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Walking and Stumbling on the Paths of Heritage-making for Rural Development in the Arica Highlands

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To reflect on the potential of the Cultural Route heritage category as an instrument for cultural revitalization and community strengthening in highland regions, we analyze an interaction of actors involved in the co-construction of a hiking circuit in northern Chile that succeeded in its heritage-based design but not in its touristic implementation. Based on an in-depth analysis of the socioterritorial context and on participatory action research carried out to design the circuit, we discuss the reasons for the project's failure during the phase of community-based tourism model definition. This leads to broader conclusions on the intersections of current policies on heritage, multiculturalism, and environment, relating to the 2014 inscription of the Qhapaq ñan *Andean road system on the World Heritage List. Finally, we highlight 3 lessons: (1) the need to clarify the risk of confusion between cultural revitalization and cultural tourism; (2) the Cultural Route category as a complex and heterogeneous heritage construct that is difficult to apply from global to local scales, and (3) the need to further develop Latin American regulations on heritage.*

Keywords: *Cultural heritage; indigenous territoriality; rural development; heritage tourism; landscape; Andes; Chile; Bolivia.*

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Introduction

In many highland regions of the Andes, the 20th century has been marked by a sharp process of rural exodus, mainly because of the inadequacy of the mountainous environment to host neoliberal economic models of productive intensification and specialization (Dollfus 1999). This has destructured communities, contributing to urban centralization and increasing multidimensional poverty (in both urban and rural areas). Today, rural revitalization constitutes a challenge for sustainable development in the Andean region (CEPAL 2014).

As rural territories continue to be an important source of identity, for both rural inhabitants and their urban relatives, innovation in the valorization and social use of rural heritage could contribute to the revitalization of depressed territories. This assumption constituted a key argument for the 2014 inscription of the Andean road system, generally referred to by its Quechua name *Qhapaq ñan* (QN) on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage List. This heritage initiative was formulated jointly by 6 Andean countries in 2004. It has had a dual purpose: while it aims mainly to identify historical pathways and related sites, landscapes, and traditions for research and conservation, it also aims to generate cultural revitalization and social development throughout the territories traversed by these paths (Caraballo Perichi and Sanz 2004). The first phase of the QN project was undertaken by experts, mainly archaeologists and anthropologists, who surveyed thousands of kilometers of roads through the 6 countries (Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina, and Chile) to map the great diversity of sites and intangible heritage entities. Since its inscription on the World Heritage List, the challenge is how this can be leveraged to generate local development, especially in the highland rural areas where most of this road network is situated.

Heritage deals with more than the preservation of the past: as Harvey (2008: 19) states, "heritage is about the process by which people use the past—a discursive construction with material consequences." In other words, if heritage is a construct referring to the past, it is mostly an action in the present. The process of heritage-making, also termed heritagization, entails the interplay of stakeholders who have different perspectives of the past and visions for the future (Guillaud et al 2016). From this perspective, QN heritagization is more than the authentication of historical paths and related sites: it should constitute a deep participatory process of multivocal and critical thinking about the resilience of Andean rurality and its cultural diversity.

QN has principally been a top-down project, led by states under international coordination by UNESCO. From this perspective, the inscription of QN is a geopolitical achievement, because it recognizes a collaborative management framework of a shared cultural heritage, formalized as a "common good, open beyond borders, which demands joint efforts" (ICOMOS 2008: 1) (especially

considering the current context of South American nationalisms). As such, QN constitutes an emblematic example of the geopolitical purpose of the Cultural Route heritage category defined by the charter of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS 2008). However, little has been done to use heritagization as an instrument for local development.

In Peru—the country that instigated the heritagization—QN is a state-led project, and the Ministry of Culture is making substantial public investment to realize its potential for social development (Marcone and Ruiz 2014). In other countries, such as Chile, state investment has been minimal, but as we show in this article, some local communities have undertaken heritage-based initiatives for the reappropriation of ancient pathways.

For people in rural communities and their urban relatives, abandoned roads and pathways often generate "endogenous nostalgia" (Berliner 2018: 20), because they provide a clear testimony of a rural lifestyle when the countryside was more active and populated. Layers of cultural meaning and ethical values are encapsulated in them. Rural road networks therefore constitute a resource for the formulation of heritage projects in various ways. With regard to identity, they provide a foundation for territoriality and social memory and are commonly referred to as such in the indigenous claims related to issues of sociocultural and territorial subalternity (Graham and Howard 2008; Hillerdal et al 2017). With regard to the local economy, rural road networks can be included in projects to revive traditional technologies and socioeconomic systems to achieve socioecological resilience (Herrera 2011; Galipaud and Guillaud 2014). In regard to science, the road networks constitute a resource for knowledge production on territorial dynamics and cultural landscapes, as well as for the *in situ* communication of this knowledge. This pedagogical potential is often combined with recreational landscape use, such as cultural tourism (Conseil de l'Europe 2003; Porter 2008; Timothy and Boyd 2014).

Because of its heterogeneity, the Cultural Route category is a complex heritage construct that combines sites, landscapes, and traditions often related to a common concept of a historic route (eg Saint James Path or the Silk Road). Because it integrates different socioterritorial realities and actors under a common heritage complex, it also presents a difficult arrangement to set up from a sociopolitical perspective. As we discuss in this article, it may be as difficult to find common ground between local communities as it is to make agreements between states.

