congadeiro drummers when they briefly unsettle the rhythmic synchrony of the group during significant events like the procession or payment of promises. Zé Bengala momentarily takes the young drummer's hand in his and together they strike the mallet against the leather drumhead, internalizing and syncing their movement to the wider beat. The overarching goal among congadeiros is to create social union, but there is also a complementary aim to realize aesthetic ideals—to construct something acoustically pleasing. Zé Bengala's choice to correct young congadeiros during significant rituals implies that aesthetic preferences and social cohesion coincide.

This example, moreover, demonstrates two primary concepts: first, inter-generational presence is necessary for the continuance of congado because its history and methods are transmitted through hearing, sight, and touch. Second, it is noteworthy that this brief teaching

lesson occurred during the official procession. There seems, in this way, to be no specifically sanctioned “ideal moment” for assimilating knowledge. Rituals act as teaching moments even in the face of high spiritual stakes. This is because congado groups, with some exceptions, have no activity that involves rehearsing or practicing. In the previous example, Zé Bengala likely assumes that proper rhythmic synchrony is more important for engendering an auspicious environment for heightened spirituality than refraining from teaching the adolescent for the sake of carrying on an undisturbed procession. More precisely, reestablishing musical and spiritual balance overrides the need for maintaining performance etiquette.

Young congadeiros must gradually learn how to use musical structure and syntax at designated times (Jackson 2012). Part of knowing when to employ musical structure and syntax is understanding the spiritual, cultural, and historical meanings attached to these musical parameters. Thus, to assimilate further knowledge often requires that they ask more experienced participants about the meanings behind their musical and physical actions. Hence, young congadeiros endeavor to learn about musical syntax as much as they strive to understand how the embedded ideas in music index particular ways of perceiving and experiencing the world.

Young congadeiros strive to learn how to be competent musicians from their elders despite the fact that there are no professional careers in congado. In this respect, congado differs from other Afro-Brazilian religious practices like Batuque, Umbanda, and Quimbanda (Gidal 2016, 64-66) where practitioners can establish a musical career as a performer and/or teacher. Indeed, amateur musicians invest in congado for personal and collective devotion, not for prospects of earning potential. Dedicated practice and active involvement in the musical milieu are still necessary aspects of gaining spiritual knowledge, but pedagogy and learning occur in non-professionalized, informal ways rather than in private lessons or in schools with formalized

systems of discipleship (Neuman 1990 [1980]). Younger musicians “learn by doing” congado to produce more efficacious sacred music, to gain prestige, and to ensure their musico-spiritual heritage by transmitting knowledge to the future generations (Prandi 2005, 48; Capone 2010, 200). Thus, just because congado holds little prospects for remuneration does not stop congadeiros from actively seeking out knowledge within an informal pedagogical system to gain competency and prestige.

Another practical reason that explains why congadeiros forgo a formal system for instructing students is that congado is not melodically, rhythmically, and harmonically difficult to learn. For instance, moçambique has only two drum patterns and practitioners and onlookers alike can internalize them quickly. As the rhythmic patterns lend themselves to easy comprehension, it reduces the need for comprehensive notational systems or designated teachers to help facilitate people’s learning. The complexity of the music lies more in the meanings that people attach to such songs, which makes the informal system of collective learning even more necessary for congadeiros to grasp the historical resonances of their ancestral and contemporary songs. Indeed, the collective, informal setting of congado is necessary for pedagogical reasons because it is ensconsed in a matrix of secrecy. The music might be audible and easily learnable to outsiders, but its meanings and secrets must be passed on from generation to generation through closely established relations among the holders and receivers of these secrets. Moreover, the informal setting of congado allows for congado as a canon of knowledge to have flexible, changing contours. As Paul Johnson says, “In theory, secrecy is a social, symbolic, and spatially referenced (‘inside,’ ‘deep,’ ‘under’) frame for experience which is flexible and in itself indeterminate” (Johnson 2002, 79). Thus, congado as a flexible framework allows for secrets to

be transferred pedagogically in such a way as to ensure their enduring longevity as well as their constant transformation.

Rhythms in Context

While the rhythmic patterns, and especially their names, often vary from group to group, they tend to fall under the following categorizations: *marcha grave*, *marcha lenta*, *dobrado*, *marcha repicada*, and *dobrado compassado*. Throughout Minas Gerais, the moçambique group only has two rhythmic patterns: *serra acima* and *serra abaixo*. Likewise, candombe carries only one rhythmic pattern, whose name is also candombe. There is no designated moment to play these rhythms. A captain, also known as a teacher (*mestre*), can choose any one of these rhythms depending on her/his preference in the moment.



Figure 19. The moçambique group from the Arturos community parade around the chapel during their annual festa in devotion to Our Lady of the Rosary, 2014. Photo by author.

The tempo and the speed at which congadeiros walk during the procession largely depend on the tempo set by the congadeiros who play the drums. For example, João Batista Faria the leader of a catopê group in Montes Claros and I stood in a room full of instruments in his home as he played and spoke about the different kinds of instruments in catopê. Pointing to a large drum that was nestled between smaller drums on the upper shelf of an instrument-lined wall, João Batista Faria's towering body drew near to it. His broad hand grasped the mallet and using it, he struck its tanned drumhead multiple times. While doing so, João Batista Faria explained that when playing the *marcha*, "That drum there has to sound first. That is the one that commands

everything. It commands everything about the whole group. The rhythm of the group comes from her [the drum] (Faria 2014).” What João Batista Faria described for catopê also obtains for the other types of congado variants. The drums are often the first instruments to sound and throughout the procession, they command the forward motion of the groups.



Figure 20. Unraveling the animal hide, João Batista Faria talks about how he tans skins so that they obtain the ideal kind of texture and elasticity for durable drumheads.

Because walking and especially dancing energetically while traveling long distances under a frequently blazing sun requires great exertion, a song that has a compact and repetitive structure, along with easy to remember lyrics, makes it easier for people to perform. In other words, the physical stress of performing all day necessitates simple melodic formulae and sonic structures that are conducive to moving within its environment. Often times a soloist initiates the song with a refrain and others respond with the same refrain. Accompanied by dance, the repetition of one refrain for several minutes is a common type of structural form used in congado

songs. Moreover, because the dance steps constantly switch, a short call-and-response structure allows dancers to focus on synchronizing their dance steps with each other.

Not only do congadeiros create music to be flexible in length, but they also benefit from a flexible song structure to improvise or reconfigure lyrics so as to respond to the exigencies of the moment. The plasticity of the song form allows vocalists to interact with changes in any extramusical and/or supernatural factors. While many of congado lyrics, rhythms, and melodies are prearranged to fit ritual purposes, there are also an equal number of songs that are open-ended. Moreover, a person may exercise lyrical creativity by beginning a song with standard verses or with other words as long as those phrases are understood by the rest of the group to index the original song.

The singers need flexibility in the choice of songs and verses to respond to people's changing emotional states as well as evolving contexts. In one instance, music makers might use song to comment upon the arrival of a group to the festa, thus exercising sacred song to signal presence. In another instance, soloists might employ sacred song to heighten the embodiment of divine presence in others. Whether the aim is to engender human-to-human co-presence or human-to-spirit intimacy, practitioners utilize song in contexts of ever-changing dynamics.

The Changing Contours of Candombe

To understand congado as a whole, it is helpful to understand how, at the level of the micro, the individual group encapsulates the world of congado. We begin by addressing the group that is known as the father of congado—candombe. During candombe ceremonies, practitioners carry out rituals in honor of their sacred tambores (drums) and ancestors. This group does not parade

in the processions or in any public rituals, but rather is dedicated to internal, private ceremonies. Even if a group does not carry the name of *candombe*, many groups have *candombe* drums and play them on the Friday night of the *festa*. Thus, while a group can be solely devoted to *candombe*, *candombe* can also be formed when practitioners from other groups, like *congo* and *moçambique*, come together. In these rituals, captains of the groups as well as both women and men in the brotherhood play three *tambores* (*Santana*—the biggest drum, *Santaninha*—the middle one—and *Jeremia* or *Chama*, the smallest one), *guiás* (also known as *chocalhos de cesto*—bamboo hand shakers), and the *puita* (also known as the *cuíca*—a drum played by producing friction with one hand). The players attach the drum to their waist and play it with the hands or drum sitting down. There is only one interlocking rhythmic pattern for the *candombe*. According to Gomes and Pereira, “the drums of *Candombe* call the ancestors and function as intermediary bodies in the interplay between the living and the dead—although visible incorporation does not occur” (1988, 218). During the ritual, the ancestors are said to come down from the astral plane to commune with their friends and families. These processes of remembering through sacred music solidify *congadeiros*’ ties to their African and New World ancestors and create a space of temporal intersection between the past and the present.

Mária Auxiliadora da Luz (Dodora) used to say to me that the groups could play certain musics as long as they were “in the rhythm of *Nossa Senhora*.” To understand what it means for a rhythmic pattern to be divinely sanctioned, one must delve deeper into what is happening rhythmically in the songs. The following transcription derives from a ceremony in which one *candombe* group gifted a set of *candombe* drums to the *moçambique* group *Treze de Maio de Nossa Senhora do Rosário* during a *festa* on May 13th, 2014 that commemorated the abolition of slavery.



Figure 21. Here a candombe group plays music as part of a larger ceremony commemorating the gifting of candombe drums. Just minutes before, the candombe group had presented a set of candombe drums to the moçambique and congo groups Treze de Maio de Nossa Senhora do Rosário. The performance and gifting of drums took place at the annual festa that celebrates the abolition of slavery, 2014. Photo by author.

The following rhythmic transcription of candombe is illustrative of congado in the largest sense because it charts the seemingly straightforward, yet quite complex nature of congadeiros' music making. Perhaps the readers are surprised by the simplicity of each individual part given that they expect an African-derived tradition to be rhythmically dense and complicated. However, to take a step back from thinking about the “simplicity” of the lines can be illuminating. When considering the composite rhythm as a whole, its actual working demonstrates a complexity that is anything but simple. This is especially true if one evaluates congado by its own standards of form and function rather than based upon Western musical standards.

The musical transcription outlines each of the individual parts, but perhaps what is most salient is the composite rhythm that the individual lines form. That is, what the musical transcription aims to demonstrate is that readers might interpret the interlocking rhythms as an “interactive rhythmic feel” (Dudley 1996) rather than as separate lines playing simultaneously. Notice, for example, how the distinct periodicities of the two drumming patterns interlock to create a hemiola. This means that the net result of the drumming has pulses that falls on each eighth note in a steady stream of beats. In many respects, the hemiola creates a sense of embodied entrainment in the practitioner and listener. The patterns are in a triple meter and the drumming pattern of the first candombe drum (Santana) also contains three beats, which means that it takes one measure for the rhythmic cell to repeat. In contrast, the second candombe drum (Santaninha) is also in triple meter, but its pattern has two beats, indicating that it takes two bars to complete the full pattern. The third candombe drum Chama plays the same rhythmic pattern as Santaninha. While the drums all play in triple meter, the different periodicities of the drumming patterns create a hemiola. In this way, the listener embodies the hemiola as a steady stream of pulses. This helps practitioners and listeners alike to sync with the music in an embodied way. Hence, the interlocking rhythmic parts combine to engender a composite, interactive rhythmic feel of steady eighth notes. As Shannon Dudley points out, the phrase “rhythmic feel,” more so than “beat,” suggests the “possibility that many rhythms can combine to produce a distinctive musical sensation” (Dudley 1996, 270). Shannon Dudley further suggests that what is important in measuring music is “the consistent musical logic and composite aesthetic effect of many parts which interact together rhythmically” (ibid., 270). Indeed, the purpose of the musical transcription is not to highlight the independence of the rhythmic parts, but rather show how their imbrication brings about a rhythmic groove that exceeds the sum of its parts.

Figure 22. This transcription outlines the interlocking rhythmic patterns played by candombe percussion players. I derived the transcription from video footage that I took during the May 2014 festa honoring the abolition of slavery. The festa was hosted by the moçambique and congo groups Treze de Maio de Nossa Senhora do Rosário from Concórdia, Belo Horizonte.

Candombe

♩ = 160

Guaiá pattern 1

Guaiá pattern 2

Guaiá pattern 3

Santana drum

Santaninha drum

Chama drum

Composite Rhythm

Another aspect to keep in mind when thinking about the distinctiveness of candombe's rhythm is the *quality* of such a metric pattern. That is, candombe's rhythm is special not solely because the interlocking parts create an overarching aesthetic and rhythmic groove, but also because of the accents that practitioners stress with their hands and the timbres that they sound with the drums. The three drums are pitched very similarly, which means that the resulting

timbre borders on the monochromatic or what I call monosonic. Indeed, the timbral similarity of the drums changes how listeners hear—how they segment the auditory stream into units. When the sounds of the similarly pitched drums combine with the accents produced by the interlocking rhythms, the listener perceives the hemiola at a wholly different level of rhythmic perception—as a steady stream of eighth notes.

In addition to taking into consideration the timbre or quality of the drums' sounds when measuring rhythmic feel, it is also important to pay attention to the notion of rhythmic entry. Perhaps what is most critical in the interlocking percussive parts is not where the pattern starts, but one's relationship to the pattern. There are multiple points of entry into the rhythmic groove. For example, the guaiá player performs three different rhythmic patterns throughout a two-minute song. At three different points, he starts and stops, introducing a new rhythmic variety. Each time that he changes the rhythmic cell, he does not alter the musical flow of the song. In general, candombe practitioners place a high premium on creating a sense of continuous, non-interrupted rhythmic flow despite changes in rhythmic structure. The temporal shifts allow for multiple points of entry into the rhythmic cycle, which reinforces the notion that congado, as its core, is composed of variations performed in a larger framework of cyclical continuity.

Verses in Congado

Tirando os cantos (literally—bring/take out the songs) is a musical activity where a vocalist initiates a song with a short, intoned phrase and the other participants respond intermittently with a refrain or harmonized vocables. They extend their refrain/vocables for several seconds or minutes before the return of the leader's verses. At different moments during the procession, for

example, another leader assumes responsibility and delivers intoned speech—mixing traditional verses with spontaneous lyrical creation. The other participants answer the soloist with either the same or fresh lyrical material. Many songs contain well-known verses to be recited, while others are open-ended and allow for improvisation. Congadeiros, for example, repeat the refrain, “This rosary is mine/This rosary is mine.” (“Este rosário é meu/Este rosário é meu.”) as soloists create verses to respond to the moment. These types of exchanges continue for several minutes until transitioning to a new song. Hence, congadeiros favor the simplicity of the lyrics for the breadth of creativity and improvisation that they allot.

It is helpful to look at an example of a popular song sung by congo groups to see one of many possible ways of structuring the vocal lines. This song, “Ave Maria, Ave Maria,” is characteristic of the verse/refrain format where the soloist and chorus sing the same melody.

Figure 23. This transcription captures a moment from the festa de Nossa Senhora do Rosário at the Jatobá brotherhood when the congo group from the Arturos community paraded in the procession.

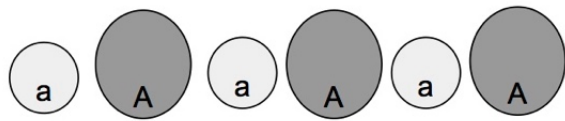
Guarda de Congo dos Arturos
Festa de Nossa Senhora at Jatobá

♩ = 120

The musical score is written for five parts: Soloist/Chorus, Dancers, Patangome, Contragüia, and Guia. It is in 4/4 time with a tempo of 120 beats per minute. The Soloist/Chorus part is in treble clef and contains the lyrics 'A - ve Ma - re - - ei - - a'. The Dancers part is in bass clef and consists of a sequence of 'x' marks representing steps and kicks, with the text 'Step step step kick step step step kick' below it. The Patangome, Contragüia, and Guia parts are also in bass clef and consist of sequences of 'x' marks representing rhythmic patterns, with accents (>) placed above some of the marks. The score is divided into two measures, each ending with a double bar line and repeat dots (:).

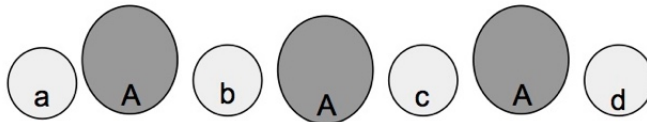
In other songs, the soloist will sing an initial phrase and then the chorus will use it as the refrain while the soloist transitions to new lyrical areas in the verses while still maintaining the original melodic contours. There is also a call-and-response format where the soloist and chorus exchange lines in rapid succession that are distinct from one another. Thus, the following chart summarizes the different kinds of song form structures in congo.

Figure 24. This chart illustrates the most common song forms in congo.



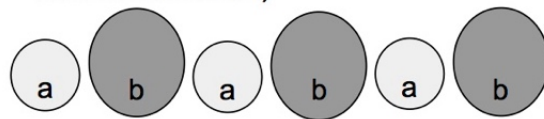
a= Soloist sings the verse.

A= Chorus responds with a verbatim refrain.



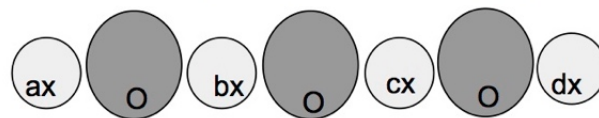
a and A = Verse initiated by the soloist and repeated verbatim as a refrain by the chorus.

b, c, d= Verses sung by the soloist (different texts with same melodic contours.)



a= Soloist sings unique, but unchanging verse.

b= Chorus sings unique, but unchanging refrain.



ax, bx, cx= Changing verse that soloist sings.

O= Chorus repeats refrain distinct from verse.

With regard to moçambique, the standard verse/refrain format that the groups usually abide by is a refrain first sung by the soloist and then taken up by the chorus, followed by the soloist interpolating improvised verses with different melodies and lyrics in between the repeated choruses. Unlike congo, where the call-and-response between the soloist and chorus takes the same lyrical and melodic form, congadeiros involved in moçambique prefer to alternate vocables in the chorus with improvised lyrics in the solo section. However, when engaging in a quick solo/chorus exchange, it is not uncommon for the two entities within a moçambique group to either sing the same phrase or to exchange short phrases—the chorus maintains its phrase while the soloist changes its periodically. An interview excerpt from one of my interviews with Ricardo Cassimiro das Dores Gasparino helps to clarify the song forms used in moçambique.

Ricardo Cassimiro das Dores Gasparino: With the songs, you go versing, placing verses. There is music where you put in verses, which is versed music. And there is normal music, where you don't put verses. It's direct. Like this, [Ricardo sings] “Êhhh warbler, this ankle shaker makes me cry/Êhhh warbler, this ankle shaker makes me cry.”⁶ It is direct.

Now, [Ricardo sings] “Holy Mary, Holy Mary, Holy Mary/They made a house of gold for the Virgin of Nazareth/She accompanied the black people/The angel of knowledge/Cry ingoma.”⁷ [Ingoma has various meanings: from referring to the preparation of instruments to referring to practitioners as a collective group.] Do you see? I put the verse in. Now the answer is: “Ave Maria, Ave Maria, Ave Maria.” You accompanied the the retrieval of the queens (*busca das rainhas*), right? You can leave from this gate here and arrive at the house of the other queen merely with this song. You go placing verses. Verses on top of verses. If I sing to you, “Ave Maria, Ave Maria, Ave Maria.” This is the refrain. This is what you are going to repeat as a dancer. And now I will put verses in. “Holy Mary, Holy Mary, Holy Mary/They made a house of gold for the Virgin of Nazareth/She accompanied the black people/The angel of knowledge/Cry ingoma.” Now you repeat, “Ave Maria, Ave Maria, Ave Maria.” Then I sing: “There in the sky there are seven stars that illuminated the light of day/These same seven stars illuminated the Rosary of Mary/Cry ingoma.”⁸ Did you understand?

⁶ “Êhhh sabiá, essa gunga me faz chorar/Êhhh sabiá, essa gunga me faz chorar.”

⁷ “Ave Maria, Ave Maria, Ave Maria/Fizeram casa de ouro para Virgem de Nazaré/Ela acompanhou os negros/O anjinho de saber/Chora ingoma.”

⁸ “Lá no céu têm sete estrelas que clareiam à luz do dia/Estas mesmas sete estrelas clareiam o Rosário de Maria/Chora ingoma.”

Genevieve Dempsey: What I am understanding is that there is a refrain and a verse. The verses continue changing while the refrain remains stable. Are all the songs in this verse/refrain format?

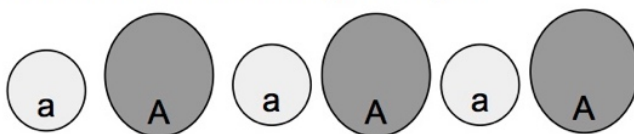
Ricardo Cassimiro das Dores Gasparino: No, not all of them. In congo, for example, the songs of congo are more of música direito. One doesn't include a verse. At the time when congo puts in a verse, it's called *embaixada*. The captain stops the group and does an embaixada, right? This moment is for putting in the verse. One time I adapted a song from moçambique to be used in congo. Likewise, there is congo music that you can adapt for moçambique. It's just different; a different way of singing.

Genevieve Dempsey: How is it different?

Ricardo Cassimiro das Dores Gasparino: The rhythm of congo is one thing; in moçambique it's another. In moçambique one sings a song generally slower. In congo, it's faster. You noticed this. There isn't a way of singing the same thing. You have to place the song in the rhythm of whatever you're singing. If you are singing in congo, you have to accelerate. If you are singing in moçambique, you have to step on the brake a little bit. [We laugh.] If you were going to sing "Ave Maria, Ave Maria" in moçambique, it's totally slower. (Cassimiro das Dores Gasparino 2014)

Figure 25. This chart presents the most common song forms sung in moçambique. In an interview with Ricardo Cassimiro das Dores Gasparino, he illustrated the song forms with the accompanying musical examples.

Música Normal for Moçambique

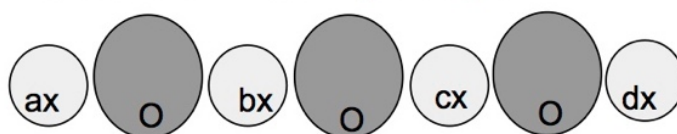


a=Soloist sings the verse.

A=Chorus responds with a verbatim refrain.

Verse and Refrain: “Êhhh sabiá, essa gunga me faz chorar/Êhhh sabiá, essa gunga me faz chorar.”

Música Versada for Moçambique



ax, bx, cx= Changing verse that soloist sings.

O= Chorus repeats refrain distinct from verse.

Verse 1: “Fizeram casa de ouro para Virgem de Nazaré/Ela acompanhou os negros/O anjinho de saber/Chora ingoma.”

Refrain: “Ave Maria, Ave Maria, Ave Maria.”

Verse 2: “Lá no céu têm sete estrelas que clareiam à luz do dia/Estas mesmas sete estrelas clareiam o Rosário de Maria/Chora ingoma.”

Refrain: “Ave Maria, Ave Maria, Ave Maria.”

The accompany chart outlines what Ricardo Cassimiro das Dores Gasparino sung to me. What is striking about Gasparino’s songs is the extent to which music and language interact to reinforce

structures of meaning about sacredness, collectivity, closeness, and salvation. Not only do they work together to produce meaning, but in both song forms, music and words blend together to move the *congadeiros* forward in the procession. One is iterative and mantra-like in its repetition, and the other is additive in the sense that practitioners can layer verse upon verse to coordinate with the timing of the ritual. As such, *congadeiros*' lyrics are both meaningful—relaying messages of spiritual devotion—and functional—affording a kind of flexibility to the movement and timing in sacred ceremonies.

The Practice of Compact Meaning

The recurring motifs in the verses and their continuous repetition are also useful for disseminating crucial semantic meanings in concise, straightforward ways. Conveying history and feeling in few words becomes a type of cipher that can only be decoded in the present-day by insiders intimately familiar with a specific historical legacy. The song lyrics encode a remembered past in a succinct and comprehensive fashion. Through the singing of these words, they become internalized and inscribe meaning onto the body (Reily 2001).

An example of how *congadeiros* relate significant meaning in concise ways is when the group *Moçambique de Nossa Senhora da Providência do Reino de Nossa Senhora do Rosário* departed the 2014 festa of the *Reino de São Sebastião de Nossa Senhora do Rosário*. Singing and dancing, they intoned:

Se a morte não me matar, tamborim,
If death does not kill me, tamborim,
Se a terra não me comer, tamborim,
If the earth does not eat me, tamborim,
Ai, ai, ai, tamborim,
Ai, ai, ai, tamborim,
Eu tenho de chorar com'ocê tamborim.
I have to cry with you tamborim.

Figure 26. This song was sung by the group Moçambique de Nossa Senhora da Providência do Reino de Nossa Senhora do Rosário upon departing from the festa.

In a song of farewell, the congadeiros sang this song as they briefly filed into the small space of the chapel. One captain approached the altar, knelt, kissed the banner, and rose to make the sign of the cross. Another captain spun, hopped, and performed the pounding movements required to sound the gungas, although gungas were absent from his ankles. The third captain intoned the verses, singing as he turned his body and raised his baton (*bastão*) towards the two rows of congadeiros playing their instruments. Fourteen congadeiros were present in this group, but the sound was intense as the rhythms of the surdão (big drum), gunga, patangome, and *xequerê* (shekere) intersected.

The congadeiros played and sang, gradually filing out of the church, while never turning their back on the altar as a sign of reverence to Nossa Senhora. As the group moved to leave, the three captains drew near to the perpetual queen, Efigênia de Paula Ward. Two captains exchanged words with the perpetual queen as the other jumped, danced, and shook the gungas on his ankles. One by one, each captain took the hand of the perpetual queen in his hand and made the sign of the cross. One captain intoned a final verse over the intersecting rhythmic patterns and the group departed as the perpetual queen waved a white handkerchief.

Singing “Se a Morte Não me Matar, Tamborim” at the moment of departure was timely because the music symbolizes both lament and strength. The tamborim (tamboril) is a small,

square, double-sided, tanned percussive instrument that represents the spiritual authority of congado leaders. In the song, the captain's expressions of uncertainty and fear are directed at the tamborim, which becomes a kind of intimate friend. Thus, the captain consciously chose the song about the tamborim to index a sense of sadness now that the festa had concluded. This anecdote demonstrates how congadeiros, at critical contextual junctures, choose particular musics to sound sentiments of intimacy and longing.



Figure 27. Presiding over the festa, congo queen Efigênia de Paula Ward waves her handkerchief at the congado groups as they depart. Queen Efigênia was the matriarch of the moçambique group of São Sebastião do Reino de Nossa Senhora do Rosário. She passed away in November 2015. Photo by author, 2014.

Congadeiros often use explicit lyrics to express their devotion to the saints and ancestors, but there are also instances where congadeiros' devotion is less embedded in the denotative

meaning of the words and more in the spirit of such declamations. In the following anecdote, congadeiro Antônio Márcio dos Santos (Márcio), whose danced in congado for thirty-four years since the age of five and has been a captain—segundo mestre—in the Arturos congo for fifteen years, discusses how the grammatical specificity of certain words used today in congado got lost in translation during the torturous Middle Passage (Conrad 1986). Despite not knowing their significances, he affirms that they continue to preserve the sacredness of the Bantu language, Kimbundu, from Angola.

Márcio dos Santos related,

They came from Africa, from defined regions and brought to Brazil. Each black person from a different region. Thus, there are places where the language that predominates is Kimbundu. Each region has a place that still preserved that language. And ours was Kimbundu. Like I said, because of where people were coming from. As the time passed, passed, passed, this became lost. Thus, in our community we speak a few words. We sprinkle in (*salpicar*) some words. Although we don't know the significance, we know that it's sacred. To us, that is sacred. My ancestors wouldn't have sung something without *sentido*—feeling/meaning. Knowing that it was sacred, they passed it to my father, who passed it to me because it's sacred, and I am going to pass it to my daughters. (dos Santos 2014)

According to Márcio dos Santos, the sacrality of the words resides in how and when their deployed, not necessarily in the words' content when they are used. It is in this sense that congado lyrics can be seen as vehicles for conveying *sentido*—feeling and meaning.



Figure 28. Depictions of enslaved Africans that came from the Congo and Benguela. From the iconography collection in the Biblioteca Nacional do Brasil (National Library of Brazil).

While Márcio spoke about how practitioners deploy Kimbundu words for their general significance rather than specific meaning, in a similar way, congadeiros speak about how they

deliberately attempt to obscure specific meanings when they sing to cloak the more consequential aspects of their words. That is, meanings emerge from the deployment of words and it is the responsibility of congadeiros to shroud the esoteric nature of their words by obscuring them. Hence, a religious ethos built on secrecy requires a sonic ethos of commensurate portion. In the following excerpt, Antônio Eusebio de Oliveira specifies the conditions and actions necessary for preserving marujada—one of the seven different types of congado groups—by preserving its discursive subtlety:

Now let's talk about the marujada itself. Like I started to tell you yesterday about the melody, the time, the hour in which we sing the melody, these kinds of thing. The marujada has a history of its own. It has a history because to initiate the allegory of the festa, you have to have a song in that moment. The music with which we begin the marujada is: "And the dawn is coming, to break the day." Because just yesterday you saw us sing, but you didn't understand anything. The lyrics, you didn't understand. Why didn't you understand? Because the marujada has something like this. We sing a bit muddled. For example, I sing the following, [Sings without clear diction.] We sing quite muddled to give meaning to the marujada. But we know what we are singing, those who are singing know the lyrics exactly. For example, "And the dawn comes, to break the day, the Virgin Mary is our guide." This music is the beginning of the marujada. Did you understand? Because the dawn breaks the day. And if there weren't the breaking of the day, we wouldn't be able to dance. Because from the moment that the dawn breaks the day, we begin to carry out the festa. Thus, returning back to the beginning, we sing half muddled to give meaning to marujada. We cannot sing the lyrics legibly because if we did, it loses its meaning and the whole world begins to sing the music of marujada. The marujada is something very discrete. (Antônio Eusebio de Oliveira 2014)

Antônio Eusebio de Oliveira's remarks have several points of contact with the way Gomes and Pereira describe the meaning behind congado lyrics. They write, "We can affirm that two languages exist in this context: the clear, univocal speech, of the literal sense (exoteric part—*parte exotérica*) and the multivalent reference, from the ambiguity that one reads in the magic—who sings—and in the mythic analysis—who interprets (esoteric part—*parte esotérica*)" (Gomes and Pereira 1988, 180). Hence, bringing together perspectives—Oliveira's attempt to obscure the words and Gomes and Pereira's exoteric/esoteric notion of intelligibility and secrecy—point to

the notion that deploying the oral word through song has the power to not only convey or reflect the sacred, but most importantly, to make the sacred possible.

Drawing on Gomes and Pereira's notion of lyrical multivalency, the esoteric part of congadeiros' lyrics could not have been made more evident than in a religious visitation to the house of Antônio Maria da Silva, capitão regente of the Arturos community, during the Arturos' festa de Nossa Senhora do Rosário in 2014. I began filming this particular musical moment as the royal court, along with the drummers and dancers, descended the hill and moved around the sacred poles before coming to rest in front of Antônio Maria da Silva's house. Antônio Maria da Silva, dressed in uniform and wielding his baston, began to intone verses to which the chorus responded in antiphony. As Antônio Maria da Silva sang, he often pointed his finger and raise his hand towards the heavens, adding gestural texture to the sonic moment. His stern, concentrated look during the moments when the chorus sang the refrain would transition into earnest, but labored singing when he recommenced with the verses. Even though he sat in a wheelchair, he looked noble and stately in his elder years. In the moment, I was pleased to capture such a beautiful moment of communion and respect between a beloved capitão and his congadeiros. However, as the video camera continued recording, I became momentarily disappointed upon realizing that his words were being overpowered by the drums and thus shrouded in their intelligibility. In fact, the recording seemed to be of little use precisely because the musical event cloaked the legibility of the call-and-response. Yet, in revisiting the ethnographic video, it occurred to me that the efficacy and meaning of congadeiros' song reached far beyond the lyrics. Because congadeiros have engaged in this call-and-response exchange countless times, they already knew its textual meaning. This performance was less about expressing feeling through clear meaning and more about performing a sacred tradition

that would be individually and collectively inscribed onto congadeiros' bodies. Hence, from congado songs that require explicit enunciation of the words to ones performed in an indistinct and messy manner, congadeiros endeavor to perform meaning as much through lyrical expression as through musical embodiment.

Closing Thoughts

From the interlocking rhythms of congadeiros, to the back and forth of their call-and-response song forms, to the separate, though unified exchanges at *cheganças*, congadeiros express feelings of collectivity through embodied rhythms and interactions. I argue that making music together in particular ways socializes congadeiros into experiencing sound in particular ways. In this respect, I draw from Greg Downey's work on how the physical training involved in moving and music making can actually change how people perceive and behave in their everyday lives (2002). Like Greg Downey's research on *capoeira*, an Afro-Brazilian martial arts and musical tradition, it is evident from my own work with congadeiros that they perceive their sense of self and the supernatural in accordance with how they shape and re-shape music. That is, congadeiros' sense of self and the supernatural, and indeed their very senses, are intertwined with the physiological effects that music has on the body. In many respects, this chapter has sought to illustrate that the selective musical inputs of congadeiros' ceremonies make congado a unique and embodied aesthetic. In fact, congadeiros' music making goes beyond merely being an embodied aesthetic; congadeiros use music for self-fashioning. When congadeiros stop to greet each other during the procession, they are not only saying something about the need to spiritually recognize one

another. They are also saying something about how they would like to be treated in society—as visible social actors whose personhood is acknowledged and accepted.

As noted in the preceding discussion, clearly not all encounters between congadeiros are auspicious, but perhaps this is even more telling. In a world where the forces between good and evil are palpable, the fact that congadeiros go to great lengths to protect themselves from spiritual and physical harm, shows the extent to which congadeiros desire to forge passages across the spiritual, physical, and sonic landscapes that unfold before them. Moreover, they not only chart these paths, their bodies and minds also become transformed along these paths. I argue that congadeiros engage in self-fashioning through the very deployment of sound, movement, and spirituality. Indeed, practitioners strategically construct their identities by carefully fashioning how they see themselves in terms of race, ethnicity, class, gender, and religion.

Chapter 2

The Borders between Self and Other

From 1947 to 1987, penned with the written word and disseminated through print media, the Catholic Church in the state of Minas Gerais told a particular kind of congado history. Divulged under the aegis of the Catholic Church, the *Gazeta de Minas* propagated their political views about congado on numerous occasions as well as prescribed regulations about how congadeiros ought to behave in public contexts. A Portuguese man by the name of Antônio Fernal founded the newspaper on September 4, 1887 in Oliveira, a small town located in the southwest of Minas Gerais. In 1889, the name changed to *Gazeta de Minas* and in 1947, the newspaper was donated to the diocese. Over the course of four decades, the diocese maintained the newspaper until it transferred hands again in 1987 to a private owner. The newspaper's sale to a private owner decisively disassociated the newspaper from the Catholic Church in Oliveira but, during that forty-year period, the two were inextricably linked. The ecclesiastical authorities saw the newspaper as a critical tool for publicizing and propagating their opinions about sacred and secular matters—and congado did not escape its discursive reach.

On September 13, 1959, an article in the newspaper praised the congado groups for undertaking their religious festivities without a trace of religiosity. This article esteemed the local congado groups for bringing happiness, entertainment, discipline, elegance, and proper behavior to the folkloric festivity. While the article championed the local groups for their self-restraint, merriment, and lack of religious symbols, the article denounced non-local congado groups for disrupting the festivities by parading with religious symbolisms and “mixed” songs interlaced

with religious sayings. The piece asserted that the outsider groups not only came to agitate the proceedings, but that their status as uninvited guests made their disturbances all the more egregious.

To address the disorder caused by the parade's unexpected religiosity and unruliness, the article called for a regulation of the festivities in terms of the days, hours, places, and people. According to the article's author, the festivity upset the economy by allowing so many blue-collar workers several days off of work. The author asserted that not even the civic or religious festivities received as much attention and time—implying that these more “esteemed” events warranted even greater pomp and circumstance. Then, it moved from citing economic considerations to alleging that the drumming of the *congadeiros* negatively impacted people's health. The article stated that the jumping and dancing throughout several days of the *festa* exhausted the already undernourished and weak youth. Moreover, the author claimed that the drumming and singing impaired people's nerves and inhibited them from resisting the music. In the sentences that follow, the article returned back to the initial argument: the festivity desperately needed vigilant oversight to ensure that the “profane ceremony” was purged of its religious symbols. The article ended by asking if it were really such a great demand to request that flagrant abuses of people's health and religion be corrected?

The article merits being translated and analyzed below because it provides clear insight into how the Catholic Church, or at least one influential member of the Catholic Church, viewed *congado* in the mid-twentieth century. The article reads,

Em vias de solução o problema máximo da cidade

Afim de solucionar o angustioso problema de energia elétrica da cidade, esteve em Oliveira, dia 9, atendendo a um pedido do sr. Prefeito, por intermédio do deputado Nelson Leite,

te, o dr. José Machado Silva, representante da CEMIG. Na reunião a que compareceram homens de projeção e ligados à vida industrial e comercial da cidade, interessados que

seja na solução do problema, o sr. Prefeito fez a exposição da situação, declarando que talvez, no Estado, não exista outra cidade com a situação idêntica e que, se a seca perdurar, estamos sujeitos a ficar sem energia e consequentemente sem água, motivando o fechamento dos estabelecimentos de ensino. Santa Casa, paralisando também, todo o movimento que depender de força. Sem dúvida, a situação é sem precedentes.

Dizendo-se disposto a dar um ponto final à questão, o sr. Prefeito passou a palavra ao dr. José Machado Silva, que esclarecendo e respondendo as perguntas formuladas, deixou bem claro o seguinte: se Oliveira entrar com 5 milhões de cruzados, a CEMIG resolverá definitivamente o problema, cujos detalhes serão depois discutidos.

O sr. Prefeito, convocando no dia seguinte a reunião no dia seguinte levou ao conhecimento dos presentes que o Conselho Geral da CEMIG, confirmando a proposta, solicitava uma Comissão do Município para estudos das futuras negociações, ficando esta assim constituída: Francisco Cambráia Campos, Paulo Pr de Carvalho, dr. José Maria Lobato, dr. Isaac Resende.

Todos os presentes acharam viável a proposta da CEMIG e se mostraram dispostos a colaborar sem medir esforços, visando o bem de Oliveira no futuro. Esperamos que todas as oliveirenses de boa vontade, que amam a sua terra acima de tudo, sem olhar o aspecto político-partidário, pois, o momento não o permite, dêem o seu apoio decidido e incondicional a este movimento que, em boa hora, está sendo encetado pelo governo do Município, cujos benefícios todos os oliveirenses vão usufruir.

«Gazeta de Minas» que vem acompanhando de perto todos os entendimentos, dará novos detalhes em sua próxima edição sobre o rito que por certo será firmado.

«Assine Gazeta de Minas»

«CONGADO»

Interessantes desfiles — Notas dissonantes de «ternos» de fora — Urge regulamentar a festa folclórica — Apelo às autoridades

Toda Oliveira teve dias de reboliço e alegria com o antigo «Congado». Justiça se fez: o «Congado» organizado nesta cidade se apresenta muito, correto, atendendo às exigências cobradas pelas autoridades, não saiu com símbolos religiosos nem consentiu em rebuses de bebidas e comodidades. Havia garbo e disciplina.

Os desfiles foram muito interessantes, tais as indumentárias apresentadas, ritmo de tambores, danças e canto.

O povo apreciou, como gosta de toda festa e divertimento.

Notas dissonantes

Infelizmente apareceram «ternos» de outros lugares que vieram abater-se, pois contrariando as determinações dadas aqui, trouxeram símbolos religiosos, cantos de mistura com dizeres religiosos e até uma lenga-lenga de forasteiro dando «palpites» e fazendo curvaturas de escravo, beijando os pés do sr. Prefeito. Simplesmente ridículo. Até certos gestos foram desairosos nas danças. Foi uma nota dissonante.

Oa responsáveis pelo «Congado» daqui devem providenciar para que não se repitam tais coisas.

Além vierem atrapalhar... e não foram convidados.

Urge uma regulamentação

A festa folclórica precisa ser regulamentada, quanto aos dias e horas, lugares e pessoas.

Não parece bem tactos dias consecutivos tomados, atrapalhando o trabalho da cidade, afastando centenas de operários dos serviços, numa época tão difícil para a economia de todos.

A terminada em grande parte

abandonou os Grupos Escolares. Nenhuma solenidade festiva civil ou religiosa jamais tomou tantos dias de trabalho.

E' preciso que se regulamente o horário. Não é possível ferial tantos dias.

Nem todo mundo tem saúde para suportar aquela maratona de tambores e reco-reco, durante o dia e pela noite a dentro. E os doentes que passam mal?

Apelo às autoridades

A presença de menores nas queelas danças e festanças deve ser objeto da atenção do Sr. Juez de Menores. Como é possível que meninos fiquem pulando quase todo o dia e pela noite dentro até 23 hs ou mais? Alguém deve velar pela saúde dos meninos. Conta que há uns bem sub-alimentados e fracos.

Merece uma atenção especial a presença de meninos no «Congado».

Também não parece bem que os tambores façam aquela barulheira pela noite a dentro, durante 7 dias seguidos. Aquilo é demasiado e nem todo mundo tem nervo bom para resistir a aquele batucque, assim seguidamente.

Também é preciso vigilância para que em festa profana não sejam permitidos símbolos religiosos nas danças. Foi o que aconteceu nos «ternos» de fora que nos visitaram... atrapalhando a ordem das festas domésticas.

Será exigir muito desejar que as autoridades, além de coibir os abusos e contravenções acima referidos, limitassem tempo e local, em horas determinadas?

Assim Oliveira teria toda a festa sem senões.

ALARGAMENTO

Ja estão sendo iniciados os serviços de alargamento da Rê-de Mineira de Viçosa e, ao que parece, desta vez será terminado. Dentro da sede de nosso Município a nova linha irá cortar, inclusive, o Bairro Nossa Senhora das Graças, indiscutivelmente um bairro de moradores pobres. Muitos deles terão seus terrenos, ou melhor, seus pequenos lotes e suas casinhas demolidas por exigência da construção. Sabemos, perfeitamente, como consequência lógica da situação financeira daqueles moradores, que as casinhas foram feitas com um supremo sacrifício. E agora, que já têm um teto, lá vem o progresso da nação aniquilar o progresso do indivíduo. Não queremos mudar o



A nossa intenção é outra. Apenas queremos esclarecer e insistir que aqueles moradores merecem e precisam de uma justa indenização capaz de lhes permitir adquirir novas lotes e construir novas casas. O povo oliveirense não pode nem deve ficar de braços cruzados assistindo à demolição dos bens de seus irmãos de cidade. Temos de nos unir nesta hora e apelar para as autoridades do Município, do Estado e mesmo ao Supremo Poder da Nação. Que nossos representantes na Assem-

si a causa de tantas correligionários. Não se trata somente de política, mas também de humanidade. Aquela pessoa lá do Bairro das Graças precisa de alguém para defender os seus direitos e compete a nós, seus patrícios, a defesa de seus interesses. Esta praga lança hoje esta nova campanha e apela pela boa compreensão de todos os oliveirenses. Esperamos também que o Dr. Hugo, engenheiro responsável pela construção, na Residência de Oliveira, ouça e atenda as nossas reivindicações

Ao povo católico de Oliveira

Diante da insistente e repetida investida das seitas protestantes, nesta cidade, nos últimos tempos, e tendo em vista a minha grave responsabilidade de pároco, a quem foi confiado o zelo pela manutenção da Fé Católica, na qual se criou, se desenvolveu e se mantém a Paróquia, tenho o sagrado dever de alertar o povo e acautelá-lo contra a insidiosa propaganda da heresia protestante que tenta levantar sua tenda entre nós.

E' bem de ver o fanatismo dos invasores da Fé, quando ao apelo do Pai Comum da Cristandade — S. S. o Papa João XXIII, pela unidade cristã, com grande e emocionante acolhida no mundo, eles pretendem dividir, desassociar, irritar e enganar a boa gente oliveirense, quando devemos nos unir, associar e aumentar o flame da caridade contra as forças do mal e do materialismo dissolvente que infecta o mundo.

Não somos um povo pagão. Temos a felicidade e a honra de nascermos em pais cristão, criados e educados na Doutrina de Nosso Senhor Jesus Cristo. Temos pregado a Palavra de Deus, Administradores e cooperadores das graças do Evangelho sempre tivemos. Orientadores de Bem e da Verdade, combatendo o vício e o erro, nunca nos faltaram. Não somos um povo que não conheça a Bíblia e os Evangelhos. Em memorável «Semana Bíblica» iniciamos o conhecimento mais intenso e profundo dos Livros Santos e até hoje não arrefeceu o trabalho da divulgação dos Evangelhos. Não tem faltado a assistência espiritual aos nossos paroquianos, em hora nenhuma, mesmo quando o sacrifício é imposto.

Nossa Paróquia mantém viva a Fé em Cristo e na Igreja, e está em defesa permanente na preservação dos bons costumes e da Fé.

A vida paroquial não tem outro escopo senão promover a glória de Deus e a salvação das almas.

Este é o único fim da nossa missão em Oliveira.

Fique o povo da nossa Paróquia em estado de alerta.

Não nos convém só a defensiva na Fé Católica. Absolutamente não. Temos que nos colocar na ofensiva que é imperativo de todo cristão.

E' dever nosso na atual situação:

Abstermo-nos de tomar parte nas palestras protestantes.

Não aceitarmos livros, revistas, folhetos da heresia, mesmo os que são apresentados a título de Saúde e Arte, pois contém o vírus do erro.

Não colaborarmos em tudo que, direta, ou indiretamente pode favorecer a divisão ou dúvida da Fé.

Promovermos uma cruzada de orações pela unidade do Cristianismo, segundo as instruções do S. Padre, João XXIII e conversão dos hereges.

Organizarmos nos em «exercício pacífico do apostolado leigo, pelo conhecimento da Religião, com maior profundidade e exerce-lo em nosso meio, ensinando, orientando, esclarecendo, favorecendo a união de todos em torno de Jesus Cristo e sua única verdadeira Igreja Católica Apostólica Romana. Sendo Cristo um só, uma só a sua Igreja, as demais são simulacros.

Manutenção firme nas convicções católicas, o que representa o caráter individual e fidelidade à Santa Religião.

Nunca cedermos em nossos princípios católicos e sermos mul caridosos nos meios que nos levem à verdadeira vida cristã.

Como filhos amorosos e protegidos de Nossa Senhora intensifiquemos a nossa piedade, veneração e devoção à Mãe de Deus que foi, é, e será sempre Aquela que esmagou a cabeça da serpente, mesmo que venha com o nome de Protestantismo, inimigo de suas glórias e grandezas.

Enfim, sejamos todos dóceis e obedientes às diretrizes da Santa Igreja, máxime, agora, na renovação do espírito cristão, pela estrema e trabalho missionário.

Unidos em Cristo, por Deus e pela salvação dos nossos irmãos separados e pelos infelizes, ajudados pela graça divina perseveremos na Fé Católica.

Oliveira, 12 de setembro de 1959 — Festa do Santo Nome de Maria.

Monsenhor Leão Medeiros Leite
Vigário de Oliveira

Maurício Chagas Bicalho no F.M.I. e no Banco Mundial

Nomeado o ilustre mineiro Governador-Adjunto dos importantes organismos internacionais de crédito

com a mudança da linha da R. M. V. Temos tido as melhores informações a seu respeito e contamos com a sua colaboração nesta campanha que ora lançamos em benefício de uns poucos que entregaram os seus bens a tróco do progresso de nossa Pátria. Por que então não lhes dar a compensação? E ou não é justo? Que respondam os nossos leitores e amigos. As providências a serem tomadas devem partir, inicialmente, da Prefeitura Municipal. O Sr. Francisco Campos deve entrar em contato com os Deputados Nelson Leite e Paulo Pinheiro Chagas e pedir a esses ilustres oliveirenses que se movimentem imediatamente afim de que os nossos conterrâneos não sofram as consequências do progresso e da

Por atos do Presidente da República acaba de ser nomeado Governador-Adjunto do Fundo Monetário Internacional e do Banco Mundial o sr. Maurício Chagas Bicalho, presidente do Banco do Brasil.

No primeiro posto, o ilustre mineiro substitui o sr. Roberto de Oliveira Campos, ex-presidente do Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento Econômico e, no segundo, o sr. Maurício Chagas Bicalho desempenha alta função anteriormente exercida pelo sr. Garrido Torres.

Essas designações para servir em dois importantes organismos de crédito internacionais consagram a carreira do sr. Maurício Chagas Bicalho que, merço do seu devotamento e competência, tem assumido destacadas posis-

Figure 29. Article about congado from the Gazeta de Minas. September 13, 1959.

Gazeta de Minas

Ano VXXII—Oliveira, 13 de setembro de 1959, N. 469

<Congado>

Interesting Parades—Dissonant notes from outside groups. Urging the regulation of the folkloric ritual—Appeal to the authorities

All of Oliveira had days of agitation and happiness with the old Congado.

Justice has been done: the congado that was organized in this city performed in a correct fashion, attending to the applicable demands of the authorities. It didn't go out into the streets with religious symbols nor did it consent to the abuse of drinks or eating places. There was elegance and discipline.

The parades were very interesting, such as the uniforms, rhythm of the drums, dances, and song.

The people appreciated it, as they like all festa and diversion.

Dissonant Notes

Unfortunately, groups appeared from other places that came to annoy because, running contrary to the given determinations here, they brought religious symbolisms, mixed songs with religious sayings and even endless talk of the outsider giving unrequested opinions and doing the slaves' curtsy, kissing the feet of the mayor. Simply ridiculous. Even certain gestures in the dances were inappropriate. It was a dissonant note.

The people responsible for the Congado here should see to it that these things do not repeat themselves.

Moreover, they came to disrupt things and they were not invited.

Urging a Regulation

The folkloric festival needs to be regulated in terms of the days and hours, places and people.

It does not seem a good idea to have so many consecutive days being taken,

disrupting the work of the city, keeping away dozens of blue collar workers in a time so difficult for the economy of everyone. The young people in many respects abandoned the school groups. Not a single solemn civic or religious festive occasion ever took so many days of work.

It is also necessary that they regulate the hours. It is not possible to vacation for so many days.

Not everyone in the world has enough health to stand that endless noise of drums and *reco-reco* [a percussive scraper] during the day and throughout the night inside. And the sick people that begin to not feel well?

Appeal to the Authorities

The presence of youth in those dances and festive occasions should be an object of attention for the Judge of the Youth. How is it possible that children go jumping and dancing almost all day and throughout the night until eleven at night or later? Someone should look after the health of the children. It's been noted that there are some kids well under-nourished and weak.

There deserves to be some kind of special attention paid to the children in Congado.

Also, it does not appear to be a good idea that the drums make that noise inside and throughout the night during seven consecutive days. That is too much and neither does everyone have the good nerve to stand that endless batuque—[drumming].

Vigilance is also necessary so that the profane festa does not permit religious symbols in its dances. This is what happened in the groups that came from afar to visit us. They disrupted the order of the domestic festas.

Is it much of a demand to desire that the authorities, in addition to preventing the above mentioned abuses and misdemeanors, limit the time and place to certain hours?

In this way Oliveira would have the whole festa without any problems.

In many respects, this article detailed the inhospitable and marginalizing environment in which congado has historically developed over the twentieth century. Indeed, the attempt to reduce congado to agitation and diversion was a strategic maneuver by the Catholic Church to delegitimize congadeiros' religious ceremonies. The Catholic Church's fear that congadeiros threatened the social order helps to explain why the public processions were the targets of social and religious disciplining. The Catholic Church viewed the congado community as competition for the religious attention of the city's inhabitants and thus sought to discount congadeiros' practices. By placing doubt in their minds concerning the legitimacy of congado as sacred devotion, they succeeded in monopolizing citizens' sense of what constitutes a religious community. In this way, print technology helped to bring about or, at the very least, crystallize the linkage between congado and folklore. In many respects, the newspaper claimed that congado was folkloric, noisy disorder that only aggravated people's health. Similarly, the Catholic Church extended "praise" to the groups from Oliveira for avoiding any display of religious symbols while demonizing the non-native groups for having disrupted the festa with their religious paraphernalia. By doing so, the newspaper set up an evaluative system where non-religious spectacle was prized over religiously-infused performance. The reality is that the *Gazeta de Minas* refused to see congadeiros in the same light that they saw themselves: as devotees of Nossa Senhora.

This excerpt from the *Gazeta de Minas* requires us to consider the extent to which print technology enabled the Catholic Church to represent congadeiros in ways that were beyond

practitioners' control. We must also take into account the extent to which the newspaper greatly influenced non-congadeiros' perceptions of the festa. I argue that the Catholic Church "represented" congadeiros through print technology in ways that congadeiros did not even "represent" themselves. Moreover, the newspaper contributed to the formation of longstanding social opinions about congadeiros that would irrevocably misconstrue their true intentions and identities.

The Catholic Church administered the *Gazeta de Minas* beginning in 1947, but for sixty years prior to this period of ecclesiastical leadership, secular social critics had already leveled slander, prejudice, and discrimination against congadeiros in a marked public, visual, and vocal fashion. The following newspaper article demonstrates the unapologetic animosity that certain critics had towards congadeiros.

correspondentes da GAZETA

a mira de pôr seus leitores ao cor-
do das novidades sensacionais e de
interesse geral, concernentes à União,
Estado e aos districtos e municípios
estas, organizou esta folha um se-
leccionado corpo de correspondentes
dolares e telegraphicos.

do Rio, José Pinheiro Chagas do
reio da Manhã" enviará á Gazeta
noticias mais importantes da semana.
Noticias hebdomadarias de Bello
horizonte ser-nos-ão endereçadas pelo
jornalista Ferreira de Car-

em Passa Tempo, o dr. Wander-
de Andrade é o correspondente des-
jornal. Representa a Gazeta, no
ado, o sr. Americo Paulinelli.

REISADO

ão obstante o clamor bradado
tra o cerimonial africano do con-
o pelas nossas vias publicas,
tar da prohibição diocesana que
ão ficou insensível aos rogos
negros daqui, ainda este anno
zou-se o congado.

