

# A study of the context and motivations of Chilean street artists

In what ways are Chilean street artists, with a focus on painting, motivated  
to create their art?

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## 1. Introduction

Latorre (2019) comments that artistic expression and social commentary can be seen on the streets through street art. In the public domain, this art form is available for and accessible to all peoples of society. In this sense, it is truly democratic. Just as the Impressionists, for example, adapted their art techniques to the new technologies of their time such as the paint tube (Samu, 2004), so does the contemporary street artist by using, for example, spray cans, latex paint and paint rollers attached to extension poles to leave artistic impression of their social realities. Street art ranges across a vast array of mediums, expressions, styles, techniques and themes. In this thesis, the focus will be primarily on what could be most simply described as painting. Street artists leave messages on the walls of the world's leading cities (Tunnacliffe, 2016).

Street art reacknowledges and repurposes the public space, reappropriating the public domain and turning it into a creative outlet, a creative playground (Tunnacliffe, 2016). Street artists convey alternative methods of visual dialogues to those of the dominant culture, “undeniably [opening] new ways of visioning and experiencing the urban fabric of everyday life” (Tunnacliffe, 2016, p. 9). According to the specific inspirations and motivations of street artists, sometimes street art uses social figures and current political nuances as subjects for their work. For example, “in the case of La Victoria [in Santiago de Chile], muralism has made the memory of the neighbourhood graphic, generating a dialogue between two historical experiences of [the] community: the land occupation and the dictatorship.” (Cortés et al., 2021). We can consequently assume that street art, either purposefully or not, tends to carry social and/or political messages which the inhabitants of the locality will experience on their daily commutes. Whether the subject matter is political or not, the public demonstration and appropriation of space is inherently counter cultural. However, what motivates the artist to produce and convey certain messages is not always clear. For instance, certain topics are subject to larger political debate and could therefore suffer from a certain censorship. Art lies between the political and the social. Consequently it is important to understand where the art stems from in order to fully comprehend its meaning. For this reason this thesis will focus on Chilean street artists, specifically focusing on their motivations to create art and how this is reflected in their practice.

The origins of Chilean street art derive from two main movements in the past century, Mexican Muralism and New York's Graffiti culture. After the ten year long Mexican Revolution, in 1921 a new governance was installed called the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (The

Institutional Revolutionary Party) and a new vision for Mexican identity was inaugurated. The party invested in the arts and culture to help foster this identity. Traditional and Indigenous representation were promoted proudly in large, colourful murals (Mexican Muralism Movement Overview, n.d.) and manifested this new-found pride in Mexican identity. A few decades later in 1960's The Bronx in New York, graffiti emerged. This included the popularised art of “tagging”, an expression of the marginalised youth who would colour and mark streets with nicknames and numbers, usually to symbolise their localities and representation (Tunnacliffe, 2016, p. 5). These movements made their way down to the south of the American continent and reached Chile, only for Chilean artists to interpret and adapt the artform in their own particular way. The political climate from the 1920's to the contemporary has had major influence in the execution of this art form, street art.

Chilean street art is notable. The contemporary scene of street art in Chile is abundant, ranging in expressions, material usage, styles and techniques. The street artist and muralist, in one way or another, transmit social and political knowledge in an “artist” manner (Bronfman & Álvarez, 2023). The term ‘artist’ refers both to the social and political commitment of militant artists and to the use of art by citizens as a form of expression of political positions, in the light of social movement, explain Bronfman and Álvarez (2023). Given that community and activism is related to street art and artists in Chile, through open dialogue with artists a deeper understanding of their motivations will be established. Chilean street art is a fundamental yet neglected form of public voice therefore this study aims to fill this gap and will investigate to generate deep understanding as to “in what ways are Chilean street artists, focused on painting, motivated to create their art?”

In Chile, the social, political, economic and ecological movements are mentioned more and more in diverse cultural expressions, including street art. Patricia de Souza (2022) suggests that the artistic occupation and intervention of the streets translates into an acquired source of power for the artists and populace. Chilean street artists plant alternative dialogues to the prevailing status-quo and therefore their innovative contributions to thoughts are worth investigating.

There is an intersectional gap when focusing on the motivations of street artists. Whereas most observations and studies focus on artists from the Global North ie. Banksy or Jeff Koons, the South American street artists' motivations are seldom highlighted. This will be elaborated on

in the Theoretical Framework chapter. Focusing on the motivating factors that keep street art alive is seldom the focus in academic research and without the street artist contributing their creativity in the streets, certain social phenomena such as the experience of marginalised communities could not be measured.

In-depth semi-structured interviews with Chilean street artists will be conducted as the research of this study, which will be transcribed and uploaded to Atlas.ti, the coding software that facilitates generating themes and drawing interpretations. This way, a deep, qualitative, understanding of the artists' motivations and their practices can be made. This thesis starts with the introduction which hints at the research unfolding. The Chapter of the Theoretical Framework delivers an academic base and context to the concepts which will allow for critical reflections in the Results chapter. Before the Results chapter, however, there is an overview of the study's operationalisation in the Research Design chapter. After the Results chapter is the Concluding chapter which delivers a holistic response to the research question, the limitations of the study and ideas for future research will be stated.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

In this section, I will use academic literature to elaborate further on the meaning of street art and its specific relevance in the Chilean context. This entails providing sufficient historical context on the origin of street art, a brief overview of Chile's past and current socio-political climate, its street art, its variants and briefly exemplifying some of responses from the Chilean populace. Specific artworks will be described in order to further contextualise and elucidate the conventions of street art in relation to Chilean street artists. This section aims to provide the requisite context and structure to sustain the thesis's research question and results.

### 2.1 Chile's post-colonial identity and street art

In a post-colonial, post-dictatorship era, the Chilean streets have experienced a burst of “public art expressions” (Latorre, 2019, p. 2), creating junctions between popular and political uprisings of activist and aesthetic practices (Ryan 2019, p. 101). countries such as Chile, suffer from a colonial past where colonial repercussions linger in economic, political, cultural and social formations (Giblin, 2015, p. 314).

Chilean street artists engage politically and challenge the oppressive status quo initially imposed by colonialism and then reinforced by the military dictatorship. This view is backed by Giblin's (2015, p. 315) thoughts on the post-colonial populace as re-appropriators of their identities who look “backwards” and look “forwards towards cultural renewal”.

The student-led riots of 2019 in Chile protested all inequalities faced by the working class and highlighted the economic, ecological, Indigenous and social struggles faced by the populace outside the high-income bracket. The outpouring of emotions has been captured by street art. These protests led to a mass strike against the neoliberal government of Sebastián Piñera and inspired similar campaigns of popular resistances in Colombia (2021), Ecuador (2021-present) and Perú (2022) , suggests Bronfman, (2022, p. 3).

Latorre comments on the influx of community-driven street art projects that have formed since the end of the military dictatorship, where “graffiti artists [seek] to promote alternative images that challenge state-[...] sponsored imagery” (Latorre, 2019).

Given the struggles the Chilean populace endure, from ecological disuse to the inequality of wealth distribution and neoliberal economic and social policies, to name but a few, the Chilean street artist continues to persevere through their creative expression. To understand why

the artists remain motivated is crucial in forming an academic link between the social, the cultural and the political.

## 2.2 Modern street art's origins and Chile's adaptation

### 2.2.1 Mexican Muralist Movement

After a violent ten year long civil war and revolution, Mexico in the 1920's had to fundamentally restructure itself. Revolutionaries from the civil war took over the governance of the country, and commissioned artists such as David Alfaro Siquieros and Diego Rivera to reformulate the Mexican identity through their art (Coffey, 2012). Their monumental pieces have been credited by scholars as the "Mexican mural renaissance", where their artistic expression mirrored the social and political movements of identity and converted the violence from the revolution "into an ethical impulse to "socialise artistic expression", quotes Coffey (2012) from an unavailable source. This intended to build up an image for a more equitable Mexican society. The murals depicted the working class, images from the revolution and insinuated Indian pride by representing the Indigenous peoples of Mexico (Coffey, 2012).

