

CHAPTER 2

GITANO ETHNIC IDENTITY

Between Being and Becoming



This book contributes to an ethnographic field saturated with ethnic identity constructions. Thus, in this chapter, I situate the field of study within the complex cultural processes that have long shaped ‘us’/‘them’ relations for the Gitanos in Spain, and the Gitanos of el Rastro and Madrid, more specifically. The main aim of the chapter is to situate the Rastro Gitanos historically and in the present and within a discourse mainly concerning ethnicity, co-constitutive of both internally and externally created identity constructions. By way of introducing the reader to the complexities and particularities of the Rastro Gitanos and their identity constructs, I present the material in this chapter as an ethnographic ‘point of departure’ for the rest of the study, regarding the way in which ‘Gypsiness’ is constituted in this thematic field and in the context of el Rastro. With my subsequent account, I do not intend to either reproduce, perpetuate or confirm a Gitano/Payo dichotomy, I merely seek to illustrate and analyse how this relation is and has been socially constructed in the past and present by both parties. And although in a multiethnic setting as that of el Rastro there will always be other parties involved, the Gitano/Payo relation seems empirically to be by far the most pronounced and significant one for the Gitano population of el Rastro.

Who are the Gitanos of el Rastro? During my fieldwork, most of the Payos I met, in addition to emphasizing their sociocultural, economic and physiognomic ‘otherness’, saw the Rastro Gitanos as ‘sectarian’, due to their great religious engagement and strange bourgeois and old-fashioned manners and ways of dressing and behaving. The Rastro Gitanos, on their part, called themselves a *pueblo* (‘people’), referring to the Gitano collective as *el pueblo Gitano* (‘the Gitano people’). At times the concept of ‘el

pueblo Gitano' was made with reference only to the Gitanos of el Rastro; at other times, it was meant to include all Gitanos in Spain. Most of the NGO representatives, policymakers and academics I met during fieldwork used the analytic construct of 'ethnic group' to describe the Gitanos in Spain. Although some of them recognized the great internal differences between various Gitano groups in Spain – for instance, concerning class, socio-economic position and opportunity – most of these stakeholders articulated a collective Gitano identity as being formed at an ethnic level. In contrast, Miriam Lee Kaprow (1978, 1982, 1984) refers to the Gitano collective identity as something akin to a Weberian 'social class'. Hence, differently positioned stakeholders in the field would accentuate different aspects of the Gitanos' lives in their ascription of Gitano identity. In order to illustrate the inherent complexity, plurivocality and multidimensionality of the Rastro Gitano identity construction processes, this chapter will likewise elaborate the various ways in which the Rastro Gitanos produce their ethnic and other identities from a mix of historical, social and symbolic evaluations and differentiations, power relations and political realities. Understanding their identity as something evolving in a constant pendular motion between *being Gitano* and *becoming Gitano*, I thus use this chapter to explore the formation and framing of 'Gypsyess' – or Gitano identity – from historical, local and political discursive perspectives and how they intermingle with other aspects of the Rastro Gitanos' personal identity constructions, such as age, gender, sexuality, occupation and socio-economic status.

First, I will provide a discursive contextualization of the ways in which Gitano identity 'on the ground' is informed by academic and other discourses, and I offer an overview of relevant theorizations in the anthropological literature on ethnicity and, in particular, Gypsy/Roma studies.

ETHNIC GROUPS AND DIFFERENTIATIONS

Both anthropological and other scholarly theorizations about the production of ethnicity, identity and 'race' have long contributed significantly to the ways in which Gypsyess is created 'on the ground'. For example, the Gitano NGO representatives I met in Spain saw Gypsyess as something constituted through the relation between Gitanos and mainstream Payo society (e.g. Barth et al. 1969); both local NGOs and EU Roma integration policies promote the minority rights of the 'ethnic Roma category'; and my Gitano companions in el Rastro openly speculated about whether they were a 'race' or an 'ethnic group'.

Building on Emil Røyrvik's (1998) study of Bulgarian Gypsies, as I see it, two main traditions of ethnicity research are particularly relevant in

our understanding of identity processes amongst the Gitanos of el Rastro. The first is the loosely Marxist tradition (e.g. Cohen 1969; Rex 1997) that focuses on clashes of interests and conflict; this tradition tends to view ethnicity in terms of stratification and rank differentiation. In this vein, one could understand the social division of labour as partly constitutive of the Rastro Gitanos' ethnic identity. The second tradition, initiated by Barth and colleagues (1969), focuses on interaction and ethnic boundaries. In this tradition, ethnicity is seen 'as an aspect of a relationship based on assumptions of cultural distinctiveness, and not mainly as the cultural properties of the group' (Eriksen 2013: 281). Accordingly, ethnic groups are defined by ascription and self-description.

The relational approach to ethnicity (e.g. Barth et al. 1969) grew out of the Manchester School under the leadership of Max Gluckman. The Manchester School developed an interest in people's 'conscious manipulation of cultural symbols, the transformations of their meaning, and the social use to which they were put' (Eriksen 2013: 281). As we shall see, this interest resonates with the performative aspects of the Rastro Gitanos' economic practices, their processual identity constructions and their relationship with Payos and each other.

During the first part of the twentieth century, the Chicago School carved out a new path for culture and ethnicity studies, in the context of the city's 'urban ecology'. At that time, Chicago was undergoing rapid growth and change, and, within this context, the Chicago School scholars emphasized a focus on social and economic processes, rather than cultural differences. Glazer and Moynihan's *Beyond the Melting Pot* (1963; see also *ibid.* 1975) owes its legacy to these early ethnicity studies of the Chicago School. In their book, they present the emergence of well-organized ethnic groups in New York as a modern adaptation, rather than a survival from the past. Likewise, Mitchell (1956) and Epstein (1992), in their studies of the Copperbelt, established that tribal allegiances and identities were strengthened as a result of urbanization, and not weakened, as one might expect. Several scholars of urban Gypsies/Roma have been inspired by this approach and the Chicago School tradition: for instance, Salo (1982), Salo and Salo (1982), Silverman (1982) and Williams et al. (1982). My analytical take on the urban Gitanos of el Rastro, who are descendants of Andalusian immigrants from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, also stands in this tradition, following similar lines of inquiry, with a combined Manchester/Chicago focus on economic, religious and other sociocultural processes.

Over time, Gypsy/Roma studies have broadened the notion of 'ethnicity' as an analytical and anthropological construct. The shift from folklorist to anthropological inquiries of Gypsy/Roma communities came with Barth

and colleagues (1969), whose seminal work completely changed the field. Since then, Gypsy/Roma studies have continued to highlight the limits of the concept of ‘ethnicity’ drawn from a model of autonomous nation states (Stewart 2013). For example, while Judith Okely (1983) explained the pollution beliefs of English Gypsies as an expression of the symbolically enforced socio-ethnic boundary between them and non-gypsies, Williams (1984) and Piasere (1985) moved away from an analysis of how ethnic boundaries are maintained in Gypsy/Roma communities. Instead, they applied a Dumontian ([1966] 1970) approach, emphasizing internally created holism and hierarchy.

Later, with Williams ([1993] 2003), a view of Gypsy/Roma livelihoods and identity constructions as intrinsically different from and incommensurable with those of non-Gypsies gained primacy. Along this latter path of reasoning, categorizing Gypsies as ‘ethnic’ would miss the important point that Gypsy/Roma systems of value are created *sui generis* (e.g. Jacobs and Ries 2008) with distinct notions of identity, commonality/community, personhood and so forth. In the present study, I consequently take a combined relational and *sui generis* approach in my understanding of the complex cultural processes underlying Rastro Gitano systems of value, sociality, livelihoods, ideologies and identities, connecting them to both internal dynamics and Gitano–Payo relations.

HISTORICIZING GITANO IDENTITY

Over time, what it means to be a Gitano has varied. The people we now call Gitanos were not known as ‘Gitanos’ but rather as ‘Egiptos’, ‘Griegos’, ‘Bohemios’ and ‘vagabondos’ (Alfaro 1993, 2009; Pym 2007). The term ‘Gitano’ was later juridically defined and conceptually shaped to – among other things – legitimize persecution, imprisonment and other legal punishments, including the death penalty, the cutting of one’s tongue if caught speaking *Caló* (the Gitano language), forced labour in Spain and the colonies, the splitting up of families, forced sedentarization, ghettoization and the confiscation of property and valuables (ibid.). Finally, Gitano identity came to relate to these people’s traditional occupations, nomadic patterns, poverty, clothing, customs, social memory, memory of origins and prejudices about their presumed innate antisocial behaviour (ibid.).