Durante tres dias viu-se !Oliveira
minada por uma algaravia ensur-
cedora, partida dos terços dos ne-
os que saracoteavam dansas lithur-
es, de um barbaro e horripilante
al hottentothico, ou de Moçambi-

ia é a razão da noticia.

importante transacção

Pelo coronel Ignacio Diniz Filho
vendida ao coronel Geraldino
raia do Nascimento o grande
decimento agro pecuario, fa-
da Serra, deste municipio.

electores especialmente con-
vocados pelo Directorio e Cama-
ra desta cidade, reuniram-se no
e indicaram para vereador es-
A o sr. Francisco Bernardes Cos-
para juizes de Paz, os srs. Aristi-
Costa, cap. Alvaro Vieira Men-
e José Bernardes Costa.

para a formação da chapa de vere-
res geraes, foi o Directorio incum-
das indicações, de accordo com
representantes dos districtos.

do dia 15, reunidos, Directorio e
representantes dos districtos, ficou a
pa assim constituida:

el. Americo Ferreira Leite

el. José Martins Borges

el. Cicero Ribeiro de Castro

el. Djalma Pinheiro Chagas

MERCADO DE OLIVEIRA

ca mineira, kilo.	58000
duzia.....	5600
ho, 45 kilos.....	285000
os bois, cento.....	2005000
ar mascavo 15 kil.....	105000
mascavinho.....	85500
branco, kilo.....	15000

Para a convalescença

Usando um remedio e aliment-
to poderoso, apressou e as-
segurou a convalescença.

Curado da gravissima enfermidade
palustre que, por mais de dois meses,
me conservou no leito, estava de tal
maneira fraco e esgotado que era com
grande dificuldade que me levantava e
conseguia dar alguns passos; temia ago-
ra mais pela minha saúde, durante a
convalescença, do que no periodo agu-
do do accesso palustre, tal era o meu
estado de fraqueza.

Fezmente, o meu medico assistente
indicou-me o «poderoso fortificante»
«Jodolino de Orh», e, com o uso desse
remedio, que é, ao mesmo tempo, um
grande alimento, consegui restaurar mi-
nhas forças, sem recahir. Estando certo,
porém, de que unicamente ás proprie-
dades curativas do «Jodolino de Orh»
devo meu prompto restabelecimento,
achando-me agora forte e tendo recu-
perado alguns kilos de peso, faço publi-
ca essa cura para que della possam ou-
tros colher os resultados, que assegura
o uso do «Jodolino de Orh».

Jacintho Dias Junior

Recife, 14 de junho de 1911.

Vende-se em todas as drogarias e bo-
as pharmacias.

VOMITOS DEPOIS DE COMER
Dilatação do estomago

Declaro que, com o uso das «Pímulas
Antidyspepticas do Dr. Oscar Heinzel-
mann, me curei, em 9 dias, de grave
enfermidade do estomago, da qual pa-
decia ha muito tempo, tendo sempre o
estomago dilatado e vomitos depois de
cada comida; não encontrava medica-
mento para minha doenca, tendo feito
uso de quasi todos os medicamentos
que se annunciam nos jornaes.

Completamente bom e com excellente
saúde, venho fazer publico meu agra-
decimento ás «Pímulas Antidyspepticas
do dr. Oscar Heinzelmann», proclman-
do-as inigualaveis para as doenças do
estomago.

Tte. Carlos Andrade

Firma reconhecida.

OBSERVAÇÃO UTIL: As verdadeiras
Pímulas do dr. Oscar Heinzel-
mann têm os vidros em «Rotulos
encarnados»; sobre os «Rotulos» vae
impressa a «marca registrada» O. H.
composta por «Treis Cobras Entrelaça-
das».

Inappetencia — Suores no-
cturnos — Desapparecimento
das regras — Febre todas as
tardes — Doenças do peito.

Comecei por sentir horror á comida,
nada havia que me appetecesse; Dor-
mia extraordinariamente e sempre me
despertava cansada e sem animo. Sua-
va extraordinariamente e tossia baste-
tante ao deitar-me; pouco tempo de-
pois, comecei a sentir muito calor no
rosto, todas as tardes. Devido a esses
incomodos e á falta de fome, fui
emmagrecendo e ficando muito pal-
lida. Começou a cair-me o cabelo e
desappareceram-me as regras, que em
mim vinham todos os mezes regular-
mente. Para encurtar a narração de mi-
nha doenca, direi que chegou um dia em
que não pude mais levantar-me, estava
gravemente atacada de tuberculose. Per-

como os remedios anteriores, seria um
allivio passageiro e a sua alegria foi im-
mensa quando, sentindo-se cada dia me-
lhor, começou a ter confiança no reme-
dio que fazia desapparecer seus soffri-
mentos. Conseguida a cura em pouco
tempo, tomei como obrigação e reco-
nhecimento enaltrer publicamente as
preciosas Pímulas do Abade Moss.

Candido R. Garcia

Construtor

Petropolis, 15 de janeiro de 1915.

Vende-se em todas as boas pharma-
cias e drogarias.

Instalação hydro-electrica

Attendendo a uma consulta feita
pela nossa ediffilidade, relativamente
às condições da instalação electrica
local, foi a usina do Jacaré inspecio-
nada pelo reputado engenheiro dr.
Henrique Betex.

O illustre tecnico, de regresso da
usina, trouxe lisongeira impressão so-
bre o estado da mesma, não obstante
carecer de certos reparos, embora de
pequena monta.

A' Pedidos

De ordem do sr. presidente faço
publico que de conformidade com o
que ficou deliberado na assembleia
de electores, reuniu-se o directorio
com a presença dos representantes
dos districtos, coronel Joaquim Affon-
so Rodrigues que apresentou uma
acta do directorio do Carmo da
Matta, coronel Americo Paulinelli,
representante do Japão, coronel
Mario Campos, representante de S.
Francisco e directorio de Sant'An-
na, estes ultimos por delegação, fi-
cando assentada a seguinte indica-
ção para a formação da chapa de
vereadores geraes:

Cel. Americo Ferreira Leite

Cel. José Martins Borges

Dr. Cicero Ribeiro de Castro

Dr. Djalma Pinheiro Chagas

Oliveira, 15 de outubro de 1918.

Francisco Bernardes Costa
Secretario

EMPRESTAM-SE a dis-
tinctas freguezas, figurinos
de ultima novidade, che-
gados agora do Rio.

CASA CASTRO

Parece incrível, mas é a verdade, que
o nosso povo não pensa no grande
perigo da doença, praga segura da nossa
raça, que se conhece pelo nome de Tu-
berculose. E, o peor do caso é que cada
tuberculoso é um foco de infecção para
todos que estão saos; pois, a sciencia
reconhece-a como um dos peiores males
no grau de contagio. A Emulsão de
Scott, pelas suas virtudes therapeuticas
e reconstituintes, emprega-se com resul-
tados excellentes, como remedio auxiliar
contra esta temivel doença.

ANNO E MEIO DE TORTURAS!
TOMAVA TODO O ROSTO!
CURA ADMIRAVEL!

Estado do Rio Grande do Sul—Julio
de Castilhos—Rinção do Padilha, 15 de
Outubro de 1909.—Ilmo. sr. pharma-
ceutico e chimico João da Silva Silveira
—Pelotas.

Acceptae os meus sinceros cumprimen-
tos: E-me orato, levar ao vosso



GRANDE E REAL

Tendo os propri-
CASTRO adquirido
gocio do finado capi-
ro, continuam fazen-
quidação por preços
alcance de todos.

Convidam, por isso, os
lhes uma visita, certos de
praras com pouco dinheiro.

CAS

BOTELHO & CHAGAS

Dr. Randolpho Fernandes das Chagas
Dr. Joaquim Botelho Martins

SOCIOS SOLIDARIOS

Rua do Rosario n. 79—Rio de Janeiro

Commissões, consignações, advoca-
cia em geral, procuratorios, ope-
rações bancarias, compra e venda
de titulos, recebimento de juros e
dividendo, administração de bens.

Tem representantes nos diversos
centros commerciaes.

Nesta Praça de Oliveira é repre-
sentante o sr. ARMANDO PINHEI-
RO CHAGAS.

Drs. Moura Brasil e

Gabriel de Andrade

OCCULISTAS

Largo da Carioca n. 8, sobrado

RIO DE JANEIRO

O ADVOGADO

DR. ARTHUR DINIZ

Encarrega-se de todos os nego-
cios concernentes á sua profissão,
mediante modicos honorarios.

OLIVEIRA

A "Sul A

Figure 30. Article about congado from the Gazeta de Minas. October 20, 1918.

10/20/1918

The Reisado

Despite the clamor hailed against the African ceremony of congado in our public roads, in spite of the diocesan prohibition, [a few words were omitted here because the newspaper was damaged] congado still happened this year. During three days one saw Oliveira dominated by a deafening commotion, originating from the black people praying the rosary that danced liturgical dances, in a barbarous and horrifying ritual, and of Moçambique.

And the festa is such that one is not able to be unaffected. Barbaric songs fill the ears of all the people and the ceremonial clothing, which is horribly inauthentic, goes beyond the picturesque and is just horrible. This is the reason of the notice.¹

The article's words were anything but accurately descriptive. Disseminating callous descriptions of congado—"African," deafening commotion, barbarous and horrifying ritual, barbaric songs, inauthentic and horrible—were meant to ostracize and "other" congadeiros. On many fronts, the writer conveyed hostility and antagonism in the hopes of socially stigmatizing congadeiros' sacred rituals. Given the widespread prejudice launched by both the Catholic Church and the wider society, it is no wonder that congadeiros' presence in public spectacles of devotion has been continually misunderstood and misrepresented over the centuries. While it is difficult to gauge the extent to which this article negatively impacted congadeiros' sense of worth, mobility,

¹ **O reisado**

Não obstante o clamor bradado contra o cerimonial africano do congado pelas nossas vias publicas, apesar da proibição diocesana..., ainda este anno realizou-se o congado. Durante três dias viu-se Oliveira dominada por uma algaravia ensurdecadora, partida dos terços dos negros que saracoteavam danças litúrgicas, de um bárbaro e horripilante ritual hotentótico, ou de Moçambique.

E a festa é das taes com que não se pode ficar insensível. Cantos barbaros enchem os ouvidos de toda a gente e as roupas do ceremonial, travestis horríveis, saem do pittoresco e vão ao horrível.

Está é a razão da noticia.

and status in society, it is helpful to step back and consider how congadeiros might have responded to such social stigma.

Congadeiros and Their Sacred Orality

While the engine of expression for the Catholic Church and social critics was print technology, congadeiros responded with the sound of sacred orality. That is, rather than employ newspapers or songbooks as their objects of private and public devotion, congadeiros used sacred music as their medium of survival. Paul Connerton's work provides a point of departure for thinking about how musical and social habits come to be understood by people via bodily practices rather than textual forms (Connerton 1989, 95). Congadeiros have resisted the church's efforts to sever the link between religiosity and congado through the very performance of sacred song. In this way, the bridge between what practitioners do musically and how it signifies spiritually resides in how they manipulate meaning within sonic rituals.

Moreover, congadeiros place significant emphasis on showing great devotion in their musico-spiritual practices not only because they feel called to do so, but also because the Church's denial of their religiosity turned their devotion into a political question. Thus, on the one hand, practitioners' offerings of gifts and songs to Nossa Senhora indexes dedication and devotion to her divine existence. On the other hand, their sacred music is also a response to earthly stimuli, especially judgments issuing from the Catholic Church. Congadeiros' devotional practices are both internally driven by the search for transcendence as well as externally informed by historical pronouncements made by the Catholic Church. I contend that it is the simultaneity of fulfilling ritual obligations to Nossa Senhora do Rosário and counteracting repressive measures by the Catholic Church that helps to explain why devotion holds such incantatory power in the lives of congadeiros.

The following discussion explains the centrality of devotion in congadeiros' rituals and outlines how its presence has often transformed congado into a site of contestation between practitioners and other social actors. To understand the centrality of devotion to congadeiros, I draw from an interview that I conducted with Geraldo de Assis Queiroga during the loud drumming, excited whistle blowing, and uninhibited singing at the festa de Nossa Senhora do Rosário of the Jatobá brotherhood. In only a few words, Geraldo de Assis Queiroga, a member of the Guarda de Moçambique Treze de Maio de Nossa Senhora do Rosário for twenty years, summarized the festa at its core.

Genevieve Dempsey: What are the elements of the festa de Nossa Senhora? What are the most necessary elements of the festa?

Geraldo de Assis Queiroga: The dancing, the adoration of Nossa Senhora do Rosário and the other saints also. Santa Aparecida, Santa Efigênia, Santa das Mercês, and it goes on. São Benedito. But it is truly about devotion. It is truly about devotion. To have faith. (Assis Queiroga 2014)

According to Geraldo de Assis Queiroga, the most evident purpose of the festa is to express devotion by dancing and singing adoration to the saints. In this way, music becomes a medium for framing their ritual actions as devotion and faith.

This chapter is devoted to understanding how people use devotional music, implicitly and explicitly, to struggle for religious freedom and civil liberties. The Catholic Church has targeted congadeiros relentlessly for religiously aberrant behavior. Likewise, the general public has and continues to racialize congadeiros' bodies and beliefs in negative and depreciative ways. Afflicted from multiple angles, congado has come to represent a vehicle of religious, racial, and gendered empowerment for its practitioners. In this way, congadeiros are motivated to search for religious, gender, racial, and civic freedom by means of expressive creativity.



Figure 31. Congado dos Pretos em Morro Velho [Congado of the Black People in Morro Velho]. Photo by Augusto Riedel (1836-ca 1877), 1868. Courtesy of the iconography collection of the Biblioteca Nacional, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Congado is a practice of oral history par excellence. Through the eminent orality of sacred song and spoken word, practitioners transmit a history that they claim as their own. Indeed, from generation to generation, words unwritten but not unsung have narrated the social history of congadeiros. Congadeiros not only express their religious convictions through the body and the voice; their somatic and aural gestures serve to undermine the Catholic Church's discourse that congado lacks religiosity. In fact, practitioners use music to show that their actions, at the core, are eminently devotional.

Devotional practices are inextricably bound up with sacred objects in congado because their materialities enable practitioners to express meaning behind their music. Congadeiros strap *gungas*, welded metal cans filled with seeds, to their ankles and vigorously stop in sync to the interlocking rhythms of the group's other percussive and melodic instruments. Captains lead their constituencies with the wave of their sword (*espada*), baton (*bastão*), and the beat of the *tamboril*—a small, double-sided rectangular drum. The sword and *tamboril*, present in congo, and the baton, present in moçambique, signal a captain's preeminent rank among the group's members. The *gungas*, baton, sword, and *tamboril* represent the mediums of devotion that congadeiros use to respond to the Catholic Church's medium of expression—print technology. In fact, the *gungas*, baton, and *tamboril* are more than aesthetic objects; they are religious statements about the materiality of congadeiros' devotion. The rosary represents another devotional object essential to congado imagery. Congadeiros wrap the rosary around their bodies before carrying out rituals. Strung in a criss-cross fashion across the front and back of their upper torso, the rosary visually signals to other members and onlookers that their utmost devotion is to Nossa Senhora do Rosário, a saint that originates from European religious iconography.

This chapter, then, is about faith and devotion because when practitioners carry out devotion, they merge music, conviction, prayer, and healing. In particular, I examine the attributes of congado devotional practices to demonstrate the ways in which practitioners harness embodiment and intimacy to counteract the delegitimization of their practices by the Catholic Church. Congadeiros' devotional practices are central to their ongoing existence as a group because they occupy a place at the juncture of several religious and social cohorts—the congado community, the Catholic Church, and society in general.

Congadeiros perform devotion through singing (*cantoria*). Respect and faith not only suffuse congadeiros' interpersonal relationships as they carry out devotional practices, but they also make these devotional practices meaningful for practitioners. Hence, respect and faith represent indispensable attributes of congadeiros' devotion. Practitioners also structure their devotional practices in such a way as to bridge the divide between an internal, intimate space and an external ritual space. Hence, devotion becomes both personal and collective, private and public.

The Abolition of Slavery

In addition to carrying out the festa in honor of Nossa Senhora, many groups also undertake The Festa of Liberation ("Festa de Libertação") to commemorate the abolition of slavery in Brazil on May 13, 1888. The festa de Liberation draws attention to congadeiros' continued struggles against racial discrimination. Moreover, congadeiros' acts of remembering stand in contrast to the acts of forgetting perpetuated by the Brazilian government. For example, in 1891, in the wake of the abolition of slavery, Rui Barbosa the minister of finances mandated that large amounts of archival documents pertaining to slavery be destroyed. They purportedly reasoned that by erasing the physical evidence, it would relieve Brazil from feeling national shame (Lacombe, Silva, and Barbosa 1988). In essence, the Brazilian government attempted to erase slavery from memory by erasing it from written history. The destruction of documents has meant that oral, written, and iconographic traditions have become even more critical in reconstructing the past (Almeida 1942). One of the ways in which congadeiros remember is by undertaking the festa in honor of abolition.

For two annual days of observance around May 13th, congadeiros invoke Dona Isabel Imperial Princess of Brazil (1846-1921), one of their longstanding protectors. Practitioners credit her with not only signing the declaration of emancipation, but for also being the driving force behind ensuring that the abolitionist movement occurred. Princess Isabel served as the Regent of Brazil while her father Emperor Dom Pedro II oversaw the empire in Portugal. Depending on the community, the festa of liberation is celebrated in different ways. For instance, the Arturos community calls it the “Reinadinho,” the little Reinado, because the festa is similar to the one that they celebrate for Nossa Senhora, but it only spans the weekend. Moreover, the festa of liberation converges and diverges with the nature of festa in honor of Nossa Senhora in the sense that while it also celebrates the congo mass in the main church of Contagem (*igreja matriz*), it adds another component: the historical re-enactment of the signing of the “Golden Law” (Lei Áurea) that abolished slavery in Brazil.



Figure 32. Photo of Princess Isabel (1846-1921). Courtesy of the iconography collection in the Biblioteca Nacional, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.



Figure 33. The official document stating the abolition of slavery in Brazil, May 13, 1888. Courtesy of the iconography collection in the Biblioteca Nacional, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Black King and Queen Coronations: The Aesthetics of Function

Dating back to the sixteenth century, the coronation of kings and queens (*coroação de reis congos* or the *coroação de reis e rainhas*) is a ritual central to the functioning of congado. The

coroação de reis congos originally occurred within the brotherhoods of the black people (*irmandades dos homens pretos*) or the black religious confraternities (*confrarias religiosas negras*) like the Irmandade de Nossa Senhora do Rosário or of other black saints like Santa Efigênia or São Benedito. Hence, not only were members united by their core devotion to a single saint, but those participating in the *irmandades dos homens pretos* were free and enslaved people of various African origins. In this way, they forged bonds based upon where they came from and what experiences they faced in Minas Gerais. Ripped from Africa, forced through the Middle Passage, and confronted with the hardships of enslavement in Minas Gerais, members had to reorient their postures, behaviors, expectations, and cosmovisions of social life in Brazil during the sixteenth-century. The brotherhoods not only prescribed proper ways to show devotion to the saints, but they also acted as a social safety net by organizing burial ceremonies to ensure the safe passage of their souls to the next life.

To make sense of these new social systems, to remember their ancestors, and to cope with the (mis)understandings that issued from the collision of cultures, they constructed syncretic musico-religious expressions that coincided with their new cultural, social, political, and economic realities. One way in which they maintained a sense of autonomy and connection to their past experiences was by means of the coronation of queens and kings. Thus, at the same time they venerated Catholic saints, they also continued rituals that they remembered from Africa. In many respect, the coronation of black kings and queens was life affirming for practitioners because it gave them the ability to participate in the making of their own identities. While the freed and enslaved black people saw the coronation as cultural, religious, and symbolic resistance, the Portuguese perceived it as an innocuous and fleeting channel for black expression. Consequently, they allowed black people to celebrate these African-derived rituals

with music and dance across Minas Gerais as well as throughout Brazil. Thus, the Irmandade de Nossa Senhora do Rosário was an institution that allowed the Portuguese and the Catholic church control over congadeiros' actions, while simultaneously serving as a creative outlet for these very practitioners.



Figure 34. Carlos Julião. “Coroação de uma Rainha Negra na festa de Reis.” [The coronation of a black queen in the festa of the kings and queens.] Brazil, painted during Julião Carlos’ lifetime (1740-1811), watercolor on paper. In *Riscos Iluminados de Figurinhos de Brancos e Negros dos Uzos do Rio de Janeiro e Serro do Frio*, Iconografia C.I.2.8 in the collections of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

The first coronation of congo kings and queens is believed to have been realized in the church of Nossa Senhora do Rosário in Recife in 1674 (Cascudo 1980, 243). According to Saul

Martins, André João Antonil registered the first coronation of queens and kings in Minas Gerais when he lived there in 1705-1706 and later published the findings in 1711 in his book, *Culture and Opulence in Brazil*.²

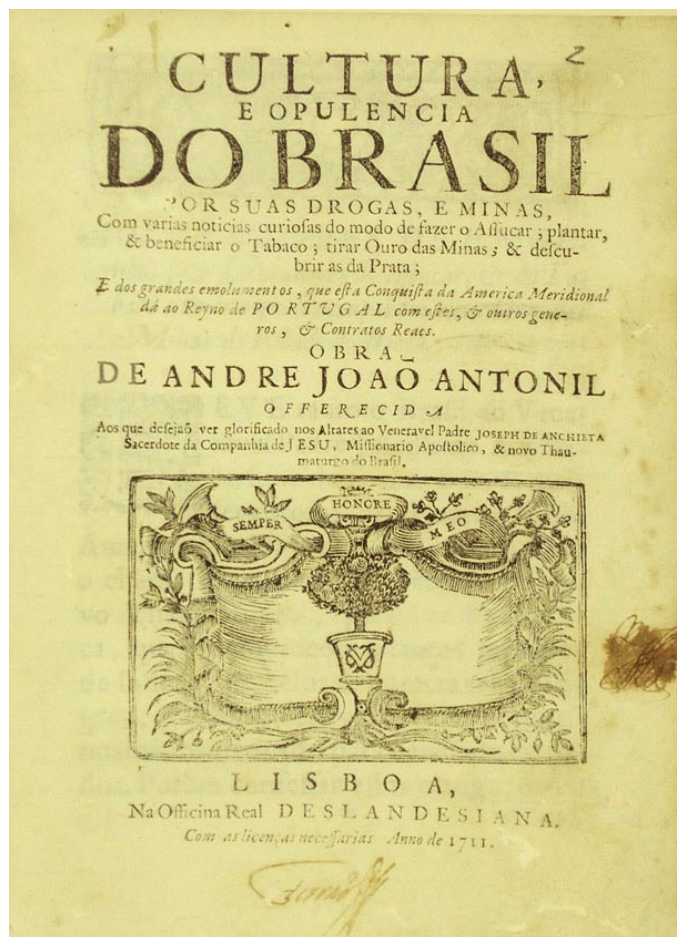


Figure 35. *Cultura e Opulência do Brasil* (Culture and Opulence in Brazil) by André João Antonil; title page, 1711. Courtesy of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

² *Culture and Opulence in Brazil, from the point of view of its agricultural commodities and mines: with various curious news about the way to make sugar, to plant and to manufacture tobacco; to extract gold from the mines; and to discover those [mines] of silver; and of the great earnings that this Conquest of Southern America gives to the Kingdom of Portugal with this these, and other agricultural goods, and Royal Contracts. [Cultura e opulência do Brasil, por suas drogas e minas: com várias notícias curiosas do modo de fazer o Açúcar, plantar e beneficiar o Tabaco; tirar Ouro das Minas; e descobrir as da Prata; e dos grandes emolumentos que esta Conquista da America Meridional dá ao Reyno de Portugal com estes, e outros generos, e Contratos Reaes.]*²

The election of the royal court, common throughout Brazil during the colonial period, has often viewed ambiguously by scholars and practitioners alike because while it allowed the blacks to practice their own culture, it also re-inscribed the apparatuses of control within slavery (Soares 2009). Likewise, the ambiguous nature of the ceremony arose from the fact that while it served as a space for the cultivation of devotion to the saints, it also served to mute Afro-Brazilians' expressive practices. The Portuguese and the Church permitted slaves and freed black people to carry out their African-derived traditions for a few days of the year in order to appease them. They hoped that the black people would refrain from contesting society's highly unequal and unethical system of citizenship. As an Italian Jesuit living in Brazil during the seventeenth century, André João Antonil, once advised the slave and industry owners with regard to their orientation toward black festivities:

To totally deny them their festivities (*folguedos*), which are the only alleviation from their captivity, is to want them to be disconsolate and melancholic, of short life and health. Thus, the senhores must not be afraid to let them create their kings and queens, to sing and dance honestly for a few hours, during a few days a year, and to make themselves innocently happy in the afternoon after conducting, in the morning, festas of Our Lady of the Rosary, Saint Benedict, and of the patron of the mill's chapel. Without expenses on the part of the slaves, the master, in his generosity, may help the judges of the festa and give them some prize for their continued work. Because if the men and women judges of the festa needed to spend their own money, that would be the cause of many inconveniences and offenses to God, for being few those who can legally help. (Antonil 1711, 28)³

³ Negar-lhes totalmente os seus folguedos, que são o único alívio do seu cativo, é querê-los desconsolados e melancólicos, de pouca vida e saúde. Portanto, não lhes estranhem os senhores o criarem seus reis, cantar e bailar por algumas horas honestamente, em alguns dias do ano, e ao alegrarem-se inocentemente à tarde depois de terem feito pela manhã festas de Nossa Senhora do Rosário, de São Benedito e do orago da capela do engenho, sem gastos dos escravos, acudindo o senhor com sua liberalidade aos juizes e dando-lhes algum prêmio do seu continuado trabalho. Porque se os juizes e juízas da festa houverem de gastar do seu, será causa de muitos inconvenientes e ofensas de Deus, por serem poucos os que podem licitamente ajudar.

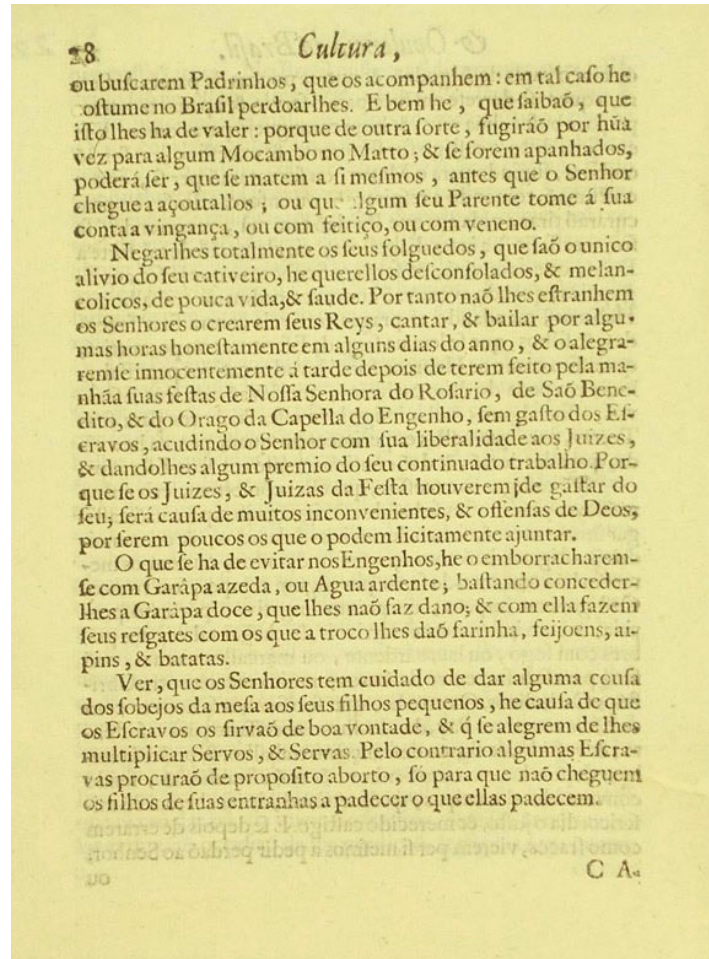


Figure 36. *Cultura e Opulência do Brasil (Culture and Opulence in Brazil)* by André João Antonil; page 28, 1711. Courtesy of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

While the coronation of black kings and queens were once considered by the ruling elite to be innocuous festivities of black devotion that merely served to reinforce the dominant system of slavery, the blacks perceived their rituals within the irmandades differently. Despite the seemingly totalizing control of the Portuguese and the Catholic Church, freed and enslaved blacks succeeded in constructing rituals that spoke to their own experiences of intercultural contact between European, African, and New World modalities. They created syncretic forms in

their new surroundings, but they also earnestly held on to traditions that had been central to their lives and/or their ancestors' lives in Africa. As Núbia Gomes and Edimilson Pereira write,

[The coronation of the kings of the Congo] was a form of outward maintenance of a social organization of black people, a survival tool that transformed into a mythic foundation. In the absence of their original society, where the kings had a real function of leadership, the black people began to see the “kings of the Congo” as intermediary elements for dealing with the sacred. (Gomes and Pereira 1988, 182)⁴

Even today, the kings and queens remain the most revered participants in congado as they embody both the totality of the African nations as well as that of the celestial kingdom.

The members of the brotherhoods, moreover, found ways to persuade the authorities to allow them to create musical festivities outside the days of the festa (Tinhorão 1972, 47). Thus, congadeiros have inherited a deep and resonant musical tradition, in part, because their music was played not only during religious festivities, but also throughout the year. Nonetheless, according to Gomes and Pereira, the brotherhoods' influence over the freed and enslaved peoples' lives was so pervasive and totalizing that it never truly allowed African-derived religiosity to flourish to the extent that it did in the Northeast of Brazil (Gomes and Pereira 1988, 20). Perhaps Gomes and Pereira portray the varying expressions of African-based manifestations throughout Brazil, but perhaps “flourishing” is an inaccurate ruler of measurement when gauging the levels of African-derived traditions. Perhaps the black Catholicism in Minas Gerais was more interculturally mixed and less “African,” but the fact that congado persisted *despite* such pervasive influences from the Portuguese and Catholic Church demonstrates the extent to which congadeiros have tenaciously struggled to survive by changing their relations to musical and

⁴ [A coroação de reis de Congo] era uma forma de manutenção aparente de uma organização social dos negros, uma sobrevivência que se transformou em fundamentação mítica. Na ausência de sua sociedade original, onde os reis tinham a função real de liderança, os negros passaram a ver nos “reis de Congo” elementos intermediários para o trato com o sagrado.

cultural synthesis. Just because congadeiros' rituals are perhaps more subtly "African" than those from the Northeast does not mean that their homage to their ancestors is anything else meaningful. As Gomes and Pereira say in another passage,

The voice of the tambores (drums), prohibited in the interior of the churches, sounded in the streets, expressing in its own way the invocations to the saints. They were the saints of the Catholic hagiology deployed in other meanings, coated in a mythic conception that referred to the intimate murmur of the ancestors.⁵ (ibid., 92)

Regardless of the extent to which congado demonstrates "African retentions," congado remains meaningful to practitioners because it articulates who they are. By stating that congado encapsulates the musico-religious practices of a community of disenfranchised Afro-Brazilians living on the margins of society, I mean that congado speaks to the social values and ideologies of congadeiros that are informed by, but also go beyond, phenotype and demographics. Congadeiros are saying something not only about the particular social values that they hold; they are also saying something about the ideologies that they wish to mobilize. Thus, congadeiros participate in the making of sacred music because they believe it to transform their dispositions from worldviews into reality.

Roman Catholicism Versus Folk Catholicism

Perhaps one reason why congado is so much more central to congadeiros' lives than the official Catholic Church is because since the time of the Brazilian colony, Afro-Brazilians mineiros have

⁵ A voz dos tambores, proibida no interior das igrejas, soava nas ruas, expressando ao seu modo as invocações aos santos. Eram os santos da hagiologia católica desdobrados em outras significações, revestidas da concepção mítica que remetia para o murmúrio íntimo dos ancestrais.

worshipped the divine primarily in lay contexts. That is, *Roman* Catholicism in Minas Gerais has largely been channeled through *folk* Catholicism since the mining production began. In the eighteenth century, the Portuguese government curtailed the presence of the institutionalized Church in order to limit the clerical influence that came from the convents and monasteries. Thus, without the Church's ubiquitous presence, brotherhoods took on prominent roles in the social and religious functioning of people's lives. Because the brotherhoods were so fundamental to people's daily lives—ensuring proper birth and death rites and everything in between—membership in the brotherhoods was seen as necessary, albeit voluntary. Brotherhoods decided who belonged within their organizations depending on one's "racial" identity—with individual categories being white, *pardo* (lit. grey—also known as mulatto—a mix of black and white), and black. Thus, wealthy white people, both men and women, tended to belong to the Brotherhood of the [Holy] Sacrament (Santíssimo Sacramento), while black people belonged to the Brotherhood of the Rosary of the Black People (Irmandade de Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Homens Pretos).

This information suggests that, beginning in colonial times and continuing today, *congadeiros*' understanding of religiosity has been learned through a lay institutional framework. That is, *congadeiros* and their ancestors have tended to perceive sacred meaning in terms of non-clerical dynamics as opposed to ecclesiastical ones. As Marco Aurélio Luz posits, the centrality of the brotherhoods to the history of Brazil resides in its "fight to occupy a urban social space capable of guaranteeing the group cohesion necessary for its existential affirmation, the constitution of its identity, and the continuity of black cultural values in our land" (Luz 2000, 343). Because *congadeiros* have often approached religiosity through such a lay lens, it has created a constant sense of independence from and interdependence with the Catholic Church. To see how far back this relationship of independence/interdependence goes, it is helpful to look

at a piece of Brazilian colonial music from the nineteenth century.

According to archivists at the Museu da Música de Mariana (Museum of the Music of Mariana), the lyrics of the following document is attributed to *congadeiros* while the accompanying music, is attributed to composer's José Maurício Nunes Garcia's mass in E-flat major. A few factors corroborate the hypothesis that this piece dates from the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth century. First, Nunes Garcia lived between 1767 and 1830, which means that the mass likely circulated throughout the main religious centers of Brazil during this time. The lyrics also speak of an emperor, most likely Dom Pedro I who declared independence in 1822 from Portugal. The markings on the double-sided page, moreover, are characteristic of the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth century.

Given these considerations, it is plausible that *congadeiros* were responsible for penning lyrics to coincide with a particular part of Nunes Garcia's Catholic mass. While undoubtedly conceivable, it is nonetheless important to keep in mind that the double-sided document was unaccompanied, which makes it difficult to ascertain its relationship to other materials. Were these lyrics and music part of a larger document that did not survive? Moreover, while the text on one side and the music on the other side were likely penned in conjunction with one another, one cannot be certain of their explicit correspondence. What was the logic to these two sides for practitioners? Thus, the musical document as fragment presents challenges for understanding how it is situated within the wider context of its day. Nonetheless, as Philip V. Bohlman succinctly states, "Fragments also facilitate connections across difficult borders" (2008, xxxiii). In many ways, this score speaks to a number of illustrative issues regarding appropriation and mediation between folk and official Catholicism. The archival evidence is fragmented, but it still hints at the semblance of a whole. One might posit that *congadeiros* invented the lyrics and then

set the lyrics to a melody from Nunes Garcia's mass. This act of creative appropriation signals that congadeiros were not intimidated from appropriating music commissioned by the Portuguese Catholic Church and performed in the context of an official Catholic mass.

Rather than creating songs in isolation to broader musical and religious social agents and contexts, congadeiros demonstrated their interest in producing music that dialogued with them. Indeed, congadeiros' act of appropriation of music from the mass and their creative synthesis of text and melody shows the extent to which congadeiros were keenly informed of composers' works commissioned by the Portuguese Catholic Church. In fact, they were probably exposed to Nunes Garcia's work via their very participation in the brotherhoods. Thus, what is particularly revealing about this scenario is that congadeiros' contact with the official Catholic Church, and the works commissioned by it, came via the lay brotherhoods. In other words, lay not official Catholicism mediated congadeiros' encounter with ecclesiastical dogma. This meant that, in many respects, congadeiros used creative agency and expression to take charge of their own cultural reelaborations. What the following document shows, then, is that these two communities—the congadeiros and the official Catholic Church—were coeval and overlapping at the level of the brotherhood. The lyrics are:

Figure 37. Lyrics written by congadeiros and set to music from José Maurício Nunes Garcia's mass in E-flat major, late eighteenth to early nineteenth century. Courtesy of the Museu da Música de Mariana, Minas Gerais.

Esta coroadado esta coroadado:
este nosso Imperador
*This is the crowned one, this is the crowned one:
this is our Emperor*

Com a coroa na cabeça:
que lhe deu Nossa Senhora
*With the crown on his head:
that Nossa Senhora gave him*

Figure 37. (Continued)

Este nosso Imperador:
ele é homen não é menino
This is our Emperor:
he is a man, not a child

Comeu um leitão asado:
bebeu um frasco divininho
He ate a roasted suckling pig:
he drank from a divine cup.

Esta rua cheira rosas:
cheira rosas que recordam
This road smells of roses:
it smells of roses that remember

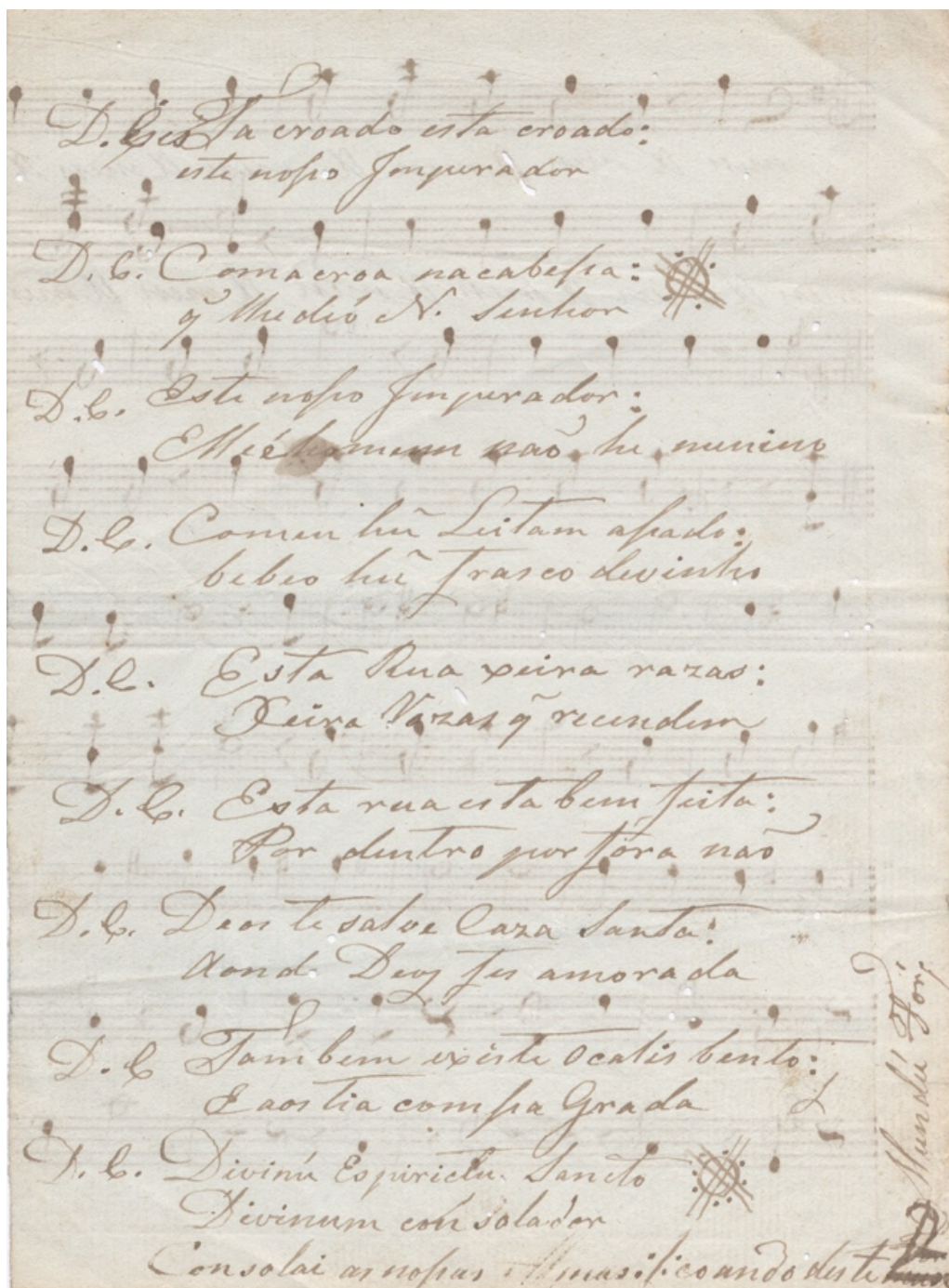
Esta rua está bem feita:
por dentro por fora não
This road is well done:
inside but not outside

Deus te salve casa santa:
aonde Deus fez a morada
God save you holy house:
where God made his home

Também existe cális bento:
e hóstia consagrada
Also there exists the sacred chalice:
and the consecrated host

Divino Espírito Santo
Divinum Consolador
Consolai as nossas almas quando deste mundo for.
Divine Holy Spirit
Divine Consoler
Comfort our souls when we leave this
world.

Figure 37. (Continued)



Studies about congado largely rest on the unnecessary premise that congadeiros and the Catholic Church have proceeded along parallel and therefore, non-intersecting, paths. This

record shows that some scholars have overlooked the fact that congadeiros have been in dialogue with official Catholic proceedings for many centuries, despite being filtered through the focal site of the irmandades, a laypersons organization. Hence, it is unclear why scholars should ignore the ways in which congadeiros have proved themselves to be both independent and interdependent with the Catholic Church. From the time of the Brazilian colony to today, both entities have been engaged in a constant process of mutually transformative interaction.

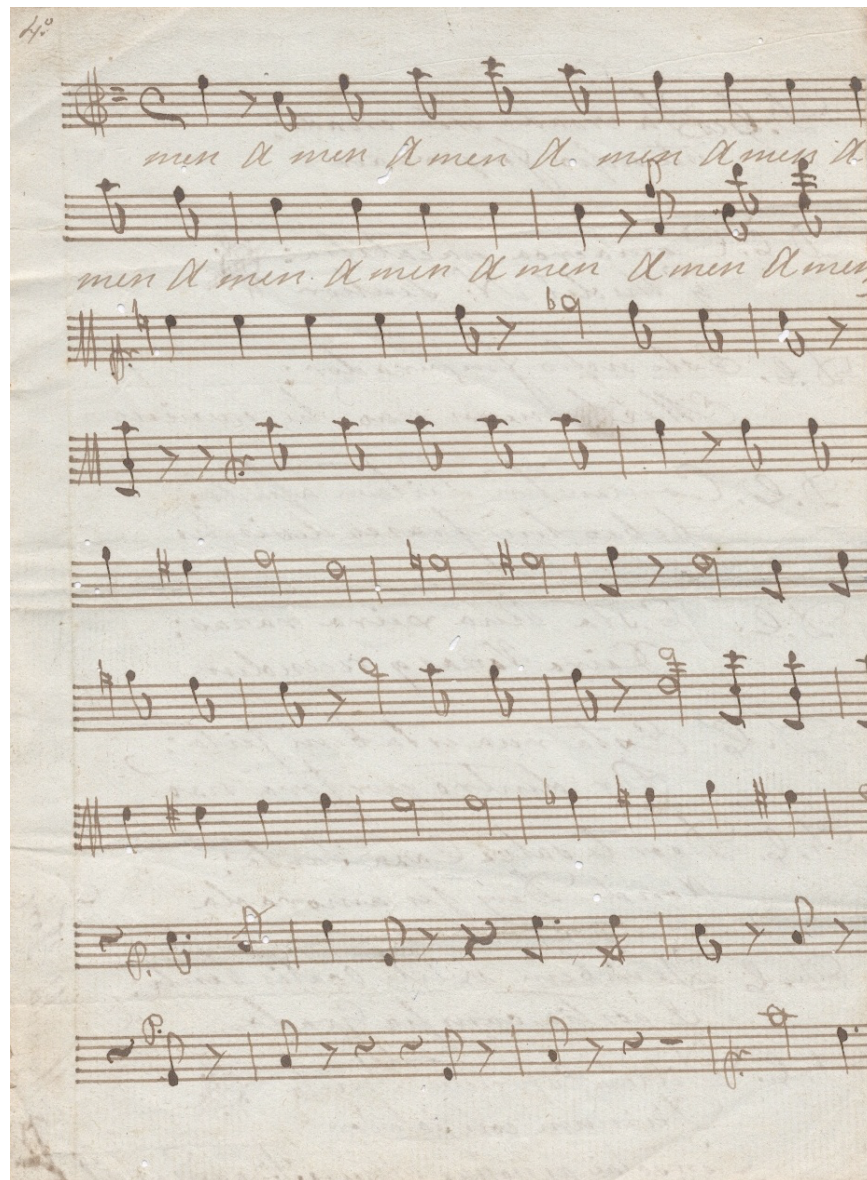


Figure 38. Melody appropriated by congadeiros from a passage of the E-flat major mass by composer José Maurício Nunes Garcia. Courtesy of the Museu da Música de Mariana, Minas Gerais.

This document has survived since the late eighteenth, early nineteenth century as nothing more than a fragment. Not only is it a fragment, but it is also a rarity as people seldom transformed the oral tradition of congado into notated and written forms. Yet, if we think about the notion of fragment on a larger scale, congadeiros have actually been engaged in recreating music from fragments for centuries—fragments pieced together from social, religious, historical, political, and economic forces that attempted to separate these holistic forms. Hence, while a rare archival document, the idea of fragmented knowledge is nonetheless commonplace among congadeiros who have responded to centuries of erasure and exclusion by assembling musical fragments to speak to an integrated identity.

Religious Boundaries

While congadeiros first and foremost identity as devotees of Catholic saints, it is important to understand the extent to which congadeiros are multi-faith practitioners. Indeed, because their devotion does not solely lie within the realm of folk Catholicism, it means that their rituals are, to a greater or lesser extent, informed by the socio-religious domains of other religions. For example, many devotees practice the religions of both folk Catholicism and Umbanda because the central objectives of their religious pursuits align on many issues. Just as congadeiros use sacred song and prayer to ask for help and healing from Nossa Senhora, these same practitioners during Umbanda sessions call spirits from celestial heights to inhabit trained mediums so that they might receive healing and advice from such spirits. While it is clear that Umbanda, with its trained mediums who advise people on personal problems, rid them of their body aches, and cleanse them of bad energies, differs from folk Catholicism, practitioners' motivations for participating in both religions intersect along various points. The following section discusses the theological nodes of conjuncture and disjuncture between folk Catholicism and Umbanda.

Umbanda is an Afro-Brazilian religion first practiced in Rio de Janeiro in the 1920s. It is religious hybrid, drawing from various Afro-Brazilian religions, folk Catholicism, and Kardecist Spiritism—a religion from Europe and the United States that incorporates spirit-mediumship. Despite the presence of mediumship in Umbanda and the absence of spirit possession in folk Catholicism, both religions focus on using music to heal the body and to cross spirit-human boundaries. Hence, when practitioners acknowledge that they follow both religions, it comes as little surprise given their theological underpinnings and the fact that they use music in similar ways to make interventions into the supernatural world and to impart critical healing energy. In both religions, practitioners see music as a mystical conduit that enables them to perform spiritual work. Clarence Bernard Henry's description of music in Candomblé rituals is also helpful in theorizing music's function in folk Catholicism for the parallels they demonstrate. Henry explains that because "music is emphasized at all intervals of the initiation process music becomes part of the mental conditioning required to receive axé energy and communicate with one's orixá," meaning that human to spirit communication is operationalized through the pervasive presence of "musicalization" (Henry 2004, 57-59).

Although it is common for congadeiros to also practice Umbanda, thus creating overlaps in beliefs and musical repertoire, practitioners largely seek to guard the boundaries between folk Catholicism and Umbanda more than they endeavor to cross them. From the theologies and prayers to the musics and rites, folk Catholicism and Umbanda are practiced in distinct ways. In many respects, the bridging and dividing of Afro-Brazilian religions has been a fresh area of exploration for ethnomusicologists. One particular noteworthy example is Marc Gidal's work with practitioners who practice the Afro-Brazilian religions of Batuque, Umbanda, and Quimbanda in southern Brazil. Gidal highlights how music is used to establish and contest

boundaries between the three religions with regard to beliefs, hierarchy, musical rules, and song repertoire. He calls this *musical-boundary work* and affirms, “Musical-boundary work assists the religious leaders, musicians, and participants in worship houses that are multi-faith and multiethnic as they seek to combine, distinguish, and explain the religions” (Gidal 2016, 1).

While Gidal’s work productively contributes to scholarly discourses in ethnomusicology and related disciplines about symbolic boundary theory, analyzing how *congadeiros* consciously use music to navigate religious borders is of only nominal relevancy here because *congadeiros* see the two as uncompromisingly separate, even when they practice both of them. Take, for example, an excerpt from one of my conversations with Antônio Cassimiro das Dores Gasparino. We were sitting and chatting in the chapel when I motioned with my hand toward the altar and said,

Genevieve Dempsey: There, on the altar, you have a statue of Saint George, which is also Ogum.

Antônio Cassimiro das Dores Gasparino: You speak of Saint George and Ogum. This is what happens. Here we have both a house of *congado* and a house of *Umbanda*. There is this mixture. There is this reality. But in *congado*, we don’t say that Saint George is Ogum. We say Saint George. There is separation. When it is a *festa* of *Umbanda*, it isn’t Saint George, it’s Ogum. Each thing in its own place. There is separation. One doesn’t mix one thing with another.

Genevieve Dempsey: But, for example, why have a separation if a saint is the two things?

Antônio Cassimiro das Dores Gasparino: But here is the question. When it is praise in honor of the rosary, it is praise in honor of the rosary. When it is something from *Umbanda*, it is *Umbanda*. It is not the same time. Coffee is coffee, milk is milk. Combine the two, it is *café com leite*. It is neither *café* nor milk, it is coffee with milk—*café com leite*. This is why there is a separation. (Antônio Cassimiro das Dores Gasparino 2014)

Thus, rather than being fearful of porous borders and using music to demarcate the lines between “two religious modalities” (Prandi 2005) and two “musical styles” (Béhague 1975, 1986),

congadeiros find it uncomplicated to embody both, but nonetheless allocate determined times for each one's religious experience.

Perhaps what is more central to the issues at hand is the fact that congadeiros have experienced acute religious discrimination because of their multi-faith worship practices. Congadeiros have been doubly marginalized by the Catholic Church not only because they follow folk Catholicism, but also because many practitioners practice Umbanda. As Marc Gidal writes,

In the 1940s, Umbandistas had to justify themselves to Spiritists, Batuqueiros, Catholic clergy, and the state government, all of whom found their hybrid practices unnerving. The Catholic Church criticized Umbanda vehemently in the 1950s, calling it a pagan, fetishistic, superstitious, magically fraudulent, and heretical hybrid of Catholicism and Spiritism. (Gidal 2016, 38)

After the Second Vatican Council in 1962, the Catholic Church openly rescinded its previous opinion of Umbanda as dangerous, incendiary, and unscrupulous in an attempt to cultivate more religious tolerance as well as come to terms with the fact that Afro-Catholic syncretism was well sedimented within the lower classes of Brazilian society (Brown 1994, 159-62). Despite these concessions, the Catholic Church's dogmatic doctrines were such that only a marginal middle ground was found with Umbanda because their antagonisms made the two entities highly incompatible (Hess 1991, 158).

The Sacred Production of the Secular

Congadeiros' rituals are predominantly sacral, but at times their actions blur the boundaries between the sacred and the secular. Hence, I echo the call of other scholars who have explored the expansion of black sacred music into non-sacral spaces (Meneses 2016; Averill 1989;

Hagedorn 2001; Sansone 2004; Feldman 2006; Henry 2008). One such event in my fieldwork that obscured the lines between the sacred and the secular was the Festival de Congado, an event produced by the city hall of Conselheiro Lafaiete. For instance, I traveled twice with the guarda de Moçambique Treze de Maio from Belo Horizonte to the city of Conselheiro Lafaiete. We traveled for the Festa de Nossa Senhora do Rosário the first time and then at a later date, made the journey for the Festival de Congado. Note the difference here between the designation festa and festival. The festa was a sacred ceremony, being undertaken by the local congado guardas, while the festival was backed by the local city hall. The government's cultural institutions hoped that the festival would draw attention to the historical and cultural vibrancy of congado.

On the one hand, noticeable differences characterized the two events: the festival took place in the paved center of town while the festa unfolded on the unpaved outskirts of the city; the festival also used a sound system to amplify the congadeiros' voices, while the festa did not employ such an instrument to magnify their voices. On the other hand, the festa and the festival demonstrated multiple correspondences—the congado groups still gathered to carry out the procissão and to celebrate the missa conga. Hence, while the festa was thoroughly sacred, congadeiros proceeded to make sacred interventions into the festival's largely secular contours.

This act of sacred intervention into secular spaces is important because it demonstrates the fluidity, not the rigidity of congadeiros' religious practices. Contrary to popular belief, congadeiros do not play sacred drums solely in religious contexts, but rather in liminal spaces that border on the sacred and the secular. In fact, a mutual dependency exists between these two modalities. This argument may seem counterintuitive given that the dissertation is founded on the premise that congadeiros' sonic work is tantamount to religious work. But congadeiros' sonic work is also social and political work. Upon closer inspection of the dynamics at play, one

realizes that the presence of the sacred within the secular sphere heightens why congadeiros employ sacred song in the first place: to stake claims to social and civic rights so that they have a say in defining its terms.

