

MIGRANT TRADE IN VALPARAÍSO, CHILE. PRACTICES OF CITY APPROPRIATION ¹

COMERCIO MIGRANTE EN VALPARAÍSO, CHILE. PRÁCTICAS DE APROPIACIÓN DE LA CIUDAD

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Las transformaciones urbanas de la ciudad de Valparaíso reflejan la reciente llegada de grupos migrantes de países latinoamericanos. Este trabajo indaga en cómo estas poblaciones se apropian de la ciudad mediante el comercio desde el enfoque teórico de la movilidad. Mediante una investigación etnográfica multisituada que incluye diferentes técnicas de investigación en movimiento y su triangulación, se analizan tres prácticas de apropiación desplegadas a través de prácticas comerciales. Algunas de ellas se vinculan a ciertos emplazamientos relativamente móviles, otras dan cuenta de la configuración de espacios comerciales que replican las tendencias locales, o bien se establecen en la intersección con otros usos. Se identifican también anclajes transnacionales que favorecen ciertos arraigos. La heterogeneidad de las prácticas identificadas evidencia que el comercio migrante es una forma de ocupar, apropiarse y disputar la ciudad. Sin embargo, estos procesos no están ajenos a las desigualdades de poder que se ejercen en la experiencia urbana.

Palabras clave: prácticas de apropiación, comercio, migración, movilidad, Valparaíso

The urban transformation of Valparaíso reflects the recent arrival of migrant groups from Latin American countries. This study examines how these populations appropriate the city through trade, employing a theoretical approach to mobility. Through a multi-sited ethnographic investigation that includes diverse research techniques on movement and its triangulation, three modes of appropriation through commercial practices are analyzed. Some involve relatively mobile locations, others reveal the formation of commercial spaces that replicate local trends, while some emerge at the intersection with other urban uses. Transnational connections that foster specific forms of rootedness are also identified. The heterogeneity of these practices highlights migrant trade as a way of occupying, appropriating, and disputing urban space. However, these processes are not exempt from power inequalities that shape urban experiences.

Keywords: appropriation practices, trade, migration, mobility, Valparaíso

I. INTRODUCTION

This article contributes to the theoretical discussion on the spaces of emplacement and the forms of appropriation of migrant populations in the city, closely examining the study of formal and informal trade from a mobilities approach. The case study focuses on Valparaíso, an urban agglomeration that has been little explored in terms of migration. Although some urban studies have investigated how housing and migrant habitat reconfigure urban spaces (Zenteno-Torres et al., 2023; Díaz, 2020), by highlighting the interactions of migrant and non-migrant groups in social, economic, and symbolic terms (Bonhomme, 2021; Ramírez et al., 2021; Riquelme Gómez & Tapia Ladino, 2020), this article addresses migrant trade from a mobile perspective.

From a mobility perspective, this paper examines the dynamics between mobility and immobility in migrant trade, illustrating how these practices combine continuity and change. The commercial spaces are transformed by migrant practices, revealing both agencies and barriers. Here, the concept of liminal space is crucial in understanding ambiguous and invisible business practices, which reflect transient ways of life. In addition, the transnational approach complements the analysis, linking migrant trade with multiple and fluid territorialities.

The research was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, a context marked by severe restrictions and transformations in everyday life. In 2020, the total lockdown in Valparaíso banned many business practices, allowing only essential activities to continue. This study explores how migrant populations faced these restrictions to sustain their economies in a context of precariousness (Penchaszadeh et al., 2022). This analysis is still revealing. First, given evidence that informal street commerce in the studied city increased by 33% during the pandemic (Ojeda Ledesma et al., 2024), it is worthwhile to examine the configurations of this expansion. Secondly, the research conducted during this period provides insight into the object of study within a context of crisis. Thus, a more reflective reading of the persistent changes that the crisis produced in migrant informal trade is proposed. As Di Virgilio and Perelman (2022) state, the pandemic “provides coordinates for understanding the present of life in cities, revisiting [...] our interpretations of the pre-existing urban experience and challenging us to recreate the future of cities” (p. 10). The temporal context in which this work is situated facilitates an understanding of how these practices, far from being exceptional, were consolidated as part of new urban dynamics and disputes over public space.

