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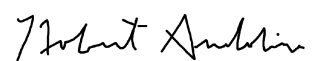
**Broadcasting from the Streets:
Chilean Street Art as a Form of Emancipatory Journalism**

A Thesis Submitted to
The Faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences
In Candidacy for the Degree of
Departmental Honors in International Studies

By
Hallie Shirnia Evans

June 2021

This honors thesis by Hallie Evans is approved by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert Andolina". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'R' and a long, sweeping underline.

Dr. Robert Andolina, Instructor

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Serena Cosgrove". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'S' and a long, sweeping underline.

Dr. Serena Cosgrove, Reader

Abstract

Beginning in 2019, Chile saw a new wave of large scale protests termed the Estallido Social in response to the consequences of the Augusto Pinochet dictatorship and the persistence of social inequality upheld by neoliberal economic expansion. This thesis explores the use of street art in the Chilean Estallido Social Protests and the ways in which it functions as a form of emancipatory journalism. The traditional means of mass communications in Chile are rooted in neocolonial and corporate interests, and are thus a limited means for disseminating information concerning political action against the present administration and its interests. This thesis aims to examine the diversity and content of Chilean protest art and demonstrate the power of street art as an alternative broadcasting means to express dissenting opinions and challenge the Chilean media superstructure.

Keywords: Chile, emancipatory journalism, street art, graffiti, Estallido Social

I. Introduction

Currently, dominant conceptions of journalism within civil society are highly formalized and associated with conventional broadcasting mediums and easily identifiable authors. Chile is certainly no exception to this as radio and television remain its dominant mediums. Similar to other neoliberal countries, media ownership has become increasingly concentrated. Consequently, a free, citizen-led press is diminishing and dominant narratives in mass communications are defined by a privileged few with vested interests. Instead of transmitting information that reflects the interests of the Chilean public, broadcast media determines its content based on what would garner viewership in order to increase advertising revenues. In addition, many media companies are owned by non-Chilean multinational corporations or Chilean family-owned conglomerates (Godoy E, 2016). These attributes of the Chilean media landscape pose a threat to freedom of expression and a diverse press that reflects the varied perspectives, experiences, political commitments, and beliefs of the populace.

Rather than become passive political spectators, the Chilean people carry forward a long tradition of protest and continue to assert their narratives through a variety of alternative mediums which correspond to the practice of emancipatory journalism. Street art, well-grounded in Chilean history, becomes a crucial approach for the dissemination of alternative narratives. The recent protest movement starting in 2019, The Estallido Social,¹ offers countless examples of political street art. The Estallido Social began as a protest against the effects of neoliberal economic policies and the proliferation of inequality in Chile. This honors thesis examines Chilean street art in the post-dictatorship era as an expression of emancipatory journalism in order to trace the linkages between protest and communications across Chilean popular sectors. The research presented in this paper will analyze prior research of Chilean street art and posit that the practice is a crucial method in critical media. This paper answers the following questions:

1. How and why does the Chilean mass media landscape generate alternate forms of communications?
2. How and why has Chilean street art been utilized to narrate the social and political lives of the populace?
3. How effective has Chilean street art been in countering corporate media and diversifying the voices in the Chilean public sphere?

¹ The Estallido Social translates to "Social Outbreak".

While the traditional news media in Chile is composed of a corporate duopoly with longstanding political and economic ties to the Chilean upper class, Chilean street art- with its diverse authors and numerous forms- successfully constitutes a populace-based press. Ultimately, the research will show that Chilean street art as used in protest in the post-Pinochet era is a powerful form of emancipatory journalism given its ability to broadcast the numerous and nuanced perspectives of the Chilean people where the traditional media has failed.

In order to demonstrate the thesis, I will first explain the theoretical frameworks used and their relationship to the concept of emancipatory journalism followed by a review of prior scholarly literature on Chilean Street Art. Next, the research design and methods used in the research will be discussed. The thesis will then briefly review Chile's history, the specifics of the Estallido Social, and the state of the Chilean news media landscape in order to provide the reader with the appropriate context for the proceeding research. Once sufficient context has been established, content analysis of articles from the dominant voices in the Chilean news media landscape will reveal biases in the corporate media and demonstrate the importance of amplifying alternative forms of journalism. A variety of Chilean street artists and their work will then be presented and analyzed in order to authenticate their function as forms of emancipatory journalism. Finally, the potential implications of the research will be discussed.

The thesis has a few potential audiences. Firstly, folks in academic spaces could benefit from this approach to non-Western epistemologies. Valuing street art and other art forms originating from the margins epistemically challenges dominant narratives in academia. Moreover, by understanding the merits of centering marginalized folks with experiential knowledge, academics can approach research in a way that does away with the hierarchies backed by Western imperialism inherent in a "subject/object" method of study. The concept of street art having communicative, journalistic functions also has important implications for folks engaged in political action in Chile and abroad. While popularizing and legitimizing street art as a form of emancipatory journalism is important from an academic perspective, street artists themselves create knowledge through their practice. Street art's ubiquity, use of creativity, and attention to marginalized narratives can serve to counter corporate media narratives in Chile and abroad.

II. Theoretical Frameworks

A. Emancipatory Journalism

To properly posit Chilean protest art as an example of emancipatory journalism, it is crucial to understand what is meant by "emancipatory journalism". Critical race theory and its attendant methodologies relating to counter-storytelling offer emancipatory journalism as an

influential method in its alternative approach to constructing narratives in the media, for it asserts knowledge as experience. Hemant Shah's article "Modernization, Marginalization, and Emancipation: Toward a Normative Model of Journalism and National Development" (1996) explores the necessity for the reconfiguration of journalism given that it presently operates within the constraints of Western epistemology. The article asserts that the current dominant social paradigm in journalism is firmly rooted in positivism and functionalism. This conception disallows a diverse array of narratives, especially by those who have been historically marginalized as a result of Western imperialism. Shah assesses the spatial and temporal relationships present in mass communication in order to synthesize a normative model of emancipatory journalism as a crucial feature of social transformation. Emancipatory journalism's primary aspects are (1) Concern for the social, political, cultural, and economic aspects of development; (2) a bottom-up communicative flow; and (3) a non-traditional approach to reporting (Shah, 1996, p.145). The emancipatory journalism model not only aims to provide socially relevant information, it also requires journalistic activism in challenging and dismantling oppressive structures (Shah, 1996). As intersectional theory illuminates the oppositional knowledges possessed by marginalized individuals and groups, emancipatory journalism offers a powerful mechanism with which to communicate alternative epistemologies. Shah's discussion of dominant perspectives in mass communications and his model for emancipatory journalism sets a criteria that imbues street art with a crucial journalistic function in social movements. This model informs the assertion of Chilean public art as a journalistic method.

B. Alternative Media

A crucial dimension of emancipatory journalism concerns the framework of alternative media. As the news media has become increasingly corporatized, scholarly work on news media conglomeratization has increased. Consequently, scholars have devoted ample research to devising alternate approaches to mass communications. Seen through a critical race theory lense, mass communications functions to uphold Western ideology rather than expressing the diverse positions of civil society. Alternative media as a form of critical media assumes a dialectical format. It is embedded into society and functions to question traditional power dynamics, express the perspectives of oppressed peoples, and prospect avenues for social change. Critical media has the power to constitute a more robust counter public sphere or proletariat public sphere through its communicative functions. The counter public sphere may represent a forum for counter-storytelling, a practice articulated within critical race theory. The counter public sphere is a dialectical opponent to the bourgeois public sphere, whose interests are reproduced into public opinion through mass communications by corporate media

monopolies. The bourgeois public sphere aims to frame the master narrative (Fuchs, 2010). An alternative media framework supplies a theoretical perspective that determines the importance of novel approaches to news media and establishes a firm foundation for the investigation of street art as an inherently democratic and communicative practice.

C. Intersectionality Theory

Intersectionality as an analytic tool allows for a more complex picture of the relationship between identity and social power. Proponents of the theory contend that identity markers such as race, class, sexuality, gender, religion, and ethnicity interact with one another and create dangerous intersections for people with multiple identities that marginalize them. These intersections connote varied forms of discrimination and privilege. Intersectionality theory as an analytic tool brings complexity to research given its social justice ethos and attention to specific contexts (Collins & Bilge, 2016). Intersectionality encompasses both structural intersectionality and political intersectionality. Structural intersectionality refers to the ways in which marginalized identities make folks more susceptible to oppression and exclusion. As a result of intersecting identities, people experience increased vulnerability to a myriad of systematically and socially produced threats. Contrastingly, intersecting identities provide the opportunity for increased agency as oppositional knowledges provide individuals with diverse and intimate perspectives that inform their worldviews in unique manners (Cosgrove, 2020). Such perspectives provide the relevant knowledge and motivation to inform modes of resistance in pursuance of societal transformation. The themes and forms articulated in Chilean protest public art are informed by the unique experiences of the creator(s). They are manifestations of oppressed experiences and manners of resistance informed by oppositional knowledges. This is not to say that the art itself does not have broad resonance amongst the rest of civil society. Since identities and experiences are widely shared, the practice of street art by folks with marginalized identities has important implications for each marginalized sector of society and their relationships with one another. Supplementing the framework of emancipatory journalism with intersectionality demonstrates the ways in which oppositional knowledges from the margins inform the practice of street art.

D. Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory analyzes the relationships between society, culture, law, power, and race (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017). From the standpoint of critical race theory, personal experience is emphasized as an important yet often disregarded method of creating knowledge. This approach to ways of knowing is crucial as Chilean public art reimagines the formation of knowledge and non-traditional manners of doing journalism. Creative manifestations of critical

race theory are, “-characterized by frequent use of the first person, storytelling, narrative, allegory, interdisciplinary treatment of law, and the unapologetic use of creativity.” (Darian-Smith & McCarty, 2017). The approach of counter-storytelling, a novel means of using oral tradition and other story-telling forms not strictly tied to literacy, to counter the master narrative, is exemplified in the practice of street art.

E. Decolonial Theory

The use of decolonial theory functions to acknowledge how a country’s colonial past persists both in its institutions and its culture. Decolonial theory examines the colonial roots of present modes of oppression and the systemic issues which continue to affect previously colonized peoples. Furthermore, decolonial theory frames acts of resistance as a manner of resisting the echoes of past colonialism and the persistence of neo-imperial ventures (Cosgrove et al., 2020). Viewing the practice of street art through decolonial theory effectively highlights the decolonial aspects of street art and allows art forms to be valued and interpreted apart from colonial perceptions of what constitutes “art”. It contextualizes protest against a backdrop of Chile’s long and tumultuous experiences with imperialism at the hands of the Spanish and the United States.