The following anecdote from the festival demonstrates the extent to which congadeiros embed their thoughts about social exclusion and enfranchisement in music. Around twenty congado groups, with ten to fifty members each, lined up along the main thoroughfare of the city to perform for the royal court as well as onlookers. Sitting under a canopy to shield them from the scorching sun, the royal court of congado queens and kings represented the divine kingdom of Our Lady on earth. By performing for them, the congado groups were praising and honoring the divine forces. When prompted by the coordinator standing on a balcony in front of the royal court, the group Moçambique de Treze de Maio de Nossa Senhora do Rosário moved into place and Sebastião Correa Braga, the most senior member of this group, took the microphone. Upon intoning each phrase, the other members echoed him with short segments of arrhythmic drumming and extended vocables. He first spoke, “This group, on the thirteenth of May, commemorated seventy years of existence. This [song] is a commemoration of the seventy years and I ask for forgiveness and for a bit a patience.” After people clapped, he declaimed,

Brazil is scandalously making our people live poorly. /
It began with the exploitation of the native peoples and to complete this process,
they began to enslave people of another nation. /
What Brazil did with the black people of the African continent still causes us
insomnia today. /
Brazil made the courageous and brave race of dark-skinned people into slaves that
worked day and night for the bourgeoisie without a cent. /
The Africans left their nation and came as prisoners in a slave ship to Brazil. /
Thus began captivity. Black people were weakened by hunger and went without
medicine. /
Many people suffered as a result of this crossing. (Correa Braga 2014)

Figure 39. Words proclaimed by Sebastião Correa Braga during the congado festival in Conselheiro Lafaiete, Minas Gerais.

Sebastião continued to declaim for several minutes, but this short passage draws attention to how congadeiros publicly stake claims to civic, social, and religious rights. Again, this was the only congado event in which I witnessed congadeiros use a microphone. Generally, the ways in which they play their drums often drowns out or reduces the intelligibility of their lyrics. In this instance, however, the primacy of the words was evident. They wanted to “say something” about racial inequality and postcolonial reality through the expressive potential of song.

In chanting these verses, Sebastião de Correa Braga redefined what it meant to be sacred and secular in that moment. He used a sacred musical structure to carry out secular motivations and by doing so, engaged in mixing the worldly and the otherworldly. In a similar fashion, Philip V. Bohlman writes, “My point is not to argue that all the musics accruing to saints’ shrines are popular music, but rather that saints’ shrines serve as particularly intensive sites for mixing the sacred and the popular” (Bohlman 2013, 174). Perhaps it is the messy in-betweenness of this event that makes scholars want to draw rigid boundaries around what is sacred and what is secular. Yet, to participate in this boundary-making is to lose sight of the function that this mixed music has. The music has the function of conjoining the sacred and the secular—the two worlds that matter the most to how congadeiros conceive and negotiate their identity among themselves and the wider world.

Indeed, the flier announcing the festa of the moçambique and congo groups Treze de Maio de Nossa Senhora do Rosário illustrates the subtle ways in which the sacred intermixes with the secular. While the first two-thirds of the flier announces the who, what, where, and when of the religious festivities, the bottom one-third outlines the various organizations that supported the realization of the festa. Although it is unclear what kind of “support” the congadeiros received from these organizations, it is clear that from the local butcher shop to the

capital's town hall, they received some semblance of backing—financial or otherwise. I argue that this move to support congado is more than symbolic given that congadeiros continue to experience trenchant social, religious, and racial marginalization.

Festa de
Setenta anos
de fé e devoção
**NOSSA SENHORA
DO ROSÁRIO**

Comemorativa aos 126 anos da Abolição da Escravatura,
aos 70 anos da Guarda de Moçambique Treze de Maio de
N. Sra. do Rosário e aos 16 anos da Guarda de Congo
Treze de Maio de N. Sra. do Rosário.

De 1.º a 13 de maio
Rua Jataí, 1.309, Concórdia

Ônibus: 8107 (Concórdia / São Pedro)
ou 9805 (Sta. Efigênia / Renascença)

PROGRAMAÇÃO

1/5 - 19h: Na Sede, início da Trezena em honra aos Santos Padroeiros e dedicada às almas dos antepassados; logo após, saída do Bumba-meu-boi (Boi da Manta) pelas ruas do Bairro Concórdia e bairros vizinhos;

De 2/5 a 9/5 - 20h: Saída do Bumba-meu-boi pelas ruas e na Sede, continuação da Trezena;

10/5 - 18h30: Cortejo à casa do Mordomo da Bandeira;
20h: Na Sede, hasteamento das Bandeiras;

11/5 - 5h: Alvorada;

10h: Na Sede, reunião das Guardas, seguindo-se em cortejo à casa dos Reis para trazê-los ao local da festa;
15h30: Saída do Cortejo Imperial do Rosário rumo à Igreja de N. Sra. das Graças e Medalha Milagrosa;

16h: Missa Conga pelas Almas dos Cativos, onde serão homenageadas as memórias da Sra. Maria Cassimira das Dóres, do Sr. Efigênio Casemiro e do Pe. Edeimar Massote. Após a Missa Conga, o cortejo retornará ao local de origem e as Guardas executarão danças e contra-danças;

12/5 e 13/5 - 10h: Reunião das Guardas na Sede e cortejo à casa dos Reis para o local da festa;

13/5 - 15h: Missa Conga Campal pelas Almas dos Cativos.

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Figure 40. Flier for the festa de Nossa Senhora do Rosário hosted by the moçambique and congo groups Treze de Maio de Nossa Senhora at their sacred grounds in the neighborhood of Concórdia, Belo Horizonte, May 13, 2014.

While congadeiros experience the sacred and the secular in simultaneity, it is worth noting that congado has not been recontextualized to such a large extent as other musico-spiritual traditions

like Candomblé. For example, Juan Diego Diaz Meneses writes about how elements of Candomblé rituals have been recontextualized in other arenas like carnival, capoeira, popular music, jazz, and art music (Meneses 2016, 90). According to him, “Candomblé practitioners use an aesthetic based on their knowledge and experience of ritual embodiment when listening to Candomblé outside the religious contexts” (ibid., 90). Clarence Henry echoes a similar ethos when he writes that people deploy *axé* (derived from the Yoruban term *ásè*—energy, force, power) in such a way as to bring the sacred to bear on the secular and vice versa (Henry 2008, 189). Catherine Hagedorn (2001) documents an analogous development in Cuba where she investigates how state-funded dance and music troupes perform traditions derived from Afro-Cuban Santería. Through their performances and discourse, these troupes articulate a host of intersecting theoretical currents about national identity, blackness, tourism, and folklorization. Meneses speaks to these research initiatives when he says, “The process documented by Hagedorn in Cuba parallels how Candomblé and other Afro-diasporic religions in the Americas infuse black popular music with new political and aesthetic values, and how the music of these religions transitions from being marginal to becoming a cultural expression of national pride” (Meneses 2016, 93).

What is interesting is that congado has not become emblematic of the nation, despite the fact that congadeiros also ascribe political and aesthetic values of Africanness and blackness to its sacred functions. Notwithstanding the recent recognition of congado as a bearer of immaterial heritage by state-funded cultural institutions, it remains largely marginal, both regionally and nationally. Again, perhaps the fact that congado does not demonstrate as many “African retentions” as that of traditions like Candomblé and capoeira means that it is also likely to be heralded as a unique, though essential ingredient to the Brazilian nation.

Chapter 3

Instrumentalizing Songs of Faith

The following chapter analyzes how congadeiros manipulate music to afford particular experiences and to engender particular emotions. Congadeiros strive for spiritual attainment through deliberate, collectively accepted notions of proper aesthetics, which means the deployment of proper musical elements of style, structure, timbre, and rhythm. Aesthetics are attached to function—how congadeiros use musical elements to suit the spiritual goals of the moment (Slobin 2011, 5). The intersection between aesthetics, function, and suitability, moreover, dovetails with the question of how music and context interact. In what ways do participants embed aesthetic, ideological, and spiritual concerns within congado to suit the context and bring about certain affective states? What meanings do these processes engender and how do congadeiros employ music to achieve particular outcomes?

I argue that congadeiros place such emphasis on musical affordance because their faith is activated by means of its sounding. That is, music making activates sacred feeling amongst those who witness and experience divine co-presence and thus functions to fulfill particular spiritual ends. Song, moreover, establishes a connection between their lived experience and an invisible but embodied spiritual realm. Take, for instance, a passage from an interview with fourteen-year old congadeira Rafaella Alves from a group of congo vilão—one of the seven different types of congado—in Dorés do Indaiá. In the conversation we talked about the intersection between music, faith, and religion:

Genevieve Dempsey: What is the connection between music and faith for you?

Rafaella Alves: Between music and faith. I hear them singing and I pay attention to the lyrics of the music, to the beat of the music. Then, I feel my faith. And because of faith, I

begin to cry. I feel this. My faith is this. I pay attention to that which the person is speaking, you know?

Genevieve Dempsey: Yes, very nice. Can you expand a bit more on this idea?

Rafaella Alves: It's like this. If a person begins to sing, you begin to listen to the lyrics of the music, to the beat of the music, and that starts to enter into your heart. If you have faith, you focus on this and start to cry. You know, it's a passion that you have for that thing. It's the passion of listening to a person sing. You know? You think directly of God. It's something captivating. It's something marvelous. For me there isn't another thing that leaves me as happy as speaking of God, you know. It's like this.

Genevieve Dempsey: Yes, I understand. Then, for you, the motivation for participating in the group *congo vilão* derives more from faith.

Rafaella Alves: It's this. The group *congo vilão* for me is my passion. I love it. I love to dance in it. Because in addition to being very religious, there is much faith. There is a lot of education, respect for each other, and rules.

Genevieve Dempsey: You made a distinction between religiosity and faith. What is the difference for you?

Rafaella Alves: Religion is what you choose because various exist. And faith, it's like this. There are people that dance and don't feel faith. They are there for prettiness and beauty. Thus, the difference is this one. Because it's no use saying that one's religion is such and such. You have to have faith. It's no use that you are Evangelical or Catholic. I have to have faith in that which I am. Thus, various people dance for beauty. Religion is what you choose. Faith is something that you have to focus on. You could choose to be Catholic. But you have to have faith in being Catholic. You have to have faith in what it is to be Catholic. (Alves 2014)

Rafaella Alves' words are interesting because she distinguishes between religion, an ostensibly passive choice, and faith, the active working out of one's sacred conviction. Not only does faith require a person's active focus and attention, but by turning her attention to the lyrics and the beat of the music, her faith becomes instantiated. In essence, faith requires work and it is musical work that affords the activation of their spiritual conviction.



Figure 41. Rafaela Alves with her sister in Dolores do Indaia during the city's annual festa de Nossa Senhora do Rosário, 2014. Photo by author.

A striking example that demonstrates the extent to which people perform sacred duties through particular musical means comes from the crowning of the festive kings and queens (*coroação dos reis festeiros*), which was carried out by members of the Arturos community during the 2014 festa do Reinado de Nossa Senhora do Rosário. Each year congadeiros choose a festive queen and king to preside over the festa as well as to provide several meals during the musico-religious rituals. The coronation, the last event of the festa, holds the dual function of closing the festa, but also opening it for the following year by transferring the crowns from one couple to the next.



Figure 42. Coronation of the Festive Kings and Queens in the Arturos community during the Festa de Nossa Senhora do Rosário, 2014. Photo by author.

Late into the night on Monday, the congo and moçambique groups came together to sing in polyphony. Led by captain José Bonifácio da Luz, he sang,

Ajoelhai senhor,
Kneel sir,
 Ajoelhai senhor adiante de Deus e Nossa Senhora, ajoelhai senhor.
Kneel sir before God and Our Lady of the Rosary, kneel sir.

Figure 43. Verse sung by José Bonifácio da Luz and echoed verbatim by the chorus during a coronation ceremony.

The chorus responded antiphonally in kind. Together, they intoned the polyphonic phrase again, eroding any sense of strict metric time. Embedded in the lyrics were directions for action; when they sang the phrase, they desired that the crowned festive king kneel before them in the chapel

so that his crown might be delivered to the next festive king. The following transcription captures a moment in the antiphonal exchange between José Bonifácio da Luz and the chorus.

They repeated this melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic formula for fifteen consecutive minutes, only changing the lyrics periodically to reflect the ritual changes in the crowning of the festive queen and king. In fact, the call-and-response songs not only narrated the action, but also mobilized it. For example, each time the groups called the festive queen and king to ritual action—kneeling, delivering, and receiving sacred objects—they followed this by singing about its completion. In this way, *congadeiros* used polyphony to bear witness to as well as to operationalize ritual action. This anecdote about transferring crowns from one royal couple to another via sound exemplifies a common practice in *congado* communities where song serves to activate the worldly and otherworldly responsibilities of participants.

The antiphonal nature of the song as well as its minimal lyrics and sparse verses are also characteristic of *congado* on a more general level. Being one of the most basic entities in *congado* songs, verse/refrain unit must be repeated at least three times before transitioning to a new song. During processions and rituals that involve movement, songs turn over quickly. However, in more stationary settings like the coronation of the festive queen and king, as the aforementioned example demonstrates, terse verse/refrain songs can be repeated for lengthy periods of time, like twenty minutes, before transitioning to a new one. Thus, rather than extensive change over long periods of time, there is a sense of intensive variation. The chorus will often maintain the traditional refrain, for example, while the soloist improvises—both melodically and lyrically. In this sense the goal is to produce small, intensive changes within an overall fixed format rather than extend the form itself to create extensive transformations.

Figure 44. Musical transcription of the coronation ritual during the festa de Nossa Senhora do Rosário in the Arturos community, 2014.

Coronation of the Festive Queens and Kings I

♩ = 65 Os Arturos

System 1:

Soloist: aj - oe - lh - ai sen - hor aj - oe - lh - ai

Chorus: Ah - - - - -

System 2:

Soloist: sen - ho - r $\text{a - di - ante de Deus/}$ $\text{No - ssa Sen - hora}$ aj - oe - lh - ai sen -

Chorus: - - - - -

System 3:

Soloist: hor

Chorus: - - - aj - oe - lh - ou sen - hor Aj - oe - lh - ou

System 4:

Soloist: - - - - -

Chorus: sen - hor $\text{a - di - ante de Deus No - ssa Sen - hora}$ aj - oe - lh - ou senhor

System 5:

Soloist: aj - oe - lh - ou sen - hor aj - oe - lh - ou

Chorus: Ah - - - - -

Figure 44. (Continued)

The musical score consists of six systems, each featuring a Soloist part and a Chorus part. The key signature is G major (one sharp). The lyrics are in Portuguese and Spanish, describing the Lord's presence and the entrance of the Lord.

System 6:

Soloist: sen - ho - r a - di - ante de Deus/ No - ssa Sen - hora aj - oe - lh - ou sen -

Chorus: sen - ho - r a - di - ante de Deus/ No - ssa Sen - hora aj - oe - lh - ou sen -

System 7:

Soloist: hor

Chorus: aj - oe - lh - ou sen - hor Aj - oe - lh - ou

System 8:

Soloist: sen - hor a - di - ante de Deus No - ssa Sen - hora aj - oe - lh - ou senhor

Chorus: sen - hor a - di - ante de Deus No - ssa Sen - hora aj - oe - lh - ou senhor

System 9:

Soloist: en - tre - gu - ai sen - hor en - tre - gu - ai

Chorus: Ah - - - - -

System 10:

Soloist: sen - ho - r a - di - ante de Deus/ No - ssa Sen - hora en - tre - gu - ai sen -

Chorus: sen - ho - r a - di - ante de Deus/ No - ssa Sen - hora en - tre - gu - ai sen -

System 11:

Soloist: hor

Chorus: en - tre - gu - ai sen - hor En - tre - gu - ai

Figure 44. (Continued)

The musical score consists of five systems, each with a Soloist part (treble clef) and a Chorus part (treble clef). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The time signature is 8/8, indicated by a large '8' below the first Chorus staff.

System 12: The Soloist part is a whole rest. The Chorus part has the lyrics: "sen - hor a - di - ante de Deus No - ssa Sen - hora en - tre - gu - ai senhor".

System 13: The Soloist part has the lyrics: "en - tre - g - ou - sen - hor en - tre - g - ou". The Chorus part has the lyrics: "Ah - - - - -".

System 14: The Soloist part has the lyrics: "sen - ho - r a - di - ante de Deus/ No - ssa Sen - hora en - tre - g - ou sen -". The Chorus part has the lyrics: "- - - - -".

System 15: The Soloist part has the lyrics: "hor". The Chorus part has the lyrics: "- en - tre - g - ou sen - hor En - tre - g - ou".

System 16: The Soloist part is a whole rest. The Chorus part has the lyrics: "sen - hor a - di - ante de Deus No - ssa Sen - hora en - tre - g - ou senhor".

After singing the melodic and rhythmic passage notated above for fifteen minutes, while nonetheless changing its lyrics, the group progressed to another melodic, rhythmic, harmonic, and lyrical area.

Figure 44. (Continued) This musical transcription represents the second musical area to which the group transitioned.

Coronation of the Festive Queens and Kings II

14'55"-19'09"

$\text{♩} = 66$

6 Lá no céu vem de - scen - do uma co - ro - - a Lá no

10 céu vem de - scen - do uma co - ro - - a a - com - pan -

14 -ha - da do Rei no da gl - ó - ria oê vamos am -

17 -par - ar el - a com jei - to meus ir - mãos es - sa co -

-roa é de No - ssa Senh - ora

Another noteworthy aspect of this song is its relation to tonality. According to Glaura Lucas, “Almost all of the songs are constructions that involve the basic harmonic functions of tonic, subdominant (when present) and dominant, functions reinforced when the sanfona is present in congo” (Lucas 2002, 85). However, it is not clear that functional tonality obtains in this example or throughout the wider congado repertoire. What appears at the outset to be tonic, subdominant, and dominant movement actually presents a reality that is far more complex. For instance, the congadeiros stack their pitches in thirds to form chords, but the chords do not move

to a place that resolves the leading tone. Even with changes in the chords, the entire song sounds as if it were tonic throughout. In terms of applying Schenkerian analysis to this piece, the music eventually transitions to the V, but the chords leading up to this arrival point do not imply such a I to V movement. To hear the arrival on the V, one would need to establish this movement ahead of time. In this song, the V appears unexpectedly and the listener is quite unprepared for its advent.

If one agrees with the notion that functional harmony needs to be gradually developed over time, then congadeiros are clearly not developing the piece in this way. What is illustrative is that singers use non-traditional polyphony inside the space of a church to sound a kind of devotion that is both within and outside Roman Catholicism. In other words, I argue that practitioners employ a kind of polyphony that contravenes the rules of Western functional harmony precisely because they wish to deliver a statement about their positionality as distinct, yet active agents in performing Catholicism. By sounding uniqueness, they are saying something about why they matter as audible and visible members of society.

With only sparse accompaniment of drum rolls, the previous ethnographic example showed the primacy that congadeiros place on the voice for activating spiritual communion with the divine. Indeed, congadeiros use the medium of the voice to convey great sonic affect and functionality. For example, Wlado Lúcio da Silva, a captain of the congo vilão Dores do Indaiá for a total of thirty-six years as well as a participant (*soldado*) in this and other congo vilão groups for fifty-two years, often spoke about how participants use singing (*cantoria*) to convey their deeply felt religious resonances. In the following excerpt, we witness a moment when Wlado Lúcio da Silva recounted the meeting of two groups for the first time during the festa. He communicated,

For example, it's logical that when you are going to arrive there, they are going to receive you. But, who has to sing for me? It is them first. I am the visitor, I am arriving. They are going to sing to me first so that I can see their style of singing, their qualities. The style of singing that I am going to have to act there with them. And after they sing for me, I will sing for them. I will greet them, their congada, their city, do you understand? All by means of singing (*cantoria*). I am going to greet them, the city. All through singing. And I come prepared. I come prepared for this. I don't write anything. I keep everything that I'm going to sing in my mind. I have it all prepared. I will wait for them to sing first. After, I will greet and praise them. One needs to plant in order to reap a harvest, you know. One needs to plant in order to reap a harvest. I am arriving, I am trying to do what I can manage, but above all, with respect and with much faith. (Lúcio da Silva 2014)

Here, the singing provided the frame within which the ritual of meeting occurred. In this way, the singing conditioned what was ritually possible in that moment. Wlado Lúcio da Silva's comments also focus our attention on the style of singing and its direct connections to the music's function and value. Wlado Lúcio da Silva places great value not only on how one sings, but also on what they sing—greetings and praises. That is, aesthetics and style became constitutive of not tangential to function and value. Hence, the convergence of aesthetics, style, function, and value resulted in the making and valorizing of sacred song.

The coronation ceremony also reinforced a founding myth in congado. According to congadeiros, when Nossa Senhora do Rosário first appeared to Brazilians in the sea, she chose Afro-Brazilian congadeiros as her beloved ones because of the pleasing sound of their drumming. The music making of congadeiros coaxed Nossa Senhora from the water, bringing her divine presence into the midst of humans and in turn, making human, musico-religious expressions audible in a sacred way. Thus, the coronation represented not only an embodiment of the sacred order in the present, but also the materialization of congadeiros' ideals of self-worth and autonomy. I argue that the ceremony was the re-creation of a divine royal kingdom on earth as well as the implementation of their own distinct laws, hierarchies, and social structures to exercise agency and express autonomy.

Ritual Preparation

The following example describes how music functions spiritually to prepare practitioners in mind and body for the advent of the festa. In the largest sense, we witness the ways in which congadeiros do things with music to accomplish certain ends—like readying themselves for the upcoming physical and spiritual journey. When the Guarda de Moçambique Treze de Maio de Nossa Senhora do Rosário prepares to travel to other festas, they gather in the chapel during the early morning hours to perform musico-religious rituals together. The ceremonies are meant to fortify them for the festa and to ask for blessings from Nossa Senhora do Rosário.

On August 1st, 2014, the day that the group traveled from Belo Horizonte to Conselheiro Lafaiete, the congadeiros began the morning rituals with a song that requested Nossa Senhora's permission and protection to play music during the festa. Set in the rhythmic pattern of *serra abaixo* (slow-paced rhythmic pattern), the tambores played a slow-moving call-and-response configuration while Ricardo Cassimiro sang, "I ask for permission from my mother, the woman of the rosary." In response, the other congadeiros answered with the same phrase, stretching each word over an extended melodic arch while continuing to play. Ricard Cassimiro then placed his hand in the water vessel on the altar and proceeded to transfer the sacred water to the sacred batons that he carried.

The altar that stood before him was covered in statues of Catholic saints, *pretos velhos* (spirits of old black slaves), Amerindian warriors (*caboclos*), Spanish Roma, and other folk figures. The cascading layers of figures arranged on different shelves on the altar were hardly surprising given that congadeiros have drawn from various religions and thus incorporated many religious figures over the centuries. While the altar acts as a sacred ground for Catholicism on

the weekends, everything is left intact for use in Umbanda *sessões* (healing and consultation ceremonies) on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evenings. Hence, of particular noteworthiness here is the doubly symbolic nature of several statues. Congadeiros have paired the Catholic saints with divinities from West and western Central Africa not only to reflect shared traits, but largely because it once allowed them to disguise their worship of African deities that would have otherwise been prohibited by the Catholic Church. For example, in Umbanda, Ogum represents the divinity of iron and war. He is also known in Catholicism as Saint George, the crusader who sits atop his white horse slaying dragons with his sword. Hence, Ogum and Saint George are embodied within this statue and while physically present for both congado and Umbanda ceremonies, he is called upon differently in each context to serve distinct purposes. In this way, there is no visual or physical separation of Ogum from Saint George. There is only spiritual separation when practitioners need to distinguish cosmologically between folk Catholicism and Umbanda.

For a brief time, the congadeiros maintained the steady beat of the drums and the swishing of the patangome as they intermittently sang, “I ask for permission from my mother, the woman of the rosary.” Soon the congadeiros’ song came to an end, signaling their preparedness for the journey to begin. This anecdote represents congadeiros’ belief that it is necessary to receive divine sanction to carry out musical and religious duties during festas. They use particular songs and actions in morning rituals to ask for sacred intercession and prepare their minds and bodies for the spiritual forces that they will encounter throughout the day.

The Signification of Sounds

To what extent do congadeiros express congado in multiple ways to afford distinct experiences? While congadeiros often play together, creating boisterous, overlapping melodies, they also create musical moments of quiet introspection. Standing in stark sonic contrast to the rowdy drumming and effervescent dancing of processions, the pensive polyphonic singing that accompanies the coronations of queens and kings represents a different kind of kinetic and sonic experience. The differences in aesthetic and sensorial registers between the thudding drums and the sweet polyphony demonstrate the extent to which practitioners carefully manipulate timbre, pitch, volume, rhythm, and melody in distinct ways to fulfill particular ritual and emotional ends. I argue that by deploying textures ranging from sonic density to musical minimalism, congadeiros shape sound to express multiple facets of their sacred cosmology.

The following anecdote illuminates the ways in which musical structures, sounds, timbres, and tempos are inextricably bound up with emotions as well as spatial and temporal frameworks. On the last day of the festa in the rural town of Dores do Indaiá, the group—Congo Vilão de Dores do Indaiá—gathered at one of the houses of the festive kings and queens responsible for the financial and religious support during the festa. As the queen proudly displayed the crown—a sign of Our Lady’s divine presence on earth—the congo vilão sang farewell songs to her and her family in thanks for providing the food during the festa.¹ Of critical concern to my research is how practitioners manipulated sound in diverse ways both to reflect

¹ Congo vilão is one of the seven different types of congado with unique songs, rhythms, dances, and outfits.

and activate the spectrum of emotions that they experienced upon saying goodbye and thanking the festive queen.

Devotees of Nossa Senhora who do not participate in the everyday activities of congado often express their devotion in other ways, like through the provision of meals for the festa. Since a group serve hundreds of friends and family each day throughout the several days of the festa, providing food for the ceremonies is no small contribution. Because of the magnitude of the endeavor, multiple festive kings and queens often pool their resources to fund the festivities. It is critically important to mention that festive kings and queens normally represent a particular kind of devotee to Nossa Senhora. Festive kings and queens often make petitions during dire moments of their lives and upon experiencing divine intercession, they vow to show their gratitude by funding the festas. Promises made to Nossa Senhora vary and depending on the person and the magnitude of the plea, they might pledge to fund the festa for a single year or for countless ones. In this way, miracles can be the catalyst for the externalization of an individual's internal devotion.

The materialization of sacred devotion in practical form holds significant implications for the festa because the provision of bountiful and delicious meals impacts how people remember the particular festa. In many respects, although the main focus of festas is centered around spiritual matters, congadeiros judge the success of a festa, in part, by the abundance and quality of the food that is served. Thus, the material expression of devotion during the festas is critically important for the spiritual attainment of its participants. In this way, the festive kings and queens demonstrate how the internal embodiment of devotion becomes outwardly shared with others through the gifting of meals. To the festive queens and kings' outward materialization of devotion, congadeiros respond with audible expressions of thanks.

With the instrumentalists behind them, the singers and dancers stood in two lines facing one another and waited patiently for the accordionist's introductory phrase. After several quick and lively notes from the *sanfona* (accordion), the other instrumentalists joined shortly afterwards, playing the *pandeiro* (tambourine), *cabasa* (shaker), and *caixas*—large drums made from animal skins and metal garbage cans. Together they created an ostinato in which the cabasa and pandeiro players would crescendo for a few seconds and then the two drummers would strike their mallets against the drumheads, accenting the upbeat before landing heavily on the downbeat. The shaking, pounding, and playing of the instruments created an interlocking pattern that encouraged the singers and dancers to sway in place.

Standing amid the two lines of congadeiros, the captain of the group, Wlado Lúcio da Silva, then intoned the first phrases to the queen. He sang,

Adeus, adeus pois adeus se Deus quiser.
Goodbye, goodbye, well goodbye if God wills it.
Estou fazendo a despedida para quem Deus der a vida ai, ai, ai.
I am making my farewell to whom God will give life, ai, ai, ai.

Figure 45. A verse sung by Wlado Lúcio da Silva during a song of farewell and thanks to the festive queens and kings for hosting the festa.

Of the thirty-person group, five designated singers responded in polyphony to the captain's words, adding a dramatic feeling to the melodic and rhythmic foundation of the instruments. All five voices sang the same phrase as the captain, but rather than convey clear discursive meanings, they transformed many of the words into vocables. As the focus turned away from the denotative meaning of the words and towards sensorial experience, there was an aural change and the aesthetic layering of voices assumed the foreground. Then Wlado Lúcio da Silva sang,

Minha devota do Rosário,
My devoted woman of the Rosary,
Vou fazendo a despedida,
I am going to make my farewell,
Adeus até para o ano para quem Deus der a vida.
Goodbye and may God give you life until the following year.

Figure 46. A second verse sung by Wlado Lúcio da Silva and echoed by the chorus during a song of farewell and thanks to the festive queens and kings for hosting the festa.

The singers answered him verbatim in antiphony. They stacked their pitches vertically and then shifted the chords ever so subtly to new harmonic areas to create a sense of sonic weeping. At the ends of phrases, the rising and falling of the singers' polyphony came to rest in extended vocalizations. Doubling much of the pitch content, their music sounded voluminous and indistinguishable, as if a sonic wave rolled through space, connecting the human and the sacred worlds together. As their pitches moved in seamless unison with one another, the singing came to approximate wailing.

Some scholars might suggest that the congadeiros' polyphonic singing encapsulated the soulfulness of their departure. On the one hand, this argument addresses the seemingly inherent emotionality that registers in the weeping, wailing, and pounding of the singers' voices and instruments. As a witness to the energy of the musical moment, I found myself struggling to keep the videocamera steady while drying my eyes.

On the other hand, it is important to know that this "soulful singing" was then immediately followed by an upbeat song with a lively triangle beat, a galloping rhythmic ostinato, and spirited polyphonic singing. They sang,

Eu peço minha licença,
I ask for permission,
 Vou fazer minha retirada.
I am going to take my leave.
 A Senhora do Rosário é uma santa da congado.
The lady of the rosary is a saint of congado.
 Foi no passar da ponte que meu coração tremeu.
It was in passing over the bridge that my heart trembled.
 Foi debaixo da ponte que me coração doeu.
It was under the bridge that my heart hurt.
 O guia bandeira santa que me guia nessa hora.
The sacred guiding banner that guides me in this hour.
 Você fica aí com Deus, vou levar Nossa Senhora.
You stay with God, I am going to carry away Our Lady of the
Rosary.

Figure 47. Sung by congadeiros of the congo vilão group from Dores do Indaiá, this upbeat song followed a somber tune of farewell.

The wailing of goodbye transformed into the exuberance of goodbye. In effect, they were using different sounds to access and articulate the oftentimes conflicting emotions in farewells—the sorrow in leaving but the delight in knowing that the festa would return the following year. Upon comparing the introspective tenor of the first song with the animated sounds of the second song, I realized that congadeiros were expressing their goodbyes with a diversity of emotions by actually *sounding* them in different ways.

What is noteworthy, moreover, is that the group gave the gift of music in thanks to the festive queen for graciously providing food during the festa. Giving music in gratitude is an offering of unparalleled significance because embedded within congado is the sound of ancestral memory, perseverance, camaraderie, and sacred conviction. Congado is a gift meant to sound appreciation and recognition as well as bring one another closer to each other in an intimate connection to the divine.

Figure 48. This transcription illustrates a song of farewell and thanks sung by a congo vilão group from the rural town of Dores do Indaiá during the last day of a five-day festa in honor of Our Lady of the Rosary.

Dores do Indaiá

Festa de Nossa Senhora

$\text{♩} = 90$

The musical score is arranged for four parts: Tenor, Chorus, Accordion, and Bass Drum. It is divided into three systems, each beginning with a measure number (1, 7, and 13). The key signature consists of three sharps (F#, C#, G#), and the time signature is 2/2. A tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 90$ is provided at the top. The lyrics are in Portuguese and are placed below the Tenor and Chorus staves.

System 1 (Measures 1-6):

- Tenor:** Rests in measures 1-6.
- Chorus:** Rests in measures 1-6.
- Accordion:** Measures 1-6 with a melodic line starting on F#4, moving through various intervals.
- Bass Drum:** Measures 1-6 with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.

System 2 (Measures 7-12):

- Tenor:** Measures 7-12 with lyrics "A - de - us a -".
- Chorus:** Rests in measures 7-12.
- Accordion:** Measures 7-12 with a melodic line.
- B. Dr.:** Measures 7-12 with a rhythmic pattern.

System 3 (Measures 13-18):

- Tenor:** Measures 13-18 with lyrics "deus pois a - deus se Deus qui - ser" and "Vou fa - zendo a des-pe -".
- Chorus:** Rests in measures 13-18.
- Accordion:** Measures 13-18 with a melodic line.
- B. Dr.:** Measures 13-18 with a rhythmic pattern.

Figure 48. (Continued)

19 2

Tenor

-di-da pa-ra quem Deus der a vida ai ai ai

Chorus

A -

Accordion

B. Dr.

25

Tenor

Chorus

deus A - deus pois a-adeus se Deus qui-ser oh oh

Accordion

B. Dr.

31

Tenor

Chorus

oh Fa-ça min-ha des-pe - di-da pa-ra quem me dá Deus der oh

port.

Accordion

B. Dr.

The musical score is presented in three systems. Each system contains four staves: Tenor (soprano clef), Chorus (soprano clef), Accordion (bass clef), and B. Dr. (bass clef). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The first system (measures 19-24) features a Tenor vocal line with lyrics, a Chorus line with a final note, an Accordion line with a melodic phrase, and a B. Dr. line with a rhythmic pattern. The second system (measures 25-30) shows a Chorus line with sustained chords and lyrics, an Accordion line with a melodic phrase, and a B. Dr. line with a rhythmic pattern. The third system (measures 31-36) includes a Chorus line with sustained chords and lyrics, an Accordion line with a melodic phrase, and a B. Dr. line with a rhythmic pattern. A 'port.' (portamento) marking is present above the final Chorus staff.

Figure 48. (Continued)

37

3

Tenor

Chorus

Accordion

B. Dr.

Min-ha devo-ta do

oh oh oh oh

44

Tenor

Chorus

Accordion

B. Dr.

Rosário vou fa - zendo a des-ped - ida

A-deus at - é para o

50

Tenor

Chorus

Accordion

B. Dr.

ano pa-ra quem Deus der a vi-da ai ai ai

A de-

Figure 48. (Continued)

56

4

Tenor

Chorus

vo - ta do Ro - sário vou fa - zendo a des - pe - di - da oh oh oh

Accordion

B. Dr.

63

Tenor

Chorus

A - deus a - té pa - ra o an - o pa - ra quem Deus der a

Accordion

B. Dr.

68

Tenor

Chorus

port.

vida oh oh oh oh oh

Accordion

B. Dr.

Congadeiros' use of distinct sonic registers to signify did not detract from the soulfulness of the farewell. In fact, their sonic and aesthetic heterogeneity added depth and breadth to its materialization. In that instance, the farewell *sounded* as both musical lamentation and musical exuberance. From the mournful timbre of the singers' voices to their bright drumming, the group demonstrated the extent to which congado sounds in a multiplicity of ways.

The abundance of affect that pervades congadeiros' rituals originates, in part, from the iterative nature of the farewells. Some congadeiros in the group have participated in the annual farewell ceremonies for fifty years. Whether congadeiros have participated for fifty years or five years, the ceremony represents the group's collective, emotional investment in perpetuating the tradition. They willingly undergo days of drumming, dancing, and walking under the scorching sun because they believe that the festa ensures their psychospiritual survival.

Just as the congadeiros confound any easy understanding of what it means to sound devotion in songs of farewell, on a broader scale, their song also illustrates the extent to which they sound a different kind of Catholicism than the one intoned by the Catholic Church. Over the course of the song, the music charts a harmonic progression that cannot be characterized as functional harmony. Indeed, one cannot presume normal scoring as there is no clear motion from tonic to subdominant to dominant and back to tonic. For example, instead of a pitch moving from D to E as in traditional Western harmony, congadeiros choose instead to proceed in parallel movement over a pedal tone drone (B). The parallel movement of the voices, moreover, is stepwise. In many respects, moving stepwise in layered sonic blocks violates Western common practice. Even more telling is the combination of the marked presence of stepwise motion and the marked absence of real counter motion in the music. All this highlights the fact that what

makes congado unique is precisely the fact that it has no real counter motion. If it did, it would sound like the music heard in the context of a Catholic Church.

The predominance of parallel movement in congado makes it a unique devotional practice distinct from Roman Catholic music. Indeed, congadeiros' choice to perform polyphony in distinct ways truly sets it apart from the song that prevails in Catholic liturgical rites. I argue that by cultivating obvious musical distinctions between congado and Roman Catholicism, congadeiros are saying something political by means of style. In other words, they are manipulating musical elements to indicate their desire to be distinct, yet inseparable from larger musical and religious currents.

Although the song is characterized by parallel, stepwise motion, as well as instances where the leading tone is in root position, a practice uncommon in Western music, congadeiros do craft chords in line with traditional Western harmony. Hence, they straddle the boundaries between cultivating harmonies and timbres unique to congado and aligning with traditional Western tonal practices. Following the rules in traditional harmony, they stack their pitches vertically in a base, third, and fifth structure. However, they diverge from Catholic teachings about what these chords signify. To illustrate this point, pay attention to the chord that works in conjunction with the text, "se Deus quiser" (if God wills it). Spanning three whole steps, the chord—D#-F#-A—is a tritone. Long considered by the Catholic Church to be the "devil's interval" due to its dissonance, congadeiros have clearly resignified the chord to fit their own purposes. Indeed, rather than being a devilish sound, congadeiros actually pair its dissonant sound with a supremely positive and hopeful wish, if God wills it. When congadeiros mobilize the tritone chord to index an auspicious occurrence as opposed to a diabolic one, it shows the extent to which practitioners have their own sense of what it means to say something.

This transcription and analysis demonstrate how practitioners use music as a kind of praxis to negotiate the religious boundaries between self and other—between congadeiros and wider social actors. I argue that devotion is a musical performance that is eminently sacred for congadeiros, but it is also eminently socially. Congado functions performatively for practitioners by helping them to build a sense of dignity in their racial and gendered identities. Indeed, they navigate a sense of self through the navigation of sound.

The Efficacy of Sacred Song

The following section illustrates the ways in which music makers craft sonic materials in highly deliberate ways to create an elevated sense of co-presence among people and between people and divine forces. When creating music, congadeiros are primarily concerned with two objectives: to make it aesthetically pleasing and to suit the situation—to know what ends the music serves. Both goals, the aesthetics and the suitability, make the song efficacious (Slobin 2011, 5). In essence, congadeiros construct songs so that they become musically appropriate at particular junctures. Indeed, performing them at suitable times not only expresses the feelings and beliefs of practitioners, it also makes them mediums for actualizing divine presence. Amanda Estefania da Silva spoke to this issue during our conversation together.

Genevieve Dempsey: And the songs, can you talk a little bit about the creation of the music? Where do the songs come from?

Amanda Estefania da Silva: Many of the songs we don't know how to identify. But, the songs, many times, we sing each song in each rhythm. During an arrival, when we are arriving at a festa, you have a song for that arrival. For the mass, there are various parts, you know. Depending on the event that you're at, you have to sing particular songs.

Genevieve Dempsey: For example, Sílvia, your dad, does he say to you, 'Look at this song, it's really important because it was passed down from my parents, from Africa' or

something like this? For example, in addition to the song's symbolism, do you know the history of each song or do you not consider the history connected to each song?

Amanda Estefania da Silva: No, we really don't give it importance. The music is really, the music is really from each origin. How can I explain it. Each song, each song of one's group, is played in the right part at the right time.

Genevieve Dempsey: Excuse me. [The noise of the drums inhibited me from hearing the last part.]

Amanda Estefania da Silva: You always have to put the songs in the right parts, to sing the song at the correct time. (Estefania da Silva 2014)

To many readers, Amanda Estefania da Silva's words might bring to mind the notion of suitability. As Mark Slobin says, "The need for music to be useful tempers the sheer aesthetic pleasure of performance" (Slobin 2011, 5). While I argue that congadeiros are concerned with both suitability and aesthetics, the emphasis that congadeiros place on playing the right songs at the right ritual times is important for understanding how they see their rituals as performing targeted and strategic spiritual work. Both ritual time and the timing of ritual music impact the functioning of congado as well as the meanings that arise from its operationalization.

For example, the payment of promises (*pagamento de promessas*) is a ritual that encapsulates the ways in which congadeiros tailor music to fit the needs of the moment. The ceremony entails circling the church as well as the sacred poles with divine images while singing and drumming in praise of the intercessions granted by Nossa Senhora do Rosário. Congadeiros of the Arturos community at the 2014 festa de Nossa Senhora do Rosário sang the verse "Behold the promise" ("Eis a promessa") repeatedly like a mantra as they continually proceeded around the church. Making the lyrics, "Behold the promise" coincide with performing the promise heightened the efficaciousness of the moment by turning words into action. Singing "Behold the promise" made the sacred words productive in the sense that it allowed participants to embody its essence. The repetition of both lyrics and musical elements for an extended period of time

served to reinforce the continuous presence of the divine. Hence, the lyrics articulated and reinforced the congadeiros' spiritual devotion. This, in turn, created a bridge not only between each other, but also between a worldly realm and an otherworldly one. In many respects, the use of a single phrase to encompass the group's religious intent speaks to the fact that congadeiros often employ rhyming couplets and quatrains, short strophic song forms, and quick, interactive call-and-responses as well as unison singing to convey a great deal of intent in a condensed format.

Similarly, I accompanied the group called Congo Vilão de Dores do Indaiá during the festa of Nossa Senhora in the agrarian city of Dores do Indaiá for one of their religious visitations (*visitações religiosas*) to the homes of the kings and queens. The religious visitation is one of several activities that groups pursue when processing as a royal court (*saindo em cortejo*). *Sair em cortejo* refers to the act of going out into the community to dance, walk, drum, play, and intone songs in honor of Nossa Senhora. The religious visitations, where they stop to bless a person's home or collect a member of the royal court for the procession, help to sacralize the group's musical activities.

At each stopping point, the group typically performs a variety of songs, all of which fulfill a certain function. As the ensemble approaches the home of the awaiting members of the royal court, they sing lyrics recalling moments of arrival and salutation. After singing greetings, they intone songs of thanksgiving and appreciation to the queen and king for providing gastronomical and spiritual sustenance. They conclude with a tune that leads the group and royal court away from the home to converge with the multitude of other groups in the procession. What we might gather from this sequence of events is that in every instance, the music is tailored to suit the exigencies of the situation. Strategy is important because by custom designing the

music to coincide with contextual factors, congadeiros concomitantly engage in presenting or, more accurately, in creating co-presence in the moment.

When congadeiros speak of processions, they are referring to a fundamental aspect of congado: the presence of a royal court. Kings and queens are essential to congado because they give purpose to its functioning. Capitão regente Antônio Maria da Silva, the most senior captain of the Arturos community, related to me,

The boss, the owner of congado, is the queen and king that present Nossa Senhora do Rosário. Congado that doesn't have a king and queen. Is it congado? No, it isn't. Congado today that doesn't have a king and queen—what is it presenting in the middle of the street? (Maria da Silva 2014)

Antônio Maria da Silva summarizes the importance of the king and queen when he says that congado is only congado if it has the royal court to protect and present the embodied image of Nossa Senhora do Rosário. The sacred icons are not merely material representations of Nossa Senhora; congadeiros treat the statues reverently because they embody the divine presence of Nossa Senhora do Rosário.



Figure 49. Antônio Maria da Silva, capitão regente of the Arturos community, and the author spend the afternoon at his home talking about congado.

Unlike the festive queens and kings that change from year to year and often come from outside congado groups, perpetual kings and queens (*reis and rainhas perpétuos*) come from within the congado community and are lifetime leadership positions. For example, the following excerpt makes it evident that queen Elsa Maria Coelho took her responsibilities seriously as a perpetual queen for the Guarda de Moçambique Treze de Maio de Nossa Senhora do Rosário.

Genevieve Dempsey: What is your role in the group?

Elsa Maria Coelho: Rainha de Nossa Senhora da Guia. I've been a queen for thirty-eight years, but I am connected to the house [Guarda de Moçambique Treze de Maio de Nossa Senhora do Rosário] since 1960, when I was two years old.

Genevieve Dempsey: What are the responsibilities of a queen?

Elsa Maria Coelho: Imagine a queen. What does a queen do? A queen, she symbolizes authority—maximum authority and an equal amount of respect. I don't know if you saw yesterday, but when the people arrived, they didn't greet the dancers, they first greeted the banner and then the queen—the authority. It is a respect that's very great. (Maria Coelho 2014)

The court is an important element in congado because it represents the presence of divine forces in human forms. In the following excerpt, Goreth Costa Eredia, *rainha da Estrela Guia* (queen of the Guiding Star) also known as a perpetual queen in the Arturos community, speaks about how embodying Nossa Senhora helps her to guide other congadeiros.

Goreth Costa Eredia: Starting from the moment that I am dressed as a queen I have to have respect because this clothing is sacred. I am living sacredly with God. That moment is unique, it's special. I cannot mix it with another world, with other things. I have to respect my tradition, my beliefs. The body that is there is my spiritual body, not my carnal one. I am not Goreth, I am the queen, star, guide. I have to help my people to pray, to augment their faith, to help them in this path. It is not Goreth, the body. It is the queen.

Genevieve Dempsey: In this way, it is not the queen of material things. It is not the queen that has a gold crown. It is the queen that represents Nossa Senhora.

Goreth Costa Eredia: That is it. The music that they are singing for me, the greetings, that blessing that they ask of me. She is the one who is blessing, not me. I am an instrument of Maria. I am placing my spiritual body in contact with Maria to live that moment for her in this carnal world. The issue is really profound. While I am living, I will tread this path. Every year that I follow this path, is it the same thing? It isn't. Because each time that I go, it is new.

Genevieve Dempsey: Is it because Nossa Senhora is responding to a unique moment?

Goreth Costa Eredia: Yes. The moment that happened last year is uniquely special. I am lending my body to her, my spiritual body, my spirituality for her to accomplish her role of doing sacred things along the path.

Genevieve Dempsey: Yes, last Saturday I went to a Candomblé ritual. What you said made me think of this idea where the person allows herself to be incorporated by the spirit.

Goreth Costa Eredia: Yes, it is to live that moment in her body. Each festa, already passed. It doesn't come back. Thus, in the congado festa, I see it in the same way. The music, it is alive. It is also new. For example, the way that I sang, the feeling that I heard yesterday is not going to be the same sentiment and the way that I am going to sing

tomorrow. Thus the music, the feeling—it is alive. It is not the same music. The time, sun, the circles, everything changed. You are not the same person. That moment is not the one that you made yesterday. (Costa Eredia 2014)

Hence, when congadeiros experience divine co-presence, these sacred moments are perceived and processed through the medium of the body. They call down Nossa Senhora via drums and voice, and in doing so, activate healing and stimulate felt connections. People's bodies undergo transformation through elevated senses of divine co-presence.



Figure 50. Queen Goreth Costa Eredia, dressed in blue, holds the hand of a devotee during the payment of promises (pagamento de promessa) as she walks on her knees to thank Our Lady of the Rosary for the blessings she received or to ask her to fulfill certain requests. This payment of promises occurred during the festa de Nossa Senhora do Rosário, Arturos community, 2014. Photo by author.

Goreth Costa Eredia also highlighted the notion of temporality. Singing a sacred song in one moment cannot be recreated in another for the context has changed. She spoke about a mix of divine timelessness—feeling the sacred presence of Nossa Senhora countless times—and historical time—experiencing divine moments as discrete instances. Music acts as a merger in

the sense that through the sounding instruments and voices, people make divine timelessness converge with historical time—creating music in a particular context (Jones 2013, 211). Notions of temporality, in these instances, have as much to do with a conception of duration as it does with feeling and affective context (Qureshi 1994, 501).

Speaking of sentiment and affective context, the following example demonstrates how *congadeiros* often express sentiments of bonding and commitment to one another in slow, five-part polyphony. Shoulder to shoulder and embracing one another in a large circle under the starry night, the *congadeiros* of the *congo vilão terno* gathered together in song for the last time as a way to mark the end of the five-day *festa* in *Dores do Indaiá*. While they would *sair em cortejo* for other *festas* in the region, they would not come together for this hometown *festa* until the following August. To commemorate and bring closure to the *festa*, members of the fifty-person *guarda* began to intone a slow-moving, five-part polyphonic tune. The musical instruments and drums were silenced and, in the solitude of the darkness, the *congadeiros* sang a song of lament. While it was common for a select group of ten singers to intone songs, all *congadeiros* in the group knew how to harmonize and did so during more informal moments like this one.

The heightened moment represented the culmination of various experiences felt over the course of the *festa* from exhaustion and sacrifice to fulfillment and gratitude. The sentiment of introspection provided a counterpoint to the lively, airy feeling engendered when the instrumentalists played catchy motifs and rapid embellishments, moving the dancers to shuffle, leap, and twirl. The two contrasting emotional and musical registers demonstrate the extent to which practitioners use music to establish particular affective environments at different moments in the rituals. The shared closeness and the spiritual connectedness that practitioners experienced

in that moment, solidified bonds to one another and made their spiritual work meaningful beyond the temporal and spatial bounds of the ritual.

Prior to this moment, the group had just finished the last official part of the festa, the payment of promises. In this variant of the payment of promises, groups rapidly circled the church; some played accordions, drums, and shakers and others took turns improvising dance steps while the dancers imitated the leader. After the payment of promises had finished, the congadeiros gathered in front of the captain's house under the night sky. As the congadeiros stood there, wrapped arm in arm while harmonizing songs, the moment seemed far removed from the boisterous music and dancing that characterized the payment of promises only briefly before. The participants' voices ebbed and flowed—rising, lowering, and wailing to the steady roll of the melody. Tears fell from most everyone in the circle. Through their song, the congadeiros engendered a sense of co-presence—yearning for the recently lived, but already vanished reality.

The Gift of Music

Generosity is another key element that engenders co-presence and serves to strengthen lasting ties between congado groups. A striking example that illustrates the degree to which generosity engenders long lasting connections between groups comes from a ceremony performed during the festa de Liberdade (Festa of Liberation), the annual festa celebrating the abolition of slavery. On May 13, 2014, at the *terreino* (sacred ground) and chapel of the Guardas de Moçambique and Congo Treze de Maio de Nossa Senhora do Rosário, the groups had already completed a full day of activities that included the religious visitations, procession, and congo mass, when the

candombe group appeared. Their arrival was much anticipated given that it was nine in the evening and the festa had begun at eight in the morning. The candombe group from Jaboticatubas, Minas Gerais, traveled to Belo Horizonte to give three candombe drums to the Guarda de Moçambique Treze de Maio de Nossa Senhora do Rosário. The gift of the three drums was significant for the congadeiros because they represented far more than material acquisitions. Once they were given proper instruction on how to play the rhythms, the recipients of the drums would find new ways to express congado.

In candombe, the tambores are crafted from molds that differ from those used in moçambique and congo. Shaped like a short tree trunk with the head of a chalice on top and struck with their bare hands, the tambores are played differently than the large double-headed drums in moçambique and congo. Rather than the melody being sung heterophonically as with moçambique and congo, moreover, the singing is polyphonic. The gift of the tambores, therefore, represented new possibilities for embedding faith within the music itself.

Not only were the tambores a gift of fresh musical and spiritual material, but the present was also a symbolic gesture of communion. The act of giving represented something more than reciprocity; it expressed fellowship between two groups. Late into the night, the small chapel reverberated with the sound of candombe. The singers layered their voices, moving in sonic unison as they synced with the beat of the tambores. It is common practice in congado for leaders to punctuate the songs with brief moments of declaration. The idea of pronouncing “Viva Nossa Senhora do Rosário”, for instance, serves as a collective way of reaffirming their intentions to make Nossa Senhora live on through their beliefs and music making. A vocalist may loudly pronounce “Viva” followed by a person, divine icon, or group’s name, to which the participants respond enthusiastically, “Viva”! On this night, in the middle of pounding tambores and

expressive singing, one of the senior candombe practitioners suddenly crouched to the floor, silencing the drums and causing the voices to fade. From a knelt position, he proclaimed “Viva Nossa Senhora do Rosário” and was answered with a spirited “Viva” from those present. He then declared, “Viva O Divino Espírito Santo (Holy Spirit)”, which was followed by a similarly eager “Viva”. Finally, he announced, “Viva all the groups that are here.” As the participants responded “Viva”, he rose from a knelt position. These moments of declaration represent small, but significant ways in which congadeiros express their collective action in ensuring that certain divine entities remain present in their lives.

Of critical importance to note is that the gift of the tambores, moreover, was given *through* music making. In the limited space of the small chapel, the candombe music makers formed a close-knit semi-circle around the other congadeiros. The act of playing the very tambores that would soon be given as gifts united the congadeiros in a web of affective and musical ties that not only connected them to one another. It also served as a way to unite the sacred tambores, voices, and spiritual forces together.

I argue that Afro-Brazilians engage in acts of gifting music and musical instruments to engender dignity and create co-presence. Co-presence refers to the shared closeness, camaraderie, and spiritual connectedness that people experience when making congado together. Whether it is giving the gift of musical instruments or musically thanking people for providing the meals during the festas, these acts of reciprocal gifting index a communal structure that congadeiros build for survival.

Congadeiros employ the musical gift as a way to create an alternative moral, economic, and social order that stands in contrast to Brazil’s societal norms of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is a set of market-oriented financial measures adopted by the Brazilian government in the 1990s

that play a decisive role in deciding who gains access to citizenship rights, how people experience upward mobility, and the cultural worth attached to practitioners' expressive practices. Practitioners create cultural and social capital that receives very little valorization in neoliberalism because it runs contrary to how "free markets" work. Neoliberal policies that promote avid consumption as a way of social ascendancy marginalize congadeiros, compounding their experiences of racial discrimination and impeding their access to basic goods, services, and opportunities. Gifting, reciprocity, and communal sharing through musical means hold minimal market and social value in a wider environment of material wealth and surplus labor. Within these communities, however, the musical gift is of great importance for it represents the means to construct long-lasting social bonds (Mauss 1967). By creating intimate bonds through music, congadeiros help to reinforce existing social and economic safety nets among themselves. Hence, to counteract this race-based discrimination and compensate for the neoliberal policies, congadeiros give the gift of music as a means to ensure survival.

Congadeiros invest in musical rituals of gifting to engender an individual and collective way of deflecting race-based discrimination as well as affirming kinship rights and obligations. I argue that practitioners use the gift of music for building co-presence, cementing their relationships to one another, exercising agency, and constructing their own moral and economic system of value—all of which deepen their sense of black pride. The giving of music ultimately makes survival possible because the bonds engendered during these rituals bring about a sense of dignity and self-worth. Acquiring personal and collective senses of worth through gifts of music motivate congadeiros to pursue an alternative social, moral, and economic order—a system whose basis is grounded in the idea that mutual collaboration and reciprocity help to improve congadeiros' social circumstances.

