



## ARTIGOS/ARTICLES

## “Party as perspective” between Calon in Mamanguape, Paraíba (Brazil): abundance and ostentation in Gypsies transforming borders

*“Festa como perspectiva” entre os Calon em Mamanguape, Paraíba (Brasil): abundância e ostentação nas fronteiras dos ciganos*

*“Fiesta como perspectiva” entre los Calon en Mamanguape, Paraíba (Brasil): abundancia y ostentación en las fronteras de los gitanos*

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**Abstract:** In describing the parties observed, namely, 1) calendar parties, for example, Children’s Day, Christmas and New Year’s parties, and 2) rites of passage, for example, wedding and children’s birthdays; during fieldwork between the Calons (Gypsy people) in Mamanguape on the north coast of Paraíba, Brazil, during the years 2013 and 2014, we propose that the celebrations are privileged moments for the realization and updating of making Calon through dialogical opposition relations to the juron (non-gypsies). These are the parties that perform abundance and ostentation as practices and scarcity as a speech, especially in the presence of foreigners or others. In this sense, the party is considered a social producer, dialoguing with the literature that defends the “party as perspective”, i.e., not as a mirror, but as a creative function of reality (Perez 2012).

**Keywords:** Festivities. Gypsies. Abundance. Calon.

**Resumo:** Ao descrever as festas observadas, especificamente, 1) festas de calendário, por exemplo, festa do dia das crianças, de Natal e Ano Novo, e 2) ritos de passagem, por exemplo, casamento e aniversários de crianças; durante trabalho de campo entre os Calons (pessoas ciganas) em Mamanguape na costa norte da Paraíba, Brasil, durante os anos de 2013 e 2014, propomos que as celebrações são momentos privilegiados para a realização e atualização do constituir-se Calon através de relações dialógicas de oposição ao juron (não-ciganos). Essas são as festas que performam a abundância e a ostentação na prática e escassez como um discurso, especialmente na presença de estrangeiros ou outros. Nesse sentido, a festa é considerada um produtor social, dialogando com a literatura que defende a “festa como perspectiva”, ou seja, não como um espelho, mas como uma função criativa da realidade (Perez 2012).

**Palavras-chave:** Festividades. Ciganos. Abundância. Calon.

**Resumen:** Al describir las fiestas observadas, específicamente, 1) fiestas de calendario, por ejemplo, día del niño, fiestas de Navidad y Año Nuevo, y 2) ritos de paso, por ejemplo, bodas y cumpleaños de niños; durante el trabajo de campo entre los Calons (gitanos) en Mamanguape en la costa norte de Paraíba, Brasil, durante los años 2013 y 2014, proponemos que las celebraciones son momentos privilegiados para la realización y actualización de la formación de Calón a través de relaciones dialógicas de oposición al juron (no gitanos). Estas son las fiestas que performan la abundancia y la ostentación como prácticas y la escasez como discurso, especialmente en presencia de extranjeros u otros. En este sentido, la fiesta se considera un productor social, dialogando con la literatura que defiende la “fiesta como una perspectiva”, es decir, no como un espejo, sino como una función creativa de la realidad (Pérez 2012).

**Palabras clave:** Fiestas. Gitanos. Abundancia. Calon.



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### Introduction<sup>3</sup>

As a starting point we take data from the fieldwork between Calon - a group of people known as Gypsies - in Mamanguape, Paraíba, Brazil. We intend to see the celebrations as privileged moments for performance and actualization of becoming Calon through dialogical relations of opposition to *Jurons*. Calons build discourse on abundance, ostentation and scarcity, especially in the presence of non-Gypsy people. At parties it is possible to observe the relations between the Calons and *Jurons* (non-gypsy person in Calon language), but this relationship is imbricated and involved at all times in meanings and in a process of stigmatization of non-Gypsy people with Gypsy people. This border that permeates this meeting is the starting point for other studies such as anthropologist Patricia Goldfarb (2003) and Frans Moonen (1994), among others, focusing on the Gypsy theme encompassed by the Ethnic Groups studies. At the party, this relationship reconfigures itself, as *Juron* is the guest and Calons are the hosts. The scenario that dominates is the Maussian gift, which will be discussed here mainly in his first exchange - the donation (Mauss 2003). On party days when there are invited *Juron*, attention is given to the luxurious decorations, table arrangements that light up the tables and adorn the social event, plus a varied banquet according to each festivity. In addition to the abundant food, the men and women girls and boys bodies are dressed in clothes that boast beauty and gold accessories that, besides being lush, set the tone of power (in)balance. The descriptions will demonstrate how abundance is configured in every detail. This resource points to the Calon-*Juron* relationship from a generating perspective otherness and legitimizing itself as Calon through festive gifts.