F. Linking Theoretical Frameworks

Intersectionality theory, critical race theory, and decolonial theory effectively complement one another and fill in gaps for one another. While all three pay close attention to marginalized identities, intersectional theory synthesizes them and allows for close attention to how the interplay of marginalized identities affects experience, agency, and political action. This is crucial in examining how the identity of artists manifests in their art. Critical race theory brings close attention to the relationships between race, power, culture, and the law, allowing for a closer look at the motivations behind criminalizing protest art forms as well as the ways in which artwork by creators with marginalized racial identities interacts with present power dynamics. Decolonial theory highlights the importance of Chile’s colonial past and its implications for Indigenous and Mestizo folks today. To effectively evaluate the diverse narratives articulated through Chilean street art, it is imperative to invoke the frameworks proposed by critical race theory, decolonial theory, and intersectional theory. Together, the particularities of the three theories and their relationships to alternative media practices deepen the practice of emancipatory journalism.

III. Literature Review

Scholarly literature on Chilean street art has mainly focused on graffiti and muralism or *arpilleras*. The following review displays the present state of scholarship on the subject.

A. *Street Art and Chilean Resistance*

Substantial literature on the contributions of Chilean street art throughout the country's post-independence period serves to provide a firm historical precedent for the crucial nature of street art in Chile's social movements. One of the first scholarly works on Chilean street art is Camilo D. Trumper's book *Ephemeral Histories: Public Art, Politics, and the Struggle for the Streets in Chile* (2016). The book discusses the emergence of protests, urban film, street photography, graffiti, postering, and murals throughout Santiago and their impact in motivating wide-ranging political mobilization during the Popular Unity era. The book delves into the interplay between urban action, visual practice, and oral history to provide an alternative account of the time period that originates from the populace. Trumper's work sets a historical precedent for the political practice of street art prior to the military dictatorship (Trumper, 2016). Though Trumper discusses public art as a mobilizing force, he does not explicitly discuss its communicative power, nor does *Ephemeral Histories* focus on the post dictatorship era. Accordingly, the work in this paper will elaborate on Chilean public art in a modern context and assert its journalistic functions.

Guisela Latorre's book *Democracy on the Wall: Street Art of the Post-Dictatorship Era in Chile* (2019) represents another important text in investigating the nature of Chilean street art. Her book discusses the different manifestations of Chilean street art after the fall of the Pinochet regime. Latorre explores the formation and resurgence of notable muralist brigades, the concept of open-sky museums, the feminist impact of female "*graffiteras*", and the transnational reach of Chilean street art. Through the lens of decolonial theory, she explores street art as a method of decolonizing urban space and asserting traditionally marginalized narratives. Latorre portrays street art as a form of "visual democracy" as it provides "discursive spaces for the possibility of a radical and progressive politics." (Latorre, 2019, p.5). While Latorre does not go so far as to designate street art as a tool of journalism, her explication of the ways in which street art decolonizes urban areas and provides a space for political expression allows for more in-depth analysis on the nature of Chilean street art as a manifestation of emancipatory journalism.

B. *Arpilleras*

Existing scholarship on Chilean public art has paid ample attention to the creation of patchwork embroidered art pieces called *arpilleras*. *Arpilleras* were created by poor Chilean women² to depict their shared experiences and shed light upon the abuses of the Pinochet regime. Jacqueline Adams's article "Art in Social Movements: Shantytown Women's Protest in

² Also known as "pobladoras".

Pinochet's Chile" (2002) is an important account of the use of *arpilleras*. Adams asserts that the creation of *arpilleras* is inherently subversive, as they center the experiences of poor folks and effectively communicate the beliefs of the anti-Pinochet movement in order to "erode the dominant ethos" (Adams, 2002, p.41). Adams' research on the topic reaffirms the historical precedent for Chilean protest art, expresses diversity in the physical form of street art, and alludes to the informative nature of protest art. Well renowned literature on *arpilleras* also includes Marjorie Agosín's book *Tapestries of Hope, Threads of Love* (2008). Agosín reflects on the memorializing power of *arpilleras* within a country that tries to deny the violence of its past and present. While Agosín's work focuses on the memorializing application of *arpilleras*, their production and distribution served a communicative function in their day. *Arpilleras* were a method of bearing witness to life (Agosín, 2008, p.33). The idea of protest art as bearing witness to a narrative or material experience that is otherwise marginalized in the dominant media illuminates the continuing practice of various forms of political public art by Chilean civil society as a powerful illustration of emancipatory journalism.

Despite the existence of voluminous research on political organizing and the sustained use of street art as a subversive expression of political dissidence in Chilean history, further work is crucial in order to center and amplify marginalized Chilean voices against a politically and economically powerful media landscape. By drawing off of previous scholarship and asserting Chilean public art as a journalistic tool, this thesis serves to legitimize the practice and demonstrate its power to bring wide-ranging attention to the narratives of those who continue to experience erasure by the corporate media. Given the immense power mass media has to alter public opinion, reimagining and building journalistic practices from the margins is imperative for the Chilean people to assert their diverse narratives and build a more just and inclusive Chile. Ultimately, Chilean street art challenges the single story presented by the news media and illustrates the power of messages from the margins.

IV. Research Design and Methods

To comprehensively investigate the interplay between protest and communications through Chilean street art in the post-dictatorship era, a synthesis of primary and secondary research methods will be employed. This includes the analysis of primary and secondary sources in addition to content analysis.

Secondary research involves the incorporation of meta-analysis of the existing academic articles discussed in the preceding literature review to bolster the content analysis of modern street art. This serves to firmly ground the manifestations and functions of Chilean street art in popular history and set an analytical precedent. In addition, the existing literature reinforces the

use of the theoretical frameworks employed given that most of them employ some form of critical race theory, intersectional theory, or decolonial theory.³ An evaluation of the extent of economic and political power held by Chilean media monopolies provides ample context for the ways in which alternative forms of journalism are articulated by the people and how such forms compare to narratives in the corporate media.

Primary research will first entail content analysis of media-framing by established news outlets concerning protests in the Estallido Social movement. The framing will be evaluated and compared to the content in street art. Content analysis is a well-documented methodology in the analysis of news media content. Literature on content analysis of news media asserts that news media emphasizes some aspects of an event while obscuring others. Content analysis of news media differs from traditional textual analysis in that it understands news outlets as socio-politically embedded institutions as opposed to neutral bodies that objectively report events. Content analysis generally aims to investigate positive/negative orientation, settings, and ideologies (Flick, 2014, p.380-391). The investigation of such aspects of news media content is used in this research. To choose the articles evaluated specifically about Estallido Social protests, I went to the respective websites *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera* and searched for articles from October of 2019 to December of 2020, given the timespan of the movement. More general articles to gauge narratives concerning street art were sought to be written within the past decade to ensure accuracy. To find articles concerning protest art and Estallido Social actions, I searched various broad terms regarding protests and the central locations of protests. These terms included “manifestantes”, “protesta”, “protestar”, “manifestar”, “manifestación”, “graffiti”, and “vandalismo”. After perusing the articles attached to such terms, those with the most content and most relevant times of publishing were chosen. The content emphasized and analyzed in the research will include positive/negative orientation, voices centered, and type of context provided.

³ Texts such as Trumper’s *Ephemeral Histories: Public Art, Politics, and the Struggle for the Streets in Chile* (2016) take on a critical race theory lens, emphasizing the importance of bottom-up approaches to storytelling, or counter-storytelling by the marginalized through street art. Fuchs’s article “Alternative Media as Critical Media” also emboldens a critical race theory lens given its emphasis on the need for news media forms controlled by the populace. Literature concerning the *Arpillerista* movement such as “Art in Social Movements: Shantytown Women’s Protest in Pinochet’s Chile” by Jaqueline Adams, *Tapestries of Hope* by Marjorie Agosín engage the intersectional approach by discussing the importance of critical attention to the identities of Chilean protests artists, namely, the experiences of poor, Indigenous women. Guisela Latorre’s book *Democracy on the Wall: Street Art of the Post-Dictatorship Era in Chile* (2019) invigorates the use of decolonial theory given its characterization of street art as a method of decolonizing urban space.

In addition, content analysis of modern Chilean street art will be carried out. A variety of images of urban Chilean street art by urban *graffiterxs*⁴ and other types of street artists will be selected and analyzed from the Estallido Social. Content analysis of the images will serve to analyze the sociopolitical and historical content of the artwork. Information concerning the identities of some of the street artists will be provided for further context on the ways in which the artist's identities influence their art. This is permissible given that street art in Chile is not heavily criminalized and personal context will not endanger the safety of artists. In addition, the artists featured are associated with various Chilean grassroots organizations that serve to commemorate the Estallido Social through protest art, namely Museo de Estallido Social⁵ and Chile Woke.⁶ To identify street artists, I explored the social media accounts of those followed by the organizations mentioned above given that this would allow me to locate artists with some popular following and desire to have their identity explicitly attached to their art via social media. The art evaluated had to meet the following criteria: located on an outdoor urban space in Chile and/or utilized during a protest and imagery alluding to Chilean popular movements (preferably the Estallido Social). Utilizing critical race theory, artistic content analysis will observe depictions of existing institutions, relationships to Chilean law, and depictions of marginalized racial groups. Through intersectional theory, the identity of the artist and the presentation identities expressed in works will be evaluated to tease out a more comprehensive picture of the message(s) of the piece. Within decolonial theory, I analyze content regarding Indigenous communities in Chile. In addition, I evaluate the positioning of the artwork and any relevant colonial history. Ultimately, the synthesis of the three theories and their contributions to the emancipatory journalism framework will contribute to a more holistic content analysis of the art that emphasizes their journalistic functions.

V. Historical Context: Chilean History

To adequately understand the importance and directives of Chilean street art, it is critical to understand it within the context of Chilean history. The following section will provide a brief review of the historical conditions that underlie Chilean street art and the institutions it challenges.

A. Colonial Era

⁴ The term “graffiterx” will be used as a gender neutral description of graffiti artists.

⁵ Museo de Estallido Social <https://museodelestallidosocial.org/>; IG: <https://www.instagram.com/museodelestallidosocial/?hl=en>

⁶ Chile Woke <https://www.chilewoke.org/>, IG: https://www.instagram.com/chile_woke/?hl=en

Prior to 1540, the present-day Chilean territory was home to many diverse Indigenous cultures. Spanish settlers first arrived in Chile with the desire to exploit the region and its inhabitants for labor and natural resources. Throughout almost three hundred years under Spanish colonial rule, Spaniards repeatedly attempted to violently subjugate the Indigenous populations through encomiendas, exposure to European diseases, famine, and outright military conflict. Resistance was persistent through the whole of the colonial period, principally by the Mapuche people, who resisted colonization in the Southern end through the eighteenth century. In fact, the Spanish crown recognized the Mapuche as a sovereign people through the 1641 Treaty of Quillín (Marhiquewun, 2021).