The earliest document linked to the Gitanos in Spain originates from 1425 in Zaragoza (region of Aragón). In this document, of 12 January, a group of French Gitano pilgrims arrive, referring to themselves as ‘Egiptos’. This work, together with other documents of presumed Gitano encounters in Navarra (1435) and Jaén (1462), comprises the first known record of the

Gitano presence in Spain (Pym 2007). In 1425, Don Juan de Egipto Menor ('of Egypt Minor') was received by King Alfonso V of Aragón; both Don Juan and the 'pilgrims' who accompanied him, with their horses, clothes, goods, gold, silver, saddle bags and other things, were provided safe and free passage throughout the kingdom. This freedom of passage was later rescinded in 1499, during the reign of the Reyes Católicos ('Catholic Kings'), whose series of laws and 'pragmatics' persecuted Gitanos on the basis of their 'cultural affiliations', lack of 'proper' work, submission, settlement and loyalty (Alfaro 1993, 2009; San Román 1997).

Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand marked the beginning of the Spanish Inquisition of 1492. The Inquisition was intended both to secure and maintain the Catholic orthodoxy of the kingdom's Muslim and Jewish converts and to replace the Medieval Inquisition, which was under Papal control. In the first years of the Inquisition, religious regulations were intensified, and Jews and Muslims were forced to either convert or leave. Often, inability or unwillingness to pursue either of these options ended in persecution and/or death. The Inquisition was under direct monarchic rule and was not abolished until 1834, under the reign of Queen Isabella II.

Although the hardships suffered by Muslims and Jews during the Inquisition are well documented, less is known about the Gitanos of the period. Teresa San Román (1976), María Helena Sánchez Ortega (1988) and Bernard Leblon (1993) were early scholars of the historic situation for the Gitanos in Spain. However, prior to the publication of the Spanish historian Antonio Gómez Alfaro's (1993, 2009) seminal work on the anti-Gitano legislations in Spain from 1492–1992 no substantial knowledge was available about this significant aspect of Spanish history in English. Despite the importance of Alfaro's work, documenting approximately 300 laws and regulations that targeted the Gitanos in Spain in the period 1492–1992 in a multitude of harmful ways, my fieldwork left me with the impression that this history was either unfamiliar or exceedingly unpleasant for NGO representatives, politicians and even laypersons in Spain to address. As one non-Gitano representative of the largest NGO in Spain working for Gitano rights and welfare told me, 'in the entire history of Spain, there has never been a single law particularly directed against the Gitanos', showing either complete ignorance or intentional oblivion.

The laws, regulations and so-called 'pragmatics' identified by Alfaro (1993, 2009) restricted everything from residential patterns to language, customs and occupations, essentially criminalizing the Gitanos for being Gitano. As late as the Francoist dictatorship (which ended in General Francisco Franco's death in 1975) and the 1978 Constitution, the Gitano language (*Caló*) was considered 'criminal slang', and thus illegal. During my fieldwork, none of my Gitano companions spoke *Caló*, perhaps apart from

a few words here and there. Thus, although several stakeholders fighting for Roma/Gitano recognition have sought to revitalize the language, at least in the context of el Rastro, it is no longer a spoken, 'living' language.

Documentation attached to the 'pragmatics' of the Reyes Católicos indicates that 'Egiptos' who were caught 'wandering around' the kingdom would be ordered to take on proper work or submit themselves as tenants under landlords (i.e. they were forced to have a '*señor*') (San Román 1997). If this was not obeyed, they would be taken in by the authorities, given 100 lashes and be forever banned from the Kingdom; if they were caught a second time, their ears would be cut, and they would be chained and banned by force. Over the years, the Inquisition 'succeeded' in regulating Gitano nomadism and sedentarism. For example, the authorities specified that Gitanos could only live in particular cities, at a ratio of 1 Gitano family per 100 citizens; furthermore, there could never be more than one Gitano family in any village (Alfaro 1993, 2009; San Román 1997).

The next example is from Valencia and is meant to illustrate a more general attitude towards Gitanos in the larger Spanish cities during the Inquisition. Jesus Salinas Catalá (2008) shows that the first documentation of Gitano presence in the Kingdom of Valencia dates to 1460 and relates to the general distrust in these persons, who were obliged to pay donations '[b]y good will ... so as they do not uphold themselves or by the love of God that they leave' (ibid.: 48). The Gitanos were 'politely' encouraged to return to the cities and territories from which they had come, as it was thought that they would 'make great damage to the city and its conditions' (ibid.).

In 1482, in the same kingdom of Valencia, the 'Egiptos', 'vagabundos' and 'Bohemios' were depicted as robbers and conmen of women and others who were easily deceived; thus, they were not to be admitted into the well-run kingdom (ibid.). Such anti-Gitano legislations in the Kingdom of Valencia were gradually 'refined' until, in 1585, the law known as El fuero was initiated. El fuero expelled all Gitanos in the kingdom within thirty days of their discovery and included lifelong prison sentences for male Gitanos and lashings for female Gitanos who did not submit. Until the end of the seventeenth century, numerous edicts and proclamations from the viceroy continued to maintain and develop this law (ibid.).

THE GYPSY ROUND-UP

In 1747, Gaspar Vázquez Tablada, Bishop of Oviedo and Governor of the Council of Castile (the highest political body under the Spanish Monarchy), presented to King Ferdinand VI a proposal that supported the adoption of

'extraordinary remedies' to provide a final solution to the 'Gypsy problem', with the aim of separating 'these irreducible persons from the body of society' (Alfaro 1993: 12). Father Fransisco Rávago, a Jesuit and confessor to Ferdinand VI, wrote about the proposition: 'I consider correct the means which he [the Governor of the Council] proposes to extirpate this evil race of people, hateful to God and pernicious to men ... the king will do great honour to God our Lord if he manages to extinguish this people' (cited in *ibid.*). All of these figures considered Gitanos 'antisocial' and 'socially dangerous', with a tendency for criminal behaviour; thus, they were convinced that the Gitanos should be punished, on both an individual and a collective level. Consistent with this view, historical accounts from this period present the Gitanos in Spain as idlers and persons who flout the law (*ibid.*).

The transition from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century was a particularly distressing period in Spain. Civil war and the positioning of foreign mercenary forces within the former Empire followed poor governance during the late reign of the last Hapsburgs. Public insecurity amidst these unstable political conditions had the effect of scapegoating groups whose mobility – and diverging sociality – threatened state control. For this reason, the rounding up of Gypsies became the favoured goal of a policing operation for which the Army, as the guarantor of public order, was called into action (Alfaro 1993). The exact number of Gypsies affected by this operation is unclear, but several documents from the time suggest a figure between 9,000–12,000, including men, women, elders and children (Alfaro 1993; Pym 2007).

In the final initiation of the round-up, great care was taken in separating women from men, and especially, confining and arresting women, since this was seen as the most favourable approach to achieving the desired 'tranquillity of the kingdom' (Alfaro 1993: 28). On Wednesday 30 July 1749, the Gitanos in Spain were proclaimed 'prisoners' who could either surrender voluntarily and be brought to collection points (i.e. prisons, old castles and labour camps) or escape and be classified as fugitives. In either case, their belongings would be collected and sold in order to cover the costs of the operation and the maintenance of the forced settlements. Many of the arrested Gitanos were farmers, shop owners, traders and property owners, and the money made from them by the authorities was considerable. In total, 881 Gitano families were affected by the round-up; these families were split up and spread throughout the kingdom, while a vast proportion of the male Gitanos were sent to the colonies – especially Mexico – to work in the mines. In 1783, although not representing any kind of end to the persecution, harassment and discrimination of Gitanos in Spain (e.g. San Román 1997, see Chapter 1), sixteen years after the round-up, King

Carlos III claimed the Gitanos as Spanish citizens and gave them freedom to reside and work throughout the kingdom. In addition, Gitanos who had been affected by the 1749 round-up were given a public pardon, and any Gitanos remaining in prison or forced labour were freed (Alfaro 1993).

THE 'EGIPTO' JURIDICAL LABEL

In historical Spain, 'Egipto' was a juridical label applied to a wide range of people. For these persons, residence in a fixed place and work in a recognized occupation could lead to a change of legal class, and the practical goal was to obtain a so-called 'letters patent of *Castilianness* ['Spanishness']', which would prove legitimate belonging to the kingdom (ibid.). Thus, the label of 'Egipto' could be escaped by those who demonstrated that they were not of such kind by means of cultural affiliation, production, sedentarization and showing no relation to or memory of their origins. Elaborating on what he calls the 'imprecise nature of legal typology', Alfaro (ibid.: 12) writes that Gitanos have always been the target of vague classification systems, drawing on their mobility, their presumed criminal tendency or their difficult to categorize occupations. A further factor that has limited the Spanish state's ability to easily classify Gitanos is their religious beliefs, which have historically been less fixed and connected to social identity than those of the Jewish and Muslim minority groups in Spain. Historically, the Gitanos in Spain have been defined by their lifestyle; because they are considered to have remained in the kingdom 'without adopting to the proposed model', they have been converted to 'citizens disobedient of the law' (ibid.: 13; San Román 1997).