Theoretically, the concept of becoming is understood in this research, as a learning process that will be delineated throughout life (Monteiro 2015), is a way of realizing that calons are people who are constantly *making themselves*, to use an

expression by Darcy Ribeiro (1995). Instead of a consideration of Gypsy identity that would lead to a freezing of sets of possibilities, we discussed how gypsies are done every day in a relational and complex process with what is considered non-Gypsy and between them and the various Gypsy groups/families.

Regarding party theory, we start from the perspective that favors party as perspective rather than object. According to Léa Freitas Perez (2012; Perez et al. 2014), the party is not only considered a social production, but a creative function of reality. Its concept is therefore to *de-substantiate, de-functionalize and de-reify* (Perez 2009, 10). We do not consider it as a mere reflection of reality, the so-called event party, an eminently social fact (thing) that has specific content for a specific type of society and at a given time, as described by Perez, Amaral and Mesquita (2012). The party is more than that.

Léa Freitas Perez (2009, 11) masters the debate:

The part that ceases to be an object to be analyzed and becomes a mechanism, a link operator that operates through 'concerted destruction' (...) and 'true socialization' (Grisoni 1976), the opening to human experimentation in the realm of possibilities, that is, the imaginary as a body of desire, the unpredictable, the undecided, the undetermined, the interior, the mystical drunkenness, the excess. It also ceases to be a sociological fact and becomes anthropological. The party is not a gift for nothing. It is part of these acts, such as the sacred, the game, the dream, the trance, the art, of "zero goal" (Duvignaud 1977).

Although the writing of the article was authored by both researchers, the fieldwork was done exclusively by the first author, while the second instigated the theoretical arguments. It should be noted that we privilege to write in the first-person plural, because neither the fieldwork nor the writing of this text has been a solitary endeavor. Importantly, the fieldwork was accompanied by the researcher's husband, the anthropologist Renan Monteiro. In some passages, we hold the first person singular because these passages closely relate personal events.

<sup>3</sup> Acknowledgments to CNPq and Capes for funding this research, also the Calons who received us with affection and the professor Léa Perez.

The article division is structured in a brief introduction and conclusion, accompanied by three moments that discuss: 1) in the first section, entitled Context and methodology research, we describe the context in which the fieldwork took place and the methodology used; 2) In the second section, Rites of Passage, we will focus on the elements that took place on the children's birthdays occasion and the wedding party of two young people, a *Juron* and a *Calin*; 3) In the third moment, entitled, Calendar Celebrations, we analyze the celebrations during the New Year and Children's Day. Our intention is not to present the entire Calon party cycle, but parts, a productive task that reveals the moments we could attend, although we can say that we didn't miss a party we were invited to!

### Research context and methodology

The investigation was carried out in Mamanguape city, located 62 km from the capital of Paraíba, in the northern coastal region called Mamanguape Valley, from September 2013 to August 2014, with monthly visits to the research group. In March 2014, we were in the field continuously for two weeks at three different times.

The gypsy people in Paraíba are the Calon ethnic group (Goldfarb 2003). According to the anthropologist, the Calon are called 'Iberian Gypsies' and differ from the Roma or Sinti ethnic groups in physical perspectives/phenotypes, economically and in terms of some ways of life; however, the specific links between them may be closer than might be expected given their place of origin, Portugal and Spain.

The Calon group have been in Mamanguape for about 19 years. They currently live on the street that became known as "Gypsy Street"; however, it is the fourth street (place) where they established residence. The changes within Mamanguape are the result of travel deals and the sale of their own homes. These shifts are expected when addressing the study of Roma groups, but they are not a rule. Despite the expectation, each family or family network behaves according to a specific need.

