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DOSSIER: IDENTITIES IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

Border careers in context: hybrid cultural identity in the narratives of musicians and chefs in a Brazil-Uruguay border region

Laura Alves Scherer [1 2]*
Larissa Pires Martins [1]

* Corresponding Author

[1] Universidade Federal do Pampa, Programa de Pós-Graduação em Administração, Santana do Livramento, RS, Brazil

[2] Fundação Getulio Vargas, Escola de Administração de Empresas de São Paulo, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

Abstract

This article analyzes how the hybridity of Brazilian and Uruguayan cultures is expressed in cultural identity and career development in the Peace Border, in the twin cities of Sant'Ana do Livramento and Rivera. We carried out qualitative research based on ten narrative interviews, complemented by direct observation of the work of musicians and chefs who consider border cultural identity as a defining feature of their careers. As a key outcome, we developed the concept of *border careers* to refer to professional trajectories characterized by work repertoires grounded in a border identity, that is, an identity shaped by a border culture understood as a hybridity between cultures capable of generating something new. In border careers, professional paths are constructed in an inseparable relationship with the cultural identity of an in-between space, which is neither fixed nor stable but continuously evolving.

Keywords: hybridity, cultural identity, border culture, careers in context.

Carreiras fronteiriças em contexto: identidade cultural híbrida nas narrativas de músicos e chefs em uma fronteira do Brasil-Uruguai

Resumo

O objetivo deste artigo foi analisar como o hibridismo das culturas brasileira e uruguaia se expressa na identidade cultural e no desenvolvimento de carreiras na Fronteira da Paz, local das cidades-gêmeas Sant'Ana do Livramento e Rivera. Realizamos uma pesquisa qualitativa com dez entrevistas narrativas e, de forma complementar, a observação direta, do trabalho de músicos e *chefs* gastronômicos que consideram a identidade cultural fronteiriça como característica da carreira. Como principal resultado elaboramos o conceito de carreiras fronteiriças como as trajetórias profissionais caracterizadas por repertórios de trabalho vinculados a uma identidade fronteiriça, isto é, cuja identidade cultural é formada por uma cultura fronteiriça que, por sua vez, se refere a um hibridismo entre culturas capaz de gerar algo novo. Nas carreiras fronteiriças as carreiras se constroem de forma indissociável com a identidade cultural de um entre-lugar, que não é fixo e está em constante transformação.

Palavras-chave: hibridismo, identidade cultural, cultura fronteiriça, carreiras em contexto.

Carreras fronterizas en contexto: identidad cultural híbrida en las narrativas de músicos y chefs en una región fronteriza entre Brasil y Uruguay

Resumen

El objetivo de este artículo fue analizar cómo la hibridez de las culturas brasileña y uruguaya se expresa en la identidad cultural y en el desarrollo de las carreras en la Frontera de la Paz, en las ciudades gemelas de Sant'Ana do Livramento y Rivera. Realizamos una investigación cualitativa basada en diez entrevistas narrativas y, adicionalmente, en la observación directa del trabajo de músicos y chefs gastronómicos que consideran la identidad cultural fronteriza como una característica de sus carreras. Como resultado principal, elaboramos el concepto de carreras fronterizas como trayectorias profesionales caracterizadas por repertorios de trabajo vinculados a una identidad fronteriza, es decir, una identidad cultural formada por una cultura de frontera que, a su vez, remite a una hibridez cultural capaz de generar algo nuevo. En las carreras fronterizas, las trayectorias profesionales se construyen de manera indisociable de la identidad cultural de un entre-lugar, que no es fijo y se encuentra en constante transformación.

Palabras clave: hibridez, identidad cultural, cultura fronteriza, carreras en contexto.

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INTRODUCTION

Careers are positions occupied throughout life, influenced by social and contextual relationships such as an individual's background, their global interactions, and the society and culture in which they are embedded (Mayrhofer et al., 2007). Careers shape how individuals see themselves and how they are socially perceived (Mayrhofer et al., 2023), which is why several studies maintain that careers are fundamental for the construction of identity and vice versa (Calasans & Davel, 2020; Martin et al., 2024; Torbor et al., 2025). Hall (2020) explains that identity is shaped by culture and social interactions, being historically constructed and mutable. The author argues that cultural identities may become fragmented, since they are not fixed; they are constructed across history and may change at any moment.

Within this scenario of fragmentation, cultural identity ceases to be homogeneous and assumes hybrid characteristics — resulting from contact between different cultures, for example among individuals who migrate, carrying elements of their origins such as traditions, histories and languages (Hall, 2020). Canclini (2015) complements this view by defining hybridisation as the combination of distinct sociocultural practices that generate new forms of expression of life and work – something particularly evident in geographical border regions.

Brazil is the only country that borders most South American countries (Almeida & Dorfman, 2017), and one of these borders — between Sant'Ana do Livramento, in Brazil, and Rivera, in Uruguay — is the focus of this study. These cities are classified as twin towns, forming a dry border divided only by an imaginary line, with free daily circulation between both sides (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística [IBGE], 2021). The region is known as the "Border of Peace", as it is characterised by a permeable dynamic and intense social interaction, which fosters a binational culture (Almeida & Dorfman, 2017) that connects common and distinct elements of both countries and gives rise to a distinctive border culture. This border cultural identity contains unique symbols and elements of both cities, such as the mixture of languages, customs and artistic manifestations, representing a crossing of diversities (Muller et al., 2010).

In this context, we argue that Sant'Ana do Livramento and Rivera present potential for the development of careers linked to the cultural identity of both countries, particularly local artistic expressions such as gastronomy and music, which constitute representative career niches – as art may be a manifestation of identity in professional activities (Caetano et al., 2017; Calasans & Davel, 2020; Canclini, 2015; Cleveland, 2013). Thus, the general aim of this study is to analyse how the hybridity of Brazilian and Uruguayan cultures is expressed in cultural identity and in career development of musicians and gastronomic chefs in the "Border of Peace".

Several studies have examined hybrid culture in border regions. Caetano et al. (2017), for instance, highlight the artistic potential and identity elements present between Ponta Porã (Brazil) and Pedro Juan Caballero (Paraguay). Almeida and Dorfman (2017) examine cultural integration between Brazil and Uruguay, focusing on the construction of binational cultural agreements. In the careers field, Akkermans and Kubasch (2017) identify, in a systematic review, the relationship between career and culture as an emerging trend. In Brazil, Calasans and Davel (2020) discuss the management of creative careers through community cultural identity, analysing the case of a musician in the Itapuã neighbourhood of Salvador, based on elements of image, culture and vision attributed by the community.

Although studies exist on the relationship between identity and career, and on cultural hybridity, research that integrates these themes remains scarce. This article proposes an articulation of the concepts of cultural identity from the British-Jamaican sociologist Stuart Hall, hybrid cultures from the Argentine anthropologist Néstor Canclini, and careers within the framework of contemporary authors in organisational studies, in order to understand career development in a border region. The proposal to examine twin towns of Brazil and Uruguay offers a Latin American perspective on the development of border careers.