Valparaíso is an ideal city for this analysis, as it has received less attention than other international immigration territories in Chile, such as Santiago or the north of

the country. However, understanding how migrant populations are incorporated into socio-territorial dynamics in intermediate cities, where formal and informal sectors coexist on a daily basis, is key. In this sense, the following question is proposed: How do formal and informal migrant trade practices reconfigure urban spaces? To address this, two research objectives were established. First, to identify the different commercial practices exercised by Latin American migrant populations in Valparaíso, and secondly, to analyze how certain businesses constitute a form of dispute and/or appropriation, thus reconfiguring the city.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Academic studies on urbanism have focused on Latin American migration in Chile, exploring at least two main lines of inquiry. The first one considers the studies linked to the residential location. This line has explored the establishment of migrant populations in segregated and culturally differentiated neighborhoods (García García & Mayorga, 2023; Márquez & Correa, 2015), such as informal settlements (Pérez & Palma, 2021), as well as access barriers to housing (Zenteno-Torres et al., 2023). Studies associated with business practices constitute a second line of work. Research on this group has indicated that migrant trade contributes to social integration (Margarit & Bijit, 2015), has created sociability dynamics (Gómez Crespo et al., 2024), and forms of resistance against hegemonic power (Apolinario-Farias & Campos-Medina, 2024). In this framework, the formation of migrant commercial communities has been documented through case studies, examining specific areas, such as the Meiggs neighborhood (Ramírez & Chan, 2018) or Peruvian shops in the center of Santiago (Garcés, 2015). In contrast, Trapaga (2024) demonstrated the dynamics of ethnic commerce, which tend to disperse rather than cluster in specific neighborhoods.

With some exceptions (Margarit et al., 2025), there are still few contributions that, from an urbanism perspective, have successfully integrated mobile logics into studies of migrant living. These populations are typically viewed from a fixed perspective, rooted in their homes or established commerce. Therefore, this study aims to contrast that gap by analyzing business practices from the mobility approach (Lulle & Di Virgilio, 2021). Thus, the aim is to understand the migrant experience based on their ability to inhabit and transit the city flexibly and adaptively. The so-called “turn of mobilities” (Sheller & Urry, 2006) emphasizes that people and their practices cannot be analyzed through categories confined to fixed territories; instead, they must be understood as part of networks and flows that are constantly transforming. In

this logic, mobility combines relationships between bodies, movements, and spaces (Sheller, 2014).

In migrant trade, the mobility approach allows the analysis of the subjectivities of those who participate in it, explaining their location and adaptation strategies within a context of opportunities and barriers. Mobility is not neutral, but is regulated by systems that facilitate or restrict specific movements (Glick Schiller & Salazar, 2013). This approach allows acknowledging that certain types of mobility are legitimized, while others, such as street trade, are criminalized or restricted by urban regulations.

Trade, apart from being one of the primary sources of employment for the migrant population (CASEN Survey) (Ministry of Social Development and Family, 2022), is also a key mechanism for the appropriation of urban space. For Gómez Crespo et al. (2024), the commercial space is a place where identities are expressed, whether in harmonious or conflictive coexistence. Through trade, migrant populations not only generate their economic livelihood but also shape new material and symbolic meanings in the city. According to Arriagada-Sickinger and Contreras-Gatica (2023), symbolic appropriation incorporates identity elements such as colors and signs that recall its origins. It is worth noting that the forms of appropriation in the city, both material and symbolic, have a significant political dimension. Commercial practices not only transform physical space, but also dispute the right to the city and to the public sphere, understood as the space where political action and citizen participation are exercised (Arendt, 1958). Through trade, migrants reconfigure their human condition, generate new forms of belonging, and build social incorporation networks (Pérez & Palma, 2023).

In this sense, migrant trade is not only an economic strategy, but also a mechanism for integration and vindication of the right to the city. Migrants not only occupy spaces, but also (re)signify them, transform them, and dispute a place in the territory, building new migrant citizenships (Pérez & Palma, 2023).

Migrant trade has been addressed through different academic approaches. Some studies have analyzed it under the concept of “ethnic economies” or “ethnic enclaves”, arguing that migrants participate in transnational economic circuits that reconfigure the urban spaces where they are inserted (Çaglar & Schiller, 2018b). This literature has tended to emphasize the ethnic component of these economies, assuming that migrant business activity is intrinsically linked to national and cultural identity. In contrast, the concept of “migrant trade” allows analyzing migrants as economic actors within the city without necessarily resorting to an ethnic perspective (Çaglar & Schiller, 2018a; Glick Schiller et al., 2006). This approach emphasizes their economic agency

and the way in which their participation in urban commerce reconfigures economic and spatial relations in the city.

The circulation of goods, imaginaries, and discourses links the spaces of origin and destination, transforming the urban landscape and endowing it with new aesthetics and cultural meanings (Imilán et al., 2014). In this way, migrant shops become spaces of resistance and cultural expression, demonstrating the active role of migrants in shaping the urban environment (Apolinario-Farias & Campos-Medina, 2024).

