

Mobility regimes and the principle of movement: The case of American Gitanos in Argentina

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Abstract

This text aims to contribute to Romani studies by exploring the practices and strategies of American Gitano migrants in Argentina who have circulated in local, regional, national, and transnational spaces. Ethnohistory and social memory allow us to trace the origin of the dynamics that opened new horizons for the Gitanos in their transatlantic migration and circulation in American territory. The current principles of circulation in America express the very life of the Gitanos, their love of their time, and their space, which is connected with the construction of their sense of self and the establishment of the Gitano presence in the world. This shows, on the one hand, how this migration to Argentina created an open space for social inclusion and modernization and, on the other, how mobility regimes, past and present, are intertwined with family and economic reproduction as key dimensions of the Gitano historical and anthropological system.

KEYWORDS: Gitanos, Argentina, mobility, circulation, identity

Introduction

The ethnographic research contained in this text aims to put into perspective elements of other important works that appear mainly focused on Gitano groups (Calós),¹ who live very difficult lives in situations of poverty and discrimination, in order to enrich the field of Romani Studies with new dimensions of the relationship between ethnicity and

¹ When I use the term *Calós* or *Gitanos*, it refers to the Gitanos of Spanish origin. *Roma* covers the diversity of groups in Argentina and America, such as the Rom, the Ludar, or the Gitanos. I also use *Gadjé* in this text which corresponds, in the Romani language, to the non-Roma. *Payo* is the term that the Calós use to refer to non-Gitanos. When the Calós use the adjective *American* as self-identification, they refer to America as a continent.

social class. The ethnography I have developed mainly in Mexico and Argentina among Gitano groups, self-described as American Calós or American Gitanos, thus places the lens on the middle class. Moreover, it encourages the reader to consider the possibilities of Roma groups and families who left Spain following the end of the 1950s for the Americas, taking advantage of their skills and activities in search of opportunities.

My research attempts to provide empirical material that addresses the challenge of anthropological research on the problem of how a transnational mode of existence was forged in the context of transatlantic circulation among the American Calós since their settlement in America. This proposal extends to the problem of the articulation between political and historical conjunctures and Roma anthropological systems. This articulation has generated internally diverse creations of Roma groups: regimes of circulation, kinship systems, economic strategies, oppositions between us/them, and externally: political identification, systems of representation and mental categorization, administrative control, and surveillance. This is why any coherent representation of the Roma world cannot overlook the anthropological fluidity of Roma systems but should integrate this dimension into the history of nation-states.

An interesting starting point in the critical tradition is Paul Gilroy's (1993) idea of transatlantic culture. Gilroy refers to a diasporic Black Atlantic culture, which is not African, British, American, or Caribbean, but a mixture of all of them that transcends ethnicity and nationality (see Kóczé & van Baar, 2020, p. 28, on Gilroy and Romani studies). In this sense, Gitano America is revealed in the historical process of the Gitano and Romani diaspora, through which Gitano culture is reproduced creatively and in a permanent reformulation of time and space. Silverman (2012), in relation to the Roma, considers the diaspora a special kind of migration that involves some kind(s) of homeland(s) but not necessarily fixed ones.

The 2010 International Conference discussed the continuities and historicities of Roma mobilities and their complexity, including the relationship between inter-European and transatlantic Roma mobilities. For instance, Acton proposes differentiating between migration and nomadism, which he defines as the "recurrent exploitation of spatially and temporally discontinuous economic opportunities" (2010, p. 6), while the concept of mobility designates the willingness of some Roma to move from one place to another according to their own identity and culture (Farget, 2010). Guet (2010), meanwhile, argues that Roma mobility, displacement or migration should not be confused with Roma *nomadism*: nomadism, seen as an inherent part of Roma culture that was caused by the historical social exclusion and expulsion of Roma by the majority society but can also be

recognized as a pattern of ethnic identity, a way of life and a collective state of mind, following Liégeois (2007).

The presence of the Gitanos in Argentina is recreated through the social memory of members of the Buenos Aires community. We are only just learning about the movements of Gitanos to Argentina, why they moved, what representations they retain of places, and what exists of these people (and in what form) in the present. On the latter, it is important to underline how the identity as Gitano manifests itself in the present reality in transnational spaces and practices of place; in particular, how kinship ties—the basis of social organization—are not eroded but help social reproduction in transnational social spaces.

Among the Gitanos, a moral community based on family, kinship, and ethnic community, as well as loyalty to the homeland of origin, are articulated by the notion of a distinctive cosmopolitanism stimulated, in turn, by the context of a cosmopolitan city such as Buenos Aires and, by extension, their presence in the Americas as a territory of new frontiers. This idea recapitulates claims about the so-called era of new cosmopolitanisms arising from social mobilities in Western societies: new groups—from here and there—construct their cultural and social identity through transnational circulatory territories (Tarrus, 2000).

Transatlantic and intra-American mobilities have fueled imaginaries about migration and mobility that underlie the national construction of identities and, specifically, about Roma—like other Roma groups—as non-native and itinerant. These have been employed to justify their “lack of integration” (Mapril & Brazzabenni, 2008) in a way that creates a collective definition based on social behavior that is perceived by the rest of society as essentially nomadic: “nomadism becomes a metaphor for colonial struggles” (Noyes, 2000, p. 49) but also a legacy as a conceptualization of subjectivity within a critique of the conceptual apparatus of colonialism and the new imperialism (Noyes, 2004).

