

# Hyper-Border Spaces: Peruvian Migrants in the Arica Bus Terminal (Chile)\*

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## ABSTRACT

This article presents an ethnographic case study of the experiences of Peruvian female migrants at the International Bus Terminal of Arica (Chile). The analysis aims to establish theoretical-methodological linkages that question the structure-agency dichotomy, based on the spatial experiences of locals and migrants. We begin by contextualizing the research and debating some theoretical categories of the urban migration studies. Later we develop an ethnographic description of the *Terminal's* internal spaces and how they “interlock” with the landscape of Arica. Our main conclusion regarding these findings proposes the concept of *hyper-border spatiality*.

*Keywords:* 1. female Peruvian migration, 2. transnationalism, 3. border, 4. Arica, 5. Chile.

## Espacios hiperfronterizos: Migrantes peruanos en la Terminal de Autobuses de Arica, Chile

## RESUMEN

El artículo presenta un estudio de caso etnográfico sobre la experiencia de peruanas migrantes en el *Terminal Internacional Rodoviario* de Arica (Chile). Desarrollamos un análisis que, partiendo de la descripción del espacio y de las experiencias entre nativos y migrantes, establece vinculaciones teórico-empíricas que tensionan la dicotomía estructura-agencia. Empezaremos contextualizando la investigación, discutiendo las algunas de las categorías teóricas de los estudios de la migración urbana. Luego, desarrollamos una descripción etnográfica de los espacios internos del Terminal y de cómo ellos se “interconectan” con el paisaje de Arica. Nuestra principal conclusión sobre nuestros hallazgos es la proposición del concepto de espacialidad hiperfronteriza.

*Palabras-clave:* 1. migración femenina peruana, 2. transnacionalismo, 3. frontera, 4. Arica, 5. Chile.

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## *Research Context, Proposal and Methodology*

The city of Arica is located in northern Chile, in the Atacama Desert, specifically a territory commonly known as the “Great North,” which previously belonged to Peru and Bolivia, and was annexed to Chile after the Pacific War (1879-1883).<sup>1</sup> Following the conflict, the southern part of the old Peruvian region of Tacna—to which the “twin” of cities Tacna and Arica belonged (González, 2008:13)—remained under dispute and occupied by the Chilean Army. The situation was resolved with the Lima Treaty (1929), an agreement between the states that side-stepped mechanisms of popular participation, —such as the plebiscite that was stipulated to take place within ten years after the war ended (González, 2008:14)—and defined Tacna as Peruvian and Arica as Chilean (Podestá, 2011:124). The new border between Peru and Chile was established between the two cities (González, 2008). The annexed territory underwent a nationalization process—commonly known as *Chilenization*—implemented by the Chilean state (Díaz, 2006; González, 2004) with the goal of integrating spaces and people to the Chilean ideals of national identity (Guizardi and Garcés, 2013). A cultural difference was established between Chileans on the one side, and Peruvians and Bolivians on the other, ideologically defining the latter two as indigenous and barbaric (McEvoy, 2011). *Chilenization* consolidated a violent process of nationalization through public education (Cavieres, 2006), the church, the paramilitary, and cultural apparatuses (González, 2004). Currently, Arica is an urban scenario<sup>2</sup> in which the construction of a national border is an ongoing process that is evident in the militarization of the city and its periphery,<sup>3</sup> and in the relevance of imaginaries that clearly define “us” as separate from “others.” This creates a complex dialogue with the territory’s

<sup>1</sup> The Great North is made up of three regions of the current Chilean political-administrative division: Arica and Parinacota (capital city: Arica); Tarapacá (capital city: Iquique) and Antofagasta (capital city: Antofagasta).

<sup>2</sup> The city had a population of 210,914 inhabitants in 2012, accounting for nearly the entire population of the Arica and Parinacota Region, consisting of 213,595 inhabitants. (INE, 2012:58).

<sup>3</sup> It is the city with the largest military contingent in Chile (Holahan, 2005).

vast history of human flows, and with the current intensification of migratory and commercial pathways between Chile, Peru and Bolivia, in which Arica takes an active part.<sup>4</sup>

The *Terminal Internacional Rodoviario* (*International Bus Terminal*)—*the Terminal*—organizes bus and *colectivo*<sup>5</sup> traffic between Arica and Tacna, serving passengers who come from different towns in Peru and Bolivia. The land border crossing between Peru and Chile—through the Peruvian *Santa Rosa*, and the Chilean *Chacalluta*—is one of the busiest frontier crossings in South America (Podestá, 2011:128). This crossing is also a gateway toward Argentina (Cozzani and Insa, 2011) and to other Chilean regions for Peruvian migrants, and it is the preferred itinerary of Bolivian migrants who travel from La Paz to the Tarapacá and Antofagasta regions (attracted by job offers in the mining industry).<sup>6</sup> The *Terminal* simultaneously articulates the flow of merchandise between Peru, Bolivia and Chile. It is one of the central routes for salespeople of all three nationalities (especially Peruvians and Bolivians) who transport textile products, “ethnic” handicrafts, herbal teas, musical instruments, souvenirs and food products to the rest of Chile. Arica is the hub of many trans-Andean routes, and an intermediate point between two free trade zones: the Peruvian one in Tacna is 52 km to the north and its Chilean counterpart in Iquique is 310 km to the south. The population of Arica travels to Tacna to access everyday products (such as beauty supplies, clothes, shoes) as well as services (health, dental, eye health, cosmetic), or simply to enjoy Peruvian cuisine for lunch on the weekends. The *Terminal* is the urban axis that organizes these flows on the Chilean side, maintaining a link (economic, social, cultural and political) be-

<sup>4</sup> Despite representing only 1.29% of the total national population (INE, 2012:15), 3.6% of all migrants in Chile are concentrated in Arica and Parinacota, and it ranks as the fourth Chilean region in terms of foreigners (DEM, 2012:3).