Migrant trade takes on heterogeneous forms. It can manifest itself as an established and formalized trade (Garcés, 2015), as seen in the case of Peruvian restaurants (Imilán, 2014) or their integration into consolidated commercial neighborhoods (Ramírez & Chan, 2018). It can also take shape in informal street trade (Ojeda Ledesma et al., 2024) or in practices situated on a continuum between the formal and informal, the visible and invisible, the allowed and the forbidden. As Vera da Silva Telles and Daniel Hirata (Telles & Hirata, 2007) point out, these practices at the margins challenge the boundaries between legality and illegality, revealing a key “gray area” in Latin American urban dynamics. From this perspective, migrant trade is part of what Vera da Silva Telles (Telles, 2010) refers to as a web of illegalisms: subsistence spaces, ambiguous regulation, and legitimate, although often criminalized, appropriation of the city.

This theoretical framework allows understanding migrant trade as a situated urban practice that articulates economy, mobility, and disputes over space. Far from being simple responses to exclusion, these practices reveal concrete ways of appropriation, negotiation, and resignification of the territory. By placing them in the Latin American debate on informality and the city, their ability to challenge hegemonic forms of urban planning and propose, from the margins, alternative ways of inhabiting and producing the city becomes visible.

This research is set in Valparaíso, an intermediate city enveloped by historical inequalities and socio-spatial fragmentation, whose dynamics intensified during the pandemic. As Soldano and Imbert (2024) note, in intermediate-scale cities, the proximity between actors, without the possibility of anonymity, exacerbates tensions surrounding the use of public space. In turn, Bokser Liwerant (2025) points out that the urban-pandemic scenario exposed structural exclusions and promoted everyday practices that re-signify the ways of inhabiting, resisting, and subsisting in precarious contexts. In this framework, migrant trade in Valparaíso is analyzed as a situated practice that stresses the logics of control, regulation and urban habitability. This perspective guides

an ethnographic methodological strategy that focuses on documenting meanings, connections, and disputes that emerge in urban spaces where everyday life is sustained beyond the norm.

III. METHODOLOGY

The research is based on a multi-situated ethnography (June 2019-January 2021) and adopts the *mobility turn* to analyze mobility as the axis of the research process. The city of Valparaíso was chosen as a research field due to its relevance in migratory terms and its political, administrative, and commercial dynamism, considering it is also the country's second most populous urban agglomeration. The region of Valparaíso, of which its namesake city is its capital, is located towards the coast, to the east of the capital Santiago (Figure 1). It has received the third highest number of migrants (8% of migrants are in the region), after the Metropolitan Region (61%) and the Antofagasta Region (9%) (Department of Aliens and Migration [DEM], 2021). Over the last few decades, there has been a significant shift in the main nationalities of origin of migrants in Valparaíso, with a notable increase in people coming from Colombia, Haiti, and Venezuela. In total, 12,724 migrants reside in the commune of Valparaíso, representing 4.1% of the commune's population. The population from Venezuela is by far the most numerous among Latin American migrants, with 6,394 people, a number that increased by 60% regionally between 2018 and 2019. In second place is the Argentine population, followed by Colombians, Haitians, and Peruvians.

The research relies on the application of three information production techniques: (1) Participant observation (June 2019-January 2020), attending activities of two migrant groups in Valparaíso, facilitating access to their reality, and laying the foundations for the following stages. (2) Urban exploration and georeferencing (October-September 2020): listing active migrant businesses with ArcGIS Survey. The quarantined city was toured, revealing diverse commercial practices beyond the "ethnic trade", including the sale of cleaning products by Haitian women. Figure 2 illustrates the study area. An exhaustive tour was made throughout the central area of Valparaíso. Sanitary restrictions excluded some non-essential formal businesses, which were later addressed in interviews. (3) Qualitative interviews: 12 interviews were conducted with migrant traders (Table 1) identified through the snowball technique from participant observation. Each interview was obtained with consent, transcribed, and analyzed using Atlas.ti, with pseudonyms used for the analysis.

It is essential to recognize the methodological limitations of this study. The COVID-19 pandemic imposed restrictions that affected fieldwork. Quarantines and sanitary measures