These arguments, in the case of the Calós, do not by themselves explain the complexity of implantation in America only by the fact that the racialization of migration (see Erel et al., 2016) means that the desirability of a migrant group or individual is directly related to the place these migrants occupy in a web of power relations, which necessarily includes colonial and late imperial hierarchies. Processes of the ethno-racial recognition of Roma in Latin America and the Caribbean reflect forms of ethnic recognition that differ from European and US models (Fotta & Sabino-Salazar, 2023). Historically, government authorities in countries such as the United States, Mexico, Colombia, and Argentina have had their own racialized concepts of who can and cannot enter the country and

who can live on their territories. This has led to the genocide and expulsion to the margins of indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples.

The systems of representation of Roma in America, including cultural and racial stereotypes, are exclusionary (see Domínguez, 2023, for the case of Argentina). In the context of racialization in Mexican society, some ethnic groups receive favorable or discriminatory treatment according to the racial category attributed to them by society. Indigenous people, *güeros*—blond or white-skinned people in Mexico—or white Mexicans, Europeans, Americans, Central Americans, Gitanos or Roma, and Afro-descendants, and similar, are equally racialized. However, the difference is that the social consequences are not the same for all. It is not only the color of the skin but also factors such as the migrant's country of origin, way of speaking, or physical features. In the case of Argentina, the strong presence of Spanish and Italian descendants in the construction of the national identity, the migration of Bolivians, Paraguayans, and, more recently, Venezuelans and Colombians, as well as the scarce presence of native populations, have shaped a country that thinks of itself as European.

For this reason, it should not be overlooked that the presence of the Calós is inseparable from their acceptability in the visual regime in each of the countries of the American continent, which has been created through the compromise between internal cultural and economic reproduction and the outside, the way of presenting oneself to the outside world. Their moral acceptability as “Spanish” in Argentina and other Latin American countries is the consequence of how the Calós strategically play with how they present themselves to the outside in the context of societies that include racialized groups; in other words, the articulation between an anthropological and historical reality and a system of representations, an image, and a function. In the case of Buenos Aires, while in everyday life and economic activities, they present themselves as Spaniards, in artistic performances related to the art of flamenco in *tablaos*, clubs, bars, or private parties, they present themselves as Gitanos, thus accentuating their prestige as repositories of an ancestral, racial, living and unique art. The acceptability awarded to them by the visual regime is combined with another organized visual regime, that of the migratory and identity documents of the state where the Calós live. The social status of the American Calós has been linked to the existing political regime in each country but also to the activities developed by the group itself in its social, political, and economic interaction with its surroundings that make it possible to maintain its autonomy, constructing a middle-class status, predominantly at the lower-middle level, as well as in the petty-bourgeois.

Palerm's (1997) contribution is also a point of inspiration in terms of his proposal to synthesize the past, the present, and the future into a single perspective. That is, understanding and explaining the past as much as the present through the discovery of regularities, trends, and general laws, as well as understanding and explaining the phenomena and processes that are shaping the future. Understanding broad historical trends and their uneven developments in the different concrete localities where they operate as processes is itself an ethnographic program and challenge. Furthermore, along the lines of Wolf (1987), and perhaps more emphatically, the critique of the separation of the social, especially the construction of mutual understandings of social consensus and their conditions and also social imaginaries as separate from the critical tradition of political economy: in other words, the impossible separation of the social from all its political, economic, and ideological dimensions.

The practices, strategies, and representations of migrants circulating in local, regional, national, and transnational spaces combine social, economic, and political factors and dynamics, and these dynamics open new horizons for Calós migrants in their transatlantic migration and circulation in the American territory. This involves the context of the action and social practice of each subject, the intertwining with their biographies, and the migratory project as such.

This perspective justifies the fact that, in the second part of the text, I emphasize the analysis of the mobilities and the logic of circulation in the present, taking the Caló community living in Buenos Aires as a unit of observation but taking into account the historical sediment that expresses the sense of belonging to a community. On the one hand, I have carried out participant observation through conversations in the square, the street, cafés, homes, and restaurants where the Calós can come together, including meeting parents and grandparents. By doing this, I could learn their traditions and see how the young people continue to value the former in such a way that what their ancestors have contributed is considered the most important thing in life. On the other hand, I have accompanied them on their journeys and movements while street vending in the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires, and I have followed up on more distant journeys through social media networks, such as WhatsApp (in particular, individual statuses).

This has been a mobile methodology that has mimicked its object of study, not only accompanying movements in the neighborhood or within the country but also following families in their transnational migratory trajectory when they returned to see their families in locations in Spain. The reader will immediately think of Marcus' multisite ethnographies (Marcus, 1998). It is worth remembering that this idea was already present in

Wallerstein's (1979) concept of the world system and Eric Wolf's (1987) global and historical analysis of the set of interconnected processes. However, it is not a matter of uncritically applying the idea that people live in a plurality of places but of analyzing the connections and processes that develop in contexts of local, regional, national, and international mobility, as well as their effects on the construction of culture. I have taken into account the processes that connect people and histories, conflicts, and cultural meanings between places, emphasizing, sometimes more and sometimes less, the modes of construction of this multi-situated methodology.

