Art and Transformation under State Repression

The CADA group; art activism as social movement for political resistance during the Pinochet years

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Abstract

Artist communities are often the first in revolting within a repressive society in the outer marginal borders of state control. This silent revolt takes place in the time period before larger oppositional movements gain momentum. However, the research has been scarce, especially when looking at the specific circumstance of the 17 years long Chilean dictatorship and the social influence that the artists had during this period. This Bachelor thesis will treat the subject and time period from a specific cultural angle, namely the effect the artistic production made by a specific art group, Colectivo de Acciones de Arte (henceforth named CADA) had on the social, and in effect, political discourse in society. CADA, a group of four Chilean artists, sociologists and writers, started collaborating in 1979, applying their artistic endeavors within a social practice that intended to interrupt and challenge the normalized routines of daily life during the Pinochet dictatorship – by utilizing semiotics and signs to reorganize and transform urban behaviors and social discourse. To illustrate the conversation CADAs production held, I will analyze two art works from their total oeuvre, as I am interested in researching the forbidden discourse that the artist movement conducted in Chile at this particular time. During the dictatorship, the official politics regressed to favor cultural symbols and expressions with a patriotic, nationalist and conservative message. This thesis wants to investigate the clash between the rules imposed by the ruling military regime and the actual art scene in Chile.

Keywords
Chile, CADA, artist groups, civil society, cultural production, dictatorship

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1 Introduction

"Usually, artists and intellectuals are the first to manifest public opposition to authoritarian rule, often before the transition has been launched. Their capacity to express themselves by oblique metaphors no doubt protects them, as does their membership in a de facto world system of cultural exchange." (O'Donnell, Schmitter 1986:49)

On September 11th of 1973, the long and stable history of democracy in Chile violently came to an end when General Augusto Pinochet deposed the democratically elected president Salvador Allende in a cold-blooded Coup d'état. The underlying mission to radically transform Chile from its earlier reformistic socialist agenda to this new decentralized yet authoritarian state, with stark neoliberal economic reforms, implemented through repressive and authoritarian methods, was both harsh and severe for the Chilean population (Nagy-Zekmi and Leiva 2005:1).

The transition back to democracy was long and achieved only after a 17 years long stint of severe dictatorial rule. Chile was a severely repressed country during the dictatorship years, which affected all artistic, social and political life. The art developed during the crucial years of the military dictatorship was characterized by a noticeable modernization, both regarding the linguistic level as well as the formal level. By propelling a crisis on the traditional discourse of painting, and by replacing it and shifting towards conceptual art, urban interventions and the use of the photographic medium, these modernizing series of upgrades took its foundation in a critical and opposing approach to the symbols and emblems of the art, promoted by the ideological discourse -of preservation and nationalism- imposed by the dictatorial regime (Gazmuri et al 2006:255f).

This Bachelor thesis will treat the subject and time from a specific cultural angle, namely the effect the artistic production made by Colectivo de Acciones de Arte (henceforth named CADA) had on the social and political discourse in society. Artistic activity is an important component when looking at a specific period, or analyzing a social context, since it by default mirrors and comments on a political reality, be it a democracy or a dictatorship. With this as a
starting point this thesis aims to analyze two artworks by CADA, an artistic and intellectual community of four artists and theorists that operated actively during 1979 through 1985, when the official agenda by the military regime massively restricted and persecuted free thinking in the realms of public space. A fundament for their art practice was the implementation of “intervention” as a method to interact in the public space in order to comment and reflect on habitual life during the time of the dictatorship in the space where art and politics converge – “the social realm” (Neustadt, 2001:15f). CADA marks an important turning point in the history of Chilean art, and the value and definition of what fine arts stood for. Up until CADAs emergence on the Chilean art scene photography, performance art and public interventions had been considered inferior to the more traditional mediums like oil painting and sculpture. Today CADA are represented both in the permanent collection of the Museum of Reina Sofia in Madrid and in the online collection of the Hemispheric Institute and referenced as an important art group in Latin American Art History today.

1.1 The two artworks/actions

The two artworks (actions) selected for this analysis is motivated both by the time when they were conceived and the importance they had looking in hindsight. From the five art actions that the CADA group created during their time active together, two has been chosen for this essay. “Para no morir de hambre en el arte” (1979) was their first art action and took place before the reawakening of the civil society and the popular mobilization period in Chile from 1983-1986 (Oxhorn, 1995, Oppenheim, 1993:171). It comprised of several different stages around Santiago in relation to a bought full page advertisement in the oppositional but massively spread journal Revista Hoy containing a written poem. The poem and related happenings alluded to the earlier political reform by the Allende government of providing ½ l of milk to the young population of Chile (Neustadt 2001:25f).

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1 Museo Reina Sofia is Spain’s national art museum with an extensive collection of 20th Century art.

http://www.museoreinasofia.es/biblioteca-centro-documentacion/archivo-de-archivos/archivo-cada
(retrieved 2016-12-28)

The Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics is an international network of collaborations in the Americas between artists and scholars with, among others, New York University.

http://hemisphericinstitute.org/hemi/ (retrieved 2016-12-01)
“No +” (1983-1984), a graffiti tag spread during nighttime around the popular sectors of Santiago de Chile, was chosen as it is considered to be their most important and impacting art action to date and because it can be connected to the larger currents moving through the society at this time. With time the tag spread and “No+” became one of the strongest manifestations in the large democratic movements against the dictatorship with the same participatory pattern of individualizing the sentence by adding content, such as “No+ Pinochet” or “No+ authoritarian government”. These actions stretched all the way to the 1988 Plebiscite, the election where the population could vote either “No” – against Pinochet and the dictatorship or “Si” in favor of the continuation of authoritarian rule. (Neustadt 2001:36f).

No one can represent the entire artistic movement since it was an eclectic and diverse group of people, but some made a more lasting impression and can act like symbols for this group and the importance they had, and also have today, in Chile. CADA was one of them. The primary research problem is situated around the political liberalization that often precedes the democratic transformations within a dictatorship. After some initial years of total repression, and dictatorial solidification, a political liberalization can take place. Small signs of transformations can be found in artist groups and collectives who could operate in small civil spaces that necessarily weren’t political. This idea is found in Guillermo O’Donnell’s and Philippe C. Schmitter’s book Transitions from Authoritarian Rule (1986). It’s a state of relative autonomy where the resurrection of civil society is reactivated. This bachelor thesis intends to put focus on the very first signs of a dawning new civil society in Chile and how the artistic group CADA acted in this frame before the civil society movement and larger mass protests had gained political momentum. Louis Hecht Oppenheim, categorizes the Chilean experience into five “Phases of Military Rule” in her book Politics in Chile (1993). From 1973-1977 the military consolidated their power and tried to depoliticize the society. As mentioned earlier in this paragraph this is a moment of total repression. Between 1981 and 1982, the economic miracle following Pinochet’s fiscal neoliberal reforms turned into a bursting bubble and economic crisis followed. It was around this time that civil society began to gain common ground again. From 1983 and forward, a massive popular mobilization against the military dictatorship gained currents both nationally and abroad, and around Chile you found newly established democracies such as Argentina, Peru and Brazil, which only strengthened those opposing the Military ruling. In the fifth phase, the broad alliance for democracy, together with the political pressure from abroad, ultimately lead to Pinochet
announcing the 1988 national Chilean plebiscite where you could vote ‘Yes’ - in favor of Pinochet and his rule of government, or ‘No’ - returning the country to civilian rule (Ibid.120ff). For this thesis, I’ll be using these divisions in time to situate my research problem into the “phases” in which the two artworks by CADA responded to.