I examine how congadeiros create human-to-human co-presence as well as human-to-spirit intimacy through gifts of music. I am interested in the ways in which congadeiros use music not as an escape from everyday life, but rather as a tool for transforming their disenfranchised social standing. Participants' sacred ideals of a divine moral order where social justice and equality predominate are made manifest in the here and now through the gift of music. They exemplify what it feels, looks, and sounds like to include participants in their rituals of popular Catholicism regardless of race, gender, age, and sexual orientation.

What does the musical gift *sound* like for congado participants and in what ways does it *sound* dignity? Congadeiros play interlocking patterns on their drums and harmonize in song as a kind of musical offering—connecting people to each other and to the divine. I contend that through the gift of music, practitioners reinforce not only the human intimacy that can result from face-to-face contact, but also the human-to-spirit intimacies to generate an enduring sense of unity.

Unity is important because in making music together, people realize the value of their traditions. In valorizing their musical expressions, they create sentiments of self-worth and work toward creating a more equitable society. The idea gifting music to one another is a hallmark of congado. Through reciprocal actions of musical gifting, people turn their sacred ideals of equality into reality. The idea of equality is cultivated in congadeiros' discourses, especially in song lyrics. A commonly sung tune has the words, “*Negros* were struck on the body, *negros* felt pain. Today, *negros* pound their chests with much honor and much love.” Through singing, congadeiros express sentiments of equality, honor, love, and survival to show pride in being Afro-Brazilian.

During the festa, social actors carry out an array of rituals as they sing loudly, dance exuberantly, and drum fervently to exclaim their devotion to Our Lady of the Rosary. Congadeiros consider Marian devotion as expressed through music one of the most efficacious ways of establishing personal and collective ties with the divine. The heightened awareness of one another and the sacred during rituals encourages them to translate their religious aspirations into reality. I argue that by expressing prayers and thanks through song, congadeiros are filled with sacred conviction and it is this sacred conviction that encourages them to change their social circumstances. For example, local church authorities declined participation in the 2003 congado festa in Ouro Preto, but congadeiros persisted, relying on their faith in Our Lady of the Rosary to help them organize a successful festa. The festa was so well attended by residents and visiting congado groups that the local church eventually reversed its attitude. The following year, the parish priest delivered the congadeiros' mass, viewing it as a chance to preside over and influence a significant event of popular Catholicism. Hence, sacred conviction encouraged congadeiros to carry on and undertake the festa, thus building their self-esteem and altering their social circumstances. I contend that people experience co-presence by voicing faith through music, which serves to both dignify them and the musical expressions that they create.

Congadeiros perceive the gift of music as the embodiment of connection—an intimacy that motivates them to create dignity. Feelings of confidence and self-valorization as engendered through sacred song encourage congadeiros to counteract race-based discrimination. I contend that music making mediates congadeiros' spiritual devotion, which creates a bridge not only between each other, but also between a worldly realm and an otherworldly one. Intimacy, divine embodiment, and faith intersect in congado to dignify expressive culture and bring about conditions for survival. Notions of self-worth and integrity materialize within congado by means

of giving, from the gifting of drums between groups to the gifting of knowledge among members. Through the musical gift, congadeiros express a sense of black pride; in offering music to one another, they come to understand the value of their own traditions. Recognizing their self-worth, in turn, helps them to become active participants in mobilizing for social change.

Congadeiros offer musical gifts to one another as aural and visual signs that reciprocity and mutual collaboration are active ingredients for building a socioeconomic safety net. The gift of congado indicates a widespread consciousness on the part of Afro-Brazilians that what they create is of value. Self-worth, dignity, and conviction become the mobilizers and sustainers of musical action, guiding congadeiros' behavior as they construct a network of mutual support. Congadeiros exhibit a resiliency of mind and body and a richness of sacred song that not only ensure survival but also offer life.

Concluding Thoughts: The Function of Aesthetics

Congadeiros employ distinct musical elements in rituals to influence participants' perceptions of time, space, and sentiment. How congadeiros move, for example, depends on the ways in which musical factors are employed. Choices regarding musical configurations bring about different kinds of heightened emotional states. Employing particular rhythmic, melodic, or lyrical components, thus, does not function in arbitrary ways in order to realize certain objectives, but rather in deliberate, calculated, and communally agreed upon manners (Lucas 2002; Pereira 2006). Hence, musical elements and patterns are employed strategically at particular junctures to afford the realization of sacred experience for participants.

Pervading the collective camaraderie between peers and their connections to the divine are elements of the visible and invisible, the heard and unheard. When they use aural gestures to communicate to one another during songs or when they create interlocking sequences with their ankle shakers, they are molding music to speak to distinct spiritual registers and to engender particular affective states. This chapter is a meditation on the ways in which congadeiros manipulate music in strategic ways to afford particular experiences through the playing out of particular sensibilities. Shaping and reshaping musical elements motivate congadeiros to become aware of divine forces as well as one another.

Chapter 4

The Aural and Physical Movement of Spirituality

Congadeiros engender spiritual flow through musical movement and physical mobility. As we witness in the following examples, congado's melodic and harmonic progressions move in sync with the physical mobility of practitioners' bodies. In many respects, a kind of simultaneity forms between musical and kinesthetic mobility. It must remain clear, nonetheless, that what I am not arguing is that one can locate the entirety of a community's geopolitical and sacred history, evaluative criteria, and aesthetic frameworks in their kinesthetic experiences of movement (Phillips 2013, 399). I contend that factors of history, ethos, and aesthetics are located in congadeiros' non-movements just as much as they reside in their physical, spiritual, and musical movements. At the same time, I am arguing for a kind of complementarity between movement and non-movement that leads to a sense of holistic spiritual identity for congadeiros. Within congadeiros' sacred spaces, movement expresses a kind of spiritual identity that complements the spiritual, social, and racial work that congadeiros enact in contexts of non-movement. Thus, congadeiros' movements and non-movements are additive, constitutive elements that converge in the making of a collective whole.

Congado rituals that encapsulate the notion of movement are the "arrivals" (*reinado de cheganças* or *cheganças*). The arrivals refer to the meeting of two groups for the first time during a procession. Sebastião Correa Braga, the oldest member in the Guarda de Moçambique Treze de Maio de Nossa Senhora do Rosário, explained "arrivals" to me in the following manner.

Sebastião Correa Braga: The *reinado de cheganças* is linked to the arrival of a group. It is the encounter of groups. The *cheganças* (arrivals) are encounters of one group (*reinado*) with another.

Genevieve Dempsey: I see, *cheganças* are when one group encounters another one.

Sebastião Correa Braga: One group comes face to face with another. They arrive and greet one another. When one captain greets another one, it's called *cheganças*. (Correa Braga 2014)

Even though groups prepare for these interactive moments, a group's ability to maintain one's respective pulse in the moment is especially difficult given that the groups' sounds often blur in such close contexts. Often, the close proximity of the drum sections creates interference and causes the two groups either to start playing at the same tempo or to dismantle one group's musical cohesion.

Take, for example, the first encounter between the Guarda de Moçambique de Treze de Maio de Nossa Senhora do Rosário and the Guarda de Congo de Jatobá that occurred at the Jatobá festa in 2014. The groups encountered one another on the road as one was heading away from their morning prayers at the chapel and towards the home that was hosting breakfast and one was arriving at the festa in the early morning hours. Instead of ceasing to sing upon greeting each other, they continued to play while the banner bearers from each guard exchanged religious banners. The banner bearers passed the sacred object over each of the participants' heads and in turn, they bow in reverence. This symbolic exchange symbolized a type of personalized greeting. Meanwhile, the captains came together to sign the cross in a mutual way—an act of respect and goodwill towards one another. During the groups' salutation, the music remained constant—grounding and maintaining the overall interaction. In this moment of exchange, recognition, and intimacy, each group's goal was to avoid synchronization by maintaining its own unique polyrhythm.



Figure 51. This photo depicts a *chegança*—the meeting of two groups while they parade during a festa. Here the group *Moçambique Treze de Maio de Nossa Senhora do Rosário* encounters the group *congo de Jatobá* during the Jatobá festa, 2014. Photo by author.

According to the *congadeiros*, in times of close intimacy, to remain steady in one's meter is not only to weather musically vulnerable moments, but also to endure socially precarious situations. Participants today are conscious of being kind and compassionate towards other *congadeiros*, but in the past, these musical encounters were seen as opportune moments for defeating their opponents by derailing their rhythmic flow. Each group trained for musical competency and prayed for spiritual fortification to be musically and mentally protected in moments of competition. In the early twenty-first century, goodwill and helpfulness characterize the encounters. If a group loses the beat or becomes unsynchronized, it is due to a musical mistake, not because of hostility from another group.

Discussing congado in terms of musical synchrony and uniqueness opens up a conversation about how guardas regard their individual place within the community of the rosary (Anderson 1989). Indeed, the notion of musical distinction versus musical overlap demonstrates a second theme in congado regarding the presence of both individuality and unity. Congadeiros see themselves as simultaneously collective and discrete. On the one hand, they recognize that all groups are bonded through the fellowship of the rosary. They travel to participate in one another's festas because they believe themselves to be agents in building communal religious identifications. Through the collective making of devotion, they reinforce lasting bonds between humans as well as heighten human-to-spirit intimacies. When speaking of sonic collectivity, congadeiros refer not only to those guardas that meet face to face to participate in the festa, but also to an imagined aural and embodied community. Whether emplaced or imagined, congadeiros conceive of their community as united under one voice. On the other hand, the individual beads of the rosary represent the distinct identity and sound of each group. But even in their sonic distinctiveness, single congado groups shape the musical elements to activate both a greater sense of self and unity with other congadeiros. This interplay between musical individuality and collectivity can be productively shown by means of a musical transcription. The following transcription captures a moment in the 2014 festa of the Jatobá brotherhood when a moçambique group passed by my video camera as they paraded in the procession. To produce this transcription, repeated listenings were necessary to parse out the individual percussion lines. The final notated form demonstrates the level of rhythmic specialization that a listener might not initially hear in such a loud, messy soundscape. But, the parsing out of individual lines is important because musicians themselves must maintain these discrete rhythmic modules to produce such an overlapping, cacophonous milieu. Hence, on the one hand, the transcription is

intended to show the rhythmic individuality of the interlocking lines. That is, the instruments within a single group retain a sense of independent musical movement. There is a sense of measured specificity to the seemingly disordered soundscape. On the other hand, in addition to demonstrating a sense of aural independence, the transcription is also meant to convey a sense of overarching aural unity—both within the group and across groups. In fact, what is of critical importance here is to reinforce the notion that in moving along during the procession and crossing physical boundaries, they also cross aural ones. They become unified both in movement and sound. The musicians work together to contribute to a wall of sound that both indexes and begets unity. Indeed, it is a unity that arises from difference. In other words, instrumentalists within individual groups create interlocking musical lines in such a way as to merge undivided sound with ceaseless movement.

Figure 52. Musical transcription of the percussion parts played by a moçambique group during the Jatobá festa, 2014. The patterns played by the percussionists show the individual, though interlocking nature of the rhythmic modules.

Moçambique-Jatobá

♩=120

Surdo (bigger drum)

Caixa (smaller drum)

Gunga 1

Gunga 2

Gunga 3

Gunga 4

When congadeiros parade in the procession, they move as individual groups as well as a collectivity. In many respects, they intone their discrete musical elements not to sound individuality, but rather to do quite the opposite: to sound union. That is, they need not play the same musical lines in order to create a sense of togetherness. Playing singular yet interlocking lines, congadeiros reinforce a sense of unboundedness that connects them to one another as well as to the sacred sphere.

Procession as Pilgrimage

Although the traditional concept of pilgrimage connotes the idea of worshipers undertaking sacred journeys to physical destinations like shrines and sacred sites, in many respects, the procession is akin to pilgrimage. What Philip V. Bohlman says in relation to pilgrims also applies to *congadeiros*. He writes, “The sacred song of the pilgrim opens the way of the pilgrim. The song itself becomes the template for the sacred journey. As intimate as the individual sacred journey is, however, it is never taken alone, but rather in communion with those sharing the way” (Bohlman 2013, 173). In traveling along a physical pathway, devotees intimately interact with each other and *Nossa Senhora* through the giving of offerings and the receiving of grace. It is the religious intimacy set in motion by song and dance that changes their orientation towards sonic, spiritual, spatial, and embodied experiences. Practitioners undergo spiritual transformation not only through their own sonic and physical movement in the processions, but also as a result of their joint movement with the object of their devotion—the sacred image of *Nossa Senhora*. Hence, passage, devotion, and blessing are not only linked, it is only through their interconnectedness that the maximum potential of spiritual work can be fulfilled.

In traveling from one religious space to another, *congadeiros* infuse the journey with sacred meaning (*ibid.*, 2013). Whether walking while singing praises to *Nossa Senhora* or visiting the homes of perpetual kings and queens to gather them for the grand procession, sacred song not only accompanies but also gives purpose to their journeying. In fact, music consecrates their mobility.

Singers, drummers, and dancers not only move through time and space, but as they move, they fill the space with sacred music making and meaning. Practitioners participate in sounding a

moving presence to connect with one another and to the sacred realm. Ordinary and extraordinary at the same time, music that is movement-oriented permeates congadeiros' lives. In fact, sacred travel becomes routine travel for congadeiros. Practitioners follow familiar pathways of sacred music making because they have activated and continue to activate human and divine interconnection. Indeed, music makers employ sonic expression to give renewed relevance to the spaces through which they move.

By moving through space with thundering music, congadeiros make themselves heard. In many respects, the public nature of congado intersects and overlaps with notions of intimacy. How might professing one's faith in a public forum simultaneously reinforce one's conviction and responsibility to oneself and to community members, thereby reconstituting mutual intimacy with one another? Intimacy can be just as public as it is private. In fact, perhaps intimacy becomes even more impactful when it enters the public arena and transgresses extant norms about appropriate social behavior in common areas (Herzfeld 1997; Stokes 2010). I contend that openly sounding one's faith-based beliefs in a public setting creates an intimate co-presence and pushes people to confront emotion and affect in places outside the private domain. The presence of intimacy in the intermixing of public and private arenas not only contributes to how people sense space through sound, but also contributes to how they reinvent themselves through movements across space.

Locating the Body in Processions

Many of the festas of Nossa Senhora last for days and encompass extensive periods of walking, singing, and dancing. Congadeiros say that faith sustains their devotion and allows them to

withstand physically arduous moments. The spiritual journey is transformative because the body undergoes visceral change. The sacred intersects with the physical in instances like the payment of promises where people often walk on their knees to thank Nossa Senhora for answering their petitions. Through physical feats, divine co-presence is made manifest. The body becomes the perceiver of the sacred, the medium for their ancestors, and the creator of musical sound. They channel the adversity and successes of their ancestors and weather the physical discomfort of processions because they believe kinesthetic experience to be inseparable from celestial experience.

Congadeiros carry images of their most beloved saints—Nossa Senhora, São Benedito, and Santa Efigênia when they parade in the procession during the festa. Practitioners take turns throughout the procession in bearing the weight of the *andor*—the platform on which Nossa Senhora sits enveloped in colorful flowers. During particular moments in the procession, practitioners conduct rituals to transfer the sacred image from one group to the next, thus ensuring that various groups have the opportunity to carry her divine presence. Participants often talk about how they strive to perform their most skillful, beautiful songs for Nossa Senhora as she moves through the procession, bestowing blessings upon them. As they offer song and dance in her honor, she rewards them with blessings. It is of critical importance to note that the process of offering song in exchange for blessings occurs by means of movement. The procession is movement and through movement comes the spiritual transformation of congadeiros' bodies and minds.

In the following section, congadeira Joyce Fernanda Aparecida de Sousa provides a window onto the interdependent nature of devotion, pilgrimage, joy, and blessing for congadeiros. Joyce Fernanda Aparecida de Sousa is a member of a moçambique group from

Dores do Indaiá. In our conversation we talked about various issues, from proper uniform attire to musical competence among members. At one moment in the interview, our discussion turned towards the following:

Genevieve Dempsey: What are the most impactful moments of the festa for you?

Joyce Fernanda Aparecida de Sousa: Look, the moments that leave us with goosebumps are the moments when we, as a group, enter into the church singing. We do this almost every day, but it seems like it's the first time we enter it because we become very excited. The procession is the principal part of the festa and it's important for everyone. And the payment of promises that happens around the church is also a moment where we become very excited. And we like it a lot. When all the people dance, those are the moment that we most look forward to. We always look forward to the procession and then the payment of promises. I think that these are the most impactful. I believe this is true even for the whole city.

Genevieve Dempsey: Could you talk about what the characteristics are that make this so important? For example, I see in the procession how the sound of each group mixes with the other. Everyone is happy. In my opinion it would be for this reason, but in your opinion why are the procession and the payment of promises so important?

Joyce Fernanda Aparecida de Sousa: Truly because of faith. I believe that it's the moment when the people are there giving thanks. The moment of being closer to the image, the very image. You know, she is walking in our city. She is making a walking journey in our city. I think that this is very pretty. It is a unique moment for the city. She is passing by the door of everyone. It's a moment, I believe, where she is blessing. It's not that she's never blessed before, but it's a moment where she is blessing the city. Last year we had rain. But regardless we continued to dance in the rain because we couldn't leave the image alone in the rain. Thus, it is a moment of a lot of faith, of believing a lot in what's happening, of believing in the blessing that comes from her. For us, I think that one of the characteristics would be this. Our faith and the diverse presences passing in the streets. The same also goes for the payment of promises because it is a moment of thanks from the individual. If she received a grace, then it is a moment to be giving thanks for this grace by dancing. It is also a very beautiful moment. (Aparecida de Sousa 2014)

Joyce's words conveyed the public nature of devotion. Congadeiros drum and play instruments with boisterous and exuberant enthusiasm as they step, jump, and carry the image of Nossa Senhora in the procession. She showed how receiving a blessing from Nossa Senhora was both profoundly intimate and personal as well as exceedingly public. This intersection between the public and the personal stands in stark contrast to the intimacy of devotion that we witnessed

previously with the coronation of the festive queens and kings in the enclosed spaces of the Arturos' private chapel. The procession, in many ways, externalizes the intimacy of the sacred musical experience. It transforms what was once a personalized offering and blessing into a collective, shared journey. Hence, I argue that movement precipitates the passage from the personal to the public.

During the interview, after listening to Joyce's previous statement and reflecting on what she said, I commented:

Genevieve Dempsey: Certainly. I really liked your observation about how the saints—Nossa Senhora, Santa Efigênia, and São Benedito—walk in the streets blessing people, being present. I think that this is really beautiful. The idea of the movement of religiosity within the city.

Joyce Fernanda Aparecida de Sousa: It truly comes from belief. I believe that we dance for this. She is there and everyone is doing their performance for her. Doing, you know, what they have best to offer in that moment. And she walks while the others pass by in front of her. And she walks throwing this blessing to the people. Wow, money can't buy this. It's very beautiful. We like it a lot. Wow. And it's tiring and we say that next year, I'm not coming back. But we come back with the same disposition as we do every year. We awake [on the days of the festa] extremely tired. But our weariness also goes away in the first hour. You have to like it, you have to have faith because if you don't, you don't do it. It's three very tiring days, but it's also of much faith. (Aparecida de Sousa 2014)

Joyce's words were striking for the ways in which they showed music to chart congadeiros' sacred pathways in the procession. Indeed, as the congadeiros moved through the streets, their sacred music articulated belief and, in turn, Nossa Senhora's blessings articulated spiritual love. Hence, the interplay between music and movement created a way for congadeiros not only to move forward along a physical pathway, but also to navigate a spiritual passage toward the sacred.

In the largest sense, Joyce's words resonated with what I had witnessed during the festa in Dores do Indaiá, but her observations were particularly reminiscent of a moment in the

procession when the moçambique group that was carrying the image of Nossa Senhora would parade forward, but then pause at certain moments and sing songs of devotion to Nossa Senhora. The interplay between movement and rest not only brought the two temporal frameworks into relief, but it also served to illuminate the different ways in which congadeiros make and remake sacred space. What is of critical importance here is that music provided the medium through which congadeiros actualized the meaning and emotion embedded in these instances of passage and pause.

An examination of the following ethnographic moment not only reveals much about mobility and music, but also of affect and faith. I point to these factors because their interplay is instructive of how ritual activity is grounded in the sonic demonstration of divine affect. I begin by describing a moment in the procession that took place during the five-day festa in the rural town of Dores do Indaiá (August 2014).

Filling in the space where the groups have just paraded by in the procession, the crowd moved closer to the sacred image of Nossa Senhora on a carrier that rested upon a raised platform. The priest moved to the front of the platform and used sacred water to bless statues of Nossa Senhora do Rosário that the crowd displayed with outstretched hands. Only a few minutes before, this space atop the hill was bustling with clamorous drums and enthusiastic singing. Although the majority of the emphatic drumming had moved further down the hill at this time in the procession, there was still one moçambique group playing music and awaiting the moment when the sacred image of Nossa Senhora do Rosário was transferred to them to continue the procession. Standing in front of the sacred image, the moçambique members flanked the pathway. Waiting in expectation, they played hand shakers as the accordionist stood in the center, pumping the bellows of his instrument.

Once the sacred image was transferred to the moçambique group, they began to parade, following the path that the other groups had charted. Four people carried her image as they walked at a fast, but steady pace. Her white and yellow flowers bobbed up and down with the rhythm of their movements. Two lines of moçambique participants surrounded Nossa Senhora's image. They maintained the forward motion of the group by rhythmically stomping their feet as well as shaking the percussive instruments attached to their ankles (*gungas*). The rhythmic pattern that they created with the *gungas* was reminiscent of the steady hum produced by rail wheels turning on a moving train. Meanwhile, the drums—*tarol* (snare drum), *caixa* (single, animal-skin drum head), and handshakers played an interlocking ostinato pattern that also helped to propel the moçambiqueiros forward. Practically drowned out by the percussion ostinato, the faint melodic embellishments from the accordion (*sanfona*) added a kind of florid tinge to an otherwise mechanistic sound. At certain times during the procession, the group would continue to play, but then they would stop to allow the heavy image to be transferred from the wearied shoulders of one carrier to the next.



Figure 53. Members of a moçambique group pause to sing songs during the procession in Dores do Indaiá.

At another point in the procession, the group stopped, but this time it was to sing praises to Nossa Senhora in sweet, melodious song. What is striking about this introspective moment is that the *congadeiros*' beautiful call-and-response polyphony was practically inaudible. Their song became overshadowed by the continuous churning from the drum section that, at this point, had broken off to play their own musical inventions. Thus, with no distance separating one section from the other, one cohort sang in flowing polyphony while the other section drummed in exuberant synchrony. With one group declaiming song and the other playing percussion in close proximity, the net result was an incongruous mix of a slow tempo, exalted polyphony and a fast tempo, rolling rhythmic ostinato. After playing separately for a couple of minutes, their musical lines began to converge. With a crescendo from the snare drum that guided and pushed the two

musical sections back into rhythmic alignment, they re-commenced their forward movement in the procession.

Thus, while congadeiros specify a right time and place for a procession and while they also ensure that music has a central place in its unfolding, it is evident that congadeiros accept a great range of ways in which the procession *sounds*. This openness to different melodic, harmonic, textural, timbral, and rhythmic combinations derives from the fact that processions are both intimate settings and public spectacles. Indeed, the juxtaposition of introspective polyphony and rowdy drumming embodies this duality of intimacy and publicness par excellence.

The Procession as Ritual

If one were to frame the procession as ritual, there are historically two dominant ways of understanding how rituals perform work. Ethnomusicologist Travis A. Jackson maps out the meaning of ritual according to scholars who see ritual as bounded and immutable. He writes,

In one such grouping, commentators have tightly circumscribed the concept such that “definitions of ritual have tended to share a presupposition about their object. [Ritual has been] indigenously represented as ‘ancient’ and unchanging, [connected] to ‘tradition,’ the sacred, to structures that have generally been represented in stasis” (Kelly and Kaplan 1990, 120). In this view, rituals are essentially conservative and devoted to maintaining a status quo or (re)establishing social and/or cosmic equilibrium. Those performing rituals, then, follow relatively rigid scripts from which deviations might be dangerous. It is precisely in this sense that many everyday speakers equally attach the word to activities that carry great social significance and to others that call for formulaic adherence to a more or less predetermined sequence of events. (Jackson 2012, 137)

In contradistinction to this scholarly camp, scholars like Comaroff (1985) believe that ritual is performative to its core. Rather than being repetitive, ritual can be used to grasp, construct, and remake the world according to one’s own vision. This concept closely aligns with how

congadeiros conceive the procession. Because the procession has been part and parcel of congado rituals since the coronation of kings and queens in colonial Brazil, people might expect that the procession's longevity and relevance to congadeiros' daily lives derive from the timeless, unchanging nature of their rituals. The reality, however, is far more nuanced. Equally important to the processions continued recurrence throughout the centuries has been their continued innovation. What impels congadeiros to participate in the procession is not its stasis, but rather its flexibility to signify in the here and now. In other words, I argue that the procession's historicalness is not in tension with its presentness. Hence, this idea strikes a balance between the two camps of scholars—one that sees ritual as static and one that sees it as malleable.

Congadeiros structure rituals so that the repeated performance of ancestral traditions become increasingly more meaningful the more they align their beliefs, symbols, and actions with the changing fabric of their lives today. Another procession that illustrates this point is one that occurred during the Belo Vale festa. The procession demonstrated how rituals can be infused with history, while also serving as a site for the performative transformation of content and meaning today.

After the congo mass, the groups assembled one-by-one in preparation for the procession. Leaving the church, the line of groups proceeded to an adjacent museum that lined the perimeter of a dust swept courtyard. The museum had a tile roof and two walls, but no doors and the large windows in the walls gaped open, allowing the air to waft in. Presented neatly and didactically, the museum contained relics of slavery. Chains, farm and torture tools, slaving documents, and life-size scenes comprised the artifacts that bore witness to such an unconscionable time. On that morning in August 2014, to this history of subjugation, the congadeiros responded with

clamorous drumming and resonant song. Members of the congo group Nossa Senhora do Rosário e Santa Efigênia drummed so loudly within the small confines of the museum that the vibrations from the drums entered our bodies. The participants not only synced their drums and *meia-luas* (tambourines) together; in that space of remembering, the vibrations united them and invoked their ancestral spirits.

As the group exited the museum, they moved into position to lead the procession as it moved forward in an arrowlike fashion down the town's main thoroughfare. Because the particular congo group that I was accompanying had been the first to arrive at the festa that morning, they had not only received the opportunity to retrieve the kings and queens from their homes in the morning, but they also held the prestigious honor of leading the procession in the afternoon. The group was proud of this distinction given their significant efforts to be there. Knowing that Belo Vale was a three-hour drive from Ouro Preto, they woke up at four in the morning to arrive early for the day's festivities. Thus, when the group departed from the museum towards the direction of the banquet, the congadeiros moved along in ceremonious regality—playing their instruments and chanting in antiphonal verses.

While I was filming the procession, an organizer of the festa approached and urged me to communicate to my group that they should accelerate the procession's pace or else it would not coordinate with the timing of the lunch. His words caught me off guard and I explained to him that I was not "in charge" of the group. Just moments after explaining that I had no directorial sway over the group's decisions to lead the procession in either a plodding or energetic way, the group did something that surprised us both. The two lines parted down the center, and each side flanked the other groups as they drummed and moved against the flow of procession. Seeing the group playing and parading in opposite motion to the other groups in the procession delighted

me, dismayed the organizer, and confused the other participants. “What are they doing?” he asked. “I have no idea,” I responded. Later, I asked the members about the reasoning behind their actions and they spoke about how they thought that a momentary break in the formality of the procession would infuse its “sluggish” nature with new enthusiasm and energy. Hence, the procession is deeply important to the functioning of congado for it allows both historical embodiment—the experience of passing through the slavery museum—and performative creativity in the present—breaking with the established rules of the procession. In many respects, the procession represents a historical and future-oriented medium through which congadeiros bring their ritual activity to bear on other aspects of their social and material worlds.

Stasis and Its Meanings

The previous section captured the meaning of movement in the procession, but how does the music *sound* when congadeiros are not moving? How might musicians tailor music so that it affords particular experiences as well as responds to the unique exigencies of the ritual moment? In referring to pilgrimage in Europe, Philip V. Bohlman writes, “The musical journey must mix and remix itself through the performance of music, relying on the capacity of repertoires to respond to constantly shifting boundaries and the ways these mark the worlds through which the pilgrim’s way ceaselessly passes” (Bohlman 2013, 93). In many respects, his words also speak to the transformative nature of congado as it moves from stages of ceaseless movement to stages of non-movement. As the aforementioned example demonstrates, congadeiros structure their songs during processions to reflect and activate sonic unity in ceaseless movement. At the same time, there are moments in which congadeiros must tailor the music to fit rituals that have less physical

movement, but that nonetheless retain the forward motion of rituals. That is, in devotional contexts when congadeiros are not physically moving, they adapt the music to fit moments of physical non-movement, while still maintaining the ritual's musical movement.

One such example that bears this idea out is the raising of the banner that occurred at the Winter Festival on the campus of the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG). Standing in concentric circles around the area where the sacred poles and banners were to be raised, congadeiros intoned songs whose lyrics narrated and mobilized the actions that congadeiros followed during each stage of the banner raising. In one of the moments that I captured with the video camera, captain Pedrina de Lourdes Santos called the congadeiros forward to come and kiss the banner, a sign of their enduring homage and devotion to Our Lady of the Rosary. The physical action of kissing the banner connects practitioners to the divine. Not only does Pedrina refer to this action with words, but the lyrics themselves also speak of that very action. The following transcription notationally captures what happened sonically in the ritual. Upon first hearing the short song, it seemed easily transcribable to me, but upon attempting to notate its musical elements, the task proved far more difficult given the ways in which the rhythmic pulses aligned and unaligned. Nonetheless, the challenge of rendering oral song into written form proved fruitful for the larger sonic and religious dynamics that it revealed.

Figure 54. This transcription captures the opening song from a ceremony called the raising of the banner (*levantamento do mastro*), which signals the official beginning of a festa and/or event. This particular song occurred during the raising of the banner at the Winter Festival (*Festival do Inverno*) that occurred at the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG).

Raising of the Banner

♩ = 86

18/8

Solo

Os Pre - tin - hos do Ro - sá - rio Quer ban - dei - ra

Chorus

Drums

2

Solo

Quer ban - dei - ra pra bei - jar Quer ban - dei - ra

Chorus

Dr

3

Solo

Os Pre - tin - hos do Ro - sá - rio Quer ban - dei - ra

Chorus

Os pre - tin - hos do Ro - sá - rio Quer ban - dei - ra

Dr

Figure 54. (Continued)

4 2

Solo

Quer ban - dei - ra pra bei - jar Quer ban - dei - ra

Chorus

Quer ban - dei - ra - pra bei - jar Quer ban - dei - ra

Dr

5

Solo

Chorus

Dr

6

Solo

Os Pre - tin - hos do Ro - sá - rio Quer ban - dei - ra

Chorus

Dr

Figure 54. (Continued)

The musical score is divided into three systems, each with measures 7, 9, and 11 indicated at the beginning. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat).

- System 1 (Measures 7-8):**
 - Solo:** Melodic line starting with a quarter rest, followed by eighth and quarter notes. Lyrics: "Quer ban-dei-ra pra bei-jar Quer ban-dei - ra".
 - Chorus:** Silent.
 - Drums:** Rhythmic pattern of eighth and quarter notes with 'x' marks indicating specific beats.
- System 2 (Measures 9-10):**
 - Solo:** Silent.
 - Chorus:** Silent.
 - Drums:** Continues the rhythmic pattern.
- System 3 (Measures 11-12):**
 - Solo:** Silent.
 - Chorus:** Silent.
 - Drums:** Continues the rhythmic pattern, ending with a double bar line.

Although there are only three differentiated instrumental sections, soloist, chorus, and drums, the group is actually producing four different layers as the sung word has a dual role as melodic rhythm and textual rhythm. In other words, the song comes across economically with

three voices, but a closer look complicates this picture. There are four levels of textual meaning: the soloist, the chorus that harmonizes the soloist, the drums, and the interaction between the melody and the text. For example, note that the lyrics have their own rhythm/accent apart from the rhythm of the melody. Thus, when you combine the text and melody together, the combination of the two produces a new phenomenon. Furthermore, the varying meters that comprise this short segment also serve to heighten the musical elements. The melody is in mixed meter while the drum is in duple meter.

With the various competing metrics at play, how does the subtle complexity of the different voices affect the listener's hearing? For example, if one listens to the entrance of the chorus on the refrain, there is no sense of a firm downbeat. This is illustrative of the extent to which the solo, chorus, and drums do not line up rhythmically in obvious ways. In what ways, then, do the rhythmic, melodic, and textual gestures function? That is, I ask, what does the music afford the practitioners who conduct this ritual? Unlike the music of the procession that is meant for dancing and walking, the music here audibly gestures at something else. I argue that the constant repetition of the music functions like a mantra so that the practitioners enter into a musical flow with one another. Because this is the first song of the banner raising, the song emotionally prepares practitioners for the physical and spiritual work that they will have to do to collectively raise the banner. The song's repetition, in functioning as a mantra, spiritually moves *congadeiros* from the human to the astral plane as opposed to physically moving them—like the songs during the procession. Over and over again, *congadeiros* repeat the lines, “The black people of the Rosary/We want the banner/We want to kiss the banner/We want the banner.” The mantra-like song is not intended to take them anywhere. Rather, the goal is to create spiritual

movement by rendering fluid the borders between the worldly and the otherworldly. In this respect, there is spiritual passage even within their stationary bodies.

Part of what makes the mantra-like feeling of the song is that the accented and unaccented beats of the rhythm are constant, but “out of focus.” Practitioners do not have a sharp sense of the downbeat. When the metric is clear, for example, you can dance and follow along. In these instances, the metric elements function in service of the danceable tunes. But, here, the tune is not for dancing, but rather for something entirely different—to create a repetitive, churning sense of flow. The rhythmic patterns overlap, the chorus and solo parts imbricate, and the drums blur the beginnings and endings of phrases to produce a feeling of constant continuity. The overall beat becomes regular not despite, but because of the irregularity of the rhythmic parts. That is, even though the metric accents of the lyrics do not match up with the melodic accents, the voices together create a pulsing ostinato. In measure two, the listener begins to feel a different sense of the ostinato because, for the first time, the melodic accents match those of the lyrical ones. In fact, in measure two, the text, melody, and drum align on the middle of the word “bandeira” (banner), which only serves to reinforce the centrality of their object of devotion. Put differently, because the drum is in duple meter and the melody and text are in triple meter, when they finally align on the word banner, their intersection underlines the *raison d’être* of carrying out the ritual in the first place—to raise the sacred banner.

In the diagram, the heavy accents are indicated with a large circle, the slightly weaker beats with a medium circle, and the rhythmic subdivisions with a small circle.

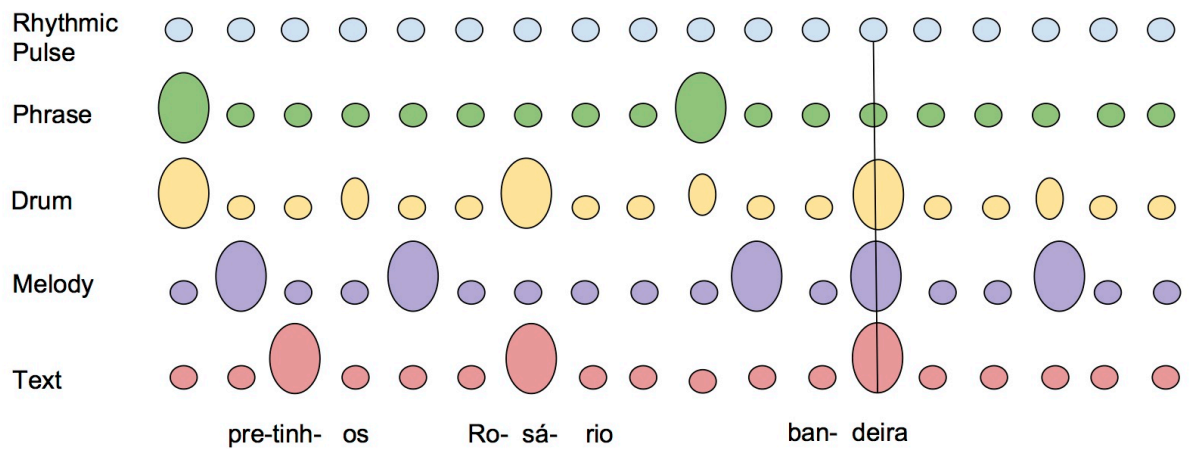


Figure 55. This chart illustrates the various moments of rhythmic accent alignment and disalignment in the song’s phrases, drums, melody, and text. Notice that all of the rhythmic stresses align on the word *bandeira* or banner, arguably the most important word in a ritual whose purpose is to raise the sacred banner.

Congadeiros use the song lyrics to create a sense of collectivity. The lyrics are:

Os pretinhos do Rosário/ Quer bandeira,
The black people of the Rosary/ We want the banner,
 Quer bandeira pra beijar/ Quer bandeira.
We want the banner to kiss/ We want the banner.

Figure 56. Song lyrics from a banner raising ceremony

In the first measure, they refer to the “black people of the Rosary,” but then, in the second measure, they switch to the third person, singular form of “we”. By moving the subject from “they” to “we,” the linguistic change heightens the feeling of collectivity and immediacy among the group. As such, they not only refer to a wider community of Afro-Brazilians, but they also position their own collective body at the very center of devotional action. Furthermore, when the soloist and chorus sing the same verses and refrains antiphonally, it bolsters their sense of physical and sonic unity.

Gesture and the Supernatural World

To what extent do physical, aural, and oral gestures become media for engendering spiritual movement? How do people “say something” about divine connection through musical means? In the following section, I outline how music, sung word, and physical gesture function together as a single unit to anchor and activate quotidian and divine experience. I argue that it is the combination of the somatic, musical, and lyrical more than just the lyrical alone that mobilizes people’s communication with the celestial kingdom. Larry Zbikowski’s distinction between the purpose of music and language is particularly illustrative for the discussion at hand. He writes,

[...]one of the reasons humans have kept both language and music around is because they have different functions. The most primary and basic function of language within human culture is to direct the attention of another person to objects or concepts within a shared referential frame (Tomasello 1999, Chapter 5). The most primary and basic function of music is to provide sonic analogues for various dynamic processes that are central to human experience, processes that include the movements of our body through space (Zbikowski 2008a), and the physiological transformations associated with emotions (Zbikowski 2011, 91-92).

In many respects, Zbikowski argues here as well as in other instances in the chapter that music and gesture can access dynamic human processes that are otherwise unreachable through the spoken word. Zbikowski’s notion dovetails with my larger argument that *congado* is a multi-textured phenomenon composed of aural, kinesthetic, spiritual, and visual inputs. Because the dense, variegated nature of *congado* is evident to anyone who experiences it in close physical proximity, attempting to render it in Western concert music notation might detract from portraying it in its sonic fullness (Tagg 1982, 41-42). The notational system might also privilege certain evaluative criteria over others and therefore contribute to a disjuncture between what is important to the researcher and what is salient for the practitioner. Nonetheless, I suggest that the following notational and graphical systems, derived from close analyses of ethnographic videos

that I filmed in the field, help to illustrate meaningful aspects of congado's essence. Indeed, the following transcriptions and charts are meant to serve as notational heuristics, not as comprehensive notational analyses. In this respect, I attempt to combine Western concert music notation strategies with ethnographic fieldwork to analyze the collaborative, interactive, and kinesthetic nature of congado.

In a conversation with Antônio Eustáquio Santos and Zé Bengala from the Arturos community, they spoke of the extent to which physical and musical gestures are critical tools of communication. They said that when moving as a musical bloc, it is difficult to communicate through normal speech so as to give directions, signal for a slowing down or speeding up of the group, or indicate a temporary change in soloist. Instead of speaking directly with someone, they rely on physical gesture, aural cues, and improvised lyrics to embed meaning and actions within sacred song, that is, lyrical and physical gestures become musical grounds from which to act.



Figure 57. José Bonifácio da Luz (Zé Bengala), captain of congo from the Arturos community at the Jatobá festa, 2014. Photo by author.

In the following excerpt, Antônio Eustáquio Santos explains how congadeiros improvise verses to communicate during events where colloquial speech would otherwise interrupt the flow of praise singing.

Genevieve Dempsey: Antônio, what I am sensing now is that you communicate a lot with music and with gestures and less with spoken language to indicate things.

Antônio Eustáquio Santos: Yes, just so. We communicate a lot through song. Let's suppose, if I am praise singing and I have something to do, I have to leave there. I sing, "I am going there," when Márcio is passing by. In the music I speak to him, inviting him to come in my place so that I can leave. Everything is by means of gesture in music, in song.

Genevieve Dempsey: Why do you think that placing communication inside the music makes things more significant instead of speaking? What changes?

Antônio Eustáquio Santos: Because, let's suppose. If I am praise singing, I am not going to have a way of speaking with him. I have to stop singing in order to talk with him. I am going to stop the whole group. By speaking to him, by singing, he is going to respond to my request. And like that, he comes and takes my role and I leave to go do what I need to do. If I need to bring the queen to another procession, I can't stop that procession to communicate with them speaking. I have to speak with them by means of the music to not stop the power of the procession. (Eustáquio Santos 2014)

Here Antônio demonstrates a kinesthetic analogue to his lyrical gesture. The improvised lyrics describe his intentions as well as encourage others to act. Indeed, being trained in lyrical improvisation allows congadeiros to respond to and change the environment through which they move.

Zé Bengala also notes that because of the congo's intense drumming and singing, it inhibits him from orally cuing musical processes. He relies on physical gestures to communicate intentions during processions. For example, depending on how he turns his sacred baton, he maps out different types of rhythmic configurations. In response, the percussion players transition to the specified rhythm. Zé Bengala relates the following idea:

Zé Bengala: We communicate more with gesture. Through gestures, through dance, by means of the gaze, you are communicating. At times Antonio is singing to me. With the gesture that he does with his baton or body, I know that it is for me. Sometimes I am not able to understand the words, but I am able to understand the gestures. The way that he is moving with gestures from his body, you know very well what he is saying.

Genevieve Dempsey: Would you be able to give me an example of when a gesture speaks? For example, gesture can indicate another thing. What would that other thing be?

Zé Bengala: Antonio, for example, when he is singing a song and playing the drum, with a movement of the baton, I know that I need to play serra abaixo or serra acima [rhythmic patterns]. It isn't necessary to say serra acima or serra abaixo. We communicate more by means of gesture. He is drumming serra acima, and then he wants to go to serra abaixo. Thus he turns the baton and one knows. We communicate more by means of gesture, you know. Imagine yourself in a festa and you have to say to someone, "Play this for me. Play that for me." It doesn't work. Our cultural expressions are with gestures, with gaze, and with dancing. (Bonifácio da Luz 2014)

Comparing these two excerpts side by side, Antônio shows how lyrical improvisation induces physical response while Zé Bengala reveals how physical action shapes musical response. Both examples demonstrate the extent to which music and gesture inextricably intertwine.

Communicating through musical gestures is not only an efficacious way of relating to one another, but the interpersonal communication also infuses the moment with a sense of heightened awareness of one another. Zé Bengala often talks about the notion of staying alert when processing with the royal court (*saindo em cortejo*). One must be attentive to improvised lyrics for the aural gestures call one to respond with action.

To extend this thread about aural and gestural discourse, I use the following transcription as a way to illustrate how musical and physical gestures anchor spiritual shifts that occur during a congado ceremony. This particular transcription represents the ritual that the Guarda de Congo Treze de Maio de Nossa Senhora do Rosário carried out in preparation for their journey to a festa in Conselheiro Lafaiete, a bus ride of two and a half hours from Belo Horizonte. In the early morning hours of Sunday June 1, 2014, the congadeiros gathered in the chapel of their sacred ground to intone songs and to ask Nossa Senhora and Jesus Christ to fortify their minds and bodies, spiritually and physically, throughout the festa. The following transcription illustrates how congadeiros articulate transformations in heightened spiritual sensibilities through sonic and gestural means. Of the transcription's three distinct segments, each section is not only signaled by new songs; each section is also indexed by unique, discrete physical gestures. In many respects, the intermixing of sound and gesture function as forces for operationalizing sacred ritual. Thus, the following is a transcription of gesture as much as it is a transcription of music. Indeed, gesture, music, and spiritual communion inextricably interconnect in congadeiros' worldviews.

First, notice in the transcription how at each change in song, the practitioners introduce new physico-spiritual gestures. I contend that these gestures contribute to a kind of body-centered feeling that not only leads to a deeper embodiment of their own corporeality, but also to an embodiment of the divine. Moreover, with each change in song and accompanying gesture, they also mobilize a kind of change in the spiritual flow/direction of the sacred movement. In the first section, when the *congadeiros* sing, they sway in place to the music. When they transition to the second song about blessings, the banner bearer comes to pass the banner over their bodies. Their reverential bows to *Nossa Senhora* symbolize a type of spiritual movement that flows from the *congadeiros*' collective body to the divine. Later in the song, they also perform a mutual signing of the cross. Here, the center of spiritual energy shifts to focus on the practitioners themselves and the divinity that they recognize in each other. When practitioners clasp hands and perform the sign of the cross, repeating the action for each person, they create a physical and spiritual bond between themselves. Finally, when they segue ever so imperceptibly into the third song, it is marked by the gesture of bowing towards the altar as they exit the chapel walking backwards. They never turn their backs on the altar as a sign of respect. This physico-spiritual gesture encapsulates humans' humble devotion to Our Lady of the Rosary and other Catholic saints. Indeed, the act of bowing re-orientes the spiritual direction so that it flows from *congadeiros* to the divine. Put differently, at this moment, the spiritual flow switches from the intimacy between humans to one that begins in the person and proceeds to the divine.

Music and gestures are additive in the sense that they mutually add information to the unfolding of the scene. Each gesture, for example, has a communicative function of indexing changes in spiritual direction—from divine to human (passing the banner over their heads), to human to human (signing the cross), to human to divine (kneeling before the altar). Thus, in the

largest sense, each song not only has its own unique gestures and musical elements, but the varying combination of distinct gestures and music elements periodically instantiates changes in the ritual's spiritual flow. From passing the banner over people's heads (divine confers blessings on humans) to the signing of the cross (humans forge spiritual bonds with one another) to bowing before the altar (humans humbly recognize the majestic nature of the divine), these moments of spiritual flow are instantiated through musical and gestural movement.

Equally revealing is the fact that the changes in music seem to signal an upward shift in spiritual movement. That is, the spiritual flow and physical gestures not only change between the second and third song, but the mode also ascends. As shown in the accompanying diagram, the mode rises in pitch content from one modal scale to another—from B-flat centered mode to a D centered mode. Note how the new sixnote scale begins on C, but its modal center revolves around the pitches of D and A. It is clear that D and A act as modal focuses due to their repetition at key junctures within the tune. As one song's mode shifts upwards to the next, it concomitantly signals a type of ascending spiritual motion. The rising modal scale reflects and activates a spiritual flow that lifts congadeiros' spirits toward the divine in the sky.

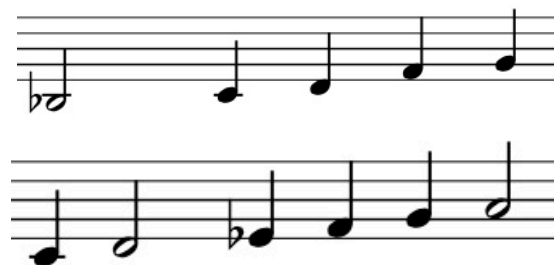


Figure 58. Musical transcription of different modal centers in the congo songs.

Hence, there is a spiritual analogue to the musical and gestural movement. Transitioning to a higher modal register coincides with transitioning to a higher spiritual level as well. Both the

gestures of bowing in front of the altar as well as the ascending change in musical mode index movement from the human to the astral plane.







Congo Treze de Maio de Nossa Senhora do Rosário			
	Section One (Prelude)	Section Two	Section Three
Movement:	Swaying	Kneeling as banner is passed over head Mutual signing of the cross	Bowing before the altar
Spiritual Flow:	Human to divine	Divine to human & human to human	Human to divine
Mode:	C centered mode	B-flat centered mode	D centered mode
			
Composite Drum Pattern:			
			
Tempo:	half note=52-55	quarter note=86	quarter note=86
Timing:	8"—1'32"	1'35"—3'44"	3'45"—4'43"

Figure 59. This chart reveals the interrelationship between movement, spiritual flow, musical mode, drum patterns, and tempo in a song sung by the congo group Treze de Maio de Nossa Senhora do Rosário.

The gestural movements and spiritual flows are heightened by an upward shift in the mode between song two and song three. I argue that the ascending modal movement stimulates a different kind of emotional affect in the congadeiros as they are brought into closer communion with the divine. In many respects, the modal shift upwards is a musically evoked activation of and response to changes in spiritual affect. That is, the elevation in the musical mode concomitantly means an analogous elevation in the spiritual feeling. Thus, it is clear in these instances how the divine becomes intimately bound up with the musical and the gestural. It is imperative to analyze musical sound in connection with gesture precisely because taken together, they help to structure divine experience for congadeiros. Indeed, when physical gestures and

music become imbricated, they help to express the context's spiritual charge for one is soundless but visible and the other is invisible but sounded. Hence, taken together, gesture and music convey what is difficult to articulate through discourse alone (Zbikowski 2011). In a word, it is the intersection of soundless physical gestures and sounded musical gestures that activates congadeiros' devotion to and communion with the divine.

Note also the function of rhythm within this ceremony. While the rhythmic pattern is hocketed, taking two drummers to complete one musical line, the interlocking pattern differs from the other rhythmic patterns that we have seen in previous transcriptions. The soundscape here is not buzzy or overlapping, but rather clear and easily discernible. The steady, unclouded metered rhythm provides an anchor for the aural and physical gestures.

In essence, my intention with this transcription is to show that congado exhibits an exceedingly close relationship between musical motion, physical gestures, and human to divine connections. Where there is a heightening of gestural language, there is simultaneously a heightening in musical language. Hence, the aural gestures as well as physical ones index the sounded and soundless transformations in congadeiros' experiences of the divine. Indeed, combined together, they yield a comprehensive, unified sense of (other)worldly affect. Thus, with the transcription, I demonstrate the extent to which ritual activity, physical gesture, and sound converge time and again in congadeiros' rituals to instantiate divine conviction and connection.

Congo Treze de Maio de Nossa Senhora do Rosário

n 1 (8"-1'32")

195

Figure 60. (Continued)

2

19

B C

Solo Vocalist

pendo a-uro - ra no a-man-he - cer do di - a Quan-do vem rom-pen-do a - uror - a -

Chorus

Caixa 1

Caixa 2

25

B C' D

Solo Vocalist

No a-man-he - cer do di - a me en - com-endo a - Je - sus Cri-sto fi - lho da Vi-

Chorus

Caixa 1

Caixa 2

31

C'

Solo Vocalist

-rg-em Ma - r - ia Me en - co-mend - o a Je-sus Cri - sto

Chorus

Caixa 1

Caixa 2

Section 2 (1'35" - 3'44")

37

D

♩ = 86 Freely

Solo Vocalist

fi - lho da Vi - rg-em Ma - r - ia A bên - çã - o ei - - a - bênção

Chorus

Caixa 1

Caixa 2

Figure 60. (Continued)

3

42 In time

Solo Vocalist

A bên - ça - o ei - - a bên-ça - o ei a mãe do Ros-ário ei a-bên- - ção

Chorus

Caixa 1

Caixa 2

46

Solo Vocalist

A mãe do Ro-sá-rio ei ei - ei ei a bên -

Chorus

ção - o A bên-ça - o a bên- - ção a mãe do Ro-sário a-bên-ção - ção -

Caixa 1

Caixa 2

51

Solo Vocalist

-ção A bên -

Chorus

A bên - ção - - a bênção - a bên- - ção a mãe do Ro-sário a-bên-ção -

Caixa 1

Caixa 2

56

Solo Vocalist

-ção a bên - ção bên - ção A bên ção abên-ção esta rain-ha ei ei - ei ei a bên -

Chorus

Caixa 1

Caixa 2

Figure 60. (Continued)

4

61

Solo Vocalist

Chorus

Caixa 1

Caixa 2

66

Solo Vocalist

Chorus

Caixa 1

Caixa 2

71

Solo Vocalist

Chorus

Caixa 1

Caixa 2

Section 3 (3'45" - 4'41")

oh va-mos fa-lando não deixa ca-ir no chão oh va-mos fa-lando não deixa ca-ir no

rainha - a-bên - ção

A bē-n - Abên ção esta rainha - a-bên - ção

-ção - a bên - ção - ção - Abên ção esta

* Derivative rhythm from composite rhythm

D

D

Figure 60. (Continued)

5

76 C

Solo Vocalist

Chorus

Caixa 1

Caixa 2

81

Solo Vocalist

Chorus

Caixa 1

Caixa 2

86

Solo Vocalist

Chorus

Caixa 1

Caixa 2

chão não dei-xa chão oh va-mos fa-lando não deixa ca-ir no chão pa-ra me cha-mar

oh va-mos

fa-lando não deixa ca-ir no chão oh va-mos fa-lando não deixa ca-ir no chão não deixa ca-ir no chão pa-ra me cha-

-ma-r não deixa ca-ir no chão pa-ra me cha-mar

Closing Thoughts

In this chapter I have analyzed musical, physical, and spiritual movement more clearly to understand how congadeiros not only move toward each other and the divine, but also how they

cross socio-political boundaries with song. Indeed, congadeiros move through space in an attempt to bridge the human and astral planes and to negate obstacles that inhibit their bodies from passing through. Ritual movement—the motion of sacred song, dance, drumming, and gesture—opens up narrative spaces that allow congadeiros to reconfigure society from below. In many respects, congadeiros succeed in re-mapping place according to their own notions of what is right and just because their music, in falling outside the bounds of traditional Roman Catholicism, becomes non-canonical and autonomous. Through the deployment of ritual movement, congadeiros circumvent traditional religious hierarchies and shape their own borders of inclusivity and hierarchy. These distinct characteristics of musical, gestural, physical motion are important because they signal a kind of collective body that is imbued with intersections of race, gender, faith, and history unique to congadeiros. Whether practitioners perform loudly in public spaces or quietly in private spaces, they employ musical, physical, and spiritual movement to rise above disenfranchisement and exclusion.