The logic of circulation

Manolito is a character, a friend of Mafalda—Quino's caricature. Manolito is the son of Manolo, "the storekeeper," and wants to progress because he comes from a working culture of immigration. This aspiration to work is the metaphor of Quino, himself the son of Andalusians: to get ahead through work. This was also the dream of the first Calós, who arrived in 1957 by boat from Spain to Brazil and, after a few months of working in the country selling textiles, disembarked in Buenos Aires (see Lagunas, 2023 for a general introduction to Caló migration). The Calós migration was part of the great flood of low-skilled, illiterate Spaniards to Argentina, whose future was to "make the Americas" by settling in urban areas and integrating into the service economy. Brazil, Venezuela, Argentina, Mexico, Uruguay, Paraguay, Peru, Colombia, and the United States have a history of circulation and implantation of the Calós, who, over the years, have built themselves up as a new middle class through dynamic processes of distinction (Bourdieu, 1988) and the recognition of excellence in terms of prestige.

What emerges from the Calós' accounts of the period of migration to America in the 1950s is that Argentina was the most important focus of implantation with a strong legacy of Spanish culture. This is explained by a combination of several factors: political repression, the socioeconomic situation, global migration flows, and transport and communication technologies, as well as factors internal to the Calós' social organization. Underlying the dynamics of social, economic, and political insertion in the American continent is the issue of cultural creativity, which can emerge through imaginative mechanisms focused on processes of ethnogenesis that give rise to new cultural realities. For the Calós, authenticity resides in the roots of culture, but the Calós also construct their idea of themselves by adapting to the contexts of modernity. They have maintained the spirit of togetherness in the community without disconnecting themselves from the cultural dimensions of modernity. Hage (2021) refers to the diasporic condition of cer-

tain communities that continue cultivating social, political, and political ties regardless of distance, shaping themselves as a collectivity through memories of migration, politics regarding ancestors, and movement.

The Calós recall that from the late 1950s onwards, they sold tailored suits, bedspreads, sheets, and table linen. These products were sold in batches, a way of offering larger amounts of the different or same type of products to stimulate the customer's interest and obtain more profit than selling products individually. The expression "throwing away the lot and throwing away the sale" is still used today to describe the act of offering lots to the customer—this has historical depth in relation to the processes of the Calós work culture. The sale of fabrics was expanded until the late 1990s and, for a time, coexisted with the buying and selling of gold, jewelry, and antiques but was later replaced by the sale of cosmetics. The buying and selling antique watches and clocks has also developed considerably over the last twenty years. The fact that the types of products offered for sale have varied over time is part of strategies for slowing the decline of mobile economic activities through "cultural adaptation to progressive mutations in regional economies that enable new entrepreneurial opportunities" (Nemeth, 1995, p. 240).

Being a good salesperson is expected of men and women and condenses several cultural meanings. In the case of men, it is associated with the idea of luck, fortune (having "a star"), the pride of gypsyism, manliness, and prestige, and with a kind of cultural attribute (a gift) that makes them superior to the Payo. Also, they seem to be non-systematic in their selection of one travel route or another, as indicated when they refer to the importance of "*la bajín, la suerte*. It's a question of luck. You get to one place, and you can't stop selling. And you get to another, and you don't sell." Luck not only gives meaning to the uncertainty associated with success or failure in street vending but also justifies more clearly the exceptional situations of bigger profits. The opposite of luck is *tener la negra*, meaning bad luck in business activities. This intuition and magical quality are expressed as a symbolic device, both tacit knowledge (Sperber, 1988) and non-verbalized implicit knowledge (Bloch, 2012).

The structure of the movements on the territory involves various specializations at the level of commercial strategies and the use of various tactics for the occupation of space. Goods are offered at home in houses, public buildings, hotels, and businesses in general, both in cities and towns. Today, the mobility practices of the Calós demonstrate evolution and diverse patterns. Movement is based on a system that combines long-range circular mobility with shorter-range movements between different eco-social niches. The Calós organize themselves on the basis of a principle of circulation that constitutes the

knowledge capital of mobility. The experience, the skills of each individual, the personal and family project, and the social position within the majority society play a relevant role in their movement through the American territory for the purpose of buying and selling goods. Analysis of movement and circulation within and between countries suggests it is logical, capitalist, and modern at the same time, but it is also very Gitano.

Figure 1 shows the main geographical circle of economic activities. This area, which includes central and northern Argentina and Uruguay, is the main focus of movement. These displacements include two types of buying and selling: the sale of personal items and the purchase of antique watches. The arrows indicate the vector of displacement extending from this area of exploitation, as well as more distant and sporadic displacements.

Figure 1
Circle and vectors of economic activities



A few sellers go to Brazil to sell items for personal use, but in Santiago de Chile, Asunción de Paraguay, Lima, and La Paz, the trip is usually made to buy watches. The directional vector towards Mexico indicates very occasional trips to sell jackets, personal

items, and watches. The south of the country is exploited more sporadically in search of watches. Long-distance trips within Argentina can combine the purchase of a watch and the sale of personal items, which can be made by car, bus, or plane, depending on the destination.

The most powerful and comfortable cars are used to travel in the country's interior, while more utilitarian cars are used for the metropolitan area. Air travel is also used when required for medium and long-distance destinations within the country. Piasere (1991) pointed out that the use of more powerful means of transport among a local Roma group in Italy allowed for greater distance and favored greater dispersion in the territory. Also, the possibility of dispersing across the country's vast territory makes it easier to avoid potentially dangerous situations with the police.