CAREERS IN CONTEXT

When careers are understood from a contextual perspective, they appear as situated within historical and dynamic processes, marked by ruptures, continuities and contingencies (Akkermans & Kubasch, 2017; Mayrhofer et al., 2007, 2023; Van den Groenendaal et al., 2022). The discussion on careers in context is advanced by Mayrhofer et al. (2007), based on four major influencing dimensions: work, origin, global and society/culture. The work context involves economic, corporate and relational factors in the labour market; origin refers to social class, education, family trajectory and living conditions. The global context includes international interactions within professional relations. Society and culture encompass social markers such as gender, ethnicity, demography and community embeddedness, which shape the possibilities and constraints of professional trajectories.

Mayrhofer et al. (2023) reinforce these dimensions by offering a renewed perspective through three lenses: ontic, spatial and temporal. The ontic perspective refers to the specific conditions of the individual who experiences the career, such as gender, age, professional status, psychological needs, expectations, resilience and identities in transformation. This perspective highlights the subjective nature of careers, recognizing that they are permeated by individual attributes, but also by social markers that may enable or constrain professional paths. The spatial perspective argues that careers unfold within social and geographical spaces regulated by institutional boundaries, norms, public policies, organisational and national cultures. These spaces are inhabited by multiple actors, such as families, organisations, professional groups and nation states, who shape possibilities and trajectories. The temporal perspective structures the professional trajectory into stages, transitions and events. Intergenerational comparisons, social mobility, migration, and the effects of crises and socio-political change illustrate how temporality affects careers.

These dimensions and perspectives are not isolated; within the context of a career there will always be interaction among them (Mayrhofer et al., 2007, 2023). In this research, we emphasise recent studies that analyse social markers and cultures embedded in the contexts of identity-based career trajectories. For example, Torbor et al. (2025) show how gender, race and field of activity shape career identity in a study conducted with early career women researchers from developing countries, all recipients of an award for women in science. Although this is a highly qualified group in the STEM field (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), individuals associated with these positions are generally presumed to be white men, which tends to eclipse the identities of the researchers by those of dominant groups. As a result, they engage in authenticity negotiations, adjusting the expression of their identities to gain legitimacy in scientifically masculinised environments, which frequently implies silencing personal and cultural aspects to conform to institutional expectations.

The study by Barros et al. (2021) highlights how gender and a local culture centred on sertanejo music shape the career identity of musicians in the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais. For these artists, music is experienced as a source of meaning and a way of life, while society labels them as outsiders, imposing a negative "virtual identity" which contrasts with the real identity they construct for themselves. Musicians face family tensions, ranging from support to pressure to abandon the career, and precarious working conditions, marked by informality, low earnings, competition and stigmatisation that classifies their activity as leisure. Women recognise that they are gaining ground due to the recent recognition of female sertanejo, led by national singers who challenge historically sexist norms of this field, including those related to women's roles in song lyrics, repositioning their place in musical narratives and contributing to identity change within the genre.

There are studies that relate careers to the cultural identity of a country, region or community. Calasans and Davel (2020) demonstrate the influence of community culture on the identity of creative careers. Based on the case of a musician and cultural manager in a neighbourhood of Salvador, in the Brazilian state of Bahia, identity can be seen in how the artist relates to the place. His songs contain aspects of his trajectory permeated by cultural heritage associated with ancestry, popular culture and religiosity. This cultural aspect forms an image that is his public signature, already recognised through national awards, which brings him closer to the local audience and reflects how he wishes to be seen and acknowledged.

There are also studies that emphasise how the blending of national cultures influences career identity, such as the study by Martin et al. (2024), which analyses how individuals of Chinese origin build their careers living in Australia and New Zealand. The role of family and age at migration influence these trajectories, fostering autonomy and professional clarity when intercultural experience occurs in childhood. Perceptions of multicultural identity ranged from insecurity associated with discrimination,

positive evaluations, and ambivalence. For some, the strategy was to align with Asian values; for others, to align with Western values. Careers thus became a way to compensate for uncertainties associated with immigrant origin, suggesting a possible vicious cycle between multicultural identity and professional identity.

From the study by Prestes and Grisci (2025), we see that the cultures of the country of origin and destination generate movements of territorialisation in the trajectories of immigrant chefs from different countries working in Brazil. When relocating, these professionals bring with them culinary knowledge, techniques, styles and cultural bonds, directly influencing restaurant organisation, urban gastronomic scenes and local culinary networks. Culinary territorialisation, however, does not occur without a foundation of tradition: the chef's work involves both appropriating and re-elaborating elements of their culture of origin and integrating, interpreting and re-signifying the culture of the country of destination. In this way, immigrant chefs become capable of grasping preferences, habits and lifestyles unknown in their contexts of origin and, through this crossing, producing something new.

It is worth noting that studies in the field of Management addressing national identity in careers tend to focus on the mixing of cultures from two or more countries mainly through cases of expatriation, migration and refuge (Akkermans & Kubasch, 2017; Prestes & Grisci, 2025; Rabenu & Baruch, 2025; Yao & McWha-Hermann, 2025). However, these studies do not use cultural hybridity as a theoretical concept derived from anthropology and sociology. It should also be noted that there are studies of career and multiple identities that use the term hybrid careers, but these refer to professional pathways composed of multiple ties, roles and forms of work (Gander, 2021), such as artist-academics (Lam, 2019); health professionals combining clinical and managerial responsibilities (Bresnen et al., 2018); academic careers and entrepreneurial behaviour (Guo et al., 2019). Considering that the national and cultural context of origin (Mayrhofer et al., 2007, 2023) is a decisive context for the emergence and management of careers, we argue that the notion of hybridity between cultures, when influencing an individual's cultural identity, can broaden understandings that situate the context of careers.

CULTURAL IDENTITY AND HYBRID CULTURES

National identity is represented by the combination of language, customs, and cultural systems. These are not aspects that people are born with, but are influenced by ethnic, social, geographical, and historical inequalities (Caetano et al., 2017; Hall, 2020). For Hall (2020), identity is a positioning that is formed and transformed through cultural representations and specific historical contexts; therefore, it is not fixed, but mutable and constantly negotiated.

Hall (2020) distinguishes cultural identity in traditional and modern societies. In traditional society, identity maintained the traditions and symbolisms of the time, whereas in modern society identity is more closely associated with reflections on social practices. The subject adapts and may undergo changes and develop other identities.

In the same line of thought, Canclini (2015) reflects on cultural processes that once existed separately and can be modified through the union of new structures, objects, and practices. Canclini (2015, p. 9) understands this mixture as hybridisation: "socio-cultural processes in which discrete structures or practices, that previously existed separately, combine to generate new structures, objects, and practices." Colonialism and globalisation are historical examples of how political, economic, social, and cultural forces sought to impose and homogenise societies that already had their own identity positioning, ultimately producing hybridisation, that is, new sociocultural structures and practices that remain in motion and transformation. This idea, shared by Canclini (2015) and Hall (2020), demonstrates that hybridity reveals power relations that are not merely vertical and imposing, but which generate spaces of struggle and agency to produce something new, particularly in different kinds of cultural manifestations.