Around the end of the 1930's, Siquieros, the renowned Mexican muralist, sought political refuge in Chile and while there completed the mural *Muerte al Invasor* (Death to the Invader) in a public school in Chillán, the capital of the Ñuble region in the south of the country (Imaginario, 2020). The mural is painted with the fresco technique, which consists of painting on top of a chalk-damped surface with pigmented minerals which are dissolved in water. In the centre, it depicts a shirtless warrior with two faces, part Indigenous part European. Taking heavy influence from Futurism, there is shading to create stark shadow work and it ripples between hues of cream and brown depicting skin and fists (Imaginario, 2021). There are representations of blood and fire blending between the ripples, where the red contrasts with the browns. In the bottom right corner there is a portrait of General O'Higgins in movement, the Chilean revolutionary in charge of "liberating" Chile from Spanish colonialism, holding firmly with accentuated hands the Chilean flag. Characteristic of Mexican muralism, *Muerte al Invasor* transmits revolutionary imagery, and recognises the descendants of social and political movements through a very particular artistic expression (Bragassi, n.d.).

The Mexican Muralist Movement led the way for Chilean artists to also depict their creole identity and values into monumental murals. The motive of the movement was to detach



from the art constructed by intellectuals and aristocrats and present a form of public art which through aesthetics suggests the militant resistance of the “third world” (Bragassi, n.d.).

### 2.2.2 Chile’s take on Mexican muralism

The 1940’s in Chile saw increased support for left wing political agendas and by the 1950’s the left was very close to presidential triumph (Mamani, 2018). This led to the rise of Salvador Allende’s presidency in 1970 making him the first democratically elected socialist president of Chile (V. B. Vargas, 2017). In 1946, communist militant, Ramona Parra, was murdered by the police in the centre of Santiago de Chile during the Massacre of the Plaza Bulnes. Her death is a representation of the terror and oppression of freedom of expression that prevailed in Chile. In response, a communist artist group, the Brigada Ramona Parra (Ramona Parra Brigade) was formed in homage to her legacy (San Martin, 2015). In revolutionary spirit, they painted murals which functioned as political propaganda of the communist parties. The Brigada Ramona Parra was formed and Parra’s martyr legacy survived in “revolutionary spirit” to “express [the] feelings” of the people (O. Dabène, 2020). As Latorre (2019) informs us, the Brigada Ramona Parra is an artistic collective of muralists who interpreted the style of Mexican muralists into their own to reconstruct the memory and identity of the Chilean populace through colourful murals around the country. During the military regime of Augusto Pinochet, which commenced in 1973 (Oteíza & Castro, 2019), the Brigada Ramona Parra and like-spirited creators were forced to go underground as they were “the first targets of oppression”, according to historian Camilo Trumper, cited in Latorre (2019). Censorship of expression was rigorously enforced by the military dictatorship and this is important to recognise when trying to understand the motivations driving street artists.

Image 1

(*Mural BRP*, 2012)



Note: Mural in Santiago de Chile painted in Centro Cultural Gabriela Mistral (Brigada Ramona Parra, 2012)It shows people standing and sitting around the mural, which depicts colourfully two figures, a woman as a teacher protesting for “free education” and a Mapuche person. The image was found on Gam.cl online magazine, the photographer was uncredited on the post.

The iconoclastic intent of the military regime to eliminate freedom of expression and prohibit (street) art “illustrate the junction between the cultural and the political” (Freedberg, 2016, p. 67). Acts of censorship are “clues to the social use and function of images”, where art in the public domain, such as the murals of Ramona Parra or the graffiti artist and tagger threaten the status-quo (Awad & Wagoner, 2018). Olivier Dabène (2020) suggests street art accompanied Chile’s route to recovering democracy (114-115). Given that the prohibition of this art form is so frequent, this thesis seeks to understand the underlying motivations persisting in street artists and how this translates to their art practice.

### 2.2.3 Graffiti and social justice from New York City to Chile

Graffiti on the other hand, can be traced back to New York in the late 1960’s, where the youth of mainly marginalised backgrounds would “tag” (a form of quick letter writing with markers or aerosol) their names onto urban surfaces (Bonadio, 2023). Over time, the subculture gained momentum and popularity as more and more artists contributed to the genre and left the

Bronx and moved into the rest of the American continents. Inevitably styles mutate, letters change, figures are incorporated, and other methods of urban interventions come to be. A plethora of techniques such as stencilling, posterizing, stickers, latex paint with rollers, and mosaic are a few of the technical variations which derive from graffiti's subculture (Latorre, 2019). Graffiti conventionally has a specific letter-based focus and hence it serves as a graphic mode of linguistic communication. As a result, the art form which commenced in marginalised sectors of cities suggests to citizens how to address the segregation of the "social fabric" constructed in cities. It is up to the artists whether to use their art to "imagine ways to address such issues" or not (Dabène, 2020, p. 14).

The youth producing graffiti were, and are, part of Hip Hop culture, including breakdancers, rappers and DJ's, and in the year 1984, while Chile was still under military dictatorship, the films "Breakin'" and "Beat Street" were premiered in The USA. These fictional films narrated the stories of groups of friends who wanted to use these sub-cultural expressions as a way to escape their realities and make their dreams come true (Leighton, 2023). According to Leighton (2023), it is uncertain how the film made it through Chile's cultural censorship. What is certain is that the films made an impact on the oppressed Chilean youth and sprouted the seed for Chile's thriving Hip Hop counterculture.

In 1973, General Pinochet overthrew the socialist government of Salvador Allende and established a brutal 17 year long military dictatorship turning Chile into a bloody zone, and an experiment in Neoliberalism (Junior Report, 2019).

The youth, the artists who engaged in painting the streets, were seeking alternative channels to diffuse their expression, in a time where there was a shortage of counter-cultural expression (Mamani, 2018). During the period of the dictatorship, the military regime assaulted culture and commenced an erasure of "leftist literature, film, music, and art" (Castro, 2016), where many artists were killed, tortured or forcefully disappeared (Dabène, 2020). The attack on culture meant the censorship of free thought. Only in the 1990's was a gradual step towards democracy, and freedom of expression, reconsidered (Nagy-Zekmi & Leiva, 2005). Street artists continued creating, regardless of the "extreme inequalities fostered by the military regime" which did not change during the first two decades of the twenty-first century (Latorre, 2019, p. 6).

Decades later, Chile, like other Latin American countries, is an epicentre for street art, and cities like Valparaíso and Santiago de Chile are considered “museos al aire libre” which translates to outdoor museums (Bragassi, nd.). The streets express the merging styles of materials and influences from previously mentioned movements as well as new foreign influences. Elements from Mexican muralism blend with New York’s graffiti aesthetics, and Chilean artists recycle their own aesthetics and identities. The streets are flowing with creativity and shape the daily urban landscape, either encouraging or discouraging the local populace to engage in the sub-culture. After the 2019 civil riots, an increase in street art was recorded (Vilches, 2023) which communicated the dissatisfaction and resentments lingering from the neoliberal Pinochet dictatorship. Hence street art’s non-institutional, public expression is inherently counter-cultural and defies mass-media outlets with the vocality of the disadvantaged under capitalist and neoliberal regimes, and in countries with great political and economic disparity such as Chile, the production of street art is worthy of archeological recognition (Vilches, 2023).

### 2.3 Validating street art(ists)

In literature, the positioning of the street artist is seldom of central focus in qualitative sociological studies. New York artist Mico, protests that “the term graffiti is a racist, denigrating term that was applied to our culture, a culture invented by the children of the working class, usually people of colour: black and Puerto Rican, black and Latinos in the early ’70s, not a culture invented by the children of the rich upper classes, because if it were, the media would never have denigrated the new art form with the term “graffiti”; they would have named it a “vanguard pop-art” or something” (Bonadio, 2023 as cited Martinez, 2006, p 54). Because street art’s origins arose from marginalised communities, the art form is often not considered by the status quo as a legitimate source of art creation. “the future cannot be abandoned to the current dominant discourses, to the imaginations of the privileged. We need [...] to re-member the future, to put it back together again” (Nagy-Zekmi & Leiva, 2005). The inheritance of the counterculture is something Chilean artists may be proud of. McAuley (2023) explains that those who actively engage with their landscape may frame the politics of the society in which they live.