<sup>5</sup> Taxis that take up to four passengers, charging approximately 4,000 Chilean pesos (8 USD) per passenger.

<sup>6</sup> The mining industry is Chile’s main economic activity. The northern territory is responsible for a significant portion of the Gross National Product, led by the Tarapacá and Antofagasta regions (located south of Arica and Parinacota) (Carrasco and Vega, 2011).

tween Tacna and Arica. Each of these *transnational, cross-border movements* organizes a specific spatiality within and around the *Terminal*. In it, Peruvian migrant women take over spaces to organize their commercial practices or to put in place strategies to offer themselves for work. With them, the cross-border articulation that the *Terminal* produces overflows onto the adjacent streets.

This work discusses the results of an ethnographic study carried out between November 2012 and July 2013, and focused on the experiences of Peruvian migrants in the Arica *Terminal*. Its general objective is to develop an analysis that establishes theoretical-empirical links that put the structure-agency dichotomy under tension. Our specific task is to analyze the *Terminal's spatial overflow* through the convergences between: 1) the national and the transnational; 2) structural constrictions and subjective agency; and 3) the reproductions and appropriations of gender inequalities. The methodology and techniques of fieldwork used in our case study were based on multi-sited ethnography and the Extended Case Method (EMC). Following the Extended Case Method, we focused on the ethnographic viewpoint that Max Gluckman referred to as *social situations* or “*trouble situations*” (Evens, 2006:53).<sup>7</sup> During fieldwork, four types of multi-sited ethnographic strategies (Marcus, 1995:106-112) were combined: *we followed people, conflicts, biographies*, and we developed *strategically sited ethnography*. The *Bus Terminal* is one of these strategic locations.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> These configure serious and dramatic social incidents; tense, unstable relationships in which structural constrictions are appropriated by subjective agency, without losing their restrictive dimension (Evens, 2006:53).

<sup>8</sup> Fieldwork gave way to descriptive-analytical material composed of a total of 47 weekly narratives (compiling daily experiences in the field), and a photographic record of the studied spaces (140 cataloged/classified photos). Qualitative interviews were carried out in different spaces in Arica; they were digitally recorded, transcribed and analyzed, based on discourse analysis (MAXQDA software). Included among them are: 32 life stories of Peruvian women, 10 semi-structured interviews with Peruvian men, 21 semi-structured interviews with state officials and voluntary workers of NGOs that deal with migrants, and 15 semi-structured interviews with Peruvian women in the Acha (Arica) penitentiary.

*Theoretical Debates:  
Spatial Dimensions of Migration in the City*

To begin, we should point out the importance of Arica's condition as a frontier territory: this alters the manner in which agency and structure give feedback to each other in the construction of "the local." According to Kearney (2003), national frontiers constitute *sui generis* spaces that defy the fixation of modern bipolarities and the defining principles of "the national": separation (ethnic, phenotypic, cultural) between "us" and "them," and the spatially marked limitations of what belongs to the nation. Border territories are crossed by three political dimensions that constitute their spatiality (Kearney, 2008). *Literal frontiers*, materialized as political and territorial demarcations; *identities* crossed by the variables of ethnicity, class and nationality; and *political regimes* (official and non-official entities in charge of drawing and enforcing political and identity frontiers). Borders generate plural spaces in which different nation-states act structurally (building legitimacies and regimes that people ascribe to), while the agency of various individuals (through movement) re-signifies and negotiates national classifications and the classifying hierarchization that the state intends to legitimize "within" its limits (Brenna, 2011:12). An analytical focus applied while working with frontiers should—more than verify the static categories around nationality—observe their re-articulation based on the movement and porosity that characterize them. In debates on migration, the idea that the trans-border condition of international migrants transforms them into "trans-migrants" predominates, and so the existence of *transnational practices* materializes: these are social fields that link the country of origin with the host society in various ways. According to Glick-Schiller *et al.* (2005:68), trans-migrants develop and maintain multiple relationships (familial, economic, social, organizational, religious and political) that cross borders. Moreover, they take measures, make decisions, have interests and develop identities within these social networks that connect them with two or more societies simultane-

ously.<sup>9</sup> This condition generates a social experience of *simultaneity*, a being at origin and destination all at once, which reconfigures the local spaces of countries that receive migrants. Forms, experiences, odors, flavors and manners that were (spatially) produced in their places of origin (Levitt and Glick-Schiller, 2004) *overflow* or spill over into these host spaces (Garcés, 2007:18). When practices that are born in specific contexts are able to travel (as a result of migratory movement, or due to global circulation of a *generalized social imagination*), they update themselves in other places, different from those in which they were conceived.<sup>10</sup> Spaces between which there can be no geographic continuity (in Euclidean terms) overlap and *overflow* through the migrant experience.<sup>11</sup> Thus, it is necessary to give centrality to the transnational spatiality of communities and individuals based “not on the distance that separates them, but on the density and frequency of community practices that brings them closer together” (Besserer, 2004:8). Thus, *migrant transnationalism* has an impact on the construction of different forms of *social and cultural capital*—that travel from different places carried by the migrants in an incorporated manner, as *habitus*—and which perme-

<sup>9</sup> Kearney (1995:548) underlines the political content of the experience of migrant transnationalism, emphasizing that it puts pressure upon political-cultural projects of national states, which seek to gain hegemony over processes with other states, with their own citizens and with their “aliens”.