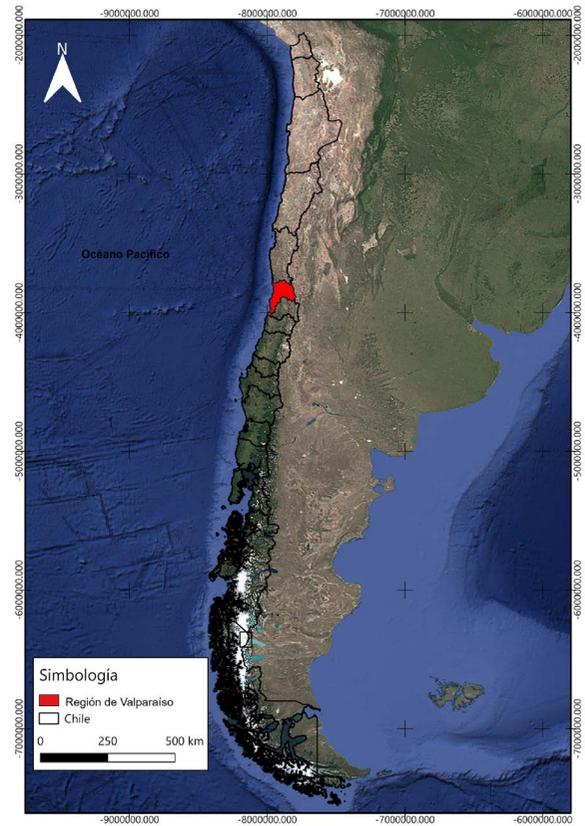


Figura 1: Valparaíso region, in terms of the national context. Source: Prepared by the authors

reduced the possibility of extending field research, limiting the ability to record business practices in greater depth.

The results presented below were elaborated based on the triangulation of the three techniques, seeking to account for the complementarity of their findings in relation to the modes of appropriation, negotiation, and resignification of the urban territory revealed in migrant trade practices.

IV. RESULTS

From the fieldwork, three forms of commercial appropriation were identified in the city, which can be categorized as follows: street trade, productive housing, and established trade.

A.- STREET TRADE

Migrant populations work in diverse ways, ranging from selling ethnic foods to cleaning products. As Figure 3 shows, their distribution in Valparaíso varies: in zones A and B,

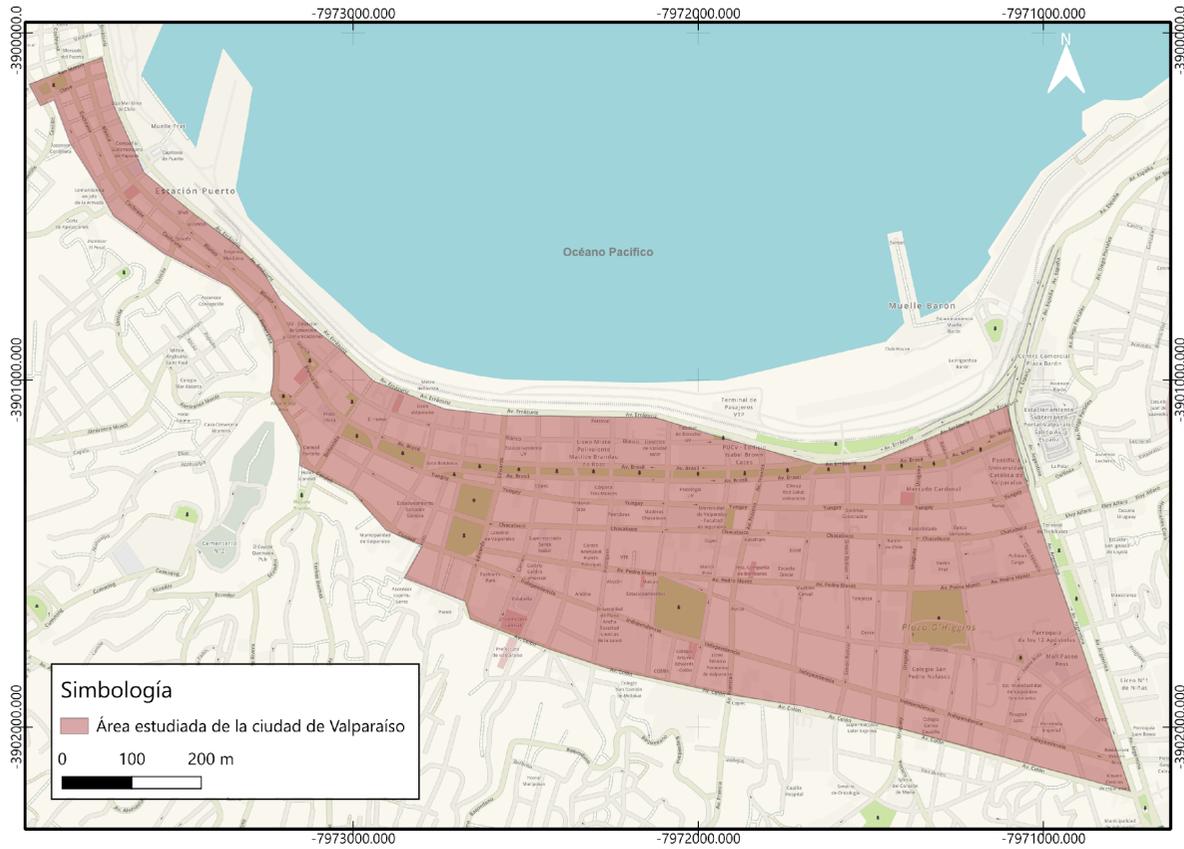


Figure 2: Area of study. Source: Prepared by the authors

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the people interviewed. Source: Prepared by the authors