The movement logic of dwelling and houses is linked to family networks, whereupon they compose cousins and relatives (get married and make families) and economic factors. We witnessed a great mobility of departing and arriving people, also we observed that the routes are built within a dynamic space. Santanna (1983, 49) tells us that mobility is *now spreading, now regrouping*, but it is always linked to three perspectives: origin, ancestry, and economic activity. We realize that Mamanguape routes are structured by family ties, affinity/kin ties, and/or as a function of doing business.<sup>4</sup> There is no estimated time when dealing with a period of stay in some place of residence. When defined, even temporarily, calons refer to the dwelling condition as being called *arranchados*. The term ranch<sup>5</sup> means home in the sense of shelter, which already points to the temporary and the gypsy house dynamic nature.

The "Gypsy Street" is approximately 9 km from downtown and next to a land where sugarcane is grown. Gypsy Street is a stretch of a street where both sides are being occupied by Gypsy families. Unlike other neighborhood streets, this place is always alive, even at times when people usually rest, such as after lunch. At about 1 pm, there are men talking, children and teenagers playing, young couples also talking at their doorstep and parents taking their children to school.

Most of the residents in this place are Calons, people who are not descendant Calons, are people who have become related after their marriages. In the period corresponding to the data presented in this article, the street was composed of eight houses that house extended and nuclear families. Although they live in an isolated region, the Calons claim to have a good relationship with the locals, which makes it a good place to live. Thinking in this "good relationship" is to think in very new data when it comes to the relationship of Gypsies and non-Gypsies in Brazil and all around the world. Ferrari and Fotta (2014) summarize the main works on the presence of gypsies in the Brazilian territory and the vast majority are conflicting relations.

<sup>4</sup> The deals are varied, ranging from transactions involving small goods, animal sales and car sales to real estate, gold and other goods.

<sup>5</sup> Term used to designate living space, be it a brick house or a tent.

Goldfarb (2013) and Moonen (1994) report in their works the pejorative forms that the Calon are treated when they relate to the inhabitants in Sousa<sup>6</sup> municipality. Thinking from a local perspective, the relationship between Calon and *Juron* at Mamanguape, we need to consider as a particular context, if we think about the economic condition of other Calon, located in Paraíba, and the daily relationship itself with non-Gypsies.

Franz Moonen writes from statements of a research he conducted in 1993 in a classroom setting with high school students in the Sousa municipality. Although students seem to be more tolerant of the Calon presence, the negative aspects are prioritized.

Almost all students, [...] have confirmed that Sousa society, to varying degrees, does not like Gypsies. More importantly, however, many students have condemned the attitude of adults or justified the Gypsies behavior:

- "For society they are nothing more than thieves, vagabonds, a bunch of unemployed who live disturbing them from house to house". (Moonen 1993, 162).

Narratives portray conflicting relationships. For anthropologist Moonen, younger and school-aged people are able to "tolerate" Calon's presence in the municipality more easily than other age groups, suggesting an important generational dimension to consider.

As Moonen describes, anthropologist Patricia Goldfarb (2013) also describes the conflicting relationship between the Calon in Sousa and the people of Sousa. During the fieldwork and interviews with the *Juron* population in Sousa's city, the author realized the stigmas are still credited to the gypsy people.

In a global dimension, Fonseca (1996), describes the living conditions in Central and Western Europe, she gives some examples of persecution and conflict between Roma and non-Roma. The author also points to the violent way in which Gypsies are treated and even expelled from different countries. An anti-Gypsy policy that has provoked and still

has provoked various violence against Roma, not only in Europe, but in the Brazilian context as well.

Unlike the scenarios presented, there is something special in Mamanguape and also in the county of Esperança (Paraíba), where I participated in a Gypsy wedding with a *Juron* fiancé. It is necessary to consider the economic factor that can lead to speculation about earnings and the way of life of this group. The favorable relationship between the observed group can also be attributed to the form of economic relationship that the calons maintain with some prestigious non-Gypsies in that locality. The business conduct that will preferably be conducted with non-Gypsies is based on a trust relationship that establishes good relations between the group and the local community.