B. Independence

The Chilean War of Independence began in 1810 as part of the entire Latin American Independence Movement. Despite the militancy and contributions by lower class Chileans in the struggle, the war was dominated by the motives of the royalist Criollos⁷ and the pro-independence Criollos. The territory officially declared itself independent from the Spanish Empire in 1818 after which Chile experienced a succession of authoritarian leaders who maintained the colonial hierarchies, serving elite interests with classical liberal reforms focused on expanding free trade and industrialization (Charlip & Burns, 2017).

The post-independence period was largely characterized by institution building focused on forming Chile into a liberal state (Carmagnani et al., 2021). Though activism from the Chilean margins remained strong, civil society remained largely excluded from the government while most political power was held by the politician Diego Portales⁸ (Gupta & McKenna, 2021). Furthermore, the independent Chilean state did not recognize the sovereignty of the Mapuche people. The Chilean military began a violent military campaign characterized by a scorched earth approach. Through the spread of disease, violent massacres, and pillages the Mapuche people were eventually forced into *reducciones*.⁹ Mapuche people were largely forced to acquiesce to the Chilean economic model and seek work in urban areas (Cosgrove, 2010).

The actions of most Chilean leaders in the post-independence era generally failed to materially benefit civil society. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Chile saw increasing urbanization through the development of the state bureaucracy and infrastructure for commerce. The achievements of political organizing amongst the lower classes grew during this period as

⁷ The term “criollos” or “creoles” refers to Latin American born individuals with purely Spanish ancestry.

⁸ Portales is largely known for his role in initiating a war with the Peru-Bolivia alliance which was ultimately won by Chile, effectively aiding in the nation’s economic prosperity (Gupta & McKenna, 2021).

⁹ This is a term for reservations.

workers successfully organized various political actions for better wages and living conditions (Carmagnani et al., 2021).

C. 20th Century

International economic devastation following the First World War had marked effects on Chile. A disenfranchised working class elected Arturo Alessandri Palma who, after much conflict in the legislature, established a new constitution that established a presidential republic, institutionalized the separation between church and state, and codified labor legislation. Despite liberal reforms, Chile's lower classes continued to face hardships. In part due to the wide-ranging organizing efforts of the Chilean left, the next three elections saw the rise of the Radical Party (Carmagnani et al., 2021). Failure to reduce social inequality led to the election of conservatives in the following years. Industrial development constituted the main objectives of conservative leaders. Chile's economy strengthened, yet wages remained stagnant (O'Toole, 2018).

A period of major reform was catalyzed in 1964 with the election of Christian Democrat Eduardo Frei. By the 1960s, Chile exceeded its neighbors in the process of development as defined by Western standards. The country had a substantial middle class, high literacy rates, and a large urban population. Organizing efforts led to material gains such as social programs in housing, agrarian reform, and education. Despite these relative gains, extreme income inequality persisted. Elite Chileans felt that the progressive reforms undertaken during Frei's presidency were too radical while common Chileans felt that the reforms had not gone far enough, since they failed to fully address the desires of feminist, working class, and Indigenous civil society groups (Charlip & Burns, 2017).

In 1970, the presidency was won by Salvador Allende, a career politician with socialist tendencies. Allende's radical call to institute socialism through the abolition of dependence on foreign capital was detrimental to the aims of the conservative Chilean elites and the United States. CIA funds were extensively used to stifle the Chilean economy, shape public opinion, and increase dissatisfaction with Allende. On September 11th, 1973, the presidential palace was bombed as a part of a military coup which placed the head of the army, Augusto Pinochet, in power (Trumper, 2016).

D. The Pinochet Era

The Pinochet dictatorship marks an incredibly violent period of Chilean history. Some 4,500 Chilean citizens were killed while 150,000 to 200,000 were detained and tortured. The press, apart from *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera*, were severely repressed. Street art and all other public forms of political artistic repression were quickly destroyed by members of the military

junta or by Chilean citizens threatened with state violence. The Mapocho River, once an ever-changing canvas for Chilean muralists and *graffiterxs* was swiftly expunged of all artistic content. The river became a sort of mass grave in which the bodies of the disappeared were carelessly dumped by the junta (Trumper, 2016). Under the first few years of the Pinochet regime, a substantial inflow of foreign credit paved the way for massive economic growth, most of which benefitted Chilean elites. By the mid-1980s, servicing the foreign debt consumed Chile's exports leading to mass bankruptcies and unemployment. By 1989, 58% of the Chilean population was impoverished, signaling the failure of the military dictatorship (Charlip & Burns, 2017). Activism within Chile's civil society was heavily involved in fighting for an electoral transition to democracy, largely due to the contributions of the women's movement (Cosgrove, 2010). After Chileans voted against extending Pinochet's rule for another eight years in 1988, the country began its tumultuous transition to democracy.

E. The Post Dictatorship Era

Firstly, Patricio Aylwin from the Christian Democrat Party¹⁰ served as president. He attempted to organize infrastructure to establish accountability concerning the disappearances, killings, and uses of torture against the Chilean people during the Pinochet Dictatorship. Unfortunately, consequences for participation in the crimes committed against the Chilean people were weak given Augusto Pinochet's ability to continue to hold political power and financially benefit from the prestige he held during the democratic transition (Spooner, 2011). The party embarked on little radical change and largely continued the neoliberal economic policies of the Pinochet era.

Aylwin was succeeded by Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle. Frei worked to expand democratic institutions and the electoral rights of the people. Frei's prime focus championed economic growth as a mechanism to deliver the Chilean people from the myriad societal ills wrought by the dictatorship era. Despite Frei's expansion of electoral rights, the Chilean populace was largely distrustful of the effectiveness of electoral politics amidst the neoliberal policies which preserved and expanded the power of multinational corporations and the Chilean elite. Popular movements continued under Frei. Indigenous movements to assert autonomy and protect sacred land were largely met with further suppression (Spooner, 2011).

Frei was succeeded by Michelle Bachelet, the country's first female president. Bachelet's socialist politics also constituted an interesting development in Chilean politics, marking her as a representative of the Pink Tide that swept Latin America through the 2000s

¹⁰ The Christian Democrat Party in Chile is a center-right, reformist party that attempts a synthesis between laissez-faire capitalism and Catholic ethics.

decade.¹¹ Despite more left-oriented politics, Bachelet continued neoliberal expansion throughout her terms. Bachelet's presidency was characterized by an interesting fusion of leftist social program expansion and liberal economic policy (Spooner, 2011). Civil disillusionment with the Concertación¹² government was worsened by an economic downturn and a slew of corruption scandals, culminating in the election of Sebastian Piñera (Cortés Abad, 2015).

While Piñera's administration did not outright gut social programs expanded under Bachelet, the administration generally engaged in retrenchment via policy drift and crept towards privatization through increased public transfers to the private sector (Niedzwiecki & Pribble, 2017). Piñera's right-wing orientation is highly contested within Chilean civil society. Civil unrest continued widely throughout Piñera's presidency, especially given his aims to further criminalize Mapuche activists (Wadi, 2019). Piñera has opted to continue the neoliberal policies of the past, championing the interests of multinational corporations and the Chilean elite. Popular dissent throughout Piñera's presidency has been strongly present. Such popular mobilization has culminated in what is now termed the Estallido Social, or Social Outburst.

VI. El Estallido Social

Chileans have taken part in a diverse range of political action since the commencement of the democratic transition to voice their dissent regarding the management of the country and the continuation of Pinochet's neoliberal policies. The most recent mass movement, termed as the Estallido Social, carries forward a long and radical history of civil action. The Estallido Social began in earnest on October 14th, 2019 when high school students engaged in massive acts of fare evasion to protest a 30 peso hike in the cost of tickets. A wide variety of Chileans took to the streets regardless of age, gender, religion, sexuality, profession, or race. The protests escalated by the 18th, culminating in the eruption of protests across Chilean cities and acts of vandalism against various metro stations and trains. The Piñera government responded with violent suppression through the use of tear gas and pellet guns by police, and later with the mobilization of the Chilean Armed Forces. Many protestors were seriously injured, while 36 were killed (McSherry, 2020). Protests continue to this day in demand of material changes to bring about economic and social equality, adequate educational, medical, and social services, respect for human rights, environmental justice, and reparations to the Indigenous community (Casals, 2020). The outbreak of protests was in response to much more than a hike in fare; the

¹¹ The Pink Tide is a term used by Latin American scholars to signify the region's shift towards leftist and "post-neoliberal" politics throughout the 1990s and 2000s.

¹² This term refers broadly to a coalition of center-left parties in Chile. It encompassed the Christian Democracy, the Socialist Party, the Radical Party, the Humanist Party, the Ecologist Party, the Social Democrats, and various smaller left-leaning parties.

protestors responded to extensive income inequality and a lack of material improvements for civil society, products of rampant neoliberalism furthered by the Piñera presidency. Throughout this movement, Chileans have engaged in wide-ranging forms of street art as an integral facet of their protest.

VII. Media Ownership Consolidation in Chile and its Implications

The ways in which traditional media outlets frame stories and disseminate information has broad implications for the ways in which citizens form their political orientations and consequently how they vote and take part in other methods of political action. A press owned by a small number of elite firms has devastating implications for the populace, as they are unable to encompass a variety of perspectives and compose informed opinions about their political situation. Mass media frames the acceptable parameters for debate amongst the populace and legitimates possibilities for political action. Under capitalism, the presentation of opinions that challenge elite control are often suppressed in the media to secure the interests of those that own the media (Exoo, 1994). Chile is no exception to global trends in media ownership consolidation. The Chilean media landscape exemplifies the bourgeois public sphere due to the present duopoly. This poses challenges to Chilean protestors as their political action directly challenges the powers that be. Accordingly, media framing in well-established print media is not likely to present protestors as in a manner they might construe as valid.