No.	Pseudonym	Age	Sex	Nationality	Type of Trade	Area
1	Oscar	29	Man	Venezuelan	Established	Barbershop
2	Luis	25	Man	Venezuelan	Established	Sale of food
3	Hernán	30	Man	Colombian	Established	Barbershop and food sales
4	Jorge	44	Man	Colombian	Established	Restaurant
5	Carolina	34	Woman	Colombian	Established	Cell phone spare parts
6	Eliana	48	Woman	Colombian	Established	Restaurant
7	Pierre	34	Man	Haitian	Street trade	Sale of shoes
8	Valerie	29	Woman	Haitian	Street trade	Sale of cleaning products
9	Nina	30	Woman	Haitian	Street trade	Sale of cleaning products
10	Jean	41	Man	Haitian	Street trade	Sale of shoes
11	Charles	32	Man	Haitian	Street trade	Sale of shoes
12	Julie	36	Woman	Haitian	Street trade	Sale of cleaning products

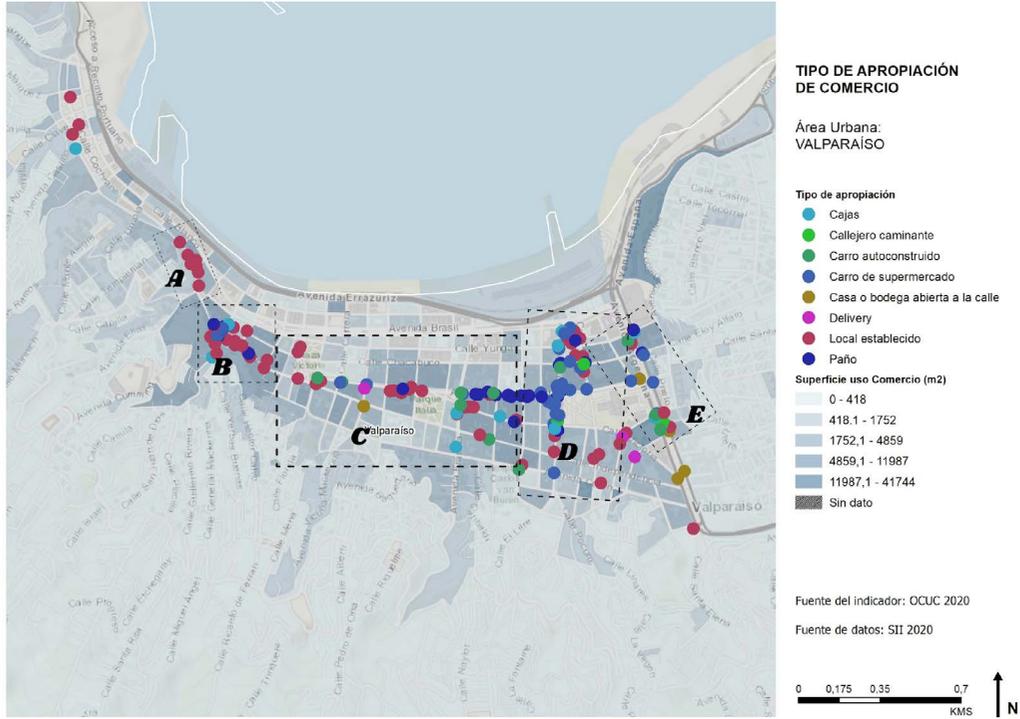


Figure 3: Types of commercial appropriations. Source: Preparation by the authors based on fieldwork.



Figure 4: Street trade of cleaning products. Source: Preparation by the authors based on fieldwork.



Figure 5: Productive housing or home commerce. Source: Preparation by the authors based on fieldwork.

established commerce predominates, while in C, D, and E, different types of informal commerce prevail, manifested in boxes, self-built carts, supermarket carts, or cloths as strategies for appropriating urban space.

In Zone D (Av. Uruguay), street trade saturates the space (Ojeda & Pino, 2019). Haitian women excel in the sale of cleaning products, using supermarket carts and boxes as ways of appropriating the environment (Figure 4). As evidenced by Trapaga (2024) for the Mexican case, ethnic trade acquires a dispersed pattern in the city.

The Haitian women who sell cleaning products in the city, although they spend a good part of the day in the same place, are part of the street trade. They load their goods on supermarket trolleys, which they store daily in nearby warehouses. When they arrive, they unfold boxes or tables to display their products. Although they do not have a formal organization, they form strong bonds of friendship and support among themselves. The support consists of both the provision and sale of products, as well as the management of family care. Valerie, one of them, says that among colleagues, they let each other know where to find better prices, lend each other money, and choose to stay together to accompany one another. During the pandemic, these networks played a crucial

role in navigating the restrictions and maintaining their work.