Throughout the research period, we used participant observation, arguing that this method would be the most effective in producing an ethnography. Our participation allowed us to see the parts from a privileged perspective "from within" (Magnani 2002)<sup>7</sup> and although this was not the subject to which they were dedicated, we could not fail to notice the experience (Perez et al. 2014), and the effect on the process (Favret-Saada 2005) in these parts. Indeed, it was during a party and the preparation: offering and acceptance of the food that the presence of the research field was finally legitimized by the Calon. The impression we had is that prior to eating together with the Calons, our presence was merely tolerated. Our first field trips did not involve tastings, because they did not offer us food at the beginning of the fieldwork. Offering food and accepting relational ties were being woven that made the research possible as well as the foods preparation that were consumed by Calon on the day of celebration. The fact that the food was cooked by researcher Edilma Monteiro and it was consumed without restriction ensured that there was minimally a trust bond. We invite the reader to take part on these parties by our side. First, let's cover the elements that can be considered rites of passage.

<sup>6</sup> Municipality located in the high *sertão paraibano*, about 380 km away from João Pessoa.

<sup>7</sup> Free translation.

### Rites of passage (children's birthdays and weddings)

At the present moment, we focus on three moments that celebrate important passages of the individual in perspective to the collective.

By "rite of passage" we mean moments that may involve festivities and important celebrations around life stages in a personal life. For the individual, it results in a new position in society and a new status, according to Van Gennep (2013). José da Silva Lima (2001, 251-252) states that the party is "a kind of 'cultural clock'", the "festive marks" that constitute, in Portugal's case, the *epicenter around which life gains morale: Christmas, Easter, and the patron saint*. Parties, marking high points, culminating moments, pace and intensity alternations in a collective life. Some elements among the Calons make up the collective values of a given cosmology in various dimensions and the party begins well before the expected date for the event, that is, in this dynamic, there is an earlier moment (party preparation (food organization, invitations, tidying, and personal details), the moment of the act (the party [the moment of ostentation]), and the post-party moment (moment of apex, where who offered the party receives prestige for the quality of the party, thus conferring a legitimacy of the party to be a 'gypsy party' and who was organizing to be a Calon). Parties can still be perceived as in the rhythm of the calendar itself: ordinary days are just the interval between one party and another. In other words, *great milestones are parties, but they are paradoxical milestones because they are simultaneously temporal and escape extra temporally* (Perez 2013, 162). Even these parties, are scenarios of proof this making process Calon us/events.

### Marriage

The invitation to the wedding, held in the Esperança<sup>8</sup> county in December 2013, it was received during one of the sporadic visits in the early field work, as we sought to have a closer

relationship with Calon at Mamanguape Valley. We had heard enough about Calon weddings, so the opportunity was precious, and we look forward to it with the typical anxiety that precedes decisive moments in the fieldwork. By the timid invitation that Calon Marcos<sup>9</sup> gave us, we were able to share important moments for the development of the research. The marriage in Esperança was our first moment of real insertion in the field, when I entered the feminine universe and my husband had access to the masculine universe. The bride was niece of Marcos and Dilma (sister of Marcos) who also resides at Mamanguape. Dilma and her husband, Divar, were the godparents of this ceremony. Usually, sponsors contribute a sum to support the cost of the festivities. Ferrari (2010), describes the marriage between the Calons, makes it clear that there is no fixed rule among these Gypsy people, but there are desirable possibilities.

The marriage rite is one of the steps to make family among the Calons. Monteiro (2015) states that marriage is a step toward building a new family and a moment defined by a rite of passage "adult life comes with marriage and the new family is legitimized with the children arrival" (Monteiro 2015, 113). Silva (2015), writing about the Calons in Ceará (state neighboring Paraíba), points to a marriage as a time for alliances to build and expand the family. Marriage among the Calons is a stage in the cycle and life of great symbolic, ritual, and daily life value. A father or a mother before giving a daughter or son to marry will think about the maintenance of their own family. In this choice process, we see the male opinion predominance that values the family honor maintenance (Monteiro 2017). The marriage success is also part of this construction of becoming Calon. And its success depends on man's ability to provide morally and financially to his family.

After lunch on the second Friday of December 2013, we went to our destination in the Esperança city. We arrived early in the afternoon, at the place indicated by Marcos (with whom we kept in touch over the phone during the week), arriving there,

<sup>8</sup> The Esperança municipality is located in the Paraíba swamp, 159 km from the capital.