Part of the main argument in this book involves an examination of the historical parallel between the feudal enforcement of Gitanos to serve as tenants under landlords ('*señores*', e.g. San Román 1997) and the present-day pressure to submit to contemporary forms of employer-employee relationships under flexible capitalism. What I argue is that their relation to mainstream society has, in both the present and the past, positioned the Gitanos in a dual position of geographical proximity and social distance (e.g. Simmel 1908) and in a particular relationship to both aristocracy (high) and the plebs (low) – reminiscent of the stranger trope (see also Pym 2007). The historical lower-class people of Madrid known as *los Manolos*, presented in the following section, provides comparative grounds to the present-day Gitanos of el Rastro and their way of moving between high and low society.

LOS MANOLOS OF EL RASTRO

In this section, I linger in the past, zooming in on Madrid, el Rastro and the eighteenth-century *los Manolos* (female: *las Manolas*), who were historically located in the same area as the present-day Gitanos of el Rastro. I will draw a parallel between the Gitanos of el Rastro and *los Manolos*, who were part of the lower classes of the *barrio* but ‘taken up’ by the aristocracy and made ‘theirs’ (Romanos [1861] 2018). My proposition is that *los Manolos* were comparable to the present-day Gitanos of el Rastro in the ways they imagined themselves and were imagined by their fellow Madridians, in other words, their relation to rest of society. It is important to note that I thus handle the connection between *los Manolos* and the Rastro Gitanos as analogous and metaphorical rather than genealogical – that is, somewhat in the same way as I use the concept of the stranger (Simmel 1908), I apply the figure trope of *los Manolos* to shed light on some features of present day Rastro Gitanos’ relation to mainstream society.

The Madridian area of el Rastro (the *barrios* of Lavapiés and Embajadores) is often described as a working-class area – an impoverished ‘vertical slum’. Historically, residents of this area were some of the most socio-economically disadvantaged in Madrid (Romanos [1861] 2018). Lavapiés was known as *La Manolería*, and residents were called *Manolos* and *Manolas* – working-class men and women, respectively.¹ The women dressed elegantly and gracefully, though they were also considered ironic, brazen and daring. The men were seen as independent and arrogant and repudiated everything that was not their own (*ibid.*). They were known to work with copper and iron, which they prepared in small charcoal stoves. In the eighteenth century, the horse-drawn carriage became a popular means of transportation in Madrid. These carriages could be rented as a type of taxi and were called ‘manuelas’, ‘manolos’ and ‘simones’, connecting them to the *Manolos* and *Manolas* of Lavapiés.

Historically, the label of *Manolo* was synonymous with the adjectives *guapo* (‘handsome’), *valiente* (‘bold’) and *chulo* (‘cocky’). Thus, from the nineteenth century onwards, the *Manolos* and *Manolas* of Lavapiés also came to be referred to as *chulos* and *chulas* (*ibid.*). In the present day, residents of the *barrio* (Gitanos and Payos) are referred to by Madridians as *chulos* – indicative of people who have a lively, boisterous, brutish, vulgar and ‘uncultured’ nature.

The word *majismo* was used to designate the Castellan aristocracy’s fondness for the dress and behaviour of *los Manolos* – a fondness that extended to their music, dance and popular pastimes, such as performing the fandango, flamenco and bullfighting (*ibid.*). Such activities are now, in the modern era, at the level of national pride and promotion, associated with the country’s

Gitano population. In the past, the culture of *los Manolos* was the answer to the French fashion and class ideals that were popular and widespread at the time. The French *petimetre* was the absolute counter figure of the vigorous, animated and feisty Madridian *Manolo*, with idle and bourgeois manners, a tall white wig and Enlightenment ideals and thoughts (ibid.). Thus, in a way, the Madridian aristocracy looked to the working class of Lavapiés for social and cultural symbols and ideals.

Francisco Goya (1746–1828) immortalized *los Manolos* (especially the women) in his paintings, which contributed to the construction and cementing of these characters as Madridian social archetypes. Although *los Manolos* originated in and belonged to the lower classes, through Goya's paintings and the aristocracy's appropriation of their cultural expressions and ideals, they became symbols of Castilian identity, set apart from – for example – French culture and 'race'. The inherent social and aesthetic duality of *los Manolos* – as simultaneously popular and aristocratic, vulgar and refined – came to define this social identity. An argument for exploration is thus whether the dual nature (the boisterousness and the bourgeoisie) of *los Manolos* is comparable to what we see amongst the present-day Gitanos of el Rastro.

This dual character of *los Manolos* implies that they were both admired and detested and viewed as having a simultaneous high social status and a low one. Although often attributed with a low status by the majority population, the present-day Gitanos of el Rastro see themselves as belonging to the higher socio-economic classes of Spanish society, as illustrated by, for instance, their views on money, work, employment, freedom and virtue, which differ from those of the working-class Payos in the *barrio*. The Gitanos also embrace markers of bourgeois taste and manners, in the form of (for instance) clothing, gestures, speech and mannerisms – characteristics that they believe connect them – together with their business contacts and networks – to the higher social strata. At the same time, the Rastro Gitanos may sometimes consciously break with these norms and standards, through rough, vulgar and boisterous behaviour while hanging out in groups in city plazas and street corners. They conduct a lot of trade with *gente de la alta sociedad* ('high society people'), and they use these economic relations to generate financial gain, status, contacts and networks. Nevertheless, their work as middlemen traders places them in a precarious position, and their prosperity can quickly transform into downward social mobility.

PRESENT-DAY GITANO IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

To counteract the objectifying and brutalizing anti-Gypsy tendencies of present-day Europe, Brazzabeni and colleagues (2016: 11) 'find it necessary

to take positive account of the humanity of the Gypsies, that is, their forms of self-ascription and the capacity for action'. Similarly, Okely (1994) asserts the need to ethnographically address the cultural specificities of Gypsies, due to their position in society as 'outsiders'; she also claims that, in order to understand notions of identity and belonging, we must examine their self-conceptualizations at both individual and collective levels. Hence, drawing on my ethnographic material, the next section pertains to the Rastro Gitanos' own ideological grounds for classification and differentiation in the present, and the consequences of these ideologies for ethnicity and other modes of identity in the field. Rastro Gitano identity has always stood in a dialectical relation to mainstream society, and it is both created and sustained through the dynamics, needs and strains inherent in that relation. However, as mentioned earlier, with subsequent chapters, we shall also see how their identity is made *sui generis*, on the basis of their own ideologies and systems of value concerning their economic practice (as *comerciantes*) and religious practice (as Pentecostal *creyentes*), their culturally specific sociality and morality (including notions of personhood and organizational structures) and their particular ways of producing meaning in and about the world.

Based on the ethnographic material, the various ways in which the Rastro Gitanos construe their own identity can be divided into two main categories: first, in their differentiation from the Spanish majority and other Payo groups; and second, in their differentiation from other groups of Gitanos in Spain. In the following, I will argue that the underlying premises (or logics) of these acts of differentiation relate to the Rastro Gitanos' own ideological² premises, associated with their culturally specific economic and religious practices, modes of sociality and morality, and ways of actualizing, attributing and inducing meaning in the world. While there is some overlap between these ideological premises and hegemonic, Payo views about Gitanos, they also contrast in important ways.

Moreover, the ethnographic material presented in the following, of the Rastro Gitanos' own processes of constituting social differences – involving notions of ethnicity, spirituality, morality, locatedness, origin and being cultivated and educated – are all made with reference to my Gitano companions' emic ideas about class; class relations and class belonging. Concepts such as *las clases altas* ('the higher classes'), *las clases bajas* ('the lower classes') and *la gente de la alta sociedad* ('high society people') were phrases I heard time and again in el Rastro, and they were all central in the Rastro Gitanos' socio-logical manoeuvring within and across their own social circles.

THE 'OTHER', FROM THE RASTRO GITANOS' POINT OF VIEW

The Gitanos of el Rastro refer to non-Gitanos of Spanish origin as 'Payos'. The word 'Payo' derives from the terms *campesino* ('farmer') and *aldeano* ('village resident'), suggesting (from a present-day Rastro Gitano perspective) someone 'without culture' who is 'primitive' or 'rough'. Juanpi, a middle-aged Gitano living in el Rastro, once elaborated the differences between Payas and Gitanas (i.e. women) stressing this exact point. His thoughts on the matter were very much in line with how other Rastro Gitanos looked upon the issue as well. He felt that Payas were rough in both clothing and language because their ancestors were farmers; in contrast, the Gitanas of el Rastro – not having this background – were more elegant in character and conduct. In addition, Juanpi claimed that the Gitanas spend 'hours and hours in front of the mirror, making them the most beautiful women on earth'.