### 2.4 Chile, the sacrifice zone and the street artist’s as martyrs

Chile is located in Western South America, covering 756,102 square kilometres between the Andes Mountains and the Pacific ocean. Rich in biodiversity and non-renewable minerals, its economy relies largely on copper mining and agriculture (The Economist, 2013). The exportation of metals and non-renewable natural minerals, followed by agricultural exportation account for the major income of the country, according to Ponce Lara, in a Policy Brief (2019). Copper mines are far from the main cities. Quintero and Puchuncaví in Valparaíso for example, were modest port villages which lived from artisanal fishing, until the arrival six years ago of a large industrial factory and turned Quintero and Puchuncaví into “sacrifice zones”, an area characterised by high levels of contamination due to mining and intense extraction of minerals (Vivanco Font, 2022). Sacrifice zones are “fostered by legal and administrative changes” “resulting in increasing competition for subsurface properties [...] of [...] nonrenewable resources”, quoted from Shade (2015). It is a mode of extraction that brings social, geographical and ecological damage to rural communities, and in the Chilean context usually with the assistance of courts, lawyers and the military. The localities tend to become so affected by the contamination that it is irreversible and cannot be cleaned up, or continue to be livable (Shade, 2015). Chile, all in all, is a “sacrifice zone”. Not only is it exploited for its natural resources, but the military dictatorship used Chile as a playground to introduce Neoliberalism into South America (Oteiza & Castro, 2019).

Communities are severely affected by the contamination and exploitation of natural resources and these are a cause for constant protest amongst the populace (Bronfman, 2023). The biggest First Nation Populace in Chile are the Mapuche people. The Mapuche are indigenous people who have been targets of genocide since Spanish colonialism in 1493, continued by the domesticated colonial Republic of Chile in 1818, during the dictatorship of Pinochet in 1973 as well (Bacigalupo, 2018), and now by private-property corporations whom want to continue profit-fuelled operations in their territory (HistoriaUniversal.org, 2023). Guisela Latorre has dedicated a chapter in her book, *Street Art of Resistance*, to contemporary graffiti and muralism in Chile and the representations of Indigenous images in Chilean murals. The Mapuche cosmologies are parallel to the Earth’s ecosystem, their resistance continues and the pursuit of memory is primordial in their battle against the “extractivist” model turning their land into sacrifice zones (Dabène, 2020, p. 133).

To further explain and understand the “extractivist” model and the land injustice in Chile, reference is made to the recurring slogan in protest and street art “Ni la tierra ni la mujer son territorios de conquista” (neither the Earth nor women are territories for conquering) since the 2019 civil riots. This is in the period where reformulating the country’s collective identity and social structure was being questioned all around (Martinic, 2020). What this slogan entails is an ecofeminist perspective, which is critical to the established hetero-patriarchal and neoliberal establishment of Chile. Taking reference from Macarena Martinic’s (2020) assessment of the slogan, it targets the metropolitan’s detachment from nature and reminds them we are eco-dependent, that we are part of the wider ecosystem which sustains our livelihoods, similar to the Mapuche philosophy. Furthermore, it enforces the systematic mistreatment of women’s bodies. Linking the Earth and women against conquest, hints at the refusal of the economic system to seek capital accumulation through the exploitation of bodies, human or non-human, water or desert.

Image 2

(Henriquez, 2023)



Note: Screen shot from the skateboarding video Regression by Matías Henriquez, mural in the background is in Santiago de Chile. (Henriquez, 2023) This screenshot shows a skater doing a front-side wall ride on a mural in the style of Brigada Ramona Parra. A sun type eye is shown on the right side, and the skater is riding on the text which states “Niether the Earth or the

Woman are object of conquest”. The video was found on Thrasher Magazine, and was screenshotted at 12:05 of 30:07.

## 2.5 Urban context responds to living conditions

Today, the United Nations estimates that more than half of the world’s population inhabit grand-scale cities (Urbanization, n.d.), and close to one billion of the populous live in “slums”, characterised by [...] insufficient living space [...] and lack of access to basic living space” (Beardsley, 2021, p. 1) and conditions. As the murals evidence, it is outdated to consider nature as a factor separate from the urban context. The natural resources which fuel cities are produced, cultivated and/or extracted from rural localities which later are distributed locally and globally explains Tunnacliffe (2016). In the circumstance of Chile, these natural resources, just like its wealth, are maldistributed. Over the past century, with increasing migration towards cities, the planet's dependency on oil, industrial-agricultural industries and deep mining has led us to the current climate catastrophe (Shiva, 2022). Naomi Klein (2001) attributes the growth in slum-dwelling and poverty directly to the neoliberal policies that have taken over the world. This is therefore applicable to Chile as one of the great proponents and testing areas of the neoliberal ideology.

Image 3

Los Ayslap (2018)



Note: Screenshot from an Instagram post posted in 2018 by @los\_ayslap, of a mural they painted in 2009. The photographer is unknown. Two members from the Graffiti crew Los

Ayslap stand in front of a mural measuring 6 metres x 75 metres. The mural shows a sleeping man laying on top of the dirty ground using his hand as a pillow. The sleeping man has an emerald in between his closed eyes.

The commitment to neoliberal policies in Chile led to a concomitant disparity in income and wealth. As a result, social structures became even more entrenched and this provided fertile breeding ground for the disenchanting (Nagy-Zekmi & Leiva, 2005). As social problems grew, so too did the need for the artist to respond.

Camila Ponce Lara (2022) supports this view. She suggests that in Chile, as in the rest of Latina America, the “extractivist” model has been installed, which gives power to a select, colonial, few resulting in economic, political and environmental power asymmetries (Bronfman, Alvarez, 2023). According to Doctor Hagolani-Albov (2022), “Extractivist logic is deeply intertwined with many of the structural and historical features that drive unsustainable practices, for example via political ideologies and economic models.” The Chilean streets respond to this model.

Image 4

Los Ayslap (2018)



Note: Screenshot from an Instagram post posted in 2018 by @los\_ayslap of a mural they painted in 2009. It shows the location where the mural was made, by the Mapocho River in Santiago de Chile. This image reveals that the sleeping man is homeless, as he is sleeping by the dirty river in a sleeping bag.



Street art can be a protest to the established model, and it is predicated on an anti-establishment stance. In the case of Chile, this means a protest against the neoliberal agenda. Therefore, this thesis posits that street art and its subject matter are deserving of sociological research as they provide important visual social commentary on the communities and the factors that affect their day-to-day life.

## 2.6 Social communication

“Street art manipulates urban space” (Tunnacliffe, 2016, p. 5). It is a phenomenon inherently representative of its community and free from commercialisation. In her study on visual-sign systems being shapers of society, Roberta Kevelson (2012, p. 33) explains how “human societies have developed [...] both verbal and nonverbal sign systems [...] which evolve continuously [...] to represent changing social norms and the [...] growing social consciousness of any given community.” The continuous change in the urban landscape, due to street art, communicates current social climates. It is not stagnant. Representations of images and signs in the public's space translate as part of the socialisation process (Awad & Wagoner, 2018, p. 1). Street art, whether it be in Chile or elsewhere, can therefore represent grass-roots understandings of the social and political climate in relation to the particular community.

Muralists and street artists become involved in citizen participation during their art creation, given that their practice is in public space and “artistic expression as a form of political participation” can be considered a form of protest or activism (Bronfman, 2022, p. 260). These “artistic expression[s]” left on urban domains often seek to promote a sense of community and regrowth from the violent and oppressive past to work on the memory and identity of a given space. Dabène (2020) states that as murals are placed on the urban landscape of the everyday commute of citizens, they may deliver a form of identity formation and general consensus beyond the commercialised modes of art consumption.