<sup>9</sup> People's names used in this work are fictitious.

soon we got in touch with him. Mark went to receive us and drove to the bride's parents residence. Upon arriving at the house, we were introduced and greeted everyone who was there. At house the movement was intense, in the kitchen the aluminum bowls were covered with cuts of beef and pork. The day before our arrival, there was a slaughter of animals, an ox and two pigs were being prepared to be served as barbecue and stew during the party celebration and the days before, when the guests/family are already coming to the celebration. Hours after our arrival, we met the owners and hosts parties, where the celebration would take place the next day. The wedding was scheduled to be held at the city's parish church, followed by a reception at a leisure club in the city.

The women took care of the house, talking, and made visits to the other calon family members in that locality. It was a day marked by many conversations; we hear fascinating stories from the time when calons traveled on horses. The men were completely involved with the preparations that still needed to be finalized before the big wedding day (care of the venue/the sound/barbecue/drinks/freezer).

The bride's parents were anxious for their daughter's marriage celebration. Even so, it was possible to hear, among the parents' random conversations with the older Calons, the concern that he was not marrying his daughter to a Calon but to a *Juron*. Marriage of a Calin woman (gypsy women in the chib-calon language) to a non-Gypsy man is not such a recurring practice unless the non-Gypsy man has a good relationship with the men in the family and is well accepted by the family network. In some contexts, it is practically impossible, even in places where persecution is not perceived as in some European context (Fonseca 1996). Even though the relations between Calons and *Juron* appear to be friendly, it is necessary to emphasize the speech of Maria, a resident of Mamanguape some years ago, stated that "It is one thing to have as a neighbor, another thing to have them in the family," answering the question, when asked about a possible marriage between one of his daughters and one of the young Calons.

Night sleep was prepared early. On Saturday, the second day of our stay, we woke up early. Before five o'clock, we were all face-washed, teeth brushed, with a strong cup of coffee, bread and cheese in our hands. The hours passed quickly and shortly after eight o'clock in the morning, lunch was ready. We were waiting for the other family members coming from Mamanguape and Itapororoca (PB). On this day I had the opportunity to prepare the mayonnaise salad and mashed potatoes. Every gypsy who served the mashed potatoes asked, *Who did this?* Calin Dilma replied, *Eat, eat, eat, you can eat. Edilma did it, the 'little jurin'*. It is in this sense that we affirm that the party was a milestone in our relationship with the calons. Although the party was our focus, it was during the party that our relationship with people was flourishing. We note that the attention given to the fact that who made the food outlined the importance of who makes the food. Food comes as a great gift according to Mauss (2003), which staged the researcher's acceptance among the Calon.

Still on the nubents, another important detail was the proof of virginity, which according to Dilma, is usually required in marriage, but was dispensed in this at the bride's parents request; they had full confidence in her person. This resignation caused disappointment, and a gypsy told about a marriage that took place in Alagoas, where the virginity proof was exhibited, maintaining the custom of her family. *Every gypsy wedding is very beautiful*, said Dilma, and continued: *with a big cake, abundant grilled meat, beef, pork, beef, goat meat*. Later, during the party, she once again wistfully recalled this wedding and other parties she had organized (for Calon, the groomsmen usually organize and fund the parties). A party without food is not a party. According to Dilma, *Gypsy parties should have on each table a piece of meat, crumbs, rice and a bottle of soda...* Another calon said: *The Juron do not starve at Gypsy parties. They come, eat at ease, also take food home. It looks like they are starving*.

These reports have made it possible to see how party preparation is directly linked to images they want to display, a show of abundance of food, a food abundance performance at parties. In another

circumstance during the research, I heard: "*Put the food there, put it on the corner. This is for those Juron to see that people here eat well - that there is no misery here.*" These statements raise the idea of relational construction, that they are people who live in food abundance, who cares to feed their own and strangers, creating an opposition to non-Gypsies. In this construction, the idea of a suffering and poverty life, as found in the popular imagination, is replaced by an abundance act, scarcity is something attributed to *Juron*, who are always looking for food at the end of the parties.