The Chilean print media¹³ is consolidated in ownership. It consists of an ownership duopoly, dominated by *El Mercurio*, also known as Grupo Edwards, and Consorcio Periodístico de Chile, also known as COPESA (Godoy E, 2016). Both firms own a wide range of regional and national newspapers. The two aforementioned firms were historically owned by politically and economically well-established families who have a long history of purporting a stringently conservative and anti-communist ideology. Presently, *El Mercurio* remains owned by the Edwards family. *La Tercera* was previously owned by the Pico-Cañas family. It was converted to COPESA in the early 2000s when it was purchased by prominent businessman Alvaro Saieh (Godoy E, 2016). Figure 1 shows the firms that own the most prominent Chilean newspapers.

Owner	City/Region of Distribution	Titles
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¹³ The term “print media” is used interchangeably with newspaper. It should be noted that newspapers are now widely presented in a digital format.

Grupo Edwards/El Mercurio (Chile)	Santiago	<i>El Mercurio de Santiago*</i> <i>Las últimas Noticias*</i> <i>La Segunda*</i> <i>El líder de Melipilla</i>
	Valparaíso and San Antonio	<i>El Mercurio de Valparaíso</i> <i>La Estrella de Valparaíso</i> <i>El líder de San Antonio</i>
	Northern Chile	<i>La Estrella de Arica</i> <i>La Estrella de Iquique</i> <i>La Prensa de Tocopilla</i> <i>El Mercurio de Calama</i> <i>La Estrella del Loa</i> <i>La Estrella del Norte</i> <i>El Mercurio de Antofagasta</i>
	Southern Chile (excluding Concepción)	<i>El Austral de Temuco</i> <i>Diario Austral (Valdivia)</i> <i>El Austral de Osorno</i> <i>La Estrella de Chiloé</i> <i>El Llanquihue</i>
	Concepción	<i>El Sur (Concepción)</i> <i>La Estrella (Concepción)</i> <i>Crónica Chillán</i>
Alvaro Saieh / COPESA (Chile)	Santiago	<i>La Tercera*</i> <i>La Hora</i> <i>La Cuarta*</i> <i>Pulso</i>
	Concepción	<i>El Diario de Concepción</i>

Figure 1. Main Newspaper owners in Chile. Sergio Godoy E, "Media Ownership and Concentration in Chile," *Who Owns the World's Media?*, 2016, pp. 641-673, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199987238.003.0021>, 6-7. Note: asterix (*) connotes national reach.

Figure 1 clearly shows the wide reach of COPESA and Grupo Edwards. Both of the companies own a wide variety of local and national papers across the nation. While it is true that their papers with national influence demonstrate the wide reach of COPESA and Grupo Edwards, the local papers have the effect of assuming a guise of plurality in the media, since they are not as explicitly attached to the names of Grupo Edwards and COPESA. In accordance, such wide influence connotes greater revenue. Figure 2 presents the share of

advertising revenues per newspaper group from 2007 to 2008 and shows other Chilean media firms for comparison.

Media Holding	2007 Nominal \$m	%	2008 Nominal \$m	%
El Mercurio SAP Newspapers (Edwards Family, Chile)	381.6	56.6	357	54.9
COPESA Newspapers (A. Saieh, Chile)	166.5	24.7	165.9	25.5
Others:				
Publimetro (free paper, Sweden)	45.7	6.8	51.3	7.9
Estrategia (business paper, Ed. Gestion, Chile)	41.2	6.1	37.1	5.7
Diario Financiero (business paper, Claro group, Chile)	35.3	5.2	34.7	5.3
Total	674.5	100	650.4	100
C4		99.4		99.3
HHI		3921		3786
Noam Index		1960		1693

Figure 2. Estimated Share of Advertising Revenues per Newspaper Group, 2007–2008. Sergio Godoy E, “Media Ownership and Concentration in Chile,” *Who Owns the World’s Media?*, 2016, pp. 641-673, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199987238.003.0021>, 11-12.

Figure 2 clearly shows that El Mercurio and COPESA take in the vast majority of advertising revenue. Combined, the two accounted for 81.3% of all advertising revenues in 2007 and 80.4% in 2008. *Publimetro* remains a corporate Swedish-owned paper and consequently does not constitute alternative media or emancipatory journalism. *Estrategía* and *Diario Financiero* mainly report on purely business matters and accordingly do not heavily report on political and social issues in the region. Furthermore, indexes such as the C4, HHI, and Noam Index illustrate a highly consolidated media landscape in Chile (Godoy E, 2016).

In addition to interest in increasing advertising revenues for their respective publications, *El Mercurio* and COPESA have vested interests in maintaining neoliberal policies in Chile. The Edwards Group is quite well-established in the Chilean private sector. The Edwards family immigrated to Chile in the early 19th century and began to establish themselves in Chile politically and economically. The first generations of the Edwards family in Chile started to accumulate their fortune within the mining industry. They were vehemently anti-Spanish and invested greatly towards the Chilean independence struggle as a means of garnering greater economic and political power. Through the 1800s, members of the Edwards family occupied prominent political positions and continued to accumulate wealth via resource extraction. The family acquired *El Mercurio* in the 1880s. Through the 1900s, the family continued to establish themselves politically and financially, partially through ownership of one of the oldest banks in Chile and prominence in the copper industry. In the late 1950s, the family became the third most wealthy in Chile, controlling 61 companies, representing 60.8% of the country's total capital stock. They influenced a wide range of industries, owning a considerable amount of Cristalerías de Chile, Fermoquímica del Pacífico, Forestal S. A., and Manufacturas Sumar among others. Prior to the 1973 military coup, the Edwards family owned 3 out of the 6 newspapers¹⁴ in Santiago in addition to multiple publications in Chile's other major cities. The group also held shares in Emelco Chile SA, a company which carried out film propaganda via Emelco Noticiero. By the start of Salvador Allende's Popular Unity era the Edwards family explicitly controlled 58 companies with a net worth of \$1.255 billion.¹⁵ The Popular Unity government liquidated the Banco Edwards and nationalized many companies that had close ties to the Edwards family (Délano, Luengo, & Salvo, 2020). Agustin Edwards, the owner of *El Mercurio* at the time, was a staunch supporter of the military coup and collaborated with the CIA and the Nixon administration. *El Mercurio* even received substantial financial and technical support to sustain its operations given its value to the interests of the United States (Qureshi, 201). During the Popular Unity era, *El Mercurio* launched an aggressive anti-Allende campaign to increase public sympathies for the oncoming coup. They created the image of an unstable Chile, highlighting stories about crime and supply shortages, often juxtaposed with images of Allende (Castillo, 2006). Through the Pinochet regime, the group reasserted its economic power in Chile by shifting its investments heavily to the financial sector in an attempt to recover from Allende's policies and the financial crisis that devastated Latin America. To maintain their economic power via political and ideological influence, the group continued to invest heavily in their influence in

¹⁴ Out of the 6 newspapers in Santiago, 5 were owned by explicitly economic entities.

¹⁵ This is measured in terms of 1978 value. This is equivalent to approximately \$7.63 billion today.

the media, including a \$20 million dollar investment in the technological modernization of *El Mercurio* (Délano, Luengo, & Salvo, 2020). Today, the newspaper remains prominent in the Chilean media landscape with *La Tercera* as its only significant competitor.

La Tercera is slightly younger than *El Mercurio*, having been founded in the 1950s by the Picó-Cañas family. It was first founded for a popular audience and tied to the Radical Party. For the following two decades, the paper shifted to the right and became a staunch supporter of the 1973 military coup. During the Pinochet dictatorship, the military carried out the censorship of many dissenting publications through the disappearance of many prominent journalists and publications in addition to restrictive laws such as Ley de Seguridad Interior del Estado and Decree 320 (Castillo, 2006). Censorship laws extinguished basically all prominent publications with the exceptions of *La Tercera* and *El Mercurio* (Couso S, 2011). *La Tercera* was certainly a crucial ideological tool to the military government. They upheld the logic of the authoritarian regime and frequently praised the neoliberal political and economic order (Castillo, 2006). COPESA fell on hard times during the financial crisis of the 1980s and was promptly bailed out by the military government (Navia & Osorio, 2015). Presently, COPESA is most significantly involved in a wide variety of media holdings in Chile, however, the company also has subsidiaries or affiliates in a wide range of financial, retail, and real estate entities in Chile (*Copesa S.A - Declaración de Intereses*, n.d.). Presently, the publication is owned by Alvaro Saieh, a prominent economist and supporter of neoliberal economics. Saieh attended the University of Chicago in 1976, marking him as a one of the Chicago Boys, a group of Chilean economists who studied Milton Friedman's neoliberal economic theories and are largely responsible for Chile's current economic structure (Osorio & Navia, 2006). Alvaro Saieh remains an extremely wealthy businessman with strong interests in maintaining the current economic order. He boasts a net worth of \$1.6 billion with significant shares in the Chilean financial firm CorpBanca (*Alvaro Saieh Bendeck*, 2021).

Clearly, the two most prominent print news firms in Chile have strong motivations for shaping Chilean ideology in support of right-wing agendas given their history of political and financial involvement, elite ownership, and vast ties to a wide variety of corporate entities throughout Chile. It is also crucial to note that despite the growth of publications since the end of the Pinochet dictatorship, ownership remains mainly consolidated between Grupo Edwards and COPESA, merely assuming the guise of plurality.¹⁶ This structure composes a bourgeois public sphere and indicates a clear need for a Chilean counter-public sphere. Certainly, such a tightly

¹⁶ See Figure 1.

controlled right-wing news media landscape merits the necessity for the practice of emancipatory journalism in a Chilean context.

VIII. Content Analysis: Right Wing Bias in *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera*

A. El Mercurio

In order for the proprietors of the corporate media to maintain their financial and political power it is crucial for them to frame coverage of protests in a negative light. The following article was published in *El Mercurio* on the 20th of October, 2019, two days after the destruction of the metro. The article “Estupor y rabia en las 36 horas más violentas de Santiago desde al regreso a la democracia”¹⁷ by Ivan Martinez, Nelson Espinoza, and Dierk Gotschlich illustrates the destruction that occurred during the beginning of the Estallido Social.¹⁸

The first article most notably highlights the destruction of property, instances of looting, and cherry-picked quotes from neighbors interviewed. All information regarding the motivations of protestors, aside from the 30-peso hike in fare, are presented vaguely or completely omitted. One interviewee, Alejandro Cid Herrera, was briefly quoted as discussing the income inequality experienced by Chileans. The hike in fare accompanies stagnant wages and increasing taxes for ordinary Chileans. Cid’s quote is followed by a signification that he was involved in the protest and possibly harmed in one of the fires. The article explicitly highlights the destruction of the metro, profits lost from the destruction of the metro, and the inability for ambulances to pass during the protests. Interestingly, the other quotes in the article highlight frustration by a local resident who assumes the protestors “want everything for free,” completely ignoring the diverse and well-informed motivations behind the protests. Another interviewee stated that destruction of metro stations was an ultimately self-destructive act, completely ignoring the logic of political violence.¹⁹ The protestors are excessively illustrated as acting out of rage, debasing their actions as motivated by pure illogical emotion.²⁰ In addition, the article fixates on arrests, injuries suffered by carabineros, and the destruction of police vehicles (Martinic, Espinoza, Gotschlich, 2019). The concept of violence is weaponized to paint the police and property as the victims of

¹⁷ Translates to “Stupor and rage in Santiago's most violent 36 hours since the return to democracy”

¹⁸ Figures can be found in Appendix A; [See figure A1](#).