A constant modality is a way of presenting oneself to the potential customer. Sellers present themselves to their customers as "Spanish" traders. Historically, government authorities in countries such as the United States, Mexico, Colombia, or Argentina have had their own racialized concepts of who can and cannot enter the country and who can live on their territory. This has included the genocide and expulsion to the margins of indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples. The image of the Spanish Gitanos in the Americas is not as positive as that of the Roma in Colombia (Gamboa, 2000; Paternina, 2013).

The fact that the Calós may live more successfully in one country or another does not automatically mean that some countries are more inclusive than others, as this statement must be situated in different historical contexts. In everyday social life, Gitanos are looked down upon by Mexicans, Argentinians, and Colombians. However, as artists in flamenco *tablaos* in Mexico City, Buenos Aires, or Caracas, Gitanos enjoy a very high social prestige and are admired by segments of society, including the middle class and intellectuals. The key element is that the Calós present themselves to their potential customers as Spaniards. In this respect, customers have expectations: they treat them as they feel they should be treated on the basis of how they should treat a Spanish person, not a Guatemalan, Colombian, or North American. In short, the aim is to create a situation of trust in the conversation whose objective is to get people to give credit to the salesperson. In other words, to create a sense of security and use this trust to one's advantage. In this face-to-face interaction, whether there is a close (regular customers) or sporadic relationship, the customer may be unaware that he or she is the object of a power relationship in which symbolic communication is employed. Words and dis-

course are used to veil intentions and create a particular psychological and emotional state that induces the latter to do something: to buy goods.

Among the Calós, pendular, cyclical, and seasonal movements are observed, resisting the mobility control of states, corresponding in Missaoui's (1999) terminology to nomadism—regular movements and a circular knowledge of non-random paths. In any case, it is not common to undertake trips alone without being informed and connected to others. So, it is very rare among the Calós to see a lone wolf.

At present, among the Gitanos of Buenos Aires, economic activities are segmented by gender, with watchmaking being a male activity, as well as the purchase of jewelry and antiques, although with some exceptions in the case of the Calós. In terms of age structure, watchmaking has gained significant momentum in the last decade due to the young men who have learned the skills and use social networks and digital information for their activities. The first generation of watch buyers is now retiring, and their methods, based on a network of contacts, have started to decline in favor of the immediacy of the new generation's use of technology.

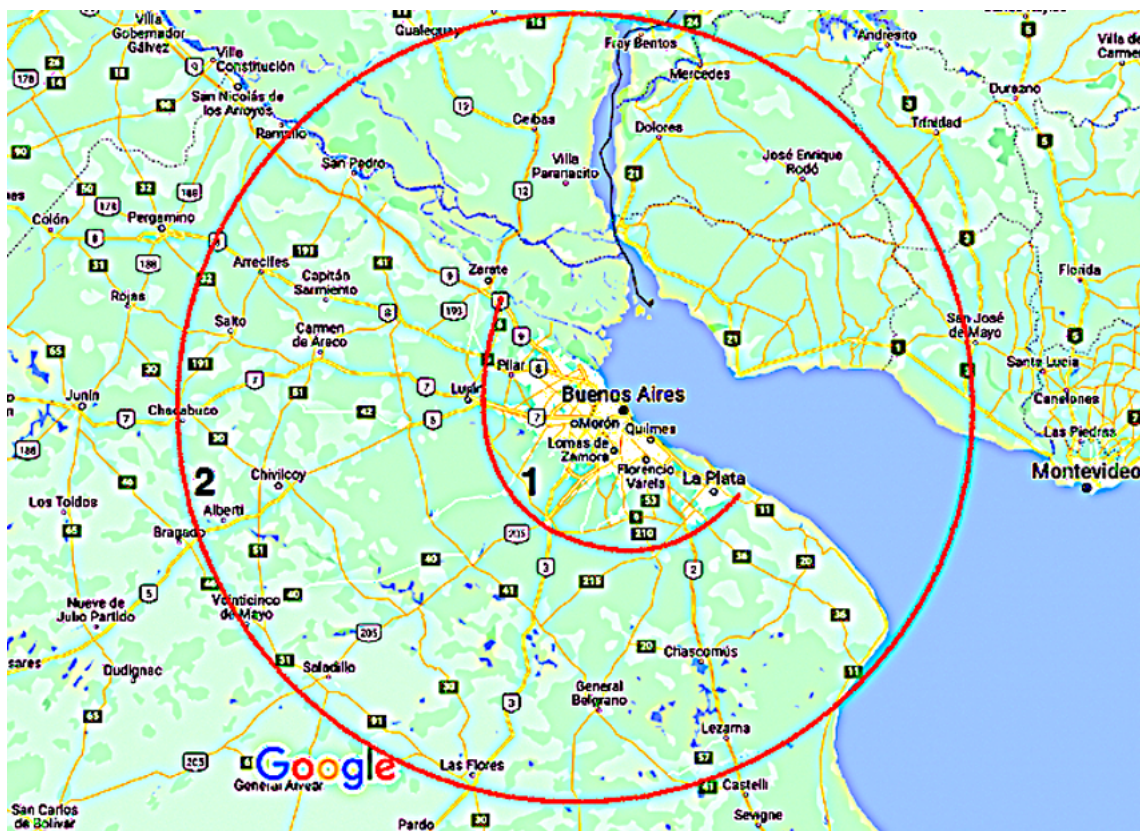
Age, in the case of the Calós, is a factor to be taken into account as it conditions the type of sale. Young Calós can take trains and buses to reach their points of sale in different locations in the conurbation and the province, while middle-aged or older Calós can hire the services of a driver with a vehicle or travel shorter distances by bus or on foot. Skills in action are more diversified. Some Calós specialize in selling in hospitals, sanatoriums, or police stations, while others work in kiosks, shoe shops, cafés, or other commercial establishments.