### 3. Research Design

This section will explain the chosen operationalisation of the theoretical concepts and the methodological choices that were most appropriate to answer the thesis' question empirically. The research design bridges the theoretical framework from the previous section with the results from the conducted interviews. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, coded, categorised and then assigned themes. Those themes give insights to the theoretical framework and deliver insights to the research question at hand.

Given that I am Chilean, an artist, and an activist, there is direct heritage and influence in my desire to acquire insights as to the motivations of Chilean street artists (irrespective of the obstacles they may encounter) and how this may affect their practice. It must be noted, for reliability's sake, that this could cause bias. To minimise this inevitable bias, the questions asked in the semi-structured interview were open-ended so that the respondents could express themselves freely. 5 semi-structured interviews were conducted with 5 Chilean street artists, who were born and grew up in Chile.

#### 3.1 Research question

In this section I will elaborate on the research design of my thesis which questions In what ways are Chilean street artists, with a focus on painting, motivated to create their art? The aim of this research question is to gather a deep understanding of what particularly motivates street artists in Chile, given the circumstances of the country's social, political, economic and ecological climate, or their personal circumstances and how this may or may not translate into their practice.

#### 3.2 Research Strategy

This study is concerned with the experiences of Chilean street artists. The study commenced with an inductive approach to literature and theory (Bryman, 2016) which provides an academic base for the research and the results chapter. The research strategy falls under the category of qualitative research, which focuses on the understanding of the social world through the participants' interpretations and experiences of their world. (Bryman, 2016). Qualitative research makes meaning from concepts to generate theory, making it a very specific measuring tool, likewise it is less generalisable on a macro scale. A qualitative research strategy is optimal

for this research as I aim to understand the motivations of Chilean street artists, which can only be deeply understood through open dialogue with artists. As Anderson and Arsenault (1994) state “qualitative research is a form of inquiry that explores phenomena in their natural surroundings to interpret, understand, explain and bring meaning to them”. It must therefore be stated that the results from this thesis could be difficult to generalise to a population beyond the Chilean street artist.

### 3.3 Research Method

This research study uses a qualitative research method, in depth-semi structured interviews, given that the research is from a social science approach (Bryman, 2016). This means I will collect primary data given that it applies a “form of analysis which emphasises description and explanation rather than quantification and statistical analysis” (Anderson & Arsenault, 1994). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 5 Chilean street artists which ranged in duration from 50 minutes to 1 hour 45 minutes. Because the interviewees are capable of giving insights about their environment and position, having in-depth, semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions allows this thesis to undress the interpretation of the interviewee’s social world (Bryman, 2016). Semi-structured interviews include structured and unstructured sections in the interviews guide, including standardised and open-ended questions (Walliman, 2006).

An interview guide is established in order to conduct the interviews with coherent structure. This is a set of open-ended questions which help guide the interview. A semi structured interview means there are a set of concepts and themes which are touched upon every interview, allowing for flexibility in the conversation in case one or other topic needs to be elaborated on (Bryman, 2016). Because the research question can only be inferred through the measurement of related phenomena, all artists were asked to present themselves in relation to their art practice. According to the response, questions relating to their practice were defined, asking to share their experiences in empowering or threatening circumstances, their introduction to street art and what inspired them to continue painting, their opinions on Chilean street art, what correlations they see in political situations and street art - always referencing back to their art practice. These key topics were included in every interview as they were influenced by the theoretical framework.

The interviews took place online via Google Meets and the audio was recorded with my mobile phone on aeroplane mode to avoid interruptions. Given that the interviewees are based in

Chile, and I am in The Netherlands, online interviews were the only feasible option. These geographical limitations led to poor connection in some instances, however this medium could also allow the interviewee to participate in the interview from a space they feel more comfortable in, for example their homes. Google meets offers video calling, which is an advantage for an online interview setting as I was able to read 'nonverbal cues' (Bessen-Cassio & Cassino, 2023), however it did mean that we were subject to connection issues and an impersonal encounter. The intention of these interviews is to elicit specific information from the participants in order to get fruitful information in the given research area.

### 3.4 Data Sample

The interviewees were selected using convenience and snowball sampling methods. The sample was chosen out of convenience in relation to the research question. Street artists based in Chile were reached out to through social media and invited to be interviewees. Given the specificity of the research question and the distances between The Netherlands and Chile, convenience sampling is most adaptive and therefore appropriate. The first artists were chosen and contacted through social media, who later mentioned other artists who I approached, again through social-media. Convenience and snowball sampling can result in sampling bias and selection bias (Bryman, 2016), however for the sake of this research question, a sample group which does not fit the criteria of a Chilean street artist could not deliver accurate and precise information that helps answer the research question.

Besen-Cassino and Cassino (2023) state that in participant based research, the participants must be treated as equal partners in the research, and they have the right to know all the potential circumstances of their participation in the study. Consequently, participants were given an informed consent form and a spanish translation to read and sign. The informed consent form mentioned how their data would be handled and that they are allowed to or not answer any questions. They were also asked to verbally confirm their comfort in participating in the interview at the start of the interview briefing.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

The interviews were conducted in Spanish, the native language of the interviewees and myself. After the interviews were conducted, they were transcribed through an AI program and

proofread for errors. The transcripts were uploaded to the coding program Atlas.ti. Through thematic analysis, I clustered their responses into categories and later further narrowed them down into themes. In the results chapter these themes were sectioned and described, explained and interpreted. The aim was to find consistencies and differences in the interviewees' responses. Finding the crossovers and dissociations and coding them into groups allowed me to later draw conclusions from the findings which I illustrate in the Results chapter. Using Atlas.ti, I was able to create a code-book which harmonises with the theoretical framework and allows me to draw conclusions from the gathered research.

## 4. Results:

This chapter will present the findings found through thematic analysis from the 5 semi-structured interviews held with 5 Chilean street artists. The chapter is divided into 5 themes which elaborate on the motivations of Chilean street artists in relation to their context and art practice. All participants' identities have remained anonymous. Thematic analysis is used because "language is not seen as a neutral medium for transmitting information; it is bedded in our social situation and helps to create and recreate it" making it is the most convenient way to structure a response to the research question and may consequently provide deep insights into the artist's motivations (Walliman, 2006).

The first theme is Intrinsic Desire, which is the overarching reasoning for all actions in regards to the artist's motivations and practices. Adjacent to this is the second theme, Setting and Representation, which considers the constant fluctuation of the practice according to the location the artists decide to intervene, and the relationship they have towards a given space. Considering the intrinsic motivations of artists and their relationships to localities, the third theme A Very Social Endeavour of Altruism considers the social and activist elements which contribute to artists motivations and their practice. Henceforth, it is very important to also recognise that all artists considered the codes and conventionalities which encompass street art, social structures and the artist's practice as meaningful, both personally and artistically. The fourth theme Divesting from Cultural Capital introduces the relationships between institutional and non-institutional art sectors, and the artist's responses to this in their practices. The final theme Street for Street's Sake acknowledges the essence of "the street" as a fundamental element of the practice. This theme intends to unfold the unnoticed nuances which street artists may consider in the development of their practice.

### 4.1 Thematic analysis

#### 4.1.1 Intrinsic Desire

This theme is salient as it serves as an umbrella for all the other themes and motivations the artists later disclosed. When asked about their first experience going out to paint in the streets all artists explained that before considering the streets as a medium, there had always been a drive inside of them which motivates them to go out and express their inner emotions. There were some parallels found in their experiences when initially approaching the artform, for

example, the artists said that from a young age they would find themselves drawing and doodling as a communicative mode that facilitated their divergence and functioned as a form of fortitude when confronted with their own restlessness. Moreover, they expressed that art functions as a cathartic expression which helps alleviate their human need to communicate. One interviewee said “the thing about art... is that I situate it very near the cognitive development of a person”. This implies that art is fundamentally a mode of communication that is almost second nature to them, and taking this expression to the streets is a mere extension of their art practice.

A notable consistency across all artists is that they really enjoy this creative mode of production. When asked about their fundamental motivations, all artists chuckled a bit at the question, given that the rewarding and positive sensations they get from producing art on the streets is reason enough to continue going out and painting.