This paper reflects on the potential of cultural route heritagization as an instrument for local development in the current sociopolitical Andean context. We base this on the experience of codesigning a heritage-based hiking circuit in a highland region of northern Chile. Despite being originally set up by an indigenous association to foster cultural revitalization and social development in their home villages, as well as being substantially funded and developed following a participatory action research (PAR) methodology, the project did not succeed in its implementation. Here, we assess this failure by analyzing the socioterritorial and historical context and the PAR process. Our findings identify the local problems that resulted in the failure of the project. We also highlight structural issues related to Chilean policies of heritage, environment, and indigeneity.

Socioterritorial and historical perspectives on indigenous heritage in the Altos de Arica

Heritage is never an isolated object, and heritage-making is never an isolated fact. Heritage processes are intrinsically related to a socioterritorial and political context (Smith 2006). In our study area (northern Chile), this context is principally characterized by multizonal ecology, borderland dynamics, and indigenous politics. An anthropological approach to these factors allows us to put the specific challenges of heritage-making in this Andean region into perspective. This socioterritorial diagnosis also constitutes the basis of PAR conducted for the codesign of the hiking circuit.

Geographical entanglements within the 18°S Andean transect

Altos de Arica is a term inherited from early colonial times that refers to the highlands of the Andean transect of 18°S between the coast of Arica and the *altiplano* of Parinacota (Figure 1). Since prehispanic times, this transect has been characterized by the socioeconomic and cultural interactions of distinct ecological zones because of the complementarity of their resources and economic potentials (Murra 2012). The intensity of these interactions has varied throughout history, with different phases of socioterritorial integration and segregation according to political situations and climatic conditions (Saintenoy et al 2019).

Today, 98% of the population (approximately 220,000 inhabitants) live in the coastal city of Arica, and the coastal valleys constitute the main production zone (because of the transfer of water from the *altiplano*). The 2 highland regions, the *precordillera* (3000 masl) and the *altiplano* (4000 masl), have experienced a massive rural exodus over the last 3 generations. The *altiplano* has a particularly low population density, with scattered herding hamlets dedicated to camelid production within and around the Lauca National Park, famous for its monumental natural landscapes. The *precordillera* is also largely abandoned, even though it used to be an important area of settlement during late prehispanic and colonial times, when it was extensively developed for irrigated agriculture and cattle raising (Saintenoy et al 2017). The traditional agropastoral economy, although depressed and uncompetitive at the regional level, is supported by cross-border immigrant families from Bolivia with multiresidential settlement systems (González et al 2013; Fundación Superación de la Pobreza 2016).

Politics of multiculturalism, indigeneity, and the local significances of *Qhapaq ñan*

Arica and Parinacota is a Chilean region bordering Peru and Bolivia. It was incorporated into Chilean territory at the end of the 19th century as a consequence of the War of the Pacific (1879–1929). This had a strong impact on the rural communities, which experienced the effects of a nationalist assimilation campaign based on cultural references from the distant center of the country (Olivares et al 2014). Today, the borderland still leads to geopolitical tensions, and the chilenization process is still active through diverse territorial and geosymbolic devices for the tripartite border reproduction, although multicultural consciousness has

grown during the last 3 decades (Amilhat Szary 2011; Angelo 2018).

With the return to democracy in 1990 following 16 years of military dictatorship, the Chilean state undertook actions, framed within multicultural politics, as a response to indigenous claims for historical justice that related to land recovery and constitutional recognition. A national commission for indigenous development (Corporación Nacional de Desarrollo Indígena) was created and an indigenous law was enacted, recognizing the presence of 9 *pueblos originarios* in the country, referred to in ethnic terms.

According to the last national census of 2017, 36% of the Arica and Parinacota region's population self-declare as indigenous (versus 9% in the country). Of this percentage, the 3 most stated identities (out of 7) are Aymara (75%), Mapuche (10%), and Quechua (3%). Arica and Parinacota's identity processes are complex, especially in the highland territories, where the self-declared indigenous population reaches 60%.

A study we conducted in 2016 on territoriality and cultural revitalization in the *precordillera* region, based on 2 indigenous associations, shows some intersections of place-based, ethnic, and national identities. It also reveals some issues with the *pueblo aymara* category representing the regional Andean cultural diversity (Saintenoy T, Astudillo I, et al 2016). For instance, a collective of individuals from different villages is claiming affiliation to the *pueblo quechua,* distinguishing themselves from the *pueblo aymara,* which they consider a social category mainly related to first- or second-generation Bolivian immigrants settled in the coastal valleys. The latter speak the language and maintain direct links with their relatives in Bolivia, while the *precordillera* communities have experienced, as explained earlier, a Chilean assimilation process that discriminated against the use of Aymara language and deconstructed most of their family ties with the *altiplano* of Carangas (Bolivia) and the *sierra* of Tarata (Peru).

To overcome the essentialism of the ethnic-related official categorization of *pueblos originarios,* some *precordillera* indigenous associations are claiming local place-based identities by strategically using heritage from their villages of origin. In this local context, global QN heritagization is significant, not only for these territorial communities but also for the ethnic-based *pueblo quechua,* by highlighting its relation to Inca history that the QN is supposed to represent.