In my experience, the Gitanos of el Rastro did not include *árabes*, *chinos*, *moros*, *rumanos* and *negros* in the Payo category; however, other (mainly white) foreigners – living in Spain or elsewhere – were frequently considered as such. For example, although the Rastro Gitanos were reluctant to use the label when speaking to me (due to its negative connotations), it was nevertheless clear to me that, from the onset of my fieldwork, many saw me as a 'Paya'. Some of my Gitano friends tried to fool their children into thinking that I was a Gitana from Scandinavia: 'That is how they look there. It is because of the little sun they get' – referring to my pale appearance. However, towards the end of my time in Madrid, some started calling me *la vikinga Gitana* ('the Gitana Viking') and *la nueva evangelista* ('the new evangelist'), at times also explicating these ideas by saying that 'you are one of us now'.

One Gitano antique dealer made the following distinction between the peoples of el Rastro.

Los Moros, as we call the Moroccans, are the worst. They are only here to steal and rob and do bad things. But *los Chinos*, they are good people. Hard working. They open up shops and pay good rents – where a Spanish person would pay 500 euros per month for a storage house, a Chinese person pays 2,000. At least before the crisis. Now, of course, it is different.

The Chinese (*los Chinos*) in el Rastro mainly sell textiles and cheap jewellery, and according to the Gitanos of the *barrio*, they do well and outcompete most of the traditional Spanish-run shops. In my fieldwork, I observed that the relation between *los Chinos* and the Rastro Gitanos seemed positive and strong, and most of the Chinese wholesale traders were even Pentecostal. Some Chinese traders became owners of formerly owned

Gitano antique shops in el Rastro; however, they continued with Gitano managers. For instance, I was told that rich *Chinos* had paid 2,000,000 euros in cash to buy an antique shop in el Rastro but had maintained the Gitano manager because customers – especially *la gente de alta sociedad* ('high society people') – generally prefer to deal with Gitanos. Even so, the most important 'constitutive others' from the perspective of the Gitanos of el Rastro are undoubtedly the Payos or more precisely, perhaps, Payo society. In other words, we should be aware of the cultural and social relational complexity of an urban setting like that of el Rastro. The impression I got from fieldwork, however, was that the Rastro Gitanos' relationship to the Spanish state, with its mechanisms of government, power and control and its representatives of authority – which the Rastro Gitanos saw as intrinsically 'Payo' – combined with the Rastro Gitanos' relation to the mainstream division of labour in society, promoted the idea of Payos as the Rastro Gitanos' main constitutive other.

Vecinos

Another label that the Gitanos of el Rastro use for non-Gitanos (instead of Payo) is *vecinos* ('neighbours'). The evangelical Gitanos of el Rastro use this descriptive and more value-neutral term quite deliberately, often explicitly pointing out that they no longer use the term Payo, which they consider derogatory. As with the Payo category, *vecino* does not include *árabes*, *chinos*, *moros*, *rumanos* and *negros* but can be used to describe other (mainly white) foreigners in Spain or elsewhere. While the label of Payo might have historically marked a difference between the nomadic Gitano groups and the sedentary Payo farmers and village dwellers, the term *vecino* seems more illustrative of a new manner of coexistence and an attempt made by some Rastro Gitanos to embrace urban life alongside the non-Gitano population. Although the term Payo is still widely used – and often almost automatically applied – many of my Gitano companions in el Rastro were concerned with replacing the term and reconfiguring their manner of thinking about the Payos.

Romanians with Gitano Ethnicity

Similar to the Spanish media and public, the Rastro Gitanos also use the word 'Gitano' to refer to Roma/Gypsy communities living elsewhere in Europe. One such formulation I heard time and again about beggars of Romanian origin was that they were '*rumanos con etnia Gitana*' ('Romanians with Gitano ethnicity'). In Spanish, 'Gitano' thus refers specifically to the Spanish Gitano population, as well as to more general European Roma or

'Gypsy-like' populations (i.e. Traveller, Roma, Tzigane, Tatere and Manuch communities). While the Gitanos see the social, cultural and economic differences between themselves and these other groups as both vast and defining, their use of 'Gitano' as a universal ethnic construct implies that they do, in fact, see a link between the Spanish Gitanos and other Roma/Gypsy groups. This is fascinating, given their rejection of any association with the Roma ethnic group. As a possible explanation, I argue elsewhere (Brodersen and Røyrvik 2021) that the ideological premises of proletarianization and assimilation carried by the universalizing Roma ethnic group label contrast strongly with the Rastro Gitanos' own locally produced identity, built on self-employment, anti-proletarianization and disarticulation from society (see Conclusion for summarizing discussion). In the following section, I will present the situation 'on the ground', using a local lens to present and examine the multifaceted economic, social and cultural aspects through which ethnicity and other forms of difference are produced and reproduced among the present-day Gitanos of el Rastro.

INTERNAL GITANO DIFFERENTIATIONS

Regionalism

In Spain, regionalism (i.e. regional nationalism) is strong: where you come from (or originate) matters. Cultural differences between regions/nations are often stereotyped and subjected to great mockery among friends. The Madridians say about the Catalonians that they are European – almost French – and that they are all for money and always in a hurry – a hurry to earn more money. In return, the Catalonians say about the Madridians that they are lazy, rough, *chulos* (explained below), lacking in manners, education and culture. It is said that the most beautiful women come from Cordoba; that the Extremadurians are strange, boorish peasants from the poorest and least fertile farmland in the country; and that all Andalusians are Gitanos, who might be economically poor, but who carry the rich Moorish traditions of the past, which gives them cultural superiority. It is said about the Toledanos that they are *Franquistas* (followers of Franco): financially well off and religiously and politically loyal to the Catholic Church (and vice versa). And the Basques? Well, no one really talks about the Basques, for some reason. Maybe they have been talked about so much in the past that when the violent conflict finally seemed to 'cool down' everyone was happy leaving the matter.

Besides being a great source of mockery, this regional nationalism has also generated significant conflict and bloodshed. The long-standing ETA

struggle for Basque independence and the newer rise of Catalonian voices for a similar cause serve as vivid political examples. The Gitanos of el Rastro are similarly preoccupied with their regional origins, though in a somewhat different manner. These typological descriptions were very pronounced in the empirical context, and both Gitanos and non-Gitanos in el Rastro put much effort into explaining them to me, with a combination of humour and seriousness. It felt like these descriptions of the typological kind carried strong social significance for people, reflective of the great cultural and socio-economic variety that exists not only among Gitanos in Spain but also in more general terms. For the Gitanos in Spain, being constantly subjected to reductionism, stereotypes and prejudices, internal differentiations become utterly important in the sense that these notions imply ideas such as: ‘we are not like them’, ‘we are better than them’, ‘we are not like the stereotype’ and so on and so forth.

Many Gitanos of el Rastro originate in Andalucía and are either migrants themselves or the progeny of migrant parents or grandparents. The Andalusian Gitanos in el Rastro could talk both intensely and at length about the huge differences between Andalusian and Madridian Gitanos – which they certainly noticed, they emphasized, as they lived alongside one another as neighbours. Paolo, about 40 years old, had lived in el Rastro almost his entire life but nevertheless identified as an Andalusian Gitano. Regarding the relation between the Gitanos and the Payos, Paolo elaborated that Andalusian Gitanos were more integrated and less ‘racist’ than Madridian Gitanos. Already in our first meeting I figured he knew what he was talking about because when I raised the idea of speaking with his wife he responded: ‘Well, I don’t know if that is possible. She’s a Madridian Gitana and quite racist.’ He also detailed notions about the Andalusian Gitanos, and I represent these here as examples of general opinions I encountered amongst the Gitanos of el Rastro.

They [the Andalusian Gitanos] are more open – not closed like the Madridian Gitanos. They have more Payo friends and business connections – Spanish, Arab, African, Latin American and Chinese – and they see Payos with milder eyes. But the Madridian Gitanos look upon our association with Payos as not very Gitano.

Madridian Gitanos, Paolo explained, are much more orthodox concerning customs and traditions. For instance, when a family member dies, Madridian Gitanos will wear black mourning clothes all through *el duelo*, the grieving period, and the women will have their hair tied up. ‘We don’t do that’, Paolo told me. The young women of Madrid will spend hours in front of the mirror in an effort to look nice, and afterwards they will stroll up and down the streets, seeking to make themselves attractive to the Gitano

men. ‘Our women are different’, he stated with contempt, ‘they work hard’. Somewhat confirming Paolo’s ideas of Madridian Gitanos as particularly *cerrados* (‘closed’, ‘conservative’ or ‘traditional’) and culturally orthodox, I experienced time and again that both my Payo friends and the NGO representatives I met during fieldwork raised their eyebrows in great wonder at the fact that I had been accepted by this group that they saw as the most ‘closed’ of all Gitano groups in Spain.

