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## Articles

## Informal fairs and commercial labor migration. Notes for the Chilean-Peruvian border corridor debate

### Ferias informales y migración laboral comercial. Apuntes para el debate del corredor fronterizo peruano-chileno

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#### Abstract

During the last five years, production has increased over the Chilean Peruvian border. However, the ethnographic deepening of the dynamics of this corridor will allow us to delve into its complex cross-border nature, allowing us to discuss theoretical and methodological proposals. This paper addresses the social, economic and cultural dynamics of the Second-Use Clothing and Footwear Trade Shows on the southern Peruvian border, complementing studies conducted in northern Chile. Finally, the results presented will discuss theoretical assumptions proposed for the Chilean-Peruvian border corridor. In this way, by means of an ethnographic methodology developed based on interview and observation techniques, it is sought to generate evidence of the socio-territorial dynamics manifested in the public sphere of the mentioned fairs. Finally, we will observe that the public sphere itself described allows us to discuss the territorial scales of analysis of the border corridor generating indications to consider a scale that extends to the Peruvian and Bolivian Altiplano.

Keywords: commercial labor migration, informal fairs, border, Tacna, Arica.

#### Resumen

Durante los últimos cinco años ha aumentado la producción sobre la frontera peruano-chilena. No obstante, la profundización etnográfica sobre las dinámicas de este corredor permitirá ahondar sobre el carácter transfronterizo complejo del mismo, permitiéndonos debatir propuestas teóricas y metodológicas. El presente trabajo aborda las dinámicas sociales, económicas y culturales de

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las ferias de ropa y calzado de segundo uso en la frontera sur peruana, complementando estudios realizados en el norte chileno. Finalmente, los resultados expuestos discutirán presupuestos teóricos propuestos para el corredor fronterizo peruano-chileno. De esta manera, por medio de una metodología etnográfica desarrollada con base en las técnicas de entrevistas y observación, se busca generar evidencias de las dinámicas socio-territoriales manifiestas en la esfera pública de las referidas ferias. Finalmente, observaremos que la propia esfera pública descrita nos permite discutir las escalas territoriales de análisis del corredor fronterizo generándose indicios para considerar una escala que se extienda hasta el Altiplano peruano y boliviano. Palabras clave: migración laboral comercial, ferias informales, frontera, Tacna, Arica.

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Although individual mobility between Peru and Chile has been addressed since the end of the nineties, during the last five years, the standpoint of these phenomena has been decentralized with the discussion of both theoretical and methodological perspectives of analysis (Valdebenito & Guizardi, 2015; Guizardi, Heredia, Muñoz, Riquelme & Valdebenito, 2014; Guizardi, Valdebenito, Nazal & López, 2017; Tapia, Liberona & Contreras, 2017; Liberona, Tapia & Contreras, 2017; Dammert, Bensús, Sarmiento & Prieto, 2017; Valdebenito, 2018; Dilla & Álvarez, 2018; Jiménez, 2018).

Thus, the standpoint of discourses on Chilean-Peruvian individual mobility has moved away from political-academic centers such as Lima and Santiago, starting a research and problematization process from northern Chile and, to a lesser extent, from southern Peru. A key analysis milestone of this new standpoint is the Peruvian-Chilean border, which encompasses a wide range of analytical and methodological categories, such as the problematization of the territorial scale and migration phenomena (Tapia, 2012), the criticism of “*santiaguismo metodológico*” [methodological Santiguism] (Guizardi, Nazal, Valdebenito & López, 2017), *hyper-border* spaces (Guizardi, Valdebenito et al., 2017), the analysis from *circulatory territories* (Liberona et al., 2017) and the analysis of the southern Peruvian border as a *global node* (Dammert et al., 2017).

Nevertheless, an ethnographic reflection on the Peruvian-Chilean border will allow us to further the theoretical scope of its behavior and to highlight that the socio-territorial dynamics of the border transcend a Tacna-Arica or Peru-Chile isomorphism, establishing circuits, networks and nodes with the Peruvian and Bolivian highlands.

One of the phenomena constantly mentioned in studies of this border, the sale of second-hand clothing and footwear (Berganza & Cerna, 2011; Guizardi et al., 2014; Valdebenito & Guizardi, 2015; Tapia et al., 2017; Dammert et al., 2017; Dilla & Álvarez, 2018), has been extensively analyzed in the study of *paseras* [border crossers]

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<sup>1</sup> The present study is the result of the research project titled “Caracterización de los usuarios y comercios aledaños a las ferias ambulantes de ropa y calzado de segundo uso en la ciudad de Tacna”, approved and funded by the Facultad de Arquitectura y Urbanismo-FAU of the Universidad Privada de Tacna-UPT; Peru, upon Resolution Number 011-2018-UPT-FAU/CF.

or *hormigas* [ants],<sup>2</sup> women who carry this merchandise across the Peruvian-Chilean border. Identifying *paseras* [border crossers] as *cruzadores ejemplares de las fronteras* [examples of border crossers] (Grimson, 2004) or border subjects of the Tacna-Arica corridor hides a broader border phenomenon and narrows theoretical discussions about territorial and border issues of the Peruvian-Chilean corridor.

Therefore, the aim of the present study was to further the analysis of social and commercial dynamics of informal clothing and footwear markets to complement and report the research of this phenomenon marginally investigated in other studies, thereby considering theoretical and analytical possibilities for the study of the border corridor.

The present article is divided into four key sections: theoretical framework, methodological aspects, results and conclusions. The first section has been further subdivided into three parts: “What has been said about the Peruvian-Chilean border?”; this subtitle, in the form of a question, will update us on the academic and scientific research advances on this border corridor; “Theoretical perspectives on the Peruvian-Chilean border”, in which we summarize the theoretical assumptions of the analysis of this border performed in this study; and “Merchant migration on the Tacna-Arica border: the case of informal clothing and footwear markets”, which contextualizes this phenomenon.