Heritage, rural development, and developing tourism

In 2004, the Altos de Arica region was officially declared an indigenous development area to facilitate public and private investment for "rural development with identity" (Indigenous Law 19.253). Since then, public investment in cultural heritage initiatives for sustainable development has focused on ecclesiastical architecture restoration. This program has been carried out in response to popular attachment to Christian monuments as ceremonial stages for the reproduction of communities and their local identities. It was supported by the Catholic Church, which is interested in consolidating its hegemony against other religions. Other initiatives have been undertaken with marginal funding and are generally limited to recognition and diagnosis of local cultural resources, without concrete heritage planning.

From a tourism economy point of view, Arica and Parinacota is a marginal destination in the Andean region. In the highlands, 90% of visitors to the Lauca National Park travel from Arica by means of a daily tour to admire the emblematic volcanoes and lakes of the *altiplano* landscape. Tourism in the *precordillera* villages is beginning to develop, despite the absence of equipped attractions. Therefore, heritagization's potential has raised expectations about promoting cultural tourism in the region. Thus, the hiking-circuit project that we study in this paper is the product of this complex socioterritorial context, while its implementation could have been one of the first tourist attractions of the region.

Walking: codesign experience of a heritage-based hiking circuit

In addition to being intrinsically related to socioterritorial and political contexts, heritage processes are always driven by social agency (Quintero-Moron and Sanchez-Carretero 2017). Because heritage has become a central object in public policies, participation has become essential for heritage-making, and interactions among stakeholders have become more complex (Juhé-Beaulaton and Girault 2016; Sanchez-Carretero 2019).

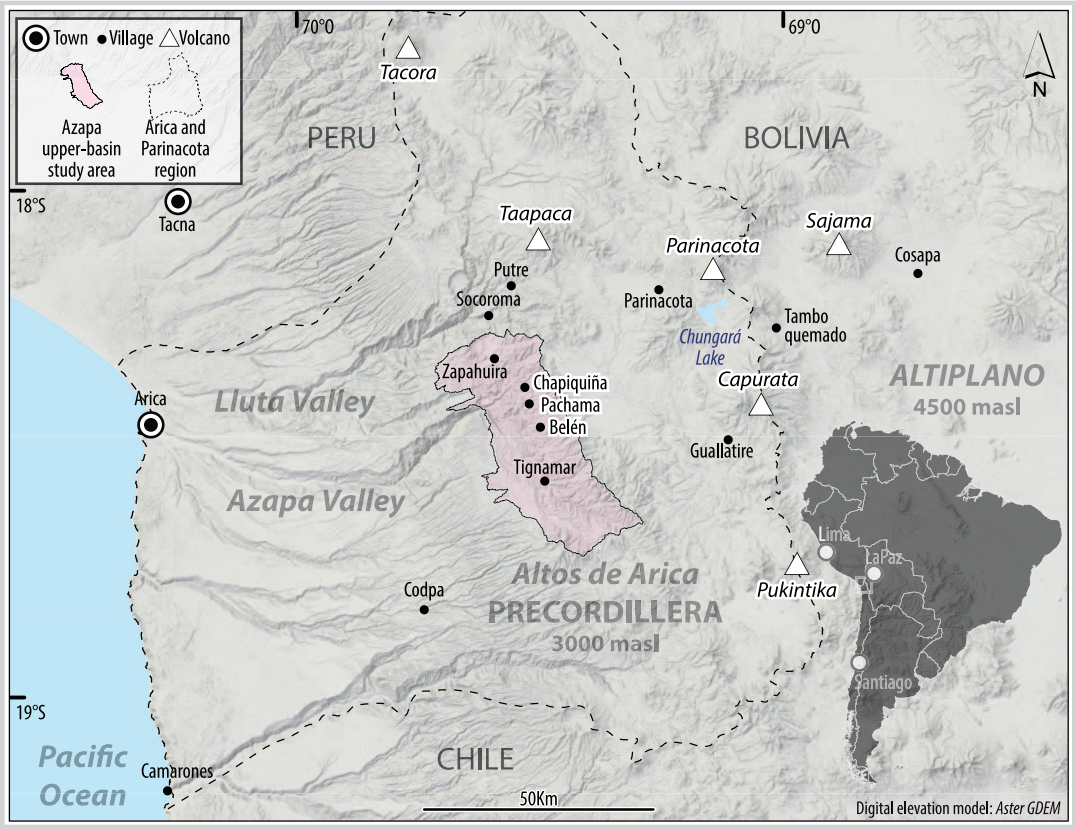
The codesign of the heritage-based hiking circuit of our case study involved interactions among 3 main actors: 1 indigenous association and 2 research centers. Figure 2 shows the roles of these actors in the project, their interrelations, and those with secondary actors, in addition to representing their situation in the sociopolitical context. Within the hiking-circuit research and development project, called Ayllu Solar (yellow in Figure 2), this interplay was examined using PAR and based on relationships established in an earlier heritage research project, called Altos Arica (green in Figure 2). The indigenous association that formulated the hiking-circuit initiative facilitated the participation of distinct local organizations and individuals during most of the process.

Actors involved

Chacha Warmi Imillas y Yuqallas Precordillera Marka (CWIYPM) is an indigenous cultural association, active since 2008, that seeks to contribute to the cultural revitalization of *precordillera* territories. Its Aymara name literally means "men, women, daughters, and sons of the *precordillera* villages," highlighting its associative and inclusive role in strengthening its communities (Figure 3A).