Chapter 5

The Performance of Race

Dressed in vibrant purples, blues, whites, and pinks, a community of congadeiros gathered at their chapel to prepare for the day-long ritual of singing, dancing, and drumming in praise of Nossa Senhora do Rosário. The sun was just rising as they helped each other to tie, drape, and fasten sacred objects like ankle shakers (gungas), headdresses, and rosaries to their outfits just like their ancestors had done for centuries. The ankle shakers, formed from seeds encased in welded aluminum cans, made a rattling sound as congadeiros moved about the chapel. A young woman patiently criss-crossed the rosary around another woman's upper body and pinned it into place. Two men took large drums and began to stretch the tanned drumheads by adjusting the ropes that encircled their frames. In a gradual process of tuning, they would pull on the ropes and then pound the drum skins with mallets to check for pitch.

As one woman used the mirror attached to the chapel's wall to adjust the crown that she wore as a symbol of divine royalty, an older man bent down to tie the headdress onto a little boy's head. The child, no older than three years of age, stood next to his miniature drum, prepared to participate in the festa alongside congadeiros of all ages. Outside the chapel in the courtyard, one of the captains of the group reminded a younger participant that the skirt, representing Our Lady of the Rosary, must be donned by passing it over the top of one's head as a sign of respect. All of these actions, gestures, and symbolisms participate in the making of congado. When the group set out to celebrate congado that morning, the vibrancy of their outfits was equally matched by the vitality of their resonating drums, rattling ankle shakers, and resounding songs.

After parading through the streets with their sacred songs, they gathered in front of the local church's closed doors. They sang,

Ó Deus lhe salve casa santa.
O God save you holy house.
Aonde Deus fez a morada.
Where God made his home.
Aonde mora o cálix bento
Where the sacred chalice lives
E a hóstia consagrada.
And the consecrated host.

Figure 61. Song sung by congadeiros before the congo mass.

Then, they intoned the “Lamento Negro” (The black person's lament) before the congo mass (missa conga). Amid pauses in drumming, congadeiros sang:

I am going to tell you a story, I ask that you pay attention,
It is an ancient story from the time of slavery.
It was on the thirteenth day in May when the group worked.
Look, the black man was captive and the princess liberated him.
Look, the black man was captive and now he turned into a respected man.
It was in the time of slavery that the white man was in charge.
When the white man went to mass, oh it was the black man that brought him.
The white man entered into the church and the black man stayed here outside.
And if the black man protested, he would be hit with the whip.
The black man prayed when he arrived in the slave quarters (*senzala*).
He prayed, and to *Zambi* (God/Central African divinity), he surrendered himself.
What suffering, what suffering, Jesus Christ is in the sky, protecting the souls of these suffering black people.

Figure 62. Lyrics to the song “Lamento Negro” (The Black Person's Lament)

After the group finished singing the “Lamento Negro,” they intoned one last short song that called for the church doors to open. They sang,

Santo padre,
Blessed father,
Abre a porta,
Open the door,
Nego véio quer entrar.
The black person has come and wants to enter.
Prá assistir à santa missa.
To see the blessed mass,
que vosmicê vai celebrá.
That you are going to celebrate.

Figure 63. Song sung after the “Lamento Negro” and before the doors opened for the congo mass.

Upon the song’s conclusion, the church doors parted, and the group moved over the threshold, playing and singing boisterously to announce the beginning of the congado mass.

By intoning songs of suffering and liberation, congadeiros not only remembered the times during slavery when blacks were barred from entering the church, they also used sound to open the church’s doors. Where a legacy of colonialism, slavery, and marginalization have restricted Afro-Brazilians’ outlets of expression, congadeiros have turned to music to express sentiments and worldviews that speak to issues of blackness—what it means to be black in Brazil.

The congo mass that took place after singing the “Black Person’s Lament” represents congadeiros’ efforts to bring their own voice to Roman Catholic masses. A congo mass has the same components of a Roman Catholic mass, except for the fact that all of the traditional songs have been replaced by those specific to congado. From the “Black Person’s Lament” to the congo mass, congadeiros sing and dance praises to Nossa Senhora and other Catholic saints as an attempt to belong in public spaces and to change the balances of power in a racially stratified society.

Following the congo mass, all of the groups paraded back in a procession to the space of the community where they would convene for lunch together. Because the host group had to provide food for hundreds of congadeiros each day over a three-day period, congadeiros ate in shifts, with some groups enjoying the traditional fare of meat, beans, rice, and vegetables while the others continued to sing, dance, and drum. After each group partook in the lunch, they sang songs of praise to the cooks for preparing the meal and to the hosts for providing the food. A similar sequence of rituals happened on the Monday of the festa, although the ceremonies were more intimate and less boisterous because the majority of the visiting groups had already returned to their respective cities.

While the procession on Sunday was projected as being more ritually efficacious and exciting because of the sheer numbers of participating groups, the private intimacy of the community's procession and lunch on Monday was the most meaningful and unifying moments of the festa. The lunch on Monday was especially important because they blessed the reis and rainhas festeiros for having graciously provided the donations for the food. After the lunch, there was another payment of promises in the afternoon. This was followed by a mass in the evening that took place not at the city's main church, but rather at the community's modest, intimate chapel. Very late in the evening, they moved from another mass to a coronation ceremony where they honored the previous festive queen and king for providing the food during the festa as well as transferred their crowns to the following year's festive queen and king. Here the perpetual kings and queens, along with the captains and other congadeiros transferred the crown and cloak from the previous reis festeiros to the following ones in a ceremony filled with florid polyphonic singing and intense drumming. How might the multisensory ambience constructed during the coronation ceremony help congadeiros to stand on their dignity, to tap into spirituality, and to

emplace themselves in society? To address this question, I start by attending to the ways in which music-making plays a role in the formation of black pride.

Music changes how practitioners perceive the world through their senses, what they register, and how they act based upon the new knowledge. I propose that when congadeiros voice their feelings of emancipation and pride in being black through melodies and lyrics, they transform how they see themselves as well as how they hear the world. In this way, congadeiros harness the multisensory modalities of hearing, seeing, and sounding to generate status, upward mobility, and dignity.

Contributing to a larger scholarly discussion about religious culture, race, and resistance, this chapter outlines how congadeiros inscribe histories of suffering and perseverance in sacred song. Specifically, I explore how Afro-Brazilian congadeiros respond to and overcome processes of systematic exclusion through hearing and singing. I ask, In what ways might congadeiros use “the grain of the voice” in particular ways to express their subjectivities and sacred ideologies (Barthes 1991)? Echoing Bourdieu’s (1991) notion of the “symbolic power” of language, Austin’s idea that people “do things” with words (1962), and Butler’s theory of performativity (1997), I propose that when congadeiros intone religious aspirations in song and dance, they performatively echo and enact new forms of individual and collective identity. My research explores how the collective experience of a marginalized community becomes expressed through the materiality of sacred song. In particular, I argue that the ways in which congadeiros choose to shape musical elements *structure* how they hear the world. Rather than being passive, congadeiros actively and selectively manipulate sound to build a unique way of perceiving the world.

Lessons in Longevity

Congado's uniqueness derives, in part, from congadeiros' efforts to remember and invoke in music the memory of their ancestors who toiled in the crucible of slavery. They admire their ancestors for seeking autonomy in their spiritual and musical lives despite not having jurisdiction over their own bodies. Indeed, through constant processes of cultural contact, imposition, and accommodation, their ancestors re-configured their identities as African and Afro-descendent peoples, particularly from Bantu ethnicities, to account for their experiences with Catholicism. Today congadeiros channel this sense of survival and spirituality in their everyday lives.

More than a musical genre, congado is a religious practice formed from the conjunctures and disjunctures of Luso-Afro-Brazilian intersections across the centuries. The term Luso-Afro-Brazilian is meant to capture the confluence of Lusophone, African, and Brazilian influences that factored into the making of congado. As Gomes and Pereira say, "Catholicism from Portugal provided the European elements of devotion to Our Lady of the Rosary, the Church in Brazil reinforced this belief, while the black people, in possession of these ingredients, gave form to the worship and to the festa" (Gomes and Pereira 1988, 176).¹ In fact, there is broad consensus in the field that congado results from various ethnic and religious negotiations and assemblages. Similarly, Queiroz communicates, "these manifestations are products of the encounter of African cultural elements with aspects of the Iberian culture, which upon incorporating elements from both, became another cultural formation, where the symbols gained new meanings, expressions,

¹ "O catolicismo de Portugal forneceu os elementos europeus da devoção à Nossa Senhora do Rosário, a Igreja no Brasil reforçou essa crença, enquanto os negros, de posse desses ingredientes, deram forma ao culto e à festa."

and ritual practices” (Queiroz 2005, 28).² French sociologist and anthropologist Roger Bastide echoes these words when he states that despite the prohibitions from the church, “the tradition was so deeply rooted that it couldn’t disappear. Expelled from the temple, they maintained themselves on the streets, which continues until today” (Bastide 1974, 172).³ Thus, to sing congado is to participate in the collective enunciation of rituals that have been made and re-made in light of sacrality and survival for several centuries.



Figure 64. Map of Africa from 1666. Created by João Teixeira Albernaz II (1655-1699). Courtesy of the iconography collection of the Biblioteca Nacional, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

² “Essas manifestações são produtos do encontro de elementos culturais africanos com aspectos da cultura ibérica, que incorporaram elementos de ambas, constituindo-se em outra formação cultural, na qual os símbolos ganharam novos sentidos e novas expressões e práticas ritualísticas (Queiroz 2005, 28).

³ “O costume já estava bastante enraizado para desaparecer; expulsos do templo mantiveram-se nas ruas, o que continua até os dias de hoje” (Bastide 1974, 172).

While congadeiros openly acknowledge the syncretic nature of their genetic, sacred, and musical makeup, they are also conscious about how discourses surrounding syncretism might overrun and blur unique, individual distinctions that they strive to maintain. For example, congadeira Isabel Cassimira Gasparino (Belinha) used the metaphor of a fruit salad to show that congadeiros identify as a unified group (the fruit salad), while simultaneously recognizing the ethnic diversity of their ancestors—a multi-ethnic community of peoples originally from the West African perimeter (the individual fruits). In this way, she struck a balance between acknowledging the ethnic multiplicity of their ancestors, while also ascribing to a contemporary, collective Afro-Brazilian identity. She explained,

It's all together and mixed. [She laughs]. I am joking because each thing is its own thing, right? Onion is onion. Potato is potato. You make a fruit salad. What kinds of fruits does it have?

Genevieve Dempsey: Apple, pineapple, mango, star fruit, and banana.

Belinha Gasparino: Great, five fruits. Each one of the fruits has its own what?

Genevieve Dempsey: Flavor.

Belinha Gasparino: Yes, its own vitamin, its own format. When they are separate, they are fruits. When they are together it is a what?

Genevieve Dempsey: A fruit salad.

Belinha Gasparino: Hence, when they are separate, they are differentiated things. When it is together, one says that it is one whole thing. But, even though they are together, each fruit has its flavor. Each fruit has its peculiarity. Each fruit has its format, right? You make a juice. Even though it's a juice, when you taste it, you know exactly what it has and if it's lacking one thing or another. (Isabel Cassimira Gasparino 2014)

Belinha Gasparino made me laugh when she pretended to make a juice and then relish in its taste, but it also vividly captured her point that congadeiros conceive of their identity in ways that go beyond simplistic understandings of mixing. They see congado and themselves as a result of long-term processes of forging ethnic and musical diversity into unified forms, while also

maintaining that diversity. More pointedly, musical and ethnic syncretism is not simply a totalizing force that erases individual identities and sonic characteristics, but rather an entity that takes on fresh, unified forms while maintaining its historical rootedness in diversity.

Congadeiros speak about who they are and what they do with very precise and politically chosen language. They refer to themselves as an “African descendant people” (*povo afro-descendente*) that produces “Afro-Brazilian culture” (*cultura afro-brasileira*). With this discourse, practitioners signal their desire to identify simultaneously as Afro-Brazilians as well as historically and cross-culturally. In doing so, they convey the sentiment that rather than embodying one socio-cultural tradition, African-derived traditions as well as folk Catholicism converge to form a central axis of their cosmologies and rituals.

What this confluence of ideologies helps to reveal is that congadeiros do not approach European-derived Catholicism as a synecdoche for an imperial, oppressive state that they must indiscriminately accept. Rather, Catholicism represents something that has become, through its intermixing with African-influenced traditions, eminently Afro-Brazilian. Thus, when they call their religious practices “Afro-Brazilian,” it is as much a reflection of the reality of their hybrid influences as it is a choice to signal political activism. Congadeiros desire the right to belong and to lay claim to different musico-spiritual traditions, both despite and because of their racial and historical makeup.

I draw upon the following quote from an interview between ethnographer Dalva Maria Soares and Capitã Pedrina de Lourdes Santos because it demonstrates the ways in which I heard Pedrina de Lourdes Santos speak about Afro-Brazilian culture as survival. Her words to Soares reveal how one cannot explain the longevity of Afro-Brazilian culture solely on the basis of taste. They reason that if the festa weathered the Middle Passage, endured slavery, and remains vibrant

in the present, congadeiros undoubtedly produce the festa in service of survival rather than for reasons of personal and collective taste (Jackson 2012, 154; Roberts 1989). Pedrina de Lourdes Santos related that,

A festa that begins during the time of slavery, within Brazil the Colony, crosses Brazil the Empire and arrives in Brazil the Republic and is made by an oppressed population? Made by people who do not have any type of abundance (*bastança*). I believe that this has something larger, a lot larger. It is not by chance that they come bringing this. It is not only because of taste, it is not because of desire. There is something bigger behind all this, there really is. (Lourdes Santos, 2009)

Pedrina de Lourdes Santos explicitly ruled out taste and desire when considering congadeiros' motivations for creating traditions that span geographic distances and temporal contexts. However, she does not finish her thought about the factors that undergirded their musical and spiritual actions. The unspoken element motivating congadeiros to harness musico-spiritual actions was survival. Through song they could reach the highest spiritual levels when opportunities for deliverance from physical harm were hopeless. Congadeiros believed in the power of ceremonial music to lift them from oppression. Thus, rather than seeing congado as an innocuous concession made by the dominant group towards the dominated, we can understand congado as a musico-spiritual practice born out of the conviction of people who refused—throughout time and space—to allow others to define their self-worth. In this way, the congado community exemplifies what it means to mobilize music for social and religious action in the name of survival.

I believe that adaptability and agency lie at the core of Pedrina de Lourdes Santos's comment about Afro-Brazilians' ability to survive, physically, mentally, and spiritually. Congadeiros see the world in a certain way and they willfully exercise their agency to make that vision a reality. In particular, we witness this with regard to Pedrina de Lourdes Santos's tireless efforts to ascribe greater responsibility and leadership to women congadeiros in the undertaking

of religious ceremonies. Just as congadeiros struggled throughout the twentieth century to avoid persecution for their musico-religious rituals, captain Pedrina de Lourdes Santos has ceaselessly advocated for an expansion in the leadership opportunities offered to women in congado.

Through the musical labor of devotion, congadeiros not only challenge longstanding discourses of exclusion and work towards survival, they also build a sense of in-group belonging. Practitioners are connected to their fellow group members as well as to the network of congado groups throughout the states of Minas Gerais, Goiás, and São Paulo. This network brings thousands of practitioners face-to-face and helps them to realize that their religious conviction can be mobilized in other realms, like working for upward social mobility (Lucas 2002).

(Mis) Representing Congado

A range of observers—academics and laypersons alike—have represented Afro-Brazilians as exotic, hybrid, gendered, and racialized people. Regardless of the fact that congadeiros' engagement is sacred not secular, these wider portrayals of who Afro-Brazilians are and what they do have limited congadeiros' abilities to exercise control over the ways in which their bodies, faith, and music are constructed and represented (Visweswaran 1988, 39). In response to these stereotypical portrayals, congadeiros use faith-based musical rituals to mobilize for public action about black rights. For congadeiros, the transformation of their socio-cultural performances into sites of agency become mechanisms for transforming people's perceptions of who they are and how they fit within Brazilian society. They also make notions of Afro-Brazilianness more variegated by expressing their sacred cosmologies through musical forms that are similar to, but distinct from, other sacred and secular traditions within Brazil. In

exercising agency by means of musical and sacred choices, they respond to social inequalities and have more say in constituting their identities in the public sphere.

Congadeiros' ability to represent themselves in regional and national arenas is further complicated by the fact that their traditions have been commonly, though inaccurately, labeled as *macumba* or black magic. Being accused of practicing macumba has engendered stigmatization for congadeiros and taken away the legitimacy of their music and beliefs. Olívia Coelho, participant in the congo group Nossa Senhora do Rosário e Santa Efigênia of Ouro Preto, described her experience regarding the misconceptions that congadeiros suffer from outsiders. In our interview, we talked about the following:

Genevieve Dempsey: Well, I would like to know how other people from your age group [teenagers/young adults] perceive your participation in congado?

Olívia Coelho: How people not in congado see my participation?

Genevieve Dempsey: Yes.

Olívia Coelho: Well, a few years ago, I had a colleague—it was the boyfriend of my friend. He said that it looked like *macumba*. He doesn't even know what macumba is. He thought that it had to do with sorcery. That we do bewitchment (*feitiço*). I said no. It's not like that. I tried to explain, but when a person is close-minded, it is difficult to make him/her understand. It is something that a person has to understand over the course of the events. In the end, he said that it was cool and that he liked it, but that he still thought that it was witchcraft (*feitiçaria*). I said no, that it didn't have anything to do with this. It is a demonstration of faith by singing and dancing. He said that, to him, it still seems like macumba. I said, fine. We are not going to discuss this anymore. The people that I live with think that it's cool. Sometimes we feel a little hesitant to speak about it, but that's part of it. What are my friends going to think of all this? Even if friends don't like it, they have to respect your opinion and what you like to do. (Coelho 2014)

As Olívia Coelho recounts, congadeiros adamantly separate themselves from *macumbeiros* because the association with witchcraft distorts congadeiros' sincere efforts to praise and worship Catholic saints in peaceful, inclusive ways. Despite these discriminatory comments made by social actors who seek to undermine and delegitimize congadeiros' practice,

congadeiros have built religious, historical, and social legacies grounded in collectively shared notions of morality, respect, and justice. Their songs and myths speak of an alternative reading of history and the present—one narrated by an internal sense of dignity and uniqueness.

The Color of Devotion

The following section focuses on race, both at the national level and at the local level of the congado community, because race matters to how congadeiros structure their devotional practices as well as how they structure their identities in relation to their devotion. Although congadeiros take their main object of devotion to be Nossa Senhora, a white saint, black saints like São Benedito and Santa Efigênia also centrally figure into congadeiros' devotional practices. Indeed, congadeiros not only foreground the worship of black saints; practitioners primarily perceive themselves as black devotees who create African-derived religious songs in praise of black saints. Thus, devotion among congadeiros is imbricated as much with religion as it is with race.

Although racial differences in Brazil do not necessarily neatly map onto distinct racial groups and/or unique cultural group formations (Bailey 2009, 33), congadeiros represent an interesting case. While belonging within the congado collectivity is not exclusive to black people, congadeiros are overwhelmingly a black community that has strategically forged a black religious subjectivity. They construct this black socio-musical religiosity within the parameters of a discrete historical and contemporary community so as to stand in contradistinction to the nation as a mixed racial and religious consciousness. Indeed, congadeiros' experiences of discrimination have derived, in part, from larger social actors' aversion to congadeiros positively

reinforcing their African heritage over an identity that foregrounds racial hybridity. Nobles explains that “the discursive construction of racial identity in Brazil is one of an all encompassing national identity which not only questions the propriety of racial identities other than ‘Brazilian’ but which supersedes their existence” (Nobles 2000, 212). This is hardly a recent phenomenon.

Since the 1930s, commentators have asserted that Brazil’s centuries-old history of miscegenation proves it to be a country that has surpassed racism (Skidmore 1993; Dávila 2003). Indeed, it is true that since Portugal colonized Brazil in the sixteenth century, Brazil has experienced an unprecedented level of racial intermixing and integration. Brazil’s history, in this way, stands in contrast to US American history where official segregation continued throughout the post-slavery period until the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ended all state and local laws compelling segregation. Given Brazilian’s widely disseminated espousal of racial democracy over the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, one would assume that skin color is an unlikely basis for how people form judgments or come to identify. However, while Africans, Europeans, and indigenous peoples have produced a racially integrated population in Brazil, racial democracy has not fostered the racial acceptance that it purportedly claimed to do. Indeed, rather than racial intermixing leading to the eradication of racism in Brazil, it has produced a kind of racism that is subtle yet acute—hushed yet palpable. Instead of perceiving racial intermixing as auspicious, Brazilians have generated scales of phenotypic ranking to judge people based upon the gradation of their skin tone. Historically and continuing unabated today, people of African ancestry have been marginalized to a more significant degree than anyone else in Brazil. Despite Afro-Brazilians’ constant and destructive experiences of race-based discrimination, only over the past few decades have citizens felt at liberty to bring these discourses about inequality to the

public sphere. This is because to speak about racism in Brazil is to contest the very notion of Brazil as a nation of multi-racial tolerance and acceptance. Indeed, rhetoric of racial equality and democracy has been disseminated to every corner of Brazil's territory in a totalizing and inexorable way.

The idea of racial democracy was coined by social scientists in the early twentieth century to rethink and revalorize Brazilians' genetic makeup. The belief in racial democracy, that all citizens have equal access to opportunities regardless of the color of one's skin, continues to be a guiding factor in how many Brazilians perceive "race" in their country. Hence, the ideology of racial democracy has been so strong that it often disguises Afro-Brazilians' persistent experiences of racism.

The notion of racial democracy is foregrounded at the outset of this discussion to encourage a move towards understanding racial dynamics from the perspectives of Brazil-centered scenarios. Far too often research about race in the United States is projected onto Brazil in ways that cloud rather than illuminate race relations. Although interesting for its comparative potential, the dichotomous nature of race relations in the United States tends to map incongruously onto the racial ambiguity of Brazilian society. Thus, a particularly effective way of understanding race relations in Brazil is to start with an ethnographically based analysis of how race is perceived by poor, black practitioners of folk Catholicism. Yet, before we can fully delve into racial dynamics in contemporary society, it is of critical importance to problematize how race was perceived and employed throughout Brazilian history during the twentieth century.

Although previously championed by several people, it was only with Brazilian social scientist Gilberto Freyre's publication of *Casa Grande e Senzala* (*The Masters and the Slaves*) in 1933 that ideas about racial democracy came to the forefront of national politics. In many

respects, the book's description of the benefits to racial intermixing was meant to respond to the pernicious discourses of scientific racism. Scientific racism assumed that not only did distinct human races exist, but that the white race was preferable to all other races. Moreover, it posited that racial hybridity would lead to a degenerate population. In contrast, Freyre believed that miscegenation (*mestiçagem*)—the intermixing of different races—would bring about a “meta-race.” This “meta-race” would be uniquely poised to confront the challenges of living in a tropical climate. Indeed, he deemed Brazil to be uniquely positioned to produce this meta-race for, “hybrid from the beginning, Brazilian society is, of all those in the Americas, the one most harmoniously constituted so far as racial relations are concerned” (Freyre 1986 [1933], 83). According to him, the miscegenation between the three races involved in Brazil's history—Africans, Europeans, and indigenous peoples—would bear the phenotype of a brownish skin complexion. Freyre posited that a racially ambiguous skin color would lead to a blurring of racial classifications and therefore unify people in their identifications with Brazil as a “color-blind” nation.

Given the worldwide climate at that time, with Jim Crow laws in the United States and Nazi Germany's emphasis on racial purity, Freyre's ideas not only unsettled the global status quo, but his theories became ideals to which the majority of Brazilians ascribed and continue to ascribe. Brazilians embraced the ideals of racial indeterminacy that were implicit in this “meta-race” because it would purportedly produce amorphous racial boundaries and ultimately lead to racial democracy. In other words, racial democracy would come to fruition only when Brazilians became racially blurred and when they had accepted all mixed-raced persons as equal participants in the Brazilian nation. In fact, in the aftermath of the Holocaust and in response to Jim Crow in the United States, the United Nations sent delegates from the United Nations

Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to Brazil in 1950 to investigate how Brazil's equitable race relations might serve as a model for building color-blind societies. The reasoning was that if Brazilians were racially mixed and displayed outward signs of peaceful coexistence (no segregation), then surely any aberrant *de jure* or *de facto* racism would be overcome by Brazil's multiracial utopia (Skidmore 1993; Xavier and Xavier 2009).

Even today, Brazilians perceive race vis-à-vis racial democracy. In many respects, they either see racial democracy as being in one of three states: achieved, oppressive, or aspirational (Joseph 2013). The achieved state refers to the notion that racial democracy has successfully been implemented within Brazil (Freyre 1933; Harris 1952; Wagley 1952; Pierson 1967). The oppressive state encapsulates the idea that racial democracy masks the inequality inherent in interracial relations (Fernandes 1965; Twine 1998; Munanga 2004; Telles 2004). The aspirational state refers to the concept that despite rampant racial discrimination, Brazilians believe that racial democracy can become a reality (Reis 1996; Sherriff 2001; Bailey 2009). Hence, racial democracy—whether seen as achieved, oppressive, or aspirational—has often been the standard against which people measure race and race relations in Brazil.

As the authoritarianism of the military dictatorship began to wane in the 1970s, ending in 1985, anti-racism activists felt more at liberty to vocalize their concerns. One particularly salient social movement to arise in the 1970s was the Unified Black Movement (Movimento Negro Unificado) (Covin 2006), which openly decried the fallacy of “racial democracy.” The goal of the Unified Black Movement was not only to expose the unsubstantiated evidence for racial democracy that was perpetuated by the elite and the Brazilian state, but also to analyze how the ideology behind racial democracy created a host of pernicious effects. They reasoned that if people accept racial democracy as axiomatic, they would have a hard time believing in the mere

existence of racial discrimination. The participants in the Unified Black Movement also further concluded that if people did not believe in racism, then surely they would not fight for antidiscrimination policies. Furthermore, when people of African ancestry ascribed to the myth of racial democracy, rather than championing the worth of all skin types, it tended to devalue the color of their skin.

In a similar fashion, the identity that *congadeiros* cultivate is very much centered around a black identity. They have consciously chosen to eschew a rhetoric of hybridity and mixing as their cognitive framework for understanding who they are in the world. Indeed, *congadeiros* see equality deriving not from espousing the benefits of mixing, but rather from a sense of discrete consciousness and racial identification with a black community. In many respects, *congadeiros'* thought processes closely mirror developments in Brazil's wider social and educational spheres.

As sociologist Stanley R. Bailey writes,

Seemingly tracing a path back through U.S. history, Brazil is experimenting with single-race understandings of racial group membership, or monoracialism, as opposed to multiracialism. For example, many institutions of higher learning in Brazil are instituting affirmative action legislation; and, rather than using the mixed-race category of the Brazilian Census, they are opting for a single-race *negro* versus white classification scheme to identify recipients. If the idea of racial democracy in Brazil exalts racial mixing, it is understandable that this attempt to "unmix" the population for race-targeted intervention has already created much debate. (Bailey 2009, 8)

Mirroring larger social developments, *congadeiros* have sought to delineate the racial boundaries of their identities as a way not only to foster in-group belonging, but also to encourage a sense of belonging that racially affirms their cultural formations. By creating a sense of ownership over black culture, *congadeiros* strive to stave off the nationalization of their African-derived symbols. The process of nationalizing blackness has occurred frequently in Brazilian history. Symbols taken from sacred traditions such as Candomblé often circulate nationally as a mix of sacred-secular imagery and soundscape (Höfling 2015; Meneses 2016).

Although some may question congadeiros' black pride given that they do not collectively participate in black movements, they had found their political voices through other avenues like through attending college. Because the majority of congadeiros come from poor, disadvantage backgrounds with little access to quality public education, their chances of going to college has historically been minimal. However, since the installation of the Partido dos Trabalhadores (Workers' Party) in 2003, there has been an expansion of affirmative action within the public school university system. Due to these affirmative-action racial quotas at universities, many young congadeiros are now joining the rank of other first-generation Afro-Brazilians students who are changing the racial composition of student bodies throughout Brazil (Cicalo 2012). In a country that historically supported multiracial discourses, the choice to implement race-targeted policies has reinforced a move among various communities within Brazil to identify locally, regionally, monoracially, and monoreligiously, rather than multiracially and nationally. The fact that all curricula in public schools now require the teaching of Afro-Brazilian history demonstrates the extent to which the nation is becoming more and more conscious of race-based body politics (Valente 2005). In this way, inclusionary race-targeted public policy has influenced how congadeiros identify and how they create pride in who they are and what they do.

Singing Dignity in Spaces of Exclusion

Musico-spiritual practices have the potential to help congadeiros assert their dignity and value as human beings. Kedison Geraldo, drummer in the congado group, Nossa Senhora do Rosário e Santa Efigênia de Ouro Preto, sang a song to me that expressed deeply felt pride in being Afro-Brazilian. He intoned the song (*cântico*):

Negro apanhava no tronco,
The black person was struck on the body,
 Negro sentia dor,
The black person felt pain,
 Negro apanhava no tronco,
The black person was struck on the body,
 Negro sentia dor,
The black person felt pain,
 Hoje negro bate no peito com muita honra e muito amor.
Today the black person strikes his/her chest with much honor and much love.

Figure 65. Lyrics for a song that Kedison Geraldo sang about Afro-Brazilians' pain and resiliency.

He then explained how prejudice continues to operate in subtle ways throughout Brazilian society.

Before, he [the black person] was struck on the body. Today he is proud of being black. He pounds his chest, honoring the fact that he is black and that he has much love. There is still a lot of prejudice. Brazil has only recently left slavery behind, 1888. Therefore, it is a thing that still reverberates a lot in Brazil. There is still a lot of prejudice. We had the first black minister of justice. Thus, they write in the headlines for the newspapers, "The first black minister of justice in Brazil." Then a female judge arrived. "First black female judge in Brazil." I think that this is wrong because it is reinforcing prejudice in Brazil. Why do you have to include it? Why don't you say, "*Fulana* [unnamed person] was nominated as a judge in Brazil? You don't need to say that she is black. I think this generates prejudice. The same thing with the minister that is going to retire now—he is black. Then they say, "The first black minister." I think that there's no need for this. (Geraldo 2014)

In this excerpt, Geraldo demonstrated that congadeiros question dominant discourses that mark black people while leaving others unmarked. Thus, song becomes a context both for the enactment of social cohesion and the exercise of creativity in spaces of exclusion.

Later in the conversation, in a hushed but confident tone, Geraldo sang another short song:

No tempo do cativoiro,
In the time of captivity,
Quando o senhor me batia,
When the slave master hit me,
Eu rezava para Nossa Senhora quando a pancada doía.
*I prayed to Nossa Senhora when the beating hurt.*⁴

Figure 66. Kedison Geraldo sings a song about slavery.

For a brief moment after Geraldo sang, we sat in the quiet of the room, appreciating the way in which the clarity of the unaccompanied words amplified the meanings of what congadeiros customarily perform in rituals as a mix of declamatory song and thundering drums. Geraldo intoned this song in the context of a broader discussion that we were having about the ways in which Nossa Senhora has interceded on behalf of Afro-Brazilian peoples across the centuries.

Kedison Geraldo's words and songs demonstrate the extent to which congadeiros perform music about Nossa Senhora's intercession because it is through the sensorial that congadeiros articulate their concerns and successes in modernity. In the song, when the individual experienced bodily harm, he turned to the intimacy of prayer to feel Nossa Senhora's divine presence. Hence, music is useful to congadeiros because it allows them to poetically communicate intimate, mystical, and traumatic experiences that are often too difficult to express with words alone. Hearing, touching, and seeing become mutual reinforcing sensory modalities through which congadeiros convey their emotions and musico-spiritual practices.

On a similar note, congadeiros attempt to connect with and embody the sentiments of their ancestors by maintaining particularly meaningful sacred songs over the generations. In the

⁴ There is also a similar song sung by the moçambique group in the Arturos community. The lyrics are: "In the time of captivity/When the slave master hit me/I cried out for Nossa Senhora, oh my God/The beatings on my body didn't hurt." ("No tempo do cativoiro/Quando o senhor me batia/Eu gritava por Nossa Senhora, ai meu Deus/As pancadas em mim num doía").

following passage, Jorge Antônio dos Santos a captain of the moçambique group from the Arturos community details the conditions necessary for congadeiros to perform memorywork through song. He communicated how feelings of suffering and emancipation felt by his enslaved ancestors could be channeled musically and used as strong fortifiers of memory and identify. Through his words, we understand how congadeiros use song to mediate between the present and the past.

Genevieve Dempsey: It is so interesting for me to hear you speak of the idea of music working, transmitting, evoking. Because the music is evoking greetings and blessings. In this way, you are working within the music to do things, to protect people.

Jorge Antônio dos Santos: Yes. And all this also has feeling. I believe that a factor that is also really important is feeling. Because we sing a specific song and what comes to our mind are various remembrances. Sometimes they are remembrances that we never even witnessed, which is the life of our ancestors. We imagine how the lives of our enslaved people were in the beginning. The suffering of our people in terms of the difficulty of life. Our people were brought here to Brazil, here enslaved and then after, they were liberated. But they didn't even know how to live, where to go, live from what or how. Thus, all this comes to our imagination. And the emotion, it takes over our being. And in this way, we have this feeling. This we transmit in the music. We have feelings of happiness that begin from liberation. We go about living, creating, looking for better life conditions, better positions in society. What we see that is of positive return, we celebrate. Congado is not just sadness. It is not just to remember bad things when remembering feelings. There are also moments of glory, of victory, of happiness. This also is transmitted in the music. (Antônio dos Santos 2014)

Jorge Antônio dos Santos shows us how by remembering through music, congadeiros embody their ancestors to gain insight into their own contemporary experiences. They take pride in honing musical skills that are passed down from generation to generation because cultivating the tradition means honoring a historical past that is also their own. That is, in drawing upon memory, they reinvent the past as a site of presentness. Philip V. Bohlman's words about klezmer acquiring "power in the present through its potential to historicize" (Bohlman 2008, 243) go to the heart of why congadeiros perform sonic memorywork—to make sense of their contemporary world.



Figure 67. Jorge Antônio Santos (center) sings while he parades with the moçambique group from the Arturos community during the festa de Nossa Senhora do Rosário, 2014. Photo by author.

Of relevance to this discussion is Tia DeNora's work on how the making of memory impacts the agency of individuals. She writes:

Music simultaneously helps to recapture or construct a sense of the capacity within which one once acted (one's aesthetic agency); in so doing, it helps dramatize to self a set of heightened life experiences. Through this vicarious review of past experience, this stock-taking of "who one is" or "where, interpersonally, one has been," one registers one's self to one's self as an object of self-knowledge, in the aesthetic construction that is memory. (DeNora 2000, 65)

Thus, becoming part of a long-standing musico-religious tradition, where one's ancestral knowledge becomes one's own, helps to encourage *congadeiros* to have pride in who they are. The songs become sites of memories because when *congadeiros* channel their ancestors, they partake in an Afro-Brazilian culture whose inception in the past is lived and felt in the present.

To highlight how *congadeiros* reestablish connections with their ancestors via memory and song is to show how memory is just as part of the making of history as historical fact. When

congadeiros sing memory into being, they participate in the simultaneous contemporizing and historicizing of their traditions. In many respects, the ancestral inspiration, reimagining, and music making that constitute these sites of memories contribute to the formation of people's perception of themselves. Congadeiros' creative musical processes should not be considered less significant because they are derived from remembrance instead of originating from historically verifiable occurrences. As Travis A. Jackson remarks, "The process through which certain events and social actors come to be regarded as historically significant, however, is not in the end drastically different from the reconstruction and sense-making processes of memory" (Jackson 2012, 26). Thus, rather than trying to account for historical explanations of ancestral experience and intervention, of more concern to my research is understanding how the remembrance of their ancestors' trials and triumphs produces meanings for its practitioners.

Congadeiros preserve old songs as well as absorb new songs in a continuous process of maintenance and renewal. They revitalize songs of the past and make them relevant today (Bohlman 2013), or discard and change songs without limiting themselves to the repertoire of ancient songs. Their repertoire changes, but in no way do they wish for the past to become irrelevant—as demonstrated by their actions of channeling and embodying their ancestors. Part of remembering and honoring the past is realizing that their ancestors heeded the tides of change too and adapted to the exigencies of the moment. In this way, congadeiros remain faithful to the past by imitating the processes by which their ancestors made music, not by recreating the very musical lines that they intoned. Hence, congadeiros channel the co-presence of their ancestors by responding to contextual transformations in the same ways that their predecessors adapted to the changing circumstances of their time.

Chapter 6

The Longevity of Afro-Brazilian Traditions

Congadeiros engage in preserving unique musico-spiritual traditions because it helps them to affirm black pride. Indeed, embodied rituals serve to affirm African descendants' pride in their traditions, physical appearance, ethos, and history. Although Patricia de Santana Pinho writes the following with reference to *blocos afro*, large percussive ensembles from the Northeastern state of Bahia, her words resonate with the racial dynamics embedded in the context of congado:

“Black and Afro-referenced identities constructed in Bahia under the influence of the blocos afro use the body as the central locus of affirmation and inscription of blackness” (2010, 102). In a similar vein, congadeiros affirm devotion and assert black pride by sounding sacred song through their bodies. To a large extent, the musical and physical gestures that are embedded within and accompany the music help to orient congadeiros towards one another. The following sections outline why congadeiros choose to invest in sound as well as their interrelations with one another. I argue that practitioners invest in music and interpersonal relationships because the longlasting musical, religious, and social bonds that arise from these investments make their lives meaningful.

Vitalício—The Longevity of Steadfastness

Congadeiros believe that their most productive tool for transferring meaning and knowledge from one generation to another is their unwavering dedication to carrying out the festa. Where material constraints and social exclusion might otherwise impede the festa, congadeiros use

willpower and what they call *vitalício* to overcome these barriers. In common parlance, *vitalício* means “lifelong,” but it is also commonly used by *congadeiros* to connote steadfastness.

Eustáquio Marques (Zezão), captain of Congo Sainha from the city of Uberlândia in Minas Gerais, related the following during one of our conversations:

Vitalício is the only form that black people found to maintain the festa so that it wouldn't be taken from them. Why? For example, the *congo marinho* [a type of *congado* group]. Let's talk about the *marinho* because it exemplifies a lot of knowledge. It was passed from mother to son. It comes about with the strength of the family. Do you understand? Why do they not give up? Why can they not give up? They can't give up. Because if I received the legacy of my father, I am going to fight for it at any cost. You do it like that. It's a thing that you safeguard with your family. This here, my father fought for this. But it isn't just this. There is a very strong spiritual part that exists on top of this thing, which is the following. No one is in a place by chance. You are not here by chance. This is going to reflect in things. We don't talk about things that we haven't lived. I speak of things that I lived, that I wanted to find out. I don't have to create something. We spoke of *congado*. I spoke to you before of the importance of what we did when we achieved, by means of the project, of preserving a little bit of the history of Congo Sainha. We fight, we sweat. We need that. We want that. It is going to start in the schools. “If they do it, then I can do it too.” This is the influence of things. If we didn't participate, if we didn't do it, do you understand? We have to react/respond. Do you know how much we earn with this? It's called preservation, history. There is no money that can pay for this. There is no money that can pay for this. (Marques 2014)

What is at stake when *congadeiros* like Zezão invoke the signifying power of *vitalício* is the expression of a particular understanding of what history is and how it might be used.

I propose that practitioners' efforts to define their own history as an alternative history to national narratives is a political endeavor grounded in the search for religious, musical, and cultural distinctiveness. People do not create “invented traditions” and imagine the past so much as they engage in constructing a sense of identity politics and emplacement in society through steadfast musico-religious symbols (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). In this way, *congadeiros'* efforts for self-determination derive, in part, from the desire to preserve a kind of collective,

embodied knowledge that has generated distinct cognitive, aesthetic, and sensorial experiences from generation to generation (Wiedman 2014, 44).

Congadeiros build their own sense of history via multisensory sacred song and dance to transform the very structural conditions of society. As Stuart Hall proposes,

Though they seem to invoke an origin in a historical past..., actually identities are about...using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming...; not 'who we are' or 'where we came from' so much as who we might become, how we have been represented, and how that bears on how we represent ourselves. Identities are, therefore constituted within, not without representation. (Hall 1996a, 4)

By consolidating their own symbols, convictions, and representations for the long term, congadeiros begin to transform the structural conditions under which their musical and religious formations come into being.

Esio Gomes Pereira (Zézé), from the congado group Congo de Nossa Senhora do Rosário e Santa Efigênia in Ouro Preto, spoke about how practitioners strive to change the structural conditions of exclusion through musical mechanisms. He remarked,

[Congado] still tries to find space. Sometimes, we think that we already conquered this space, but in reality, it turns out that we didn't conquer it. In many places that we go to play, see, there is a little bit of prejudice. There are cases where people still don't like congado. It ends up being, you know, a thing that is imprisoned in the places that we go to play. [Congado] is still not well received. It ends up being a thing of discrimination, of things like prejudice. It's still there. Through the music, we end of transmitting a feeling that has yet to be seen by people. (Pereira 2014)

By talking about how prejudice is locked/imprisoned in the places that they perform, Zézé draws upon the rhetoric that congadeiros often use when relating how their ancestors were physically chained during slavery. In this way, congadeiros use music to uncover feelings that have been disguised and held imprisoned by prejudice. Hence, in my research, I critically attend to the ways

in which congadeiros employ music to reconfigure society according to what they think is right and just.



Figure 68. Esio Gomes Pereira (Zézé) is the first man on the right in the picture.

The Congado Vivência: Experiencing Song

For congadeiros, *vitalício* (steadfastness) is the motivational force that sustains *vivência* (life experience). Containing similar but distinct meanings from the closely related word *experiência* (experience), *vivência* encapsulates the notion that congado is life experience grounded in religious praxis. Practitioners understand their sacred experiences to be a kind of *vivência* that is

communicated through their sensibilities and musical labor. In this way, practitioners not only embed particular sensibilities within congado, doing so helps to constitute their identities.

Vivência, then, is the praxis of sacred song.

Cesar Augusto da Silva, one of the captains in the congado group from the Arturos community, expressed an aspect of the congado *vivência* in the following way:

You have *vivência*, you live *reinado* [another term for congado]. You have that element of being present. The *reinado* is a presence, congado is a constant *vivência*. You are going to live without knowing anything and you are going to die without knowing anything. Because there is always going to be a secret in the deep down that you will discover. It is always, it is always a constant search for knowledge. It is always a constant search for knowledge. When a person is born in congado, the person is born learning and will die learning. And every day the person will learn something new within congado. (Augusto da Silva 2014)

According to Cesar Augusto da Silva, congado carries experiential elements embedded within it that must be lived to be understood. Congado, moreover, is a practice through which one gains acoustic, cultural, and religious knowledge through lifelong learning. Hence, it is via aurality and orality that the complex historical, cultural, and religious meanings of congado become inscribed onto practitioners' bodies.

Cesar's assertion—congado *is* *vivência*—also represents a powerful statement about music's role in constituting religious experiences for practitioners. He implies that music *is* spirituality, aesthetics, memories, and knowledge, rather than saying that music merely accompanies these life experiences. Likewise, he also distinguishes between congado sounded *in* sacred conviction and congado as the sound *of* sacred conviction. Congadeiros give sacred conviction a sound; they are not simply religious practitioners of popular Catholicism who create music. In a similar way, Ronoldo de Queiroz, from the congado group Nossa Senhora do Rosário e Santa Efigênia in Ouro Preto, notes,

The issue with music is that it is a spectrum. It's going to open to diverse dimensions. Each person is going to feel inside the moment. Music is going to provide for the person in that moment.

Genevieve Dempsey: Very interesting. And what is it that music provides?

Ronoldo de Queiroz: Peace, happiness. When we are singing, praising our saint of devotion, it is a thing that is almost impossible for one to explain. It's difficult. It comes from the very bottom of each person for one another. Thus, you don't have a concrete explication for this type of music in that moment. Sometimes a person is in a presentation—the person begins a song and it carries you to many things. (Queiroz 2014)

At another point in our conversation, Ronoldo de Queiroz asserts,

Within congado, for example, you have moments that you're sad, but over the course of the presentation, you let everything go. There are songs (*músicas*) that they play in congado in particular moments that you become more learned by means of the very song. The very song is going to bring you that kind of burning sadness. You have just as many happy moments as you have sad moments also. The music within congado is a life. The music itself is a life in which a person expresses the feelings that she is living in that moment. In the moment when a person sings or plays, that feeling will be related to the music. Or it's sad or it's happy. (Queiroz 2014)

One possible way to interpret Ronoldo's idea that music is a spectrum is to consider how music making affords the materialization of different possible emotional states. Building on Cesar and Ronoldo's ideas, I argue that if congado is life experience, then music is the medium for engendering the spectrum of emotions that pervade these life experiences. This claim departs, in part, from the idea that music simply expresses emotion or identity. Rather than demonstrate how music conveys an already fully formed subject position, I propose that it is more productive to explore the ways in which musicians employ music as a tool to generate emotion and identity. By approaching cultural expression from this angle, one begins to understand music making as an activity that has the potential to engender sentiment as well as to bring about change. As Ronoldo says, "The music within congado is a life." Similarly, Cesar notes that congado is both a presence and a *vivência*. These statements reveal congadeiros' deeply held convictions that

music making not only reflects life, presence, peace, and emotion, but also brings them into being.

While practitioners cultivate the congado vivência within their musico-spiritual milieus, it is not located “in the blood.” As shown by congadeiros of all different phenotypes, there is no particular background or skin color that allows for privileged access to the congado vivência. At the same time, most all of the practitioners with whom I worked identified as black. Whether congadeiros celebrate their black skin or deflect discrimination based upon black skin, the racialization of their bodies indelibly affects the kinds of experiences that congadeiros live. Blackness is a socially meaningful component of congadeiros’ lives that informs the choices that they make when creating music and negotiating social dynamics (Jackson 2012; Fales 2002).

Resistance and Persistence

As Brazilians increasingly value progress, productive efficiency, and formal education in modernity, congadeiros use of song as an expression of *oralidade* (orality) becomes a type of resistance (Pereira and Gomes 2003, 13). In the following section, I attend to the ways in which music making symbolizes a critical tool for congadeiros in deflecting the erasure of their traditions. Scholars have historically connected the notion of *resistência* to a Euro-American concept of resistance by describing the ways in which participants deploy music to speak back to oppressors in covert and overt ways. Although the concept of *resistência* denotes resistance in the context of congado, the term also helpfully describes the ways in which social agents adapt to particular historical circumstances for reasons of preservation and persistence. According to congadeiros, *resistência* is about creating long-lasting traditions that transform in content and

meaning over time, but that nonetheless endure as emblems of Afro-Brazilian *vivência*. In this way, congado's efficaciousness resides both in its malleability to change with the times and in its ability to remain socially and religiously relevant throughout the ages.

Gecino Alves, a member of the group Moçambique Treze de Maio de Nossa Senhora do Rosário, talked about the congado house of Dona Isabel Cassimiro das Dores Gasparino as a space of collectivity, preservation, and dignity. In our interview, he asserted that

Congado, this is my point of view. The house of congado is a social center, a cultural center. It principally helps the people who are around it. The communities are the ones that compose this house. There you have a shantytown, there another and another. Here you have people from all levels. But, the majority are people from this place and they make up the beads of the rosary. If someone needed a medicine, oh Dona Isabel must have it. How many people have been fed by this house, for example? Because here, there was a queen or various queens that were ambassadors for the black people. They went out from here and they guaranteed the right of these people to dress in luxury, to sing their song.¹ One's self-esteem goes up. We have pride. Everyone that has participated and danced in congado has pride. The pride to not need to walk with your head down. Only when the dance calls for it [laughter from the two of us]. Only when it's part of the ritual. This offers authority. They are captains, queens, kings, and they are not false.

Genevieve Dempsey: Yes, they are real.

Gecino Alves: I would literally obey my queen much more than I would the president of the republic. It's that. It is very old. It is part of the *resistência* of our people. It helped a lot. It's reinado here. It's *maracatu* there. It's *afoxé* there [different kinds of Afro-Brazilian musico-cultural traditions]. Each region of Brazil, they are the practices of our people that were preserved. You know, like language also, various aspects of the language. Not only the language, but also the way of speaking—the way of seeing the world. The vision of the world is also preserved. (Alves 2014)

¹ Congadeiros tend to be poor and use inexpensive materials that imitate the splendor of precious metals and sumptuous clothing to symbolize royalty. Hence, despite the fact that the luxurious goods worn by congadeiros are not truly expensive in a monetary sense, they are still revered and prized by congadeiros for they signal the presence of the honorable royal court (*cortejo*). The notion of dressing in luxury might also be reminiscent of the times during colonial Brazil when the surpluses of the mines actually allowed the black irmandades to host elegant religious festas (Reily 2013, 243).

By employing resistance, congadeiros recast their experiences of enslavement as narratives of redemption rather than tales of destruction. Moreover, as they build a collective identity, practitioners not only ascribe lasting function to their unique traditions, their music making also becomes an intervention into Brazilian society towards a more just and ethical order (Lucas 2013).

According to Gecino Alves, the congado house represents a social safety net and central place for engendering collectivity. *Resistência*, in this way, not only materializes as a way of making claims to an outside entity, but also as a way to turn inward—to feed and heal the people that constitute the beads of the rosary. The congado house, then, acts as both a cultural center and a metaphoric space of centering where high-stakes issues become expressed in discourse and song. Thus, representing a space of self-recognition, acceptance, and growth, the congado house counteracts the social invisibility that congadeiros experience on an everyday basis.

We might observe also that Gecino Alves specifically highlights singing, speaking, hearing, and seeing as crucial modalities for constituting the vision of congadeiros. Emphasizing the relationships between vision, hearing, and singing is of critical importance because people live rituals as sensory experience (Feld 1990 [1982]). In this respect, sight and sound are more than biological senses. They are politically charged cultural and social modalities from which congadeiros construct meaning and make sense of the world. I call for an integrated kind of scholarship that takes critical account of the senses as a unified entity through which congadeiros operationalize their historical memory and contemporary practices. As functional modernity sidelines, fragments, and devalues the senses for their lack of utility in a globalized political economy (Herzfeld 2001), congadeiros prioritize the senses as privileged sites of knowledge construction. When congadeiros sacralize audition and vision, they engage in the exercise of

agency because it is through kinetic action and sonic experience that their own conception of the sacred materializes. Thus, particular modes of hearing, seeing, and touching become gateways for congadeiros to build alternative narratives to capitalist orders.

For congadeiros, few actions invoke such a great degree of symbolism and politics than singing about liberation from slavery. What is telling is that congadeiros not only sing of freedom from oppression in the here and now. Archival evidence bears witness to the fact that congadeiros have intoned songs of abolition for centuries. Yet, despite the fact that Ouro Preto was an important colonial mining center and epicenter for black culture throughout the centuries, the richness of black orality stands in stark contrast to the dearth of archival records about congado in the present. Many of my trips to the archives in Ouro Preto and the surrounding region yielded very few substantive documents. Nonetheless, I managed to find one particularly revealing document. Comprised of only a sheet of music, congadeiros in the twentieth century would have sung the following lyrics to its melody repeatedly:

Figure 69. These lyrics narrate congadeiros' feelings about emancipation in Brazil, late 19th century-20th century. Located in the archives of the Museu de Inconfidência in Ouro Preto, Minas Gerais.

Estava capinando,
I was napping,
A princesa me chamou,
The princess called to me,
Descança negro,
Rest black person,
Você não tem mais sinhô.
You no longer have an owner.
Alleluia, tem peixe no prato,
Alleluia, there is fish on the plate,
Farinha na cuia,
Mandioc powder in the bowl,
O sol da liberdade já raiou.
*The sun of liberty has now dawned.*²

² The reference to the “princess” likely refers to Princess Isabel of Brazil who abolished slavery in 1888.