The methodological aspects section is followed by the results; we have proposed a qualitative strategy based on the ethnographic observation of informal clothing and footwear markets, particularly focusing on social and commercial phenomena underlying these markets. Thus, we visualize three specific activities in this phenomenon: food sales, transport services, and other services, which will be analyzed under three categories, products or services offered, merchant characteristics and spatial arrangement of the trade. Last, the conclusions will summarize these facts and theoretical possibilities for the discussion of the Peruvian-Chilean border corridor.

## Theoretical Framework

### *What has Been Said about the Peruvian-Chilean Border?*

In Peru, migration studies are among the main drivers of research output on the southern border. During the 1990s, one of the first studies on Peruvian migration (Altamirano, n.d.) highlighted that the first migration corridors between Peru and other Latin American countries, mainly Argentina and Venezuela, dated back to the 1950s and 1960s.

Later, the 1980 internal armed conflict multiplied the number of Peruvians who immigrated, not only to the United States, Western Europe or Japan but also to some South American countries, including Argentina and Chile (Altamirano, n.d.). Simultaneously, mobility during the 1990s was marked by economic recession and underemployment (Altamirano, n.d.) caused by neo-liberal adjustment policies, whereas according to other authors (Alvites, 2011), the period from 1990 to 2007 shows a sustained increase in emigration processes.

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<sup>2</sup> “It is called ant trade because people crossing the border transport the merchandise little by little. They cross the border often, carrying small amounts each time” (Berganza & Cerna, 2011, p. 88).

The migration processes of the 1990s and early 2000s led to the consolidation of migration studies focused on specific matters such as remittances (Altamirano, 2009) or sustaining long-distance family relationships (Alvites, 2011), while the mobility of Peruvians towards Chile was becoming an underexplored field of study.

However, one of the most important materials would be the research conducted by Berganza and Cerna (2011) on individual mobility between the cities of Tacna (Peru), Arica and Iquique (Chile), furthering the knowledge on dynamics of border mobility and decentralizing reflections on Peruvian emigration from other cities in the country, beyond the metropolis Lima. In addition, a study on borders and informal and illegal economies in Peru was published in 2017 (Dammert et al., 2017) that highlighted the importance of border cities for circuits of informal and illegal markets within the framework of a global system.

Regarding Chilean studies, “since the 1990s, mounting concerns about migration in Chile monopolized communication and political discourse, spawning considerable research output” (Guizardi, Nazal et al., 2017, p. 29). Nevertheless, as subsequently indicated by Guizardi, Nazal et al. (2017), Chilean research output, from the 2000s, encompassed various socio-anthropological studies on the migration phenomenon in Chile.

Although the aforementioned statement shows the origin of the concern about social studies on Peruvian-Chilean relations, Chilean migration studies from the 2000s suffered from some biases such as the assumptions that Chile has become a priority Latin American migration destination from the late 1990s to present day or that migration is a predominantly Santiguan phenomenon.

After these initial Peruvian-Chilean migration studies, research on the phenomenon from northern Chile must also be considered, including the studies by Valdebenito and Guizardi (2015), who developed an ethnography of Peruvian migrants in northern Chile; by Guizardi et al. (2014), who conducted a visual ethnographic study on spatial appropriations of Peruvian and Bolivian migrants in the International Terminal of Arica and its surroundings; by Guizardi, Nazal et al. (2017), who reported a critical methodological perspective on migration studies in Chile; by Tapia et al. (2017), who made a key contribution about the problem of individual mobility in northern Chile and southern Peru from a circulatory territory perspective;<sup>3</sup> by Liberona et al. (2017), who conducted an investigation on mobility from northern Chile to southern Peru for healthcare services; by Valdebenito (2018), who published critical perspectives on the concepts of cross-border urban complexes and regions in the Tacna-Arica context; and last, by Dilla and Álvarez (2018), who analyzed migration phenomena between northern

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<sup>3</sup> The term *circulatory territory*, coined by Alain Tarrus, refers to “the socialization of spaces that support mobility practices” (cited by Tapia et al., 2017, p. 119), allowing two critical meanings of circulation and territory: the first one is the denial of the premise of sedentarization as a fundamental element for territorialization, and the second one is that according to which a conception that gives social meaning to spatial movement requires abandoning concepts such as *circulation* or *flows*.

Adopting *circulatory territory* in the analysis of the Chilean-Peruvian border makes it possible to problematize mobility concepts that, in previous analyses (Altamirano, 2009; Alvites, 2011), would prioritize intermetropolitan territorial dynamics or *change of address* as an essential element of the migratory phenomenon. Although quantitative research generates interesting evidence about this border territory, we should assess whether the concept of circulatory territory is capable of challenging our approach to the broader territorial categories that go beyond strictly Tacno-Ariqueño or Peruvian-Chilean phenomena, analyzing socio-spatial practices of the Peruvian and Bolivian highlands in this territory.

Chile and southern Peru from the theoretical perspective of cross-border urban complexes.<sup>4</sup>

In short, research on Peruvian-Chilean migration originated in the likely misrepresented (Guizardi, Nazal et al., 2017) phenomenon of overwhelming Peruvian migration to Chilean territory, which has been extensively studied by researchers from both countries. However, from the second decade of the twentieth century, the Peruvian-Chilean problem begins to decentralize, as its research problems and loci of enunciation move to the border territories themselves, with Chilean research always prevailing over Peruvian studies.