Given that the artist sample was selected through convenience sampling, all artists have a notable portfolio of work. Their artistic growth is organic in nature, as they expressed the progress and surprise of seeing their development as artists throughout the years. It must be noted therefore, that the artists also found that through their intrinsic motivation, they saw progress in their art skills and its application in the streets. They get motivated by seeing their own progress and when they compare the work that remains on the street from different periods of time they feel a rewarding sensation, saying that they “acquire a new technique from the aesthetic experience”. The artists find self-fulfilment in the act of art making, in and outside of the streets.

Four out of five artists make no financial gain from their street art practice and therefore their intrinsic desire is primordial when investing in their practice. They explained that they have art practices beyond the streets, which are things that are also personal. Noting that their art practice focused on other venues may have another message, what is magnified in the streets by the artists may expose that street art inherently has a social motif. Latorre (2019, p. 106) states that Chilean street artists “availed themselves of the opportunities afforded to them by the changing glocal [...] landscapes [...] For some of these young artists, graffiti became a long-term lifestyle or career decision, while for others it became a means by which to make important social and political statements.” Three out of five artists attested to having part-time jobs, which helped contribute to the sustaining of their art practice. This means that there is a true passion for art making, and that their sense of reward comes firstly from themselves. This can be backed up

by Hans Abbing (2021) analysis on “The Selflessly Devoted Artist” where he states that “external rewards are less important to artists” and that the art making process is more rewarding than commercial recognition.

The Intrinsic Desire theme enables the contextualisation of the artist’s approach to their practice, generalises their personal motives for expression and explains the intrinsic essence of their artistic communication.

#### 4.1.2 Setting and Representation

Interviewees were sampled because of their street art. Henceforth, by logical extension their surroundings, the streets, complements their practice. This theme is called Setting and Representation for it signals that their surroundings relate to their motivations and in the elaboration of their art work, and how this is a symbolic element in their practice. In the interviews, the interviewees shared what a situation may look like when they are out on the streets, sometimes sharing explicit anecdotes. This theme will explore the importance the streets, and other surrounding features have in their practice.

It is important to recognise that all five artists mentioned the Chilean urban landscape is saturated with colourful art. All artists also mentioned how iconic the city of Valparaíso is in relation to street art, that the landscape is inspiring when “you see the blue ocean and endless amounts of colours, tags, graffiti” and community aimed messages. It is an incentive to contribute to street art’s culture when it is normalised in their urban landscape. For the artists, seeing a white wall or an untouched louvre for example, is a creative temptation. In fact, they consider blocking over street art with monotonous a form of white washing and monotony towards the identity of their city and therefore harshening their approach to city life. This is comparable to censoring (Latorre, 2019) as creativity is considered a threat for social and democratic thought.

This correlates to their impact on street art’s culture and the impacts their contributions may have to the urban landscape. All artists interviewed have an activist element in their street art. Two artists sign words in Mapudungun, the language of the Mapuche people. These contributions to the urban landscape preserve the language which faced a government led programme of extinction. When creating bigger scale pieces, rather than only tags, the artists mentioned that they try to contribute with positive messages and aesthetically pleasant pieces. It



was stated by an artist that “I find it very beautiful that all those things I appreciate I can transmit in this format where a bunch of people can see it and anything may happen to it”. This is because the artists want to create pieces that last on the street and contribute to their urban landscape, and by doing so provoke something “beautiful” for others. They are aware of the external reactions and circumstances which may arise when making art in the public domain.

Given that the streets are public, this means they are also inhabitants of the space where they practise their art. Three of the five artists mentioned they do not usually approach a space with an idea of what they are going to paint, rather the space and its surroundings express to them what expression is needed. They do, however, recognise that not all street artists have the same morality and some street artists just want to “tag” everywhere, and do not respect the dynamics of a certain neighbourhood. For instance, one artist mentioned that in their practice they feel like an anthropologist everytime they go to paint a mural because they really want to depict the identity and characters of the neighbourhood, something that contributes to a proud neighbourhood rapport. It can be considered positive for the neighbourhood’s socialisation process, for instance one artist said “to paint graffiti is already a characteristic, but I try to not mark it as my personality. Rather, it’s to be present in the space, in the street. Where someone else can see what’s going on, you can see it too... and the counterculture is formed” Meanwhile another artist criticised the artists who do not have this sensitivity to locality, and paint anywhere for the sake of exposure. They mentioned for example painting on the house of a grandmother who wants her house’s wall to be a certain colour should be respected, but rather a neoliberal bank’s wall is a different story. It is important to recognise that in street art not all artists agree and that the counterculture does not always contribute positively to the urban landscape or the remaining populace. If there are others contributing to the visual landscape, then it is a motivation for these artists to want to contribute in a positive artistic manner as part of this community as opposed to other artist’s with a different moral stance.

The artists tend to find inspiration wherever they go. The streets are described as messy and dirty with trash scattered around. Three of the five interviewees mentioned that they find inspiration within this apparent mess. They explained these elements as mediums that contribute to their practice and are part of the city’s nature; the metropolitan’s ecosystem. One artist shared a series of portraits they make from the plastic bags they collect from their painting sessions in the streets. As Malaika (2016, p. 11) explains, the street artist uses “the means available to

humanity today to freely construct its life, beginning with the urban environment”. It can be deduced that their identity as artists is also personal, and therefore the experiences of being a street artist can be extended to their practice beyond the streets.

This theme illustrates how the settings of the artists contribute to their practice as a source of inspiration and creative integrity. They find themselves attuned to their locality and thus contribute creatively to it.

#### 4.1.3 A Very Social Endeavour of Altruism

Now that it has been established that street artists are motivated intrinsically and they are also connected emotionally to their surroundings, it is important to recognise the social aspects which influence them and how this may translate as altruism through their practice. As stated, this sample of street artists want to contribute with positive interventions and due to their intrinsic motivations they do not expect recognition in return. Hence their interventions may be considered as altruistic.

In relation to this theme, it is essential to appreciate the socio-political reality of the country. The artists mentioned the imposition of neoliberalism in the country, tracing the dictatorship and colonialism as raptures for social dissatisfaction and other problems. This is something all artists recognised as being a collective emotion by Chileans and an important reason why artists take the streets for creative outlets, because they are carving a space for creative exploration which is “gate kept” by the dominating class (Nagy-Zekmi & Leiva, 2005). The artists want to have their space of expression, and not conform to the dominating class, and therefore they persist by occupying the public space. This innate political act may come with the risk of legal prosecutions, however their persistence to the social cause is selfless.

The 2019 social riots ignited a new wave of urban interventions. The artists mentioned that during the protests the quality of their street art was not focused on aesthetics but rather reflected an outpouring of emotions. One compared the communal sensations the whole populace had during the riots, where one artist compared it to the sensation at “a football game”, a wave of community and harmony. This incited people who had never touched a spray can before, for example “a grandmother”, to go out on the street and write something that felt cathartic, something that would “make noise”.

A sense of camaraderie had developed during the 2019 riots and community engagement encouraged others to paint and express themselves too. Bronfman (2021) expressed similarly the “civic strength that had been achieved in citizenship as a result of the recovery of the street as a form of democracy” in her essay on the role of ‘artivism’ in the Chilean citizen movement of 2019. The artists further explained that their focus in this period was to leave clear messages, the priority was not on the aesthetic of the pieces but rather on the impact, impulse and catharsis it could create.