The circulatory territory of the Calós has Buenos Aires as its center, a base locality with an aggregate centripetal attraction so that the territorial space is structured around a core area (Piasere, 1996, p. 141). This core area partially coincides with the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires, which includes medium-sized municipalities as well as small towns and districts of the conurbation. It also extends beyond the limits of the Buenos Aires conurbation.

The area of the territory captured in the smaller circle (Figure 2), with a radius of approximately 60 kilometers, is close enough to permit the sale of items for personal use and returning to Buenos Aires on the same day (Lagunas, 2017). This core area marks a relative limit. The saleswomen who operate in the cities of the conurbation of Buenos Aires and the province of Buenos Aires usually work in groups of two to four people, although vendors may work individually. When the work groups formed by the Calí

saleswomen cross this boundary into the wider area 2, they tend to remain in towns for short periods and overnight stays, usually three to seven days, staying in hotels or flats and distributing the accommodation costs equally among the members of the work-group. For more distant trips to the interior of the country or Uruguay, these overnight stays can last from one week to ten days in the case of work groups composed only of Calís or from one to two months if the group is made up of one or more family units with the presence of both men and women. A niche is exploited (a village, a region, a town) until it is perceived to be exhausted, so the length of stay varies.

Figure 2
Areas 1 and 2



The fact that Calí women play a very important role in economic activities and in sustaining the family unit indicates that women have been actors in history and are not passive subjects. They are seen as people with much room for maneuvering in the economic, political, and family senses. The fact that they go out to sell and take part in different activities reflects their desire to break out of physical isolation and economic immobility and subvert their reproductive roles. This expresses the link between gender and mobility, as well as the psychological and physical barriers to mobility. Women are productive agents and are more connected to mobility regimes (Glick-Schiller & Salazar,

2013) in areas where men are more immobile. "Roma women in America are freer and live more freely than in Spain."

The fact is that women are considered to be better at selling and are able to penetrate the "Payos spaces" that are more difficult for men to access. Calís make decisions about the routes they will take for making sales, the type of products they offer, and the profile of potential customers. While earnings from buying and selling an antique watch are occasional, the women's hawking involves a daily, weekly rhythm with Sunday and public holidays as days off. Their work ensures that they cover the minimum expenses of a family unit: the payment of household energy bills, food, clothing, and similar. The household depends on money from such sales, while earnings from the sale of watches are more sporadic and irregular. The irregularity of sales is offset by the confidence that comes from unexpectedly making a big sale of a watch, the profits of which may represent many days' or even months' worth of work by the Calís.

Both with the sale of cosmetics and watches, the concept of luck, *bajín*, has to do with the idea that a sale cannot be controlled or assured. Moreover, it is connected with serendipity, the idea that a sale can happen at any time and place: "Sometimes, the sale is crazy." This mental schema is not rigid but allows for the representation of the environment and guides behavior associated with discovery and unexpected findings. Selling cosmetics is a safer, more reliable process than buying and selling a watch. A Calí woman can go out to sell her goods anywhere in the country and return with the sale made without too much difficulty. However, the economic crisis in Argentina has impacted the work of the Calís, which is increasingly marginal economically. It is now work done in worse circumstances but where it is still possible to sell. In Buenos Aires, there are not many possibilities to accumulate capital. As the saying goes, Buenos Aires is *achicharrado*, meaning that the novelty factor is no longer an advantage in terms of sales, as other Calís have been in the same area before. As a result, the Calís have to travel further away from the center of Buenos Aires to sell, but of possible localities, selling in the urban centers is already well established, as other Calís have been there. More and more saleswomen go to the "tips" of the towns, where it is less likely that other Calís, usually young women, have been there to sell. This is also due to the fact that they are looking for less exploited territories ("to be where the money is, not the competition"). This increased industriousness is marginally advantageous in terms of productivity since it requires more effort, more hours of work during the working day, and more sacrifices to make savings. At this juncture, the Calís demonstrate great intelligence and resilience in dealing with a new and difficult economic and social situation. Calí saleswomen are highly skilled at

selling to educated people such as doctors, lawyers, judges, and teachers. The Calós are able to open new market niches, which shows the importance of individual and collective versatility, freedom of movement, time management, and effort in relation to the kind of independent activities associated with an immediate cost-effect impact, which generate large profits (Reyniers, 1998, p. 9). An important dimension is the consideration of where it is convenient to go to sell and where it is potentially unproductive. As mentioned, when an area or place in the city is “scorched”, this means that it has already been exploited, and therefore there is no need to return. This does not mean that the Calós do not return to the same sites to sell. Gmelch and Gmelch (1987) and Piasere (1995), based on Lauwagie’s cultural ecology, point out that Roma act as “r-strategists”, discovering ephemeral resources and quickly expanding to exploit them, only to disperse and exploit new ones.