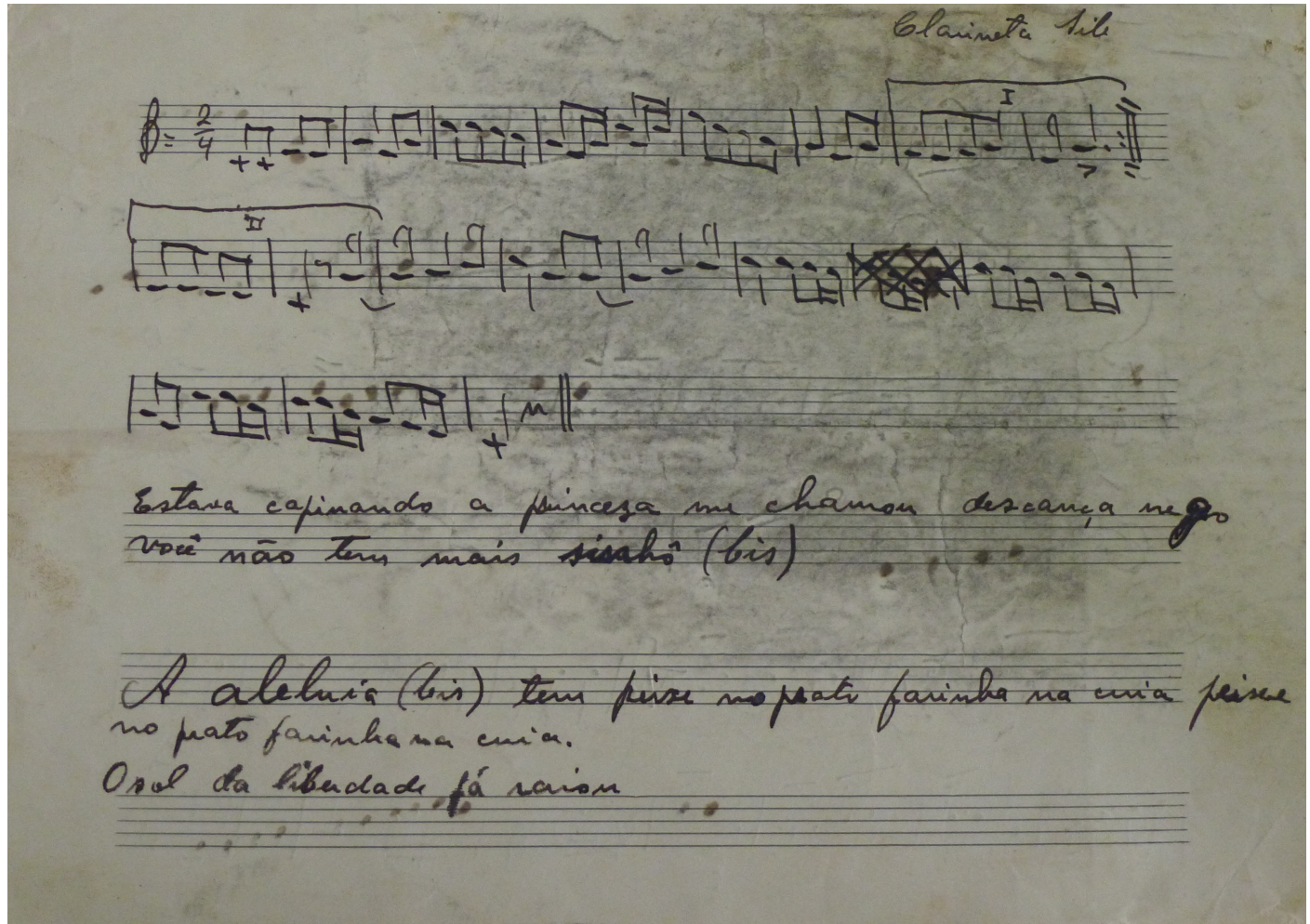


Figure 70. Congado lyrics and melody narrate black people's liberation from slavery, late 19th century-20th century. Courtesy of the archives of the Museu de Inconfidência in Ouro Preto, Minas Gerais.

Congadeiros not only narrated and continue to narrate their liberation from slavery through song, but also that congadeiros' liberation from slavery has always been found "in the music"—whether or not they were directly speaking of emancipation. That is, I argue that long before the physical liberation of their bodies, congadeiros have always found a way to liberate themselves "in the music." Thus, lyrics that speak of liberation, as evinced by the musical example above,

are actually reinforcing what was always there—liberation etched in the musical sounds themselves.

The Intersection between Syncretism and Blackness

With regard to how congado communities deploy the concept of resistance, it is of critical importance to note that a paradigm predicated on a dichotomy between congadeiros' resistance or acquiescence to the Catholic Church is not as useful as one that charts more of a middle ground. Indeed, it is evident that congadeiros transform their relationship to the Catholic Church by strategically manipulating it (Bell 1992, 110). Hence, congadeiros' constant engagement with the Catholic Church, rather than their isolation from it, characterizes their interrelationship.

When J. Lorand Matory posits the following idea, he is addressing the interconnection between ethnic groups and nation-states, but his words resonate strongly with how I approach the interdependence between congadeiros and the Catholic Church. He writes,

Those classes and ethnic groups whose imaginations of community subdivide or crosscut those of the nation-state cannot be discussed simply in terms of their exclusion from the nation-state, or as though their visions of community had nothing to do with the nation-state. The trans-Atlantic Jeje nation and its cultural projects are a "fragment" of the nation, to borrow Partha Chatterjee's term (1992), but they are not merely that. Nor does such an African "nation" represent a mere alternative to or withdrawal from the nation-state, as Bastide has implied (1978 [1960]). Rather, this trans-Atlantic nation represents an important economic function of the nation, mediating its exchange with other territorial entities, generating tax revenues for the state, and providing the symbols of regional diversity. The Jeje nation crosscut the British, French, and German empires as well, and its transoceanic commerce played a role in their economies, too. The most obvious lesson in this phenomenon is that the dialogue among mutually crosscutting forms of imagined community is not only old but normal. (Matory 2005, 89-90)

I draw upon the ideas of J. Lorand Matory as well as Sherry Ortner's concept of resistance (1995) to suggest that resistance signifies more about accommodation and collaboration than it

does about opposition to other social, cultural, and religious actors. Indeed, my research has shown that congadeiros work to be included within, rather than stand apart from, mainstream Catholicism. By operating internally rather than externally to Catholic proceedings, congadeiros make Catholic religious praxis more inclusive, expansive, and understanding of a diversity of musics and opinions. In fact, I expand upon Paul Gilroy's idea of "double consciousness" (1993) by arguing that congadeiros not only "self-identify as both 'black' and members of Western nations" (Feldman 2005), congadeiros also exhibit a double consciousness by identifying with black folk Catholicism as well as with Roman Catholicism.

Furthermore, congadeiros contend that they are legitimate practitioners of Catholicism because their African ancestors were longstanding practitioners of Catholicism, not converts upon reaching the New World. In our conversations, they often spoke about how people's extensive contact with Catholicism in Africa since the fifteenth century transformed their beliefs and traditions into syncretic mixtures of European Christianity and African religions (Selka 2014). For example, congadeiros who trace their ancestry to the Kingdom of Kongo—today's Republic of the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Angola in West Central Africa—believe that even before being enslaved and forced into labor in the Middle Passage, they had been "converted" to Christianity in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century (Thorton 1998; Queiroz 2005, 32). This wave of conversion was the result of the Portuguese explorers and Dominican missionaries who came into contact with the Kingdom of Kongo in 1483 for mercantile and ecclesiastical reasons. After establishing economic and diplomatic ties, the reigning Kongo monarch Nzinga a Nkuwu was baptized, thereby beginning the initial movement toward kingdom-wide catechism and conversion in 1491. The processes of commerce between Africa and the New World and movements towards conversion to Catholicism were

accelerated under Afonso Mvemba a Nzinga, the predecessor's son and successor, who sought to mix Kongo lifeways with Christian doctrine. To facilitate the conversion process, the Church in the eighteenth century promoted the worship of black saints like São Benedito, Santa Efigênia, and São Elesbão to encourage African and Afro-descendent peoples to identify racially with Catholic figures (Scisínio 1988, 30). Thus, even at the outset of colonization in Brazil, black people's worship of Nossa Senhora and other Catholic saints through song and dance was part and parcel of the country's foundation. Hence, congadeiros draw upon these historical facts to substantiate the legitimacy of their traditions in the here and now.

What is interesting is that even today, scholars and practitioners have yet to reach a consensus regarding the extent to which the Kongo people wholeheartedly embraced Christianity. Marina de Mello e Souza argues that the "African Catholicism" that formed between the Congolese and the Europeans developed from:

A dialogue of deaf people or the reinterpretation of mythologies and symbols starting from their own cultural codes. The conversion to Christianity was taken as a fact by the missionaries and by the Holy See, just as the local population and religious leaders accepted the Christian designations and rituals as new ways of dealing with old concepts. (Souza 2002, 63)

Regardless of how scholars such as Marina de Mello e Souza measure sincerity and intent, West Central African people's conversion to Catholicism had major ramifications for power dynamics, religious networks, and commercial trade routes that crisscrossed the Atlantic World (Sweet 2003). Hence, with the initiation of the Atlantic slave trade in the fifteenth century, Portugal, Brazil, and Central Africa became entwined in a myriad of networks. As people came into contact with one another because of commerce, they were also forced to confront each other's religions, politics, and cultures. Indeed, the contact between practitioners of European Catholicism and various African religions created mixed sacred ideologies and

musicalities. Congadeiros attempt to carve out a place of belonging in the Catholic Church by showing the extent to which syncretic sacred traditions have been the norm, not the exception, for centuries. Indeed, to remember the past as a crossroads for religious beliefs across various sites of the Atlantic World helps congadeiros to forge a hybrid identity in the here and now of Brazil.

I describe these initial processes of conversion to highlight congadeiros' beliefs that the legitimacy of their faith derives from its historical rootedness. Rather than conceiving of their religious and musical practices as recently invented traditions, congadeiros lay claim to a hybrid past. This past offers practitioners a sense of legitimacy in the present. Hence, the musical practices of congadeiros are unique, but they do not see their stylistic distinctions as placing them outside of Catholic devotion. Indeed, congadeiros perceive themselves to be Catholic devotees whose reshaping of European-derived religious thought and music through the prism of afrodescendence (*afrodescendência*) reflects a kind of creative agency that both bears witness to and seeks redemption from their harrowed history of enslavement.

Community for Survival and Coronation for Dignity

Religious and social confraternities known as brotherhoods (*irmandades*) date back to the initial period of colonization in Minas Gerais during the seventeenth century. *Irmandades* were and continue to be Catholic confraternities comprised of communities based upon kinship and affective linkages. While congado groups can be independent entities, many represent central protagonists in the broad-based religious brotherhoods.

When Portuguese-funded explorers known as *bandeirantes* (banner-bearers) discovered gold in the mountains of Minas Gerais in the late seventeenth century, the brotherhood of Our Lady of the Rosary of the Black People (Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Homens Pretos) was already an active entity in Brazilian society. Not only did religious institutions establish the legacy of the brotherhood in Brazil, but at this same moment, the brotherhood as an institution had already been active in European society for centuries. The brotherhood of Nossa Senhora do Rosário and other rosary brotherhoods developed throughout Europe as early as the mid-fifteenth century when the Portuguese began to explore and plunder Africa. The first brotherhood in Portugal was established around the 1480s within the Dominican religious order.

The historical association between congado and brotherhoods is an important one because congadeiros not only participated in the functioning of the brotherhoods; the religious confraternities were also the primary institutions responsible for the faith-based and social lives of its members. Through such activities like charity work and the promotion of an annual festival on the feast of its patron saint, the brotherhoods oversaw and controlled people's social and religious lives. In fact, from issuing birth certificates to allocating land for their burials, brotherhoods coordinated the most significant events in people's lives.

Echoing this idea, Elizabeth Kiddy asserts that the irmandades were the most crucial organizations in the daily lives of Portuguese subjects in both the metropolis and colonies because they organized the religious festivals, distributed social services, and looked after the well-being of people's bodies and souls, both on earth and in heaven. In negotiating the relationship between the official church and the laity, the irmandades became prominent actors in mediating power struggles. The irmandades likewise served as mediators between individual

families and society at large through the construction of commonalities and general senses of collective identity.

The relationships arbitrated by the brotherhoods were also one of mediation between human beings and the unseen world of the divine. Many devotees made promises to the saints, often in the form of grand fetes and celebrations, with the intent of pleasing the saints and falling into their good grace. By creating musico-religious sites and ceremonies where promises could be voiced, they prayed that the saints would answer their pleas for intercession. Thus, the brotherhoods became *congadeiros'* liaisons between the worldly and other worldly realms.

According to historical evidence, *congado* commenced during the colonial era as a means to sound the splendor and fanfare surrounding the coronation of black kings (Alvarenga 1982, 100). The earliest known document to reference the formal crowning of black kings in Brazil comes from the early eighteenth century, but a few researchers (Bastide 1985 [1960], 173; Travassos Lins 1992, 232) suggest that these festivities had their initiation long before this date. The slaves celebrated the coronation by announcing it with parading, singing, and dancing, as well as by playing drums, shakers, and other instruments in the streets. Because crowning kings and queens was a popular activity amongst Bantu slaves of Congolese origin, people began to associate these two ideas with one another. Soon, any generic courts that elected black kings came to be known as the Kings of the Congo (Reily 2001). The ceremonies, processions, parades, and rituals of *congadeiros* that we witness today are connected to the celebrations of saints that were carried out by brotherhoods during the colonial period in Minas Gerais.

While most people belonged to a brotherhood, the selection process for belonging to certain brotherhoods was decided based upon racial questions, with separate ones for whites, *pardos* (mulattos), and Afro-descendants. Because black people, both African-and Brazilian-born

slaves and freed slaves (*forros*), predominantly identified with Our Lady of the Rosary, the festival in her honor became the most significant event throughout the year. Although scholars had traditionally assumed that the *irmandades* were “slave” organizations, the membership was free for much of their history and Africans and their descendants, regardless of legal status, eagerly participated. To understand the apparent paradox of why Africans willingly joined Catholic lay organizations during the colonial period, one must look at how they perceived it as an opportunity to mold an institution in light of their social ideals and religious devotion.

In addition to serving as sites for the expression of religious devotion, brotherhoods also became sites for competition and ostentation. They attempted to rival each other in musical pomp and circumstance on the days of the patron saint festivals (Priore 1994, 25). While the competition and showcasing was taken seriously and served to single out brotherhoods in terms of wealth, organization, and numerical strength, it was also a chance for different classes to congregate and instill a sense of equal social standing, if only for a short period of time (Boxer 1964, 134).

Between Conforming to and Reimagining Social Structures

Portuguese colonial authorities encouraged slaves to organize themselves into confraternities for various motivations. Not only was it a way of incorporating them into the functioning of the Portuguese societal infrastructure, but also by organizing the slaves, they were able to monitor and influence them. For instance, many times colonial officials took part in the selection of people for the courts. It is important to emphasize that members of the brotherhoods did not simply accept the Portuguese socio-political system, nor did they wholly reject Portuguese norms

in the creation of autonomous cultural and social expressions. From their very inception in the interior of Brazil, the brotherhoods contained elements of sub-Saharan lifeways and cosmologies—which were already influenced by European culture and Catholicism—as well as eighteenth century Iberian folk traditions. At the same time that the brotherhoods drew people into the fold of the church and Portuguese society, the black population found a balance between embodying Portuguese norms and deciding their own social criterion. Indeed, upon confronting Portuguese values and hierarchies, they found symmetries with their African belief systems and went about remolding the system so that it served their social and religious needs.

This autonomy over the practice of popular religion was aided by the fact that there was a lack of secular and religious clergy in Brazil when they arrived in the mid-sixteenth century. This shortage of leadership allowed the brotherhoods to place laypeople in charge of their own worship practices. To entrust the decisions about daily devotional activities to ordinary people helped ensure that devotees retained agency vis-à-vis the Portuguese administrative system and the clergy.

Participants also saw the confraternity as a place for the making of community. Various African communities managed to forge a shared heritage through the convergence of their devotional practices. As Elizabeth Kiddy writes:

The idea of community is not one of place, or of neighborhood, but rather of a people who have worked to maintain a group identity through generations—annual reaffirmation of a shared, remembered history as descendants of Africans and devotees of Our Lady of the Rosary.

The concept of collective identity tends to be used generously in scholarly literature, but this forging of diverse traditions into a shared heritage is a legacy of the rosary brotherhoods that should not be deemphasized. Building a collective identity in the past and maintaining it today is far more than a symbolic gesture. It is a survival option. Individuals created and continue to

create lasting ties with one another through brotherhoods because fellowship offers security, support, and survival.

When using the term identity in Brazil, it is important to note that the concept is generally not linked to an individual's sense of personal agency, but rather to an individual's place among a collectivity. In Roberto DaMatta's work on the Brazilian social system, he shows how individuality has historically been considered unfavorable. In the eighteenth century, family or kin comprised the most basic social unit. In being an extension of the family unit, the brotherhood protected the interests of its constituents.

Within these familial-like communities, people cultivated a social memory through rituals that both rearticulated linkages to Africa and forged a fresh, common heritage based upon their experiences in a new land. As sociologist Maurice Halbwachs writes, when people congregate together they are able to "recall, recognize, and localize their memories" (Halbwachs 1992, 38). Paul Connerton's work also echoes this sentiment by situating the emergence of a cohesive social memory in religious and commemorative rituals. In this respect, the past becomes an ever-living source of life for the beliefs and traditions of today. Pierre Nora reiterates the notion that "Memory is life, borne by living societies founded in its name. It remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived" (Nora 1989, 8). The very act of being together and especially of making music together allows people to recollect, reminisce, and revive past experiences.

Sounding an Afro-Ancestral Past

What does it mean when congadeiros say that their rituals are part of the African matrix (*matriz Africana*)? Is the idea of the African matrix far more ‘Brazilian’ than it is ‘African’? What are the underlying assumptions that accompany the use of these narratives and terms (Palmié 1995, 2008)? In many respects, western writers have often used the term ‘Africa’ to index concepts of the other (Mbembe 2002; Miller 1985). I argue that the notion of ‘Africa’ becomes a kind of flexible identity marker that congadeiros use to craft a collectively produced cultural knowledge. The qualities that constitute the African matrix, furthermore, show increasing fluidity the more ‘Brazil’ becomes theoretically distanced from ‘Africa.’ Put differently, the meanings that accrue to ‘what is Afro-Brazilian’ demonstrate a greater degree of malleability the larger the historical and temporal space is between Brazil and the African continent (Moore 1998, 32). When speaking of Africa, congadeiros are more likely to reference the past and indicate the resiliency of their ancestors during the Atlantic slave trade than they are likely to talk about contemporary African influences on Brazilian culture. The African matrix, in this sense, is a contemporary way of identifying that remains rooted in the historic memory of the past. In a musical conversation with instrument maker, Enildon Pereira Silva, he speaks about the double consciousness that Afro-Brazilians embody.

Genevieve Dempsey: You spoke of the inspiration for the drums, of the instruments that come and came from Africa. What is the relation between what happens in Africa and what happens here in Brazil in terms of the instruments?

Enildon Pereira Silva: Well, in terms of instruments, we do the ethnicity—the rhythm. The form that they play there, we change it here in Brazil in order to transform it into congado. But, in Africa there has never been congado. It was never in Moçambique. But why does congado and moçambique exist here in Brazil? Because the blacks that came from that region are the blacks that formed the congado groups. Thus, in memory of them

we have congado and our afrodescendancy. This relation is very large. Why? Africa and Brazil are linked through ethnicity.

Genevieve Dempsey: But it is not just one ethnicity. They are various ethnicities, right?

Enildon Pereira Silva: They are various ethnicities, but they're all encompassed under one form. It is a magnetic thing. There is no way for us to make congado without remembering our African mother. (Pereira Silva 2014)

Enildon's words about creating music in remembrance of a metaphoric African mother highlight the idea that congado is not only a hybrid cultural expression, but also a hybridizing one.

Although a Brazilian musico-spiritual phenomenon, congado's roots were forged in the trans-Atlantic exchange. Even today, practitioners strive to remember and commemorate these linkages. In building musical, historical, and metaphoric ties with Africa, congadeiros deconstruct and reconstruct the idea of Brazil, Africa, and themselves.

Lucimar de Carvalho expressed similar views to Enildon Pereira Silva when she spoke to me about preserving and renewing musical knowledge so as to maintain the vibrancy of Afro-Brazilian congado communities. Her preoccupation seemed to be linked to questions not only of musical transmission, but also of identity transmission. To forget the verses of the most ancient songs in their repertoire represented a kind of cultural forgetting. Lucimar de Carvalho related,

We cannot let the past die. We must always try to conserve the most ancient songs and attempt to always renew new music. To not let the most ancient songs die. To always be, pulling, bringing forth that which is in the past to the front once more. We are forgetting a lot of ancient songs. I myself do not remember anymore. Now there are only a few that we sing. You have the song "Flowers are Falling" ["*Está caindo Flores*"], which is ancient. You have the song, "Foot in the Air, Foot on the Ground" ["*Pé no Ar, Pé no Chão*"]. It is one of the most ancient ones that we have. (Carvalho 2014)

Lucimar's comments open up a discussion about how music preservation and renovation act as lenses through which to think about the creation and transformation of Afro-Brazilian identity and social memory. In what ways might these musical and social performances serve as spaces

of remembering and mutual identification for participants? The question of identity is critical because many participants express their motivation for reviving congado in terms of preserving and giving continuation to an identity inherited from their Afro-Brazilian ancestors. I interpret Lucimar de Carvalho's comments to mean that these songs and dances are not about returning to an eternal past, but rather about bridging the past and the present through song so as to construct a collective autobiography of themselves (Connerton 1989, 70).

Enildon Pereira Silva and Lucimar de Carvalho communicated the need to draw upon and preserve their ancestral pasts, but how does the discourse of preserving an Afro-Brazilian identity match up with how practitioners fashion their own bodies on an everyday basis? What does it mean to not only preserve an Afro-Brazilian history and identity, but also to embody it? These questions are intended to broach a discussion about the ways in which congadeiros shape their body, and in particular, how female congadeiros style their hair. Initially, I never considered how the concept of hairstyling might intersect with other themes like performance, devotion, dignity, and psycho-spiritual survival. However, a short conversation changed my perspective.

I had traveled to the Museum of the Music of Mariana (Museu de Música de Mariana) to carry out archival research about congado when I met a woman from Mariana who was also researching at the archive. Over the course of our conversation, we discovered that she knew some of the interlocutors with whom I worked. I do not clearly remember what preceded the following portion of our conversation, but at one point, our conversation addressed members of the Silvério family. I remarked, "Isn't it interesting how genes within one family can be so different? Look at Kátia, she has incredibly long, straight black hair. And Karina her older sister has short, very curly hair." The woman firmly responded, "They don't have different hair types. Kátia *straightens* her hair." The woman went on to explain that although she self-identified as a

light-skinned Brazilian, her intensely curly hair was a trait inherited from her Afro-Brazilian ancestry. The woman maintained her natural, spiraling hair because she thought that straightening it signaled a kind of displeasure with her own identity as an Afro-Brazilian. Over the course of the conversation, she began to criticize the women *congadeiros* who straightened their hair. She deemed it contradictory to champion an Afro-Brazilian heritage, while seemingly rejecting the physical traits that this heritage signaled: curly black hair.

In this short conversation, the woman's comments made me re-think how notions of hair might be bound up with *congadeiros*' contexts of devotion. First, I had previously assumed that Kátia's long, arrow-like black hair was natural because I had stayed with her many times and had only seen her with straight hair. When I learned that it was naturally curly like Karina's hair, I simply reconfigured my knowledge about Kátia's hair, but still attached no value judgment to it.

However, according to this woman, the act of straightening black hair—especially in the context of Afro-Brazilian sacred rituals—was far from neutral and innocuous. For this woman of Afro-Brazilian ancestry, she believed that how people style their hair indicates how they conceive their racial identities. I initially perceived Kátia's hair styling choice to be aesthetic. However, according to the woman, Kátia's decision to straighten her hair was a deeply historical and racial one. What was the link between the styling of hair and women's racial and gender identity? Note also that this question obtains for Afro-Brazilian women and men *congadeiros* alike. The woman's comments made me aware of something that I had previously observed, but not yet analyzed. Each morning when I woke up at Kátia's home, I would find the straightening iron cooling in the bathroom. After some weeks, I realized that João Henrique Silvério Estevam, Kátia's fourteen-year old son, was using it to straighten his hair before school.

Our conversation also reminded me of a time when I was staying at Maria Goreth Hozédio's (Goreth) home in the Arturos community. One afternoon when Maria Goreth Hozédio, Ana Teresa Eredia Luz—her fourteen-year-old daughter—and I were eating lunch together, I told her Ana Teresa how beautiful her long braids were. Pleased by my compliment, she started to play with the long braids to highlight their beauty. She giddily remarked that her mother had allowed her to go to the salon so that she could parade gracefully for the festa of Nossa Senhora do Rosário. Goreth Eredia chimed in, saying that because of the special occasion, they had splurged nearly two hundred reais, around a hundred dollars in 2014, for the braids. Goreth Eredia mentioned that given the low-income status of her family, only exceptional occasions merited this kind of expensive hair treatment. Goreth Eredia previously worked as a grade school teacher before a medical issue prevented her from continuing. Her husband worked as a farmer, tending the livestock for the Arturos community. Thus, given their meager income and the fact their three kids lived at home, trips to the beauty salon were considered to be rare and significant events.

What these anecdotes reveal is that, on the one hand, congadeiros go to great lengths to style and take care of their hair. Their rituals are directed towards the heavens, but women and even men, engage in beautifying routines to aesthetically prepare themselves for devotional ceremonies. On the other hand, some of these styling choices receive criticism from people concerned about the political imperatives that the straightening and styling of black hair reflect. What, then, do these understandings of hair imply about people's conceptions of attractiveness as well as racial and historical authenticity? It is clear that congadeiros like Kátia and João did not perceive it to be contradictory to wear their hair in a straightened fashion while also championing an Afro-Brazilian identity. Moreover, Kátia was also the proud owner of a beauty salon, which

she ran out of the front part of her home. Although poor, Kátia was an entrepreneur, which gave her a feeling of autonomy and pride in taking care of her two sons as a single parent. Yet, it is also evident that some non-congadeiros, like the woman whom I met at the archive, viewed hair straightening as an affront to Afro-Brazilians in the largest sense. She believed that by uncurling their hair, they were showing a dissatisfaction with their Afro-Brazilian genetic makeup. According to her, it seemed paradoxical to champion an Afro-Brazilian heritage, while simultaneously attempting to re-style it to fit a purportedly “whiter” aesthetic. Listening to this woman’s discourse made me realize the extent to which congadeiros’ hairstyling choices carry significant political implications for how they perceive themselves as well as how others perceive them.

Closing Thoughts

From vibrant drumming and spirited dancing to introspective polyphony, congadeiros participate in multisensory music making because it offers them a way to address social exclusion and to create a collective identity. In this chapter, I have explored music’s role in tapping into a divine realm where practitioners access their African roots and experience spiritual healing. Through sacred song, congadeiros reinforce ties to their ancestors and divine icons as well as engender dignity on a personal and collective level.

Because faith is a core motivator for making sacred song among congado communities, faith is also a resource for exercising agency. Congadeiros operationalize music and faith in tandem not only to express their worldviews, but also to carve out a place for themselves in the modern world. Hence, when congadeiros participate in the making of individual and collective

musico-religious traditions, they simultaneously impact the ways in which modernity comes to be constituted.

While congadeiros carry out sacred musical rituals with palpable conviction, enthusiasm, and dedication, Dona Isabel Cassimiro das Dores Gasparino, elected queen of all the congado groups in Minas Gerais, reminded me that her group, and countless other poor, marginalized congado communities, create music as an expression of sacred conviction even in the face of significant financial and social barriers. She recounted how despite adversity, or rather because of adversity, congadeiros must “not allow the ball to drop” (*não deixar a peteca cair*) because their collective identity is inextricably linked to their African roots. During a conversation with her, I asked, “But, where do the roots come from?” Dona Isabel Cassimiro das Dores Gasparino answered,

From our ancestors, from our ancestors. They come bringing, bringing to us. There is so much foundation of ancient roots here that people don’t even know it exists, but what exists, exists. But here’s the case. There’s a difficulty in being able to maintain the roots, you know. It is very difficult. If the authorities gave support, I think that it would be easier because we have expenses to buy uniforms—the purple, blue, and white clothing. We have to buy the leather for the instruments. Everything, everything requires money. Many times we try, try, try, but we aren’t able to do all that we have the right to do. It’s because of this that I say it’s a struggle. It is a true struggle. For you to maintain a group, it’s difficult. You have to think of food for them. Some need money for transportation to be able to come. We have to give it to them because we need them. It’s difficult. (Isabel Cassimiro das Dores Gasparino 2014)

Here Dona Isabel das Dores Gasparino highlights the extent to which material constraints impact the agency of congadeiros. Music and worship afford people the ability to carry out their actions, but agency is also contingent on practical things like money for uniforms and instruments.

Despite significant material constraints, Dona Isabel das Dores Gasparino affirms that congadeiros succeed in deploying sacred music as a means for intervening in and changing social, moral, and divine orders. Of critical importance here is the notion that the otherworldliness of their musico-spiritual rituals are also fundamentally grounded in worldly

concerns. Hence, I argue that congado resides at the intersection between the mystical and the material.

Just as congado festas conclude with the lowering of the sacred banner, I similarly close this chapter with the following anecdote from my fieldwork. This example highlights the significant extent to which material and physical constraints matter in congadeiros' struggles for dignity, recognition, and inclusion. At the lowering of the sacred banner ceremony, in the darkness of the night, practitioners formed concentric circles around the sacred banner. The captains danced and moved in the center under the approving gaze of the royal court. The captains took turns intoning songs with help from the drummers and singers from various groups. At several moments during the songs, the captains came face-to-face with one another. They clasped their hands together, jointly made the sign of the cross two times, and raised their hands toward the heavens. They followed this gesture by tapping their shoulders together in three solemn movements. As the singing progressed and the practitioners gradually moved the earth away from the tall pole in preparation to lower it, Ricardo Cassimiro, the son of queen Dona Isabel and captain of the group Moçambique Treze de Maio de Nossa Senhora do Rosário, stood with other practitioners to brace the pole as it came down. The pole represents various themes: Our Lady of the Rosary's divinity, the ongoing presence of a musico-spiritual festa, and the connection between humans and divine forces.

As the pole came loose from the earth and Ricardo Cassimiro reached up to brace it, he realized that there were not enough people to sustain its weight. Ricardo Cassimiro momentarily interrupted the singing to candidly urge, "This is *really* heavy. We need more people." Congadeiros rushed in and extended their arms towards the descending pole. Ricardo Cassimiro's punctuation of the sacred moment was imperative because lowering it required a

host of people. I realized in that moment that even congado's most sacred ceremonies require the engagement of people's minds *and* bodies in practical ways.

Dona Isabel das Dores Gasparino's comments about how material constraints impact practitioners' rituals as well as Ricardo Cassimiro's call for physical exertion in ritual contexts reveal the extent to which people work through material and physical constraints to operationalize musico-religious rituals. Indeed, material constraints and physical labor are implicated in how people manipulate musical elements to exercise agency and motivate action. The lack of resources and the difficulties encountered in carrying out rituals do not fully impede congadeiros' musico-religious rituals. However, they do impact the choices that they make when carrying out their ceremonies. They also shape and raise the value that congadeiros attach to fulfilling these sacred convictions and actions. In this way, material constraints and the challenges of carrying out rituals serve to increase congadeiros' awareness of what is at stake when sounding devotion, counteracting exclusion, and expressing dignity in their daily lives.

Chapter 7

“There in the Sky is Santa Maria”: Sounding Gender in Sacred Rituals

Standing at the entrance to the chapel of the Arturos community, I watched the moçambique group pass by in procession. As they moved forward, I overheard one onlooking woman whisper an aside to another woman. While I did not record the comment verbatim, I nonetheless remember the phrases. One woman said to the other, “Look at the women in the moçambique group. That’s not right. It’s not traditional moçambique if women are in it.” The women were being critical of other women who sought to transgress traditional gendered musical roles. Indeed, they seemed to desire that other women perform particular gendered roles through the performance of particular musical roles (Schieffelin 1985, 1998; Butler 1990). Why were these women censoring other women who attempted to participate in gender-inclusive forums of singing and drumming? What kinds of transgressive social cues were the women responding to and to what extent were their quick asides circumscribing women’s musical actions in a small, but significant way? In this chapter, I show how concepts of gender invariably pervades every aspect of congado. I theorize gender because it allows for thinking about how the interactions between women and men lead to gender ideologies that are inextricably tied to notions of ideal competence, prestige, and proper behavior, both musical and otherwise (Ortner and Whitehead 1981, 6-9).

In reflecting on the interpersonal dynamics recorded by this anecdote, I began to meditate on the issues of power, prestige, and value that underlie musical and gendered expressions in congado. Power is not simply a question about men subordinating women through norms, deception, persuasion, coercion, or harm, but rather about the pervasive nature of power in all

human relationships. Both men and women participate in the exercise of power and the maintenance or transformation of social codes through constant interaction and mediation (Foucault 1977, 1995). As the anecdote showed, language, even the tersest observations, can serve as effective modalities for legitimizing power structures that police gendered norms. Musical performance, in particular, presents a fruitful context for exploring how music makers reinforce or transform gender orders and power structures. In this chapter, I theorize about the ways in which men and women engage in disrupting or reinforcing gender conceptualizations and power in contexts of musical performances.

Shifting Times

Over the past several decades, Afro-Brazilian women involved in congado have moved from occupying positions of high visibility but low vocality—as queens and princesses in the royal court (*corte real*)—to occupying positions of high visibility and high vocality—as singers, dancers, instrumentalists, and captains of the groups. In fact, until recently, women were prohibited from participating in any musical capacity within the groups. I chart in this presentation the transformations in women’s musical and religious roles within congado communities to understand the varying ways practitioners conceive and enact gender in contexts of Afro-Brazilian sacred song. In particular, I focus on how musical performance provides a space for practitioners to reaffirm gender values and rules as well as to negotiate and contest them. In the existing literature on gender in congado communities, scholars have focused on how power dynamics between men and women congadeiros lead either to empowerment or to disenfranchisement. Extending the work of other scholars concerned with gender and congado

(Soares 2009; Sousa 2011), I argue that understanding the musical, gendered, and religious dynamics at work in congado requires a far more nuanced analysis and interpretation of congadeiros' actions. Indeed, to examine both musical performance and discourse about musical performance as sites for the (re)production of power is to complicate the picture of how gendered dynamics condition practitioners' experiences—sonically, interpersonally, culturally, religiously, historically, and spatially.



Figure 71. As the banner bearer, Renata da Silva proudly carries the banner and leads the way for everyone for the moçambique group.

Although women's assumption of more varied roles within congado has led to a more inclusive atmosphere, there is still little consensus among men and women regarding what proper gendered behavior looks like in congado. For this reason, performance serves as a critical space for practitioners to affirm, negotiate, and/or contest their values and rules about gender norms. The transformations in musical and religious roles among congadeiros demonstrate the changing ways in which gender roles have been conceived of in contexts of Afro-Brazilian sacred song.

Historically, even when women founded congado groups, they were not allowed to be captains. Dona Isabel Cassimira das Dores Gasparino, congado queen of the moçambique and congo groups Treze de Maio de Nossa Senhora do Rosário as well as the elected queen for all of the congado groups in Minas Gerais, spoke to me about the time when her mother Dona Maria Cassimira das Dores founded the group in 1944:

Dona Isabel Cassimiro das Dores Gasparino: You see, on the twenty-six of this month [July 2014], it's going to be thirty years since she [Dona Maria Cassimira das Dores] passed away. We are here in the fight struggling to not let die what she attempted to construct. Because it isn't easy, no. She had a lot of difficulty in registering the group. She had to register my brother, who was a man, to be president of the group. This is because historically, they used to say foolish things like women can't be presidents of groups. Thus, she took my brother and put him [in the position]. On the eighth, it will be eight years since he also passed away. I was the one who was left in the court of this old group persevering, persevering hardships. I don't know until when Nossa Senhora will give me this strength to be able to forge ahead. (Dona Isabel Cassimiro das Dores Gasparino 2014)

Dona Isabel's story revealed how women were historically prevented from exercising a sense of leadership in congado by being obliged to pass the position of authority to men. Hence, notwithstanding women's proven interest in founding groups and the fact that congadeiros' main icon of devotion is the female figure of Nossa Senhora do Rosário, women's participation in congado has traditionally been curtailed.

As briefly mentioned above, women were historically only allowed to participate in congado as queens (*rainhas*), princesses (*princesas*), banner bearers (*bandeireiras* or *porta-*

bandeiras), and cooks (*cozinheiras*) during the festa. Even in 1998, Suzel Ana Reily writes, “*Ternos* [also known as *guardas* (groups)] are voluntary associations, but membership tends to be almost exclusively male; women may participate as bearers of banners (*porta-bandeiras*), leading the procession of musicians and dancers” (Reily 1998, 332). Reily’s words reveal two primary issues. First, gender used to be the primary basis on which to exclude women musicians from congado. Second, this gendered criterion held in congado until fairly recently, after which women began experiencing an unprecedented and rapid ascension into musical and leadership roles. Given that women now occupy prominent leadership positions as well as musical ones, how can we account for such a significant transformation in gender roles in a relatively short amount of time?

Indeed, the partitioning of musical roles based on rigid understandings of gender, sexuality, and power has lessened over the past several decades and women have increasingly moved from the periphery to the center of congado. As of late, women have assumed the roles of drummers (*caixeiras*), dancers (*dançantes*), instrumentalists, and captains (*capitães*) of different kinds of groups. As social anthropologist Dalva Maria Soares says, “Whoever sees these women in charge of the festa today, does not perceive the dimension of the challenges that they encountered and encounter in continuing the tradition” (2009, 36). While it is often challenging to gauge the extent to which traditional gender biases still influence congadeiros today, women’s significant inroads into singing, dancing, and playing suggests that music making has become less and less divided along gender lines. As women take on more eclectic musical and leadership roles, they have experienced an increased sense of empowerment to think and behave in ways that reflect their individual desires. This change in gender roles also indicates that congado has become a more inclusive space for individual expression.

In assuming greater responsibility as instrumentalists, *congadeiras* (women participants in congado) have also managed to avoid the social marginality that occurs in many cultures when women become associated with instruments. Indeed, the diversification of *congadeiras*' musical roles has allowed women to express their devotion through a multiplicity of sonic means. In the following discussion, as I outline issues of music and gender in congado communities, my intention is not to downplay the historical and contemporary significance of *congadeiras*' roles as queens, princesses, and cooks. They continue to be indispensable agents in the making of these musico-spiritual communities. Rather, my aim is to highlight the varying ways in which practitioners conceive of *congadeiras*' attempts to chart fresh paths to visibility and vocality as drummers, dancers, and singers. In the largest sense, I explore the gendered expectations regarding appropriate social actions of women and men and the ways in which they influence music making.

The diversification of musical opportunities for *congadeiras*, moreover, is linked to larger transformations in social consciousness on the part of *congadeiros*. For instance, many practitioners believe that to control women's musical activities only mimics the kind of exclusionary measures perpetuated by actors with the larger socioeconomic system. In other words, as participants reflect on their experiences of racial and class discrimination in society, they have come to recognize just how unjust it is to restrict *congadeiros*' musical roles based upon narrow understandings of gender and social roles. Hence, part and parcel of *congadeiros*' efforts to counteract Brazil's hierarchical system of class and race are their efforts to implement more inclusive gender and social roles for its participants. In this way, my goal is to analyze how *congadeiros* work to expand women's roles as part of a larger movement to gain collective self-determination and exercise agency in society.

In my broad-based analyses and interpretations of gendered dynamics within congado communities, I place both women and men at the center of my research. I focus on the relationships between men and women because understanding women's musico-religious role in society also means understanding the dialogic nature of men and women's actions. How do men and women's interrelations constitute the production of gendered, cultural, and social knowledge within congado and how is music a site for this exchange? In order to chart the presence of different voices within congado, this chapter is dedicated to examining the ways in which musical performances become outlets for the enactment of gendered subjectivities.

For purposes of this analysis, gender is a category that is both biologically influenced and socially constructed. While it is undeniable that biological differences between women and men exist, it is also undeniable that people construct their gender not in terms of biological categories of sex (female-male), but rather in terms of a socially negotiated and performed continuum of gender (woman-man) (Koskoff 2014, 7 and 36). Drawing from Joan Scott's work (1986), I argue that men and women's social roles are determined more by the socially constructed nature of their sexual roles than by the biology of their bodies. In fact, of critical interest here is how social practices become inscribed on the gendered body (Bourdieu 1977). In this way, gender becomes more than just a synonym for women and women's experiences of varying degrees of (in)equality.

My goal is to focus on processes of gendering and on intergender relationships to move away from studying Afro-Brazilian women as objects. I agree with critic Ann duCille when she resists the "production of black women as infinitely deconstructable 'othered' matter" (DuCille 1994 in Hayes 2010, 39). Thus, rather than looking at Afro-Brazilian congadeiras as a unitary subject or object, it is more fruitful to theorize the heterogeneity of congadeiros' experiences

through an analysis of the musical, social, and spiritual relationships among women and between women and men. This work is important because when academics theorize Afro-Brazilian musico-religious rituals on a broad scale, they often do not consider gender when problematizing the intersection between hierarchy, power, and ritual efficacy. To disregard the gendering of sound is to overlook the particular body politics embedded within the sonorous, material, and affective qualities of congado. Hence, it is necessary to offer a multivocal narrative from men and women who express and contest gendered dynamics through the making of congado.

Gendering Singing

My inquiry into the intersection between music and gender is guided by two primary questions. First, how do people's gendered perspectives and actions impact musical performances? Second, in what ways do people use music as a fruitful arena for exploring their gendered identities? That is, I investigate the ways in which music provides the context for participants to reflect, reinforce, and revise gendered performances (Feld et al. 2004, 332; Wiedman 2014). I devote this chapter to analyzing issues concerning women and men's status, intergender interactions, gender ideologies, and the interplay between gendered and musical thought and action.

One of the dissertation's overarching ideas is that congadeiros use music as a tool for ameliorating discrimination in social spheres. Music is harnessed by practitioners to stake claims to cultural and social rights and to gain a greater sense mobility in their everyday lives. At the same time that congadeiros attempt to model ideal behavior for other non-congado groups to follow, they also take cues from social actors operating in intersecting social spaces. To a large extent, wider transformations in women's roles and gender ideologies throughout society have

become enacted musically among congado communities as evinced by women's newfound access to playing and performing. Indeed, when congadeiros emulate larger progressive phenomena in Brazilian society, it makes them veritable actors in the struggle for gender equality. Hence, congadeiros increasingly bring gender ideologies to bear on their musical performances as well as the social values that these musical performances communicate. At the same time, the gender ideologies that codify acceptable behaviors for women and men in congadeiros' musico-religious communities also impact gender relations in larger social spheres (Ortner and Whitehead 1981). In this way, congadeiros' milieu and the wider Brazilian society represent highly interactive modalities of thought and action.

In the interviews I conducted, practitioners often reiterated the notion that women's increasing involvement as performers and leaders in congado derived from seeing women take on more vocal and visible positions in other social spheres. In a conversation with Zé Expedito Cardoso do Nascimento, captain of the group Catopê de São Benedito from Montes Claros, he spoke about his efforts to make congado an avenue for the mobility of women. In the following excerpt, he explained what it meant to structure the group so as to reflect and further progressive gender relations in society.¹ He related,

There are three groups of catopês in Montes Claros. There are two of Nossa Senhora and one of São Benedito, which is the one that I lead. I put women in the group. There are a lot of women in the group. Only Master Santa and João Faria [the two other catopê leaders in Montes Claros] do not put women in the groups. Now, I start to think the following, they say that they don't put women in the groups because it doesn't work out well. But, I put them in the group and it doesn't disrupt things. And another thing, I start to think, women are in politics, women are working as drivers, in a lot of things. Women work in the police force and everything. And thus I said that there wasn't a problem to put women in the group. And they do it better than the men. [Laughter from both of us.]

¹ Unlike the congo and moçambique guardas that predominate in the Belo Horizonte region, three types of congado—*caboclo*, *marujo*, and *catopê*—prevail in Montes Claros, a city in the northern part of Minas Gerais.

Genevieve Dempsey: In what sense?

Zé Expedito Cardoso do Nascimento: I say that the voices of women have a better timbre. There are many men that go to sing and they don't have a voice. And women, no, the women train their voices. They're much better than the men.

Genevieve Dempsey: Interesting. The women's voices seem to add something to the group.

Zé Expedito Cardoso do Nascimento: They add a more delicate voice. (Cardoso do Nascimento 2014)

In this passage, we witness how Zé Expedito Cardoso do Nascimento, a catopê leader in his late seventies, did not capitulate to the other catopês leaders' thinking about gender norms. Instead, he took cues from the social values enacted by non-congado groups to structure the group's musical roles. In the largest sense, Zé Expedito re-directed the musically gendered activities of congadeiros to approximate the gendered expectations and behaviors expressed by non-congado actors.

With regards to why Zé Expedito chose to include women in congado, he cited his desire to align with progressive social and gender norms, but he also mentioned that women, with their delicate timbres and trained voices, sang better than men. That is, he believed women's voices to bring a unique dynamic to congado's sonic and religious environment. His evaluative statements underscore an inextricable relationship between sounding, aesthetics, and devotion in congado communities. Indeed, according to practitioners, how they manipulate their voices matters in how productive they are in expressing sacred devotion. Hence, Zé Expedito's motivation for embracing women in congado derived from believing that they contributed to building the right aesthetic as well as proper ritual environment.

At another point in the conversation, Zé Expedito mentioned that women now comprise the majority of catopê participants. The inclusion of women in catopê reflects as much a desire

for aesthetic beauty and a transformation in gender appropriate norms as much as it reflects a consciousness on the part of congadeiros that they need women's participation to ensure the revitalization of their sacred song. In many respects, part of the motivation for allowing women to join congado arises from the fact that its ceremonies would likely disappear without women's active involvement. For these reasons, women have become equally important as men in ensuring that congado remains a relevant and vital musico-religious tradition throughout the changing times of modernity.

As practitioners engage in the revitalization of congado, women increasingly exercise a greater degree of mobility within the groups. Indeed, congadeiros are gradually re-envisioning their hierarchical roles to account for greater inclusivity and diversity. From dancer to captain, women are not only participating in congado, but also assuming prominent positions of power and influence. Many times these transformations result from deliberate intentions to make changes, as evinced by Zé Expedito Cardoso do Nascimento's thoughts and actions, but they also occur by means of performance.

Zé Expedito Cardoso do Nascimento drew a connection between women's increased participation in congado and a more heightened sense of women's agency and musico-spiritual ritual efficacy. However, the visible and audible presence of women in congado may not unquestionably index such dynamics. In the following passage, Joyce Fernanda Aparecida de Sousa demonstrated how despite her participation in a traditionally all-male group, her actions did not derive from a desire to empower women or work towards progressive gender ideals.

Her assertions redirected my prior knowledge about how congadeiras perceive their own and other women's actions within the musico-spiritual spaces of congado. For instance, when I first visited the small, rural town of Dorés do Indaiá, the visible presence of women in

moçambique seemed to differ markedly from the more moderate presence of women in moçambique in other regions of Minas Gerais. Due to this gender discrepancy, in the interview I conducted with Joyce Fernanda Aparecida de Sousa, I expected her to frame women's increasing participation in moçambique in terms of the desire to transmit values concerning women's empowerment. Joyce Fernanda Aparecida de Sousa's responses concerning the gendering of the body in sacred performances complicated my initial assumption.

Genevieve Dempsey: Can you talk about the presence of women in moçambique?

Joyce Fernanda Aparecida de Sousa: The tradition of moçambique is of the men. I don't know why but after some time, the moçambique groups let women in. I don't know why there was this necessity. But, what they try to stress is that women are equal to men—that they dance the same as men, leading the banners that are in the front. Because just like the men, they serve to sing. And the women help with paying more attention to doing the *venha* and the *meia-lua* [these are particular choreographed dances]. I think that women help in this more attentive aspect. The women help with taking care of the aesthetic part of the group. The women have more of a propitious vision for these things like clothing. But women only help in this respect. Because I think that moçambique is really a group of men.

Genevieve Dempsey: What does it mean to be a group of men?

Joyce Fernanda Aparecida de Sousa: There have been women that sang in this group. But, the men have a better aptitude for this. It is a group of men because the very tradition of moçambique is a group made of men. Because to drum is a thing of men. The drum is heavy. The women ended up getting involved in playing the *gunga* (ankle shakers), but it is really heavy. It hurts us a bit because I've used it. All this was for men. After, they saw that the women could do this and they started to involve the women. But until this, everything was for men. We only saw women captains in groups that were women only and even then, they were created much later.

Genevieve Dempsey: You said that the men have more aptitude, but more aptitude for what?

Joyce Fernanda Aparecida de Sousa: Aptitude to sing and play. Being in the group more time than women, I think that they have more ease to learn a song. The drum is heavy. A woman can't play the drum the whole day. I can make a small sound, but I can't spend the whole day doing this. The young boys do this the entire day. The men are able to do this. We had a woman last year that sang well. But it's more difficult to find a woman who sings than a man who sings. It's much more complicated [for the woman] to make a voice.

Genevieve Dempsey: Well, isn't it a matter of training?

Joyce Fernanda Aparecida de Sousa: The women that come, come to dance. They don't come looking for song. Because, who knows, there might be some woman who does this well. But they don't come looking for song. They want to dance.

Genevieve Dempsey: Ok, I understand. They would be able to sing, but they prefer to dance.

Joyce Fernanda Aparecida de Sousa: That one woman who sang. She came to sing. She wanted to do one of the voices. But, she already had this desire. Now the others that arrive here, they don't come looking for this.

Genevieve Dempsey: And is there, for example, pressure to not sing? Many times I think that people follow the standard that was established beforehand. Perhaps it's difficult to break this standard of not singing? At any moment, did you feel like you'd enjoy singing, but that it wouldn't be acceptable?

Joyce Fernanda Aparecida de Sousa: My uncle said that my voice wasn't for singing. I even managed to produce a little voice. [laughter.] But he said, no, your voice doesn't work. But I felt a desire to sing, to make a voice. But, I understand, I know that my voice doesn't work. It's quite hoarse, I can't control it. Sometimes it's a bit heavy. Sometimes it becomes a bit delicate.

Genevieve Dempsey: But I think that a hoarse, yet delicate voice is quite ideal for moçambique.

Joyce Fernanda Aparecida de Sousa: But you have to have control over the voice. And I can't manage to achieve that control. Because at the same time that it is hoarse, it is delicate. You have to manage to control it and I can't.

Genevieve Dempsey: But speaking of this, what kind of voice training is there within moçambique?

Joyce Fernanda Aparecida de Sousa: There isn't any specific training for the voice. They arrive and just try it. (Aparecida de Sousa 2014)

What immediately stood out to me from the conversation were the processes of socialization and learned gendered knowledge that materialized in Joyce's ascription to particular kinds of gender and musical values. On the one hand, one cannot attribute Joyce's thoughts solely to cultural conditioning given her individual identity. On the other hand, if her

own actions and experiences stand in contrast to what she is saying, then how strong must these gender norms be? In other words, she asserted a particular understanding of musical performance and identity even when her participation in moçambique, a historically all-male group, illustrated the contrary. Despite the fact that she was making changes in the aesthetic, social, and political contours of moçambique merely by participating in it, she refused to attribute any kind of discourse of social and gender empowerment to its occurrence. In fact, she did quite the opposite when she stated that moçambique is a group of men because they have more aptitude for singing and playing. While she acknowledged that women helped with the “aesthetic” part of moçambique, the group’s *raison d’être* still resided in the men’s singing and playing.

Note also how Joyce located the men’s aptitude in the physicality of their bodies. She asserted that women cannot play all day under the weight of a heavy drum. She further claimed that although she has used gungas in the past, they only injured her. According to her, women have sung in moçambique, but men’s complete ease in playing and singing comes from possessing a more appropriate physique—both vocally and physically—for music making. She reasoned that if women had acute musical skills, then they would excel at moçambique. Because women do not sing or play instruments, then they must not possess such skilled talent. While Joyce acknowledged that in the past she wanted to sing, she came to “understand” that her voice lacked the right qualities for congado’s religious soundscape. Instead of questioning the captain’s value judgments, his evaluative comments merely reiterated Joyce’s thinking that her voice was uncontrollable. Unlike Zé Expedito’s belief that women possessed a beautiful timbre and fine voice, Joyce underestimated her ability to produce the kind of voice necessary for worship in the context of congado. Moreover, in addition to having an unfit voice to sing, Joyce was also fated

to continue in this infelicitous stage for there was no “training” in congado to learn how to “control” the voice.

Not only did Joyce consider her own voice to be “out of control,” but she clearly esteemed men’s voices for being “in control.” How might these evaluative judgments about the “out-of-controlness” and “in-controlness” of women’s voices be indicative of big picture power (im)balances that result from people’s daily interactions with one another? Joyce’s comments about her voice needing control is not as much about vocal training as much as it is about power dynamics. The mentality that one needs control over her voice, but ultimately lacks it, illustrates the extent to which social power dynamics play out in real and consequential ways within the domain of sound.

Ellen Koskoff speaks to the notion of being *in control* and *out of control* when she observes, “Further, it is not that all societies, or all individuals, perceive women (as opposed to men) as literally out of control, but rather as linked, through their fertility, with more generally out-of-control domains—that is, nature and the supernatural—and thus take on some of the essence, ambiguity, and power of these domains” (Koskoff 2014, 83). Koskoff’s comments resonate in particular ways in the context of congado for the devotional practices of congadeiros deal precisely with the astral plane. In what ways do practitioners’ seek communication with and control over supernatural occurrences by means of control over women’s bodies?

Joyce Fernanda de Sousa added to the complexity of her argument when she asserted that men not only have greater aptitude for music making, but that women join moçambique to dance, not to sing in the group. Hence, she switched the argument from one of competency to one of choice. The assertion then became that women were not impeded from participating in the group as vocalists and instrumentalists, but rather that they willingly elected to dance. This

comment raised the issue of preference and demonstrated the extent to which women might believe it to be more devotionally efficacious to dance in moçambique than to sing or play an instrument. During the conversation, while I recognized the validity of Joyce's comment, I suggested that it might be difficult for women to assert their own individual desires within such strict social and musical codes. In response to my comment, Joyce returned to the argument that women's voices were less ideally suited for singing in moçambique.

To a great degree, her words resonate with what Nino Tsitsishvili experienced when she carried out fieldwork in Georgia. She writes, "When I asked a man in Guria why women do not sing improvisations and complex polyphonic styles, he responded in a somewhat surprised way, saying, 'They may sing if they want to, who holds them back?'" (Tsitsishvili 2006, 458). This comment parallels Joyce Fernanda Aparecida de Sousa's discourse when she first asserted that women do not sing because of competency and then later affirmed that their real motivation for not singing was choice. In both instances, either competency or choice purportedly explained why women did not sing.

An analysis of Sousa's very words reveals much about how she perceived her role in the moçambique group. When she spoke about her personal experiences of singing and playing the drums, she used the diminutive "inho," the grammatical structure in Portuguese that is used to indicate something small or cute. Thus, on the discursive level, stating that she managed to produce a small, adorable sound from the drums has significant symbolic and gendered repercussions. In making the sound diminutive, did she not also diminish her contribution in creating that sound? She implied that men create normal sounds, while women, even when they succeed in creating sound, merely make a little, adorable sound.

Zé Expedito Cardoso do Nascimento and Joyce Fernanda Aparecida de Sousa's words provide striking examples of how notions of socially acceptable and/or socially restricted behavior intervene at the level of the sonic. That is, the power to include or exclude people in society hinges on factors that are musical and aesthetic at their very core. Hence, my claim that gender is bound up with the sonic derives from witnessing how *congadeiros* structure musical roles to coincide with their normative and/or progressive perceptions of gender roles in society. What is interesting is that practitioners make these evaluative judgments in different ways, which leads to varying understandings of women and men's behavior in society. Indeed, these two commentaries demonstrate the extent to which *congadeiros* learn to construct, perform, and contest gender in varying ways through the sounding of their voices, the stomping of their ankle shakers, and the drumming of their sacred instruments (Koskoff 2014, 74-75).