The artists interviewed furthermore explained how they feel their contributions to the counterculture may constitute a critical response in regards to mass media propaganda. This I would label as altruism, as Kagan (2011, p. 220) states “creative productions are expressions opening a dialogue of experiences, [...] a cultural phenomena, [...] a means of promoting its development”, interpreting what Dewey (1934, p. 339) reflects on the artistic expression reflecting what a society considers meaningful in a satisfactory life. Taking this into consideration, the apprehension of their setting’s aesthetics and contributing by executing creative socio-political rhetoric, for the sake of intrinsic motivation aligns with altruist endeavours. To quote an artist who explained a piece where they painted ““The Government of Piñera killed 77 students” outside a hospital, “I think it is important, even if it only reaches one or two people... But in the context of Chile, it’s an escape from the system, to criticise something, to open dialogue”. Or, in another instance an artist shared an encounter they had with police when they were caught painting over a Coca Cola billboard. They explained that by occupying the public visual landscape, what they were doing was conceptually the same as a propaganda without capital interests. This contributes to a social form of activism, for it criticises consumer culture imposed by the system provoking a critical response to the passerby. Furthermore, the artists mention getting no financial reward from producing their art. It is only “in good spirit”. The artist who got caught painting over the Coca Cola billboard did not specify what happened with the police, yet authority confrontations are an important factor to recognise. The art form is illegal and may lead to prosecution. The artists are putting themselves under legal threat to produce their art, and continue to produce regardless of this possibility. Latorre (2019, p. 110-111) explains that “the very notion of permission” when it comes to intervening in public space “is complicit with the power asymmetries promoted by institutions of power”, given that “mass media companies secure “permission” to advertise in the public space. Therefore, by

going against the requesting of permission “represents a direct or indirect denunciation of unequal access to “permission” that exists in neo-liberal states” (Latorre, 2019, p. 111)

Artists who leave their work on the street use pseudonyms, reverting to anonymous street personalities. This means that there is no direct recognition of themselves and the art they produce. Consequently, street artists, or “the school of the anonymous” as one artist coined does not consider external recognition as the main source of motivation, rather the act of creating and expressing, of keeping “a solidary environment” motivation enough.

Given the trade-offs in relation to street art’s production, artists producing art on the streets without permission are constantly against the odds, for they make no financial gains and are up against prosecution. Nevertheless, they continue to be critical, and contribute their grain of salt to the art form, through their aesthetic and socio-political productions, without expecting recognition in return. This is an altruistic act, and relates to their social (and political) endeavours.

#### 4.1.4 Divesting from Cultural Capital

A significant element of street art is its public commentary as mentioned earlier, which ignites the counter-culture. The artists are working in public space because of intrinsic motivation, but the socio-political realities of Chile have historically pushed (street) artists to have to build their own spaces of recognition. This unveiling is significant in the motivational elements of street artists. By building their own spaces they divert from the institutional art scene, and claim recognition for their production on their own terms. The institutional art scene consists of cultural capital that has been unattainable or has a distinctive interpretative stance in relation to those who fall outside of the “high cultural capital” bracket (Huang, 2019).

Three of the five artists mentioned a distinction between art that is made from a position of privilege and art made out of necessity and place themselves on the side of artistic creation stemming from a necessity. One artist said that in their university the curriculum was very conceptually oriented, which they enjoyed but this “pretentious” art form could not touch the people back “en la población”, the shantytown. This explains how street art entails a certain cultural accessibility in relation to the general society and the artists themselves. They explained that their motivations lay within themselves, and that art that stems from a position of privilege is not relatable to them, or to the majority of the populace. Enclosed art cannot be enjoyed by the

everyday worker as those in charge of the institutional cultural fields “have a general disregard for democratic rule” where street art in contrast “is for the people” explains Latorre (2019, p. 110).

Although not institutional, the artists mentioned codes which have been formed within the street art, and how these codes are unwritten forms of communication between themselves and other contributors to the genre. Recognising these codes gave an insinuated sense of pride about the art form, given that it legitimises the counterculture as a sustainable culture. This formalises their motivations, and relations amongst others in their community. The artists do not feel a need for institutional approval for making their art. They are the ones in charge of the perseverance and growth of their own culture, and this may persist as a motivational factor in order for the artform to persist.

Stemming from the idea of community in 4.1.2, I would like to mention the phenomena of “crews”. All artists mentioned working collectively with other artists, painting walls in collaboration with their “crews”. They mentioned the growth that comes from working collectively, and how they are able to create larger scale and more detailed pieces because they can fraction out the tasks when it comes to elaborating larger scale pieces. They expressed the rewarding feeling that comes from seeing their “crews” pieces on the streets and “I think it is also a supporting mechanism in terms of learning” stated one artist. Crews are formed because their members seek “to transcend their individuality” and forge “powerful bonds” with other artists (Latorre, 2019, p. 124).

There is a Do it Yourself ethic that was mentioned by some of the artists. Three artists express being invited to Hip Hop festivals to paint, or participating in community painting initiatives for social causes and cultural promotion. These grass-roots festivals are organised by the community with either a social cause, or for preservation of the counterculture. Because the counterculture is sustained by the artists themselves, there lies a motivation to keep the momentum of the scene alive, which encourages the artists to either participate or contribute in the organisation of these festival gatherings. This overlaps with A Very Social Form of Altruism for their counterculture is sustained through grassroots initiatives accessible to all brackets of society.

The artists perpetuate the creation and maintenance of their own culture through their Do it Yourself ethic, the codes they have constructed, the teamwork of crews and the defiance of

institutional art's cultural gatekeeping. Their motivations are driven by the desire to maintain their counterculture alive.

#### 4.1.5 Street for Street's Sake

This is the concluding theme, which is supposed to garner the motivations of the artists in relation to street art, placing the street as the primal focus in their practices. The artists made it clear that when they are out of the streets, they have a sensation which cannot be attuned to other mediums of expression. One artist explained that they do not need a studio because when given the creative freedom the streets have to offer, they consider a stretched canvas, for instance, too limiting. This section will therefore focus on the "street" as the motivational factor.

When their art is left on the street, anyone can modify it in any manner. It is open for the public to respond to. The artists mentioned this as a feeling of uncertainty in regards to what their work will be exposed to. They further continued to accept it as just another element that makes up the streets, and leaving art in the public domain. When they work hard on a piece for it to later get damaged, altered or covered, they have learned to accept that this is what tends to happen when leaving art in the public domain. It belongs to everyone, and no one at the same time. Whether they find this motivating fluctuates according to the circumstance of the piece. Some artists mentioned the "you cover me, I cover you" phenomena in street art's culture. This means that if they leave a piece on the street and someone else covers it with their signature this may ignite rivalry between the artists and serve as a motivation to go out and paint again, while in other instances it may just pass by as another contribution to the urban visual landscape and they accept it as it is.

Because their art is intrinsically motivated, supported by their community and the artists consider it enhances the urban visual landscape, there are certain external factors which contribute to the persistence of their work. For instance, the artists expressed the "fun" that they have when inhabiting the streets, that there is a particular sensation that comes from making art on the streets they want to constantly feel. One artist compared the sensation of making street art to being "high", and that in their given context the options for pastimes can be painting or indulging in substances. This artist was clear that they preferred making art over indulging in substances. This may be deduced in regards to the "politicised upbringing" of marginalised

communities exposed to graffiti and street art from a young age, and use it as a tool to democratise and create visibility for their urban surroundings (Latorre, 2019, p. 107).

The notions that come with street art's unwritten codes are elements which the artists mentioned passively when explaining the sensations they feel. Rivalry or companionship are both elements which contribute to the art making process, functioning as an unrecognised motivation. One artist explains going to paint on the street results in a representation in between "anonymity and identity", and that is how they go finding their community, allies and communicating amongst the other artists involved in the street.

The sensations the artists feel on the streets cannot be replicated in other circumstances, given that they plainly enjoy the activity of being in the public space and recognise the possibilities of leaving their art on the streets. That the street becomes an open playground for the artists to express themselves, and democratise their identity in the public space which tries to exclude them is of crucial importance to them.

## 5. Conclusion

This thesis consisted of an introduction, a theoretical framework which constituted a spine for the research conducted that explored the context and motivations of Chilean street artists, focus on painting, and the effect this had on their practice. The research design chapter explained the importance of using in-depth semi-structured interviews to draw themes and conclusions which were illustrated in the results chapter.

Five themes were identified. The overarching theme of Intrinsic Desire shows how the primal motivation of street artists lies within themselves. This information shows that the artists have a devotion to their craft and find themselves attuned to their artistic identity in their personal identity too. The rewarding and cathartic sensations of their expression is complemented by external factors such as their surrounding localities and the community, which results in cyclical art making rhythms of practice.