In 2013, the CWIYPM became involved in a participatory research experience with our program called Altos Arica (led by the Arica-based public research center Centro de Investigaciones del Hombre en el Desierto) (Figure 2). This collaboration, based on the principle of mutual feedback between actors on their distinct understandings of heritage, has been successful not only by producing knowledge on the history of the *precordillera* territories but also by bringing critical and multivocal reflection on the current meanings of archaeological heritage in indigenous territory and its potential for social development (Saintenoy T, Aguilera D, et al 2016). Among diverse heritages, the ancient pathways and roads were of special shared interest, mainly because of their quality as a gathering space and a route for participatory research on cultural landscapes (Johnson 2012).

FIGURE 1 Location map. (Map by Thibault Saintenoy and Federico González)



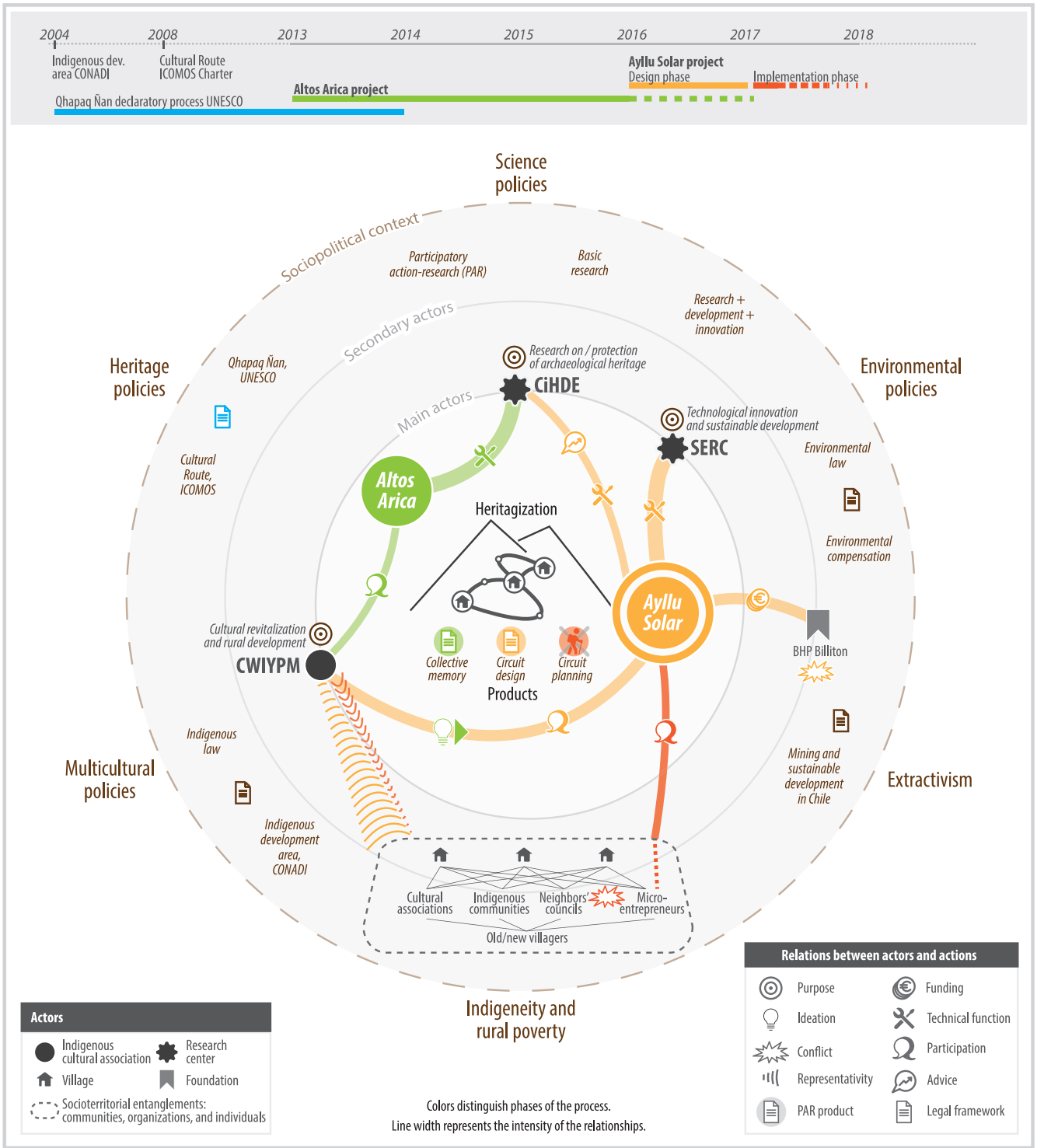
In 2016, a solar energy research center (SERC), based in the country's capital, contacted CWIYPM, looking for opportunities to implement its technologies for sustainable development in the region with funding from a multinational mining company (in the framework of the extractive industry's environmental compensation). CWIYPM expressed an interest in the valorization of ancient pathways because of its experience in trailing them as a tool for territorial recognition and cultural revitalization. This initiative resulted in the formulation of a cultural tourism project called Ayllu Solar, echoing the recent UNESCO inscription of QN. The technical design of the circuit was entrusted to our team because of its archaeological and geographical knowledge of the territory, as well as its social capital with the local communities, especially with CWIYPM. The funding allowed us to set up a multidisciplinary team composed of archaeologists, anthropologists, and biologists, complemented by an architect, a hiking specialist, and a tourism engineer.