¹⁹ Political violence is an umbrella term for forms of destruction that are used as instruments to bring about social change (Mars, 1975). The types of political violence discussed in the article are rioting and property destruction. Political vandalism often serves to alert the public of political tension and financially damage the owners of the targets.

²⁰ It is important to note that emotional motivations for action have a long history of being devalued, feminized, and delegitimized in a Western context.

the uprising, as the article completely neglects to mention the protestors killed by the police and military and the hundreds of protestors suffering permanent damage as a result of the use of non-lethal munitions such as rubber bullets and teargas canisters (McSherry, 2020). This article exemplifies the framing often used by *El Mercurio* to delegitimize protests and their actions, signifying the way the corporate media works to protect the interests of their elite owners.

The next article analyzed also hails from *El Mercurio*. It highlights a conservative bias against the practice of street art. The article is entitled “Ellos limpian las murallas rayadas”²¹ by Patricio Baeza.²² The article explicitly lionizes Claudia Jara and Alejandro Alvarez for preserving the cleanliness and purity of the Chilean streets. They are described as “cazadores,” which translates to hunters, effectively painting them as noble and aggressive vigilantes against clandestine action. The pair expresses having experienced verbal abuse throughout Santiago for erasing “rayados,” which translates to scratches (Baeza, 2020). This effectively infantilizes street art, thereby upholding conceptions of what constitutes art according to the powers that be. The article signifies their services as contributing to a cleaner and safer Santiago. This reinforces the idea of street art as an inherently criminal and destructive act. Jara and Alvarez boast cleaning explicitly political art on their website “alertagraffiti.com,” where a large repertoire of their activities can be found in addition to information regarding requesting their services. They were even directly involved in removing street art pertaining to the primary causes of the Estallido Social.²³

Clearly, *El Mercurio* aims to reject the validity of the objectives and perspectives of protestors and the political functions of street art. This is achieved through the framing of articles, the information they choose to include, and the civilian opinions they prefer to highlight. Certainly, more plurality in the media and alternative approaches to journalism are necessitated by such a media superstructure.

B. La Tercera

The next article analyzed is from *La Tercera*. It discusses the painting of a statue of General Baquedano in a large plaza in Santiago in the days prior to the one-year anniversary of the 18th of October 2019. The article is entitled “Manifestantes pintan de rojo estatua del

²¹ Translates to “They clean scratched walls”

²² [See Figure A2.](#)

²³ [See Figure A3](#) for an image of the pair cleaning graffiti from a Metro station.

general Baquedano en Plaza Italia: alcalde Alessandri dice que ‘es un pésimo augurio’ para el domingo”²⁴ by Juan Pablo Andrews.²⁵

The article opens by describing protestors in black bloc blocking traffic around the plaza and effectively painting the statue. The article centers on the discontentment of Santiago’s conservative mayor, Felipe Alessandri. Alessandri purports the “good protestor, bad protestor” narrative, calling those that engage in acts of political vandalism “violent people.” He weaponizes the identities of low-income residents of Chile and insinuates the idea the protestors are outside agitators, saying that the protestors are completely disregarding the interests of locals and forcing them to clean up the damage done to the statue (Andrews, 2020). Once again, this article completely disregards the motivations of protestors, solely focusing on painting their actions as destructive to the community.

The next article analyzed is an editorial in *La Tercera* concerning the vandalism experienced in Plaza Baquedano. The article is entitled “Plaza de Dignidad?”²⁶ by Ivan Poduje.²⁷ The editorial, written prior to the one mentioned above, expresses further displeasure at the protests that have occurred in Plaza Baquedano and the call to rename the square to Plaza de Dignidad. The author explicitly compares the plaza to an urban guerilla camp, citing destroyed bus stops, burned buildings, and boarded up cafes. He expresses sympathies with commuters since their commute was affected by the closing of two metro stations. He goes on to portray the protestors as violent, sexist, and abusive, citing verbal abuse against female carabineros. He furthers the “good protestor, bad protestor” narrative and disconnects the current occupiers from the millions that gathered a month earlier, purporting the idea that change will happen from reforms, not the use of force (Poduje, 2019). This *La Tercera* article once again dispels any possible political logic associated with the actions of protestors, painting their actions as violent and destructive, while once again neglecting to mention police violence against protestors.

The final article, “Graffitis elevarían disposición a violar las leyes”,²⁸ provides more context on *La Tercera*’s depiction of graffiti.²⁹ The article cites a study from the University of Groningen in the Netherlands that draws a strong causal relationship between the presence of

²⁴ Translates to “Protesters paint the statue of General Baquedano red in Plaza Italia: Mayor Alessandri says ‘it’s a terrible omen’ for Sunday”

²⁵ [See Figure A4.](#)

²⁶ Translates to “Dignity Plaza?”

²⁷ [See Figure A5.](#)

²⁸ Translates to “Graffiti would elevate the disposition to violate laws”

²⁹ [See Figure A6.](#)

graffiti and crime. The article synthesizes the study in which researchers conducted a series of experiments examining whether people would engage in deviant behavior based on whether there was graffiti in the area. The article cites graffiti as increasing instances of petty theft, disregard for bicycle regulations, and littering (DPA, 2008). This article explicitly associates graffiti with criminality and uncleanness, further delegitimizing its political utility. In addition, the study itself draws a strong causal relationship, negating the well known fact that correlation does not equal causality. Another article from *La Tercera* discusses the potential beauty of street art, however, the article focuses on an elite art critic who gives a biased account based on his social location of what can be construed as art. He focuses on a purely aesthetic criteria (Corona, 2019). The article was published ten years after the previous one, possibly signifying greater acceptance of urban art by elites.

Given the previous analysis, it seems clear to state that the two most wide-reaching print media firms in Chile have little interest in representing the maxims of Chilean protestors. As such, novel means for disseminating information to the public about protests is certainly necessary.

IX. The Criminalization of Chilean Street Art

During the Pinochet era, *graffiterxs* had to regularly evade law enforcement to complete their works. However, currently in Chile, graffiti does not face the same strict criminalization as it does in countries such as the United States. Through the 1990s, the urban streets of Chile were something of a safe haven for street artists wishing to practice without the threat of law enforcement. It remains illegal to paint public property, but anti-graffiti laws are ambiguous and rarely enforced, though painting government buildings is more likely to invite aggression from law enforcement (Latorre, 2019). However, recent government actions have sought to increase barriers for the practice of street art. In 2014, legislators in the city of Curico began to paint public buildings with anti-graffiti paint and increase police patrols in areas frequented by *graffiterxs*. In 2015, the city of Valparaiso passed an ordinance allowing law enforcement to fine *graffiterxs* up to 220,335 pesos for painting walls. A stipulation in the law provides caveats for street art that is formally commissioned or has “artistic merit”, a highly subjective criteria, especially when artistic merit is decided by police officers and people in positions of authority. Santiago began a large campaign in 2014 and 2015 to discourage graffiti, reasserting the idea that graffiti is destructive and unclean (Latorre, 2019). Most recently, Santiago legislators passed a law deemed “Ley Sticker” that sanctions vandalism to public transportation and its associated infrastructure. The law seeks to punish offenders with a minor prison sentence and a fine. Opponents of the law see it as an attack against the practices of *graffiterxs*, especially

given its association to public transport and its relationship to the primary causes of the Estallido Social. They also question lawmakers' priorities, given overall mismanagement of the COVID-19 pandemic (Parra, 2020). Certainly, continued attempts to criminalize graffiti by the government may signify its usefulness in a politically communicative manner, especially after the mass acts of graffiti carried out during the Estallido Social.

X. Content Analysis: Chilean Street Art

In order to evaluate the communicative merits of Chilean street art and its function as emancipatory journalism, it is crucial to evaluate the political content of street art. This section is dedicated to highlighting prominent Chilean *graffiterxs* and their work, followed by analysis of the content of each work.

A. Rosita Beas

Rosita Beas is a Chilean visual artist and teacher inspired by popular culture and kitsch. Though she engages with a variety of mediums, she is also a self-proclaimed *artista de paint-up*. Her designs are printed and pasted around the streets of Santiago. Beas's designs fuse national characters, religious imagery, and protest icons to portray a complex visage that alludes to Chile's rich and controversial history (Beas, 2020). The following analysis considers a piece by Beas entitled "Sigan Luchando".³⁰

The piece depicts a variety of figures from Chilean popular history in the scene of Leonardo DaVinci's 15th century mural, "The Last Supper". Replacing Jesus and the Twelve Apostles are notable figures such as former president Salvador Allende, poet-diplomat Gabriela Mistral, folklorist and musician Violeta Parra, educator and martyred communist artist Victor Jarra, renowned protest dog Negro Matapacos, activist and former communist party leader Gladys Marín, vocal left-wing actor Felipe Camiroaga, and LGBTQ activist and essayist Pedro Lemebel. The first figure on the left is a depiction of the divine antichrist. These figures are from a wide cross-section of Chilean history, encompassing vast methods of struggle and activism against Chilean authorities.

Depicting such characters in a well-renowned religious painting illuminates their sanctity in the Chilean political consciousness. The head of each figure is adorned with an aureola, a golden disk of light used to depict holy figures in early religious art. The green bandana worn by many figures is a symbol of "la marea verde", a Latin American movement for gender equality, specifically pertaining to abortion rights and the prominence of gender based violence, or femicide, in the region (Montañez, 2019). The juxtaposition of religious imagery, the antichrist,

³⁰ [See Figure B1.](#)

recent political symbols, and famous Chilean figures, many of whom were vocal against the institution of the Catholic church, calls for reverence for Chile's long and tenacious history of popular struggle and faith in the continuance of the struggle.