Chile, as evidenced in the theoretical framework and backed by the results chapter, has an outstanding legacy of street art. The abundance of street art manifests itself as a stand alone culture within the counterculture which is street art as it is plainly sustained by the artists themselves. The art form engages publicly with society and socialises creative expression. Everything in the public horizon, for the artist, is viewed as a creative opportunity, even if this entails the risk of persecution by the Chilean authorities. This creates a form of social stamina in communicating against the dominating class.

The factors mentioned in the results chapter explain in deeper detail the motivations for the artists to continue their practice regardless of the potential limitations they may confront in their creative trajectory, such as confrontations with authorities or having their art covered by another artist. It was made clear that there are external factors which contribute to motivating their expression with street art such as the community and settings around them, but how the limitations around their practice may offer motivation was not elaborated on.

Furthermore it was not specified that there is a direct immediate correlation between socio-politics and the art that is left on the streets, the implications were deduced in the artist's responses. The emotive state of an artist is an impulse to create and paint, and their emotions may be affected by their surroundings and the socio-politics of the time. If there is a sensation, an impulse according to the socio-political situation, this will be represented on the streets in order



to provoke a response in the public domain and serves as catharsis for the artists themselves, as explained in *A Very Social Approach to Altruism*.

In a country like Chile, renowned for political instability, it is made difficult to find truth in the media and functioning educational systems. Acknowledged by the artists themselves, they view the streets as a terrain to repurpose the public consciousness. The 2019 riots were an outpouring of emotions which signalled that the proletariat would no longer tolerate the entrenched inequalities in wealth and opportunities. Furthermore, it reiterates the fact that artists and the general populace need to constantly be tackling external factors to carve a space for themselves in society. The abundance of street art and artists in Chile defends the DIY notion of repurposing space, which may create some harmony in a politically unstable country.

Therefore, In what ways are Chilean street artists, focused on painting, motivated to create their art? The motivation stems primarily from themselves, then their surroundings and their community. The unstable and inequitable political situation, and the act of carving their own space creating an identity in the streets is also a motivation to paint on the streets. Their art, nevertheless, may change according to their circumstance, be it personal or socio-political which leaves room for interpretation of situations when consuming or executing art in the public domain.

The research does come about with its limitations, which can be filled with further research in the future. The first limitation is that the sample group is very small in relation to the abundance of street artists in Chile. It was briefly stated in *Setting and Representation* that within the counterculture there are disagreements, and not all artists share the same moral position in their art making, resulting in unstable conclusions on a macro scale. Not all artists live the same experience. In a country like Chile with systematic oppression, the experiences for women, non-binary, trans, people of colour and immigrant artists may be very different to those experiences of the cis-het white man and it is therefore important to also recognise that this thesis fails to recognise those factors in the artistic practice and motivations. Nevertheless, for the sake of ethical considerations, the identities of the interviewees cannot be unveiled making it difficult to state such facts. Having a gender diverse, and larger sample in the future may lead to more generalisable conclusion to other street artists. It was also noted in the theoretical framework that there are many forms of street art in Chile, yet this thesis focuses on those whose main medium is painting. It would be interesting to get insights into other types of street interventions, such as

dancing, juggling, performers, rappers or even skateboarding and how these may contribute to a more enriching understanding of Chile's diverse street art and its culture.

Furthermore, this thesis only focuses on the motivating factors which affect the practice of the artists. It does not consider the setbacks artists may also endure in their artistic endeavours which may demotivate them. These are fundamental considerations. We are all humans with emotions, lives and experiences, meaning that productivity may not always be motivated and that there are periods where there is no artistic production. Life is not always motivating and productive, and an insight into the artist's unmotivated periods may also provide insights into their artistic practice and the street's rhetoric.

There are artists who focus on their socio-political position and others who focus on their aesthetic abilities. There is room to further unravel the dichotomy between art for arts sake, and art for political sake in a street artist's motivation.

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## 7. Appendices:

### *7.1 Interview guide:*

#### Introduction:

Hello, and welcome to this interview. I want to thank you very much for letting you interview. I would like to start by introducing myself and the project: I am Raq, 23 years old, I am half Chilean and half Irish - in the O'Higgins style. I never lived in Chile, but my homeland has always been close, although my accent accentuates another. I am finishing my university studies in arts and cultures, with an option in sociology and another career in visual arts where I work conceptually on miscegenation. I find the links between the metropolis and the countryside to create installations, sculptures, poetry and paintings that defend the rights of the land, animals and humans.

Being Chilean, torn from its roots, I have an affinity with reconnecting with the territory. Something that is particular to Chile is its street art, or rather... its street essence. Muralism, graffiti, the streets have always fascinated me. Always, they are colorful and expressive... they have a mutant and popular voice... something that the mainstream media does not share and in those I decided to dedicate myself to studying them for my thesis. Of course, putting the artists as protagonists in this case.

1. Could you please introduce yourself \_\_\_\_\_ as an artist and person?
  - a. How did the name thistle come about?
  - b. Have you always lived in Chile?
  - c. Have you seen changes in street identity in your travels?
  - d. What motivates you to stay in Chile?
2. How do you prefer we title you?
3. How long have you been in art?
  - a. What developments have you seen in your art?
  - b. Do you find challenges in your career?
  - c. How have you maintained that motivation?
4. Could you please, in words, contextualise yourself to the scene of a mural graffiti, what you feel at that moment.



5. What do you think about collaboration in your art?
  - a. Do you work alone or in a team? Because?
  - b. On commission or by own wish?
6. Within culture there are many methods, as a muralist do you only work on legal or illegal walls?
  - a. What differences do you feel in the experiences?
  - b. How do you feel if they cover you?
7. Confrontations with the law, who prevents you from working?
8. Could you please elaborate on your experiences painting on the street?
  - a. Things that empower you
  - b. Things that threaten you
9. Who are the subjects you paint?
  - a. What entities do these subjects have?
  - b. Does the community answer you?
  - c. How does it make you feel?
10. How connected do you feel that a social voice or a political voice develops with your murals?
11. I wonder if you were active in the streets during the social outbreak of 2019?
  - a. How did you see the streets during this time?
  - b. Did you work then?
  - c. Physical oppression as censorship, how do you motivate yourself around that?
12. Who inspires your work?
13. Something that is usually taboo to the cordial - Tax opportunities as a street artist in Chile? good/bad?
  - a. Does the integrity of the artist go beyond the fiscal?
14. Do you see heritage or legacy in Chilean street art?
  - a. Given the socio-political circumstances in Chile, do you feel an impact on the murals?
15. How recognized do you think a foreign field is?
  - a. Is it good that it is normalized?

## 7.2 Code book generated by Atlas.ti

### **Grouped codes**

*Report created by Raquel Williams on 12 June 2024*

#### Action

##### **1 codes:**

- Action (Acción)

##### **groups:**

*Action*

#### Artist context and interpretations

##### **9 codes:**

- anecdota

##### **groups:**

*Artist context and interpretations*

- Emoción (emotion)

##### **groups:**

*Artist context and interpretations*

- girl struggles

##### **groups:**

*Artist context and interpretations*

- identidad personal

##### **groups:**

*Artist context and interpretations*

- inspiración

##### **groups:**

*Artist context and interpretations*

- Interpretación de la situación (Interpretation of the situation)

##### **groups:**

*Artist context and interpretations*

- lack of resources

**groups:**

*Artist context and interpretations*

- Posición (Position)

**groups:**

*Artist context and interpretations*

- Trabajo (Work)

**groups:**

*Artist context and interpretations*

### Artist Motivation

**1 codes:**

- Motivación - (Motivation)

**groups:**

*Artist Motivation*

**comment:**

*cuando la comunidad se une la gente tiene el poder de hacer que la escena sea más comoda para lxs principiantes*

### Community and altruism

**7 codes:**

- activismo

**groups:**

*Community and altruism*

- Altruism (Altruismo)

**groups:**

*Community and altruism*

- Auto gestión (DIY)

**groups:**

*Community and altruism*

- el pueblo (the people)