However, another important fact for Peruvian-Chilean relations strengthened different lines of research. During this period, in 2014, the Judgment of the International Court of Justice of The Hague on the case concerning the maritime dispute between Peru and Chile (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Perú [MRE], 2015) consolidated a previous line of national and institutional research on borders from a methodological perspective, particularly focusing on binational history studies (Cavieres, 2006; Cavieres & Aljovín de Losada, 2005; Parodi & González, 2014; Cavieres, 2015), on education and intercultural studies (Bustos, 2017; Pizarro & Bustos, 2015), and on international relations studies (Panfichi & Venero, 2017).

Last, reviewing studies on the Peruvian-Chilean border highlights a series of problems, such as centralism in the conception of the border problem, based on theoretical and methodological bases of its analysis. In turn, the Peruvian-Chilean border problem is closely related to the phenomenon of mobility, but those studies have overlooked other problems such as the criminal economy, trade policies, water problems and territorial governance, among other topics.

In summary, Peruvian-Chilean migration studies indicate a recent decentralization of research, which is starting to highlight some border phenomena and corridors. Accordingly, we should investigate the theoretical-territorial assumptions that are made when interpreting the Peruvian-Chilean border.

## Theoretical Perspectives on the Peruvian-Chilean Border

Studies on the Peruvian-Chilean border have included discussions intrinsic to territorial theories. Considering the research on this border developed during the second half of the twentieth century, we will make some territorial assumptions, which entails two specific aspects.

The first of these aspects is to set aside migratory studies conducted from a national methodological perspective. Consequently, a national scale must be used in any type of social and political analysis, which in addition requires regarding national society as a unit of analysis (Massó, 2012). Within this first analysis group are the first Peruvian studies on emigration (Altamirano, n.d.; Alvites, 2011) and the Chilean studies cited

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<sup>4</sup> As indicated by Haroldo Dilla (2015), cross-border urban complexes (cucs) suggest a concept of *complexity* broad enough to address various socio-territorial systemic interactions and conformations, whereas the *cross-border* character refers to the relationship between actors of interacting communities. Therefore, the term *cuc* is flexible enough to address various specific situations.

in the work by Guizardi, Nazal et al. (2017). This was done to differentiate the first phase of research on Peruvian-Chilean relations from the subsequent phase of studies conducted in specific regions, such as southern Peru (Berganza & Cerna, 2011; Pastor, 2017; Ponce, 2017; Ponce, 2018), Peruvian borders (Dammert et al., 2017; Jiménez, 2018; Jiménez, 2019), and northern Chile (Valdebenito & Guizardi, 2015; Guizardi et al., 2014; Guizardi, Valdebenito et al. 2017; Tapia et al., 2017; Liberona et al., 2017; Valdebenito, 2018; Dilla & Álvarez, 2018).

A critical review of migrations from Peru to Chile will require reconsidering theoretical and methodological perspectives by problematizing the territorial scale of analysis (Tapia, 2012), adopting the proposal of circulatory territory and its determination through border mobility practices (Tapia et al., 2017; Liberona et al., 2017) and differentiating migration trajectories from a critical perspective of nationalism or methodological Santiguanism (Guizardi, Nazal et al., 2017) while reconstructing territories based on the ethnographic analysis of border practices (Guizardi et al., 2014; Valdebenito & Guizardi, 2015), establishing new analytical categories such as hyper-border spaces<sup>5</sup> (Guizardi, Valdebenito et al., 2017) and designing a specific Tacna-Arica border urbanization scale (Valdebenito, 2018).

Furthermore, in studies on southern Peru and its relationship with northern Chile, the interrelation between Tacna and Puno must be considered<sup>6</sup> when analyzing city outskirts (Ponce, 2018) and jobs and housing (Ponce, 2017) and examining identity aspects and conflicts over urban space occupation (Pastor, 2017), as well as the interrelation with northern Chile (Berganza & Cerna, 2011), the territorial role of the southern Peruvian border as a global node (Dammert et al., 2017) and cross-border trade and merchant mobility (Jiménez, 2018; Jiménez, 2019).

Peruvian research, which, in contrast to Chilean research, is based on books and theses, shows various territorial interpretations. Thus, we can analyze researchers of urban development in southern Peru in an ethnographic study (Pastor, 2017; Ponce, 2017; Ponce, 2018), reconstructing territorial trajectories based on in-depth interviews, documentary analysis and observation techniques.

Regarding specific approaches of border research, the study by Dammert et al. (2017) analyzes zonal logic of territoriality, understood as the spatial continuum, and reticular analysis, resulting from the globalization process. Thus, border cities must be analyzed considering the various manifestations of these territorial logics and their various scalar effects. The study by Berganza and Cerna (2011) considers the polysemy of border a natural, political and cultural limitation, wherein border relations are governed by local practices, social conventions and state regulations. This perception makes it possible to differentiate southern Peru and northern Chile migration trajectories from central and northern Peru migration trajectories to the main cities of Chile. Last, Jiménez (2018) analyzes the social construction of territory at a local border scale, which conflicts with the legal determinations of the global scale.

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<sup>5</sup> The *hyper-border* space is a theoretical construct derived from the ethnographic analysis of the International Terminal of Arica and its surroundings. Ethnographic analysis shows that the *Terminal* itself is a *border space* within the *Tacna-Arica border space* itself. The presence of migrants in the *Terminal* and surroundings does create an ethnic enclave, enclosed and separated from the border territory. It is rather the migrant dynamic itself that interacts synchronously with the border territory itself.

<sup>6</sup> Peruvian department bordering Bolivia.

Second, when referring the theoretical-territorial perspectives that have underlined reflections on the Peruvian-Chilean border, we should briefly review theoretical reflections on borders as an analytical category. However, for the sake of brevity, we will refer to the territorial reflections that have underlined approaches to South American borders; to some extent, reflections on South American borders derive from reflections on the Mexico-United States border.