Traditionally, the academic research has focused on stronger and more active forms of criticism and political activism that you can only find once the political democratic system underneath the dictatorship, radical social movements or labor unions, have gathered enough momentum in larger groups of people to actually make an impacting difference. This period in Chile is very well documented in for example Philip D. Oxhorn’s book Organizing Civil Society: The Popular Sectors and the Struggle for Democracy in Chile (1995). There is a vast selection of material dealing with Chile, the dictatorship and its implications on society, the economic transformations, the injustices made on its population and the transformation back to democracy with all its complications.

Caterina Preda, a researcher at the Department of Political Science at Bucharest University, has specialized on the intersecting relationship between Art and Politics and on how these two concepts interact within the Chilean experience specifically. Her previous research has created a foundational base for this thesis that further motivates my topic. Preda focuses on the period before the breakdown of the dictatorial regime whereas my focus for this thesis is the period when the civil society yet had to be re-initiated. In my thesis, I will argue for the artist as a civil actor, someone who acts as a civilian for freedom of speech by exhibiting works of art. A strong motivation to choose this topic lays in the lack of investigative research in the field of how Chile transitioned back to democracy (Puryear 1994:4). It could be claimed that by omitting the importance of intellectuals and artists and the role they played in this process, an important component in the overall understanding for the complex mechanisms and structures of the democratic popular mobilization within the Chilean dictatorship is neglected. When utilizing the viewpoint of artistic production by intersecting and placing it with theories on Civil Society and Political liberalization, my intention is to problematize and hopefully enrich the analysis on this period. The artists that were part of this movement managed to create a social discourse at a time when voicing an opposing opinion from the official military government was forbidden. Escena de Avanzada, marked a paradigm shift in in artistic practice in Chile, and acts today as an important point of reference for the artistic theoretical legacy that challenged the rules imposed by the dictatorship. This movement, the Avanzada,
“was an extraordinary convergence of ideas, strategies and practices arising from the rupture that the dictatorship entailed” (Mosquera 2006:31). Functioning as an umbrella, the CADA group belonged here. This “convergence of ideas” in the case of CADA, was outlined through their central idea to fuse the currents in conceptual arts and the inclusion of popular sectors in Santiago that normally had no association to these cultural spheres (Neustadt 2001:19).

1.2 Aim and Research Question

This thesis attempts to answer the questions regarding the role played by CADA in the first initial and dawning steps back into democracy, before the civil society movement and larger mass protests had gained political momentum. In order to do so, this thesis will analyze the two art pieces; “Para no morir del hambre en el arte”, 1979 and “No+”, 1983-1984 by the CADA group with the intention to examine the social structure in which it acted in. The aim for this examination is to strengthen the ideas of the civil society’s discursive power to affect and reinvent its own situation, despite other external factors, such as in this case, the dictatorial regime by Pinochet. This will hopefully provide a deeper understanding on how artists and intellectuals influenced the social discourse in Chilean society by provoking and voicing questions in public at a time when no larger civilian movements dared doing so. Hopefully this thesis helps further to problematize the official stance on art in a dictatorship and how art can act as a civil actor for change.

This thesis aims at answering the following question:

1. How did the two artworks analyzed in this thesis re-create the social discourse in the Chilean society 1979 and onwards?

I will argue in this thesis, that they took part of the re-ignition of the quest for a civilian autonomy i.e. a democratization process though their artistic practice that allowed for a questioning by the civil society of the state of things. I will further argue that this is something
they achieved, which moreover adds to their historical importance as an art group, but also as political activists that helped mobilize the reawakening of a civil society through their art. Artistic practice on a general level is, however, usually small and not something that the entire civil society takes part in, viewed as world within society for the privileged and knowledgeable of this social and cultural sphere, but it constitutes a fundamental part of society nonetheless as it is a vital forum to explore and reflect on questions that deals with the current status of the society. The direct interaction with a specific work of art usually only reach a small percentage of the population, this does not mean that it bears no influence, on the contrary, it is argued that art has a crucial role in shaping, extending through the social strata’s in society as the influence of the work can be multiplied with time. Political discourse is often found in art and does not only reflect on its social milieu but can also help to shape it (Edelman, 1995). CADA’s art practice was particular as it was situated on the streets; they had a visibility in the public, which went against the official politics that had been established since the coup of a nationalistic and authoritarian modus operandi free from pluralistic cultural expressions (Errázuriz 2009: 153f).

1.3 Methodology and Material

The methodological approach for this thesis will be to do a qualitative analysis on two artworks by CADA using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This method opens up for specific focus on the relationship between the state and the critical artistic voice; how artists during this time, I will argue, became “civil actors” (a key concept that will be further explained in chapter 2) whom, from their actions and body of work, possibly helped re-create the civilian discourse in society which was taken away by the military regime. This thesis will be conducted through a qualitative research approach. In order to achieve this thesis preliminary aim it is needed to portray the cultural vision stated by the regime, to give context to where CADA grew from. Text analysis is, I find, an adequate method for this thesis since the two pieces are based on language and texts, with the primary intention of dialoguing with the beholder of the artwork. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a theory as well as a method that analyzes society through discourse, for instance, newspapers, speeches, and in this case, art production. This thesis will implement CDA as a method, in the analysis of the two artworks made by CADA, using theories on Civil Society and political liberalization. The
two art pieces will be analyzed as the framework and examples for how CADA took a position in the art scene and opened a space for new forms of social dialogues. The works also differs from each other, “No+” with a clearer political message, and “para no morir de hambre en el arte” of a more alluding character that is not necessarily stemming from a political motive, but the common characteristic for the works chosen is that they ultimately opinionate something about the social reality under the ruling dictatorship. The academic analysis on Chile’s democratization process had mostly been focused on the economic crisis that, from 1982 and forward changed the hold the dictatorship thus far had had on the Chilean society. The conclusion for this thesis will be based on the analyzed examples together with the literature on how the relationship between the state and CADA was constructed. The material will hopefully show an example of how a democratization process can open up in a repressive society and the method will exemplify how this is demonstrated from the critical art movement.