<sup>10</sup> The concept of spatial overflow is inspired by Appadurai’s debate (1996) on global processes and their ability to reinvent the relationship between “the local” and “local practices.” The intensification of global displacements promotes the deterritorialization of cultural dynamics and this impacts the production of localities. The latter demands its inscription onto bodies through processes of socialization that are both a way to embody a locality, and to locate bodies (Appadurai, 1996:179). Immigrants’ travels articulating different social spaces create the possibility to perform the locality embodied by them in places other than the ones in which these subjects were socialized. This is what we call here the “overflow” of a social place into another: a process both material and immaterial and one that can be linked to Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus*.

<sup>11</sup> These conceptualizations of the spatial dynamics of transnational migration (as a time-space dialectic between material and immaterial aspects of social life and displacements) have acquired impressive importance in the social sciences during the last three decades. Theoretical arguments in which space is understood as a mere platform are still echoing among researchers who study international migration. This Euclidian perspective does not allow an understanding of transnational simultaneity as we propose in the present article, since both arguments are supported by radically divergent epistemologies.

ate space while becoming simultaneously permeated by space. By *migrant social capital* we understand “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition” (Bourdieu in Portes, 2000:45). This long-lasting network does not occur naturally, but weaves itself from the strategies oriented toward the institutionalization of group relationships (Besserer, 1999; Portes, 2000), and can be defined as: 1) the *social relationships* of these migrants by themselves, when they give access to the knowledge and resources that are at the disposal of the network members; and 2) the quantity and quality of resources (Portes, 2000:45). *Cultural capital* would correspond precisely to the knowledge and resources incorporated by the migrants. The link between *social and cultural capitals* and the formation of social spaces is mediated by the dimension of *habitus*: the subjectively-incorporated manner (assumed by the body) of social, cultural, economic and symbolic capitals. The *habitus* “adheres” to the body as a second nature: it is “the social” turned into “long-lasting *dispositions*, long-lasting manners of carrying oneself, moving, talking, walking, thinking and feeling that present themselves as natural appearances” (Gutiérrez, 2004:293). The *habitus* is a way of being that constitutes the subject and leaves an imprint upon space through corporeality.<sup>12</sup> One of the forms of transnational migrant materiality that interests scholars the most is, precisely, the construction of a transnational simultaneity *in space*. It imprints itself in the way that migrants occupy the places where they live, spend their leisure time and work, giving them functional meanings that strengthen the social reproduction of a collective and its

<sup>12</sup> This conceptualization of *habitus* relates agency and structure, since *habitus* becomes the margin in which humans can act and transform the social world, while being, at the same time, conformed by its structural limitations. The dialectical relationship of agency and structure relies on the fact that, “structures constitutive of a particular type of environment [...] produce *habitus*, systems of durable, transportable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively ‘regulated’ and ‘regular’ without in any way being the product of obedience to rules [...] Collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor” (Bourdieu, 1997:41).

autonomy.<sup>13</sup> But these spaces cannot be understood solely as a locus in which autonomy and/or the ability to appropriate spaces takes shape. Thanks to the authors of the Chicago School, urban social-anthropology has seen how migrants constitute “the others” in the city, deepening the social field of hierarchies through their categorization as ‘aliens’ by the native society (Kearney, 1995). Structurally, migrants occupy residential spaces deemed as city margins or *Urban Transition Zones* (Martínez-Veiga, 1999:13-14): areas of economic depreciation caused by real estate deterioration, a consequence of their residents’ loss of economic power and the lack of state investment in infrastructure. Properties in the *transition zone* constitute a market of “infra-housing,” which is occupied by migrants who pay higher sums than those paid by locals for spaces in better conditions. Owners see in this transaction the opportunity to generate a profit without having to make an investment. This structural condition of urban marginalization takes place simultaneously with the migrants’ appropriation of deteriorated spaces, thus contributing to urban revitalization.

Another favorite object of research in the transnationalism field is the study of businesses that are managed by migrants or aimed at migrant consumers, and which result in a sense of identity in the occupation of public space: the so-called *ethnic economies*.<sup>14</sup> In second place, these businesses produce a specific form of social *otherness* experienced by migrants, unlike locals from the host society, in reference to the principle of the collective’s *self-enclosure*. Entrepreneurship becomes an *enclave* that acts as a self-segregation logic within urban space (Garcés, 2011). The establishment of these economies frequently consolidates the group’s social reproduction,

<sup>13</sup> As Garcés (2007:13) explains, “the autonomy with which migratory networks function and the way that they settle themselves within society gradually provide content to the appropriation of urban spaces undertaken by the migrants. Other functions that cooperate in the formation of *space as a resource* for economic reproduction of migration, are added [...] to the privileged use of a meeting point.”

<sup>14</sup> *Ethnic* here means, first of all, that these markets import products, practices and types of consumption from their countries of origin, sold as “authentically” migrant: as forms that constitute their identity (Garcés, 2011; Light, 1972). The concept of ethnic economies refers to enterprises developed by migrants, with a migrant initial capital, managed, maintained and controlled by migrant labor, and destined to cater to a migrant consumer (Portes and Jensen, 1989).



while at the same time it reinforces a differentiation between migrants and “locals” in terms of consumption habits and practices. In studies on residential and commercial spaces adopted by migrants, there is a widespread notion that these constitute the spatial manner of a *social enclave* that adopts urban margins, bestowing them with new meanings. Migrant agency produces these spaces in which the experience of a transnational identity is possible, but at the cost of turning the collective into itself, causing its *segregation* from the “native” surroundings and the reproduction of a displaced position on the social field. The following ethnography evaluates if this is the case for the migrant experience of Peruvian women in Arica’s *Terminal*.