Spaces of cultural hybridity are common in artistic expressions, as in the study by Marzano (2024) concerning carnival groups in Luanda, Angola, in the first half of the twentieth century, where practices considered "traditional" and elements associated with "modernity" were dynamically combined amidst Portuguese colonial tensions. Although the colonial press insisted on representing these manifestations as fixed folkloric expressions and as remnants of a disappearing past, the revellers themselves incorporated technical, aesthetic, and performative innovations, revealing ongoing processes of cultural appropriation, negotiation, and reinvention. Rigid colonial categories such as indigenous/assimilated/European and traditional/modern

(where "indigenous" classified Africans not assimilated to European culture) failed to capture the complexity of these practices, as the carnival groups operated precisely in the interstitial spaces, producing hybrid forms that destabilised symbolic boundaries and offered alternative possibilities for identity expression in the colonial city.

Cultural hybridity can also be observed in literature. Drawing on the case of a writer born in China and raised in the United States, Hu and Roberto (2019) show the presence of linguistic and cultural traces of Chinese in her English writing, which is evident in immigration processes and, consequently, bilingualism. In the context of linguistic hybridity, translation encounters lexical gaps in the target language, producing divergences and losses of meaning that require effort on the part of the translator.

Canclini (2015) argues that different cultural forms – such as scholarly, popular, and mass cultures – interact and transform the contemporary context. This leads people to create strategies both to adapt to a culturally complex world and to resist its effects. According to the author, this process of hybridity is particularly intense in Latin America, due to the combination of Indigenous, European, and African heritages, as well as the global influence of mass culture.

An example of resistance is offered by the study of Rincón et al. (2024), concerning an Indigenous group in the Colombian Amazon facing agricultural modernisation that caused cultural erosion and loss of agrobiodiversity. The community, in partnership with governmental agencies, implemented actions to recover, produce, and conserve native seeds, which have nutritional, medicinal, and ritual functions and become the symbolic core of identity and food sovereignty. More than biological resources, these seeds carry memory and intergenerational knowledge, with women serving as key guardians of this heritage. The creation of local seed networks and the recovery of ancestral knowledge emerge as central strategies to preserve culture, territory, and identity in the face of modernising pressures.

Another example in which food production and consumption strengthen cultural identity is the case of the Argentine government, supported by the Hispanic-Creole population, which employed *yerba mate* as a strategy of resistance against European ambitions during the colonial period. Munizaga et al. (2024) explain that British trade aimed to impose tea consumption as a symbol of civilisation, while *yerba mate* became associated with *gauchos* and barbarism. However, *yerba mate* was exported, commercialised, and used to demonstrate the economic and cultural sovereignty of the Argentine Confederation, and the beverage ceased to be simply a locally consumed plant and became a symbol of a shared culture and ritual across different provinces. The strengthening of economic ties with other regions of the River Plate (platine region) reinforced a narrative of autonomy and self-affirmation, becoming part of the collective memory and the construction of a national/regional imaginary and identity.

The platine region is the area of South America that encompasses the River Plate basin, reaching territories of Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Bolivia. The source of the River Plate is in Brazil and its estuary is located between Argentina and Uruguay, where the pampa biome predominates, with vast plains that are especially present in these three countries. According to Boff and Machado (2023), from this region during the colonial period emerges the *gaúcho/gaucho* (Portuguese and Spanish spellings), a creole figure originating from the mixture of Iberians with Indigenous peoples, and, to a lesser extent, with Africans.

> Between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, the *gaúcho* moved freely across the pampa, virtually unaware of border limits and with only loose, fluid identification with the Kingdoms of Portugal and Spain. With the emergence of colonial treaties seeking to draw frontier boundaries, the errant character of the *gaúcho* began to disappear. This process intensified in the era of independent nations, when each country sought to adapt this figure to its dominant political projects. In Brazil, the Brazilian *gaúcho* emerged, whose image, inspired by the Farroupilha Revolution, was shaped to align with republicanism and federalism. The myth of the heroic *gaúcho*, defender of the frontiers, was cultivated in order to distinguish him from the platine *gaucho*, portrayed as barbaric. It was above all in Rio Grande do Sul that these myths of *gaúcho* culture became institutionalised, mainly through the Centros de Tradição Gaúcha (CTGs) (Boff & Machado, 2023, p. 29, our translation).

In this sense, it becomes evident that the origin of the *gaúcho/gaucho* is transboundary (Boff & Machado, 2023) and its figure was constructed as "brave, macho, boastful; a type who is always dressed in traditional attire and constantly accompanied by a horse, a barbecue and chimarrão" (Ramil, 2009, p. 11, our translation). However, at present, according to Ramil (2009), only the Brazilian *gaúcho* has expanded its meaning to refer to someone born in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, unlike in Uruguay and Argentina, where the term *gaucho* designates only a man from the countryside and not a demonym for the population. The author further notes that precisely what marks the identity of all inhabitants of Rio Grande do Sul, as a Brazilian regional type, is also what makes them foreign, since it links them to neighbouring countries. Indeed, cultural production in Spanish from Buenos Aires and Montevideo sometimes becomes a stronger reference than that from Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo for *gaúchos* from Rio Grande do Sul, especially those living outside major urban centres. Songs that tell stories of customs, clothing and cuisine that once belonged to a single culture continue to meet in cultural manifestations, even after geopolitical borders were established (Ramil, 2009).

This context illustrates the cultural hybridity present in Brazil arising from its historical miscegenation and vast territorial expansion (Caetano et al., 2017). In particular, the borders between Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina demonstrate that frontiers are not limited to territorial division, but represent zones of contact and exchange between different social groups, where boundaries are symbolic and interdependent (Alencar et al., 2017). In these places, the term *fronteiriço* (borderlander) gains prominence, as it is associated with a particular identity and the privilege of living between two nations (Muller et al., 2010). In everyday life, border regions witness the movement of people crossing from one country to another to carry out various activities, whether work, trade, study, etc. They take advantage of diversity in gastronomy, entrepreneurship, and the mixture of languages such as portuñol, all of which lead to the formation of a third culture: the border culture (Ferraro, 2020; Muller et al., 2010; Pimentel, 2021; Sturza, 2019).

In light of the above, it becomes apparent that the theoretical notion of cultural identity can be understood through the hybridisation of cultures, such as the border culture, which in turn may significantly influence the formation of individuals' careers in these regions.

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

We conducted exploratory qualitative research using narrative interviews and direct observation. According to Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2003), the aim of the narrative interview is to collect accounts through stories told during the interviews. Participants recall moments and have the freedom to recount experiences in a spontaneous and open manner. The researcher has a pre-established guide and may follow it; however, this does not prevent asking additional questions when necessary, that is, departing from the script, since this technique is more flexible and shaped according to the course of the interview. Pederson (2013, p. 415) argues that although narrative interviews may begin with "tell me your story", it may be necessary to use "a more descriptive initial prompt" so that the participant can understand the context and the importance of the research. The level of detail used at the start of the interview may vary, but it is important to recognise that any response is significant, as narrative interviewing involves accompanying participants' development of their own stories.