The wedding began in the church, all family members of the bride and groom entered, followed by friends. The homily was considered exhaustive; the children come and go endlessly, walking through the church without restrictions. At the end of the homily and the vows, the photo session marked us as family photographers. The photography duties gave us an opening to the field and allowed the dialogue with different subjects in the celebration. In the early evening, the party was predominantly Calon. They ate, drank, sang. The few non-Gypsies there were, were part of the groom's family, people who work at the event, the anthropologists. After the early hours of the night, new guests began to arrive and gradually increased to a larger number of *Jurons* at the party. The party was beautiful! With the arrival of new *Juron*, Marcos looked at us and said: *Come on, it's time to leave.*

### Children's birthdays

There were countless children's birthday celebrations that we attended, however attention will be given to two birthdays held right in my first fieldwork. One of the parties were done for Luan, who turned 9 - a dear boy from much of the group and a firstborn son. The Party preparation had begun a few weeks earlier. His mother, known as Preta, made the cake, snacks, sweets, souvenirs and decorations. She said, *It's a simple little party, Edilma, but made with love.* We arrived the day before the birthday and were warmly welcomed as usual.

His godparents, also Calons, presented the boy with a pig that was slaughtered and prepared the day before. This gift once again demonstrates the importance of food specially meat in Gypsy cuisine. In all parties this food is considered essential and central. We could say that the party began with the *death of the present*<sup>10</sup> and that from then on the preparations intensified, with the preparation of small bags being distributed, the organization of every detail of the table arrangements and the flow the arrival of relatives from other locations who were already celebrating Luan's life in preparation for the bash. The *death of the present* was also a moment of joy in which the children participated intensely. The pig was sacrificed so that everyone could taste it. Gift giving involved the killing violence, the victory glory over nature, and the savoring pleasure of a roast meat. From the raw to the roast, the gift was given to be shared: raw, blood and joy; roast, sharing and pleasure.

The preparations lasted the early evening. On the morning of the party, work continued. It was time to prepare the hot dog ingredients, salad, rice, candies, lunchboxes and cake tables. Late in the morning, a professional party decorator arrived with his team and gradually everything took shape, the colorful balloons embellishing the "Gypsy Street" that day was filled with tents and tables scattered across the street. The party was a great show, a great party. Modesty is another aspect of the display of abundance. It turns out to be a discursive performance to emphasize that the bare minimum (a *simple party*) is evident abundance.

Alejandro's birthday, which turned three, was also a big party, with food varieties, a barbecue cart, a ball pool, and elaborate decorations. Alejandro's parents prepared the party with zeal and advance. The party followed the same style and abundance display. The care with the preparation of children's parties, pointed a way to highlight, not only the relational form that points the Calon as wealthy people and the *Juron*, not. But also the promptness with which parents care and cherish their children.

<sup>10</sup> The pig given slaughter by the groomsmen to the birthday boy. He was shot down to be served during his birthday celebration. In addition to pork, parents also bought meat and sausage to be grilled at the party.

We conclude this section by describing the parties that celebrate the passage rites of passage, drawing attention to abundance as a key feature of Calon departing from performance of otherness. On both sides, even in preparation, it was possible to hear the constant talk of Gypsy women: *Wow, Juron will arrive today to end their hunger here!, Let's make 400 hot dogs to show them that people eat right here.* These and other statements were constant at the other parties that had guests from *Juron*. Although there was a display of the huge amount of food at the parties, before the festivities ended, families tended to take home and save generous amounts of food thus ensuring that *Juron* doesn't take it all away because *Juron* are considered rude and hungry. We continue the debate now by focusing on calendar celebrations.

### Calendar celebrations (New Year's Eve & Children's Day)

By "celebration calendar" we mean parties that take place every year, even without a fixed date, such as Carnival. "The first point that articulates duration in diachronic and synchronized terms is the calendar, which can be defined as a corpus of indicators/markers that signify duration in the form of ordered sequences of time units, usually associated with phenomena and/or events, especially of a festive nature" (Perez 2013, 151). We will not discuss this kind of celebration. We'll talk about the children's day and sequences of the holiday season festivity.

#### Children's day party

In the first forays into the field, I felt a desire to eat some food prepared by the Gypsies. However, only after 2 months in the field was something offered. On this day, I was accompanied by my husband for the first time. We were offered lunch, cake, coffee, and cheese as dessert. What is surprising here is that Calins first offered us food at a children's day party, it was precisely the children who conducted the research among the Gypsies.