Codesign of the hiking circuit

Although the creation of a heritage-based hiking circuit might seem trivial from a sociopolitical point of view, the existing literature shows that this task is usually challenging in terms of interactions among stakeholders and that the involvement of local communities is a crucial issue (Timothy and Boyd 2014; Berti et al 2015). Therefore, the first step of PAR consisted of agreeing, with the actors involved, on the fundamental purposes of a heritage-based rural development project: the cultural revitalization of the territory, the generation of opportunities for socioeconomic development in its villages, and the protection of the archaeological remains and the environment. The second step involved the identification and interpretation of the cultural resources of potential interest for the project. This was conducted through 2 participatory mapping workshops to share academic and popular knowledge about the territory, including memories of the traditional use of road and path networks (Figure 3B). These workshops gathered representatives of 5 villages who had extensive knowledge of their territory and the members of CWIYPM who had excellent knowledge of the region as a whole since trailing for territorial reconnaissance has constituted the main activity of the association since its foundation. This work identified many pathways related to local histories, along with the diversity of potential heritage meanings and values, from which the most suitable and significant paths were selected to be part of a hiking circuit. Paths were selected by multivariate modeling. From a participatory analysis of the socioterritorial diagnosis (described in the previous section), 7 variables (Figure 4) were collectively identified that related to expected qualities (and undesired effects) of the potential hiking paths. These criteria were translated into geospatial characteristics and assessed using geographic information system analysis (eg least-cost, safest, and most attractive paths; see Figure 4) to generate quantitative and cartographical data for decision-making.

The most appropriate configuration was determined to be a figure-eight-shaped circuit connecting 3 villages. The circuit had the following characteristics: (1) it was located at the center of the most populated territory in the region, allowing intercultural encounters and living rural heritage to be

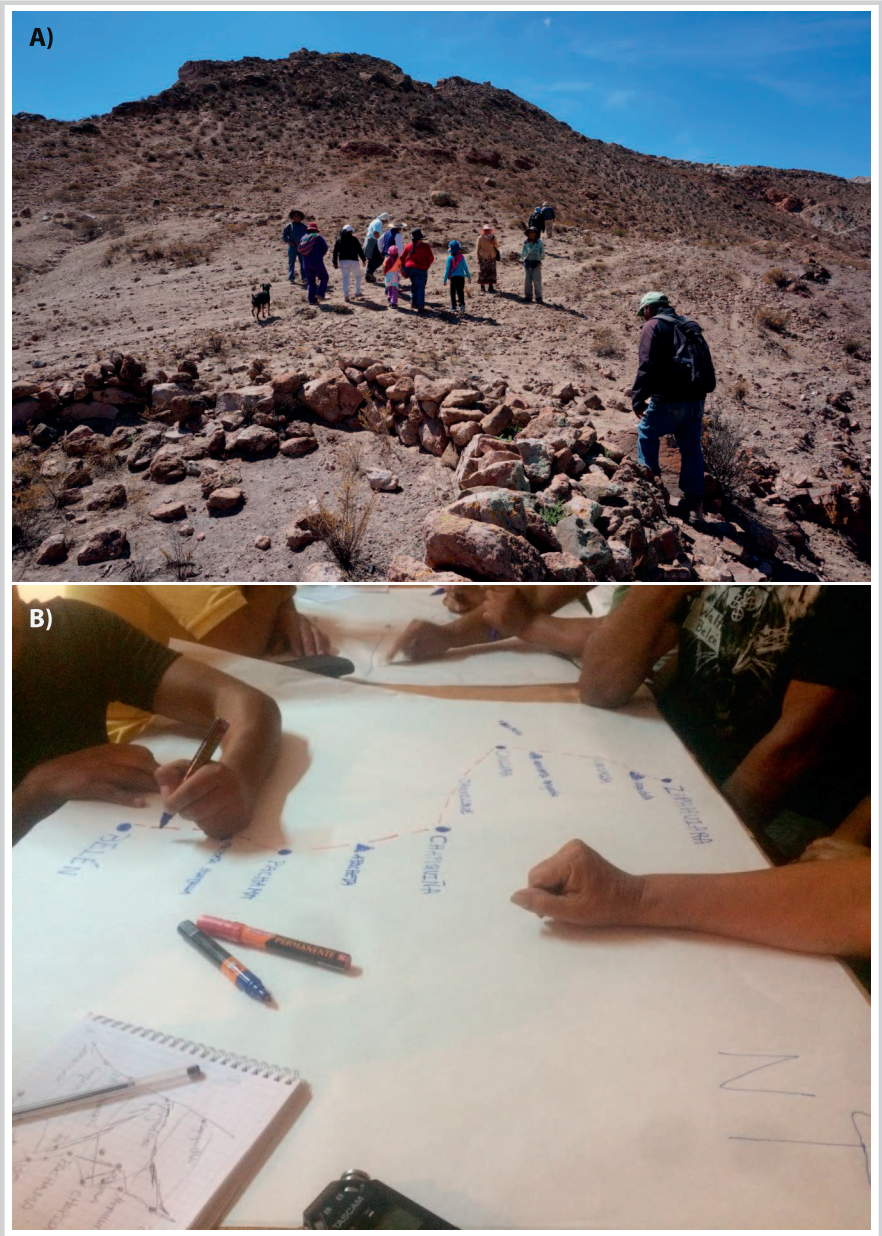
FIGURE 2 Sociogram of the interplay of stakeholders. (Designed by Maria Masaguer and Thibault Saintenoy)



experienced; (2) it was associated with a recognized historical route (like the QN); (3) it had varied scenery; (4) it crossed through distinct vegetation niches of notable biodiversity; (5) it had few vulnerable archaeological remains in the proximity of the paths; (6) the multicircuit format with adjustable itineraries served different tourist profiles and interests; (7) it linked 3 localities with basic service infrastructure; and (8) its central and interconnected situation offered potential scaling of the circuit through the integration of new paths associated with other villages within the region.