Following these recommendations, and based on theoretical notions of cultural identity, hybrid culture and careers in context, we developed the following questions for the interview guide: (1) Tell me what it is like to live on this Brazil–Uruguay border, including elements of your life and family trajectory; (2) Tell me about your career trajectory, describing your routine, main activities, and the relationship with the Brazil–Uruguay border culture; (3) Tell me about the main challenges and difficulties of your career; (4) What does it mean to be a borderlander and in what ways does living on the Brazil–Uruguay border shape your work?

Ten narrative interviews were conducted: five with professionals from the music sector and five with gastronomic chefs who live and work on the "Border of Peace". All participants reside on the Brazilian side, in the city of Sant'Ana do Livramento, and frequently move around the city of Rivera in Uruguay for personal and professional purposes. They view border cultural identity as a characteristic of their careers. Participants were located through the contact network of one of the researchers, who is a native of this border region, using the snowball technique, as well as through Instagram, where profile posts were

examined to check whether they made reference to border culture. The interviews were recorded in audio files in locations chosen by the participants between April and May 2023 and lasted on average one hour.

Additionally, direct observation was conducted in the workplaces of one musician and two chefs, during events held on the "Border of Peace". For the musician observation, one researcher attended an event in May 2023 held in a pub in central Sant'Ana do Livramento. In the title of the musical project advertised on Instagram, the border theme was explicit: *1ª Peña Fronteira*. For the chef observation, one researcher attended the Binational Enogastronomy Festival *Fronte(i)ra* in August 2023. The spelling of the word *fronte(i)ra* evokes Portuguese and Spanish simultaneously. One chef was part of the organising committee and present in the food court; the other was one of the main grillers at the closing barbecue. The aim of the observations was to complement the interviews, analysing in practice the references cited, including those on social media, supported by notes and photographic records.

For data analysis, we followed Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2003). After collecting the interviews, we transcribed the recordings as they were spoken. Attention at this stage focused not only on the general context of the interview but also on pauses, sounds and tone of voice, making the transcription rich in detail. To ensure better intelligibility of participants' speech, the excerpts used had their Portuguese corrected, removing linguistic fillers while retaining regional border idiomatic expressions and Spanish. Next, thematic analysis was carried out, which involved a gradual reduction of the text into keywords and paraphrases.

While reading the transcriptions, one of the researchers selected excerpts from all participants' speech that addressed the hybridism of Brazilian and Uruguayan cultures and assigned a keyword to each. The researcher grouped statements with the same keyword. The other researcher reviewed the selection, keywords and grouping, and together the authors interpreted the selected excerpts, synthesising them into paraphrases and linking them to the perspective of cultural identity and careers in context. Then, the authors selected the excerpt and paraphrase that best represented the others and used them to name the thematic narrative. This process resulted in eight thematic narratives containing the keywords: binational origin, know-how through family encouragement, *portuñol, gaúcho* dress, binational festivals, border gastronomy, border music, and challenges in border careers. Table 1 presents an example.

Table 1
Example of the development of the thematic narratives

Excerpts from the statements	Key words	Interpretation through paraphrases in synthetic sentences	Selected excerpt of speech to name the thematic narrative	Main paraphrase elaborated regarding the thematic narrative
"Because I have my mother's family who are Uruguayan and my father's family who are Brazilian, I have always lived 24 hours a day with this exchange of cultures and territory, which is actually something imaginary, right? My grandmother was born in the countryside of Uruguay and lives in Uruguay, right? I grew up going from my house to my grandmother's house. Crossing the dividing line and, consequently, living with all this cultural exchange that exists here on our border, which is something very unique and which I have learnt to admire since I was very young" (Chacarera).	Binational border origin	Daily experience of cultural exchange at the border, shaped by the hybrid family life between Brazil and Uruguay and by the admiration for this binational heritage.	"Crossing the [imaginary] dividing line"	Hybrid families and the binational border origin
"My family is of Brazilian origin, both father and mother, but I had a grandmother who was Castellana [...] Our families, whether we want it or not, are very intertwined, right? This doble chapa incorporates our border identity, I think" (Chamamé).		Brazilian origin with Castilian (Uruguayan) ancestry highlights family interweaving as a borderland identity.		

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

We organised the presentation of the results by outlining the participants' profiles, the context of the Border of Peace, and the thematic narratives, beginning with life and family trajectories on the border and moving on to the more specific aspects of the careers of chefs and musicians. The authors sought to describe the narratives in a manner close to the participants' own language. We then present the discussion of the results, which led to the development of the concept of border careers as an identity expressed through cultural hybridity for musicians and gastronomic chefs.

PROFILE OF THE INTERVIEWEES

The profile of the interviewees is presented in Table 2. To preserve their identities, the musicians were identified using names of musical genres, and the chefs were identified by names of typical dishes from Uruguay and from Rio Grande do Sul, the Brazilian state where the city of Santana do Livramento is located. During the research, we observed that when referring to Brazilian culture, the interviewees frequently mentioned specific regional elements of *Gaúcho* culture. This was expected, as Brazil, due to its vast geographical size, encompasses distinct cultural aspects in each state.

Table 2
Profile of the interviewees

Name	Hometown	Age	Gender	Education	Profession	Time working in years
MUSICIANS						
Chamamé	Sant'Ana do Livramento- RS	28	M	Bachelor in Rural Development and Agroindustrial Management, Environmental Technician and Broadcaster	Musician Public servant Commerce	16 2 Not informed
Candombe	Sant'Ana do Livramento- RS	37	M	Bachelor's degree in Business Administration and undergraduate degree in Economics	Musician Education agent	20 5
Vanera	Sant'Ana do Livramento- RS	49	M	Higher education incomplete	Musician Composer	35
Milonga	Sant'Ana do Livramento- RS	61	M	Elementary school incomplete	Musician	35
Chacarera	Sant'Ana do Livramento – RS	25	F	Bachelor of Journalism	Singer Journalist	15 2
GASTRONOMIC *CHEFS*						
Pancho	Sant'Ana do Livramento- RS	39	M	High school	*Chef* Entrepreneur	11 2
Parrillada	Horizontina- RS	42	M	Bachelor's Degree in Archivology, Master's Degree in Cultural Heritage	*Chef* Public servant	8 19
Carreteiro	Sant'Ana do Livramento- RS	54	M	Elementary school	*Chef* Public servant	28 Not informed
Choripan	Sant'Ana do Livramento- RS	48	M	Degree in Gastronomy	*Chef* Entrepreneur	23 30
Churrasco	Sant'Ana do Livramento- RS	34	M	Bachelor of Communication-Advertising	*Chef* Entrepreneur	9 9

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

All participants are Brazilian *Gaúchos*, with nine being from Sant'Ana do Livramento and one originally from Horizontina, though residing at the border for eight years. One of the interviewees is *doble chapa*, holding dual nationality. Ages range from 25 to 61, with a predominance of men—only one woman was interviewed. Half have a higher education degree; the others completed either primary or secondary education. Only one chef has formal training in gastronomy, and none of the musicians have specific academic training in music. In the case of music, careers typically began early due to family influence; in gastronomy, they usually emerged after other professional experiences. Most participants are also active in other areas beyond music or cuisine.