For Jean and other Haitian interviewees, such as Charles and Pierre, selling on the street is a transitional stage, a strategy of resistance while they wait for a better job, the regularization of their documents, or the possibility of returning to Haiti. The wait operates on multiple levels: the end of the pandemic, the arrival of permits, or the return to their country of origin. Jean wants to return as soon as possible, although he wants to regularize his immigration status first. This “life in waiting” is ambivalent: between the longing to leave and the need to sustain oneself in the present. It is a liminal state within immobility, but also a space of agency and resistance (Conlon, 2011). In this context, street trade symbolizes a state of political, economic, and legal uncertainty, where movement is suspended without a clear destination or purpose.

B.- PRODUCTIVE HOUSING

The analysis demonstrates how migrants transform urban space through flexible strategies that allow them to adapt to challenging contexts. One of them is home commerce or productive housing (Díaz et al., 2022),

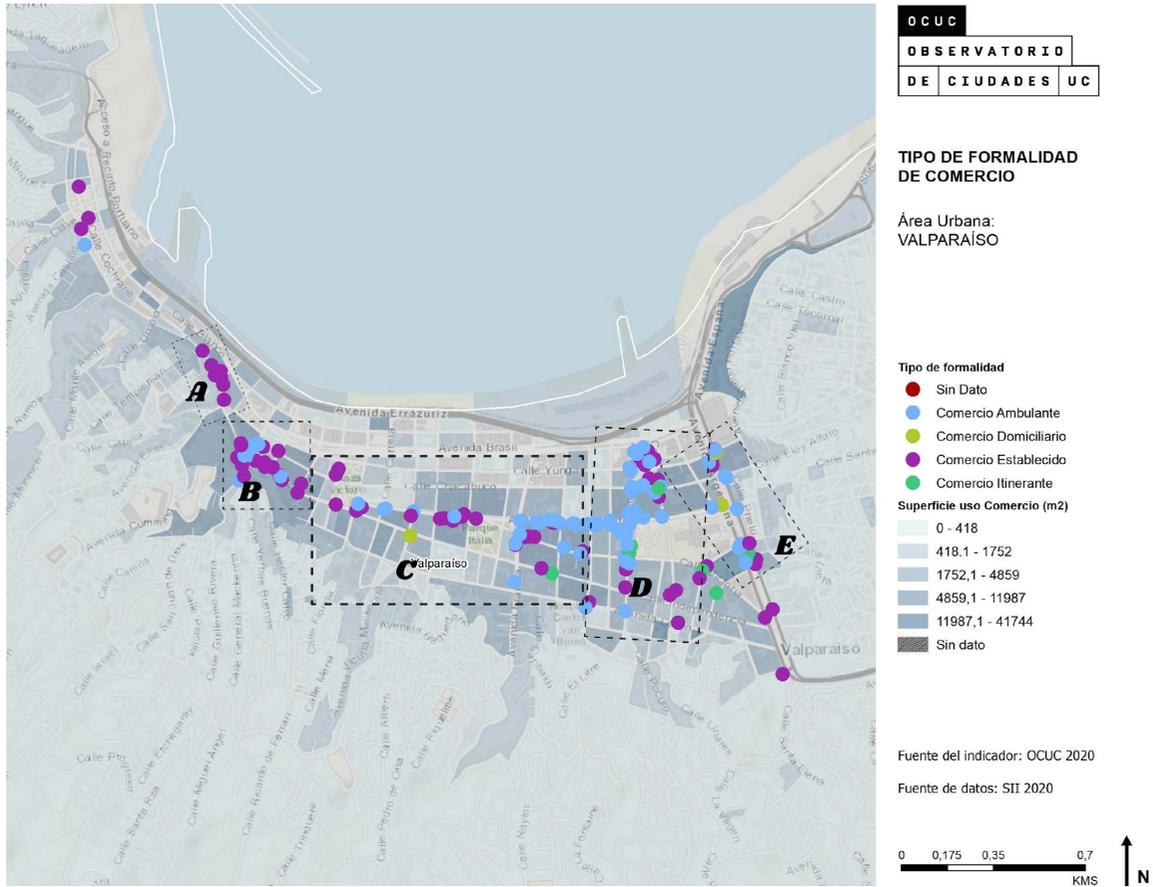


Figure 6: Types of commercial formality in Valparaíso. Source: Preparation by the authors based on fieldwork.

where economic activities occur in liminal spaces, such as entrances and staircases, extending out onto the sidewalk (Figure 5). Although informal, these practices avoid sanctions by maintaining visible links with the domestic sphere. By blurring the boundaries between public and private, production and reproduction (Jirón & Imilán, 2018), these commercial forms not only guarantee sustenance but also reconfigure the appropriation of the city in the face of pandemic restrictions.