The children's day party is a moment of performativity and display of wealth and kindness, in a strong but joyful dialogue with the Calon life austerity. The poverty image is contrasted with the abundance vision. On this day, in addition to children's games, toys and treats that were distributed to Gypsy and non-Gypsy children, there was a reminder of the memory of the pilgrimage that Calons usually make each year, on October 12, pilgrims go to the city Rodolfo Fernandes (RN)<sup>11</sup> to visit the "Covinhas" and pay their promises and graces achieved. They also said that there are many Calons who make this pilgrimage in the payment of the votes achieved.

The "Covinhas" have this name because they are related to the girls' tombs, the "Covinhas Girls" (Silva 2010). There is a shrine that attracts pilgrims from around the country to worship the two girls who became martyrs, dying on the scene as victims of the 1877 drought. However, it is noteworthy that devotion to the 'Dimple Girls' occurs during an abundance scene, especially food, whose lack made these girls sacred. It is a devotion of the Catholic faith to holiness to consider "promises". Authors such as Pereira (2009) and Campos (1999) discuss the religiosity of Gypsy groups, who get used to the form of faith based on residence place or rest place.

According to Calins, besides the visit to the sanctuary in the Rodolfo Fernandes city, the party celebration in which many children present and distribute toys and sweets is practical in this devotion. Payment for votes in the form of toy and food distribution parties presumes the display of the power to celebrate and give, which has not gone unnoticed by non-Gypsies in the city. Through the party, one can celebrate events, revive traditions, create forms of expression, affirm identities and break old stereotypes (Amaral 1996). what is conceptualized party as object by Perez (2009, 2012), Perez et al. (2014).

At this party, Calin's performance acts like a way to demarcate the Gypsy/Non-Gypsy frontier, it is a way of reaffirming the group's distinctions

<sup>11</sup> Municipality in the hinterland of Rio Grande do Norte, where is located the sanctuary of dimples. See Silva (2010).



and worldview through play and aesthetics. The long skirts and props (gold jewelry) were performatively displayed, which is not seen in everyday life. As shown by Schechner (1988, 1993), Schiefflin (1985), Turner (1974), and Goffman (1985), representations and the subject of interactions in their particular daily lives indicate and help us understand performance as an act or ritual that has a double effect: exchange and fun.

Returning to the party, the audience is especially mobilized because the party *is for the children*. The children and their companions were euphoric at the time of handing out the bags containing candy, treats, and popular toys such as balls and dolls. This is also a day when Gypsy and non-Gypsy children play together; they are all simply children, and all space belongs to them. Gifts are very important to those who receive them and represent the visibility and notoriety of the donor who is hosting the party (who, on this day, was Mr. Giliarte). The definition of who offers the party can lead to disputes between the Calons domestic nucleus, and here it is understood dispute, not from the perspective of a conflict that generates negative aspects for people's experience, but a performative dispute that continues the dispute over the display of wealth and power. In internal parties it is possible to observe that some disputes do not come into play.

### **New Year's celebrations**

Other festive and excessive moments among the Calons include Christmas and New Year's eve festivities. However, these celebrations are promoted for the group itself, they are internal parties.

Preparations start early. Beans, rice, pasta, spicy meat and manioc flour are on the menu. It is always tasty and appetizing. Beef and pork are guaranteed. A meatless meal is not considered a meal.<sup>12</sup> On Christmas Eve, girls and teenagers were visibly anxious, thinking about their clothes. The night of the 24th consisted of a lot of barbecue

(beef, pork and sausage), a lot of music and joy through various jokes. On Christmas morning, we had our coffee, at about six o'clock in the morning, goat for lunch, dipped in rice, manioc flour and beans. The rest of Christmas day went on like any other day.

When we arrived on the 31st, I noticed that there were more people than usual, as always, I asked Dona Zeza: *Are they Gypsies? Where are they from?* She told me that these people were calons and that there were more calons from Pernambuco and Rio Grande do Norte. She said, *It's our whole family!* Calon life is a life built between networks and streams and is updated at times of celebration like this.