1.4 Limitations

The limitations to this thesis are a few. The examination is concentrated to the CADA group within the larger Escena de Avanzada movement and therefore, other viewpoints from the same movement will not be investigated. CADA does not speak for the bigger movement as a whole although they are considered to be part of this “convergence of ideas that characterized the period” (Mosquera 2006:31). Although they were often labeled as regime critics and leftist intellectuals, CADA did not have as a primary concern, the specific interest to publicly or primarily criticize the dictatorship they were living in. As the reality of a dictatorship meant that public activity was repressed it instantly changed the rules for the artists working inside this new reality. It would be safe to assume that this would reinforce the probability to, as an artist, want to question the society and the restrictions placed on top of free speech. By being critical rather opposed to specifically political, this would still essentially mean to “act politically” against the dictatorship. This limitation and complexity of not being openly political gives the opportunity to delve further into this group of intellectuals and possibly see how their production was interpreted versus their intentions for making the work. Important to take into consideration is that this thesis will not deal with the external political forces that preceded the rupture in democracy and the establishment of a dictator. It will only focus on
the actual politics, from the time, officially stated by Pinochet leadership and the effects and reactions on the artistic community in Chile. The focus on the process and production of a small artistic group, with the micro-level imposed for this thesis, is not as common in previous research. One possible critique for this thesis is that almost all literary sources are secondary, which can create a problem of reconstruction and memory. A substantial part of the literature concerning Latin American Art is also in Spanish, so it can be safe to assume that without access to the language, an investigation like this one would not be possible. The topic is thus, still fairly local on a geographical level and not taken into account in the larger community of Latin American studies worldwide or in the understanding of culture as a factor in democratic and social processes. I am of partly Chilean descent and I speak Spanish, which gives the opportunity to extract information from Spanish sources. It is clear for me that this thesis could not have been written without extensive knowledge in the Spanish language since most literature isn't translated.

Furthermore, this thesis will not consider the economic factors of, and in, art production and its ties to a commercial market since the market implies and consists of factors from several circuits and economic forces in society. The research objective is to look at the relationship between the dictatorial state and the discursive practice of CADA’s artistic production through the analysis of two key works. Even though the dictatorship spanned from 1973 to 1989, this investigation in restricted to the period in time, 1979 and 1983-1984 respectively when the chosen artworks are made. This enables the examination to understand how the chosen artworks worked in the time period they were produced and could have made an impact. This essay does not intend to state whether the CADA group changed the urban behavior and mind set of the entire Chilean society, as I have no base for such claims. During their time they worked primarily in Santiago and moved in more satellite intellectual circles. However, their intention with their art actions was to engage and encourage public participation, foremost in the popular sectors in the outskirts of Santiago, no matter how small impact it had to their immediate surroundings at the time (Neustadt 2001).

I am fully aware that this is a limited section of the whole spectrum that was the Chilean dictatorship, and I am not trying to make claim of analyzing the complete impact it had on society. The consequences from this limitation means that I can only make claim of interpreting something about the social construction under which these two art works and the CADA group acted in and from this, reflect further on what this could represent in the society.
as a whole. I will not look into the potential complications arisen from their actions. I merely want to look at how their actions can be related to the official policies, and how they managed to criticize without being explicitly political. Necessary references will be made in this thesis to the artistic life in Chile before the military dictatorship as to define and differentiate the circumstances that artists worked under before and after the military overthrow.

1.5 Disposition

The arrangement for this thesis is the following: The first chapter is an introduction, a presentation to the research problem, aim and research questions. The investigation is broadly focusing on how the art movement was affected by this repression and specifically focusing on the CADA group but can also be used to present a phenomenon that is common for most dictatorships, where small movements became political actors in society and thusly aimed to change the rules set up by the oppressive regime. The first chapter is also an introduction to the methodology, State of Research that introduces previous research on the topic and limitations made for this thesis. In the second chapter the theoretical framework is presented; Critical discourse analysis, which is the method I’ll be using and theory of Civil Society marks the theoretical approach for this essay. The Civil Society perspective allows me to analyze the artworks under the eyes of social activism and helps broaden the picture of the artist that hopefully can contribute to a more reflective analysis of my results.

The third chapter gives a historical background to the artistic period before the dictatorship, which allows for the reader to understand the context of where CADA came from and how these periods differed from each other. The dictatorship will also be presented and examined as to give insight in the contexts and where society lay importance in these questions, how art and the repressive society was described in their relationship together. The fourth chapter introduces more in depth the CADA group; introduction, background, significance during and especially after the dictatorship and lastly their meaning and relevance to Chilean society and its art scene. In the fifth chapter a critical discourse analysis will be made on two chosen art works as to analyze both the political status, their intentions for the making of the artwork and how this affected the discourse in society in a democratic way. Discussion will be made on the
research questions and material presented earlier in the thesis. In the closing chapter, a final discussion on the analysis for this thesis where conclusions connected to the purpose for this essay with the questions, materials and research is presented.

1.6 State of Research

This section will present previous research relevant to this thesis. The research on how the Chilean artist movements acted within the repressed society during the dictatorship is scarce. One major volume has been published that deals with the interrelation between civil society and authoritarian rule, namely, *Dictators and Dictatorships: Artistic Expressions in Romania and Chile (1970's-1989) No pasó nada…?* by Caterina Preda, 2009, which is a comparative analysis made on two different dictatorships and artistic productions, but where, she found, the underlying mechanisms and structures are very similar.

A further in-depth approach by Preda is found in her article “*Civil society activism and authoritarian rule in Romania and Chile, Evidence for the role played by the art(ists)” (2012)*; the analysis is based on the differences and similarities of the two countries and their economic models during the dictatorship (state versus free market model) and how this has shaped the political agenda for the artistic sphere in each country. *Sabotage Art: Politics and Iconoclasm in Contemporary Latin America, (2016)* is an entirely new contribution to the intersecting academic field of Art and Politics by Sophie Halart where Ch. 5 is dedicated to Chilean and Argentinian art Post-1960’s with CADA’s production emphasized and investigated in depth in relationship to how their artistic production and sabotage strategies worked in interruptive manners in the specific social context of living under a dictatorial regime.

After the international conference “Democracy in Latin America: Thirty years after Chile’s 9/11” held in 2003 at the State University of New York at Albany, a selected amount of papers were compiled into the book *Democracy in Chile, The Legacy of September 11, 1973* by Silvia Nagy and Fernando Leiva, The research conducted for this conference dealt with the Chilean experience from the last three decades and the book is an eloquent summary of how
cultural production in the broadest sense, meaning literature, academic writing, music, art and theatre has been researched in relationship to the dictatorship (Nagy, Leiva 2005).