The pandemic prompted new transformations in this appropriation strategy: diversification and mobility. Migrants developed ways of selling on the move to cope with the restrictions. Oscar, a Venezuelan barber, closed his shop and started working at home to support his family: "To provide for my children, I had to go out to work at home, I was looking for a thousand and one ways to have an income [...] I made the effort at the time and started working everywhere and anywhere. Thanks to the pandemic, I got to know Valparaíso like never before"

(Oscar). Hernán, a 30-year-old Colombian, turned his business around by transforming his barbershop into a greengrocer, allowing him to continue operating. Although the commercial space was adapted, the barbershop never stopped working. This labor hybridity is common in migrant trade, where the borders between sectors are blurred in response to the crisis, demonstrating flexibility and a capacity for reinvention in the face of adverse contexts.

C.- ESTABLISHED TRADE

The analysis of the established trade in Valparaíso reveals a differentiated occupation pattern according to the city's areas, highlighting the adaptation of migrant trade to the local commercial environment. In zone A (Figure 6), formal or established trade predominates, and migrant trade tends to adapt to these characteristics. On the contrary, migrant informal trade is concentrated in areas where non-migrant informal trade also operates (Ojeda & Pino, 2019), such as in Bellavista-Plaza Victoria (Zone B), Pedro



Figure 7: Migrant trade in the Cardonal Market of Valparaíso. Source: Preparation by the authors based on fieldwork.

Montt (Zone C), Av. Uruguay (Zone D) and Av. Argentina (Zone E).

In the areas closest to the port, migrant trade is primarily manifested through established premises, whereas in areas farther from the center, such as Zone E, informal trade predominates. The Victoria Square and the Bellavista intersection (Zone B) function as transition zones, where established premises and street trade coexist. Meanwhile, Av. Pedro Montt, from Victoria Square towards Av. Uruguay is configured as a predominantly informal trade space, where strategies such as street and home trade are observed.

A key point in Zone D is the Cardonal Market, which acts as the nucleus of the established migrant trade. This space not only houses businesses that offer ethnic products, but also distinguishes itself by incorporating symbols and identity elements, such as flags, ethnic products, and music that express their transnational ties (Figure 7).

Eliana, for example, a Colombian migrant, with no experience in cooking, but with the idea of linking with her life path, decides to open a restaurant that progressively reinforces the “idea of being Colombian”. To make this change, Eliana resorts to a bank loan so that they will support her with her idea of transforming her restaurant into an ethnic product. The idea had bank approval and achieved financing. Today, “the atmosphere of the place is very Colombian and the products, the food, this is practically the only Colombian food place in Valparaíso,” says Eliana. Thus, formal trade favors specific anchors and allows migrants to access public institutions through political and economic recognition. For Eliana, the business she has built serves as an anchor, a kind of pillar that sustains her and her family; moreover, it allows her to connect with other public and private institutions through the figure of a female microentrepreneur.

V. DISCUSSION

In line with other contributions (Gómez Crespo et al., 2024), the fieldwork conducted reveals that the migrant commercial fabric fosters interaction between diverse groups, thereby enhancing neighborhood dynamics. The results show that migrant populations actively transform the city through their business practices. The deployment of three appropriation strategies responds to creative practices located in a formal-informal continuum.

The street trade, as the literature points out, is not limited to ethnic logics of proximity. In particular, the sale of cleaning products by Haitian women shows the need to analyze these practices from a broad perspective, considering their daily work context and without reducing the migrant trade to ethnic circuits (Çaglar & Schiller, 2018a). Likewise, the commercial practices of migrant populations intersect with other dimensions of life, in particular with care. As mentioned by Margarit et al. (2025), migrant women assume multiple caring roles and responsibilities outside the home, which makes them move around the city to perform these tasks.

Thus, these commercial appropriations of space are understood as a process of interaction with pre-existing urban structures, generating new spatial configurations (Arriagada-Sickinger & Contreras-Gatica, 2023). On the other hand, street trade is viewed as a flexible work practice that allows coping with precarious work contexts. However, paradoxically, it can constitute an obstacle to achieving regularization and access to formal jobs.

On another note, productive housing constitutes a liminal space between the public and the private, the formal and the informal, where the work, residential, and care dimensions intersect (Díaz et al., 2022; Pérez, 2016). The research demonstrated how specific residential spaces also serve as points of sale and centers of social interaction, illustrating the multi-scalar nature of urban spaces inhabited by migrants (Çaglar & Schiller, 2018b). These homes enable individuals to navigate the challenges of the formal labor market while also supporting close community networks.