Educación y cultura

The Gitanos of el Rastro also create and articulate internal (Gitano) social differences with the concepts *educación* (‘education’) and *cultura* (‘culture’). For instance, ‘I would never think of taking my daughters out of school just because they are girls’, continued Paolo. ‘Education is important, very important. But the Gitanos from here [i.e. the Madridian Gitanos], they take their girls out of school. They don’t think education is important for girls.’ Paolo thought, like many Gitanos of Andalusian origin who I met in el Rastro, that he had more *educación* and *cultura* than a Madridian Gitano due to a combination of ancestry and upbringing; by this he meant that they were well mannered, had good morality, behaved properly and respectably and were *cultivados* (‘cultivated’) and *formados* (‘educated’) – in line with both Christian and Gitano ideals.

Besides his reflections on the different levels of *educación* and *cultura* between Madridian and Andalusian Gitanos, Paolo – and other Gitanos I talked to – applied these same concepts to reflect on other groups of Gitanos as well. Socio-economically, there are considerable differences between various groups of Gitanos in Madrid. From the point of view of the Rastro Gitanos, the differences between, for instance, the Gitanos living in Vallecas and themselves were described in terms of class belonging, although not necessarily in terms of income and economic status. As Paolo told me:

It might well be that a Gitano in Vallecas earns more than me, but socially and culturally he belongs to *la clase baja* [‘the lower class’], and I belong to *la clase media* [‘the middle class’], even though I am unemployed, even though my father provides the food on my table, and even though I am facing the danger of being thrown out of my apartment because of the [financial] crisis. Despite all this, I belong to a higher class than them.

As an Andalusian Gitano in el Rastro, Paolo places himself in a superior social class twice over with his description of social differences amongst the Gitanos in Madrid and Spain. Broadly speaking, having (or not having) *educación* and *cultura* is a central criterion in the Rastro Gitanos’ socio-logical

manoeuvring, as when they differentiate themselves from the Gitanos in the suburbs of Madrid, including Vallecas. In general, they would say that the Madridian Gitanos have less *cultura* and *educación* than the Andalusian Gitanos, but in Madrid, the Vallecas Gitanos have less *educación* and *cultura* than the Rastro Gitanos. Moreover, *educación* and *cultura* represent critical components of the Rastro Gitanos' bourgeois, artistic and avant-garde self-image.

Often, a minority's preoccupation with notions of class or other socially stratifying concepts is inspired by the majority's rhetorical paradigm and hegemonic language about such things. The Gitanos of el Rastro are, in other words, not alone in their preoccupation with the concepts of *educación* and *cultura*. For instance, among the Spanish majority population, numerous examples circulate of Gitanos' perceived lack of culture and civilized conduct (i.e. *educación* and *cultura*). The non-Gitanos I met during fieldwork told me that they 'hated' the Gitanos; that they 'weren't afraid of them, but that they were dangerous'; that the Gitanos are *machistas* ('male chauvinists'); that 'they kill' and 'wear knives and guns'; that 'they all sell drugs', that 'they all live in *chabolas* ['shacks'], but still have plasma televisions, satellite dishes and a lot of money'; that 'they do not belong to the ... what do you call it, the Aryan race – oh well, that was such Nazi stuff'; that 'the only good thing about the Gitanos is that they are *limpios* ['clean']; their houses are very clean'; and that 'their women are very beautiful'. A non-Gitana in her early 40s who had been born and raised in Vallecas, which is home to the biggest Gitano community in Madrid, shared the following thoughts on Gitanos with me. Although extreme, these thoughts are representative of common ideas about Gitanos in the non-Gitano population, as lacking the attributes of civilized human beings.

I am not racist, but you know... there is something very strange about the Gitano community. Why do you never see a Gitano with grey hair? Why do you never see gay Gitanos? And why do you never see disabled persons among the Gitanos? Do you know what I think? I think they either kill the weak children while infants or they hide them inside their houses all through their lives.

The presumed 'strangeness' of the Gitanos and their alleged inhumaneness connected to their treatment of disabled persons and other unwanted persons, as articulated by the non-Gitana above, in fact reflect national sentiments. The establishment of special colonies for Gitanos in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Gay y Blasco 2003) was a political strategy to heighten the 'cultural development' of the Gitano community in order to make them into proper, civilized neighbours and human beings. In the Conclusion, I touch upon the Rastro Gitanos' preoccupation with bourgeois values and manners. Based on what we now know of Spain's 'integration' policies,

the Gitanos' concern with proper bourgeois behaviour may thus in fact be understood, in part, as a 'protection' against such state intervention.

Comparatively, in his study of Bulgarian Gypsies, Røyrvik (1998) argues that being of 'Bulgarian blood' (i.e. claiming membership to the Bulgarian ethnic nation) is more or less regarded as synonymous with being *cultured* and *honourable* – traits the Gypsies are considered to lack. The Bulgarians also emphasize the Gypsies' lack of education, employment skills and knowledge of the Bulgarian language, and they consider Gypsies to be lacking in culture, morals and civilized conduct, as opposed to the well-cultured, moral and civilized community of Bulgarians.

Interestingly, although the non-Gitanos I met in Madrid and elsewhere see themselves as superior to the Gitanos of el Rastro (due to their perception of greater *educación* and *cultura*), the Rastro Gitanos tend to interpret this relation in precisely the reverse fashion. The Gitanos of el Rastro – especially those who have converted to Pentecostalism – see themselves as superior to the Payos in many ways, but particularly with respect to their moral and social conduct, their knowledges about fine arts and music, their ways of (making a) living and associating with the elites; and their elevated religious faith and practice. Furthermore, the Pentecostal Gitanos also apply the *educación/cultura* evaluation to contrast themselves to their pre-converted selves, as well as to non-converted Gitanos in the *barrio* and elsewhere. Hence, conversion is an important factor in the Rastro Gitanos' social and symbolic manoeuvrings, as I will elaborate in a short while.

Chulo

As mentioned above, the emically descriptive term *chulo* was historically used to define the social character of *los Manolos* in the area of Lavapiés (el Rastro). However, this socially descriptive term is also of relevance in the present day. For example, I was told by Gabriela – a Gitana in her late 50s – that the Madridian Gitanos are *chulos* and the Vallecas Gitanos even more so. More broadly, *chulo* is a term that (Gitano and non-Gitano) Catalonians I spoke with apply to Madridians. With reference to the above discussions about criteria for class-belonging, *chulo* refers in the empirical context to a person who lacks *educación* and *cultura* but – in my view – nevertheless functionally epitomizes the trickster's wit and know-how and the ease and flexibility of the flaneur. Emically, the term is used to describe someone cocky and cool, easy-going, talkative and, at times, bullying, who can be both flashy and rough, amusing and attractive, nice and natty. As the area of el Rastro is famous for having previously been a neighbourhood of slaughterhouses, lexically, *chulo* can also refer to a 'slaughterhouse worker', 'someone from the lower classes of Madrid' or a 'bullfighter's assistant'. After

asking a non-Gitano friend from Barcelona why he called his Madridian friend *el chulo*, he replied that a *chulo* is a guy *con el pecho arriba* ('with his chest up front') – meaning a brusque and courageous man, a real man, a *macho*. This example shows that *chulo*, as an emic term, refers to both Gitanos and non-Gitanos.

The area of el Rastro is typically seen by the Madridians as *chulo*. In general, both Gitanos and Payos I met during fieldwork refer to the working-class residents of these neighbourhoods (Lavapiés and Embajadores) as *brutos* ('brutish'), implying that they are unpolished, tactless, rude and, at times, simple minded. In emic terms, for the Gitanos of el Rastro, the animal-like directness and brutish nature of a *chulo* (lower class person) is contrasted with the refinement and sophistication of a person with *educación* and *cultura* (higher class person). Thus, the word *bruto*, when used to describe a person and that person's class belonging, may emphasize a vibrant and 'natural' character, or, more negatively, a lack of intelligence, sensitivity and cultivation. As was the case with *los Manolos* of the past, the exact meaning of the term depends on both the context in which it is applied and the relation between the speaker and the object.