In the field of cultural writings and art criticism there is more to be found, especially on the artistic movement “Escena de Avanzada” its name given by Nelly Richard, a Chilean art critic, originally born in France, who in her book, “Margenes e Instituciones” (1987) for the first time gave name to this specific time period, after the military overthrew the democratic government of Allende. This title included the prominent artists of its time, those that even today are the key figures of the Chilean art world, and other intellectuals and scholars, who one way or the other, within their given fields, gave voice to a society that was under severe repression. In 1986, a symposium was held in Santiago, Arte en Chile desde 1973, to initiate a discussion around above mentioned book “Margenes e Instituciones” and the topic of national art production under the Dictatorship, held in collaboration with FLACSO, Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, Francisco Ziegars Editor and Galería Visuala (Richard 1987:3).

In academic research for this particular field on how the democratization process took place in Chile, the center of attention has mostly been on the privileged social groups that had influence enough to play a crucial role in the shift from dictatorship to democracy but “the elites mentioned tend to be political, economic and military. They are seldom intellectual” (Puryear 1994:3). Puryear further mentions the book by O'Donnell, from where this thesis’s introductory quote is taken, and the importance of emphasizing and bringing forward the roles played by intellectuals and artists in the resurrection of the “civil society” that often precedes the democratic transition that takes place from “above”. A larger focus has therefore, traditionally been placed on the larger tendencies in formulating a democratic movement within a dictatorship. My descriptions of previous research and research questions that are closely related to mine, places my study in a context from where I’ll be able to contribute with my own approach.

“Chile, arte actual”, (Galaz, Ivelic 1988), is an academic book that chronicles a historic overview of Chilean Modern art until its time of publication. I am including it to the chapter of State of Research as it also portrays the artists, and movement they belonged to, chosen for this thesis. The book itself, I find, is problematic and biased towards the stance and consideration for the military government, based on the market values they had on good vs. bad art. The book is lacking any kind of political awareness or dimension to the political
times in which it was written; it is “neutral”, apolitical, which, in my opinion, can be read as in favor for the military rule. The authors are demonstrating a critical stance against Escena de Avanzada’s conceptuality, the contemporaneity of artistic mediums, as they based their art practice on actions, photography and public installations (explained further in chapter 4), instead of using more traditional mediums, such as classical painting, meaning that no painters belonged to this movement.
2 Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, the central theories and concepts will be outlined. The theories of Discourse Analysis, and more specifically Critical Discourse Analysis is used as the methodological foundation for the analysis of the two artworks that CADA produced during the dictatorship. Furthermore, are theories and notions on Civil Society introduced and exemplified in subchapter 2.3. To conclude, this chapter will introduce further key concepts that are important for this thesis.

2.1 Introduction to Discourse Analysis

The definition of Discourse Analysis presented by Marianne Jørgensen & Louise J. Philips in their book, *Discourse analysis as Theory and Method*, (2002) is how discourse characterizes as a certain way of talking about and understanding the world, or a segment of the world through investigations in communications, culture and society. It also reflects our surroundings, identities and social relations at the same time as it plays an active role in the recreation of changing and making new progress in social discourses. Discourse analysis believes that you create “subject” within discourse, meaning that the “I”, the self, also becomes a means of expression, a reflection of culture and language in which the self is active in, at the same time as new conditions and changes are made possible due to the way we speak and act in social situations. As it becomes a reflection of the state of things; it is also a form of method for changing the same situation. *Discourse analysis as Theory and Method* demonstrates that discourse analysis is an approach that uses both theory and method to explain something. Discourse Analysis lies on a social constructivist foundation and the book provide a comprehensive view of its theoretical field but the focus lies on three different approaches that all rests on four basic premises:

1. Critical approach to conventional wisdom
2. Knowing that our knowledge of the world is culturally and historically stamped
3. In social interactions and social processes, does new knowledge occur
4. Social actions related to knowledge leads to the notion that certain actions are considered to be “natural” while others are considered impossible
The three approaches in focus here are Ernesto Laclau’s and Chantal Mouffe’s discourse theory, discourse psychology and critical discourse analysis, which is the method chosen for this essay. I will anchor Norman Fairclough's approaches on how to make use of critical discourse analysis. He argues, inter alia, that the discursive practices that exist in society creates and cements the unequal power relations between social groups. Discourse as a social practice is both reproducing and changing knowledge and social identities but it is simultaneously a part of other social power structures. By making use of this analysis, it is easier to uncover the stigmatizing social roles that our discursive practices maintain.

### 2.2 Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a transdisciplinary method and theory developed by the Lancaster School with Norman Fairclough in the forefront of this scholarly discipline. Fairclough’s analysis was presented in his book “Language and Power” (1989) as a three-dimensional model of interlacing strata’s: Text, Discursive Practice and Social Practice. A central point in Fairclough's theory, the theoretical foundation, is that our discursive communication consists of three dimensions, his three-dimensional frame; discursive practice (how the text is produced), text (how the text is written) and social practice (which context and social practices that it relates to). The quintessential quality that critical discourse analysis possesses is the exploration in the relationship between the uses of language, social practice and how it shapes, reshapes and reflects on social structures. According to Norman Fairclough it is through the "discursive practices in everyday life (processes of text production and consumption) that social and cultural reproduction and change take place” (Jørgensen & Philips, 2002:61). Thus, the analysis contributes to the understanding of the discursive practice that you participate in when using and consuming language and text.

Fairclough's theory and framework, the analysis of discourse as social practice, centers around the theoretical basis that our discursive communication consists of three interconnected dimensions, the aforementioned three-dimensional model. First is the discursive practices (how the text is produced), then there is an analysis on the text (how the text is written) and lastly is the social practice (which context and social practices that the text is belonging to). The results obtained from this analysis are a critical awareness of language, a potential insight
on our language and discourse practices, its limits and the future possibilities that exist for changing our current social conditions. Fairclough also believes that the analysis helps to give insight into the discursive practice that oneself participate in the use of language and text (Jørgensen & Philips, 2002:64, 68f). For the analysis of art works and pictures, CDA makes room to include and treat them on the same basis as a written text (ibid. 61).

2.4 Theory of Civil Society

“Democratic transition could be defined as a complex process of shifting relations between the state and civil society, in which authoritarian rule is gradually replaced by political democracy.” (Biekart 1999:21-22)

The Civil Society forms part from a vast group of activities and social sectors such as organizations, groupings, movements, individual actors and social discourse. In literature on democratic transition the mobilized civil society is “the critical actor in the breakthrough to democracy” (Bernhard 2007:542). Historically Latin American States (countries) have been strong and the civil societies have been weak (Biekart 1999:28) but in Chile the democratic tradition had a long and strong hold on society ever since its Independence in 1810 from Spain. A central notion to considerate for this thesis in the general understanding of civil society the interrelationship between the civil society and the state. Does a society exist without its citizens? Who is the citizen without the constituting frame that a society gives you? They must therefore belong together since both constitute of one another.