CONTEXT OF THE "BORDER OF PEACE": THE TWIN CITIES OF SANTANA DO LIVRAMENTO AND RIVERA

The city of Santana do Livramento, with 84,421 inhabitants, is located in the south-west of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, while the city of Rivera, with 84,775 inhabitants, is situated in the north-east of the Department of Rivera, Uruguay. They are considered twin cities due to their conurbation and intense circulation of people and goods, as there are no rivers, walls or any migratory barriers between them. There is, of course, an official immigration office on each side, where individuals must present themselves should they wish to travel beyond these two municipalities, but the movement between the cities is unrestricted: one simply crosses, on foot or by any other means of transport, the imaginary line that separates the territories. The longstanding history of friendly political, commercial, social, economic and cultural relations between the two cities and their countries has earned the region the nickname "Border of Peace". The symbol of division–integration between the cities is the International Park (Figure 1), where each country's flag stands on its own national soil, and the obelisk marks the imaginary dividing line.

Figure 1
International Park



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

THEMATIC NARRATIVES

"Crossing the [imaginary] dividing line": hybrid families and the binational border origin

In the Border of Peace, mixed Brazilian and Uruguayan family origins – what we may call hybrid families – are common in the region. Hybridism, which may occur in the parents' generation, grandparents' or even further back, results in the everyday habit of crossing the border to visit relatives on either side. When father and mother are of different nationalities, Brazilian and Uruguayan, or vice versa, the child is called *doble chapa*. Many retain this label only culturally, while others, as in the case of Chacarera, have official dual citizenship: "if you open my wallet, I have my Brazilian ID card and my Uruguayan identity card".

> "Because I have my mother's family who are Uruguayan and my father's family who are Brazilian, I have always lived 24 hours a day with this exchange of cultures and territory, which is actually something imaginary, right? My grandmother was born in the countryside of Uruguay and lives in Uruguay, right? I grew up going from my house to my grandmother's house. Crossing the dividing line and, consequently, living with all this cultural exchange that exists here on our border, which is something very unique and which I have learnt to admire since I was very young" (Chacarera).

> "My family is of Brazilian origin, both father and mother, but I had a grandmother who was *Castellana* [...] Our families, whether we want it or not, are very intertwined, right? This *doble chapa* incorporates our border identity, I think" (Chamamé).

Regardless of formal registration, the crossings over the imaginary dividing line – literally and culturally – between the countries, according to the interviewees, begin with the binational family origin, which they value and recognise as a border identity.

"I grew up in this environment": the labour know-how acquired through family encouragement and living with border culture

Reflecting on the know-how of chef and musician careers led participants to memories of childhood. The first contact with different musical instruments and with the handling of kitchen utensils typical of the border region occurred through everyday family life:

> "I was influenced by my family… I was a 10-year-old boy, they already played and sang. When I was 12, my mother gave me a button accordion and I started lessons. Later I was already playing in two *invernadas* [groups of gaucho dance]. At 17 I started playing at festivals and I never stopped" (Vanera).

> "My father prepared meals over an open fire, on a *trempe*, it was very rustic, but it was the most flavourful food I have ever eaten. I have never managed to eat anything like it again, even cooking at home; it does not have that taste, that seasoning from the cuisine my father made" (Carreteiro).

> "My whole upbringing was inside the CTG [Centre of Gaucho Traditions], right? So from there I started to develop a taste for music and art. I took part in artistic dance groups, singing competitions. And I developed a taste for music, started guitar lessons, and learnt a little about the music and culture of Rio Grande do Sul. Over time, I became more comfortable with the instrument and developed a taste for composition" (Candombe).

Many other narratives reinforce that the relationship with musical art and food spans both life and career, marked by the support and presence of family and close people, through gestures and encouragement for discovery: (i) "During childhood, I used to go to my grandfather's farm and watched him prepare the Sunday *churrasco* (barbecue), and that is how I learnt […] I grew up in this environment" (Churrasco); (ii) "I always liked and had a flair for cooking. I helped my parents from a young age with the housework, so I had to manage. I began to enjoy cooking and developed my own way of doing things, but you only really gain skills inside a professional kitchen, after a lot of experience" (Pancho); (iii) "When I was about 7 years old, I really started, encouraged by my godmother. At the time, it was something very casual, so I started music lessons and sang

the songs I liked" (Chacarera); and (iv) "At around 8 years old I got to know the cultural side through poetry and started reciting. At 13, I began music festivals and I was one of the first singers here in Livramento to win first place at a nativist festival at such a young age – I was 16 at the time" (Chamamé).

"Here at the border we speak portuñol": linguistic hybridity in music and gastronomy

Portuñol is noticeable in the speech of all interviewees. It is worth recalling that they are all Brazilian and received their schooling in Portuguese, yet throughout the interviews their narratives were filled with Spanish words and expressions, blending the two languages. This is one of the cultural elements that forms part of the border way of communicating: "We are on the border and there is no way of avoiding Spanish, is there? Even though what is spoken here is not Spanish, but *portuñol*" (Vanera). This linguistic hybridity, which is a quotidian way of speaking, also appears in artistic modes of expression:

> "We have an accent, we carry certain words, dialects, and then we mix them as well, don't we? A real mixture in the lyrics that the songwriters here already write in *portuñol*" (Milonga).
>
> "We always include in the albums we record one or two songs in Spanish and the songs that are in Portuguese also bring a bit of *portuñol*, don't they? This is a characteristic we have had from the very beginning. It is already part of our own formation, of the border accent" (Candombe).
>
> "When arriving at the pub, I found Candombe and Chamamé. I notice that Chamamé communicates with the audience using words and expressions in portuñol: *Buenas amigos; vamos parar de charlar e cantar; nosotros aqui; entonces gurizada*. In addition to the names of the songs and repertoire in *portuñol*" (Field diary).

Portuñol, more than simply a way of speaking for border residents, is a way of being, which gives rise to song lyrics, names of dishes and names of festivals, bringing closeness with the local audience, differentiation and a border identity to chefs and musicians.