### *The Terminal “Inside” and “Outside”*

The Terminal is located on *Diego Portales Avenue*. To its right we find the *National Bus Terminal* (the terminals are separated by *Hernyn Trizano Street*); on the left, there is a gas station (next to *Nicolás Hidalgo Street*). The facilities of the *National Terminal* contrast sharply with those of the *International*.<sup>15</sup> The first has a well-kept, pyramid-shaped, completely roofed building. The latter is a big yard that is divided in two by a small, roofed construction that houses small shops; passenger and cargo traffic takes place out in the open. The contrast in infrastructure reflects the relative importance of *national* vs. *international* transport: Arica’s connection with other Chilean towns takes priority, while links with neighboring countries, Peru and Bolivia (the only available destinations abroad), are of secondary importance. The building that houses the *International Terminal* reflects this marginalization. The experience and daily use of both *Terminals* manifests the contradiction of national centrality evident in space: it gives this centrality

<sup>15</sup> The administration of both is currently in private hands. The origin of the *National Terminal* goes back to the Junta de Adelanto de Arica (JAA, Arica Development Board), a state institution that promoted local development (1958–1976), and that built the station, giving temporary right of use to private companies (*partial privatization*). The *International Terminal* was built by the Arica municipality, and was *totally privatized* and sold to ASEVERTRANS in 2006.

a new dimension through the intense border crossing practices articulated by the *International Terminal*. These are carried out by labor migrants, merchants, tourists and businesspeople (of local or underground economies). The *International Terminal* carries more traffic, structuring Arica's connections with *other spaces abroad*.

The *International Terminal* occupies a walled rectangular lot, which is divided internally in two yards. Upon entering it through the main access—on *Diego Portales Avenue*—, we find the *colectivo lot* on the right hand side, and to the left, the *Bus Yard* (with buses departing to Peru and Bolivia carrying 30-60 passengers). Between them in the central building there are 28 shops that sell bus tickets, transport and tourism services, and money transfer services to Peru and Bolivia, plus call centers. In the *colectivo lot*, immediately to the right of the entrance door, there are another 14 shop spaces, offering the same services. On the back wall of this yard there is a small zone, protected from the sun by a tarp, intended as a waiting area for passengers taking *colectivos* to Tacna. There we see the constant presence of Peruvian women who work with *Ropa Americana*: second-hand clothes, imported from the United States, and transported from Chile to Peru. Upon entering the *Bus Yard*, to the left of the main door, there is a small restaurant that serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. There, salespeople, bikers, travel assistants, *Terminal* employees and migrants awaiting a job all eat and take a break from the multiple trips between Tacna and Arica. Next to the restaurant there are public restrooms, where you can shower and use the toilet for 300 Chilean pesos.<sup>16</sup> In front of the bathroom, a low wall is used to sit on by passengers who are waiting for the buses and also by the women who work classifying the used garments to be transported to Tacna. In the *Bus Yard* we see the impact of a national frontier: the area next to the door is exclusively for buses that travel between here and Peru. The back area is for buses con-

<sup>16</sup> An important alternative for migrants who have no rented room in Arica. The boarding and guest houses charge 500 Chilean pesos for a shower. Migrants who work on a daily wage go to the restrooms at the *Terminal* to shower. A migrant is paid between 5,000 and 8,000 Chilean pesos for a day's work (12 hours) in the agricultural valleys of Arica, while workers in urban areas, both male and female, get between 6,000 and 10,000 Chilean pesos. The use of a shower thus constitutes 6-10% of the daily income of a migrant day laborer.

necting with Bolivia. In the space before the entrance door to the yard, on the right, there are three carts, selling fast food “to-go.” These businesses are managed by Chilean and Peruvian businessmen and constitute points of social interaction, besides offering an inexpensive food alternative. The carts are a preview of the *Terminal*’s overflow to the surrounding urban space. They offer a mix of Peruvian and Chilean fare, and are operated by migrant employees and Chilean owners (or with migrant owners and employees), personifying an economy in which all are interdependently included.

On the opposite side of the *Terminal*, on *Diego Portales Avenue*, facing the bus area, we find numerous businesses that are related to the border crossing between Chile, Peru and Bolivia. Their names—‘*Bolivian Residencial*’ and ‘*Cevichería Sabor Peruano*’—and the use of flags on their signs reinforce this. An abundance of boarding houses, hostels and hotels—both legal and illegal—offer beds to travelers, tourists, salespeople and migrants. Services vary in terms of prices and the amenities they offer. Some guest houses rent out bed spaces in rooms shared by up to ten people (without the right to use the bathroom); while at the same time hotels offer suites that include cable television, refrigerator, bathroom and some of the daily meals. There are call centers (offering telephone booths, money transfer services and internet); Peruvian restaurants; bazaars (small shops that carry a great variety of everyday use products); and bus ticket offices for travel to Peru and Bolivia and international transport services.

Across *Diego Portales Avenue*, in front of the *Terminal*, is the *Juan Noé* neighborhood. It is an old textiles neighborhood that nowadays mixes educational, housing and commercial spaces. Here, underground businesses spring up in the *Ropa Americana* market, and include guest houses, restaurants and illegal shops that cater to migrants. Some of these businesses also serve Chileans and travelers of different nationalities. The neighborhood was built in the 1960s as a residential area for workers employed by Arica’s industrial sector, when the city was still a Free Trade Port Zone (1953-1963). *Juan Noé* received rural migrants (predominantly of Aymara origin) from the Andean Plateau, who made up the new working