Civil Society is a term with many meanings and different schools (such as the ones by Durkheim and Gramsci) but as an overall concept is crucial when analyzing a democratic transition from dictatorial rule. A society whether democratic or not is affected by the influence and communities of the citizens. “Central to the understanding of the dynamics of democratic transition is therefore to analyze changes in the relations between the state and civil society, or more precisely: the political relations between the state and its citizens” (Biekart 1999:30). The important connection between art and Civil Society under a dictatorship, taking the theory further, is on how the artistic discipline fills a void in society for “the missing political arena” as it reproduces a social space of communication and
inclusion for thoughts and “imagination” that allows people to no longer be restricted by the political power on their introspective feelings (Preda 2012:64).

A key book in this field and an important reference is the book *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule* by O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986), already mentioned in this thesis but here exemplified as it holds important ideas on key concepts on “transition” and “democracy and dictatorship in civil society”. The resurrection of a civil society, per O’Donnell and Schmitter, must be understood in relation to the authoritarian regimes ability to have successfully suppressed political identities, ideologically manipulated society and the engagement in active physical oppression against the population. The substitute for political diversity and free agency is ”a state-controlled public arena in which any discussion of issues must be made in codes and terms established by the rulers” (ibid. 48). It is in the proximity of the authoritarian reality that this emergence of alternative cultural voices eventually comes to fruition, since their language not necessarily is overtly political.

## 2.5 Other Key concepts

The institutional definitions of theory of art are complex and many. One of the most noted scholars on the subject, George Dickie defines a work of art as “(1) an artifact (2) a set of aspects of which has had a conferred upon it the status of candidate for appreciation by some person or persons acting on behalf of a certain social institution (the artworld)”. (Dickie 1974:25). How to define an artwork is widely debated as the ability to value and label art relies on factors beyond mere production costs and supply and demand for a commodity. Historically, a work of art was considered a singular piece made by hand, but with “readymades”- a term coined for the introduction of any regular objects as works of art, the notion changed. With *Fountain* (1917), a urinal displayed for an exhibition, Marchel Duchamp introduced a development in modernist art practice that expanded the horizon of the consideration of Art.  

To further develop the definitions and valuations of art John Berger, art critic, includes the spiritual dimension that an art work should require, that sets it apart from everything else. The commercial value of a work of art is not only the price someone is

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willing to pay, but also a measurement of its intellectual importance. (Berger 1972: 14) The value of an art work, can be argued, to lie in the eyes of the beholder, but using above mentioned definitions means that art can only really be considered art in relation to a reaffirming third party.

Iconography is the study of images, what is the meaning of a specific image, how can it be interpreted based on its content? When identifying a process of artistry or image the studying of images often calls for an ample view of the culture in which it was conceived. Iconography has different schools, some say that a picture can only be examined up and only until the borders of the frame and no other contexts can help you examine the art object, while others say, for example the German philosopher Ernst Cassrier, that the importance of including the social context is crucial in understanding the specific work. The specific work of art functions as a “document” of an artist, religion, philosophy or even an entire civilization” (D’Alleva 2005: 21-23). Iconography is a theory focused on the visual interpretation of artworks but is interesting to include since the similarities to the definition of Critical Discourse Analysis makes for an inclusion of textual artworks too.
3 Chilean Society

3.1 Introduction

Chile, since the time of independence in 1810, was one of the oldest and strongest lived democracies in the western hemisphere, with stable democratic governance, a strong competitive party system and a military that operated only in the background of governing politics. The severity in the political turn that came with the military coup, hit Chile much harder than many of its neighboring countries, (Puryear 1994: p. X) considering the strong democratic society in which Chileans historically were brought up in and how the society had been “characterized by active popular participation” (Oppenheim 1993:4f). After the coup, Pinochet made radical changes in the political, economic and social spheres, creating “one of the most durable and autocratic dictatorships in Latin America” (Ibid p.33) by putting the Constitution on hold, blocking the participation of political parties, and placing severe restrictions on the media.

The first official communication by Pinochet and the military junta was printed in the daily newspaper El Mercurio’s, September 11th edition 1973, setting the new totalitarian standard for the Chilean society and the population of Santiago and demanding the complete shutdown of radio and press associated with the socialist movement and Allende government. The implementation of these new rules and policies with a decentralized state thus fundamentally changed the social circumstances for cultural groups to relate and be a part of official social life. It became clear that the reforms being made came to greatly affect and change the situation in which artists and intellectuals could work in.

3 http://www.memoriachilena.cl/602/w3-article-92134.html (retrieved 2016-12-27)
3.2 Chilean Art before the Coup

In the early period of the 1960’s a new group emerged on the local art scene, *Grupo Signo*, and, in hindsight, is to be considered the first critical and political movement towards the Fine Arts Academy of Chile and traditional art forms. Up until this group, with the now internationally recognized artists José Balmes and Gracia Barrios, the meaning of avant-garde art did not imply a criticism towards the center from which they stemmed from (the Academy) it was rather a development that reacted to a social context and idealism without any political undertones. This awareness of a local and political reality started to form during the early 1960’s and began with the informality of *Grupo Signo*, and was produced with an esthetic language that was not considered to be progressive at the time. Abstract Expressionism was already surpassed by Pop Art on the international art scene when it made its Chilean entrance but it was still a clear break from the traditional school that had its ruling presence. The *Grupo Signo* directed attention to the need of being involved within a specific social context, where an aesthetic modernism went alongside with modern political awareness in the art production (Gazmuri et al 2006:267-69). The movement of the Escena de Avanzada differs greatly since they made a clear break from figurative art and traditional oil painting, which Grupo Signo still belonged to.

3.3 Official stance / Dictatorship

Salvador Allende socialist movement, Unidad Popular (Popular Unity), won the presidential election in 1970 with help from his political devotees and supporters on grass root level, who plastered the city with his political message using urban art, graffiti and posters and helped diversifying pieces of information in the city (Trumper in Nagy, Leiva 2005:142). This stand in complete contrast to the authoritarian regime that right after the coup, brutally coated all public murals to cover any unauthorized messages, also called; “Operación limpieza” (“Operation clean-up”). Operación limpieza targeted specifically any cultural outlet that was reminiscent of Salvador Allende’s tenure. One specific example for this method was a 200-meter-long series of murals right next to the central River Mapocho in Santiago where national artists such as Gracia Barrios and José Balmes depicted a narrative of the “historical worker’s movement in Chile and of the Communist Party” that was coated gray by the
military and subsequently recoated gray when later attempts were made to restore the murals to its original state (Errázuriz 2009:139, 141).