Since the 1980s, several theories about the Mexico-United States border interpreted it as a cross-border region (Bustamante, 1989) or cross-border metropolis (Herzog, 1990); nevertheless, Tito Alegría (2009) developed a critical review of both concepts considering that the Tijuana-San Diego pair cannot be regarded as a harmonic system or as a cross-border metropolis because “they are not a cross-border metropolitan unit but instead two neighboring cities with different urban forms, different ways of generating this urban form and a tendency towards structural divergence” (Alegría, 2009, p. 353).

The thesis by Tito Alegría (2009) is discussed by Haroldo Dilla (2008) regarding the theory of cross-border urban complexes, which are understood as complex systems that “function amid contradictions due to the prevalence of asymmetries and different modalities of unequal exchange, which can generate strong political and cultural tensions” (Dilla, 2008, p. 170), and the thesis of cross-border urban complexes will be used to interpret the Tacna-Arica border (Dilla & Álvarez, 2018).

The proposal of cross-border urban complexes (Dilla, 2008; Dilla & Álvarez, 2018), as well as the criticism of cross-border metropolises (Alegría, 2009), is framed in a debate on “cross-border expression in cities, metropolises or urban conglomerates located at borders” (Tapia, 2017), underscoring the importance of border practices—the product of asymmetries—as the core of territorial cross-border regions in the case of Tacna (Peru) and Arica (Chile).

Although the study of the Tacna-Arica space has gained relevance through critical analysis of migrations between Peru and Chile, further research evidence must be generated to allow us to validate theoretical and methodological approaches proposed in recent years. Thus, for example, will the complexity manifested in the *circulatory territory* proposal (Tapia et al., 2017), *cross-border urban complexes* (Dilla, 2015) or hyper-border spaces (Guizardi, Valdebenito et al., 2017) inevitably lead us to go beyond the territorial category of the Tacna-Arica or Chile-Peru analysis, to rethink broader socio-spatial categories? We should ask: Is this an exclusively Tacna-Arica or Chile-Peru relationship? Or a necessarily interurban relationship? Can the high plateau be involved in this border relationship?

For such purpose, we will conduct below an ethnographic analysis of informal economic activities in the city of Tacna from the markets of goods smuggled from northern Chile, which will allow us to perform a more in-depth analysis of cross-border relations.

## Merchant Migration in the Tacna-Arica Border: The Case of Informal Clothing and Footwear Markets

Tapia and colleagues (2017) highlight a series of socio-spatial border mobility and practices between the cities of Tacna (Peru) and Arica (Chile), considering mobility a socio-spatial practice that involves crossing the border frequently without changing

residence. In addition, these socio-spatial border practices between the two cities are categorized as productive and reproductive activities.

Merchant mobility (Tapia et al., 2017) is considered a productive practice, as a strategy to achieve economic benefits or material means of subsistence, including salaried worker mobility, freelance worker mobility, in-between worker mobility and seasonal worker mobility. In summary, merchant mobility consists of “merchants who cross the border to buy products on one side and to sell them later on the other side” (Tapia et al., 2017, p. 132).

The clothing and footwear market originated in the cross-border trade that benefited from the Special Border Regime of the Treaty of Lima of 1929,<sup>7</sup> which allowed free trade from Arica (Chile) to Tacna (Peru), from the free port, from the Peruvian railway station in Arica and from the customs agency.

Among the various activities that benefited from free trade under the Special Regime, an activity as daily and local as *ropavejero*<sup>8</sup> [*rag-and-bone man*] became a cross-border activity. As reported by the managers of the clothing and footwear markets themselves, towards the late 1980s and early 1990s, a large sector of the Peruvian population living in Tacna exchanged plastic goods, such as trays, jugs and buckets, for various products in Arica, such as used clothes and shoes, toys, used tools, meshes, ropes and scrap, among other items.<sup>9</sup>

This exchange of second-hand goods heightened when second-hand American clothing began to arrive at the ports of northern Chile:

Because we asked for it ourselves. We talked about what American clothes were coming in and we said: *then bring us American clothes* because we could not go to Iquique since we had no identity document, so we told him *bring them, bring them* to our homes (Peruvian merchant, 60 years of age, cited by Jiménez, 2018).

One of the main factors related to the arrival of second-hand American clothing to northern Chile is the creation of the free economic zone known as *Zona Franca de Iquique* [Free Zone of Iquique] in the late 1970s. The border dynamic triggered by the strengthening of a trade node in the port of Iquique resulted in the creation of local retail stores in Arica, such as *María Eugenia* or *Holguín*, which supplied second-hand clothing and footwear merchants in southern Peru.

However, neoliberal reforms of the 1990s, specifically the creation of Export, Processing, Manufacturing, Merchandising and Service Centers (*Centros de Exportación,*

<sup>7</sup> To understand the Treaty of Lima (or Tacna-Arica compromise) of 1929, the Treaty of Ancón of 1883 must be considered. The Treaty of Ancón ended the armed conflict between Peru and Chile, which began in 1879; among other terms, this treaty ended the conflict, granting Chile control over the Peruvian provinces of Tacna, Arica and Tarapacá, for ten years for the first two and perpetually for the last. After 50 years, when the Treaty of Lima was signed, the governments of Peru and Chile reached an agreement in which the province of Tacna returned to Peru, and the province of Arica remained in Chile.

<sup>8</sup> “A person who sells, in a store or otherwise, old clothes and dresses and used trinkets” (Real Academia Española, 2005, p. 1350).

<sup>9</sup> This information corroborates Fernando Graña (2001), who coined the term *cambio casera* [*peddler*] to describe the work of a group of Peruvian merchants who collect, from door to door, plastic products in exchange for used clothes and shoes in the city of Arica. Importantly, Sonia Zarzuri (cited by Graña, 2001) highlighted that a similar occupation had already emerged in the 1960s, albeit dedicated to the sector of agricultural products.