Finally, the third reported strategy of appropriation of the city, the established trade sustained by migrants, accounts for multiple links with the territory and contributes to the construction of the sense of belonging. In this strategy, the expert knowledge of the tastes and cultural habits of their fellow countrymen and women is put into practice (Trapaga, 2024). Migrant roots are not only linked to physical space, but also to social relationships and the stability they provide (Saxinger,

2021). As has been theoretically documented (Glick Schiller et al., 2011) and reaffirmed by this ethnographic research, these anchors are not neutral; they are traversed by structural inequalities of gender, race, and ethnicity, which determine which groups can be consolidated in formal trade and which are relegated to the informal economy (Glick Schiller et al., 2011). In this sense, the empirical investigation showed racist barriers in access to the formal economy, where established merchants of Colombian, Venezuelan, and Chinese origin predominate. On the other hand, the established migrant trade expresses how migrants maintain connections with their countries of origin, participating in transnational networks that enable them to sustain their economic activities in the destination city (Boccagni, 2011). This dual belonging challenges the idea of a linear integration and reinforces their agency capabilities to articulate multiple spaces (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004). These practices of space occupation, based on circulation, the strategic use of mobile furniture, and constant adaptation to municipal surveillance, can be read as concrete expressions of what Vera da Silva Telles (2010) calls the "gray areas" of the city. In this case, migrant traders are not located exclusively inside or outside the urban order, but rather operate in a dense web of illegalisms and partial regularities, where the informal is not dissociated from the legal, but instead interacts with it in a complex manner. The migrant trade is then revealed as a relational way of inhabiting the city, where the visible and invisible, the tolerated and the sanctioned, are intertwined in unstable but persistent spatial configurations.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

This study addresses the question of how both formal and informal migrant trade practices reconfigure urban spaces in Valparaíso, revealing that these practices constitute situated forms of appropriation that materially and symbolically transform the city. Through the deployment of strategies such as street trade, productive housing, and established businesses, migrant populations re-signify urban areas as productive spaces, dispute the use of public space, and reactivate economic circuits. These forms of appropriation, analyzed through an ethnographic methodological strategy and a triangulation of techniques, reveal not only the agency capacity of migrants but also the tensions they face when inserting themselves into a city marked by structural inequalities. In this sense, migrant trade is presented as a complex urban practice that articulates mobility, exchange, and resistance in precarious contexts, allowing the analysis of its active role in the daily transformation of urban space. This analysis, produced from a temporal distance, allows re-reading these transformations as part

of new urban dynamics that persist in the post-pandemic era.

Although the migrant trade, in some areas, replicates previously established local commercial forms, in other places, it introduces innovations in the physical and/or symbolic forms of occupying the space, demonstrating creativity and adaptability. The strategies presented are constituted as creative responses to contexts of crisis and precariousness. These forms of appropriation are inscribed in the notion of liminal spaces, where the borders between the public and the private, the formal and the informal, are constantly negotiated.

Based on these results, multiple lines of future research are opened. One of the most relevant needs is to study migrant trade from an intersectional gender perspective. This study has demonstrated that certain commercial activities, such as the street sales of cleaning products by Haitian women, are characterized by specific dynamics that combine gender, race, and mobility.

Likewise, future research could compare the experiences of migrant trade in other intermediate cities of Chile and Latin America. This would enable the identification of common patterns and divergences in how migrant groups integrate into local economic circuits and negotiate their presence in the city. Similarly, a comparison would enable the exploration of the impact of municipal and national regulations on the formalization of migrant trade, considering how some can reinforce and/or challenge existing inequalities.

Migrant trade in Valparaíso is a complex practice that combines mobility and immobility, precariousness and agency, resistance and adaptation. Through their business practices, migrants reconfigure the configuration and meanings of urban space, disputing their right to the city in a context of structural inequalities. In dialogue with the literature on 'grey areas' and 'plots of illegalisms' developed by Vera da Silva Telles and other Latin American authors, this study suggests that the migrant trade practices analyzed cannot be understood solely from the classical categories of informality, exclusion, or resistance. Instead, they are inserted into a web of illegalisms that structures the contemporary Latin American city, where the borders between the legal and the illegal, the formal and the informal, become porous and negotiable. Recognizing this condition makes it possible to complicate the view on urban appropriation by migrant sectors, highlighting their active role in the daily reconfiguration of public space, in tension with, yet also in relation to, state control and regulatory devices.

VII. CONTRIBUTION OF AUTHORS CRediT:

Conceptualization, E.Z., C.P.; Data Curation, E.Z.; Formal analysis, E.Z.; Acquisition of financing, E.Z.; Research, E.Z.; Methodology, E.Z.; Project management, E.Z.; Resources, E.Z.; Software, E.Z.; Supervision, E.Z.; Validation, E.Z.; Visualization, E.Z.; Writing - original draft, E.Z.; Writing - revision and editing, E.Z., C.P.

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