Buenos Aires, the suburbs and the province, the rest of the country, also Uruguay, and to a lesser extent Mexico and Brazil, as well as Chile, Paraguay, and Peru, are currently the territories of resource exploitation: the sale of items for personal use, which is mainly a female activity, and the purchase of antique watches, exclusively male, with some occasional exceptions. Potential clients may also be tourists (Figure 3), such as in Bariloche or San Martín de los Andes, towns near the beach in the southern regional area such as Bahía Blanca, or even in Punta del Este in Uruguay.

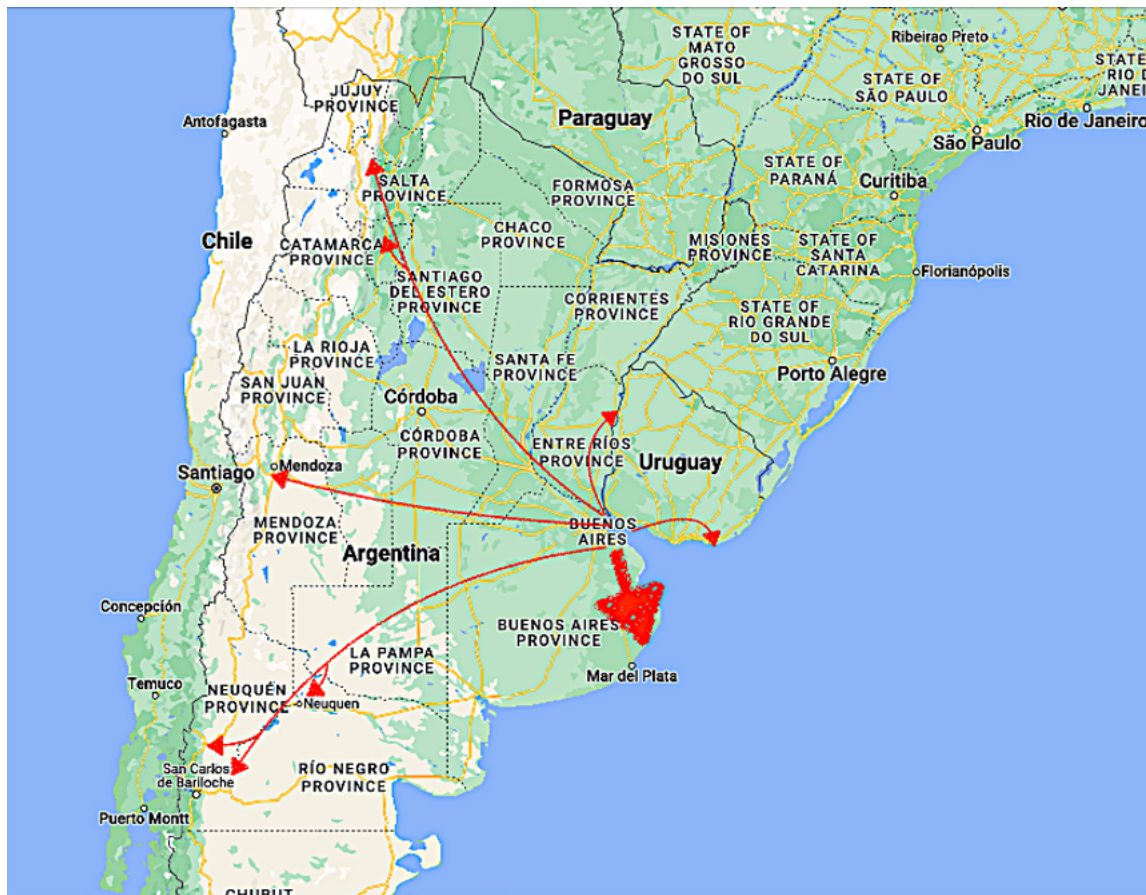
Another mobility regime that has not been studied much is tourist practices. It is interesting to note that in the main holiday destination, the waterfront around Mar del Plata, the mixed-use of time as working time and time for recreation generates comments. That is to say, criticism and social control because of “what people will say” are accentuated when several families go to work selling goods in the mornings in the towns around the base territory and spending the money earned in the afternoons on family outings having a snack, dinner with the family, or even for the young people to go out for drinks. One of my interlocutors said: “I am criticized if I say that there are some who go to Mar Azul, work in the morning, and do not save.”

Some boast that they do not need to work in the mornings to pay for their holidays, and this distinguishes them from others. Others employ an intermediate system such as bringing a *paya* caregiver from Buenos Aires to look after the young children in the morning so the parents can go out to sell. Having a maid is also a sign of socioeconomic status.

The commercial and geographical strategy employed in these coastal destinations is establishing a base territory where one does not sell merchandise but acts exclusively as a

tourist, consuming goods and services. However, the villages around this base territory are exploited with short trips of a maximum distance of approximately 60 km to return at midday or in the evening with the proceeds of the sale.