**groups:**

*Community and altruism*

- Movimiento social (Social movement)

**groups:**

*Community and altruism*

- tematica de murales/graffiti (themes)

**groups:**

*Community and altruism*

- transformation - (transformation)

**groups:**

*Community and altruism*

#### Institutional art scene

**2 codes:**

- Arte Institucional (Institutional Art)

**groups:**

*Institutional art scene*

- Arte por Arte (Art for Art)

**groups:**

*Institutional art scene*

#### Oppressive State Aparatus

**8 codes:**

- abuso policial

**groups:**

*Oppressive State Aparatus*

- censuras

**groups:**

*Oppressive State Aparatus*

- chile

**groups:**

*Oppressive State Aparatus*

- estallido social (mass social strike)

**groups:**

*Opressive State Aparatus*

- política

**groups:**

*Opressive State Aparatus*

- problemas

**groups:**

*Opressive State Aparatus*

- urban layout

**groups:**

*Opressive State Aparatus*

- violence

**groups:**

*Opressive State Aparatus*

Space and Locality

**8 codes:**

- Espacio (Space)

**groups:**

*Space and Locality*

- Habita - (habitus)

**groups:**

*Space and Locality*

- latam

**groups:**

*Space and Locality*

- mapuche

**groups:**

*Space and Locality*

- memoria

**groups:**

*Space and Locality*

- neoliberal

**groups:**

*Space and Locality*

- Opiniones del público (public opinions)

**groups:**

*Space and Locality*

- Valparaíso

**groups:**

*Space and Locality*

Street for street's sake

**13 codes:**

- Adaptarse a la calle (Adaptation to the street)

**groups:**

*Street for street's sake*

- Arte Callejero (Street Art)

**groups:**

*Street for street's sake*

- calle por calle (street for street)

**groups:**

*Street for street's sake*

- cogidos (codes)

**groups:**

*Street for street's sake*

- Comunidad (Community)

**groups:**

*Street for street's sake*

- Contra cultura (counter culture)

**groups:**

*Street for street's sake*

- Firma (Signature)

**groups:**

*Street for street's sake*

- Graffiti

**groups:**

*Street for street's sake*

- HipHop

**groups:**

*Street for street's sake*

- identidad callejera

**groups:**

*Street for street's sake*

- mural conventions

**groups:**

*Street for street's sake*

- ocupar el espacio (occupy the space)

**groups:**

*Street for street's sake*

- trespassing?

**groups:**

*Street for street's sake*

Technique and aesthetics

**7 Codes:**

- aesthetic

**groups:**

*Technique and aesthetics*

- Dimensiones (Dimensions)

**groups:**

*Technique and aesthetics*

- Mezcla (Mix)

**groups:**

*Technique and aesthetics*

- Materiales (materials)

**groups:**

*Technique and aesthetics*

- Reutilizar/Reciclar (Reuse, recycle)

**groups:**

*Technique and aesthetics*

- tags

**groups:**

*Technique and aesthetics*

- technique

**groups:**

*Technique and aesthetics*

No hay grupo de codes

**2 codes:**

- naturaleza

- pol



### 7.3 List of respondents

<i>Name/Tag</i>	<i>Instagram handle</i>	<i>Profession</i>
<i>Azul/Plaga Rosa &amp; No binaries que cortan y pegan</i>	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/nobinariesquecortanypegan/">https://www.instagram.com/nobinariesquecortanypegan/</a> <a href="https://www.instagram.com/dietmountain___demon/">https://www.instagram.com/dietmountain___demon/</a>	<i>Freelancer, graffiti artist and collage artist</i>
<i>Leonardo/Cardo</i>	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/cardo_maleza/">https://www.instagram.com/cardo_maleza/</a>	<i>Muralist</i>
<i>Elizabeth/Sigue</i>	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/ssiguee/">https://www.instagram.com/ssiguee/</a>	<i>Art therapist, mural and graffiti artist, English teacher</i>
<i>Ramiro/Kimün</i>	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/antuku.yen/">https://www.instagram.com/antuku.yen/</a>	<i>Student, graffiti artist</i>
<i>Nicolas/Rayen Todo</i>	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/vehederios/">https://www.instagram.com/vehederios/</a>	<i>Community organiser, father, muralist, graffiti artist, collage artist, sculptor</i>

### 7.4 Consent form (unsigned)

#### **INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

<b><i>Project Title and version</i></b>	<i>In what ways is the Chilean street artist motivated to use their art form as an activist tool?  (And how do the conventions of street art support this?)</i>
<b><i>Name of Principal Investigator</i></b>	<i>Raquel Williams Vasquez</i>
<b><i>Name of Organisation</i></b>	<i>Erasmus University Rotterdam – Erasmus School of History, Culture, and Communication.</i>

<p><b><i>Purpose of the Study</i></b></p>	<p><i>This research is being conducted by Raquel Williams Vasquez. I am inviting you to participate in this research project about the motivations of Chilean street artists to use their art as activism. The purpose of this research project is to further understand the motivations of artists to further enhance sociological research in the field of street art.</i></p>
<p><b><i>Procedures</i></b></p>	<p><i>You will participate in an interview lasting approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour. You will be asked questions about your context as an artist, your positioning, the subjects you depict and so forth. Sample questions include: “How does the label street artist make you feel?”.</i></p> <p><i>You must be at least 18 years old.</i></p> <p><i>From Chile.</i></p>
<p><b><i>Potential and anti-cipated Risks and Discomforts</i></b></p>	<p><i>There are no obvious physical, legal or economic risks associated with participating in this study. You do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. Your participation is voluntary and you are free to discontinue your participation at any time.</i></p>
<p><b><i>Potential Benefits</i></b></p>	<p><i>Participation in this study does not guarantee any beneficial results to you. As a result of participating, you may better understand your motivations as an artist and what a certain public’s takes interest of your work.</i></p> <p><i>The broader goal of this research is to give visibility to the intentions of the artist who make revolutionary work.</i></p>
<p><b><i>Sharing the results</i></b></p>	<p><i>Once the thesis has been completed, I can share the writings with you. A copy of your transcript may also be shared if this is requested. I will inform you in any case of future publications of this study.</i></p>

<p><b>Confidentiality</b></p>	<p><i>Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. No personally identifiable information will be reported in any research product. Moreover, only trained research staff will have access to your responses. Within these restrictions, results of this study will be made available to you upon request.</i></p> <p><i>As indicated above, this research project involves making audio recordings of interviews with you. Transcribed segments from the audio recordings may be used in published forms (e.g., journal articles and book chapters). In the case of publication, pseudonyms will be used. The audio recordings, forms, and other documents created or collected as part of this study will be stored in a secure location in the researchers' offices or on the researchers password-protected computers and will be destroyed within ten years of the initiation of the study.</i></p>
<p><b>Right to Withdraw and Questions</b></p>	<p><i>Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalised or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.</i></p> <p><i>If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the primary investigator:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>graquandra@gmail.com</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>+31630767426</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Raquel Williams Vasquez</i></p>
<p><b>Statement of Consent</b></p>	<p><i>Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; you have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree that you will participate in this research study. You will receive a copy of this signed consent form.</i></p> <p><i>For research problems or any other question regarding the research project, please contact the coordinator of the Bachelor Graduation Project, Dr. Débora Póvoa (povoa@eshcc.eur.nl).</i></p> <p><i>If you agree to participate, please sign your name below.</i></p>

<p><b>Audio recording</b> (if applicable)</p>	<p><i>I consent to have my interview audio recorded</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>yes</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>no</i></p>	
<p><b>Secondary use</b> (if applicable)</p>	<p><i>I consent to have the anonymised data be used for secondary analysis</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>yes</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>no</i></p>	
<p><b>Signature and Date</b></p>	<p><b>NAME PARTICIPANT</b></p>	<p><b>NAME PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR</b></p> <p><i>Raquel Williams Vasquez</i></p>
	<p><b>SIGNATURE</b></p>	<p><b>SIGNATURE</b></p>
	<p><b>DATE</b></p>	<p><b>DATE</b></p> <p><i>16/04/2024</i></p>