*Transformación, Industria, Comercialización y Servicios*—CETICOS), affected Peruvian border trade dynamics. The creation of CETICOS in southern Peru transformed border trade dynamics from cross-border exchanges at a local scale to cross-border exchanges at a global scale. Thus, the Trade Regime of CETICOS aligned with the Special Border Regime used by second-hand clothing and footwear merchants.

To some extent, second-hand clothing and footwear has become a commodity moved through various corridors on a global scale, from its origin in Asian production and its use in the global north (Pérez, 2013) to various port corridors anchored in the South American port of Iquique, subsequently traveling through various border corridors such as Tacna-Arica, Peru-Chile (Jiménez, 2018) or Corumbá-Puerto Quijarro on the border between Brazil and Bolivia (Hernández & Loureiro, 2017), to mention just two case studies of this phenomenon.

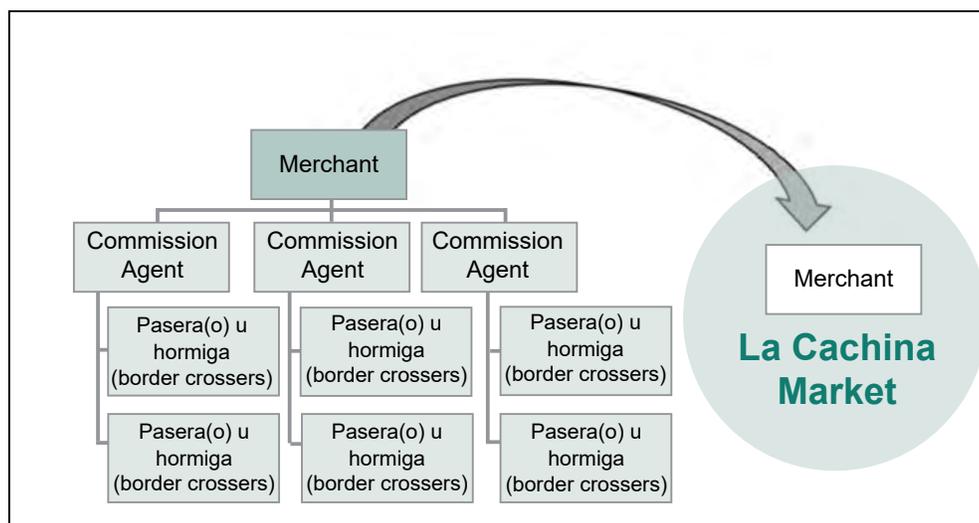
Based on the background reviewed in the previous sections, the second-hand clothing and footwear trade has been analyzed in more than one study, albeit not systematically, primarily the work of *paseras* [border crossers] at the International Bus Terminal in the city of Arica (Guizardi et al., 2014; Valdebenito & Guizardi, 2015) and of *comisionistas* [commission agents] in moving goods across the border (Dilla & Álvarez, 2018), focusing on merchant mobility, on the cross-border character of informal trade (Berganza & Cerna, 2011; Tapia et al., 2017; Dammert et al., 2017) and on urban commercial development in the city of Tacna (Ponce, 2017; Pastor, 2017).

In summary, various instances of informal cross-border trade or merchant mobility have been studied, albeit not from a systematic and comprehensive approach. The movement of goods from the port of Iquique to the Tacna-Arica corridor is supported by an important informal and organizational labor structure involving various actors, including merchants, *comisionistas* [commission agents] and *hormigas* o *paseras* [border crossers]. The merchants are those who have the capital to buy and sell the products and who, in turn, hire *comisionistas* [commission agents] responsible for organizing the movement of goods across the border, which they outsource to *paseros* u *hormigas* [border crossers or “ants”], who ultimately, either carrying them on their bodies or transporting them by other means, transport the merchandise to the city where they will be sold, in this case, Tacna (Peru) (Figure 1).

In turn, although we have already delved into the socio-economic characteristics of informal clothing and footwear markets in other studies (Jiménez, 2018; Jiménez, 2019), this study is focused on a series of informal satellite businesses and on commercial and social dynamics, which account for the development of cross-border economic corridors not only between Tacna (Peru) and Arica (Chile) but also in the Peruvian and Bolivian highlands. The present study will further analyze these commercial and social dynamics, specifically in the informal markets, assessing the extension of border corridors beyond the aforementioned Tacna-Arica isomorphism.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> As indicated by Valdebenito (2018, p. 306), it is necessary to “develop a scale or a much broader geographical approach than that which has been used so far to understand the Tacna-Arica border. A geographical scale or approach capable of overcoming the spatial isomorphism which thus far has been used to study” this border.

**Figure 1: Schematic representation of Tacna-Arica informal trade**

Source: Jiménez (2018).