García, a 30-year-old Gitano of Andalusian origin, told me that he disliked Lavapiés, partly because of the criminal *moros* and partly because of the working-class *chulos Madrileños*. My own observation was that the further one ventures into the *barrio* of Lavapiés, the more *chulería* (cockiness) fill the atmosphere: the smells of big city life, of urine, excrement and marihuana, blend with the brutal reality of people living on the streets, trying to craft themselves provisional homes out of cardboard and plastic; African refugees selling handbags and sunglasses atop large sheets and runoff in haste when a police car suddenly appears; and, in one instance, the two Latin Americans, in a highly professional, sophisticated and well-planned scheme, tricked me into handing them my 400 euro camera and 1,500 euro laptop.

García, the abovementioned 30-year-old Gitano, is a religious man who attends *el culto* as frequently as possible and thanks God for most of the good things in his life. He told me that, of the three Gitano Pentecostal churches in el Rastro, he never goes to the one lowest down in the *barrio*. He does not like it there, because it is full of *chulos* – people from *las clases bajas, sin nivel cultural* ('from the lower class, lacking [sufficient] culture'). In contrast, people from the upper class, such as himself, go to the church at the top of el Rastro. García's father had previously attended church at the lowest part of the *barrio*, but he no longer did so, García said, after realizing that the other church was better because it did not have 'all the *chulos* and low-class people'.

As we have seen, for the Gitanos of el Rastro, class depends more on *educación* and *cultura* than on economic status. This is social differentiation

constructed through a combination of social rank and its reference to certain cultural values. Of course, the cultural level of people as a measure of class is not unique to the Gitanos of el Rastro. As an illustration, we might recall the example mentioned above, from Gay y Blasco (2003), of the special colonies for Gitanos thought to lack sufficient culture to live amongst the majority population. More broadly, Pierre Bourdieu's (1979) concept of social stratification based on aesthetic taste serves as a more generative example. He argues that among the French upper classes how one chooses to present one's social space and aesthetic dispositions to the world says something very important about one's status, and it serves the task of creating distance between oneself and members of lower groups. For the Gitanos of el Rastro *educación* and *cultura* – intrinsic of bourgeois demeanour and values – are two major ways they distinguish themselves from other Gitano groups whom they depict as belonging (in their eyes) to the lower classes. As I will come back to in Chapter 4, I reason that for these self-employed merchants, living with the fluctuations of larger economic and state development policies, non-monetary values are more stable and perpetual than short-term monetary values. For instance, those Gitano friends of mine that have in the last couple of years experienced a heavy drop in income because of the Covid-19 pandemic still strive to dress, act and speak in accordance with a bourgeois demeanour and values, and in that way maintain – at least for now – their class position despite their economic fall.

Respect

Respeto ('respect') is of central value to the Rastro Gitanos. To come from a good family, with *mucho respeto* ('a lot of respect'), means to come from a highly valued family with a history of good comportment in both life and business, conducted '*a la manera Gitana*' ('the Gitano way'). In addition, for the women, *Gitanas*, of el Rastro, respect has to do with chastity (and virginity in the case of young, unmarried women), aesthetic refinement, hard work, family commitment, keeping one's house in order and catering to the needs of their husbands (sexually, materially and emotionally). Albeit somewhat differently, for the men, respect has equally to do with hard work, family commitment and providing for one's wife (sexually, materially and emotionally), children and extended family. However, it is also about being strong (*fuerte*) and capable (*capable*), sexually and materially. The Rastro Gitanos also practise the social custom of calling on appointed *hombres de respeto* ('traditional men of respect') to find solutions and make decisions when conflicts arise. I was told that, in the past, *los hombres de respeto* were men of great conduct; they were moral men, and their reward for resolving conflicts in the community was increased moral and social respectability.

‘Today, if a man of respect is called upon, he could charge you money, easily 1,000 euros, for his work. The graver the conflict, the larger the amount charged’, implying that money has become relevant for how cultural values, morality, respect and power relations are defined.

During fieldwork, I was told that some Gitanos of el Rastro had become wealthier than their neighbours through the purchase and sale of gold and jewellery – a widespread practice in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis. Many of my interlocutors spoke of this tendency with some concern, saying that these newly minted Gitanos now received greater respect, irrespective of the ‘way’ in which they had achieved their success. In the past, my Gitano companions told me, *respeto* had been based on a moral evaluation; now it was about to become a financial evaluation. According to the Rastro Gitanos, *el mundo de los Payos* (‘the world of the Payos’) ‘is all about the money’. This tendency, of translating and evaluating everything into monetary terms and gains, was perceived to have seeped into their own social institution of *los hombres de respeto* (or *los ancianos*, ‘the elders’). These internal changes regarding strong ‘monetization’ at a local level do in fact mirror broader changes in wider society (Berry 1995; Bloch and Parry 1989; Maurer 2006; Røyrvik 2021). The concept of monetization refers to the processes where money and monetary value become prime tools of commensuration, valorisation and conversion in the (post)modern era. In his analysis of money, numbers and market relations in the state of Chiapas in southern Mexico in the 1970s, Thomas Crump (1978: 507), for example, explains how ‘the equivalence property of money ... converts two unlike things into each other, and so money, in its own terms, effaces the distinctions inherent in any system of classification, so you can mix chalk with cheese’. According to Bill Maurer (2006: 23), this echoes the idea of Marx and Simmel that ‘money commensurates, flattens, and homogenizes’. Several other ethnographic studies point in a similar direction. Mariana Ferreira (1997) shows in her study of some Brazilian indigenous groups how money and numbers together become the chief means of quantitative comparison, measurement and evaluation – creating conflicts with other value systems. Sharon Hutchinson (1992) illustrates with her study of the Nuer how money works as a means of commensuration between unequal values, but also how personal possessions are invested with deeper meaning and importance.

If we return to the local notion of *respeto*, another observed tendency among the Gitanos of el Rastro is for pastors in the evangelical Gitano churches to be more involved in resolving conflicts that were previously resolved by *los ancianos*; in some cases, the two roles might overlap. Although conflict did arise on one occasion during my fieldwork – between *los ancianos* attending el culto and the pastor, due to these new developments in hierarchy – the

generally held view is that pastors hold *respeto spiritual* ('spiritual respect') and *los ancianos* hold *respeto social* ('social respect'); hence, they should not be in conflict. Another aspect of both institutions – if we might call them that – and with reference to the monetization of social values, is that it now seems like both the pastors' and *los ancianos*' relation to the general Rastro Gitano community is being mediated by money; for the former in the shape of *la ofrenda* ('the offerings') and for the latter in the form of economic compensation. In short, while *respeto* based on non-monetary values is held high as a means of distinction among the Rastro Gitanos, it is simultaneously increasingly challenged by monetary values, which might change drastically the way in which internal social relations, status and position are evaluated in the future among the Gitanos of el Rastro.

Pure and Holy Persons

In addition to *respeto*, other moral evaluations, such as being *sincero* (sincere), *puro* (pure) and *sencillo* (straightforward or simple-hearted), are relevant to Rastro Gitano categorizations and distinctions. '*Soy un simple gitánico*' ('I am a simple little Gitano'), the pastor would say from the pulpit: '*un simple gitánico, sincero y sencillo*' ('a simple little Gitano, straightforward and sincere'). These concepts have both a moral and a religious foundation, and they arguably form the marrow of the Gitanos' social modes of differentiation, both internally and externally, in relation to both class belonging and ethnic identity. These religiously inspired ideas intersect with the Gitanos' idea of being 'God's chosen people'. In her study of the Gitanos of Jarana, on the outskirts of Madrid, Paloma Gay y Blasco (2002, 2012) shows how, in Gitano Pentecostalism, the distinction between the saved and the damned overlaps with the opposition between the Gitanos and the Payos. In extension, my material points to multiple differentiations and overlaps that challenge simplistic assumptions of allegedly unambiguous dichotomies, such as Gitano versus Payo and saved versus damned. Moreover, for the Gitanos of el Rastro, religious and social ideas and means of differentiation, as those just mentioned, become equally central in their class stratifications, where long-term, non-monetary values such as *educación*, *cultura*, *respeto*, to be sincere, pure- and simple-hearted, and to have a proper bourgeois demeanour and values all co-constitute and contribute to a combined ethno-socio-religious notion of class belonging where the Gitanos of el Rastro place themselves in a superior social class.

As shown in the empirical sections above, I would argue that multiple distinctions may be constructed within seemingly simple identity categories. These distinctions emerge, take form and are reformed through a practice that simultaneously accentuates both the performative and situational

aspects of identity and its more essentializing and objectifying qualities. Thus, (ethnic) identity categories and notions of ‘we’ and ‘other’ are, in the Rastro Gitano context, plurivocal, contested and highly contextual and social but at the same time rigid in their categorical intent. This is especially true of the Rastro Gitanos’ descriptions of other Gitanos, in which (ethnic) identity is coupled with ideas of class – with all its monetary and, not least, non-monetary content.