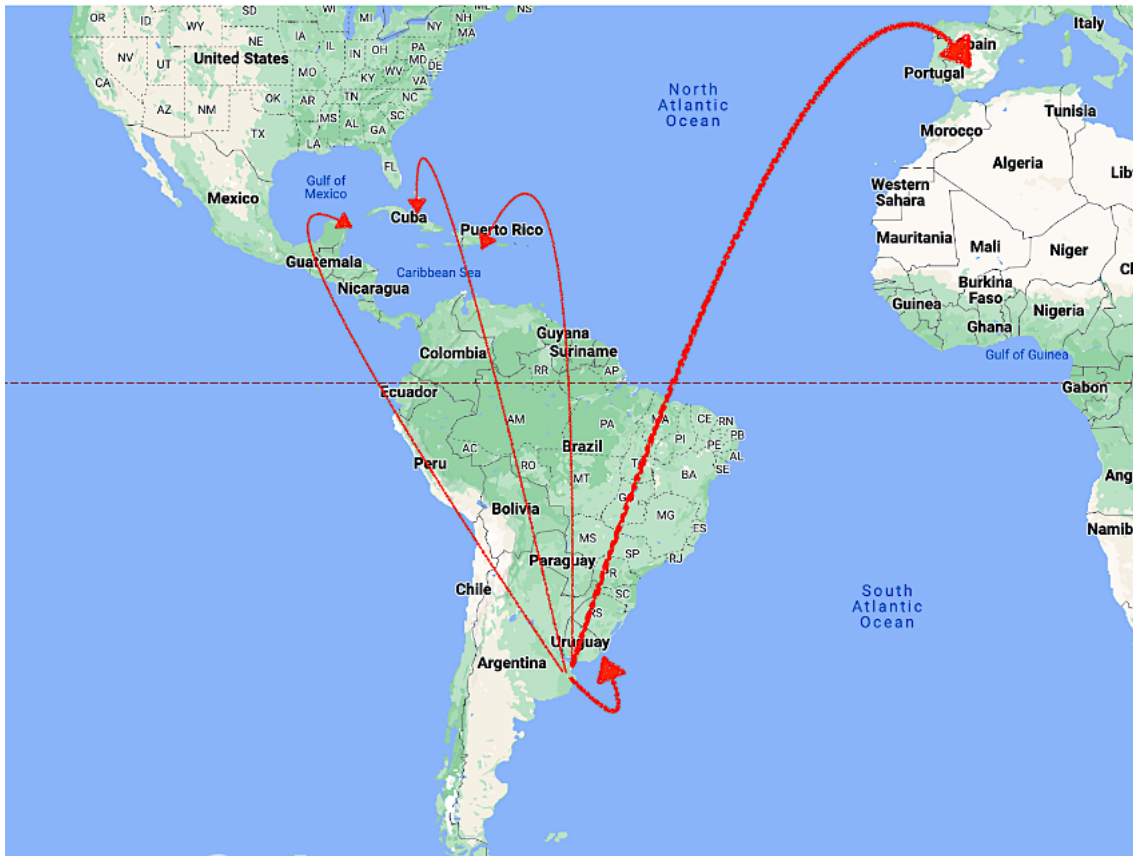
Figure 3
Tourist mobility



The inclusion of tourist mobilities, on the one hand, underlines the distinctive character of the Calós as an aspirational middle class, and on the other hand, it is a dimension common to the middle class of the majority society but has its own cultural connotations. This social practice of tourist mobility implies making this type of stay in unison in the company of other Calós families. Tourism also has a collective dimension, as families meet up repeatedly at the usual tourist destination, Mar Azul, where they organize various groups that share their time at the beach and family leisure spots and go out for dinner or a drink together.

Figure 4 shows international tourist destinations. Spain and Uruguay account for the bulk of these. Cancun, the Dominican Republic, and Cuba are more specific destinations available only to the wealthiest families.

Figure 4
International tourist mobility



In contrast, tourism is an element of social distinction. Those who can afford a holiday in Mar Azul distinguish themselves from those who cannot, thus indicating their position in terms of social prestige and symbolic capital. However, some individuals and nuclear families have an above-average economic level, which enables them to go on holiday throughout the year to other more expensive destinations such as Punta del Este in Uruguay, Cancun, or Spain. This greater economic capacity is a sign of distinction that generates strong envy and, above all, social criticism if it is associated with posturing: "We call those who boast of spending their money on cars or trips 'the fantastic ones'."

The distinction is not only reproduced at the intra-group level but also at the inter-group level. It is well-known that a large contingent of Argentine Calós families living in the Buenos Aires suburbs flock every summer to the beaches of Mar Azul and meet the Calós from Congreso Square in the bars, restaurants, recreational halls, or on the beaches where they live together. However, among the Calós, the presence of these lower-class Argentine families in the same place leads to rejection of the Calós' presence:

We are not talking about money. They may have more money, but in class, they don't beat us. A monkey in silk is still a monkey in silk. They have zero class,

even if they drive around in Audis. In Mar Azul, they get kicked out of places. They go with their shoes and polka-dot shirts in their Audi. They are very ugly and are from villages. There are only three pretty girls; the rest have hair in their armpits and legs like *cumbias*. We beat them in beauty and class.