"Pilcha is stage attire but I also wear it every day": dress of the gaucho from Rio Grande do Sul and Uruguay

In the state of Rio Grande do Sul, one of its cultural symbols is the traditional clothing worn in the Centros de Tradição Gaúcha (Centres of Gaúcho Tradition), garments similar to those used by men and women during the colonial period. In Uruguay, the same types of clothing are found, with small variations. Men's dress consists of *bombacha* trousers, shirt, neckerchief, leather boots or *alpargata*. Women's dress consists of the *prenda* dress; blouse and long skirt; or blouse, *bombacha* and boots or *sapatilha*. Although this type of attire is more commonly associated with traditional festivals, it can also be seen in daily use in the streets along the border, since on both sides it is connected with rural life. When musicians perform, and even in their everyday life, it is common for them to wear traditional clothing, known as pilcha gaúcha:

> "The pilcha is stage attire but I also wear it every day" (Vanera).
>
> "And from the culture of Rio Grande do Sul, I think there is a bit of everything, isn't there? My clothing, which is also imported from Argentine and Uruguayan dress, is a mixture of everything" (Chacarera).

The *pilcha gaúcha*, therefore, refers to the *gaúcho* from Rio Grande do Sul, but also to the *gaucho* of the Uruguayan and Argentinian pampas. On the other hand, some artists do not consider it necessary to wear these outfits to represent their border identity: "Even if today I am wearing jeans and I am not accustomed to wearing *pilcha*, I feel immense pride in being from this land, being a border person, and expressing this through hospitality, customs and traditions" (Chamamé). During the observation at the Gastronomy Festival, we noted that "Parrillada was not wearing traditional clothing, unlike the other colleagues" (Field diary).

"I work from the first [Binational] Festival onwards": Cultural infrastructure that enables work and encounters between the two countries

One of the career strategies of these professionals is to take part in binational events held at the "Border of Peace", as these occasions symbolise the union between Brazil and Uruguay and celebrate typical regional food and music. Musical festivals, for example, constitute an entry point into musicians' careers, as in the case of Candombe.

> "A group of friends and I formed the group Charla de Fronteira. I was 16 years old, the youngest in the group. We started doing performances, opening fairs and shows. We did the opening act for Luiz Marenco's show [a nativist singer of state-wide prominence]" (Candombe).

Choripan was one of the creators of a gastronomic event that highlights a border delicacy and takes place on the dividing line between the two countries:

> "I invented ChoriCeva [the name of the event combining the terms *choripán* and beer], and I have also worked from the very first edition of the [Binational] Enogastronomy Festival" (Choripan).

The gastronomic events mentioned take place periodically and are hosted at one of the symbolic markers of separation (and union) between the cities, the International Park, a public square with green space, featuring an obelisk and the flag of Brazil on one side and that of Uruguay on the other. This location, which is jointly administered by a mixed commission from both countries, brings together traders, organisations, businesspeople, local residents and tourists who attend the events and often take photos between the two flags. The events mentioned by the interviewees sometimes have music as their main feature, and at other times gastronomy. However, both gastronomic elements and music are always present, complementing each other. It is also worth emphasising that this cultural infrastructure prioritises border culture and constitutes one of the display windows and forms of legitimisation of the work of chefs and musicians within the community.

"There is another country just next door [...] dishes, ingredients, seasonings that you can't find here, but you can find there": references used by chefs in their gastronomy

Given that the Border of Peace is a land border where residents of both countries have free access to cross to the other side, this becomes highly significant for gastronomy, as it provides availability and experience for replacing or obtaining ingredients and diversifying flavours: "For gastronomy it's excellent, you've got another country right next door, haven't you? You have another culture, both in dishes, ingredients, seasonings, in products that you can't find here but you find there" (Carreteiro).

The culinary style is the *comida campeira* (country food), which, according to the interviewees, is simple cuisine based on cattle and sheep farming, typical of the pampa biome. When listing elements of the border, Carreteiro always tries to prepare dishes that represent the region:

> "In the culinary part we try to include something, like *choripan* and *parrilla*, which are very popular" (Carreteiro).

> "I like to take ingredients from here, you know? To value the local producer first, and then use these products — lamb, walnuts, honey, olive oil, wine and the cheeses we have — and with that make a more elaborate meal" (Choripan).

This mixture of Brazil–Uruguay cultures in gastronomy leads to the creation of new products through the cultural references of the border. This can be seen when Parrillada manages to use Uruguayan elements without losing the touch of Brazilian cuisine, resulting in a new product emerging from this blend of cultures: "The picanha burger is inspired by roasted red pepper, things we find in some *parrilladas* in Uruguay. So there are things I draw on, some tendencies or characteristics of border cuisine from the Uruguayans" (Parrillada).

"We are recognised for this border [...] where the very language, musical rhythms and the pampa biome blend": musicians' references for their artistic performances

All the musicians interviewed are singers, instrumentalists and composers. In their narratives, they recognise certain rhythms as belonging to neighbouring countries: "the *chamamé*, which is stronger in Argentina, Uruguay here with the *milonga* and the *candombe*" (Candombe). However, they observe similarities between musical rhythms from Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil), Uruguay and Argentina, and how this cultural feature is represented in the identity of the border artist:

> "When I go to festivities in the Uruguayan countryside, to folklore festivals, *peñas, criollas*, I see a great similarity with our culture here, with what we live, right? And musically speaking, I think I can have, in my work, a blend of the two strands. Uruguayan music has a great deal of focus on guitarists, guitar solos, milongas. From Argentina, the *chacarera*, which is a rhythm I really enjoy singing, forms part of my repertoire in several songs" (Chacarera).
>
> "And I also continue with my show, which brings together *gaúcha* music with Uruguayan and Argentine folklore in the repertoire" (Chacarera).
>
> "The title of the composition *Encandilado* (Enchanted) is already in Spanish, isn't it? Because it is in Portuguese, but it has some terms which are *doble chapa.* There is *Carniceria de Frontera* (Border Butchery), it is also a *chamamé* that we composed, portraying the butcheries on the border line between the countries, where we always tend to go at the weekend to buy meat" (Candombe).

In their compositions, the artists write about life on the border, which demonstrates that their identity as musicians is neither solely Brazilian nor solely Uruguayan, but a blend — it is *doble chapa*, in Candombe's words. Therefore, it is something new, for which they seek recognition: the border identity within their careers: "Wherever we go, we are recognised for this border, which has no division. Where the very language, the musical rhythms and the pampa biome, both from Brazil and from Uruguay, become blended" (Candombe).

"It is a struggle in every sense, you know? [...] I sing folklore, this is my show": challenges intersecting gender, origin, and generation

Chacarera, the only woman among this group of interviewees, highlighted the gender challenges she faces, alongside her situation as an autonomous artist. The singer notes that she experiences sexism at various moments:

> "Especially as an independent artist, working in a rather limited niche, where there are not many opportunities. I am a woman in a musical genre that is predominantly male, extremely sexist, exclusionary and so on. It is a struggle in every sense, you know? A struggle for space, for representation, it feels as though we always have to prove our worth, prove what we are capable of doing. Many times it seems that it does not matter what I do, it does not matter how competent I am in my work, how much I achieve, awards, programmes. It seems I will never be good enough for this niche, simply because I am a woman" (Chacarera).