El Mercurio is the oldest and leading daily newspaper in Chile, a conservative media house that leading up the coup, it has in hindsight been proven, worked together with the military junta and the CIA (Howard 2014) to overthrow the Allende government, and during the dictatorship worked as the official messenger for the junta’s agenda. The state for the media and press in general, was on the other hand, in effect, censored and regulated by the governmental body DINACOS, (Dirección Nacional de Informaciones) that restricted liberal ideas and free thinking. The political maneuver took drastic and reshaping paths to a New Chile after the coup and was thus characterized by a sole and exclusive authoritarian power held by the Military junta. 4 Pinochet had, according to himself, a civilizing mission in saving the Chilean population from Marxism and totalitarian communism (Lazzara 2006:16) and through aggressive neoliberal reforms he wanted to transform the country towards a more international market-oriented society with a de-centralized state. According to Puryear,

Pinochet’s “salvationist” version of the events 11 September 1973, the grave human rights violations perpetrated by the dictatorial state must be understood as a price that had to be paid to save the nation from Marxist terrorists. (1994:15)

By this irregular logic, Pinochet wanted to break with a totalitarian universal theory, such as Marxism, without giving up on his own totalitarian undemocratic politics. According to Oppenheim, who further supports this notion, Pinochet was unique in having two completely different approaches to the economic and social compositions that constitutes a society. He “attacked the idea of an activist state” by introducing the free-market economy model but on a social and political level he wanted to dictate and set the rules of conduct (Oppenheim 1993:29), a paradox that worked against his rather modernist approach to his economic ruling. An important key concept to Pinochet’s undemocratic governing was the importance to “depoliticize the country by attacking and eliminating leftist political groups and old institutions and practices” (ibid. 118) which would be further emphasized with the implementation of -new- conservative and traditional cultural values. Television was both allowed and widely promoted by the regime within the Chilean society during the dictatorship. Financial incentives encouraged TV-productions whereas books and literature was charged with higher taxes that aimed to intimidate reading stimulus (Preda 2012:62f).
The allowed medium for popular mass culture was directed from state grounds, thus it became an excellent medium to retain the population to certain cultural frameworks and light entertainment that again subordinated them to their own government. The developed concept was based on the woman in the family, domesticized and outside of the competitive job-market giving enormous space to the sentimental “telenovelas” that explicitly dealt with no opinionating, the collective experience for the viewer was in lack of diverse cultural references and topics (Brunner 1981:94f.).

The artistic state policy from the regime had only two accepted cultural levels, “High Art” and “Mass Culture”. This meant that the mass culture had to be banal and unreflective while the elitist cultural approach, promoted by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs ultimately only favored conservative and traditionalist mediums like opera, ballet, classical music and academic oil painting (Preda 2012:62). This aimed to preserve a notion of - art for the sake of beauty - rather than - art that aimed to propel thought.
4 CADA

“Clearly, intellectuals can play remarkably important roles in democratic transition/.../they criticized the regime when politicians were prevented from doing so.” (Puryear 1994:161)

4.1 Introduction

In 1979 the artists Lotty Rosenfeld and Juan Castillo, the sociologist Fernando Balcells, the poet Raúl Zurita and the writer Diamela Eltit started to work together as Colectivo Acciones de Arte, CADA (The Arts Action Collective), a group that made interventions in public spaces on the streets of Santiago with a series of different ”art actions” (Neustadt 2001:13f). The 4 principal ones were: Para no morir de hambre en el arte (1979), Inversión de Escena (1979), Ay Sudamérica (1981), No+ (1983-1984 – and continuing) and Viuda (1985) (ibid. 2001).

Their political approach bordered on indirect criticism rather than openly criticizing the military regime with art interventions that spoke and created dialogues directly with the population in Santiago. A fundamental thought of what characterized the embodiment of CADA is the relationship between art and politics, they did not describe the two concepts as the same, but both acted as a mean of communication in order to improve life. When politics was the act of creating social activism, everything else that could be labeled as creative meant, for them, to be the artistic action (Neustadt 2001:16). It was in their work that these two notions came together. They were not part of any official cultural agenda or there was a rupture in their practice with the “linear tradition in the Chilean art world that valued sculpture and paintings/.../as they presented their art outside the established gallery spaces and national art institutions such as Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes.”5 CADA’s practice centralized around criticism, transformation of the conservative and legitimate conceptions of

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5 [http://hidvl.nyu.edu/video/003209317.html](http://hidvl.nyu.edu/video/003209317.html) - (1996) Recorded in Santiago, Chile. Video interview with the former director of the national art institution, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Milan Ivelic. (retrieved 2017-01-05)
art. In reality, this created a privilege in CADA’s practice as they were able to project such release on a grass-root level.

4.2 Historical Context

To further comprehend the context in which CADA acted in, it is important to understand how different art forms were labeled and categorized in Chile right before the Military Coup. The conceptual art form, where art can be more than a painting or a sculpture, was not worthy of the epithet of ‘Art’ during the early 1960’s in Chile, despite it being the current that moved this market forward in the western parts of the world at the time, but this prejudice dwindled in the following years. The Chilean avant-garde from the larger period of the 1960’s, starting with el grupo Signo and continuing during the 1970's with the conceptual and non-figurative art by Escena de Avanzada are both characterized by a clear purpose and meaning. Namely, to encourage a critique against the fine arts representation of which they themselves belongs to, and, have their art being visible and an active part of the social context in the political changes of the country (Gazmuri et al 2006:273). When the cultural military agenda was put in order, after the coup, this limited conception of what art supposedly was, was restored and emphasized once again (ibid, 277).

A central notion that combined the different forms constituted in Escena de Avanzada’s art production was based on conceptuality and projects rather than traditional paintings and sculpture. They introduced photography and urban interventions, which at the time were new methods and mediums in the Chilean art world, to perform a more advertising form of public art. Not only was there a rupture from the prior time period but there was also a break from what had been considered avant-garde and what had been the most influential means of artistic production. The cultivated art, like oil painting and official art was according to CADA (Neustadt 200:36) also part of the official politics and the repressive system. By integrating the popular sectors of Santiago, they managed to connect and voice many people’s opinions that for the past decade had not been heard publicly. They were severely criticized from both sides of the political spectrum. People from the right thought they needed to learn respecting law and order, whilst the left felt they were being too elitist, incorporating new technology, such as video and a conceptual rather than utilizing traditional folkloric approaches in art (Neustadt 2001:13).
4.3 Escena de Avanzada

Escena de Avanzada, the larger movement that CADA belonged to, is not the title for a group that represent the entire artistic timeline for this period, even if they today are considered to be the most significant one (Richard 1987). It and can neither be presented as a political activist group as it would not be a representative caption for the whole body of work created during this time. It was a diverse group of artists that under an umbrella name became part of a larger movement that was considered avant-garde during the dictatorship with artists such as Gonzalo Díaz, Carlos Leppe, Eugenio Dittborn, Adriana Valdés and Arturo Duclos (Fonseca and Zegers 2006, Galaz and Ivelic 1988:20). The discourse created by these artists often touched upon political and social criticism, which undoubtedly gave the political discourse of the specific period a greater depth and another interesting layer to now base research on. Therefore, the works of art chosen from this group and for this study are intentionally as political as they can be, so that the criticism against the regime comes to light even if does not represent the entire group as a whole.