The contradictory words of Zé Expedito and Joyce Fernanda de Sousa call attention to the fact that differing gender dynamics are at play at the micro level of the group. I highlight these ideational discrepancies to show that a uniform gender norm does not exist for structuring *congado* music. In other words, one cannot "hear" a consonant kind of gender-related norm in *congado*. In this respect, my work draws upon, but differs from research of scholars like Jane C. Sugarman who analyzes the "stylized singing behavior of *Presparê* as a metaphor for aspects of the community's conceptualization of gender" (Sugarman 1989, 192). Rather, I endeavor to show via interlocutors' evaluative comments that gender-related norms in Brazilian society tend to be more heterogeneous than homogeneous. Indeed, it is more fruitful to compare the differing and contradictory ways in which practitioners draw upon a myriad of gender-related norms than to say that *congadeiros*' gendered, social, and cultural positions exist as a homogenous unit (Hall 1986a, 1991a, 1991b). Put differently, the diverging views of Zé Expedito and Joyce Fernanda

Aparecida de Sousa offer readers a more acute sense of just how contested it is for people to define the points of intersection between gender norms and musical ones. Indeed, rather than there being an undivided consensus about how gender shapes musical expressions, I seek to show how people that belong to the same musico-religious circles can still demonstrate a multiplicity of subject positions. Thomas Turino reinforces this notion in his work regarding music in the Peruvian *altiplano* when he writes,

From the perspective taken here, “culture” can be located only in relation to the lives of concrete individuals as articulated through action at specific moments. It involves the *resources* (ideas, dispositions, practices, material objects, and modes of expression and behavior) that individuals select, create, or absorb through socialization to fashion their lives. Subjective cultural positions are simultaneously individual and social and are located at the multiple points where the individual and social intersect. As with Bourdieu’s notion of the habitus, subjective cultural positions dialectically structure (shape tendencies) and are structured by the conditions within and through which people live their lives. [Bourdieu 1977] (Turino 1993, 8)

Drawing upon the work of Bourdieu, Turino, and Hall, I argue that music and gender intersect in interesting and dynamic ways not because of predestined and unchanging forces, but because of the engaged and often contradictory ways in which people shape music to reflect and activate their thinking.

Raising Banners, Raising Voices

Figure 72. Common song sung by the moçambique and congo groups during the ceremonies of the raising of the banner.

Vamo pelo céu, bandeira
Let’s go for the sky, banner

Vamo pela glória, bandeira
Let’s go for the glory, banner
O céu é teu lugar, bandeira
The sky is your place, banner

Figure 72. (Continued)

Vamos pela glória, bandeira
Let's go for the glory, banner
-Congo

Ê bandeira
Ê banner
Ê bandeira
Ê banner
A bandeira de mamãe, ai ai
The banner of mother, ai ai
Ê bandeira
Ê banner

-Moçambique

The following section explores how congadeiras claim symbolic and sacred space through the making of ceremonial music. To best capture how musical rituals shape congadeiras' sense of autonomy and mobility and vice versa, a short anecdote follows. For the raising of the banner (*levantamento de bandeira*), also known as the raising of the sacred mast (*levantamento do mastro*), during the Winter Festival (Festival do Inverno) in July 2014 at the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, four prominent groups from the region gathered together: the Guarda de Moçambique de Nossa Senhora das Mercês from Oliveira, Guarda de Congo Feminino de São Benedito de Jatobá, the Guarda de Congo dos Arturos from Contagem, and the Guarda de Moçambique Treze de Maio de Nossa Senhora do Rosário from Belo Horizonte. While the festival's purpose was largely intended to be secular in nature, to teach non-practitioners about Afro-Brazilian religions, congadeiros still incorporated many sacred ceremonies into the festival, including a congo mass as well as a raising and lowering of the banners. The festival acquired even more of a sacred feeling over the five-day period when congadeiros gathered with participants from Candomblé and Umbanda to exchange ideas about their religious practices and

to perform together. In this respect, the festival was organized by a secular entity, but its practitioners cloaked the events in such a sacred valence that it blurred the boundaries between educational learning and sacred ritual.

The raising of the banner is significant not only because it signals the ceremony's opening and marks off ritual time from ordinary time, but also because this particular raising of the banner was led by Pedrina de Lourdes Santos, one of the first female captains of moçambique in the state of Minas Gerais. The following chart outlines the musical songs and actions that transpired during the raising of the banner. We witness how in sounding devotion from a position of leadership, Pedrina de Lourdes Santos demonstrates one of the many ways in which Afro-Brazilian women gain mobility through song.

Figure 73. A narration of the course of events at a banner raising ceremony.

Song #1 for the Raising of the Banner

- People chant part of the Hail Mary: "Hail Mary mother of God pray for us sinners now and in the hour of our death, amen." ("Santa Maria mãe de Deus rogai por nós pecadores agora na hora da nossa morte, amén.")

Action #1 for the Raising of the Banner

- The fieldwork excerpt depicts a ceremony called the raising of the banner. In the scene, captain Pedrina de Lourdes Santos prepares the banner that will adorn the top of the sacred pole. Pedrina de Lourdes Santos is the captain of the Guarda de Moçambique de Nossa Senhora das Mercês from Oliveira.
- As Pedrina attends to the banner, a group of male congadeiros hold the pole at an angle. Made from the wood of a tall, slim tree, the pole measures around thirty feet and depending on where the men stand along the pole, it comes to rest at their hip and shoulder heights.
- The banner is adorned with Our Lady of the Rosary's image.
- The congadeiros begin to intone a prayer.
- (2:04) Isabel Cassimira Gasparino (Belinha), queen in the Guarda de Moçambique Treze de Maio de Nossa Senhora do Rosário, then asks Pedrina de Lourdes Santos if it is alright if the participants kiss the banner. Pedrina says yes and Isabel announces to the groups, "Whoever would like to kiss the banner, can kiss it. ("Quem quiser beijar bandeira, pode beijar").
- The dozens of congadeiros in attendance at this raising of the banner gather around the sacred pole. The four groups largely stand among their own ranks, but there is also a fluidity to where the group members position themselves, especially among the percussionists.

Figure 73. (Continued)

Song #2 for the Raising of the Banner

(3:09)

- Verse/chorus call-and-response: “The black people of the rosary want the banner, we want to kiss the banner, we want the banner.”
- (Os pretinhos do rosário quer bandeira, quer bandeira para beijar, quer bandeira.”)

Action #2 for the Raising of the Banner

- Immediately after Belinha’s words, Pedrina starts to sing a verse, which is then echoed verbatim in a call-and-response style by the participants.
- Drumming accompanies the entrance of the chorus line.
- Pedrina alternates back and forth with the chorus as they sing the same verse. The repetition serves as a kind of ostinato to accompany people as they come forward one-by-one to kiss the banner and make the sign of the cross.

Song #3 for the Raising of the Banner

(5:52)

- Pedrina sings, “It is the commandment that I want to see.” (“É o mandamento eu quero ver.”)
- The chorus responds: “It rises in the sky, I want to see it.” (“Sobe no ar, eu quero ver.”)

Action #3 for the Raising of the Banner

- As the previous song ends, Pedrina begins another one. The drums enter as the chorus complements Pedrina’s call with a unique response.
- As congadeiros perform the song, they push the banner up towards the sky. Pedrina initiates this motion by raising her baton and motioning towards the direction.
- When the banner is raised, Pedrina starts to sing a new song.

Song #4 for the Raising of the Banner

(7:10)

- Pedrina sings, “Take off your hat, take off your hat, our banner is there in the sky.” (“Tira chapéu, tira chapéu, nossa bandeira está lá no céu.”)

Action #4 for the Raising of the Banner

- The chorus responds to Pedrina’s singing with the same phrase and is accompanied by drumming.
- After thirty seconds, Pedrina transitions into a new song.

Song #5 for the Raising of the Banner

(7:45)

- Pedrina and the chorus sing, “The banner of the sea has already flown, if it went there in the sky, I will also go.” (“A bandeira do mar já voou, se ela foi lá no céu, também vou.”)

Action #5 for the Raising of the Banner

- Pedrina starts to sing and is echoed by the chorus with the exact lyrics. There is a pause of around five seconds before re-commencing with the same lyrics and drumming.

Figure 73. (Continued)

- Some people begin to show their enthusiasm by pointing in the air and jumping in place.

Song #6 for the Raising of the Banner

(9:00)

Verse/Chorus:

- “Eh sacred banner, oh sacred banner there in the sky, there in the air. Eh, sacred banner, open the paths so that I can walk.” (“Eh, bandeira santa, bandeira santa lá no céu, lá no ar. Eh, bandeira santa, abre os caminhos para poder eu caminhar.”)

Action #6 for the Raising of the Banner

- Waiting in silence, the congadeiros listen intently for Pedrina to introduce the next song. She begins and they respond to her with the same lyrics.
- The drummers are playing the slow tune (*serra abaixo*) rhythm.
- As Pedrina dances around the mastro, the *gungas* (ankle shakers) on her feet make a rattling sound.
- At this moment, Sebastião Correa Brega, one of the most senior members of the Guarda de Moçambique Treze de Maio de Nossa Senhora do Rosário, comes to accompany Pedrina De Lourdes Santos. They circulate around the banner in clockwise motion as they pat down the earth with their feet to securely fasten the sacred pole into place.

Song #7 for the Raising of the Banner

(12:08-16:03)

- Pedrina says to Sebastião Correa Braga, “Help me here, let’s sing together.” (“Me ajuda aí, vamos cantar juntos.”)
- Pedrina sings, “The black person did not kill, the black person did not rob, he did not do anything. The black person did not kill, the black person did not rob, he did not do anything. But the people are saying that tomorrow is my jury trial (*jurado*). I am going to ask Nossa Senhora herself to be my lawyer.” (“Negro não matou, negro não roubou, fez nada. Negro não matou, negro não roubou, fez nada. Mas o povo está dizendo que amanhã é o meu jurado. Vou pedir Nossa Senhora que ela mesma seja minha advogada.”)

Action #7 for the Raising of the Banner

- Pedrina and Sebastião now pause and face each other as they gently touch the sacred pole that stands in between them. As Pedrina embraces the sacred pole with her hand, Sebastião brings his sacred baton to rest on the sacred pole. He makes the sign of the cross.
- She says a few lines and then invites Sebastião to accompany her.
- Congadeiros stamp their *gungas* and sing extended vocables very loudly in between the refrains.
- The singers distorted the lyrics, making it unintelligible for those who did not already know the song.

Song #8 for the Raising of the Banner

(14:10)

Figure 73. (Continued)

- Pedrina then says: “A little bird sang, long live Our Lady of the Rosary in the language of the black people of Angola.” (“Um passarinho cantou, viva Nossa Senhora do Rosário na língua de preto de Angola.”)
- The chorus responds with, “Anatué, Anatué, Anatué, Anatué.”

Action #8 for the Raising of the Banner

- Pedrina and Sebastião now pause and face each other as they gently touch the sacred pole that stands in between them. As Pedrina embraces the sacred pole with her hand, Sebastião brings his sacred baton to rest on the sacred pole. He makes the sign of the cross.
- She says a few lines and then invites Sebastião to accompany her.
- Congadeiros stamp their gungas and sing extended vocables very loudly in between the refrains.
- The singers distort the lyrics, making it unintelligible for those who do not already know the song.

Song #9 for the Raising of the Banner

(16:28)

- The following verse and refrain are identical.
- “A voice called to me and the other answered me. I raised the sacred banner. All the earth trembled.” (“Uma voz me chamou, a outra me respondeu. Levantei a bandeira santa; a terra toda tremeu.”)

Action #9 for the Raising of the Banner

- The drum section from the congo feminino de São Benedito de Jatobá starts to play and is followed shortly afterwards by the singing of one of the female captains, twenty-one-year-old Ritielly Caroline Pereira Barroso.
- Ritielly Caroline Pereira Barroso takes her square drum, the sign of captaincy, and circles it around the sacred pole several times in a counterclockwise direction.

Song #10 for the Raising of the Banner

(17:11)

- Verse/Chorus
- They sing, “Flower of the sky banner, flower of the sky banner.” (“Flor do céu bandeira, flor do céu bandeira.”)

Action #10 for the Raising of the Banner

- Ritielly Caroline Pereira Barroso then transitions quickly and seamlessly to another verse while the drummers maintain the same percussion accompaniment.

Song #11 for the Raising of the Banner

(17:38)

- Verse/Refrain

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Figure 73. (Continued)

- “Flowers are falling. Eh, flowers are falling there in the sky. There on earth, flowers are falling.” (“Está caindo flores. Eh, está caindo flores lá no céu. Lá na terra, está caindo flor.”)

Action #11 for the Raising of the Banner

- As Ritielly Caroline Pereira Barroso is singing, Belinha Cassimira Gasparino advances towards the sacred pole with the banner and passes it around the sacred pole in counterclockwise motion.

Song #12 for the Raising of the Banner

(18:12)

Repeated Verse/Refrain

- “There are flowers, there are flowers, there are flowers rosary of Maria, there are flowers.” (“Tem flor, tem flor, tem flor rosário do Maria tem flor.”)

(18:59)

- “There in the sky, flowers are falling. There in the sky, flowers are falling. Our Lady even sent them. There in the sky, flowers are falling.” (“Lá no céu está caindo flor, lá no céu está caindo flor. A senhora até mandou, lá no céu está caindo flor.”)

Action #12 for the Raising of the Banner

- After passing a type of banner that groups use during religious parades around the sacred pole, Belinha pauses as she places her hand high on the sacred pole.
- Belinha then passes into the background as other senior leaders move to the forefront to perform the same gesture.
- Then, Ritielly Caroline Pereira Barroso smoothly transitions into singing another verse (18:59).
- More people bring candles and place them at the foot of the sacred pole.

Song #13 for the Raising of the Banner

(19:20)

- As the drumming comes to a rolling conclusion, Pedrina exclaims, “Viva Nossa Senhora do Rosário.”
- The female captain of the Congo de Nossa Senhora do Rosário begins the recitation of the Lord’s Prayer and others follow:
- “Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. / Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. / Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.”
- (“Pai Nosso que estais nos céus. / Santificado seja o vosso Nome. / Venha a nós o vosso Reino, / Seja feita a vossa vontade assim na terra como no céu. / O pão nosso de cada dia nos dai hoje. / Perdoai-nos as nossas ofensas, / Assim como nós perdoamos a quem nos tem ofendido. / E não nos deixeis cair em tentação, / Mas livrai-nos do Mal.”)
- Then, they recite the Hail Mary.
-

Figure 73. (Continued)

- The captain intones: “Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. / Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus. / Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.”
- (“Ave Maria, cheia de graça, o Senhor é Convosco. / Bendita sois vós entre as mulheres, / e bendito é o Fruto do Vosso Ventre, Jesus.”)
- The Chorus responds: “Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.”
- (“Santa Maria, Mãe de Deus, rogai por nós, pecadores, agora e na hora de nossa morte. Amém.”) (3X)
- The captain calls and the other participants respond:
“Viva Nossa Senhora do Rosário, Viva São Benedito, Viva Santa Efigênia, Viva Nossa Senhora das Mercês.”

Action #13 for the Raising of the Banner

- In the final portion of the fieldwork excerpt, *congaideiros* recite the Catholic prayers called the Our Father (*Pai Nosso*) and the Hail Mary (*Ave Maria*).



Figure 74. Captain Pedrina de Lourdes Santos sings with Sebastião Correa Braga during a banner raising ceremony.

If one attends to the notion of time and timing in this ritual context, it is hardly coincidental that Pedrina de Lourdes Santos led the raising of the banner for such an extended period of time—more than any other individual that night—as well as presided over the most ritually efficacious moment—the raising of the banner itself. At one moment, she invites another respected elder, Sebastião Correa Braga, to sing with her. While this might index an inclusionary move, it is evident that she held the leadership position; she dictated not only the order of the music but also when people sang. Hence, Pedrina de Lourdes Santos' power was directly proportional to the leadership that she exerted in such a milieu. More pointedly, power was connected to ritual action and the more Pedrina led ritual action, the more she exercised and modeled power and mobility. Cultivating mobility and consolidating power resides in the repetitive and ordinary nature of ritual action. Indeed, it is precisely in the contexts of ritual performances that musical action engenders power and mobility. The act of leading musico-spiritual rituals is both a product of power as well as a process through which women gain power benefits from the work of Shelemay, Post, Gaunt, and Tsitsishvili. These scholars show how women gain a sense of mobility and dignity through musical sound (Shelemay 2007; Post 1987; Gaunt 2006; Tsitsishvili 2006). The following section is, then, an effort to show how Pedrina de Lourdes Santos used sacred song and discourse to normalize women's occupation of ritual space.

When Pedrina de Lourdes Santos performs songs about the raising of the banner, she not only comments upon and orchestrates the distinct stages of the ritual as it progresses, she also brings into being a way of voicing and hearing gender inclusion. Scholars like Jane Sugarman have explored how one can hear gender in the structure of the music (1989, 204-5). In relation to Muslim Albanian people from the Lake Prespa district of Yugoslavia, she writes “[Singing] is an experience that endures through the vagaries of daily life to serve as a point of reference, an

index of Prespa femaleness and maleness” (ibid., 208). While informative, my aim is to demonstrate that singing exposes a multiplicity of gendered identities that contribute to, not detract from, congadeiros’ sense of unity in diversity. Put differently, women’s singing during critical ritual moments indexes a move towards multivocality and gender inclusion within congado. In this respect, how or what Pedrina de Lourdes sings is less important than the mere fact that she is singing from a position of leadership. Hence, Pedrina participates in the gendering of song regardless of the way in which her timbre, tessitura, and melisma signify.

If one were to posit that the materiality of Pedrina de Lourdes Santos’s voice *did* matter to the ritual’s aesthetic, gendered, and social dynamics, then perhaps I would find a middle ground by proposing the following. Pedrina’s singing reconfigured what it meant to embody a masculine or feminine voice by sounding a gendered space that bordered on the androgynous. Her vocalizations suggested an aesthetic “indeterminacy,” as Marc Schade-Poulsen calls it (1999, 141)—that infused the acts of singing and devotion. In this way, one might say that Pedrina’s androgynous voice lent a gendered in-betweenness to the spiritual performance.

My interest in understanding what happens when women sing in positions of leadership stems from an even more fundamental endeavor to understand not only how musical rituals reflect the gendered identities of participants, but also how singing itself opens up a space of gender inclusion. Pedrina opened up an increased sense of mobility for congadeiras by showing how the ceremony could be a context for efficacious ritual behavior as well as a context for women’s leadership. Thus, this idea reinforces the notion that ritual action in public places normalizes intergender relations. In the process, it affords women an increased sense of power. In this way, congadeiras can participate in restructuring a gendered social system by means of

singing. This is because when congadeiras envoice positions of leadership, they unsettle normative beliefs concerning the bounded nature of gender roles and social identities.

One might conclude, however, that even in a position of leadership, Pedrina de Lourdes Santos' singing is hardly an efficacious medium through which to restructure an ingrained social and gender order. Indeed, one might suggest that at the seasoned age of fifty-five, Pedrina's age affords her the social and religious freedom of expression during ritual contexts, while still maintaining the rigid gender order for younger women. The reasoning is that having passed the reproductive years, Pedrina is no longer subject to the same strictures of restraint and propriety placed on younger women.

A social norm, nonetheless, that requires younger women to show a shy and controlled self-demeanor in public does not seem to obtain here as Kátia Aracelle Gonçalves, the young captain who sings after Pedrina, delivered the lyrics with extroverted emotion and unrestrained vocal resonance. Because this ethnographic moment disproves a one-to-one correspondence between a congadeira's age and her expected demeanor, the age-grade fails to explain why Pedrina was afforded such a prominent role in carrying out the raising of the banner.

This moment also disrupts people's expectations about the drumming of Afro-descendant communities. Rather than exhibit intricate, difficult to learn rhythmic patterns that "African-derived" music purportedly demonstrates, congadeiros largely play straightforward, repetitive, and easily memorized rhythms. Drawing upon Christopher Waterman's and Eileen Hayes's work, I argue that congado has often been omitted from scholarly sources because congadeiros' identity and the sounds that they produce do not align with reigning notions of racial difference (Waterman 2000; Hayes 2010, 42). Because the non-normative musical expressions of congadeiros fit messily into people's racialized expectations about music, outsiders often discard

their sounds as not optimally “Afro-Brazilian.” Thus, the simplicity of the musical lines can nonetheless have significant implications for congadeiras’ power and mobility. In this way, rather than being tangential to broader African-derived traditions, congadeiros’ ritual activities are central to creating inclusion in Brazilian society.

Invoking Mary

Pedrina de Lourdes Santos sang in a ritual context of both men and women, but what happens to the dynamic when women sing devotional songs in spaces occupied predominantly by women? Does the nature of the collective singing, prayer, and devotion change? On October 13, 2014, on the last day of the festa of Nossa Senhora do Rosário in the Arturos community, women and men gathered to pray and sing songs while parading with the image of Our Lady of the Rosary around the community’s grounds. Departing from the chapel, the group moved ceremoniously along the paved and unpaved trails, circled around the raised banner that stood in the open field of red earth, and visited the congadeiros’ homes. As they walked in the procession, the women sang, prayed, and spoke words of thanks to Our Lady of the Rosary in such a way as to gender the musical and religious expressions. As the women raised their voices above that of the men’s voices, the poetics and aesthetics of the moment became gendered female. Chanting part of the song “Mary of Nazareth,” they intoned,

Figure 75. Song lyrics for the hymn, “Mary of Nazareth.”

Às vezes eu paro e fico a pensar,
Sometimes I stop and begin to think,
E sem perceber me vejo a rezar,
And without perceiving it, I begin to pray,
E meu coração se põe a cantar pra Virgem de Nazaré.

Figure 75. (Continued)

And my heart starts to sing for the Virgin of Nazareth.
Menina que Deus amou e escolheu pra mãe de Jesus, o filho de
Deus,
She is the girl that God loved and chose for the mother of Jesus,
the son of God.
Maria que o povo inteiro elegeu,
Maria is the one who the entire people chose,
Senhora e Mãe do céu,
Lady and Mother of heaven.
Ave Maria, Ave Maria, Ave Maria, Mãe de Jesus.
Holy Mary, Holy Mary, Holy Mary, Mother of God.

In a wider sense, they turned the procession into a traveling sonic space of sacredness. Through simple chant formulas, they expressed deeply felt sentiments of popular devotion. I argue that singing and chanting served as meditative moments that put the women as a collective unit in direct contact with their spiritual guide, Nossa Senhora do Rosário. Although men were present, there was a marked female dimension to Marian veneration. This was not only because the song repertoire dealt with devotion to Nossa Senhora, but also because women took charge of praying and performing the music. Thus, women prove crucial to congado because they mediate the community's devotion by using performance to connect the worshipers to Nossa Senhora do Rosário.

The fact that the procession took place within the grounds of the Arturos' community is significant because while some of the women were only visiting, others have spent much of their lives living there. Thus, for the women, the procession was very much tied to the notion of place. In turn, place became inextricably bound up with ideas about memory, worship, and sound. When Philip Bohlman writes the following, he is referring to the space of a shrine, but it is also helpful for understanding the Arturos's community as a place of embodied memory. He communicates, "A shrine, for example, condenses many different levels of memory—historical,

genealogical, ritual, political, sacred—but it is the interactive, performative acts of music and worship that reveal specific sets of memories. Music and worship, through performance, instantiate place itself” (Bohlman 2013, 42). Thus, in retracing the steps that they have made time and again, the women layer meaning onto the initial histories of the land.



Figure 76. Members and friends of the Arturos community engage in Marian devotion as they parade with her sacred image of the grounds of their community.

Hierarchy in Myth and Ritual

Part of women’s sense of exclusion and/or inclusion in congado derives from congadeiros’ discourse about the existence of ritual hierarchies among congado groups. This rhetoric arises, in part, from what congadeiros narrate in myth as well as what they disseminate in ritual and non-ritual contexts. The following section outlines the myth of congado’s genesis as well as the

discourse surrounding it. Congadeiros and scholars alike point to the myth as evidence for why they structure the ritual hierarchies within congado as they do. The perpetuation of the myth within congado communities brings about an imbrication between myth, history, and contemporary reality. While different variations of the myth have been told throughout Minas Gerais, all the versions foreground how Nossa Senhora's admiration for the religiosity, conviction, and expressivity of congadeiros' music making. The myth has remained a constant source of inspiration for congadeiros across the centuries. Practitioners are also very much invested in the myth because it explains the "origin" of their rituals and structures. Myth and discourse of "congado's origin" structure people's understandings of gender ideologies in the contemporary world rather than merely reflect how these gender dynamics truly operate.

When Kedison Geraldo from the group Congo de Nossa Senhora do Rosário e Santa Efigênia recounts the following myth about the apparition of Our Lady of the Rosary, he describes a story that congadeiros claim to have told for centuries. In response to my question regarding the origin of congado, he related the founding myth of their community. He began,

There was a ship on the sea. An image of Our Lady of the Rosary fell from the ship. The white people tried to retrieve the image. The black people asked if they could also retrieve the image, but the white people wouldn't let them. The white people constructed a chapel for her and tried to take her to it. But, the following day, the image appeared in the water again. She would not let the white people take her image. Thus, the black people had the opportunity to bring the image to the slave quarters (*senzala*).

First came *congo*, which represented the youngest black people who were anxious for emancipation. They jumped, they danced. Then came the *caboclo* who was dressed as indigenous people and represented the land. Then the *vilão*, *catopê*, and *marujada*—who were slaves that were arriving in the port. Also, the *candombe*, the group that has three sacred drums which are played in closed spaces. And finally came *moçambique*. Moçambique represents the group of the oldest black people that were tired and still chained.

Because they did not have an altar, they placed the saint, Our Lady of the Rosary, on top of a drum. Thus, we say that the congado drum represents the altar of Our Lady of the Rosary. Hence, the drum is sacred. You cannot play it on any occasion or at any hour. It

must be played only to praise Our Lady of the Rosary and the black saints. (Geraldo 2015)

In retelling this myth, Kedison Geraldo demonstrates how devotion, dignity, and congado are inextricably linked. When Geraldo mentions *congo*, *caboclo*, *vilão*, *catopê*, *marujada*, *candombe*, and *moçambique*, he is referring to the seven different types of congado groups that danced, drummed, and played their instruments as a united group to draw Our Lady from the waters. The humble beauty of the slaves' handcrafted instruments and melodious songs not only coaxed Our Lady of the Rosary from the sea, their music making encouraged her to embrace them as her beloved ones. Historian Elizabeth Kiddy writes,

The story is designed to actively evoke the memory of the origin, and reason for being, of particular congado communities. No single group had success in calling Our Lady to the shore; it took the united effort of all of them to accomplish this task. Here, many different "nations" joined together on the basis of their status as "blacks" and united under the protection of Our Lady of the Rosary. (Kiddy 2005, 212)

While Kedison Geraldo and Elizabeth Kiddy foreground the notion of musical and racial unity in calling Nossa Senhora from the waters, not all variations of the myth told throughout Minas Gerais stress the egalitarian nature of the groups' musical work. For instance, in an interview with Vânia de Fatima Noronha Alves, captain Maria Solange Leandro Esteves (Solange) affirms,

Moçambique is of the crown, moçambique leads the crown, the crown of Nossa Senhora, right? Wasn't it moçambique that pulled Nossa Senhora from the waters? The responsibility of the group is that. Thus, moçambique is the one who always pulls, because it was this group that pulled Nossa Senhora from the waters, and the crown is of Nossa Senhora. When they put a crown on a person's head, they have to know this, ok? (Leandro Esteves 2006, 133)²

² "Moçambique é de coroa, o Moçambique puxa a coroa, a coroa de Nossa Senhora, né? Num foi o Moçambique que puxou Nossa Senhora das águas? A responsabilidade dele é essa, então Moçambique sempre que puxa, pois foi ele que puxou Nossa Senhora das águas, e a coroa é de Nossa Senhora, porque a pessoa quando põem a coroa na cabeça tem que saber também, né?"

While Kedison Geraldo states that the groups collectively drew Our Lady from the waters and Capitã Maria Solange Leandro Esteves asserts that moçambique accomplished this singular feat, other people argue that it could only be the work of candombe. Social anthropologist Dalva Maria Soares states that

In the hierarchy between the groups, the Candombe is the holder of the mysteries and of the maximum power, being considered the father of all the *reinados* here on earth, and does not parade in the streets. It is surrounded by many mysteries and secrets and according to the founding legend, it was the Candombe that took Nossa Senhora from the waters and served as the *andor* for the saint [platform on which they carry the saint]. In the ritual, Nossa Senhora do Rosário, their ancestors, and the crossing from Africa, their land of origin, to the Americas are revered. While some members play instruments, others alternate singing and dancing in front of the drums. (Soares 2009, 11)

Following similar theoretical currents, ethnomusicologist Glaucia Lucas writes, “The hierarchy determined by the myth establishes that Congo should initiate the parades, Moçambique lead the royalty, representing Candombe in public outdoor rituals, and Candombe be a private indoor ritual. Thus, there is an orientation to greater ritual force from Congo to Candombe” (Lucas 2002, 124). For a myth that congadeiros claim to be so central to their cosmology, one would likely expect that practitioners would have shaped the myth into a collectively sanctioned, cohesive narrative. On the one hand, they demonstrate common thematic threads and characters. They speak about the enslaved peoples that fought against the oppressive regime of slavery and the fact that black people, not white people were the ones who drew Nossa Senhora from the waters (Martins 1997, 56). On the other hand, despite these commonalities, there are a multiplicity of narratives regarding Nossa Senhora’s appearance and rescue. These variances are important because with different narratives come different ways of structuring the social lives of congadeiros. In other words, how people understand the myth’s musical implications impacts how they understand themselves socially.

When scholars Dalva Maria Soares and Glaucia Lucas speak of a hierarchy within congado, they are reiterating a common sentiment among congadeiros that the founding myth consolidated a ranking of musico-religious importance among congado groups. In many respects, participants often turn to the myth of Nossa Senhora's apparition to explain how the musical hierarchy became institutionalized and what it means. Understanding the hierarchies of value within congado communities can help to illuminate the underlying complexities that structure participants' engagement with the divine realm.

While Soares and Lucas propose the notion of the musical hierarchy as self-evident, I argue that a more detailed look at the dynamics surrounding the congado myth complicates their conclusions. Rather than explain an extant system that governs congadeiros' actions and determines the relative importance of their ritual music, did Soares's and Lucas's interpretations of textual meaning embedded in the myth reinforce and/or rationalize a stratified order? The following discussion problematizes the notion of the "congado hierarchy" as it relates to musico-religious practices, gender, and age. Does a hierarchy of greater ritual play out in the everyday actions of congadeiros and if so, do all congadeiros ascribe to this system and share its attendant assumptions? Likewise, are there discrepancies in what people say they value and how they demonstrate these values on an everyday basis? Might instances exist, moreover, where people defy this hierarchy—similar to the ways in which congadeiros work to defy hierarchies of race and class in Brazilian society? If a hierarchy among groups does exist, is there also a hierarchy within a single group and how might this constrain and/or enable people's actions? Finally, can congadeiros disassociate musical, social, and religious difference from value or must they always judge the value attached to individual group in discrepant ways?

These questions are meant to nuance scholars' unquestioned acceptance that all congadeiros ascribe to a core hierarchy among musico-religious groups. Throughout my fieldwork, I observed that congadeiros hold similar, but not identical beliefs about ideal behavior, religious practices, and social attitudes. Indeed, congadeiros share many core ideas with one another within a single group and across groups. To overstate these generalizations, however, is to overlook the fact that congadeiros approach their musico-spiritual practices in a variety of ways depending on their subject positions. My goal in interviewing congadeiros of different genders, sexual orientations, and ages arose from my conviction that rather than espousing a cohesive narrative, congadeiros use their unique, often competing voices to participate in the making of a diverse community. Moreover, because people's subject positions hardly remain fixed over time, the identities of its practitioners and the ways in which congado signifies demonstrate constant fluidity. Hence, rather than being a site of reproduction, congado is a site of contention where practitioners constantly negotiate the cultural, racial, and gendered contours of congado. In fact, congadeiros actively work to make their ritual activity plural and inclusive. While many congadeiros reinforce a hierarchical order of prestige and value among the groups, it is also clear that not all congadeiros ascribe to this hierarchy of value. Women often work, subconsciously and consciously, to redress these unequal power relations in multiple ways. Thus, in the largest sense, the existence of multiple levels of meaning in the congado myth implies that different practitioners attribute different kinds of significance to the text.

Ritualizing Hierarchy and the Hierarchy of Ritual

Congadeiros often claim that the moçambique group, primarily composed of male participants, is considered to be the most essential element of a procession because they lead the royal court, the symbol of divinity on earth. In leading the royal court, they facilitate the communication between humans and spirits. Mandated with different ritual tasks, the congo group, a predominantly female group, has the responsibility of leading the way. With splendor and grandeur, congo announces the triumphant arrival of moçambique and the royal court. While many congadeiros use the myth to explain why they structure their musico-spiritual rituals in the ways that they do, they often omit gender as being an element that factors into this organizational process. Why is this the case when gender seems to be an evident criterion in determining membership in moçambique or congo? Is it mere coincidence that congo, the predominantly all-women group, is said to have “lesser ritual force” than the male dominated moçambique group? What are the consequences when practitioners and academics uphold a hierarchy of ritual force among musical groups largely divided along gender lines? Were men not gaining greater prestige and privilege in comparison to women by being associated with greater ritual importance? Do practitioners value distinct congado groups in different ways and if so, does this index an asymmetry of gender in contexts of congado rituals? Did *different* ritual responsibilities among groups always signify *differential* ritual importance? Or could people’s participation in moçambique or congo give rise to feelings of complementarity rather than hierarchy? To begin answering these questions, I explore the ways in which gender is bound to hierarchies of ritual prestige.

To understand how prestige, value, and gender become imbricated in congadeiros' spiritual worlds of musical praise and worship, I draw from a conversation with José Bonifácio da Luz, known as Zé Bengala. Capitão-mestre of the congo group of Nossa Senhora do Rosário from Arturos community, Zé Bengala's comments reveal productive tensions concerning ritual responsibilities and roles in congado communities. In the following passage, he seems to establish a hierarchy of ritual force while also setting up a structure of complementarity between congo and moçambique. Bonifácio da Luz and I discussed these issues in the following way:

Genevieve Dempsey: Why is it that the congo is predominantly comprised of women while the moçambique is comprised mostly of men?

José Bonifácio da Luz (Zé Bengala): Look, moçambique has more responsibility, more detail, because moçambique was for older people. Moçambique is a thing of old black men, it is truly a thing of old black men. In order for it not to become too closed off, the congo group was created to make the celebration. For one person it is a festa, for another it is tradition, for another it is devotion. But, the congo makes the festa. Thus, the congo is more feminine, more comprised of young girls, more youthful because, because they have the responsibility of dancing, jumping. Moçambique separates itself from dancing; walking is the only thing that they can do. Now, the congo should not stop. The congo has to show that there is a festa, that what's coming is something good, that happiness is coming. For this reason, it's formed more by younger people, by women. And it was also a way, here in the community, to have more participants. Historically there weren't any women. It was truly only men that danced. You saw in the women's eyes their desire to participate. And little by little, they are doing it. Now, the woman takes charge. Today women practically make the festa for us. I dance in everything. To me, it doesn't matter if I participate in moçambique or congo. Everything to me is one thing. But the women say that congo has to be this way. The woman is more vain and she is better at making the festa. For this reason, we created the feminine congo, or at least the more feminine congo. There always has to be men because one must have a moment that is more, more. The congo is really the festa. You see that it is all decorated, there are ribbons, flowers, dancing. Moçambique is slow, more secure, it steps more slowly. This is not to say that the congo doesn't show devotion because in the congo mass they also have to sing, but the true responsibility is that of moçambique. (Bonifácio da Luz 2014)

In this excerpt, Zé Bengala asserted seemingly paradoxical understandings of congado. First he claimed that congo, comprised mostly of women and children, "makes the festa" by bringing enthusiasm and joyful music making to spiritual devotion. Then he asserted that even though

their slower steps do not “make the festa,” moçambique holds greater spiritual responsibility within congado because it has been entrusted to lead and protect the royal court. If congo is central to the success of a festa, then why does it not hold the same degree of importance as moçambique? While my question did address the gender divisions that I observed in the groups, I was surprised by how he characterized congo to be comprised of women *and* children and moçambique as that of old black men. Why did he associate women with children in congo when children also participate in moçambique?

Throughout my fieldwork, I witnessed Zé Bengala assume his role as captain of the Arturos’s congo with a sense of pride, dedication, light-heartedness, and conviction. He clearly believed in the participants’ abilities to make congo ritually efficacious. Yet, after extolling congo as the maker of the festa, he nonetheless ended his comments by ascribing more responsibility and thus more power to the moçambique. Can one really measure the responsibility and efficacy of a group’s sacred song and dance in relation to another? It seems rather impossible to decide a group’s level of responsibility and then expect them temper their religious convictions and musical actions accordingly.

When Zé Bengala implied a connection between ritual responsibilities, importance, and gender, I wondered whether or not this thinking perpetuated a form of social control over congadeiros’ spiritual endeavors? Clearly, there is no inherent connection between particular ritual responsibilities and gender. People actively engage in positioning themselves in different ways and then ascribe value to their positions in the hierarchy. This reasoning follows from the belief that power is not inherent in any object or hierarchy, but rather derives from the act of ranking differences based upon their perceived value (Adams 1977; Reesing 1981). Ellen Koskoff provides insight into this issue:

Outward signs of control may include material wealth, large fighting forces, or other culturally agreed-upon signs of social status, such as extraordinary mental or physical capacities, age, or gender. Although the origin of social power may lie in the ways people and groups deal with primary differences in sex, age, physical, and mental abilities, or in the ability to articulate ideas, it is not the simple recognition of such differences alone that creates a power dynamic. Rather, power is an outgrowth of the ranking of such differences and in assigning value and status to particular differences over others. (Koskoff 2014, 81)

If Ellen Koskoff's ideas are applied to congado, does a hierarchy of ritual force mean that when congadeiros enact musical protocols, they simultaneously enact hierarchies of value that connect people's gender to worth and prestige? If this proves correct and gender pervades people's claims to ritual force, then song would likewise become gendered. How might seemingly inconsequential, but iterative performances of gender not only translate discrete acts into normative ones, but also transform people's everyday thoughts and behaviors (West and Zimmerman 1987; Price and Shildrick 1999; Butler 1990, 1993; Koskoff 2014, 63)?

Zé Bengala's words seemed even more perplexing to me when I revisited an ethnographic video that I filmed at the festa de Nossa Senhora do Rosário hosted by the Jatobá brotherhood. The video captured a moment in the procession when Zé Bengala paraded with the congo group from the Arturos community, wielding his baton and singing the verses. A king and queen paraded behind the group in solemn procession. At one moment, the camera panned over to the moçambique group as they danced and sang in front of Antônio Maria da Silva, the capitão regente of the Arturos community. Leading the congo group and the royal members forward with song, Zé Bengala shouted the verses and the chorus responded antiphonally all the way to the threshold of the chapel. At that moment, they parted their double lines down the center and allowed the royal members to pass through and into the chapel. Upon safely delivering the royalty to their destination, the group turned, reconfigured their lines, and resumed their participation in the procession.

In this ethnographic moment, the responsibilities of congo and moçambique became inverted. While the moçambique group was occupied with other activities during the procession, the congo group assumed the duty of escorting the royal court. The exception to the rule—moçambique always leads the royal court—thus stands out. If Zé Bengala himself led the congo and royal members in full song and praise during the procession, then how does one account for the discrepancy between his actions and discourse? How ingrained must Zé Bengala's learned social knowledge be for his actions to so clearly belie his words? This incongruence foregrounds the fact that ritual responsibility and hierarchy among congado groups demonstrate a greater degree of fluidity in practice than in myth or discourse. This fluidity of action signals to scholars that while normative behaviors exist, people's everyday actions eschew being compartmentalized into organized categories.

The Sensual and Sensing Body

People may attribute “lesser ritual force” to congo even when they assume similar and/or identical responsibilities as moçambique due to the fact that women dance exuberantly during the musico-spiritual rituals. Unlike male participants in moçambique who refrain from dancing, congo more closely approximates other Brazilian secular genres like samba that readily showcase energetic bodily movements and upbeat musical sounds. While their dance moves are not erotic—moving their feet and shaking their hips in playful enthusiasm—the historical linkage between women and inherent sexuality in Brazilian society might lead to apprehension about using the body in Catholic musico-religious ceremonies. That is, dancing is an integral part of congado rituals, but perhaps the intersection between a woman's identity, her sexuality, and

dancing produces a surfeit of emotion that threatens to unsettle the pious religious context. In the following passage, anthropologist Natascha Pravaz recounts how Brazilians forge links between women's bodies and the sensual and erotic qualities that such bodies "epitomize" through the nation-wide spectacle of *carnaval*—pre-Lenten celebrations of singing, parading, revelry, and dancing *samba*. She writes,

Mockery and exaggerated expressions of bodily comportment were prevalent in the context of early twentieth-century carnival celebrations in Brazil. A hundred years later, however, the body presented in the spectacle of carnival is heavily sexualized and its genitals strongly emphasized, but it is never debased or grotesque, as Bakhtin would have had it. Not the outrageous but the aestheticized and visually pleasing body now rules. Moreover, carnival's experiences of the body have undergone a transition from an emphasis on tactile sensuality to a mode of consumption based on visual detachment. Following Debord's insight on spectacle, we can say that "everything that was directly lived has moved away into a representation" [1977]. This detachment, however, is not without eroticism. As opposed to the de-eroticized scopic regime of Cartesian perspectivalism, based on the dispassionate eye of the neutral observer, the pre-dominant mode of seeing in Brazilian carnival presents similarities with that of baroque vision, which celebrates the dazzling, disorientating, and ecstatic surplus of images [Jay 1993, 187]. (Pravaz 2008, 105)

Pravaz places carnival and erotic bodies in dialogue with discussions about national identity formation, thus demonstrating how Brazilians frame the *mulata*, the sensual, racially mixed woman, as the sine qua non of Brazil's national identity (Chasteen 1996; Fry 1982; Martínez-Etchzábal 1996; Sheriff 1999; Pravaz 2008).

Given congadeiros' awareness about meta narratives surrounding women's bodies, eroticism, carnival, and national identity, it is not surprising that they take great precaution to control and temper women's sensuality in the context of congado. Hence, congadeiras' exuberant, but demure movements reflect society's expectation of religious women's dancing as much as they reflect congadeiros' expectations that women dance in proper and acceptable ways. Thus, prestige, value, bodies, and gender are very much involved in determining the scale of "ritual force" among the groups. This is because when prestige and value accrue to musico-

spiritual objects and bodies, it brings about a scale of status as well as the structuring of human hierarchies (Robertson 1984, 451). In this respect, to understand gender-status asymmetry and the differential power relations among men and women, one must also grasp the extent to which value and prestige come to play central roles in determining acceptable kinds of embodiment.

At a certain moment while speaking, Zé Bengala paused and changed the direction of his thought, allowing an interesting first half of the sentence to fizzle. He referenced the creation of the *congo feminino*, but just when he was saying, “There always has to be men because one must have a moment that is more, more,” he substituted it with another thought. What was Zé Bengala leaving unsaid and why? Moreover, what is interesting is that although one gender tends to predominate in the congo and moçambique groups of the Arturos community, there is gender fluidity between the groups; women and men participate in both congo and moçambique. Thus, did his comments reflect more of an ideological stance or nostalgia for the traditional ways than a true reflection of congado in the present day? To what extent might my own subject position as a female ethnomusicologist make Zé Bengala conscious of what he was saying? How did our identities and the roles that we assume affect our face-to-face conversations and the potential for open dialogue? To what extent did we have multiple selves that materialized consciously and unconsciously in the conversation? Was it possible to perceive Zé Bengala’s words as a neutral-observer-ethnomusicologist? I cherished our friendship and knew, on some level, that if his comments reflected a feminist perspective, they would reinforce my utmost respect for him. How, then, did my underlying expectations affect the ways in which I wished Zé Bengala would answer the question?

On the one hand, I had asked a neutral question deriving from the observation that women primarily participated in congo and men predominantly participated in moçambique. The

question about why this occurred came from a desire to understand congado on its own terms rather than seek to revise or critique it. However, over the course of the conversation, I began to hope for an answer that would somehow show Zé Bengala to be an advocate for redressing gender inequalities. His potential comments about gender equality would not only increase my personal esteem of Zé Bengala, but they would also validate my observation that congado leaders were citizens who worked to confer agency on women in their own communities.

Music as Mediation

If we understand Zé Bengala's comments about congo opening the spiritual paths for moçambique to be less indicative of ritual hierarchy and more suggestive of mediation, this changes the valuative frameworks that we bring to music and gender. I draw upon Sherry Ortner's discussion of women as mediators to illuminate the gender dynamics within congado. She outlines how women occupy an intermediary position in society by nurturing, socializing, and transforming people, particularly children, from "nature" into "culture" (Ortner 1974, 73). In this way, women mediate by intervening in situations where they act as agents of transformation. According to Ellen Koskoff, Ortner "describes three interpretations of women's intermediacy: where intermediate may have the significance of "middle status" (i.e., women exist on a hierarchy of being from culture to nature); where intermediate may imply "mediating," that is, synthesizing or converting; and where the intermediate position of women carries the implication of "greater symbolic ambiguity" (Ortner 1974, 84-85 in Koskoff 2014, 46-47). As the group that announces the festa and leads the way for the moçambique and royal court, might the congo's physical location in the procession suggest such a mediating position? When considering the

different functions of congo and moçambique, it is of critical concern to analyze the extent to which women, being the primary participants in congo, act as mediators between the public and the moçambique/royal court—between the outside world and the sacred one embedded within moçambique/royal court.

Congo and moçambique carry out distinct functions within congado, but both use music as a vehicle of communication between humans and spiritual entities. In this respect, both groups are complementary and necessary for communicating with the divine. Nonetheless, the congo has a particularly important intermediary position by being the first group in the procession to bring the supernatural to bear on the natural. In its geographic placement, congo represents a kind of spiritual intervention into social life.

Drawing on Ortner's metaphor of women being the mediators between nature and culture as well as on Koskoff's model of women being "in and between," I extend their metaphors by asserting that women congadeiros mediate between the mundane world and the divine world when they lead the procession and open the way. Congo participants are physically *in* the procession while simultaneously being positioned *between* the moçambique and royal court behind them and the listeners before them. Not only does music mediate between humans and the spirit world, but women—the primary participants in congo and those who guide the procession—assume the role of initiating that mediation.

Just as the congo mediates between the sacred and the secular by announcing the festa with exuberant dancing, drumming, and singing, the moçambique also acts as an intermediary by protecting and leading the royal court. Practitioners perceive the royal court, in turn, to be the most significant intermediary within congado because it embodies the black African nations as well as represents the incarnation of the celestial kingdom on earth. Hence, the royal court

mediates between the spiritual world on earth and the world of the divine. As Leda Maria Martins says, “In the absence of their original society, where the kings and queens had the real function of leadership, the blacks came to see, in the ‘kings and queens of the Congo,’ intermediary elements for dealing with the sacred” (Martins 1997, 33).³ In this respect, by presiding over the congado rituals, the congo king and queens mediate between the mundane and the divine world.

Some congadeiros might characterize this separation of responsibilities as an indication of valuing the constitutive components unequally. But depending on one’s perspective and preference, this division of musical labor might place each group on equal footing with regard to the maintenance of spiritual devotion. For example, a woman might perceive her role as a dancer in the congo to be more ritually efficacious than participating in the slow trod of moçambique. I argue that depending on the subject position of the participant, communication with the divine may come in many distinct, but equally valued forms.

Rather than speak of the groups being structured and valued hierarchically, it is more productive to think of them as complements or, perhaps even more accurately, as interactive modalities where individuals fulfill particular ritual functions within a structure of ceremonial communication and exchange. As Steven Feld convincingly argues, women’s and men’s “coordinated separate expressive spheres” (1982, 397) allow for gender difference to be esteemed in equal measure. Congadeiros choose to participate in moçambique or congo in accordance with their individual interests. If we understand it to be true that individual preferences guide participants’ actions, then it calls into question scholars’ insistence upon the

³ Na ausência de sua sociedade original, onde os reis tinham a função real de liderança, os negros passaram a ver, nos ‘reis do Congo’, elementos intermediários para o trato com o sagrado” (Martins 1997, 33).

stratification of the different groups. For example, congadeiros who perceive dancing to be ritually efficacious, often elect to perform in congo. Hence, congadeiros who take pleasure in dancing as a form of devotion would bypass participating in moçambique. They would do so not because they are prohibited from participating in it, but because they willingly choose to dance in congo. In the largest sense, congado is more about multivocality than hierarchy—although hierarchy can play a role in the ways in which congadeiros structure and express their sacred song. Thus, the paradigm that I propose acknowledges hierarchical value judgments while also seeing their actions within a wider system of multivocal and multidirectional spiritual and cultural flow.

Chapter 8

The Stories of Women in Congado

The following chapter illustrates varying understandings of gender by introducing different perspectives of women in congado. Known as congadeiras, the experiences and perspectives of these women represent complex counterpoints to one another. In order to grasp the ways in which the multiple voices coalesce to form a larger narrative whole, we begin by understanding the meanings of music-making for congadeiras through a focus on the following issues: their musical performances, interactions within and outside of these musical performances, and thoughts about such performances and interactions. Moreover, I outline diverse ways of being within congado to show how congadeiros express myriad ways of identifying their gendered selves through performance. What kinds of expressive, racial, gender, and social productions are women generating within congado and why does this matter to how congadeiros move through their everyday lives? From being active, but reserved to proactive and outspoken, congadeiras demonstrate a multiplicity of ways to chart paths within congado. Indeed, through performance, interaction, and evaluation, congadeiras demonstrate that there is no “right” musical discourse through which to perform gender identities. Furthermore, listeners who produce and hear these gendered sensibilities interpret them differently depending on their own gendered identities within these sacred sites of performance.

Rather than endeavor to fulfill a feminist agenda and make ethnographic evidence conform to a particular theory, my intention in the field was to be cognizant of and open to the multiple ways in which congadeiras embody and express sacred performances. As Eileen Hayes convincingly argues, “it is increasingly difficult to posit one-to-one correspondences between the

labels we use to describe our subject positions and the meaning we derive from our musical encounters” (Hayes 2010, 36). Hence, rather than form preconceived notions about how congadeiras think and act, I approached interlocutors in the field with more questions than expectations. Over time, I learned that just as congadeiros produce diverse sounds, women bring manifold ideas about body politics to bear on congado. In this way, the following section analyzes the various discourses of women to show how gender proves critical to comprehending congado as a musico-spiritual landscape.

Hierarchy and Agency

With regard to the ritual responsibilities of congo and moçambique, congadeiros and scholars alike often ascribe prestige and importance to certain rituals, objects, and groups over others. When scholars and practitioners prop up hierarchies of ritual force among the groups, they also engage in enabling and constraining people’s agency—the capacity to act. As practitioners embody these notions of greater and lesser ritual force, they carry them over into the realm of the individual group. In the process, they create power imbalances. To illustrate this point, I draw on a passage taken from an interview with Lucimar de Carvalho in the group Congo de Nossa Senhora do Rosário e Santa Efigênia from Ouro Preto. In the conversation, she expressed her preference for maintaining the order of leadership within the group rather than risk upsetting the overall balance of power by voicing her opinion. Part of our conversation follows:

Lucimar de Carvalho: Now, referring to the music, you can see that for each song, the dance steps are different. On Sunday, Rodrigo [one of the captains] led with one of the oldest dance steps. The one where you need to get low and then criss cross your legs. You want to see it. Like this. [She demonstrates the move by crouching down and quickly crossing one leg in front of the other]. Today, the congado doesn’t do it. It’s an old dance step. My father used to say that it was the scissor dance step. It was to cut

through the bad gazes he used to say. From other groups we receive a lot of charged energy, a lot of charged energy from other groups that we try not to allow into our group. It's in order to be able to cut through the bad things. Today this dance step is rarely done, do you understand. It's rarely done because it's tiring. You have to have a lot of intensity. We don't do many of the old dance steps because the children today cannot endure it. It's very fast-paced.

[Our conversation continued on in different directions, but at a particular moment we returned to Lucimar's comment about the scissor dance step.]

Genevieve Dempsey: I like the idea of the scissor that cuts the bad energy.

Lucimar de Carvalho: But, today we don't use this very much. Historically, the group used to use it. There are only a few old dance steps that we use within the congado. It's becoming lost, do you understand?

Genevieve Dempsey: But, as you are knowledgeable about what came before, why don't you say in the gatherings, "Look, this dance step is really important. Why don't we do it?"

Lucimar de Carvalho: Because sometimes we cannot pass in front of the captain. Did you understand? I prefer to always listen. We try to pass [knowledge], for instance, when we have, let's suppose, a cultural activity, understand? We pass it in this manner.

Genevieve Dempsey: I think that it's really interesting what you're saying because I see in front of me a person that knows a lot, but out of respect for hierarchy, you don't say anything.

Lucimar de Carvalho: We have to have respect for the captain. (Carvalho 2014)

In her comment, Lucimar de Carvalho does not explicitly create a triangulation between power, gender, and the silencing of voices, but in the quiet of the long pause after she spoke, I wondered how closely the three factors were related. To what extent do congadeiros knowingly operate from a specific gender ideology that unequally values women's and men's contributions to musico-religious rituals (Ortner and Whitehead 1981; O'Kelly and Carney 1986)? As Sugarman states, "highly symbolic practices such as music-making have helped to inscribe and maintain these notions deep within our beings, and their very beauty and power have often distracted us from noticing the assumptions that they embody (Sugarman 1997, 32). Why would Lucimar, a

competent participant whose age exceeded that of the captain's, refrain from teaching other participants dance movements if she remembered the dance steps that were slowly falling into disuse? Lucimar de Carvalho couched her deferential behavior in terms of respect for leadership, but perhaps the more fundamental issue at hand was not respect, but rather performativity. Did Lucimar de Carvalho's repetitive performances of social, cultural, and gender norms through embodied discourses serve to reinforce the status quo (Koskoff 2014, 151; Schieffelin 1985, 1998; Bourdieu 1977; Butler 1990, 1993)?