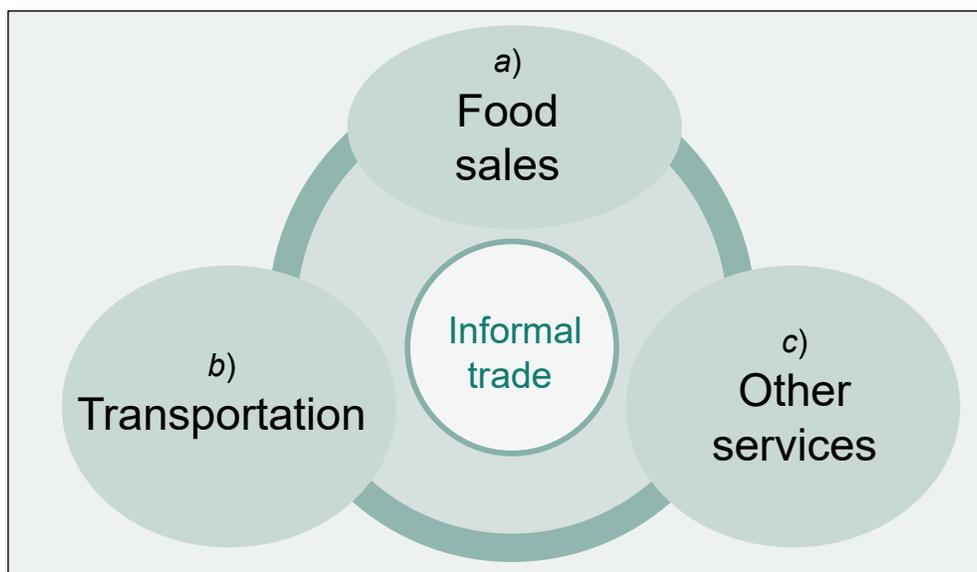
## Methodological Aspects

Because the objective of the present study is to further analyze commercial and social dynamics underlying informal clothing and footwear markets, we have carefully categorized the complexity and diversity of activities that characterize this informal trade. Therefore, we have considered three large groups of activities:

- a) Street food sales, including breakfast, snacks, meals and to-go drinks;
- b) Transportation services, including passengers and goods; and
- c) Other types of services, including cell phone, microfinancing and healthcare services, among others (Figure 2).

To study the informal markets and their commercial and social dynamics, we have used the ethnographic observation technique, which we regard as a tool that goes beyond mere contemplation and that aims to delve deeply into the study situations, maintaining an active role and a permanent reflection while strengthening bonds of trust with the space and the actors involved and attending to the various details and interactions of the phenomenon (Hernández, Fernández & Baptista, 2010, p. 411).

Similarly, the field notes were systematized based on three categories: the products traded, the commercial characteristics, and the spatial arrangement of the informal businesses; based on these categories, the three trade groups mentioned above were analyzed in the context of informal clothing and footwear informal markets.

**Figure 2: Economic activities of informal clothing and footwear markets**

Source: The authors.

## Results

To present the results, we will divide this trade into the three groups of shops adjacent to informal clothing and footwear markets, each of which will be subdivided into the following categories: traded products, merchant characteristics and spatial distribution of the informal businesses. Last, we will briefly summarize the results before the conclusions.

### *Street Food Sales*

The food offered for sale in informal clothing and footwear markets varies by time of day. The diversity of traded products, as well as merchant specificities, exposes a series of socio-cultural characteristics whose interpretation allows us to reconsider territorial analysis categories for the Peru-Chile border corridor.

The day starts with breakfast sales, followed by brunch, lunch and afternoon snack sales. The breakfasts offered range from fruit and vegetable juices to hot drinks, such as *api*,<sup>11</sup> maca smoothies, avena [oat-based] and soy milk, among other beverages

<sup>11</sup> Term derived from *quechua*, which means *corn kernels*. Masculine term used in Peru, Bolivia and northern Argentina, defined as “food prepared with crushed purple corn, seasoned with various ingredients” (Real Academia Española, 2010). In turn, Carmen Pérez (2011) argues that *api* is typical of the Bolivian cities La Paz, Oruro, Cochabamba and Potosí.

consumed when eating empanadas and *sopaipillas* [fried dough].<sup>12</sup> Similarly, among the food offered, lunches include *chakepa* [toasted and coarsely ground barley] soup, *chairito* [chairo], *thimpo de trucha* [trout soup], *mazamorra de calabaza* [pumpkin pudding], fried cheese, *chicharrón de alpaca* [alpaca *chicharrón* (fried alpaca meat)], chuño soup, *picante a la tacneña* [spicy dried lamb or llama stew], *picante de mariscos* [Peruvian spicy seafood stir-fry], ceviche and rice with chicken. As one merchant leader comments:

Those who bring soy and anything alike, in the morning, they come with their soy bag, they buy it, they leave it, they offer it, they buy it. Early on, they also sell carrot extract; similarly, they arrive early. Here, everyone does business, we all buy, nobody leaves without selling anything, they always sell something to support their household (cited by Jiménez, 2018).

After offering breakfast from the early hours of the morning to 10 or 11 am, to both merchants and users and clients of informal clothing markets, brunch or mid-morning foods are sold, including gelatins, ice creams, sweets and quail eggs, among others. As the merchant leaders mention, the mid-morning meal distribution hours serve, in turn, for charging for the food offered earlier in the day: breakfast

Figure 3: Fruit seller



Source: Personal archive.

<sup>12</sup> Feminine term used in Peru, Bolivia, Chile and northern Argentina, defined as “sopaipa, well-whipped, leavened, fried dough that forms a kind of thick pastry” (Real Academia Española, 2010).

Other businesses include ice cream, quail eggs, and fruits as well; those people who are passing by (people with disabilities) sell their chocolates, batteries, toilet paper, records and music. And even the ladies who skip breakfast in the morning, expectant mothers, they are pregnant, also end up charging; they charge after having left the breakfast (interview of a merchant leader, cited by Jiménez, 2018).

In the early hours of the afternoon, immediately after noon, lunch sales begin, which may range from *chakepa* [toasted and coarsely ground barley] soup, *chairito* [chairo], *thimpo de trucha* [trout soup], *mazamorra de calabaza* [pumpkin pudding], fried cheese and alpaca chicharrón. These foods are offered to both stallholders and informal market clients, who can purchase several products, mainly from the South American highlands (Figure 3, Figure 4 and Figure 5).

Figure 4: Foods for sale



Source: Personal archive.

Thus, the products sold by food vendors lead us to rethink the Peru-Chile border corridor. If we limit the border corridor to the Tacna-Arica relationship, how can we explain the cultural presence of the Peruvian highlands typical of the Peru-Bolivia border corridor in a commercial activity recognized in the literature as specific to the Peru-Chile border? The same question is raised when analyzing the characteristics of food merchants. Selling second-hand clothing and footwear is not merely moving merchandise but also involves dynamics and territorial anchors in each of its various processes: purchasing clothes in Iquique or Arica (Chile), organizing the clothes at the Arica International Terminal (Chile), smuggling the clothes through the border checkpoints of Peru and Chile, moving the clothes inside Tacna (Peru) and selling these products at informal clothing and footwear informal, in addition to the various economic activities surrounding the aforementioned informal markets.