After its social validation during a workshop with representatives of the 3 villages' social organizations, the proposed circuit was surveyed by a team of archaeologists and ecologists to produce a detailed impact assessment for justifying its implementation to public agencies managing cultural and environmental resources.

FIGURE 3 (A) Walking for cultural revitalization with CWIYPM, and (B) cocartography workshop. (Photos by Thibault Saintenoy)



Infrastructure of the hiking circuit

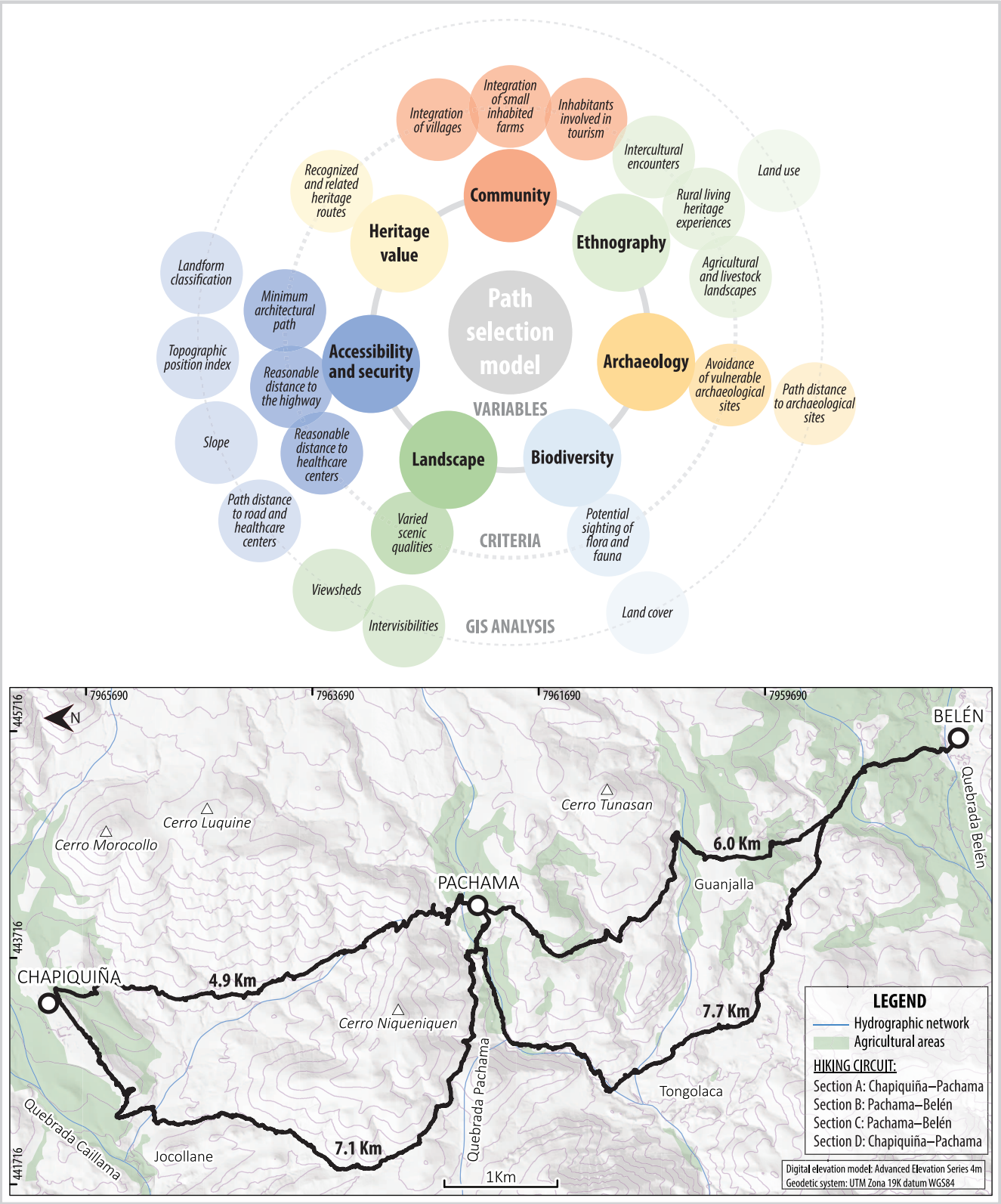
The technical proposal for the implementation of the circuit was based on data from workshops. Specific heritage narratives were elaborated for different sections and sites of the circuit: Figure 5 shows that 6 distinct cultural landscapes related to the history, folklore, and ecology of the region could be experienced by hiking the circuit. This figure also illustrates the infrastructure architecture (mainly signage and resting areas) that were designed based on memories of hiking in the recent past and visiting archaeological remains in the region. Finally, an ethical charter for hikers was prepared based on the existing charters of French and Spanish hiking federations but taking into account more heritage-specific aspects related to principles of interculturality in indigenous territory and the protection of both archaeological remains and biodiversity.

Misunderstandings about the community-based tourism business model

Because cultural revitalization of the territory and strengthening of its communities were the main purposes of the project, the focus of tourism was mainly regional, with the idea that urban descendants from rural communities would be the first tourists.