Lucimar de Carvalho's comments about her preference to listen rather than to teach the tradition seemed contradictory for the following reason. She stressed in other portions of the interview the pressing need to ensure the tradition's continuity by teaching the younger generations to sing and dance as their ancestors did. If her overarching intent was to safeguard the musico-religious rituals, then how could she ultimately prioritize the preservation of hierarchy over the preservation of a tradition? In other words, was Lucimar de Carvalho legitimizing the captain's power and undermining her own knowledge by carrying out acts of "respect" that really silenced women's voices through repetitive, unmarked gestures and actions?

Despite these concerns, it was imperative to remember that Lucimar de Carvalho's priorities differed from mine own as an ethnomusicologist. She saw her participation in congado as meaningful regardless of whether or not she contested the gender identities and power dynamics at play within the ceremonial context. As she mentioned, she had found a voice through listening and by occasionally teaching the almost-forgotten dance steps in cultural settings rather than religious ones. In the dialogic context of fieldwork, when ideas are transmitted, negotiated, and transformed, I realized that no right answer would somehow neatly unwind the complexity of ideas, dynamics, and expectations pervading our conversation. Instead,

finding clarity in complex ideas came precisely from understanding and representing those concepts in their untidy and unresolved states.

Marking and Unmarking Gender

While Lucimar de Carvalho believed in preserving the group's unity by maintaining its hierarchy, there were women within congado who, in assuming a position of leadership, expressed worship in a different way. Captain Kátia Silvério Augusto from the group Congo de Nossa Senhora do Rosário e Santa Efigênia of Ouro Preto was one of the first congadeiras and female captains that I met upon entering the field. In the following passage from one of our conversations, she recounted how she saw herself as a female captain within the reinado milieu.

Genevieve Dempsey: Is it common to have a woman as a leader?

Kátia Silvério Augusto: No, it's not common to have one. Above all, in our congo, I am the first female captain of the group. There hasn't been any prior ones. I occupied this space, I acquired this space through the work that I did both within and outside of the group. This position of captain was bestowed upon me because of merit. One of the oldest captains died and they needed another one and I was chosen to occupy the place.

Genevieve Dempsey: And how do you feel being a woman in a position of leadership?

Kátia Silvério Augusto: I feel really great. But, at times, it is difficult. With regards to our group, the participants, they respect me. They all respect me—the children, adolescents, and adults all give me respect. I believe that what's difficult is to be a female captain who tries to interact with the other groups.

Genevieve Dempsey: Can you speak a little bit about this?

Kátia Silvério Augusto: There are some very closed off groups from other cities that only have men. Let's suppose that I arrive there. Their gaze is different, do you understand? We feel it, but I am able to navigate this really well. I am not preoccupied by it.

Genevieve Dempsey: Interesting. Do you feel like a certain kind of model for the women within your group?

Kátia Silvério Augusto: I see myself as a reference, a spiritual reference and also a reference in all the senses because what I look for within the group is not to show power. I feel that when we are in the group, it does not matter if you are a man, a woman, a child, an adolescent. We are a group and we are all equal. But, I see that they see me as a very strong reference, principally to the women in the group. (Augusto 2014)

On the one hand, Kátia Silvério Augusto saw herself as a reference to other congadeiros, especially to the women. On the other hand, she emphasized the fact that when congadeiros are together, they are equals and gender plays no part in their unity. Hence, Kátia seemed to alternate between emphasizing and de-emphasizing the gender aspect of her subject position to conform to varying responsibilities as a captain. Even in this short excerpt, she moved back and forth between marking and unmarking herself as a woman and being marked and unmarked by other social actors. For example, Kátia clearly underscored merit not gender as the reason for being chosen to “occupy the space” and to carry out spiritual and musical responsibilities within the group. By foregrounding hard work and service and understating gender, it is as if Kátia desired to neutralize her subject position. Then, she discussed how despite her efforts to be seen as an accomplished leader *regardless of* her gender, all-male groups assumed certain competencies and incapacities *because of* her gender. Clearly the male category represented the unmarked category and in having to confront it, Kátia’s subject position as a woman became marked. After this, Kátia Silvério Augusto concluded her thought by transitioning from talking about how she served as a spiritual reference to all members of the group to asserting that being a woman leader allowed her to serve as a key reference to other women in the group.

At the same time that Kátia Silvério Augusto saw herself as reconfiguring gender restrictions by moving in male-dominated spaces and serving as a spiritual reference for other women, she ultimately seemed to want the sharp distinctions between male and female to blur in

these performative spaces of worship. I suggest that Kátia Silvério Augusto's somewhat ambivalent stance towards talking about her leadership position in terms of gender derived from her discomfort with gendering the sacred space as either female or male. Hence, the paradoxical nature of the situation is that Kátia Silverio Augusto identified as a female leader with particular subjectivities while also approaching congado as a space for flattening gender differences (Bohlman 2013, 47). While Kátia's actions seem paradoxical—simultaneously participating in the gendering of herself while also resisting it—let us theorize about the ways in which people often have multiple, overlapping agendas that occur simultaneously.

People tend to cultivate multiple, overlapping agendas because they construct their worldviews through constant negotiations with other people's unique perspectives and meanings. As they negotiate their relationship in the social contract, individuals highlight or de-emphasize certain aspects of their subject positions. Hence, rather than a preexisting entity, I understand the power that suffuses all interrelationships to be the result of interactions between people. Power, in this respect, is performative to its core. Power is also malleable and negotiable. The question, therefore, is not necessarily about how much control one gender has over another one as it is about people's perception and negotiation of such social control. For example, if Kátia perceives herself as empowered—able to navigate situations of gender bias really well—then she is more likely to circumvent men's social control and to exercise a sense of agency in social situations that threaten to destabilize her.

Conquering Space

While Lucimar de Carvalho saw her role in terms of participating by listening and Kátia Silvério Augusto perceived her captaincy as being simultaneously gender relevant and gender neutral, there were other congadeiras throughout Minas Gerais who were actively involved in conquering a space for women within congado. In a conversation with Ester Antonieta Santos, the daughter of captain Pedrina de Lourdes Santos and a captain herself in the group Irmandade de Nossa Senhora do Rosário in Oliveira, she articulated the significant avenues that her mother has opened for women in congado circles. Our dialogue that evening also included César Augusto da Silva, Ester Antonieta Santos's husband, who is a captain in the Arturos's congo.

It is interesting to note that these three family members were all tied to congado, yet they led different groups within congado—Pedrina with Oliveira's moçambique, Ester with Oliveira's congo, and César with the congo from the Arturos' community. Family connections that run vertically—mother to daughter—and horizontally—husband to wife—are common in congado and demonstrate the extent to which kinship ties of blood and matrimony factor into the conviviality, closeness, and continuation of congado as a tradition. In the following excerpt, Ester Antonieta Santos and Cesar Augusto da Silva recounted how Pedrina de Lourdes Santos has struggled for decades to diversify women's participation and activate their leadership within congado.

Genevieve Dempsey: I am really interested in the theme of women within moçambique and congo. In your opinion, what is the status of women within congado? Do women have leadership roles? What's it like?

Ester Antonieta Santos: The woman has achieved this space only now, very recently—the conquest of the space of the woman within congado. Because the space that she had was being the cook, the queen. I think that they weren't even banner carriers. She couldn't even carry the banner in a group. She had to stay with the other services. And

then, my mother is the first woman that we know of that danced in a moçambique group. She started to dance as a captain thirty-four years ago.

Cesar Augusto da Silva: It's been forty-four years that she has danced and thirty-four of captaincy.

Ester Antonieta Santos: My mom has been a captain for thirty-four years. At the time that my mom assumed the captaincy, there wasn't a "woman captain." And if you talk with her, she tells you history of, moments of her going to greet older captains and kings, and the kings turned their heads away so as not to look at her. The captains also thought it was absurd that a woman would use *gunga* [ankle shaker] and the traditional headdress of moçambique. And thus, she gradually took possession of this space, so to speak, because it was under much criticism, under much fight and with much effort that she became recognized as she is recognized today.

Genevieve Dempsey: She is very respected today. Very sought after. People want to know her opinion.

Ester Antonieta Santos: She is very sought after today. But for her to achieve this, for her to have the space that she has and for her to learn the things that she learned in congado... For example, the two of us are conversing. Let's suppose that we were men, the oldest captains of congado. To learn something, she drew near and stayed there listening to their conversations. When they perceived that she was close by, they stopped, moved away, or changed the subject because it wasn't permitted. In the Jatobá brotherhood, for example, a woman is not permitted to be the most senior captain [capitão-mor] nor is it permitted for a woman to take care of candombe. But in Oliveira, for example, who takes care of candombe is my mom; she is the one who takes care of it. Thus, there are these particularities within congado. Each brotherhood is going to have its own characteristics. Each brotherhood is going to do it in its own way. (Antonieta Santos 2014)

Two particularly noteworthy issues stand out here. First, Pedrina de Lourdes Santos's story reveals the extent to which women are often restricted from gaining access to mystic knowledge when it falls under the jurisdiction of male captains. Moreover, her experience of exclusion not only highlights the fact that women are often denied access to the captains' esoteric knowledge. These moments of exclusion also contradict congadeiros' discourse that they transfer knowledge willingly and openly to members of the congado community. In many respects, they denied Pedrina knowledge as well as access to the process by which knowledge was transferred. To experience this dual sense of exclusion matters significantly because knowledge within congado

communities is transmitted orally. To be excluded from the system—the oral mode of transmission—means concomitantly to be banned from the object of such transmission—knowledge. Hence, in congadeiros' musico-spiritual culture of orality, the spoken word has the utmost potential for exercising power, prestige, and status.

Ester Antonieta Santos highlighted another notable point. While women were prohibited from being a capitã-mor in the Jatobá brotherhood, women were welcomed as captains of moçambique and candombe in Oliveira. Hence, the discrepancies in women and men's positions of leadership between Jatobá and Oliveira reveal the extent to which congadeiros organize congado in unique ways across Minas Gerais. Thus, while groups feel a collective sense of unity in the congado nation, individual groups largely determine the structure of congado on an everyday basis. Cesar Augusto da Silva added to this thread of thought when addressing women's tireless efforts to transition from invisible social actors to visible and vocal leaders.

Genevieve Dempsey: And Cesar, what is your opinion about the representation of the woman in the guardas?

Cesar Augusto da Silva: Like Ester already said really well, historically, in some places, the woman didn't have liberty. When she could be in the reinado, it was in roles that were totally, how do you say it, anonymous—like in the kitchen. Today, one sees many women captains of congo, captains of moçambique. There are many female captains of congo here in Belo Horizonte. For example, the congo of Dona Maria is a *congo feminino* [congo that is comprised entirely of women.] I think that it's beautiful because it's rare. You already saw Jatobá; the congo is really a congo feminino. It's gaining space. The places do not lose their essence by allowing women to have space within reinado. Because in one form or another, the patroness of reinado is a woman, hence it's more than just. There are still situations where it's not permitted for women to assume certain positions, certain possessions, but women really won the liberty to be able to express her own faith. I think that today the situation is beginning to resolve itself. The oldest people, we're not going to say that they changed their mind *abriram mão* because many died, but it's the case where they liberated things a little bit more and gradually it became modified. I think that the freedom of the woman is necessary. The woman has to have a space because today the woman is assuming many diverse places and why not within reinado? Dona Pedrina is a very clear example of this. She used to relate how when she sang, the people laughed. Instead of responding, they mocked her. She endured much

embarrassment to arrive where she is today, to have the knowledge that she has today. Thus, she is a very clear example for me today of how the woman gained this space within reinado by force, so to speak. She was very striven despite knowing that much could happen. (Augusto da Silva 2014)

Congadeiros throughout the greater Belo Horizonte region know Pedrina de Lourdes Santos for the valuable role that she has played in advancing women's participation and leadership roles in congado despite daunting social and gendered barriers. Ester Antonieta Santos and Cesar Augusto da Silva's comments, moreover, revealed how singular individuals like Pedrina de Lourdes Santos could precipitate social change, creating a snowball effect where other people joined the movement for increased gender equality. Many congadeiros who have witnessed and experienced sexism have come to appreciate how Pedrina de Lourdes Santos turned aspiration into praxis.

Congadeiros' gradual acceptance of women in leadership positions and diversified musical roles derives from the burgeoning conviction that allowing women to be leaders will not destabilize the fundamental identity of congado as a musico-religious community. Congadeiros do not need to maintain rigid social and gender relations to preserve who they are. As Cesar Augusto da Silva says, "The groups do not lose their essence by allowing women to have space within the reinado. Because in one way or another, the patron saint of the reinado is a woman, thus it is more just." Hence, women's assumption of greater visibility within congado reflects a movement to keep apace with the changing times in larger social and cultural spheres. It would be unfair, moreover, for congadeiros to contest wider social exclusion in society, yet continue to perpetuate gender exclusion within their own communities. Thus, as women increasingly take on greater responsibility in diverse areas of society, the congado community attempts to both model and reflect the changing times.

Pleasure as the Embodiment of Agency

The next section theorizes pleasure for its crucial role in not only revealing gender dynamics but also in revealing why congadeiras do what they do. Pleasure is a medium through which people derive their preferences for timbres, rhythms, melodies, and overall aesthetic as well as a guiding principle in congadeiros' choice to participate in congo or moçambique. Thus, rather than feeling coerced to participate in certain groups based upon gender norms and rather than performing certain musics to gain status and power, I suggest that a framework of pleasure more accurately captures participants' preferences and motivations to act. For instance, if a participant feels as though dancing is the best way for her to express devotion, congo arguably allows for more somatic expression than moçambique. I connect the concept of pleasure to worship because the theoretical intersection reveals how women congadeiras come to perceive their own actions of dancing and singing to be ritually efficacious.

While my work is in dialogue with scholars who theorize about women in congado, it nonetheless slightly differs from their inquiries. For instance, Soares asks: "How did it happen that women moved from spaces of minor visibility to others more valorized in the ritual hierarchy?" (Soares 2009, 17). While Soares's question led to an interesting analysis, I do not perceive women's empowerment in congado to be akin to climbing a ladder of ritual hierarchy determined by androcentric ideas of value. It is of more critical interest to my work to ask how women's self-valorization through music affords them a sense of autonomy and mobility. The following discussion examines the ways in which congadeiras come to valorize their own unique

actions in discrete ways, rather than measuring themselves against the standard of other individuals.

A passage from my interview with fourteen-year-old Ana Teresa Eredia Luz, a participant in the Arturos's congo group for eight years, will help to parse the extent to which a personal sense of pleasure and embodiment means more to an individual's sense of worth and status than where they ostensibly rank in congado's "hierarchy of ritual force." In other words, how might embodiment rather than status determine how a person feels about making musico-spiritual rituals efficacious?

By introducing Ana Teresa Eredia Luz's comments, my goal is to problematize dominant narratives in the field that claim that congado rituals increasingly gain more and more importance as they move from congo to moçambique. I argue that while there are asymmetries in how congadeiros value congo and moçambique, it is clear that different groups become valorized in varying ways depending on the person's subject position. To hear and see Ana Teresa Eredia Luz's palpable enthusiasm for dancing and singing in the congo, would make one reconsider the kinds of value systems at play in congado. The latter part of the following excerpt is perhaps more apropos for the discussion at hand, but I included the initial part because it offers further information about the musical aspects of congado. Furthermore, it contextualizes Ana Teresa Eredia Luz's observations about the ways in which pleasure—not necessarily pressure to conform to ritual hierarchies—motivates congadeiros to continue their participation in ritual activity.

Genevieve Dempsey: How long does a song last and when do you know to transition to a new song?

Ana Teresa Eredia Luz: The song can last as long as the person wants it to. There is no specific amount of time. For example, I begin a song here at the church. I can carry it far away to the community gate where I want. It depends on the taste of the person. There

are people that sing a song and do not stop singing it. And no one likes this. [Eredia Luz laughs].

Genevieve Dempsey: Why not?

Ana Teresa Eredia Luz: It goes on repeating the same thing various times. In this way, it becomes boring. [We both laugh]. That person that sings a song three times and changes it to another. We love it. We jump, we dance. We love dancing, you know. You already saw the happiness that we have when we sing a lively song and we start to dance.

Genevieve Dempsey: Lively music helps, doesn't it? Everyone wants to jump and dance.

Ana Teresa Eredia Luz: I love lively songs. There is one song that we sing in the space where we drink coffee and have lunch. It goes like this, "Pull the chain of the sea, sailor/ Pull the chain of the sea, sailor, oh sailor, oh sailor/I came to play in the *terreiro* [sacred space of congado], sailor, oh sailor/I came to play in the *terreiro*." In that moment, we hold out our hands, the whole line links hands. We give each other our hands and we make a kind of chain. I love the song. (Eredia Luz 2014)

It is clear that dancing in the congo brings joy to Eredia Luz. The pleasure that she derives from expressing herself through somatic means coincides with one of the fundamental functions of the congo, to animate and enliven the festa. Perhaps other congadeiros more highly regard moçambique for their somber steps and greater spiritual responsibility, but Ana Teresa values the energetic steps in congo and believes them to be ritually efficacious. Ana Teresa is free to join the Arturos's moçambique because they now allow women to participate, but she chooses to dance and sing in the congo. By willingly choosing congo, Ana Teresa elects movement as a conduit for the expression of devotion. If Ana Teresa Eredia Luz contributes to making the rituals more efficacious by heightening their spiritual fervor through dancing, then do Eredia Luz's actions reflect an inversion of the hierarchy of "ritual force?" Even if Eredia Luz knows about the "hierarchy of ritual force" at play in moçambique and congo, it does not seem to factor into the choices that she makes. Thus, I suggest that Eredia Luz places dancing and singing at the spiritual center of her devotion because she derives the greatest sense of pleasure from their

somatic expression. In fact, her preference for congo led me to conclude that rather than a consensus prescribing each group's relational ritual importance to one another, there are multiple systems of value at play in congado.

Concluding Thoughts

This chapter has explored gender because the concept affords the theoretical latitude to address the complexity and diversity of relationships between men and women congadeiros. It remains of central importance to continue analyzing the ways in which norms about gender regulate people's behavior, thinking, and musicking (Koskoff 2014, 27). In equal measure, it is necessary to explore how people use music as a site for enacting gender dynamics. Through the performance of gender in sacred contexts, congadeiros come to know their own identities as well as how they are situated vis-à-vis other people (Haraway 1988).

From the perspectives expressed by Lucimar de Carvalho to those voiced by Ester Antonieta Santos, practitioners have collectively shown that there is a continuum, not a consensus, regarding how congadeiros express their social and gender roles. Moreover, as Kátia Silvério Augusto demonstrated, gender is often paradoxically expressed because of the complex ways in which it plays out in real life. Drawing upon this, I argue that multivocal gendered expressions tend to be the norm rather than the exception to the rule among congadeiros.

Giving new salience to the role of gender in congado communities helps to account for why and how congadeiros move through the spiritual and mundane worlds in the ways that they do. Practitioners use sacred song to confirm, contest, or revise the processes by which their bodies become gendered. In other words, in the making of musico-spiritual rituals, congadeiros

negotiate their gendered selves. Indeed, congadeiros' choices about how they configure their musico-spiritual practices are fundamentally grounded in the expression of gendered worship. In sum, the lives of congadeiros through dialogue show how enacting gender profoundly shapes congado as a nation of sound and sanctity.

Conclusion: Mindful Devotion

Congadeiros cultivate an oral tradition in the here and now, but they also have a history—a history that is both abiding and changing. They sing songs passed down from their ancestors and they invent songs to suit the particularities of the contemporary moment. Their music memorializes the past even as it charts new historical paths. Just as congadeiros make their sacred rituals as equally longstanding as they are transformative, they also emphasize their unified, yet multivalent contours. This is because congadeiros engage in cultivating sacred rituals across Minas Gerais in converging and diverging ways. Moreover, they have brought their diverse and shared cultural, racial, gendered, and social experiences to bear on congado performance. In these moments of interaction, they have re-mapped knowledge, rendering sound and other realms inseparable from one another (Hannerz 1980). Throughout the dissertation, I have endeavored to show the dynamism inherent in congado because it is a changing phenomenon whose meanings for congadeiros also change. As Timothy Rice has written,

It would be descriptively accurate and therefore useful to have a model of our field that reflects the central importance of change, or historical processes. For us history or “historical ethnomusicology,” to use Kay Shelemay’s phrase, does not, in fact, seem to be one of many issues, but a primary issue, a fundamental process, a given of music making, and this model acknowledges that by elevating the study of change to the highest analytical level of the model. (Rice 1987, 475)

Even the diverse kinds of congado groups demonstrate the extent to which congadeiros actively seek to merge musical elements in unique ways to reflect the distinct qualities of their region and local culture while contributing to collective self-making. Although seemingly paradoxical, congado fuses heterogeneity with homogeneity, diversity with sameness. At the root of this unity in diversity is congadeiros’ desire to say something about devotion, belonging, gender, race, dignity, and perseverance. Congado thrives because practitioners are invested in the spiritual and

social work that it performs. This spiritual work, moreover, is meaningful to congadeiros because they choose to devote themselves to congado in full knowledge that several other alternatives for spiritual and social expression exist.

In the context of both longevity and change, congadeiros participate in the invention and re-invention of society. They reconfigure historical and social time through the reconfiguration of ritual time. From the time of rupture and emancipation, to the timing of particular rituals throughout the festa, to the timing of the individual rhythmic patterns, notions of time and timing have been crucial to how congadeiros conceive of the past and the present as well as how they conceive of themselves along that continuum. What is striking about congado is not only that it signifies a musico-religious identity to themselves and others, but also that it is dynamic and malleable. Congado allows practitioners to affirm and assert their changing identities through its flexible framework. Survival thus becomes a mode of being that is always-already musical in its sound, structure, and repetition. Just as responses follow the calls closely, so do practitioners attempt to retrieve the past in the present, call down their ancestors once again, and collapse the human world with that of the supernatural one.

Congadeiros manipulate musical elements of sacred song in deliberate ways to afford desirable sacral outcomes. For example, the distinct rituals in congado—raising of the banners, payment of promises, coronation of festive kings and queens, preparation ceremonies, processions—all function in distinct, yet mutually reinforcing ways to approximate the divine. In other words, congadeiros tailor musical elements in particular ways so that they imbue the ritual with maximum efficaciousness. Through music, linkages emerge between the lived-in and cosmological worlds that bind the sacred communities together in a history of sacred conviction and action. The musical transcriptions and anecdotes demonstrate congadeiros' conscious efforts

to render sacred rituals meaningful through the deployment of precise music materials. In each setting, congadeiros reposition musical melodies, harmonies, and rhythms to respond to the exigencies of the moment. In this way, sacred experience becomes accessible to congadeiros precisely because their unique drumming, singing, declaiming, and playing open up this possibility. In giving voice to the sacred, music metonymically embodies the congado community.

What I have illustrated in the analyses of music is that the musical elements—the structures, forms, timbres, melodies, harmonies—are all constitutive ways of transferring energy. This *force vitale* allows humans to engage spiritually and otherwise with the natural world. Through the sounding of music in their bodies, congadeiros tap into and acquire spirituality. The intersection between sound and the body is important in these instances because sound becomes tangible at the site of the collective, Afro-Brazilian body. As a community whose ancestors endured slavery, congadeiros bear the burden of remembering their ancestors' hardships as well as confronting social and racial obstacles themselves in the contemporary world due to racial exclusion and discrimination.

In many respects, the sacred history of congado is tied to the material and physical history of disjuncture wrought by slavery. Even today, congadeiros still struggle with the aftermath of its devastation. They have responded to the recurring conditions of an unjust history—marginalization and exclusion—with the resiliency of sacred song. Congadeiros' ritual actions are made meaningful because they use music to activate and express their inner convictions about devotion, gender, race, class, and dignity. Music functions as an indispensable medium of expression and transformation for congadeiros. It is in this sense that congadeiros not only invest music with devotional practices, they also invest sacred song with politics.

Hence, this is a history of devotion, but it is also a history of devotion that is not solely relegated to “sacred” contexts. The sacred music practices that happen outside of sacred contexts index the religious, political, and aesthetic sensibilities of congadeiros. When congadeiros parade through sacred and secular spaces with their processions, they indelibly alter the spaces through which they move. Their sacred movements accrue secular implications precisely because motion, boisterous music, and vibrant song in public arenas help them to counteract the discrimination that has made them impoverished and voiceless citizens. In many respects, they close the gulf between the sacred and the secular by moving their music from the private to the public sphere. Through the analysis of varied musical events in this dissertation, we have witnessed the ways in which congadeiros maintain unique ceremonies that are so private and intimate that they are performed only among members of the group.

Congadeiros, nonetheless, also perform songs that function in the public sphere. When practitioners parade in public, congadeiros’ music acquires an ontological indeterminacy—the secular space becomes sacralized and the sacred music becomes secularized. In this way, performing music makes place and identity equally performative. This ontological in-betweenness of music and setting, moreover, says something about how they identify. Congadeiros desire to say something about themselves—who they are—is also a desire to say something about who they are in relation to others. In this respect, the music is about congadeiros expressing personal and collective devotion as well as about expressing otherness to gain selfness. In other words, when congadeiros express pride in their unique music, they are signaling to others that despite ever-constant attacks on the integrity of their religious practices, they have persevered in marking place with their identity. In other words, by bringing their

sacred music into the secular sphere, their identity comes into contact with those of others—making a border region hybrid and ambiguous.

In this dissertation I have analyzed congado by not only attending to sound as spiritual work, but also sound as gesture, context, body politics, religion, and history. I have analyzed these factors in conjunction with the “social experience, background, skill, desire and necessity” (Feld 1994b, 84) of congadeiros to understand the stakes involved in the making and remaking of congado. The study of congadeiros’ actions, reactions, and interactions within these musical scenes helps to capture what it means for poor Afro-Brazilians to use music to negotiate opportunities and constraints in their spiritual and non-spiritual lives. I explore congado as a process created by practitioners who, in the process of making and remaking their objects of devotion, also make and remake themselves as subjects.

As my goal was to understand the “interpretive moves” (Feld 1994b, 86-89) of congadeiros, my primary ethnographic methods were participant-observation and interviews. At the same time that I strove to comprehend the interpretive moves of unique individuals, I was also interested in understanding the interpretive moves of congadeiros as a collective entity. How do their engagements with one another contribute to the creation of a mutually shared arena of collective knowledge? During the research, I asked them about how they individually and collectively create meaning in congado, what criteria they use to evaluate congado, and how they manipulate musical parameters to afford particular experiences—spatially, religiously, racially, and socially. They taught me that congado is dynamic—an ever-changing process where people construct meaning by bringing their past knowledge to bear on the knowledge that accrues in the present. Congadeiros concern themselves with the aural and the oral because it exposes the fact that their sacred rituals place the past in dialogue with the present. Indeed, it is important to

understand the extent to which congado as “‘historical construction’ comprises two important processes: the process of change with the passage of time and the process of reencountering and recreating the forms and legacy of the past in each moment of the present” (Rice 1987, 474). Rice’s tripartite model of “historical construction,” “social maintenance,” and “individual adaptation and experience” remakes “Merriam’s model,” a particularly influential theoretical paradigm coined by Alan Merriam in the 1960s. The model seeks to address the fundamental characteristics of music by charting the interrelationship between concept, behavior, and sound (Merriam 1964, 32-35). Taken together, all three converge to engender meaning and interpretation for practitioners.

In the largest sense, congadeiros manipulate musical elements within the context of ritual performance to signify on levels outside the religious context. As Travis A. Jackson remarks that “performative transformation of structure and form can metaphorically open space for transformative negotiations with the structures that surround our daily activities” (2012, 209). In other words, musicians’ creative manipulations of timbral, modal, melodic, and harmonic parameters not only hold ramifications within the immediate space of the performance, but also outside the musical frame. In singing congado, practitioners lay bare the body politics of race and gender. That is, congado is the sound of practitioners who have elected music as their medium for expressing racial and gendered politics. These skills showcase musicians tapping into their creative energies as well as tapping into a process of creativity and agency that finds resonance and utility in extramusical contexts. Put differently, what musicians learn within musical contexts might actually be essential skills for ensuring survival beyond the aural limits of the music.

The previous chapters' emphases on the imbrication of the musical and extramusical outlines the extent to which I see congado not as a solitary entity with self-evident meanings, but rather as a process of sound, spirituality, preference, and competency that congadeiros engage in to produce psycho-spiritual survival. Practitioners operationalize the practices and politics of music to navigate the world. More to the point, by participating in a spiritual, gendered, racial, social, and political field, congadeiros yield fresh ways of expressing identity.

Indeed, congadeiros are predominantly drawn from poor Afro-Brazilian communities and live precariously on the edges of society, yet they employ sacred music to mobilize for embodied and everyday transformation. Practitioners anchor and activate their beliefs in sacred song because music serves as one of their most effective mediums for showing why they matter in the world. This dissertation raises critical questions about the ramifications of spiritual song for congadeiros' social, spatial, religious, and political lives in urban and rural Minas Gerais. In short, I show how music transforms congadeiros' sense of "being in the world."

Another aspect that this dissertation has explored is the extent to which congado represents a space of negotiation—not only between folk Catholicism and Roman Catholicism, but also between practitioners who have differing ways of perceiving the religious, gendered, racial, and identity work that congado performs. Congadeiros recognize themselves as part of a community, but its homogeneity does not contradict its heterogeneity. Instead of assuming that categories like race, gender, religion, and identity are understood uniformly among congadeiros, I begin from the premise that they are socially constructed and seek to understand how people's individual evaluative criteria shape their collective unfolding in performance.

In many respects, what congadeiros choose to annex into their musical, religious, and body politics repertoire depends on a constant process of negotiation among themselves as well

as with outsiders. Thus, when congadeiros use music to distinguish their practices and devotion from other religious actors like the Catholic Church, they do so not to exit from the negotiation of identity, but rather to engage in it. Therefore, the question becomes less about whether congadeiros cross and/or purify boundaries with other social agents in the wider world and more about practitioners who negotiate an interactive and inseparable position vis-à-vis other entities. From the destruction wrought by slavery to the denial of religious worth by the Catholic Church, congadeiros have been the object of physical harm and blatant criticism for centuries. Prevented from developing their traditions in isolation, they have been invariably forced to create traditions in direct dialogue with outside entities. The cultural contact or interculture formed at the borders between congadeiros and outside social agents has been marked by disjuncture. Yet, the rupture has also shown congadeiros to be resilient social actors.

I base this dissertation on the understanding that congadeiros have found a primary outlet for socio-psycho survival through sacred music. When congadeiros anchor survival in songs of devotion, they contravene many of the discourses about Afro-Brazilian cultural expressions that portray the Afro-Brazilian body as innately sensual, hybrid, and rhythmical. Not only do these characterizations misrepresent Afro-Brazilians as a collective body, but they also disguise who Afro-Brazilians are and limit the possibilities of how they might act. To desire Afro-Brazilian congadeiros to fit a narrow stereotype is to miss out on their complex, multilayered identity. In fact, congado remains critical to the understanding of the history, religiosity, and artistry among African-descended peoples in Brazil as well as in the Americas, Europe, and Africa. Indeed, it is all the more imperative to research congado because scholars have problematically omitted congado from the Afro-Brazilian symbolic matrix. For example, anthropologist José Jorge Carvalho defines Afro-Brazilian manifestations in the following way:

The main matrix of Afro-Brazilian identity is still the traditional cults of African origin, such as the Candomblé of Bahia, the shango of Recife, the tambor de mina of São Luís and the batuque of Porto Alegre. They concentrate some of the most powerful symbols shared or at least known by most Brazilians: the orishas or santos and the drum ensembles, among which the better known are the atabaques of Bahia. (Carvalho 1993, 3)

Although Carvalho's statement has merit, it is important to emphasize that there is no measurable difference between a veritable cult of African origin and practitioners' identification with a phenomenon of African origin. In other words, when congadeiros say that congado is a hybrid mix of African, European, indigenous, and New World sacred and secular traditions, it makes their traditions no less "African" than any other Afro-Brazilian manifestations. Congadeiros self-fashion their identities in ways that index hybridity—their devotion to Our Lady of the Rosary, a white, Catholic saint—as much as they encapsulate pride in being black Brazilians who create black traditions. In many respects, where scholars perceive paradox and contradiction, congadeiros see entwinement and symmetry.

It is clear that congadeiros' spatial, temporal, musical, racial, and ritual frameworks are unique. But, it is also evident that congadeiros confront the intersection of devotion, performance, politics, and power in ways similar to how other people around the world sound these dynamics. It is in this sense that congadeiros' experiences resonate not as different from, but as similar to how other people across the globe respond to life's daily challenges with devotion and sacred song.

Despite discrimination and marginalization, congadeiros continue stake a claim to history on their own terms by cultivating unique musical and devotional endeavors. Indeed, congadeiros have attributed their own sense of worth to themselves even when few others in society would offer them dignity and prestige. In this way, congadeiros have managed to survive through the

resistance and resilience of their sacred rituals. What is interesting is that innovation and continuity have been mutually reinforcing tools for ensuring the maintenance of the tradition.

The songs of congadeiros are about channeling spiritual salvation to instantiate physical survival. In becoming songs of survival, they also become songs of a counterhistory. Congadeiros cultivate a religious tradition that is counterhistorical to the actions of Roman Catholicism writ large as well as Brazilian society. It is important to understand why and how congadeiros sound a counterhistory in relation to larger currents in Brazilian history because by doing so, one gains a better understanding of the increasing role that aurality plays in the constitution of Latin America. As Ana Maria Ochoa Gautier writes, “In speaking about Latin American as an aural region, I argue that under the contemporary processes of social globalization and regionalization coupled with the transformations in the technologies of sound, the public sphere is increasingly mediated by the aural” (Ochoa Gautier 2006, 807). In this way, by shedding light on the counterhistory that congadeiros mediate with their music, it helps to diversify the frame within which ethnomusicologists work.

Congado is both an eminently private affair as well as a strikingly public spectacle. Indeed, congado enters the public sphere by means of the procession. As they parade through the streets, the reverberation of their booming drums and unhampered song demonstrate the extent to which they endeavor to be as visible as possible. Through movement and sound, they help to transform the public sphere into an aural public sphere (Ochoa Gautier 2006). This spectacle of loud music and dance draws attention to congadeiros’ contemporary as well as historical presence in Brazilian society. They work as a collective to occupy sonically and spatially a space that congadeiros have often been restricted from belonging. Nonetheless, congado also envelopes the private sphere through rituals like those of coronation ceremonies that take place in their own

private chapels. Hence, congado shifts fluidly between these two spheres. The musico-spiritual practice exists in a kind of state of in-betweenness—neither being wholly public nor wholly private. In many ways, what makes congadeiros’ spiritual work possible is that it is private in times of intimate sacred communion and public in times of open sacred spectacle.

In both private and public spheres, congadeiros endeavor to build black pride. What is interesting here is that congadeiros cultivate a sense of black pride that eschews stereotypical notions of black bodies like percussiveness, rhythmicity, and proximity to the natural and supernatural worlds. If a sense of black pride derives from congadeiros’ manipulation of rhythm, melody, harmony, and timbre, it has arisen out of strategic, not stereotypical use. In other words, blackness and Afro-descendant heritage are linked to congado not because congadeiros promote blackness via stereotypical rhythms and kinesthetic behaviors, but because particular musical parameters function as mediums for expressing that blackness. While these two scenarios might seem similar, they are actually quite distinct. In the first hypothetical case, congadeiros might musically employ what others would expect of them when evoking blackness. In the second case, and the one that more closely aligns with congadeiros’ actual behavior, practitioners produce black pride as a product of what they do through the process of making music and expressing devotion. In other words, one scenario deals with fulfilling expectations placed upon them by the public. The other scenario addresses the ways in which practitioners perform sacred song for reasons of affordance, functionality, aesthetics, politics, and spirituality. In this way, engendering musicoreligious, aesthetic experiences might help practitioners to “create new modes of sense perception and induce novel forms of political subjectivity” (Rancière 2004, 9). The practices of congado and the discourses and meanings that congadeiros derive from them matter in the largest sense. This is because congadeiros embody a sense of otherness in their

history and soundscape that is interwoven with the aural and written histories of Brazilians, North and South Americans, Europeans, and other peoples of the wider global ecumene.



Figure 77. The lowering of the banner signals an end to the festa until the following year. A king reaches up to steady the banner as it is lowered in the Arturos community during the festa de Nossa Senhora do Rosário, 2014. Photo by author.

Congadeiros' emphasis on community is heard at the level of the sonic. Their sounds converge—timbrally, rhythmically, harmonically, and melodically. As a soloist's verse is quickly responded to with the chorus' answer, so too does a drummer's pattern interlock with those of another drummer. While the focus is on interlocking at the level of the group, between individual groups, the goal is not to entrain rhythmically because sustaining rhythmic difference evinces the group's spiritual power and musical prowess. But, for example, if one were to take into account the net effect of a procession's soundscape, one would find sound collapsing together. The fact that it is challenging to separate one group's pattern from the next in a

procession means that the composite, buzzy soundscape is perhaps the most characteristic of and crucial for congado. Indeed, there is musical synchrony and cohesion at the level of the group. However, at the level of the community, the cohesion ensues precisely from mobilizing the opposite aesthetic—rhythmic messiness and intertwinement.

Ritual elements of congado are not only interlocking, but also extensively cyclical. Congadeiros repeat rhythmic formulae *ad infinitum* and intone songs as if they were endless mantras. As the musical cycles in congado circle back, they do so in variation. They repeat again and again, always sounding with slight difference, whether it is with unique embellishments and verses or innovative melodies, harmonies, and rhythms. The combination of the cyclicity, intersectionality, and variability across the music of the groups means that congadeiros chart paths of return and renewal. They parade along routes of return and renewal through the invisible, but audible, landscape of the sacred to unite one another in sonic and sacred harmony.

GLOSSARY

Acordeon de oito baixos button accordion.

Adufo small double-sided drum.

Afrodescendência afro-descendancy.

Alvorada/Matina during dawn, groups announce the beginning of a festa by performing songs as they parade throughout the community's streets.

Axé derived from the West African Yoruban religious term *àsé*—energy, force, power. Axé refers to the vital energy embodied in living beings and divinities.

Banda like guarda and terno, banda refers to a musico-religious group in congado.

Bandeira sacred banner that congadeiros carry in front of their parading group as a sign of devotion to particular Catholic saints.

Bandeireira/Porta-bandeira banner bearer that carries the sacred banner in a parade.

Bandeirantes explorers that discovered deposits of gold in the Espinhaço Mountains in Minas Gerais in the late seventeenth century.

Bandolim a four double-coursed instruments similar to a mandolin.

Banquete coletivo collective banquet that congadeiros partake in during the annual feast day celebrations of the crowning of Our Lady of the Rosary.

Bastança abundance.

Bastão the staff used by captains of moçambique groups as an indication of leadership and wisdom.

Bênção blessing; congadeiros ask for blessings from spiritual divinities. Young congadeiros also ask for blessings from older congadeiros when they meet as a sign of respect.

Benzedeiro/Benzedeira healer; congado communities have healers who bless people in informal ceremonies to ensure their health, safety, and success in life, employment, and relationships.

Busca da Rainha ritual where the congadeiros retrieve the queen for the festa.

Cabasa a percussion instrument that is made from steel ball chains wrapped around a cylinder and fastened to a wooden handle.

Caboclo the term caboclo can refer to (1) a spirit of Amerindian heritage, (2) a person of mixed Indian and Portuguese descent, (3) a specific kind of congado group with unique outfits, songs, dances, and histories that honor the indigenous heritage of Brazil.

Caixa cylindrical double-headed drum that can range in size.

Caixa de Guia guide drummer.

Caixa de Contraguita secondary guide drummer.

Campanha/Gunga a metal shaker that attaches to congadeiros' ankles; a percussion instrument commonly made from soup and tomato cans that has been welded together with tiny black seeds inside to produce a rattling sound when congadeiros jump and stomp.

Candombe considered the “father” of congado groups. Depending on the region of Minas Gerais, the candombe can either be open to the public and parade in the streets or it can be private and stationary, only playing in enclosed, secretive spaces.

Candomblé Afro-Brazilian religion that originated in Bahia in the early nineteenth century.

Cantiga short song.

Cântico chant, prayer.

Canto song in general or a particular song.

Cantoria a generic term for singing.

Canzalo made of bamboo, canzalo is the local name for the largest reco-reco (sawtooth notched scraper instrument played with a wooden stick).

Catopê one of the seven different types of congado.

Capitã/Capitão captain; captains are responsible for leading the congado group in musical and religious matters.

Capitã-mor/Capitão-mor the most senior captain of the group or brotherhood.

Capitã-regente/Capitão-regente second most senior captain of the group or brotherhood.

Casa house; congadeiros often refer to their sacred communities as houses.

Cavaquinho petite chordophone of the European guitar family with four wire or gut strings.

Caxixis bamboo shakers of various sizes.

Chama/Jeremia the smallest of three drums in candombe groups.

Chegança the meeting of two groups during a procession.

Chocalho de Cesto/Guaiá bamboo hand shakers.

Comandante a term used interchangeably with the word captain in particular regions of Minas Gerais; in the Central West part of Minas Gerais, comandante often denotes the position of capitã(o)-mor, the most senior captain of the group.

Comunidade Negra dos Arturos Black Community of the Arturos.

Congada a term that can be used interchangeably with congado.

Congo one of the seven different musico-religious groups of congado.

Congo/Kongo ancient kingdom in west Central Africa.

Congado Brazilian musico-religious tradition of popular Catholicism where practitioners sing, drum, play, and dance in honor of Our Lady of the Rosary and other Catholic saints.

Congadeiros organize themselves in ritual groups known as guardas or ternos and practice a syncretic, sacred music phenomenon of African, Iberian, and New World influences. There are seven different kinds of congado, which are named candombe, moçambique, congo, caboclo, catopê, marujo, and vilão.

Congadeira/Congadeiro a participant of congado.

Congo vilão one of the seven different types of congado.

Congo de Viola congo group characterized by its predominant use of guitars.

Confraria religiosa negra black religious confraternity.

Coroação de rei e rainha congo crowning of the congo king and queen.

Coroação de rei e rainha festeiro crowning of the festive king and queen; the festive queen and king provide the meals for the congadeiros throughout the festa.

Corte real royal court; the royal court parades solemnly behind the moçambique group during the processions.

Cortejo procession.

Cozinheira cook.

Cuíca/Puíta drum played by producing friction with one hand.

Cultura Afro-Brasileira Afro-Brazilian culture.

Cumprimento/pagamento de promessas payment of promises; a ceremony where congadeiros perform actions like walking on one's knees as an outward sign of inward prayers of petition or thanks for blessing already received.

Dançante dancer.

Dança Dramática dance drama.

Dança Sagrada sacred dance.

Demanda a spell that is sung by a soloist, usually a captain, in one congado group to negatively affect the performance of another group.

Deus te abençoe God bless you.

Divino Espírito Santo the Holy Spirit.

Dobrado one of several different kinds of rhythmic patterns used by congo groups.

Dobrado compassado one of several different kinds of rhythmic patterns used by congo groups.

Espada the sword used by captains in congo groups as a sign of their leadership.

Feitiçaria black magic.

Festa a musico-religious ritual lasting from one to several days; the most important festa for congadeiros is the annual festa commemorating the crowning of Our Lady of the Rosary. Individual congado communities celebrate the festa at different times throughout the year and invite other congado groups to help animate the sacred festivities.

Festa de Libertação annual musico-religious ritual commemorating the abolition of slavery on the thirteenth of May 1888.

Folguedo festivity.

Folk Catholicism/popular Catholicism The traditions cultivated by laypeople who venerate Mary and the saints, but who do so in a way that both aligns with and stands apart from Roman Catholic practices.

Forro freed slave.

Guiás/Chocalhos de Cesto bamboo hand shakers.

Guarda like a terno, a guarda is a musico-religious group specific to congado; group membership in a single ensemble can range from ten to two-hundred people.

Gunga/Campanha metal ankle shaker.

Igreja Matriz main parish church of a town or city.

Irmandade brotherhood; a lay religious organization historically built around people's devotion to a specific saint or organized in devotion to the Catholic Church. Although the term means brotherhood, women are prominent and active members in brotherhoods, especially those devoted to Our Lady of the Rosary.

Irmandade de Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos homens pretos brotherhood of Our Lady of the Rosary of the black people.

Jeremia/Chama the smallest of three drums in Candombe groups.

Lei Áurea literally "Golden Law"; law that abolished slavery in Brazil in 1888.

Levantamento/hasteamento de bandeira/mastro raising of the banner/sacred pole ceremony; this ritual signals both the beginning of a festa and the connection between congadeiros on earth and divinities in heaven.

Macumba a pejorative term for African-based musico-religious rituals assumed to be witchcraft.

Marcha Grave a rhythmic pattern played in a slow tempo, but characterized by a faster tempo than marcha lenta; performed in parades by congo groups.

Marcha Lenta slow march for solemn moments of rituals performed by congo groups.

Marcha Repicada one of several different kinds of rhythmic patterns used by congo groups.

Marchêta machete; an object used as an instrument in twentieth-century congado groups.

Marujo/Marujada one of seven different types of congado groups.

Matriz Africana African matrix; a concept denoting any tradition that has its origin in Africa.

Meia-lua half-moon tambourine.

Mestiçagem miscegenation.

Mestre teacher; used interchangeably with the word for captain (capitão).

Mineiro a person or object from the state of Minas Gerais.

Minas Gerais general mines.

Missa conga congo mass; the congo mass is similar to, but distinct from a Roman Catholic mass in its use of unique congado songs as well as its implementation of the ceremonial rituals.

Moçambique one of the seven different types of congado groups.

Música term that can refer to music in general as well as to a particular song.

Nação Africana African nation; used by congadeiros to refer to a tradition, place, community, or orientation that encapsulates their spiritual, cultural, and ethnic connections to Africa.

Nossa Senhora do Rosário Our Lady of the Rosary; congadeiros' principal icon of devotion is Our Lady of the Rosary.

Oralidade orality.

Pagamento/Cumprimento de Promessas payment of promises.

Pandeiro hand frame drum with metal jingles.

Pardo(a) literally grey; a general term for Brazilians who have mixed African and European ancestry.

Patangome metal hand shaker; common name for an instrument commonly made from two car hubcaps welded together with tiny black seeds inside.

Patriarca patriarch.

Pequena small drum.

Ponto Cantado sung point; a song intoned by a congadeiro(a) to defeat another congadeiro(a) perceived as a spiritual adversary.

Ponto do Terreiro spell performed in Candomblé rituals.

Porta-bandeira/Bandeireira banner bearer.

Povo a generic term for the people.

Povo afro-descendente people of African heritage.

Preto Velho/Preta Velha a spirit of an elderly black slave in both Umbanda and congado.

Primeiro Caixeiro First Drummer.

Princesa princess; the princess is a member of the congado royal court.

Procissão procession.

Puíta/Cuíca drum played by producing friction with one hand.

Quilombola refers to a runaway slave community as well as to a community whose inhabitants are descendants of Afro-Brazilians who escaped from slavery. Today, quilombola may also refer to any distinct community that takes its Afro-Brazilian heritage as a focal point of their identity.

Rainha perpétua perpetual queen; the queen is considered to be one of the most preeminent members of the congado community.

Rainha Treze de Maio the thirteenth of May queen is a title that honors the abolition of slavery.

Reco-reco sawtooth notched scraper instrument made of wood, bamboo, and/or metal that is played with a wooden stick.

Rei perpétuo perpetual king; the king is considered to be one of the most preeminent members of the congado community.

Reinado interchangeable word for congado; some congadeiros propose that reinado is a more all-encompassing term than congado because of its reference to both the musico-religious ensembles and the royal court. However, many congadeiros understand congado to describe the same sacred phenomenon and thus use reinado and congado interchangeably.

Reinado de Nossa Senhora do Rosário the Reign of Our Lady of the Rosary.

Reinado de cheganças the meeting of two groups during a procession.

Reza do terço prayers of the rosary.

Sair em Cortejo to go out in procession; refers to when congadeiros parade with the royal court as they sing, dance, drum, and play musical instruments.

Salpicar to sprinkle.

Sanfona accordion.

Santana the largest of three drums in Candombe groups.

Santaninha the second largest of three drums in Candombe groups.

Santa Efigênia Saint Iphigenia; one of the preeminent female, black Catholic saints in congado communities.

Santíssimo Sacramento brotherhood of the Holy Sacrament.

São Benedito Saint Benedict; one of the central male, black Catholic saints of congadeiros.

Senzala slave quarters.

Serra abaixo slow-paced rhythmic pattern characteristic of moçambique groups.

Serra acima fast-paced rhythmic pattern characteristic of moçambique groups.

Sessão healing and consultation ceremony in Umbanda.

Sete Irmãos seven siblings; refers to the seven different types of congado.

Sinhô a vernacular term used during slavery to refer to the master.

Soldado soldier; to express their roles as participants in congado groups, some congadeiros refer to themselves as soldiers.

Surda large drum.

Surdão large double-headed drum.

Tambor cylindrical double-headed drum.

Tamboril/Tamborim square, double-sided drum of captains used to signal their sovereignty.

Tarol snare drum.

Terno like a guarda, it is a term for congado group in particular regions of Minas Gerais.

Terreiro sacred ground of the worship house.

Tirando os Cantos to bring out the songs; this phrase refers to when a soloist initiates a song.

Treme-terra a large double-headed drum known as an earth-quake because of its dark, resonating sound.

Umbanda syncretic Brazilian religion founded in the 1920s in Rio de Janeiro as an eclectic mix of Spiritism, folk Catholicism, Afro-Brazilian religions, and Amerindian shamanism.

Umbandista practitioner of Umbanda.

Vassalo subject.

Viola a five double-coursed instrument more petite than a guitar.

Visitação religiosa religious visitation.

Visita de Coroa visit of the crown.

Vitalício steadfastness.

Vivência life experience.

Xequerê shekere; percussion instrument made of a dried gourd surrounded by beads strung together.

Zambi term referring to both God and a divinity from Central African religions.

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APPENDIX

Description of the Festa do Rosário (Embaixada of the Black People of São Gonçalo do Sapucaí—MG) 1938

Arthur Ramos Collection

I-36, 26, 2 n. 14

The festa starts on the Sunday of the Espírito Santo (Holy Spirit) and lasts three days. The “embaixada”—a kind of *auto* (medieval allegorical religious play)—is represented in the churchyard of the Church of Nossa Senhora do Rozario. The Christians (dressed in blue and white, the colors of N.S. do Rozario) and the “Turks” or “Moors,” wearing red, with their banners and tassels take part in it. The auto begins with the verses of “Náu Catarineta (16th century oral poem that’s part of oral culture.) After repeated choreographic times, in which the two bands do not mix, the “Almirante” (Admiral), in a loud voice, orders the “gageirinho” or “calafatinho” to try and see “the lands of Spain” or the sands of Portugal.

Up, Up Chiquito (diminutive of Francisco)
My gageirinho (stutterer), laugh
See if you see the land of Spain
Or the sand of Portugal...

The calafatinho scans with his binoculars the vastness...of the plaza. (The binocular is a stick that is decorated with ribbons.) Finishing up the circle, the calafatinho declares,

(Song recorded by Alice Chaves de Melo)

Look, look my captain
Look at the three maidens
Underneath the vine

The three maidens are daughters of the Admiral, to whom he offers to the calafatinho; we don’t really know why.

—One for you to marry.
—One to wash you.
—One to iron.

And it isn’t just this that the Almirante offers to his low ranking sailor.

I will give you my white horse
So that you can travel through France...
I will give you so much money
Which you won’t be able to count...

But the calafatinho is “incorruptable.” He doesn’t want anything. Moreover, there are—or it should have been prohibited in those days—the accumulations... The calafatinho denies all of it and says that he merely wants,

—Your soul
To carry with me.

Thus, the “Almirante” becomes angry:

—God gave me my soul
Only to him can I deliver it.

The coreographic movements recommence to the sound of the violas (guitars), cavaquinhos, marchêtes (machete), caixas (drums) (the surda—big drum—and the pequena—small one), réco-réco, adufo (small double-sided drum) and triangle. They reconvene in the lines and the Almirante becomes Carlos Magno with his twelve pairs, in Spain, occupied by the infidel. One hears the challenge of Ferrabraz in the twelve pairs. Scared, they don’t accept Gúi de Borgonha, Galalão and the rest. Only Rodão agrees to fight and triumphs over the “Turk” in a singular battle and takes the prisoner. Balão, the father of Ferrabraz, sends his ambassadors to “Carlos Magano” for the liberation of his son. The ambassador goes, the ambassador comes, the time moves forward and Ferrabraz falls in love with Floripes and passes arms and baggages to the hosts of Carlos Magano. This is equivalent to a declaration of war. There is a mutual challenge. The dancers take out their handkerchiefs and shake them in the noses of their adversaries.

(Song recorded by Alice Chaves de Melo)

—I am not afraid any more
Of your threat...
Come soldier,
Como soldier,
Pick up your arms,
Let’s go make war.

The combat hurts, it’s long and interminable, long like any other battle of the Spanish revolution. Finally, the Christians defeat the Moors. The red dancers circle around the square, by the arm of the victor, of the blue band. They intone the song of defeat.

(Song recorded by Alice Chaves de Melo)

—When this notice arrives...á...á...
What passion,
What passion,
How much pain there will not be...á...á

The victory of the blue people is customarily well received in the moment such that they give “Vivas” to Nossa Senhora do Rozario. Fireworks. The chiming of bells. Finally, the losers accept baptism and they all dance, mixed now, in praise of the “Senhora do Rozario”.

—After this, there is nothing more to do than for everyone to go to the house of the Rei (King), the house of the Rainha (Queen) and of the “Senhoras Juizas” (Judges), where there are an abundance of sweets. Everyone eats and everyone drinks in the greatest peace. In São Gonçalo do Sapucaí, during these days, about ten thousand people gather. And there is no sign of any minimal alteration of order.