Contrasting with the locally produced Rastro Gitano identity, as I have just presented it, is the pan-European Roma ethnic identity, as this is produced and promoted through current EU integration measures (EURoma 2012, 2013) and operationalized by various Gitano NGOs ‘on the ground’. The following sections will elaborate on the differences between these two notions of identity, as seen from the point of view of the Gitanos of el Rastro.

GITANO OR ROMA?

The final contextualization made in this chapter emerges from the complex and at times troublesome interrelation between the locally produced Rastro Gitano identity, ideology and livelihood and the unifying, pan-European ‘Roma ethnic group’. As previously mentioned, the use of ‘ethnicity’ as an analytical construct in the study of Gitanos is not unproblematic (e.g. Stewart 2013). Elsewhere (Brodersen and Røyrvik 2021), I highlight the creation and use of the all-inclusive Roma label by current EU integration policies (e.g. EURoma 2010, 2013; Sigona and Trehan 2009; Simhandl 2009). Such a label attempts to make various Gypsy peoples comparable through their common ethnicity and – on a certain level – paint them as ethnically the same, in a process of ‘ethnification’ (Brodersen and Røyrvik 2021). Furthermore, such practices imply that the ‘Roma ethnic group’ is commensurable and comparable to other ethnic groups, such as the Catalans, the Galicians or the Bretons.

In one sense, my material shows that the Gitanos of el Rastro are not ethnic in the standard meaning of the word, relating to nationhood, shared ancestry and common origins. Traditionally, they have not had a political authority unifying them across kinship lines, regional ancestry, sociocultural affinities and class belonging, and they have not created *el pueblo Gitano* on principles of harmony and unity (see Gay y Blasco 2002 for similar findings). However, my findings do in fact also suggest that the Rastro Gitanos are moving in the direction of seeing themselves as something akin to a classic ethnic group. In my view, this is not primarily because of the NGO and state push towards integration and assimilation but due to their great religious engagement and ritually shaped, biblically formulated and historically rooted identity

and imagined homeland – that is, their becoming as *a* people with *a* history and an almost certain future in God’s celestial kingdom. Briefly, the way in which the Rastro Gitanos narrate their past origins holds that the Gitanos of Spain come from Israel, that they are direct descendants of Jesus Christ and that they are not only *el pueblo de Dios* (‘God’s people’) but also *los elegidos* (‘[God’s] chosen ones’).³ As highlighted by Elfriede Hermann (2005), ‘emotions are involved in forming historicity’. The Rastro Gitanos’ intense, emotional, ritualized, collective and individual religious experiences in *el culto* exhibit his point in a very vivid manner. Such experiences involve feelings of fear and desire, frivolity and ecstasy, exaltation and tension, mirth and relaxation – all emotions that comprise the Rastro Gitano cultic habitus, as identified in Chapter 7. On a further note, the *creyentes*’ intense physical and emotional cultic engagement unites Biblical content (particularly the Old Testament) with their own experiences of historical and present-day suffering, a powerful amalgamation in which the biblical dimension and the Gitano dimension become one. Although this biblical Gitano narrative is recounted with great humour by the Gitanos of el Rastro, because of its daily ritualization it seemingly takes part as a natural and taken-for-granted aspect of their self-conceptualization.

In the following, I present what I see as an apparent juxtaposition between present-day depictions of Gitano identity as seen from a ‘bottom-up’, collectively produced self-ascription in el Rastro, on the one hand, and the ‘top-down’, externally produced categorical label of ‘Roma’, applied in current EU integration policies and elsewhere.

The word ‘Gitano’ is a Spanish term, and for the Gitanos of el Rastro – as for the Spanish majority population – the ‘Gitano’ label can be applied both locally and globally. Newly arrived beggars from Eastern Europe working the streets of Madrid, for instance, are called *rumanos con etnia Gitana* (‘Romanians with Gitana ethnicity’). Interestingly, my Gitano companions in el Rastro were generally unaware of the use of the term ‘Roma’ as a rough equivalent to ‘Gitano’, and they never showed any self-identification with the newly arrived Roma from Romania or Bulgaria. In a similar vein, none of my Payo acquaintances recognized the Gitanos as Roma. Once, a Romanian woman turned up at the market stands in el Rastro, begging the Gitano merchants in a combined ironic and mildly aggressive tone to give her either money or something she could sell in the streets. They received her with great kindness and humour. Later, I was told by some Gitano friends who had witnessed the episode that they had learned from some Gitano employees of an NGO that the Spanish Gitanos had an ancient link with the Roma of Eastern Europe, and that they therefore needed to help one another out. However, despite this ancient link, the Gitanos did not see them as the same: ‘The Romanians are brutal’, they said. ‘They are

poor, they beg, and they smoke, they are like how we were in the past, but we have advanced, we have become more civilized; they have not, they are uncivilized.' Along similar lines, a Rastro Gitano summarized the distinction as follows: 'They [the Roma of Romania and Bulgaria] smoke, they swear, they are impolite, uncultured and barbarian.' By emphasizing these elements, with their particular notion of class belonging and evaluation (as seen in the above discussions), the Rastro Gitanos in fact position the Romanian Roma not only as someone distinct from themselves but also as someone belonging to an inferior social class. In general, the Gitanos of el Rastro did not feel that the term 'Roma' included them. Although they acknowledged that some exotic history might bind them together, based on their combined ethno-socio-religious notion of class belonging, they felt that the Roma people begging in the streets of Madrid should never be seen as belonging to the same group of people as themselves. More so, the Gitanos of el Rastro consider themselves Spanish, placing them at an even further distance from the Roma of Romania or Bulgaria.

The Rastro Gitanos perceive the ethnic label 'Roma' as an externally produced category. Nevertheless, as Gay y Blasco (2002) has also shown, through processes of what we might call 'strategic essentialism' and 'ethnic incorporation', many interest groups (and academics) fighting for Gitano rights have come to apply the label of 'Roma' when talking and writing about Gitanos. In my inquiries, I found several examples of Gitano NGOs using the term 'Roma' to refer to Gitanos and, specifically, the Gitano community in Spain (for examples, see Brodersen and Røyrvik 2021). Although many voices from different perspectives warn against any intermixing of identity markers, this nevertheless seems to be a uniform trend, also in the Spanish context.

According to the strategic documents concerning EU integration policies (EURoma 2010, 2013), the European Roma population is the largest ethnic minority group in Europe, numbering 11–12 million people (EURoma 2010: 5). Furthermore, the Roma represent Europe's poorest, most discriminated against and most socially excluded minority group (ibid.). It was clear from my conversations with Gitano interlocutors that any association with the Eastern European Roma served to distance them further from the majority population, alienating them even more and making their otherness a by-product of their relation to the Payo population, rather than a phenomenon in itself – produced *both* in contrast to Payo society and *sui generis*.

Within Spain, the politicization of Gypsy/Roma communities began as early as the mid-1960s (Gay y Blasco 2002; Cantón-Delgado et al. 2020), and it has since undergone huge growth, corresponding with EU expansion and the increasing global acceptance of the self-legitimization of minority

groups. The political context of the EU proposes a transnational political framework, and it assumes that all Roma groups have universal interests and that they are made up of a global diaspora of Indian origin. Indeed, as Gay y Blasco argues (1999, 2002), Roma NGOs wish to reformulate the meaning of Gypsiness, and they have turned to the non-Gypsy world for instruments to dramatize their reformulations. However, she warns that by fully embracing the ideological premises of personhood that currently prevail in non-Gypsy spheres of international identity politics, Roma activism runs the risk of reducing Gypsiness to 'its minimal cultural prop ... akin to a badge that comes to symbolize nothing but itself' (San Román 1986, in Gay y Blasco 1999: 186).

Along these lines, I would argue that it is through these efforts that Gypsiness is made commensurable to the non-Gypsy world. I propose that the recategorization of Europe's diverse Gypsy populations into a single umbrella category pertaining to the Roma ethnic group serves to replace these groups with a new global discourse of ethnicity, human rights and not least, proletarianization (due to its focus on Roma integration into the mainstream labour market); however, at the same time, this ideologically driven reclassification creates a new arena of relations and connections, transcending the specificities of a single locality. In recent years, the ambiguity connected with the use of 'Roma' and 'Romani' as umbrella terms for all Gypsy/Roma peoples in Europe has been a concern for many stakeholders (Matras 2013: 244), who emphasize that the choice of terminology should in no way attempt to homogenize the various groups. This being the case, I would also argue that the renaming and reframing of Gypsies/Roma nevertheless creates opportunity for new political realities – enactments of what Bourdieu (1977) accentuated as the struggle over representations of reality. They are, in other words, ideologically shaped and motivated. And, as illustrated in the previous sections regarding the Rastro Gitanos' engagement with creating internal social differences and stratifications, these discussions about ethnic labels and categories are therefore not merely typological (analysis of different classificatory categories); they concern power relations, hierarchies and stratifications, as well as the right to autonomy, self-representation and sociocultural diversity. Differently put, typological discussions of an anthropological kind should always be seen as enactments of the struggle between various ideologically unequally positioned parties, to create and represent the social world – in which classifications and differentiations play a central role.