The production of Escena de Avanzada was restricted to the confinement of the non-official circuit in the artistic communities. The transformation of the artistic communities that came with the establishment of a military regime created a creative space to reflect on concepts of surveillance and censorship in context to symbolic and meaningful production. It was a way of challenging a repressive reality and a “culture of fear” through self-initiated artist initiatives (Fonseca and Zegers 2006:9, Richard 2011:26, 38). What distinguishes Escena de Avanzada from other artistic movements at the time was their direct connection with intellectualism and academia, often strongly relating their work against the dominating notion of Eurocentric ideals and values in Chilean artistic practices. Their curatorial work was both intrinsic and self-reflective and the critical discourse that characterized this movement “sometimes led to artwork, and artwork sometimes formulated discourse” (Mosquera 2006:31f).
5 Analysis and Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and discussion of the two chosen artworks based on the research questions for this thesis where the analysis seeks to understand how discourse is affected in relations to the specific power dynamic that the Chilean dictatorship entailed. Each subchapter focuses on the interpretation of the official discourse in the analysis, and the conditions that the dictatorship called for (and was explained in Ch.3.3). The analysis and interpretation of the two artworks will implement the theoretical foundations for this essay. The time frame that will be taken into account is limited to the two different time periods, 1979 and 1983-1984, when the artworks were made and intervened with its urban environment. The analysis has also an overall focus on the political voice in society - by including the dictatorships official position on freedom of speech and how the CADA group related to this situation. During the dictatorship of Pinochet, other political parties became illegal and broken down. 1977 can be considered the height of the state terror as no emerging movements had enough “agency” to act on their own. It was only in 1983 that when the massive popular protests began that larger political movements resurfaced onto the social scene once again (Oppenheim 1993:20). The revival of political parties and larger mass mobilization is connected to larger tendencies in society rather than vague, apolitical and specific artist movements working from beneath. The civil society worked in small groups and created platforms of dialogue that was made possible from the “dissociation between the state and civil society” (Puryear 1994:34) something that was achieved through the coup and the implications that followed.

Fairclough’s definition of discourse is that is a social practice that “both reproduces and changes knowledge, identities and social relations including power relations, and at the same time is also shaped by other social practices and structures. Thus, discourse is in a dialectical relationship with other social dimensions” (Jørgensen & Philips, 2002:65). In terms of the situational context it is useful to have in mind questions about time and place. Could this text have been produced earlier than 1979 and 1983? Could this text have been produced outside of Chile? What contextual factors influenced the production and interpretation of these two artworks? Here the theory of Iconography can be helpful for a further understanding of the
artworks, how the social context it was conceived in makes room for the comprehension of the artwork itself.

5.2 Artwork 1: Para no morir de hambre en el arte

*(For not Dying of Starvation in Art)*

![Picture 1](image1.png)

![Picture 2](image2.png)

‘imaginar esta página completamente blanca
imaginar esta página blanca como la leche diaria a consumer
imaginar cada rincón de Chile privado del consumo diario de leche como páginas blancas para llenar.’

*(CADA, 1979, ad in the paper Hoy) (Neustadt 2001:15)*

Revista Hoy, was a bi-weekly journal operating between 1976-1989 opposing the dictatorship and circulating their copies in clandestine environments as an alternative medium to state controlled periodicals. In the 1970’s the Pinochet government had a tight grip on the “flow of information” and oppositional dissidence was weak (Lazzara 2007: 246). “Para no morir de hambre en el arte” was in reality, a series of symbolic events that, mimicked the daily

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6 [http://www.memoriachilena.cl/602/w3-article-96760.html](http://www.memoriachilena.cl/602/w3-article-96760.html) and [http://www.memoriachilena.cl/602/w3-article-773.html](http://www.memoriachilena.cl/602/w3-article-773.html) - A brief history on oppositional periodicals during the dictatorship. (retrieved 2016-12-28)
distribution of milk, a reform that the earlier Allende government had applied nationwide (Gaspar & Ivelic 1988, Appendix 1:53, 453). The performance was staged through several actions: passing out milk in the popular sectors of Santiago, a broadcast of a critical speech within an art gallery and buying full-page ads in different news journals.7 This analysis concentrates on the textual contribution to the work which held the shape of an advertisement in the journal Hoy.

The experimental art tendencies in the end of the 1970’s worked around concepts of “symbolic materiality” and “the discursive figuration of words” (Richard 2001:52) and “Para no morir de hambre” can be situated against that backdrop.

The artwork identifies several possible discourses within itself. It references the earlier government, political reforms by Allende, a communal feeling, nutrition and caring for the next generation, a time that no longer exists, a given commodity for the popular sectors that relied on receiving their daily ½ liters of milk. The text bears the character of poetry with an ambiguous nature, “imaginar esta página como la leche diaria a consumer”. It is only in the social dimension Chile that the message is connected to the earlier Allende government and its political reform. During their tenure, the Allende government proclaimed and made sure every child in the country had the right to receive ½ liter of milk daily as a democratic effort to ensure the growth and health of the Chilean population (Neustadt 2001:15). “Para no morir de hambre en el arte” also plays with the concept of advertisement itself and the notion of content in a commercial “space”, and therefore, a criticism to as who has space to bring a voice forward, even though you pay for it.

"Publicity is usually explained and justified as a competitive medium which ultimately benefits the public (the consumer)/…/it is closely related to certain ideas about freedom/…/For many in Eastern Europe such images in the West sum up what they in the East lack. Publicity, it is thought, offers a free choice”. (Berger 1972:124f)

Here, Berger uses Eastern Europe as an example of a totalitarian mindset. This idea on publicity can be used to contextualize “para no morir de hambre en el arte” as a contribution where a blank page also means that you can fill it out with your own ideas. This, despite its elusiveness and poetic character, could be read as a critical stance against the military dictatorship. Bringing in the idea of the artwork as a visual piece, using the theory of Iconography, the depiction is borrowing both the format and image of advertising at the same

7 http://hidvl.nyu.edu/video/003180953.html - The Hemispheric Institue Digital Video Library, NYC (retrieved 2017-01-06)
time as it is not. The ad is not meant to make you want to buy something rather than having you think, in time’s lost, an earlier phase when things were different, in an alternative reality. “Imaginar esta página completamente blanca…” is the artwork’s own analysis of itself where it goes beyond the borders of the frame and situates it right in the Chilean society of lost political reforms and democratic governance without using any literal connotations.