The image is captioned “sigan luchando”, translating to call to keep fighting. The piece is installed in Plaza de la Dignidad, also known as Plaza Baquedano,³¹ which has been a focal point of protests over the past two years. The redecoration of colonial-era monuments has been a popular practice for Chilean protests. In particular, General Baquedano serves as an important image of Chilean patriotism and military might for conservative sectors of the population. Piñera himself has expressed positive sentiments for the statue's role in commemorating the military actions of General Baquedano (“Estatua del General Baquedano Es Trasladaada Luego de Dos Horas y Media de Trabajos”, 2021). Chileans have condemned the statue and justified its redecoration based on General Baquedano's position as a leader in the Mellaco and Renaico conquests against the Indigenous Mapuche people (Tincello, 2020).³² The piece's position in such a public area with a complex history serves as an important conversation starter for Santiago residents.

As of March 12, 2021, the decision was made to remove the statue from its position in the Plaza due to numerous direct actions during protests, and recent instances of redecoration in early March (“Estatua del General Baquedano Es Trasladaada Luego de Dos Horas y Media de Trabajos”, 2021). The removal of a monument that commemorates a violent colonist is a direct example of the decolonial power of street art as articulated by Guisella Latorre (Latorre, 2016). Not only does the creation of graffiti have the power to impose varied political images on the walls of Santiago, direct, creative action has resulted in the removal of a colonial-era statue. The most recent direct actions involving redecoration of the statue included repainting the statue in rainbow colors, signifying solidarity with the LGBTQ+ community, placing a skull on the face of General Baquedano, and hanging a Mapuche flag. This act firstly asserted an image of the kind of place protestors wish Chile to be, a place that condemns colonialism and respects traditionally marginalized identities. Secondly, such direct action resulted in the altogether removal of the statue, effectively aiding in the decolonization of such a prominent urban space.

As an expression of emancipatory journalism, Rosita Beas's “Sigan Luchando” fully fits the criteria. As an homage to past movements with the incorporation of more modern political

³¹ The plaza is a well-renowned landmark in Santiago. It was a hub for protests at the start of the Estallido Social, partially due to its proximity to many metro stations. Protestors amiably refer to it as Plaza de la Dignidad.

³² See [Figures B2](#) and [B3](#) for the statue's vandalism and removal.

maxims, specifically pertaining to women's rights, the piece shows concern for the sociopolitical aspects of national development. The piece shows a bottom-up flow method of communication given its creation by an urban female artist and its physical position on the streets of Santiago. This method amplifies a feminine voice and brings it directly to the people. This is critical given the often undervalued knowledge that a feminine perspective can provide. Lastly, it is most certainly an unconventional approach to reporting. It amplifies the present feminist aspect of the current movement, with wide-ranging historical backing. This profound inclusion of history in journalism is not often seen or emphasized in *La Tercera* or *El Mercurio's* reportage. The reverence demonstrated in this piece is profound, especially against the backdrop of so many disappeared during the Pinochet regime.

B. *MemorArte*

The next piece presented was created by various *arpilleristas* from the collective *MemorArte*. Through the continuation of the *arpillertista* practice, they preserve an important cultural tradition regarding artistic forms of resistance by Chilean women. The piece entitled “Bordando presencia”³³ was created by *arpilleristas* of *Memorarte* in 2017 as a symbol of their organization and utilized in a variety of protests since then and displayed on the streets of Santiago (*Memorarte*, 2017).³⁴

The image conveys an eye and various images being actively unzipped. This alludes to the revelation of a Chilean political consciousness and historical memory. It resonates widely with the original purpose of *arpilleras* in Pinochet's Chile, namely the purpose of bearing witness under an administration that prefers to negate its national and popular history. Although this piece was created in 2017, the symbol of the eye gains further depth when considering the prominence of the imagery of the eye in the *Estallido Social*. Hundreds of civilians suffered severe eye trauma from the use of non-lethal munitions by Chilean carabineros. Consequently, bleeding eyes have become a popular symbol for the movement.

The popular folklorist Violetta Parra is seen singing and playing the guitar next to the opening eye. Parra remains prominent in the Chilean consciousness given her ethnographic work in Chile. She was part of the “nueva canción” movement, a movement of Chilean composers who aimed to base their highly political songwriting with diverse national traditions to construct music with nationalist and politically informed tendencies (Trumper, 2016). Her

³³ Translates to “embroidering presence”.

³⁴ [Figure B4](#) shows an image of “Bordando Presencia”. [Figure B5](#) shows members of *Memorarte* collectively sewing the piece. [Figure B6](#) shows the piece being displayed in front of La Moneda, the Chilean presidential palace where some of the most violent aspects of the 1973 coup and Pinochet dictatorship were carried out.

depiction in the piece speaks to the importance of developing a nuanced national character, one that does not racialize or other, but sees all sectors of society as threads of a rich national character. Parra's work exemplifies the work of *arpilleristas* as it threads together the stories of people across Chile.

The demands of a variety of social groups are presented throughout the piece as well. One of the most prominent demands presented are those from students and professors. The piece shows protestors fighting against the closure of the ARCIS, the University of Arts and Social Sciences in Chile (*Cooperativa*, 2014). Chileans protesting against the Administradoras de fondos de pensiones de Chile, the Chilean pension program, are also featured. Chileans have long contested the structuring of the Chilean pension system which highly privileges business interests and has continually neglected the needs of the people (Bril-Mascarenhas & Maillet, 2018). Another community featured in the piece is the Catholic church. It has occupied a prominent and decisive role throughout Chilean history. While conservative sectors of society have championed the Catholic church in its efforts to protect conservative interests- primarily anti-abortion policy- liberation theology represents a split from repressive establishment Catholic teachings, effectively orienting Christianity with social justice. This spurred the growth of social Catholicism. The development of liberation theology in Chile has even had the effect of developing an insurgent consciousness, sparking a religious motivation for popular mobilization (Mackin, 2012). In the *arpillera*, one can observe a priest and churchgoers holding up a sign that says "paz", translating to a call for peace. This *arpillera* certainly explores the political demands of a wide variety of societal groups.

One of the most prominent images in the *arpillera* is a depiction of the 1973 US-backed military coup of Salvador Allende's Popular Unity government. This image calls for remembrance of the military coup and the violence that ensued during the Pinochet dictatorship. The names of important figures in Allende's administration are featured such as army officer Carlos Prat and economist Orland Letelier. This image is an important reminder of the violence taken by US backed elite Chilean institutions when leftist policy is enacted in a generally accepted manner, namely, electoral politics. The depiction is certainly a testament to continued reverence for Salvador Allende within the minds and hearts of many Chilean people.

Images from the Pinochet dictatorship are also featured, primarily through the figures with covered eyes. This references Chile's "desaparecidos", the vast amounts of people killed for supposed opposition to the Pinochet dictatorship. The images of desaparecidos were often portrayed in Pinochet-era *arpilleras*. Often, they were depictions of the loved ones taken from the *arpilleristas* by the military junta. Throughout Pinochet's regime, around 4,500 Chileans

disappeared or were killed while another 150,000 to 200,000 were detained and tortured. The military junta outlawed all forms of social organization and embarked upon a vast campaign to destroy books, public records, posters, pamphlets, and other political paraphernalia. Images from *El Mercurio* even show citizens painting over murals at gunpoint in the days following the September 11 coup (Trumper, 2016). *Arpilleras* themselves were popularized during this repressive time. They effectively filled the position of the communicative artistic spaces that were under heavy surveillance and suffered erasure in the streets. *Arpilleras* were generally poor women from urban shantytowns who utilized their art to secure a livelihood for their families and spark important and terrifying conversations about the conditions in Chile. The *arpilleras* became a powerful communication tool, calling for solidarity and the need for greater political organization. They even transcended national lines as Isabel Letelier, wife of the aforementioned Orlando Letelier who was killed by the junta, gathered and displayed *arpilleras* in the United States to garner greater international attention to the issue (Agosín, 2008).

Arpilleras have, from their inception, been an art form and medium for counter-storytelling created by poor Chilean women. Women who were powerless within the political system and undervalued in non-institutional political spheres found *arpilleras* as a way to recreate the meaning of such domestic work, provide for their families, and express their dissent (Agosín, 2008). While their identities as poor, non-white, women made them more vulnerable to marginalization, their identities also endowed them with the experience and knowledge to create such a politically powerful art form. The art of weaving itself is a feminized practice,³⁵ one that has been widely devalued through Western cultural imperialism (Bratich & Brush, 2011). Members of MemorArte often don orange jumpsuits that read “bordar y luchar” on the back, translating to “embroider and fight”. This asserts that such a feminized practice does not connote weakness. Engagement with traditionally feminine practice and joyful political struggle are not mutually exclusive. This is especially salient given the echoes of *machismo*³⁶ in the region as the concept occupies space in both right-wing and left-wing organizing (Huiskamp, 2000). *Arpilleras* therefore assert their autonomy while embracing and redefining the value and potentialities held by traditionally feminized practices.

³⁵ Weaving, sewing, and other similar craft forms are often associated with domesticity and therefore female subordination. This contributes to a perspective of such practices as soft, lacking power, and relegated to the confines of domestic life.

³⁶ *Machismo* refers to the cultural identity of the domineering, assertive male. In terms of labor division, women are relegated to devalued household and reproductive work while men work in laborious jobs outside of the household.

Members of MemorArte carry on the collective nature of *arpillera* creation. As mentioned before, *arpilleras* were an important communicative form and demonstration of solidarity during the Pinochet-era. Not only does the continuance of *arpillera* creation emphasize solidarity, it calls attention to the collective trauma experienced by Chileans. This is a powerful indication of the importance of community healing. Collective artistic mobilization purports an ethic of care and decolonial love. It sees the self as relational, rather than individual, breaking down the colonial split between self and other (Latorre, 2019). Collective creation connotes collective healing. Members of MemorArte are not only able to engage the wider populace with their art, but they are also able to engage intimately with one another on the trauma suffered through the Pinochet era. In intertwining their threads, they are intertwining their stories and proclaiming that creation is not only possible, but necessary given the history of such a destructive and violent dictatorship.

Participants of MemorArte have depicted themselves in the bottom-right corner of the *arpillera*. This signifies their presence, asserting that they are not outside of history, but a collective product and producer of history. They are bearing witness to their present circumstances, artistically telling their stories, and asserting their autonomy and presence in political spaces. While the present administration aims to forget the violence of the colonial and Pinochet-era past and the proliferation of such a charted history through injustices suffered by Chileans today, members of MemorArte and other *arpillerista* groups remind the Chilean populace what they are fighting for by displaying their art in marches and on the walls of Santiago.