class. Transferring the Free Trade Zone to Iquique undermined the city's industrial development, resulting in an economic stagnation that has left its mark on *Juan Noé*. The disappearance of industry caused the neighborhood's marginalization. In this neighborhood there are many one-family homes that are currently shared by three or four migrant families. The properties are "adapted" as the owners see fit (the homes are divided into fractions that are rented out to different families). This modality of subletting is one of the most common used among migrants who live between Peru and Chile; most of them work without a contract and hold no residence permits, making them unable to formally rent any other living space. Most landlords refuse to sign a contract with those who cannot provide evidence of a stable income. The neighborhood is home to two types of Peruvian women migrants. The first group consists of those who have lived for at least five years in Arica and rent homes or parts thereof (usually a room). Some of them hold a permanent visa,<sup>17</sup> but have no stable work contract. They own or rent a home in Tacna, and they live in a state of residential bi-nationality, spending weekdays in Arica and weekends in Tacna, where their grandmothers, aunts or sisters care for their children. The second group is composed of migrants who are just beginning their work history in Chile (or have no more than two years at it) and are still unable to save enough to rent a space of their own. They sleep in guest houses (paying between 500 and 1,000 Chilean pesos per night), and spend their days around the *Terminal* offering their labor. Renting a night's lodging has an impact on particular spatial uses and appropriations. The migrants make use of public space in *Juan Noé* to compensate for the deficit that the nightly rented sleeping quarters represent to their reproduction as a workforce. For example, they use the neighborhood streets to satisfy their bodily needs, because renting a place to sleep does not always include the use of a bathroom. It is common to find used toilet paper and other discarded and used hygiene products (shampoo or soap bottles) in *Juan Noé's* dark and hidden corners. Many migrants wash them-

<sup>17</sup> Most of these visas were granted due to the International Migrants' Amnesty agreement signed by Chile and Peru in 2007, during the first presidential government of Michelle Bachelet (Riquelme and Alarcón 2008).

selves in passages and dark alleys using a bucket of water (offered by the owners of illegal guest houses for a fee). Migrants also usually spend their free time in the neighborhood's gardens and sidewalks, resting under the trees in the afternoons. All of this is met with resistance from the native population:

“In 2007, one of the first priorities of the community was to get rid of the *International Terminal*, because it is the *Terminal* that causes all of this type of migration, ok, and invasion [...] Now, unfortunately we cannot go against migration, migrants are everywhere, I mean, in all countries of the world there is this social movement, in which we, as well, maybe some of our children are also in another country doing the same, in the same circumstances [...] Unfortunately there is a special case here with Peru, and most of those who come here are Peruvian, so then, there is special treatment for them, unfortunately due to the circumstances that we are in, because of the territorial conflicts that we have. And then all of this history, right [...] Chilean people tend to reject the foreigners, especially Peruvians, and in second place Bolivians, those are the two with whom we have most conflicts” (EI, Chilean, Arica, 2012a).

### *The Terminal as a Display Window for Work*

On the sidewalk in front of the *Terminal* there are 6 kiosks, a more stable type of business than the food carts. They are permanent and stand in front of the gardens on the main access street. These small shops are green and red, and exhibit the logo of a Peruvian soft drink: a visual display that transports us at times to the businesses of the neighboring country. These kiosks are an important reference point for the migrants that offer their daily labor right next to them. A network of workers and workforce offers is woven around the *Terminal*, and it fills spaces and corners, installing its own dynamics, relationships and spatiality. Men and women occupy clearly separated spaces: the types of labor insertion and the ways in which it is offered in the *Terminal* also designate a gender spatial differentiation. Even if a couple arrives together, they say

goodbye to each other on the street and walk separately to the male and female spaces, waving to greet each other from afar every once in a while. This gender separation is visible in the soup kitchens operated by churches, in the guest houses and in the public gardens where they spend their leisure time. The first point the migrants go to, around 5:20 am, is *A. Raiteri Street*, on one side of the *National Terminal*, next to a partially abandoned shopping center. On the sidewalks, Peruvian and Bolivian men take up their positions offering their work in agricultural jobs in the Azapa and Lluta valleys near Arica, as well as on construction sites (in the city). Pick-up trucks arrive and park close to the migrants. They rapidly approach the driver's window to negotiate the value of their workday. Every time a pick-up parks, there is a rush of men to gather around the vehicle. The driver negotiates and selects who he will take.

The migrant women are found between *A. Raiteri Street* and *Diego Portales Avenue*. They usually sit on the corner of the *National Terminal*, in a small garden outside the building. In the women's case, men usually come on foot to offer them work (they park their cars on nearby streets). Sometimes they are aggressive with the women, asking them if they shower or if they brush their teeth, and rejecting those who they might consider to be "dirty." There is harsher treatment of indigenous women. On repeated occasions we heard them say things like: "speak clearly *India*, can't you speak Spanish?" When one of these men arrives, the women run and gather around him to negotiate jobs in homes, restaurant kitchens, packing enterprises, and even in the textile sector. Agricultural labor is the last option: the women describe it as worse paid than urban jobs, and it is much heavier, more physical work. Usually the conditions are harsh, requiring the women to work for many hours straight, under a scorching sun, with little water available and no breaks.

The first hours of waiting for work are the tensest. Every day a Chilean police car (*Carabineros*) is parked a few meters away from the place where the migrants stand. Stressed migrants keep a vigilant eye, watching nervously for when the police will abandon their role of observers to actively intervene and request to see documents and visas. Most of the migrants who "offer themselves" here hold

no visas, and this is public knowledge in Arica. Police presence allows the reproduction of illegal work exploitation, whilst still reserving the state's power to impede it. Every once in a while these policemen lead "document raids," which result in many migrants being detained. Additionally, it is rather suspicious that the Investigation Police (PDI) force uses undercover personnel, dressed in civilian clothes, who pretend to hire migrants in the *National Terminal*. These practices are less frequent in the *International Terminal*. But in both spaces, they create a tense climate that causes the dialogue between migrants and those who approach them to be permeated with distrust.