As explained earlier, the socioterritorial context of the Altos de Arica poses 2 basic challenges for tourism development. First, the tourism activity should be inserted within a strategy of diversification of rural socioeconomic systems. Second, this activity should be adapted to the

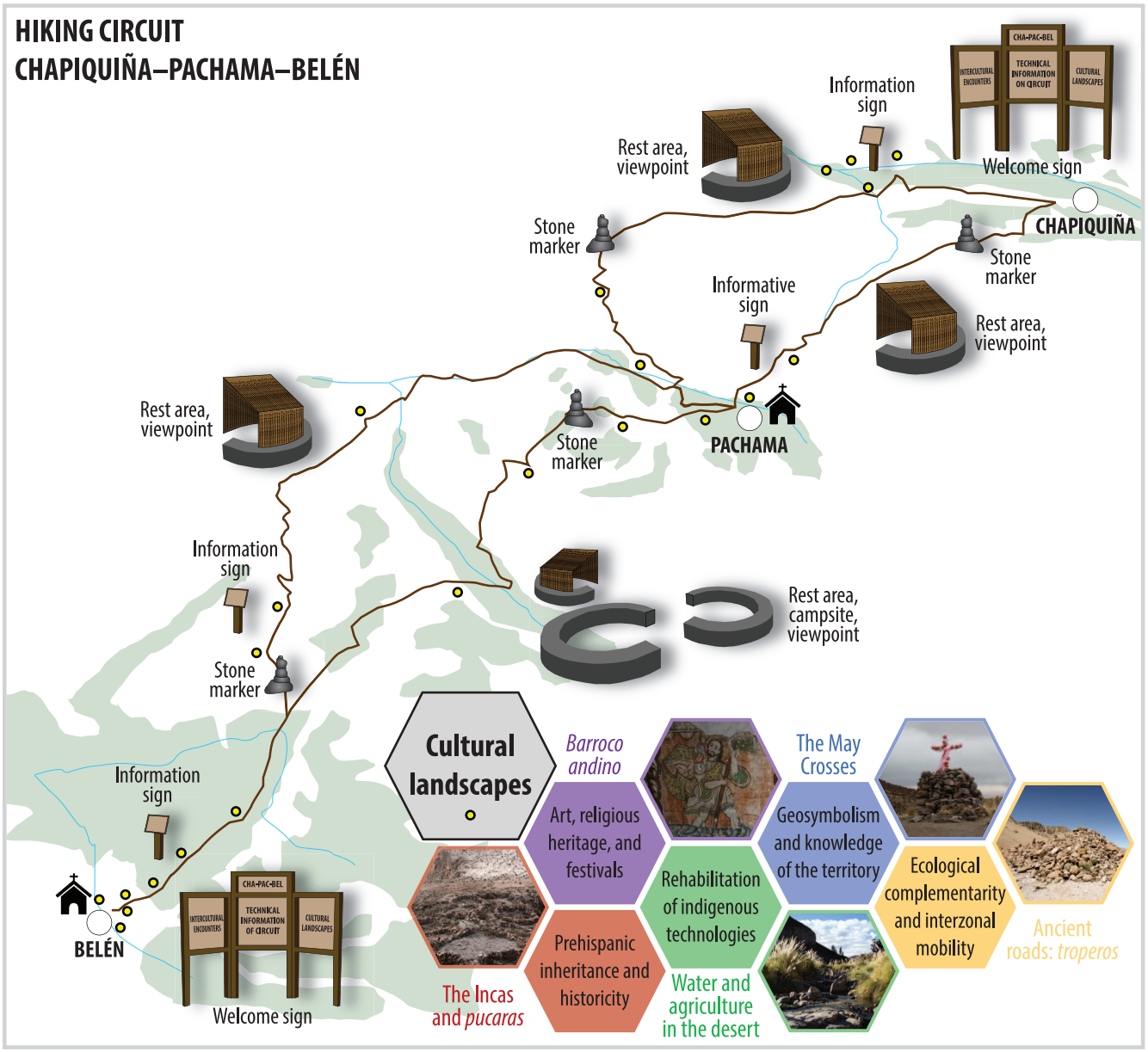
FIGURE 4 Multivariate modeling for the codesign of a heritage-based hiking circuit. (Designed by Federico González and Thibault Saintenoy)



multiresidential settlement systems of many inhabitants of the communities involved in the project, including the microentrepreneurs of developing tourism services.

A model of community-based tourism was researched for the management of the circuit. While a series of workshops made it evident that cooperation between the villages' social organizations and the community's microentrepreneurs was the key factor, no appropriate business model could be agreed upon. The research generated misunderstandings, causing social organizations to lose interest and,

FIGURE 5 Heritage-based planning of the hiking circuit. (Designed by Federico González and Thibault Saintenoy)



consequently, isolation of both the tourism engineer and the microentrepreneurs.

Stumbling and learning

The project's failure at the stage of tourism implementation is a source of reflection and learning about the use of the Cultural Route heritage category as an instrument for rural development in indigenous territories. Moreover, this experience leads to broader conclusions regarding the complex intersections of the current policies on heritage, multiculturalism, and environment.

Diagnosis of a failure

The failure to create a business model for the touristic exploitation of the hiking circuit is related to several sociocultural factors on both global and local scales. In addition, Figure 2 shows that the project was situated between potential lines of conflict; this became evident during the final stage of the project design.