Figure 5: Foods for sale: alpaca chicharrón and *thimpo de trucha* [trout soup]



Source: Personal archive.

This process must be mentioned because although the informal economy may affect some vulnerable sectors of the population, the informal economy shows a marked gender division of labor. This is a key feature in food sales.

Figure 6: Seller of *picante a la leña* [spicy dried lamb or llama stew]



Source: Personal archive.

The feminization of informal practices not only encompasses most merchants of second-hand clothing and footwear but also produces economic and survival dynamics (Sassen, 2003) in the work circuits associated with the sale of clothing and footwear. Thus, women are not only the primary used clothing and footwear vendors or intermediaries between *comisionistas* [commission agents] and *paseras* [border crossers] (Dilla & Álvarez, 2018; Guizardi et al., 2014) but also the protagonists of food shops near the informal markets (Figure 6 and Figure 7).

Figure 7: Female food vendor



Source: Personal archive.

The concept of *feminization of survival* (Sassen, 2003) as an analytical key is important in a context in which government revenue is collected from the income of women involved in informal economy dynamics because women's informal work enables a development circuit from which local governments benefit (through taxes paid to the municipality). This informal work includes the sale and transport of clothing as well as the commercial experience around the sale of food as one of the main businesses near the informal markets.

Again, furthering the analysis of the social, economic and cultural dynamics of informal clothing and footwear markets allow us to gain a broader perspective of the Peru-Chile border corridor, beyond Tacna-Arica, observing that the same characteristics of the border population (*paseras* [border crossers]) also extend to the used clothing and footwear informal markets.

Last, the spatial arrangement of the informal businesses can be classified into food stands and food carts. Food carts are located in the informal market walkways, whereas stands are mostly clustered around benches where diners sit down to eat under the shade of a tarp. The food stands are not arranged uniformly, that is, they can be located at the entrance, at the ends of the informal market, or near the avenues around the informal market, thereby providing easy access to kitchen products and utensils (Figure 8).

**Figure 8: Food stands**

Source: Personal archive.

Conversely, food vendors who choose to offer their products inside the informal market find various ways of moving between the busiest areas (Figure 9).

In conclusion, the food trade around second-hand clothing and footwear stands provides us with a series of analytical keys of Peru-Chile border dynamics. First, the feminization of informal economic activities extends beyond primarily border activities such as trade and moving second-hand clothing from Chile to Peru, thus indicating that the characteristics of the border phenomenon extend beyond the concept of border because satellite informal economic activities at clothing and footwear informal markets retain similar characteristics.

Figure 9: Food cart



Source: Personal archive.

In turn, culinary activities accompany the experience of informal border trade because the relationship between merchants and clients is not limited to a trade relationship but instead constructs a public sphere of relationships including food experiences shared both among merchants themselves and with the clients.

Details regarding food allow us to reconstruct the circuits and corridors that transcend the Tacna-Arica space, autonomastically regarded as the border space; the latter is constructed through a series of concatenations among other territories such as Puno, Ilave, Huancané, Chuchuito and Yunguyo in the Peruvian highlands as well as La Paz, Oruro, Desaguadero and Potosí in Bolivia, extending to the same dynamics created from Iquique in Chile. Hence, the presence of highland foods allows us to redraw the border corridor beyond its current limits.

Last, the layout of the stands and food carts reflects a commercial space constructed based on the collaboration between merchant stands and food vendors; this collaboration is not limited to the arrangement of the stands but instead involves the strengthening of bonds of trust and reciprocity while watching over the vendor stand or cart when the owner is absent, changing money into smaller amounts (*sencilleo*),<sup>13</sup> bartering and buying or selling on credit.

### *Transportation Services*

Transportation services around informal markets show various manifestations. The presence of the informal market increases urban mobility and public transportation in the sales areas, including busses, taxis and motorcycle taxis,<sup>14</sup> to such an extent that the last two types of transportation have stands inside the informal markets (Figure 10).

However, the offer of transportation services is not limited to transferring users and customers in and out of the informal clothing and footwear market; the customers' routes can be highly heterogeneous and affect the analytical proposal of the informal market as a junction or transport hub, extending beyond the purely border concept.

Thus, transportation services transfer not only clients but also all merchants and their merchandise, who thus also avoid, within the city, the constant control of local security agents. Furthermore, transporting merchandise already moved to the city of Tacna from Arica and Iquique (Chile) involves two routes: one from the home of each merchant to the respective informal market and another from the perimeter of the informal market to the stand.

The merchandise is transported from the merchant's home to the informal market in station wagon taxis, which are often driven by the merchants themselves, as a family-run business and as a complement to other labor activities, such as transportation or border work. In turn, the merchandise is transported from the perimeter of the informal market to the respective stand in carts driven mainly by seniors, who move merchandise, such as toys, clothing and footwear, among others, for 80 cents (Figure 11).

<sup>13</sup> Of *sencillear*: "to break or change large bills or coins into the equivalent amount in smaller bills or coins" (Real Academia Española, 2010).

<sup>14</sup> Three-wheeled, roofed motorcycle used for short distances (Real Academia Española, 2010)

Figure 10: Taxi stand



Source: Personal archive.

The merchandise is moved, both inside the informal market and around the city, early in the morning (4 am), returning home late in the afternoon (5 or 6 pm). This activity has a specific profile: adult males and the elderly. In contrast to food sales, predominantly female, transportation services rely predominantly on adult males who have access to some capital to support the mobility business. However, the profile of those who transport goods in carts is the elderly male population. Although we cannot address the *feminization* of survival, we can emphasize that the dynamics of economic survival against capitalism are underpinned by the most indigent and disadvantaged population.