MemorArte's "Bordando Presencia" is a powerful pronouncement of emancipatory journalism. Certainly the *arpillera* shows concern for the social, political, cultural, and economic aspects of development. It articulates political viewpoints from many sectors of society and illustrates their demands as interrelated as important components of Chile's prior and continuing development. As *arpilleras* are rooted in the activism of poor Chilean women, their continued creation still comes from marginalized sectors of society. This allows Chilean women to engage with counter storytelling. By propagating the *arpillerista* practice, they reassert the bottom-up communicative flow that *arpilleristas* during the dictatorship created to communicate amongst themselves and with the world. With the advent and growth of the internet and social media, members of MemorArte are able to spread the messages conveyed in their *arpilleras* with novel, digital means. Lastly, the piece certainly encompasses a non-traditional way of reporting. Although *arpilleras* themselves have historical roots, their perception as a reporting medium is still not widely recognized, especially given the continued prominence of the traditional news

media in Chile. By displaying their pieces on urban walls, carrying them through the streets at marches, and hanging them on the fences of government buildings, the women engage a non-traditional reporting method by asserting their presence and message in public spaces.

C. *Zen Nynja*

Zen Nynja is a collective of artists, filmmakers, and architectural documentarians. They proclaim themselves to be a “collaborative of ninjas creating and funding anonymous art projects” (*ZenNynja - Professional, Photographer* 2021). They have been documenting Chilean protest art since the beginning of the Estallido Social, but cite their present involvement as a response to Piñera’s declaration of a 90-day national “state of catastrophe” to address the developing COVID-19 situation (Cuffe, 2020). During the lockdown, the government hired a professional cleanup crew to spray down the statue of General Baquedano, remove three Indigenous statues, and paint over protest art (*ZenNynja - Professional, Photographer* 2021). To combat the removal of such politically relevant art, the collective began documenting protest art of Santiago and disseminating images on social media platforms such as DeviantArt and Instagram. The following content analysis focuses on pieces funded and documented by the Zen Nynja collective.

The first image features the acronym “ACAB” in traditional graffiti style next to a cartoon image of a pig representing a carabinero.³⁷ Upon the large image are smaller writings that say “todos son bastard” and “asesinos del estado” (Zen Nynja, 2021). This effectively translates to “all are bastards” and “assassins of the state”. The phrase “ACAB” translates to “All Cops Are Bastards” in English. While its exact origins are unknown, the phrase seems to have been first abbreviated during worker’s strikes in England in the 1940s. Since then, the popularity of the phrase has grown in anti-authoritarian, anarchist, and abolitionist spaces, especially amidst the recent George Floyd uprising in the United States (Groundwater, 2021). The condemnation of *all* cops in the phrase condemns all police as complicit in violent systems. The acronym has been depicted worldwide in a wide variety of anti-establishment movements. Accordingly, its use in Chile connotes an expression of global solidarity as well as an acknowledgement of police forces serving first and foremost as protectors of property and the ruling class rather than public servants.³⁸ This is displayed in the image through the green hat with a dollar sign worn by the pig. The phrase “asesinos del estado” becomes even more meaningful when one considers

³⁷ [See Figure B7.](#)

³⁸ The phrase “ACAB” is commonly seen throughout the Zen Nynja portfolio in a wide variety of depictions. It also tends to be coupled with the word “Evade”, nodding to the mass fare evasions that catalyzed the Estallido Social.

the history of the military and the government in Chile, especially given the atrocities committed during the Pinochet regime. Little police or military reform ensued following the dictatorship and many officials complicit in the atrocities committed during the Pinochet era retained influential positions in the government and military (O'Toole, 2018). The artist's condemnation of the police as assassins of the state becomes even more salient when one considers their role in brutalizing protestors during mass demonstrations in the Estallido Social (Wadi, 2018). Furthermore, the police and military play an active role in protecting potential targets such as the statue of Baquedano³⁹ from protest artists and enforcing the increasing criminalization of graffiti (Parra, 2020; La Tercera, 2021). Overall, the piece displays condemnation of policing in Chile and points towards disturbing continuities within policing given its violent history and present repressive tactics.

Another important aspect of the piece is its use of the hip-hop graffiti style that became popularized in the 1970s in the United States. It is crucial to note that this particular style was heavily criminalized at its conception given its association with urban Black communities and characterization as a "symptom of urban decline." Hip-hop graffiti style is inherently tied to civil resistance to racism and economic disenfranchisement. Its use, specifically its origins in tagging,⁴⁰ is an assertion of the right of the marginalized to exist and be seen (Landry, 2019). While the previous pieces analyzed may be more acceptable as "art," this piece's use of a style that was heavily racialized, demonized, and criminalized at its inception asserts the role protest artists have in blurring the dominant narrative's distinction between "street art" and "graffiti."⁴¹ Regardless of its acceptance in dominant culture, graffiti's linguistic forms and communicative nature can illuminate interesting findings about an area's political landscape with special attention to class dynamics. The practice of street art and diverse reactions from the public emphasize its power to evoke conversations surrounding urban aesthetics, the meaning of citizenship, and political activism. Acceptance of style and absorption into the dominant culture is far from the purpose of the use of this distinct style. The practice of graffiti changes the city's aesthetics and communicates desires for political and social change. While public opinion continues to be a point of contention for graffiti, the practice of graffiti and its ubiquity throughout the streets still holds power. Despite attempts to frame graffiti as destructive, it is a world building activity as it shapes Santiago's aesthetics and communicates an aspect of the

³⁹ See Figures B2 and B3

⁴⁰ The practice of "tagging" refers to graffiti artists writing their name or pseudonym in various public spaces.

⁴¹ It is interesting to note that there is a fair amount of anti-graffiti research that considers murals as an anti-graffiti strategy (Landry, 2019). This points to potential tensions within the street art scene.

perspectives of the marginalized. Furthermore, graffiti holds a unique power in a post-colonial setting (Lee, 2013). Changing discourse about graffiti in the Global South challenges Western conceptions of graffiti as destructive and unclean. This is especially important to unpack in cultural contexts that are facing the challenges of self-determination in a neoliberal world after the experience of outright colonization. The assertion that the value of graffiti, aesthetic or otherwise, is not determined by Western standards is a compelling example of the decolonial power of graffiti.

This piece certainly emphasizes the practice of emancipatory journalism. The piece's condemnation of the functions of the police clearly shows concern for the social, political, cultural, and economic aspects of development. This is also salient in its use of the 1970s American hip-hop graffiti style. Such an homage to a style that was outright criminalized due to its association with non-white and poor communities in urban America illustrates the artist's engagement with global countercultures and their relevance to all struggles for liberation.⁴² Furthermore, given that the artist of the piece remains anonymous, it certainly follows a bottom-up communicative flow. This characteristic is reinforced by its presence on the streets of Santiago. Lastly, the piece most certainly encompasses a non-traditional approach to reporting. The symbolism in the piece, its location, and the point at which it was created in Chile's recent history causes the concerned viewer to more critically consider its meaning and connections to modern Chilean politics. Accordingly, the piece adheres to the prime characteristics of emancipatory journalism.

The next piece is also funded and documented by the Zen Nynja collective. The image conveys multiple phrases signaling the beliefs and demands of the *graffiterx(s)*.⁴³ Once again, the image does not conform to accepted aesthetics of street art or muralism, effectively blurring the lines between "art" and "graffiti."

The first phrase on the left of the piece reads "No es sequia, es saqueo". This translates to "this is not a drought, this is looting". The next phrase on the top reads "¡Fin al código de agua!" which translates to "end the water code!". The phrases on the right reads "Peligro, incendio a los casas" and "ACAB". The first phrase translates to "Danger, fire to the houses". The meaning and significance of ACAB was explained in the analysis of the previous piece. The bottom phrases reads "no+minera" and "Aconcagua resiste," translating to "no+mining" and

⁴² This is not to say that each artist that utilizes this style is or must be explicitly aware of its origins. Rather, the great popularization of the style and its continued use in different struggles for liberation connotes its ability to connect political action worldwide.

⁴³ [See figure B8.](#)

“Aconcagua resist.” The aforementioned phrases likely refer to Indigenous resistance to neoliberal water policy endeavors in Chile. While Mapuche communities have ancestral rights to their lands, colonial and neoliberal policies have challenged them since the onset of colonization in the region, largely due to the growth of the mining industry in the region (O’Toole, 2019). Some such neoliberal policies have their roots in Pinochet’s Chile. In 1981, Pinochet enacted the Water Code. This code designated the use of water as a right and water itself as a commodity registered with the state. Unregistered sources were auctioned off by the Chilean government to the highest bidder. Up until 2005, owners of sources of water had no responsibility to use the water. This led to mass amounts of hoarding resources from Indigenous populations by large landowners and mining companies. Given their ancestral rights to the land and lack of notification from the government, most Mapuche leaders did not register their claims to water. In 1993, Chile passed a reform that gave Mapuche communities the ability to contest their claims to water and territory. However, the policy was largely reactive and forced Mapuche activists to reckon with the large landowners and mining companies that maintained claim over the land. Furthermore, the 1993 legislation has often been overruled by water and mining codes in Chile (Boelens & Vos, 2005). The graffiti in the piece points attention to this infringement of Mapuche rights. The first phrase in the piece asserts that the lack of access to water experienced by Mapuche communities is not due to a drought that is out of the Chilean government’s control. Rather, it is the product of centuries of settler colonial violence proliferated through neoliberal policy that continues to loot resources from Indigenous land. This perspective is deeply informed by the oppositional knowledges colonized people develop. The public proclamation of oppositional knowledge is essential given the control that colonizers have had in determining the framing of both historical and modern narratives. Here, the author(s) assert the legitimacy of their experience of having their resources continually stolen from them despite the Chilean government’s insistence that Chile is a post-colonial state. Moreover, the *graffiterx(s)* call for an end to neoliberal water codes. Such a display of demands illuminates tensions between legislation of a neocolonial government and the natural rights of Indigenous people. Furthermore, the expression of such demands contributes to the idea of decolonizing urban space. Amidst continued attempts at the theft of Indigenous resources, the artist takes their demands to the streets of Santiago and displays them for the citizenry to see and reckon with.

The piece conclusively exemplifies emancipatory journalism. As an overt condemnation of Chile’s neoliberal water and mining policies and their colonial roots, it shows great attention to Chile’s historical, economic, and sociopolitical development. Once again, as a result of the

artist's anonymity and their adherence to graffiti styles that are not perceived as aesthetically pleasing by the dominant culture, the piece follows a bottom-up flow of communication. This is further demonstrated by its attention to Indigenous rights. Furthermore, as a work of graffiti, the piece maintains a non-traditional approach to reporting.