The non-Roma discourse around the future of Roma identity and lifestyle centres mainly on two themes – the conservation of old traditions and cultural props and symbols, and/or the development and modernization of lifestyle and modes of production. Both rest on the assumption that

‘Roma-ness’ is something in and of itself – that is, an entity with pre-given dispositions. However, in this very construction, I would argue that the putative original object takes on a new form. In the context of current EU policies and the increasing number of Roma/Gitano NGOs, it is possible to grasp the contours of a potential transformation of an experience and practice-based mode of creating identity and belonging, according to the Rastro Gitanos’ own locally and ideologically produced mode of differentiation and self-ascription, into a more instrumental and rational classification, whereby all of Europe’s ‘Gypsy-like’ groups are categorized under a singular label of ‘Roma’. Given this risk and potential clash of conflict, it is imperative that this label is opened up to reveal the ideological premises it serves (see Brodersen and Røyrvik 2021, for such an analysis).

CONCLUDING REMARKS: BETWEEN BEING AND BECOMING

Gitano identity in the context of el Rastro is comprised of a multitude of factors. One key factor is the Rastro Gitanos’ relation to the Payos, as well as to other non-Gitano groups. However, as we have seen, of equal importance are their internal differentiations, concerning ideas of regional belonging and class, the emic categories of *educacion* and *cultura*, and the notions of being *capaz* (‘capable’), *chulo* (‘cocky’), *sincero* (‘sincere’), *puro* (‘pure’) and *sencillo* (‘straightforward’ or ‘simple-hearted’). Their identity also pertains to their ideological choice to work as self-employed *comerciantes*, their religious practices and beliefs as *creyentes* and their practices of endogamy and their creation of a ‘society within society’ – all topics that I will address in subsequent chapters. On a further note, Gitano differentiations are combined and contrasted at a local level, with the current EU political processes of seeking to unify all Gypsy/Roma groups in Europe into one single Roma ethnic minority, and with the global movements of, for example, ethnic minority rights groups, Pentecostalism and neoliberalism.

Although most Payos I met during fieldwork depicted themselves as superior to the Gitanos (of el Rastro and elsewhere) in all formal skills and manners (i.e. formal education, rational thinking, gender equality, work ethic, civility and morality), the Gitanos of el Rastro – especially those who have converted to Pentecostalism – see themselves as superior to the Payo population. For them, it is not primarily ‘ethnic’ grounds that distinguish them from the Payos but more so their self-employment, religious faith, moral conduct and a life lived ‘*a la manera Gitana*’ (‘the Gitano way’). Of course, these factors are intrinsically connected to how they view their Gitano identity; however, and as mentioned earlier, whether this identity can best be described as ‘ethnic’ or not is a more complex question (see also

Messing and Bereményi 2017). The majority of the Gitanos of el Rastro are Pentecostal; but, Pentecostal or otherwise, by being of *la raza Gitana* ('the Gitano race') and by being *pura Gitana* ('pure Gitano'), as the Gitanos say, they see themselves as endowed with at least the potentiality for a range of honourable talents and virtues: collectivism and close family ties, traditionalism, high moral conduct, respect towards elders, entrepreneurial cleverness and know-how, passion and warm-heartedness, cooking and hospitality skills, and multiple talents in the artistic sphere (e.g. painting, singing, rhythmic clapping, dancing and guitar playing). Concepts such as *el duende* (see Chapters 5 and 6), *el arte* ('the art of ...') and *virtudes* ('virtues') are used to describe the moments in which these endowments arise and become enacted. Furthermore, I am told that it is only Gitanos that can properly actuate these skills and create moments of great art. Talent is understood as *potential* because it requires hard work and correct living to come to fruition. The implicit idea, as it was explained to me, is that without living *a la manera Gitana* the Gitanos would risk becoming less Gitano and thus more Payo. In Chapters 8 and 9, I explore the idea of potentiality in greater depth.

As I have sought to show in this chapter, Rastro Gitano identity is complex and constantly fluctuating; it is situational, contextual, relational and performative, yet it is also heavily dichotomized, rigid, stiff, essentialized and entified. In other words, more than just through performative actions, I take Gitano identity to be constituted in the dialectics between *being* and *becoming*. This indicates that I understand the Rastro Gitanos to have a combined essentialist and performative idea of their identity: they take themselves to be born Gitano, from Gitano parents, but they also believe that, to *become* Gitano, one must act and live in accordance with Gitano moral notions in a Gitano environment and family setting – that is, a life lived *a la manera Gitana*. Hence, inherent in the notion of 'being Gitano' lies the essentialized and naturalized content of both past and present, which gives shape to the Gitano identity – as this unfolds in the context of el Rastro. This state of *being* is constituted by ideas about Gitano origins (e.g. that the Gitanos are God's chosen people). It also contains the *cicatrices* ('scars') caused by the Gitanos' history of oppression and persecution by the state, as partly presented in this chapter.

To provide but a small example of this concept, the *creyentes* told me that the 'new' young pastors in church lack the *cicatrices* that the elders have; because of this shortcoming, the congregation view them as 'cold' and 'stiff', without the ability to 'talk to people' – 'like you people from the north', they told me, referring to what they recognized as a classic cold and stiff Nordic appearance. Hence, in the eyes of the *creyentes*, the young pastors are not able to reach the hearts of their congregation as the older

pastors do, and when the new pastors notice this, they become moralizing and patronizing, something that makes them even less popular. Based on the many hours I spent in *el culto*, I can certainly confirm these distinctions made by the *creyentes* and how they manifest in the ritual. Furthermore, underscoring the great cleavage between the old and the new pastors, the *creyentes* call the new pastors 'internet pastors', on the basis that they suspect they obtain their sermons, Biblical citations and interpretations from the internet. This was meant to suggest that these young pastors do not truly contemplate and mirror the words of the Bible in their own lives, souls and minds, and that they are preoccupied with gaining a position and authority in the church and *el pueblo Gitano*.

I was told a pastor could not give a good sermon until he had 'lived, struggled, knocked on doors, gathered people, been persecuted and felt suffering in his own body'. 'Experience without suffering is not worth anything', said Bobola, referencing the young pastors, 'you must have suffered to have your heart with you, and you must have your heart with you at all times, not only during the *culto* sessions.' Equally, 'with everything you do, you must have your heart with you', Manuel told me. 'For example, when you write, you have to *feel* what you write, *be* in your writing with your entire self, and always, always have your heart with you when you write.' However, in the end, although often with great mockery, anger and frustration on the part of the *creyentes*, the young pastors were always cordially excused because, as I was told, 'they do not have the scars, they do not know any other way'.

Being Gitano thus involves a claimed Biblical origin and having a history of suffering and *cicatrizas* and certain inherent skills and talents. But as we have learned, all these perceived innate talents and virtues mean nothing if they are not nurtured, 'lived out', expressed and actualized in the present through practices conducted *a la manera Gitana*. This could involve, for instance, living by the ethos of 'being one's own master' through self-employment and anti-proletarianization. Another example is how young Gitanas (i.e. girls or young women) engage in a process of *becoming* Gitana through a practice of premarital chastity and virginity. Hence, as the title of this chapter indicates, I propose approaching Gitano identity as something created at the interface between a very rigid understanding of *being* combined with a highly flexible movement towards *becoming*.

NOTES

1. After the Jewish ‘converts’ (*los judeoconversos*) moved into the area following their 1492 expulsion by the Reyes Católicos, they referred to their children as *Manolos* and *Manolas* to conceal their Jewish background.
2. With ‘ideological’ I refer to the the neo-Marxian Gramscian version of the concept, where society consists of several ideological, constantly ‘in-the-making’ currents where only one group’s ideology becomes hegemonical at a certain moment in time (Hall 1988). We should also bear in mind that the Gramscian approach to ideology and hegemony is close to Bourdieu’s and Foucault’s (and my own), involving not only state control but also civil society; knowledge paradigms, modes of hierarchizations, stratifications and differentiations, taste and what is considered ‘proper’ values, manners of dressing, behaving, speaking and gesturing.
3. For similar findings, see: Maximoff (1966: 25); Williams (1991: 87); Gay y Blasco (2002); Méndez López (2005); Montañés (2016); Cantón-Delgado (2018); Cantón-Delgado et al. (2020).