For artists whose careers carry the identity of their origin, culture and regional folklore – such as the musical rhythms *milonga, chamamé, chacarera, candombe* and *vanera* – the public tends to be more local, without reaching a mass audience, and this often becomes a dilemma that may result in lost work opportunities:

> "I received around three proposals for shows in large events here in the city where they wanted me to sing other things, not folklore, not regional music. Because, well, they did not like it or did not want it. Obviously, I can sing anything, because besides being a regional artist, I am a singer. But often you end up having to say: look, this is my work, what I do is this, I sing folklore, this is my show. If you want to take this show to an event, I believe it will add a lot. If you do not want it, unfortunately I cannot create a show from scratch with another proposal, not least because that is not what I want to convey to people" (Chacarera).

Maintaining the tradition of what is folkloric music, also called nativist music, does not mean that its characteristics will not change over time. Earlier generations of artists influence the current generation, but the latter also incorporates contemporary elements, which may generate criticism.

> "My generation also drank from that source (of artists from Rio Grande do Sul and Uruguay), and it still does today. Many of those I work with now, those I have partnerships with, were the very ones who inspired me at the beginning of my career, and the nativist scene fosters that. In 2007, the identity of nativist music was already no longer very different from the genre that Lelé, Adair de Freitas, Luiz Cardoso drew upon. And this changed, it was already a more romantic genre, not so rural. And then my generation mixed it, made a great mix and many times I have been criticised for that" (Chamamé).

Although the careers of chefs and musicians are valued through their experience of being frontier inhabitants, their narratives are marked by tensions associated with gender, origin and generation which shape their trajectories and identity, involving constant negotiation between tradition and innovation.

BORDER CAREERS AS IDENTITY THROUGH THE EXPRESSION OF CULTURAL HYBRIDISM FOR MUSICIANS AND GASTRONOMIC CHEFS: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

> "For me there is no border here. The border is for those from outside who arrive and say: here is Brazil, here is Uruguay. Because being a border (*fronteiriço*) means being a mixture of Brazilian and Uruguayan. This mixture is what is beautiful here. In a moment the Brazilian is speaking to the Uruguayan in Spanish, the Uruguayan speaking Portuguese with the Brazilian" (Choripan).

The narrative above by Choripan synthesises the other narratives presented and encapsulates the singular context of the Border of Peace. This border between Brazil and Uruguay does not operate as a limit, but rather as a space of continuous coexistence between cultural, linguistic and symbolic codes, thereby constituting what Hall (2020) terms identity as positioning – always relational, negotiated and in transformation. The narratives describe a shared life of hybrid families that circulate between the two neighbouring countries, where national distinctions lose rigidity in everyday life, giving rise to hybrid practices that exemplify the processes of hybridisation discussed by Canclini (2015), in which elements previously separate combine to generate new cultural forms, in this case the border culture, already evidenced in other studies (Ferraro, 2020; Muller et al., 2010; Pimentel, 2021; Sturza, 2019).

By stating that "being a border (*fronteiriço*) means being Brazilian and Uruguayan mixed together" and attributing beauty to this mixture, Choripan expresses pride in this identity which does not anchor itself in fixed belongings, but rather in a shared experience of an in-between place, marked by territorial and sociocultural permeability. This way of being translates border identity as an active construction, produced through the constant encounter between cultures, and one which redefines the very meaning of the border – in many places around the world associated with division, separation, walls, migration and control – by transforming it from a dividing line into a space of everyday hybridity, even carrying the adjective "peace" in its popular appellation.

The border culture, learned and experienced throughout life, is expressed in the coexistence with *doble chapa* family members, in the orality of *portuñol*, in the *pilcha gaúcha*, in cultural festivals, in shared culinary practices and in nativist musical repertoires. It operates simultaneously as a symbolic and structural resource, shaping strategies of action in the regional labour market. The artistic careers of chefs and musicians emerge from this border identity marked by hybrid national cultural matrices, confirming the argument that professional trajectories are inseparable from the spatial, ontological and temporal dimensions (Mayrhofer et al., 2023) that configure their contexts of work, origin, global interactions, society and culture (Mayrhofer et al., 2007).

The cultural examples brought by the narratives, especially those related to gastronomy and music in Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil), are not entirely distinct from those of Uruguay. They are close, sharing symbolic pairs with different names in Portuguese and Spanish — for example, *chimarrão* and *mate, linguiça* and *chorizo, churrasco* and *asado, churrasqueira* and *parrilla* — or even the same name in both countries — for example, *pilcha, bombacha, milonga, chamamé*. This reveals the sharing of a common rural way of life *(estilo de vida campeiro)* that permeates those who live in the vast Pampa biome.

This shared repertoire refers to the historical figure of the cisplatine *gaucho*, descendant of the miscegenation between Portuguese and Spanish colonisers and Indigenous peoples (later also Black populations), who in the colonial period circulated freely across the plains of the River Plate region (which encompasses mainly Rio Grande do Sul, Uruguay and Argentina), tending cattle and practising rural habits (Boff & Machado, 2023; Munizaga et al., 2024; Ramil, 2009). It is striking to observe that what is today called border culture, marked by interaction between two distinct national cultures, has the same origin: the origin of the countryside. The cisplatine *gaúcho*'s way of life, still present in the region today, precedes the geopolitical divisions and state boundaries that later came to define Brazil and Uruguay. Thus, border culture is born from this shared past and reinscribes it in the present, translated into two countries, especially through art (Cleveland, 2013), such as in the careers of chefs and musicians.

The findings are in dialogue with studies on cultural hybridity, such as Marzano's (2024), which illustrates the creation of an "in-between space" in festivals organised by Indigenous Angolan communities, who were pressured by European cultural assimilation during the colonial period. At the same time, the results advance beyond studies in which hybridity emerges as a translational tension, involving lexical gaps and losses of meaning (Hu & Roberto, 2019), given that *portuñol* is not experienced as a problem, noise or difficulty of translation, but as a positive marker of belonging. It does not need to be corrected or mediated; rather, it is valued as musical aesthetics, as a communicative style and even as a strategy for career differentiation. In the "Border of Peace", *portuñol* emerges as an identity and professional resource, incorporated spontaneously and celebrated in the performances of chefs and musicians. The findings also advance in relation to studies in which hybridity appears within a context of erosion and direct threat to the survival of traditional practices — such as seed cultivation involving actions of resistance (Rincón et al., 2024). In the Brazil–Uruguay border under analysis, cultural hybridity is not experienced as something that places one country or the other at risk, but as a historical outcome celebrated by chefs and musicians, including their traditional forms of cultivating food, which become aesthetic and professional differentiators.

The findings also dialogue with studies that demonstrate how careers are influenced by context (Akkermans & Kubasch, 2017; Mayrhofer et al., 2007, 2023; Van den Groenendaal et al., 2022), and that territory is not merely a backdrop, but a source of cultural identity, legitimacy and economic value, as occurs in artistic careers linked to regional cultural identity (Barros et al., 2021; Calasans & Davel, 2020) and in careers associated with more than one national cultural identity, generally linked to migration (Martin et al., 2024; Prestes & Grisci, 2025; Rabenu & Baruch, 2025). In the case of the chefs and musicians in this study, it is possible to advance this literature by showing that, in this border zone, cultural identity is constituted from childhood through the everyday hybridity of different national cultures (which share the same historical origin), without formal migratory mobility, but through pendular mobility. It is this that becomes borderland music and gastronomy, as work, and enables us to understand what we call a border career.