**Figure 11: Senior with a cart**

Source: Personal archive.

Last, as mentioned above, the main taxi and motorcycle taxi stands are located around the informal markets, whereas most public transportation users come from districts near Tacna such as Ciudad Nueva, Gregorio Albarracín or Alto de la Alianza. Again, the analysis of the phenomenon of mobility around clothing and footwear informal markets contradicts the so-called Tacna-Arica isomorphism of the Peru-Chile border corridor by highlighting the diverse origins of informal market users, beyond the city of Tacna.

### *Other Services*

This section on other types of services includes selling music and renting bathrooms, showers and warehouses, as well as other services, primarily related to personal care; in addition, formal services, including cell phone and microfinance companies, which provide their services to merchants, can also be found in informal markets (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Cell phone service provider



Source: Personal archive.

*Other services* predominantly involves informal businesses, such as renting spaces in houses near the informal market and shower and bathroom services, in addition to alternative healthcare services, ranging from massages and natural skin care products to alternative treatments for discomforts or diseases. Conversely, formal services such as cell phone and microfinance companies take advantage of the informal economy in two broad senses: first, by harnessing the possibilities offered by the informal market in terms of access to and variety of buyers and, second, by hiring young people, predominantly contractors, who must reach specific sales goals for their monthly salaries (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Personal care services



Source: Personal archive.

Although those who provide other services have a more heterogeneous profile than do food vendors and public transportation providers, they are predominantly young workers, who reinvent forms of economic survival thanks to the possibilities offered by informal clothing and footwear markets.

Similarly to food vendors, the providers that offer personal care products, such as hygiene and health products, are scattered inside the informal market; in turn, the stands of other services are located at the entrances and exits of the informal markets and sell music, finance services and cell phones, whereas bathrooms, showers and

warehouses are primarily located at the ends of the informal market, within houses and hotels near the venue.

The stands around the informal market can be both mobile and fixed because their main users are not only the visitors but also the merchants themselves, who need some services when spending long periods of the day at the informal market and when accompanied by their family.

The situation of the users, both visitors and merchants, determines the various uses of these services, ranging from food and transportation to other services. This is important to mention because the presence of services near the stands in informal clothing markets reflects an experience being built of living inside the informal market. Merchants and street vendors not only maintain a trade relationship but also use the commercial space as a meeting point for social interactions between buyers and merchants as well as between merchants and vendors of nearby businesses; these relationships involve not only trade (and the possible economic revenue from this commercial exchange) but also interactions (Lacarrieu, 2016) ranging from borrowing and getting change to watching over stands and merchandise, among others.

Thus, the heterogeneity of the actors located inside and outside the informal clothing and footwear market implies not only a commercial interaction but also other meanings; in the words of Ángela Giglia (2012), “street vending is an attractive activity—among other things—for the possibility of being in the open public space, seeing a lot of people go by and talking to and building relationships with different people” (Giglia, 2012, p. 93). The public sphere strengthened through social and commercial relationships between buyers and sellers extends to interactions between the vendors themselves either by watching over each other’s stands or by borrowing money, bartering and *sencilleo* [changing money into smaller amounts] as well as by the care for their own body and that of their relatives. Hence, the public sphere constructed by the heterogeneous panoply of actors in informal clothing and footwear markets allows us to further characterize the composition of the Peru-Chile border corridor.

## Conclusions

Thus far, we have observed that the public sphere produced around informal clothing and footwear markets shows a broader territorial behavior than does the Tacna-Arica or Chile-Peru categories, including the Peruvian and Bolivian highlands in this relationship. Beyond a local scope, the Peru-Chile border involves a series of minor corridor concatenations from Arica and Iquique in Chile and Desaguadero, La Paz, Oruro and Potosí in Bolivia to Puno, Ilave, Huancané, Chuchuito, Yunguyo, Ciudad Nueva, Alto de la Alianza, Gregorio Albarracín and other nearby cities in southern Peru. Here, we addressed a series of clues highlighting the importance of this evidence for further analyzing the complex nature of the cross-border territory.

One of the main observations in the literature reduces the transfer of used clothing from Arica to Tacna to an exclusively border activity of the Peru-Chile border corridor. However, this movement of goods is in fact a more complex activity involving various

cities and actors, which contradicts the proposal of a local corridor and the Tacna-Arica border isomorphism. By observing that the activity is not restricted to Tacna and Arica, we realize that we require new methods and strictly cross-border approaches for an adequate interpretation of these phenomena.

The sale of second-hand clothing and footwear is an activity focused on the merchants of these products at street markets in the urban area of Tacna. They purchase the products in Arica, which in turn are transported from Iquique, both in Chile. The merchandise purchased by the Peruvian merchants crosses the border from Peru to Chile through an organizational framework consisting of *comisionistas* [commission agents] and *paseras* [border crossers], often supported on family structures.

However, the activity does not end there. Once the goods enter the Peruvian territory, another journey starts, also consisting of seizures and detentions, from the Peruvian border crossing to the merchants' homes. Finally, these goods are offered at informal second-hand clothing and footwear markets, which create social, urban and economic dynamics in Tacna, creating other subsistence economies described in this article.

A more in-depth analysis of the dynamics of second-hand clothing and footwear markets makes us rethink the notion of *pasera* as one of the figures *sine qua non* of the Peru-Chile border corridor and its consequences, such as limiting this corridor to the Tacna-Arica relationship at the local level. The practices observed in the informal markets, as well as the characteristics of the actors, lead us to consider that the so-called Tacna-Arica corridor is even more complex, involving the Peru-Bolivia corridor as well as cities and populated towns adjacent to the highland region.

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