XI. Counter Arguments

Those who might disagree with equating street art with journalism would likely argue that street art is too distant from traditional news media in form and content. While this is somewhat true, this illustrates some of the chief strengths of street art. Certainly, the form of the corporate news media and the content that is emphasized when recounting events serves the interests of the owners of the corporate media. In addition, the argument in this thesis equates Chilean street art to emancipatory journalism, not traditional journalism. Emancipatory journalism relies on the negation of traditional forms of reporting as they have proven to be unable to encompass different aspects of events, namely protests, when reporting on them. It asserts the need for the people themselves to articulate their stories rather than have them told by journalists who likely received a college education and are now on the payroll of news media corporations like COPESA and Grupo Edwards.

Critics might also say that alternative media (i.e. news media that follows the traditional format but does not have corporate backing) already fills the need for alternative reporting methods. While the existence of alternative media is important and should not be undervalued, it does not negate the prominence of the corporate news media in the Chilean media landscape. In addition, rather than creating a sort of either/or choice between alternative media and street art, the two can be seen as part of a broader coalition of artistic and journalistic forms that work to articulate the opinions of the Chilean populace. Street art, social media campaigns, political film, and alternative news media are all powerful components that work together to counter the master narrative and knowledgeably justify and display the maxims behind popular Chilean mobilization. The power of Chilean street art as a journalistic form lies in its prominence in urban areas. While people can choose what films to view, what social media accounts to follow, the people they choose to be around and their political tendencies, and what news media to read, the ubiquity of street art forces all sectors of society who spend any amount of time on the urban streets to engage with the content of the art.

XII. Implications

Certainly, content analysis from *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera* in conjunction with their wide control over the print media landscape, political history, and vast corporate ties demonstrates a clear need for alternative forms of journalism in Chile. While a wide variety of

forms of emancipatory journalism aid in diversifying the Chilean media, Chilean street art emerges as a powerful alternative to the corporate news media. Content analysis of the selected art works demonstrate clear attention to continuities in Chilean history, the perspectives of a wide variety of sectors within Chilean civil society, and the centering of Chile's most marginalized populations. Furthermore, the use of creativity by Chilean street artists effectively counters the dominant narrative purported by the Chilean news media because such an unabashed use of creativity coupled with the ubiquity of street art speaks a language that is foreign to the powers that be and disseminates information in a manner that civilians cannot ignore. The subversive nature of street art is precisely its strength. Emphasizing and playing upon the strengths of the use of street art in protest in Chile demonstrates a powerful example for liberation movements worldwide. Furthermore, altering perspectives on street art may contribute to shifting the discourse on social order (Landry, 2019).

Moreover, the decriminalization of graffiti in the Chilean context and beyond may be a just solution for urban spaces. Municipalities waste countless taxpayer dollars cleaning street art and enforcing its criminalization (Landry, 2019). While the erasure of street art may present the guise of cleanliness and security in cities, marginalized groups who experience poverty and inequity are erased alongside their art. Street art forces civilians to reckon with the relationships between culture, society, and law. Regardless of their opinions towards street art, such art is deeply affective and produces discourse amongst civil society. Allowing the most marginalized groups to have a voice through their art can be a step in the right direction towards social equity.

XIII. Conclusion

Certainly, the dominance of corporate media groups in Chile such as Grupo Edwards and COPESA necessitate alternative reporting forms. The content analysis of news media from *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera* demonstrate that reportage from the corporate media tends to emphasize property destruction, center the narratives of members of institutions, and neglect to discuss the deep maxims behind popular mobilization, relegating political action to a historical vacuum. Emancipatory journalism emerges as a powerful, novel approach to journalism that allows people to describe their experiences and the social, historical, and economic conditions that contextualize them. This approach reinvigorates autonomy within marginalized sectors of society, allowing them to articulate their knowledge in whatever form they see fit. Chilean expressions of street art throughout the Estallido Social are a powerful demonstration of such a practice. The content analysis of the chosen art pieces illuminates several key expressions made by Chilean artists. Firstly, the artists negate the idea of objective reporting. They center themselves and their community in their work and make no false claims to universalize their

narrative. This asserts that people in popular movements are agents of history, drawing upon long held popular traditions. The pieces evaluated illuminated the importance of remembrance. Both pieces showed images of many renowned Chilean figures. Such depictions call for reverence for those that have fought for Chile's future decades ago. By maintaining their prominence in the Chilean political consciousness, the artists remind Chileans that this fight is not new, nor is it complete. These figures have much to teach the present movements through their successes and their failures. The pieces effectively tie Chile's history to its present circumstance, disputing the historical vacuum asserted in the corporate news media. Lastly, the position of art in the streets of Chile has the power to disseminate messages across wide sectors of the populace. In the present digital age and its contributions to confirmation bias, such an enveloping approach forces the citizenry to engage with the art as they go about their daily activities.

The ubiquity of street art on the urban streets of Chile forces difficult conversations and attention to the complexity of Chile's present political situation. Certainly, Chilean street artists draw from a rich tradition of protest art and popular mobilization. Their engagement with novel and diverse news media expressions serves as a dynamic model for the rest of the world in the effort to contend with the corporate news media and challenge the master narrative.

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Appendix A

Images of Headlines from *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera*



Figure A1. Image of article ““Estupor y rabia en las 36 horas más violentas de Santiago desde el regreso a la democracia” by Ivan Martinez, Nelson Espinoza, and Dierk Gotschlich. Source: *El Mercurio*.
<https://digital.elmercurio.com/2019/10/20/C/MQ3MJT0H?fromSearch=1&q=manifestantes&GotoArticle=6M3MTO1D>

CLAUDIA Y ALEJANDRO [**GRAFITIS**]

Ellos limpian las murallas rayadas



Usan productos biodegradables e inocuos. Alertagraffiti.com.

CONFIESAN QUE SE HA TRIPLICADO SU TRABAJO DESDE EL 18-O.

En abril del año pasado entrevistamos a Claudia Jara y Alejandro Álvarez, los cazadores de grafitis (Alerta Graffiti). Si bien en ese tiempo ya tenían bastante trabajo, luego del estallido social confiesan que la demanda por su servicio se ha triplicado. "Ahora, claramente hay más rayados, pero muchas personas están esperando marzo para recuperar sus fachadas".

Cuentan que además han

debido enfrentar momentos difíciles cuando limpian las murallas. "Hemos sufrido agresiones e insultos, sobre todo en el centro de Santiago, porque hay quienes no quieren que se borren algunos rayados. Pero la idea nuestra es contribuir a una ciudad más limpia y segura".

Ellos ofrecen dos servicios: mantenimiento de muros y limpieza específica.

956 581 416.

Figure A2. Image of the article "Ellos limpian las murallas rayadas" by Patricio Baeza. Source: *El Mercurio*. <https://digital.elmercurio.com/2020/01/19/G/BG3O1BCP#zoom=page-width>



Figure A3. Members of AlertaGraffiti cleaning graffiti from a metro station. Source: <https://www.alertagraffiti.com/>

[nuestros-trabajos?lightbox=datattem-k6wx5fn](#)

NACIONAL **Problemas** General Baquedano

Manifestantes pintan de rojo estatua del general Baquedano en Plaza Italia: alcalde Alessandri dice que “es un pésimo augurio” para el domingo

El tránsito se encuentra cortado en el sector, tanto en dirección oriente como poniente. El hecho ocurre en la antesala de lo que será el aniversario del 18 de octubre.

Juan Pablo Andrews: 18 OCT 2020 04:51 PM



Figure A4. Image from the article “Manifestantes pintan de rojo la estatua del general Baquedano en Plaza Italia: alcalde Alessandri dice que ‘es un pésimo augurio’ para el domingo” by Juan Pablo Andrews. Source: *La Tercera*. <https://www.latercera.com/nacional/noticia/manifestantes-pintan-de-rojo-estatua-del-general-baquedano-en-plaza-italia/Z55H4266OBHMZJMKULRQ7RH4M/>

Ivan Poduje

Plaza de la Dignidad?

OPINION **Volante** DEC 8, 2019 08:51 PM



Figure A5. Image from “Plaza De Dignidad,” by Ivan Poduje. Source: *La Tercera*. <https://www.latercera.com/opinion/noticia/plaza-la-dignidad-3/930768/>

HISTÓRICO

Graffitis elevarían disposición a violar las leyes

DPN
24 NOV 2008 11:17 AM

Según un estudio, duplica la cantidad de personas que roban o arrojan basura a la calle.

Figure A6. Image from article "Graffitis elevarían disposición a violar las leyes". Source: *La Tercera*.
<https://www.latercera.com/noticia/graffitis-elevarian-disposicion-a-violar-las-leyes/>

Appendix B

Images of Chilean Street Art



Figure B1. "Sigan Luchando" by Rosita Beas. Source: https://www.rositabeas.cl/street-art/87064420_2404120826566892_4512144473395822592_o/?=5bc574a47246



Figure B2. Image from the Article “Sujetos intentan derribar estatua de Baquedano en medio de la conmemoración del 8M” by *La Tercera*. Source: <https://www.latercera.com/nacional/noticia/carabineros-interviene-para-evitar-que-sujetos-derriben-monumento-de-general-baquedano/GTOJ4ARNLJH5VCKPDNRSRYC3P4/>



Figure B3. Image from the Article “Estatua del general Baquedano es trasladada luego de dos horas y media de trabajos” by *La Tercera*. Source: <https://www.latercera.com/nacional/noticia/comienzan-los-trabajos-para-retirar-la-estatua-del-general-baquedano/WVQIQE4NI5G6TG2AE5HSOMM3UU/#:~:text=...->

[Estatua%20del%20general%20Baquedano%20es%20trasladada%20luego,horas%20y%20media%20de%20trabajo s&text=Operativo%20comenz%C3%B3%20a%20las%2023.00,el%20sector%20de%20Plaza%20Italia](#)



Figure B4.. “Bordando presencia” by members of MemorArte. Source: <https://www.facebook.com/colectivomemorarte/photos>



Figure B5. “Bordando presencia” by members of MemorArte. Pictured in front of La Moneda. Source: <https://www.facebook.com/colectivomemorarte/photos>



Figure B6. “Bordando presencia” by members of MemorArte. Artists pictured collectively sewing the art piece.
Source: <https://www.facebook.com/colectivomemorarte/photos>



Figure B7. Image captured by Zen Nynja. Source: <https://www.deviantart.com/zennynja/art/SantiagoProtestFav-18-873016435>



Figure B8. Image captured by Zen Nynja. Source: <https://www.deviantart.com/zennynja/art/SantiagoProtestArt-1076-873015136>