Border careers are constituted not only through the blending of two national cultures, but through work that results from a permanent in-between place, rooted in a hybrid cultural identity. In addition, the free circulation between the twin cities broadens the repertoire of available material and symbolic resources — such as language, ingredients, binational festivals, and a cross-border audience — thereby configuring a professional space that escapes the traditional categories of local/national/global careers proposed by Mayrhofer et al. (2007). This scenario of border careers connects the theoretical perspective of careers in context (Mayrhofer et al., 2007, 2023) with that of cultural hybridity (Canclini, 2015), and with that of (a new) cultural identity (Hall, 2020).

The tensions experienced in the border careers of chefs and musicians were traversed by social markers (Akkermans & Kubasch, 2017; Mayrhofer et al., 2007, 2023), particularly gender, origin and generation. The only woman among the musicians faces difficulties of legitimisation in a field marked by hegemonic masculinity, already extensively observed in career studies (Barros et al., 2021; Torbor et al., 2025). It is worth noting that the nativist musical field (as well as border-region gastronomy) is shaped by a *gaúcho* identity historically associated with rigid masculinity — "valiant, macho, boastful", as described by Ramil (2009) — and by a cultural tradition which, according to Boff and Machado (2023), was politically constructed to exalt the *gaúcho* as a male hero, a defender of the borders. This structuring imaginary, historically reinforced by the Centres of Gaúcho Tradition (Ferraro, 2020), establishes a symbolic environment that naturalises male centrality and reinforces the exclusion of women, limiting female legitimisation in careers linked to folklore and traditional repertoires.

Regarding origin, the tension does not concern the multicultural setting, as in Martin et al. (2024); it is not about Brazilian or Uruguayan culture, but rather about rural (countryside) culture and urban (mass) culture. Borderland artists operate within cultural niches that are frequently marginalised by mass-market demands, which requires ongoing negotiations between

authenticity and adaptability. A similar scenario emerges with regard to generation, when one of the musicians notes that his generation began producing more romantic songs and not so deeply rooted in rural tradition, showing that the hybridisation of cultural references from different periods continuously reshapes borderland music, fragmenting identity, as proposed by Hall (2020). On the one hand, this brings the music closer to mass culture, but on the other hand, it may lead to the loss of a more conservative audience.

In summary, this study contributes by (1) empirically demonstrating how the hybridity of neighbouring national cultures – border culture – operates as a structuring and performative logic within cultural identity – border identity – in the careers of musicians and chefs in a South American border region, and by naming this scenario as border careers. (2) It highlights the specificities of the case of the "Border of Peace", which distinguish it from other contexts, such as the historical character of the Platine formation that produced the figure of the *gaúcho* within the pampa biome during the colonial period, re-signified by each country after geopolitical divisions; (3) it shows that multicultural identities do not arise solely from formal migration, but may emerge from the historical coexistence of neighbouring cultures engaged in pendular mobility; and (4) it demonstrates how prejudices related to social markers, especially gender, are a result of local historical and cultural constitution, which perpetuate specific tensions of legitimacy and recognition in women's careers.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

As theoretical implications, the study contributes by (1) associating the concept of cultural hybridity with that of border culture; (2) associating the concept of cultural identity with that of border identity; and (3) expanding the understanding of careers in context by linking it to cultural hybridity (border culture) and cultural identity (border identity), resulting in the presentation of the concept of border careers. We understand border careers as professional trajectories characterised by work repertoires associated with a border identity, that is, whose cultural identity is shaped by a border culture which, in turn, refers to a hybridity between cultures capable of generating something new. In borderland careers, careers are constructed in an inseparable manner with the cultural identity of an in-between space, which is not fixed and is in constant transformation.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

As practical implications, this study offers contributions for public policy professionals to recognize workers in border careers as agents of valorization of border culture and identity, and as potential catalysts for strengthening the local labour market and tourism in the region. The findings may also serve as evidence for professionals engaged in border careers, particularly those located in the context under analysis, the "Border of Peace", who seek to apply for public calls that finance their work – a recurrent strategy in this type of career. The study may further contribute to reflections among new generations of artists in border careers by highlighting that the border culture, symbolically represented by the *gaúcho*, has Indigenous and also Black roots, even if to a lesser extent, which have often been obscured by colonial narratives of Spanish and Portuguese domination in Latin America.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study was limited to interviewing individuals who reside on the Brazilian side of the border and who predominantly speak Portuguese, due to the researchers' accessibility. We also highlight that the researchers are Brazilian, which brings a specific perspective shaped by their own origin when addressing the hybridity between their country and the neighboring one. Future studies would benefit from comparing the results of this research with chefs and musicians who reside on the Uruguayan side and have Spanish as their first language. Finally, we underline the frequent references to Argentina during the interviews. Although Argentina does not directly border the area, the country is geographically close to the "Border of Peace." This reinforces the strong relationship with the historical figure of the *gaúcho* cisplatino. Therefore, as a suggestion for further research, we propose identifying, jointly, the elements of the *gaúcho* figure across Brazilian, Uruguayan, and Argentine cultures. Moreover, we recommend further exploration of the difficulties and challenges faced in the careers of female cross-border musicians and chefs, and expanding the field of study to other border careers not necessarily linked to artistic professions.

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Laura Alves Scherer
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1803-3014
Postdoctoral Researcher at the São Paulo School of Business Administration, Fundação Getulio Vargas (FGV EAESP); Assistant Professor at the Federal University of Pampa, Santana do Livramento Campus; Postgraduate Programme in Administration and Professional Master's Programme in Public Administration (PPGA/PROFIAP/UNIPAMPA). E-mail: laurascherer@unipampa.edu.br

Larissa Pires Martins
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0008-5231-7671
Bachelor's degree in Administration from the Federal University of Pampa (UNIPAMPA). E-mail: larissap.martins@hotmail.com

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Laura Alves Scherer: Conceptualization (Equal); Data curation (Lead); Formal analysis (Lead); Funding acquisition (Lead); Investigation (Supporting); Methodology (Lead); Project administration (Lead); Validation (Equal); Writing – original draft (Equal); Writing – review & editing (Lead).

Larissa Pires Martins: Conceptualization (Equal); Data curation (Supporting); Formal analysis (Supporting); Funding acquisition (Supporting); Investigation (Lead); Methodology (Supporting); Project administration (Supporting); Validation (Equal); Writing – original draft (Equal); Writing – review & editing (Supporting).

DATA AVAILABILITY

The dataset that supports the findings of this study is not publicly available.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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The artificial intelligence tool ChatGPT was used to translate the manuscript from Portuguese into English and to assist with the technical and grammatical revision of the text, as well as the standardization of references.

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