First, the main funding for the project was granted by a multinational mining group, which weakened its possibilities from an early stage (Romero 2017). An ideological incompatibility between indigenism and extractivism led to the withdrawal (nonconflictive) of several individuals, including an influential member of the CWIYPM, jeopardizing the association's ability to facilitate the participation of all local organizations.

Second, the same indigenous cultural association's social legitimacy created broader issues. Since the beginning of the project, CWIYPM's commitment to associate representatives of the different local communities resulted in constant negotiation. Because of the weakness of the villages'

sociopolitical institutions (produced by rural exodus and jurisdictional centralism), a high degree of conflict existed within and among these communities. Likewise, despite having been formulated by a local-roots indigenous association, the integration of different villages and their communities under a cultural route framework was still a top-down proposal that required diplomacy and intercultural skills at all scales.

Third, it is likely that conceptual issues related to territoriality did not help the project. Beyond land ownership conflicts between families and with the state, current publicly funded projects for the delimitation of indigenous territories use modern concepts to define territoriality: exclusive sovereignty, spatial continuity, and continuous linear delimitation. Such approaches constitute a historical break by ruling out socioterritorial entanglements of the traditional multizonal vertical ecology and settlement system and limit integration among villages (Giraut 2013, 2017).

Fourth, current policies promoting indigenous heritagization are often misinterpreted by local actors because of recurrent misunderstandings regarding the concept of heritage, and its ownership, in an ultraliberal country such as Chile (Ayala 2018). Although both the purpose and the means of such a project are related to the concept of common goods, confusion and/or rivalries about the sense of heritage often produce a tendency to commodify nonmercantile goods (Kouchner and Lyard 2001). This risk is clearly identified in the Florence Convention on landscape and sustainable development (Conseil de l'Europe 2006) and in the ICOMOS Charter on Cultural Routes (2008). It is also undoubtedly a problem related to theoretical debates about the impossibility of applying the concepts of heritage and of development outside the capitalist sphere (Edelman and Haugerud 2005; Criado and Barreiro 2013; Alonso 2017).

Finally, several of the causes of failure that we have identified are probably related to the absence of a culture of using the landscape for recreation and of hiking networks in northern Chile. In this context, and despite appearing to be a locally rooted project, it can be argued that this heritage-based hiking project was an exogenous proposal based on a modern Western concept of the recreational use of mountain spaces (Debarbieux and Rudaz 2010).

Lessons about the Cultural Route heritage category as an instrument for rural development in indigenous territories

The aim of this paper was to reflect on the potential of heritage-based initiatives for cultural revitalization and community strengthening in highland subaltern territories. To do so, we analyzed the complex interplay of stakeholders involved in the co-construction of a hiking circuit in northern Chile that succeeded in its heritage-based design but not in its touristic implementation. Our analysis was undertaken from an actor–researcher point of view, using both applied and theoretical constructivist approaches.

A basic learning methodological construct is that heritage-making for development relies on 2 fundamentals: a purpose related to a social change and a process involving the interplay of actors. Hence, participatory dynamics constitute the most critical factor of the process; this is also the most complex, because stakeholders' interests and social representativity may vary according to the dialogue during this process, as do the meanings, values, and functions attributed to the heritage entity of interest. Finally, conflict is often inherent to the process, and although consensus is ideal, it may not need to be mandatory (González-Ruibal et al 2018).

In relation to the potential of the Cultural Route category as an instrument for rural development in the Andean highlands, what we have learned relates to 3 main insights: (1) the risk of confusion between cultural revitalization and cultural tourism; (2) the difficulty of applying the concept of cultural routes because of the heterogeneous nature of this heritage construct; and (3) the need to further develop Latin American regulations on heritage. These insights can be dissected as follows:

1. Cultural revitalization has a fundamentally social purpose: it seeks to strengthen human communities through the enhancement of collective memory about a shared cultural heritage, partly materialized by the territory and its representation (the landscape). Cultural tourism shares the purpose of pedagogical use of local heritage but does so for mercantilist purposes, which require valorization planning to increase visibility and communicate an objectified meaning of heritage to outsiders (Severo 2018). While the development of social cohesion is an essential condition for community-based cultural tourism, the introduction of a mercantilist project is a risk for that same social cohesion.
2. A cultural route is fundamentally a multiscale and relational construct (that combines different sites, landscapes, and traditions), whose heritage meanings are simultaneously related to a global concept of a historical route and founded on local scenarios. The global concept is principally a top-down instrument, while more specifics of local heritage entities may be more meaningful to local actors. Therefore, the pathways' archaeological authenticity related to the global representation may not be the principal criterion for heritage-making on a local scale. Finally, the cultural route is a complex heritage construct, not only because of its heterogeneity but also because its implementation implies potential divergences and conflicts among different local actors, their communities, their heritages, and their interests. Therefore, the cultural route's philosophy of union of diversity requires continuous encouragement of interculturality and fostering of the concept of common goods during the heritagization process (Herzfeld 2017).
3. Latin American countries, individually and collectively, lack documents and regulations of reference for cultural heritage management and territorial development. Considering the historical trajectories of the Latin American territories and their current postcolonial realities (cultural diversity and indigenous cosmopolitics) would allow us to refine heritage policies' rationales and territorial development criteria (Charlier and Vapnarsky 2017). Heritagization, beyond being a mere model for identifying, classifying, and managing cultural goods, also offers the opportunity to constitute a field of action for the emancipation of historically subaltern groups and territories.

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