After 8:30 am, anyone who did not get a job for the day moves over to the *International Terminal*. The women sit on the lawns in front of the kiosks. The men stand next to the gas station. There, they await more pick-up trucks. Most of them depend on their day's work to have breakfast. Some will not be able to pay for a guest house, nor even a minimum of one daily meal if they are unable to sell their "*jornal*." Given that securing a daily wage can be uncertain, some migrants develop dynamics of solidarity, covering the cost of lunch or accommodation for colleagues who did not find work that day. Of those who did not get a job, the ones who have some Chilean pesos cross *Diego Portales* to buy coffee with cereal, "Peruvian style," that is, sold by a small cart on the opposite side of the street. The women buy coffee and go back to their waiting positions. The men sit around the cart to drink their coffee while they chat. The women chat as well, but they do it from their well-placed waiting places. In some of these female conversations, we learned how they interpret their contact with the locals, how they see the differences in perspectives, and how they recognize the exploitative mechanisms to which they are subjected. For example, *Genny* told us that "Chileans would stab them in the back; they would make them work many hours. They would say to them 'very well, everything is good.' But then they talk behind their backs, saying 'Peruvian women don't work well, they are lazy, they don't do their job right'." *Genny* continued: "Peruvian women are terrified to see how Chilean women do things in the kitchen":

“I have worked in Chilean restaurants here, slicing potatoes and vegetables, washing dishes. The Chilean cooks do not wash the vegetables: they tell us to slice and after we slice, they cook them like that, without washing them. I worked here in the [...] (name omitted), and there the cook is Peruvian, so there the food is really clean, very clean, she makes them wash the vegetables two, three times before slicing, and the dishes have to be thoroughly washed” (*Genny*, Fieldwork diary, Arica, 2012a).

In the *Terminal*'s spaces, the migrants shape a discourse of their own, which cannot be expressed in their places of work, in the church social soup kitchen, or in the guest houses, because all of these spaces are managed by Chileans. Thus, from dusk until dawn, the presence of migrants offering their labor in the *Terminal* overflows with a cross-border logic that spills over the walls of this precinct, constructing its own spatial forms in the city, with a specific interaction between the migrants and the locals (mediated by the relationship between those who pay for work and those who offer to work). The surroundings of the *Terminal* are, therefore, a display window for labor, a *locus* where conditions and prices of a workday are negotiated, reproducing the precariousness and informality of the migrant labor experience. But, simultaneously, the locus is appropriated by migrants, who build a spatiality of their own, in which they establish the parameters of the conversations developed according to the migrant perspective and frequently challenging the current of local discourse—as well as their dispositions, rhythms and spatial uses.

### *The Ropa Americana Women: Female Mobility in Space*

Seated along the sides of the *International Terminal*'s bus yard, partially protected (thanks to improvised umbrellas) or directly under the sun, Peruvian women classify garments, distributing them in colorful bags. These bags are a sort of registered trademark of the *atravesadoras*<sup>18</sup> of *Ropa Americana*: almost an identity icon with which they can be identified at the *Terminal* and its surroundings,

<sup>18</sup> “Atravesadoras” are the women who work crossing the border, transporting second-hand clothing imported from Arica to Tacna. This is a job carried out sometimes six times in a day.



where they spend their time. Redistributing clothing around in these bags requires ability and experience: there is a limit to the quantity of products of the same type allowed as non-commercial baggage. Quantities and types of products per bag have to remain within the established amounts to qualify as “personal baggage.” Women are used as a “means of transport” to surreptitiously move the *Ropa Americana* into Peru. The transport is, for the most part, a female service, in many cases coordinated by men (the “*encargados*”), but carried out by women. The *Ropa Americana* ladies are a local manifestation of a global chain of events. The second-hand clothing they transport to Peru is part of the material that people from the United States donate to social causes (NGOs, churches and charity institutions).<sup>19</sup> In Chile, used American clothing supplies consumers across the country, but its main port of entry is the Free Trade Zone of Iquique, thanks to tax exemptions. The bundles arrive at Iquique and from there they are transported in big shipments to Arica, where a system of receipt and distribution awaits. A network of enterprises receives the bundles that are stored in warehouses in *Juan Noé*, and they organize the work of Peruvian women who separate, classify and regroup the “donations.” These businesses are managed by Chilean men. *Merche* describes her work at one of the warehouses:

“The direct donations arrive in bags [...] you have to then open one of these and in it there are shoes, books, pots, anything you can imagine out of a house, even clothes, then you have to separate the clothes to one side and later gather them all together and separate them [...] skirts, all the skirts on one side, all the pants on one side, the jackets, the sweaters [...] select the clothes, the good ones, the bad ones and they get selected according to quality too, first, second, third and prices vary too” (*Merche*, Peruvian, Arica, 2013).

From Arica, the clothes are distributed, mainly to Peru. The reason why Iquique and Arica play this central role in distribution to the neighboring country is related to Peru’s protectionist mea-

<sup>19</sup> There is an excess of donations that surpass the needs of humanitarian projects operated by institutions. Agencies sell the surplus to merchants in “developing” countries, allegedly using the resources generated by the sales to supply other needs of charitable work.

asures. In order to protect the national textile industry from the competition posed by the second-hand garment business, importation of this sort of merchandise was prohibited in Peru. Despite this national prohibition, its sale is permitted in four Peruvian departments, and Tacna is one of them. The entrepreneurs of this Chilean-Peruvian trade play with the ambiguity of the limits of the law, crossing the garments over as private consumer goods. This labor is carried out every day by Peruvian women who go back and forth, crossing the Chilean-Peruvian frontier. It is a job “fit for an ant,” as described to us by *Esperanza* (Arica, February 2013), a Peruvian woman who has done this job for eight years. The female figure is central in this process of overflow of the second-hand clothing market between the *Terminal* and *Juan Noé*. Women carry the weight of this international commerce on their backs, in bags filled with clothes, and they become porters of this merchandise from warehouses to buses. In the *Terminal*, they have taken over the waiting areas of both yards, in which up to seven women gather and spill the contents of the bundles brought in from warehouses over tarps. They begin the painstaking but quick labor of (re)distributing the merchandise into its corresponding bags. In Tacna, they deliver the merchandise to the *encargados*, returning with empty bags. They cross the *Terminal* again and return to the warehouses, to refill their bags with merchandise previously classified by other Peruvian women working there. This crossing with the colorful bags configures a female economy *in the space*, overflowing the frontier logic associated with it from the *Terminal* to the outside.