On the morning of December 30th, things were normal. In the afternoon the preparations began: some Calons went to the hall, while others were in charge of preparing the food. Giuliano, son of Calon Giliarte, Marcos's *compadre*, was waiting for a phone call about the "sound" to which he had been mounted,<sup>13</sup> a famous "sound wall".<sup>14</sup> Sound is an important item in everyday life and at parties. Ownership of sounds, their display, and having the music at the highest possible volume are common, especially on holiday days.

The New year's eve party was considered as a major social event. Family members came to share: a cycle closes and another start begins. It is a time for memories, loved ones and life experiences. It's time to celebrate. On the first day of the year, Calon de Mamanguape, usually go to the beach, bathe in the sea, they believe it brings luck and serves as a cleanser to start the new year as well. During these celebrations there was a lot of Gypsy-style singing (guitar, keyboard and high notes), a lot of talk and laughter, a lot of barbecue meat, soda, alcohol, and a lot of music and dancing. The Christmas party was indoors and did not have the same preparation and display as the other parties we attended. The New Year was an outside party

<sup>12</sup> However when a gypsy dies, beef or pork is not consumed for a week; only fish is consumed (but mourning depends on each family, just as mourning can be distinguished among the calons of other localities).

<sup>13</sup> Calon prefers the sound to be high powered. Most of the time, they assemble speakers, purchase amplifiers, speakers, and materials and pay a sound expert to set up, thus getting the desired power.

<sup>14</sup> After a few hours of waiting, the long awaited sound arrived. Giuliano and his brothers and son in the street on top of a Hilux model pickup truck to which a DVD player was attached, and they set up a support structure to hold a 50 inch TV.

for insiders because it had Gypsy visitors and was more lively - a bigger, more elaborate party.

What do Gypsy parts have in common? They share plenty of food on display, dancing, expensive gifts, big arrangements, lots of tasks in party preparation. But it is in the *Juron* presence that these characteristics become most evident.

## Conclusion

As noted in the introduction, our goal was not to paint a complete picture of the Calon parties. As this goal is extremely productive, we invite the dear reader to move forward in this festive task. At the moment, our ability extends only to the parts we observe. We brought varying degrees of involvement and participation to these parties because we were not, as we said, interested in observing the festivals themselves. However, the parties were present throughout the fieldwork and ended up being important moments for conducting our own research and accepting our presence as field researchers. We path into the data from the first months of interactions with Calon. The exchange of affection from food, and this abundant supply colored our acceptance in the fieldwork. When eating my food, the presence as a researcher was considered welcome.

In festive circumstances, as well as calendar celebrations and rites of passage, the display of wealth indices is present mainly in the food abundance. Having food is not enough. There has to be excess food and food that everyone eats and finds satisfactory. In this sense, meat becomes relevant. The show, which is not limited to food but is a more powerful version, is particularly noticeable when the party has the largest share of *Juron* present - such as at Luan's wedding or birthday. This display decreases when the party is an indoor event, such as Christmas.

The performed wealth and power display is a resistance to the everyday stigmatization that this population suffers in general. Developing these notions of a friendly relationship between calons and *Juron* in Mamanguape, puts for reflection the construction of this Other that does not appear in the discourse throughout the official history

narrated in Brazil. Calon children present their expensive toys and treats throughout the year, while *Juron* children are given these gifts on Children's Day, the party in honor of the Dimples Girls, are a context for Calons to publicly demonstrate their financial autonomy and his power to boast being benevolent with other children. The parties are places of dispute, as opposed to the non-Gypsy, the *Juron*, but also among the Calons of other places. The party is built as an important moment within the group, where it shows investment in the child, the means to do so and indicates the family's financial success through prosperity and male success (Monteiro 2017).

This is how we understand the parties as central place in the building a performance Calon. In this becoming Calon process, it is the feast of excess and ostentation that sets the tone. Through the luxury, the festival realizes the great amount of food and details, the clothes and gold that adorn the bodies of Calon, the possibility of reconstructing the imagery about the Roma in the locality. Gypsy festivals become events desired by non-Gypsies, re-establish relationships and re-signify the relationship between these different populations. Therefore, it is during the same party that everything happens and the question of the party is raised (Perez 2009, 2012, Perez, Martins e Gomes 2014). It is within your time limit, the time of the party, that becoming Calon is realized and updated. "As Duvignaud says [...] in the party 'man changes himself because he invents himself'" (quoted in Perez 2009, 11).

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