In the last five years, marked demographic decline has resulted in a shortage of young, marriageable Calís. This has led not only to an opening up to alliances with young Argentinean Calís but also to an intensification of transatlantic mobility in search of spouses in Spain, especially for young men. This is why I have used the term *migratory* in a nominal way, as it strongly connotes its classic meaning (as if migration were only for economic reasons). However, finding a spouse in Spain is difficult. Calís women residing in Spain do not readily accept moving to Argentina and demand that any agreements require that the young Calós remain in Spain. Increasingly, young Calós who have not found spouses travel to Spain to meet Calís and try to return to Buenos Aires with a good marriage, which generates tensions and power struggles.

Conclusion

The American Calós imagine themselves as cosmopolitans, travelers, and “international” people, as they like to point out because their frames of cultural affiliation and belonging are much broader. This contrasts with the homogeneity of any nation-state, as the Calós and other groups of humans generally establish arbitrary continuums in relation to space in a territory, as shown in the vast literature on the transnational, particularly the Roma world (Piasere, 2011). For the Calós, this is no exception given that, perhaps more demonstrably in their history, they have experienced more areas of contact than essences through interrelationships that have constructed fluid and mobile types of a “We”. This is why frontier cultures such as the American Calós have been so rich and historically had more options: because of their high level of mobility in the American territory.

The American Calós are characterized by a refined culture of circulation that they have practiced on the American continent. At the end of the 1950s, they were attracted to settle permanently in Argentina and subsequently in Venezuela, Brazil, Bolivia, and Mexico. The cultural capital of the American Calós, their enormous mobility capital as a resource, their technical and emotional competence, and the preparation and intelligence they have demonstrated in their relationship with their clients were key dimensions in their emergence as a commercial elite. Likewise, the possibilities for diversifying sales of

merchandise, the types of exchange, and the structure of the local, regional, and national street vending market defined the conditions for success or failure.

Asséo (2008) identifies a principle of circulation among European Roma. The American Calós are also agents of history and reproduce this principle of circulation in the context of American countries. Rather than nomadism, we should speak of movements of a cyclical and non-regular manner. There is a strong rootedness with specific places that are repeatedly visited, such as Uruguay, and in situations of economic crisis, in Argentina, due to the high level of income in this country, including the rich cities to the north and south, as well as tourist sites. Street vending sites are temporarily occupied by individuals and families. Other individuals or families may pass through them. There is a competitive coming and going between space and seasonality. The destination chosen for selling is not always fixed and repetitive; the routes change according to strategies and political, social, and economic conjunctures. In this movement, the group's identity is to be found: social rhythmicity.

The Calós are constantly on the move, and this movement is based on the conditions of the place. This idea of territorial possession is based on constant mobility and a culture of freedom at local, regional, and transnational levels. This is the lived identity of this group. The principle of circulation organizes the way of moving around the country, which is another way of possessing territory: circulatory territory. This implies a dialectic between certain degrees of sedentariness and nomadism, but there is always mobility. Like transnational migration, on the global scale, the Calós delineate very complex cartographies related to time and space. The situation is one of constant and uninterrupted flows, a continuum of movement of people, with mechanisms of entry and exit, temporary or definitive return, and the mechanisms of group reproduction. There is constant movement in the metropolitan, regional, and national space. Movement for street vending takes place throughout the year with moments of expansion, for example, in summer or at the end of the year.

The position from which to approach these situations according to the principle of circulation is recognizing their sequent mobility and continuity, avoiding referring to the category *nomad*, which is nothing more than implying an organicism that is almost genetic in nature—that is to say, suggesting that the Calós cannot change their lives. A constant element of Calós' mobility is that free movement is always organized. The high mobility that the Calós demonstrate throughout the American territory, as well as transoceanic mobility, is not the exception but the rule. Mobility on the territory suggests the need to redefine the circulation of the Calós, who are rooted in the territory in which they circu-

late freely. This fine and multiple territorialization of the Calós is an element that has been built up over the previous four decades, not only involving a rootedness and a lived identity but a whole anthropological and historical system that constitutes a totality, interweaving cultural reproduction with economic insertion, which is consubstantial with history and global society.

In relation to transnational circulation, the temporal dimension is fundamental in these migratory processes. Transnational circulation is also a utopian fact, a mythical ideal since it is imagined that there are multiple facilities for working and living in the Americas, and expectations are generated. Movements closer to the conurbation of Buenos Aires and the province are the most frequent, combined with those throughout the country and bordering countries, especially Uruguay.

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Povzetek

Besedilo naj bi prispevalo k romskim študijam z raziskovanjem navad in strategij ameriških romskih (Gitano) migrantov v Argentini, ki se gibljejo v lokalnih, regionalnih, nacionalnih in transnacionalnih prostorih. S pomočjo etnozgodovine in družbenega spomina lahko sledimo dinamiki, ki je Romom (Gitanos) odprla nova obzorja v njihovem čezatlantskem preseljevanju in kroženju po ameriškem ozemlju. Trenutna načela kroženja v Ameriki prikazujejo pristno življenje Romov, ljubezen do njihovega časa in prostora, kar je povezano z oblikovanjem občutka lastnega jaza in vzpostavljanjem navzočnosti Romov v svetu. To na eni strani kaže, kako je njihova migracija v Argentino ustvarila odprt prostor za družbeno vključevanje in modernizacijo, na drugi pa, kako so pretekli in sedanji režimi mobilnosti prepleteni z družinsko in ekonomsko reprodukcijo kot ključnima razsežnostima zgodovinskega in antropološkega sistema Romov.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: Gitano, Argentina, mobilnost, kroženje, identiteta

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