This activity belongs to *women*. Even when a Chilean man is in charge (the *encargado*), there is much in this movement that is determined by the women’s rhythms, their way of walking and of *being* in space, their dexterity in classifying the products. They have the authority in this business. When they do not personally carry the products on their backs, they hire a transport cart (the ‘*burritos*’) mostly managed by Chilean men, and they walk in front, guiding the transport and giving directions for where to take the merchandise. In a city characterized by symbols of male power (such as the

*patria*, or fatherland), Peruvian women have managed to take over a spatial movement of their own that authorizes them both *beyond* and *due to* their condition as female migrants.

*Final Remarks.*  
*The Terminal as a Hyper-Border Space*

The ethnographic accounts of the last three sections describe the *Terminal* as a locus where conflicts between the social presence of migrants and the ways of establishing restrictions to migration operate simultaneously and asymmetrically. Space is conformed in the social imaginaries as a place belonging to “migrant presence within the city.” In the *Terminal* migrant women have to continuously deal with “structural” barriers, permanently facing persecution from state control apparatuses (police), and dealing with the exploitative practices of migrant labor and the constitution of unequal gender relationships—as well as the violent treatment to Peruvian women, especially those of indigenous origin. But, dialectically, in the *Terminal*’s surrounding area, the local society’s “need” for this migrant “other” materializes: it is there where Chileans go to seek migrant working women for various jobs; it is there where people go for good and affordable Peruvian cuisine and used clothing of the best quality (transported by Peruvian women). In the *Terminal*, Chilean men and women take the bus to Tacna, where they can consume a diversity of products and services that are not available in Arica (neither as affordable, nor in the same variety and quality). A tense relationship is established between the rejection of “the migrant culture”—expressed in the persecution, discrimination and exploitation present in the relationships between locals and migrants—and the need or desire to consume *their* products, things, customs and services. This causes everyday relationships in this space to be, paradoxically, based on conflict. Initially, we thought that the *Terminal* would constitute a scenario where we could penetrate these concrete conflict situations. But the ethnography required us to theoretically redefine this appreciation on the basis of two points.

The first is related to the perception that migratory spatial experience in the *Terminal* is constructed upon exploitative processes of migrant labor that reproduce discrimination based on class, ethnic origin and gender, and which result in the exclusion of Peruvians in Arica. But simultaneously, this process permits forms of appropriation of public space that return a certain amount of agency to the individuals. Thus, the exploitation of the women who carry the heavy used garment bundles between the warehouses in *Juan Noé* and the *Terminal* does not prevent them from appropriating the space in which they carry out these movements, gaining a certain centrality in them. This centrality allows them to even generate a demand for male labor associated with their tasks. These migrants, by making use of the profit from their activities, hire Chilean men to whom they give orders indicating how and where to carry their loads. The same was observed in the case of Peruvian women who, even after being constantly harassed by the presence of *carabineros* standing right next to them, allowed themselves to speak out regarding their negative opinions of Chilean women. The carts at the *Terminal's* entrance bring together workers, consumers, owners and also both native and migrant products, building a *transnational economy*, without constituting an *ethnic enclave*, since they are not structured as a closure of the collective migrant upon itself. Instead of spatially segregating the “migrants,” the carts allow them to build bridges that materialize a form (partial but reliable, precarious but effective) of social integration. Here, migrant agency impacts the structuring of place in a non-dichotomist manner, endowing space with a curious diversification (visible in the colorful abundance of advertisements for Peruvian soft drinks that enliven the small shops). This non-dichotomist relationship between structural oppressions in space and the ability of migrant women to re-signify *being in space*, meant that we had to assume Bourdieu's inference (2011:31) that one must reject both a structuralist and an ethno-methodologist view, going far beyond a static perspective regarding where (when and how) agency and structure make each other different and yet dialectically complementary phenomena.

The second point of our analysis is related to the ethnographic confirmation that the *Terminal*, in spatial terms, *gives materiality* to these relationships between agency and structure, while also *being* those relationships. Returning to Lefebvre (1974), we assume that there is a *three dimensionality of space* (Maldonado, 1997:29) that can be observed in the manner in which migrants and locals experience *social situations*. The *Terminal* is the group of concrete practices (flows, fixations, interactions, *overflows*) that exist within it and that happen through it. But it is, also, the *social perceptions* that the different groups, people and actors have of their space and the *signs* and *meanings* that emanate from these perceptions. Finally, the *Terminal* is the *imaginary that ones and others make of it* and its projection toward the future has an impact on the way they act or intervene in space (individually or collectively). The *Terminal* is the space that the Peruvian migration network envisions as “*their place in the city,*” projecting this imaginary on the structuring of relationships.

Complementing these three dimensions of space, we add a fourth. We assume that spatiality is as constitutive of structural form and content as is agency (Harvey, 2008). The *Terminal* reunites structural, economic and political processes that materialize in it through the action of the state and of entrepreneurial groups. Investment in urban infrastructure is centrally connected with the need to re-apply the capitalist surplus of added value in favor of the production of more surplus (Harvey, 2008:17), and urban planning is a structural mechanism for the reproduction of capital (Lefebvre, 1974:223). The state centralizes, through taxes, the social resources that will be invested in one or another zone, in one or another urban project. Thus it acts as an agency that concentrates social added value in determined areas (in which it immobilizes economic capital in infrastructure investments), causing the valuation of specific land and spaces (Harvey, 2007:210-211). The quantity of resources that a state invests in specific public works allows us to infer the spatial priorities present in its ideological framework (Castells, 1985:264). The concentration of public investment results

in a differentiation of urban space according to political criteria (Lefebvre, 1974:220), imprinting upon space a fundamental link with social relationships. All of these reproduction mechanisms of capital accumulation become central in the comprehension of the *Terminal's* space, which is located in an urban *Transition Zone*. As an example of findings from preceding studies, in Arica anything related to migrants was also pushed toward the city margins. It is not a coincidence that the *Terminal* is located in loci considered to be run down by Chileans, surrounded by neighborhoods considered to be dangerous by the municipal administration, with high levels of poverty, and where trash collection services are irregular and urban infrastructure is damaged due to lack of investment. The contrast between the infrastructure of the *International* and *National Terminals*, the latter concentrating public and private investments, while the former shows a lack of investment in facility and service improvement, is also not coincidental. The building of the *International Terminal*—in contrast to its national equivalent—reveals how the state has an influence on the articulation of transport infrastructures that reaffirms the centrality of the national against the international, emphasizing the importance of this specific frontier, contrary to the trend in global urban planning that privileges the flows *through* national frontiers (Sassen, 2007:9). This transnationalizing dynamic of space exists actively in Arica, being articulated by migrant, commercial and touristic flows in the *Terminal's* vicinity. But it precedes what we currently understand as globalization, and is closely related to this territory's past, as the object of a dispute between Chile and Peru and the complex connection between Arica and Tacna since colonial times.<sup>20</sup>

Additionally, we conceive a fifth dimension of the *International Terminal's* space, by assuming that it constitutes what Bourdieu (1997) denominated as a “structured and structuring structure.”

<sup>20</sup> Arica and Tacna fulfill Sassen's assertion related to the trans-border reality of generalization of the global: “it is possible that some cities have had this capacity a lot earlier than today, but nowadays the conditions have multiplied and amplified to the point of being considered as generators of a new urban phase, different in qualitative terms” (Sassen, 2007:9-10).

This is because the agents or groups position themselves in the *Terminal*'s space according to their position in the distribution of capitals (symbolic, economic, cultural and social) within the framework of a most relaxed social field. Thus, the *Terminal* is also a space that has been incorporated as a sort of *habitus*, while at the same time *it expresses itself in the habitus* of the people who transit in it, imprinting with their spatial presence a tendency toward the *reproduction of social distributions* (Bourdieu, 1997:41). On this point it is fundamental to assert that the presence of Peruvian migrants causes a dialectic experience with structural determinations, altering them while at the same time being altered by them. This is not to be underestimated in any case, due to the porosity of the border along Arica's territory. If we take the definition of frontier that we worked with metaphorically in section two, as an analytical concept with which we define spaces or practices that summon an asymmetrical and porous mixture between subjective agency and state structure, we might then define the same *Terminal* as a border space. A border locus placed in the urban space of a border territory: an urban specialization of frontier spatiality. The *Terminal* would thus materialize a *hyper-border spatial condition*. The theoretical image that we have constructed here corresponds analogously to the structure of a *matrioska*.<sup>21</sup> The *Terminal results from*, while at the same time *is*, the specialization of a frontier space within a frontier territory. Our case study contributes, thus, to consider that in the vicinity of Arica's *Terminal*, the agency of migrants *on* and *about* space cannot be constituted as an inscription of an *ethnic enclave*: it is not "closed within itself" or a spatial appropriation that segregates the collective in order to, in that segregation, give it the possibility of agency. Here, the frontier condition of the "urban" is structurally permeated in the migrant's agency. This dynamism implies serious challenges to the ethnographic viewpoint. It causes a sort of *focal dyslexia*, because any experience that can be classified as an everyday practice has an open and structural influence on factors that are

<sup>21</sup> A Russian doll characterized by being assembled through addition, in other words, each doll contains more miniaturized versions of itself. The *matrioska* is thus a doll composed of an assembled structure of dolls.

extra-local, extra-synchronic and extra-national. As a frontier, the *Terminal* operates in a process in which the concepts of social and spatial are overflowed, and this is its specific manner of social reproduction: it materializes the superposition of unequal and asymmetrical times. We see this in the discourse of the neighborhood leader of *Juan Noé*, whose position is overflow, repeatedly, from the rejection of the migrant other, to the assumption of a necessary generalization of the movement that this “Peruvian other” leads. Even when he recognizes the historic-national construction of this rejection of Peruvians and Bolivians, his position wavers between understanding migrants as necessary (“to migrate is everybody’s issue”) and as undesirable (“migrants and the *Terminal* should leave the neighborhood”). Opinions fluctuate between one stance and the other as if there were no logical incompatibility between them, and this is the result of the porously unstable character that, as a frontier in a frontier territory, is produced by the *Terminal*. To think about it this way, the *Terminal* is configured as a *heterotropic and liminal* space (Hetherington, 1996:36). It is the transgressive locus that threatens nationally-instituted Chilean-ness, the margin or the point at which “the activities and conditions are most uncertain, and in which the normative structure of society is temporarily overturned” (Hetherington, 1996:36). Here, the concept of migrant can be constructed as an inversion and a part of order, and as making something central out of that which is structurally marginal. In Arica, the *Terminal* can only be product and producer of migrant centralities (Garcés, 2011), because it configures itself as a *hyper-border* spatiality.

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