**5.3 Artwork 2: No +**
The fourth action, 1983-1984 and onwards

In 1983, Chile entered a period of acute political crisis due to a collapse in the economic policies that had been applied ever since the military coup (Drake and Jaksic, 1995:253). Here, a “counterofficial political movement” took energy from the political situation that emerged in the 1980’s. International attention was directed towards the Chilean situation, and the large exile communities became more loud in opposition of the dictatorial regime (Lazzara 2007: 246). In this new reality of liberalizing tendencies, the fourth action took place. “No +” is pronounced No más (No more) and is considered by CADA themselves to be their most important and accomplished action. Being a classic graffiti tag spread around the streets of Santiago, CADA underlined both “the literal and discursive” when it was conceived and realized during late nights of 1983-1984 together with friends and collaborators (Neustadt 2001:36f). In Oxford English Dictionary ‘No’ means “not any” – “not one” – “not a” (OED online 2016) The word in a clinical sense is a negation of doing something, but also for having something. No has many meanings as a word, in a sentence there are even more directions to be taken, and the artwork propelled a continuation for a sentence, or phrases and it invited people to participate, to add, to give “No” a specific depth. The additions that were
made described to a reality that was not official, or spoken about. Herein lies the grand contribution of the art work. By situating it in the social context it was conceived within, it opened up a social dimension in which a voice, the individual person, could contribute to a larger discourse in society, without necessarily having to be identified, but rather adding to a larger current of voices. By adding + más (+ more) to No, it is also specifying the possibility of making a statement.

The action was a collective effort, but it targeted both the individual and the masses at the same time. This work, in its simplicity is a voice both for the individual “I”, the person as a subject and individual in a society and a larger voice, a current of many voices who felt that enough is enough. “No” is spelled the same in English and Spanish which eased the translation process and the ability for people in others countries to relate and contextualize the situation. (the work spread outside Chilean borders and attracted further collaborations with people in support of a democratic governance. No is also about re-appropriating language and words and the meaning of them. Can it be looked at like a democratic process that happened under the dictatorship?

Shortly after “No+” started appearing on various murals around Santiago, a dialogue was created with unknown inhabitants who answered by adding to the ”+” sign, by completing (or continuing?) the sentence with castigating criticisms, examples like; No + tortura, No + desaparecidos, No + dictatura was found throughout the city with a clear anti-dictatorial message (Neustadt 2001:36). What created such impact from this action, was the direct response and collaboration that was created by the direct public participation, a collective action in its broadest sense. The intervention of urban spaces could take a form like in the picture below:
There was a strong black/white narrative in Chile that greatly came from the official discourse by Pinochet as the savior from Marxism, where any potential oversteps from the military junta was justified to save the Chileans from a communist reality (Lazzara 2006). Among Chileans this was also noticeable leading up to plebiscite with the YES/NO sides, the contradicting concepts of a savior/brutal tyrant and each side’s overwhelming conviction for their respective truths. A large part of the population voted Yes in the Plebiscite and in reality didn’t lose by much (Lazzara 2007: 246). The work “No +” was, as such, a contradicting voice to the official social discourse of the “the savior” as it pinpointed everything else that Pinochet also was – murderer, - dictator, -torturer etc. The work was complex in its simplicity as it worked both as a statement on its own and a reflection on a society that wanted to change. The implication of how democratic transitions works in relationship between the state and the civil society (Biekart 1999), “No+” plays with this relationship without claiming authorship nor recognition towards the regime. It worked simply as an active collaboration that integrated civilians in public discourse while living without the possibility to openly do so.

5.4 Further discussion

“The artistic position holds a major role in the re-establishment of a common language and is most commonly the first moment where an alternative discourse (to the official one) was given, as the political discourse was excluded in Chile.”

(Preda in Cavatorta (ed.) 2012:69)

In Chile, advantage of power came from “the apparatus, the institutions, the armed forces, the state’s control over the media and its resources/…/the politics didn’t take seriously culture, except for when it was institutionalized” (Brunner 1985:3). In the case we apply how the civil society should behave under a dictatorial regime that “discourage citizens from actively participate in politics” (Bernhard 2007:546), and how to oppose this repressive stance by engaging in social discourse, does either work of art fall in this category?

Having analyzed the two artworks, it is now important to include the social practice and dimension they belonged to, one of the corner stones by Fairclough and his Critical Discourse Analysis and situate them in the broader social context and shape of Chilean society. Having
in mind the background chapters as well as the analysis, “para no morir de hambre en el arte”, and “No+”, the works have two very different “essences”. The former eluding a more poetic character, where the message is conveyed between the lines, and the latter simply stating the obvious “No+”, both actively engage in a social setting. A difference between the two works is the textual content. “Para no morir de hambre” had more body and written words, within all different stages the action executed, that can be considered as a “final product” conceived by CADA. “No+” had a more open ending to the work, that centered around a statement that was only the beginning of a continuing conversation.

Another central notion that is important, to understand their oeuvre, is the ephemerality and mystical aura that surrounded the group at the time. The artworks have not been kept for later generations to experience firsthand hand, but it is the documentation of the works. A layer of interpretation is therefore added to the artworks, a social context of how to memorize a recent past. Since this thesis is very narrowed to a specific period, starting in 1979, right in the inception of transformation after a couple of years of total repression, the connection made in this thesis is how voices within an arts movement and the generally critical nature of an art practice in this case can be a potential demonstration on an emerging civil rights movement that helped Chile transform back to democracy. If art “encouraged experimentation with new social behaviors, new theoretical avenues, and diverse forms of political and social action” (Edelman 1995:20) the artistic practice of CADA can also be read as the kind of social practice Preda theories on Civil Society argues for where the new communication, although hidden recreates a space that allows for democratic thinking. Political liberalization is the time period in which there is a transitional change in the ruling politics, it doesn't mean that the dictatorship has ended, or even close to ending, but the extreme repression that usually marks the first years in a dictatorship is slowly changing. It also marks the beginning for the unequivocal transitional change back to democratization (without them, the regime necessarily knowing). These tiny spaces within a society is often where the art communities are given space to work and act in.

“Critical discourse analysis is ‘critical’ in the sense that it aims to reveal the role of discursive practice in the maintenance of the social world, including those social relations that involve unequal relations of power. Its aim is to contribute to social change along the lines of more equal power relations in communication processes and society in general.” (Jørgensen & Philips, 2002:63f)

Chile was traditionally a society with an active popular participation. The military junta severely restricted the Chilean society where the media and press was regulated from above and all mediums related to the leftist socialist policies of the Allende government was
crushed. But the daily newspaper El Mercurio, was a channel for the political agenda, and as released internal documents from CIA in 2014 shows, they actively participated in the process leading up to the military overthrow. In the 1960’s, early tendencies of the rupture with more traditional mediums, like academic oil painting, could be found in the Chilean artist community. The military regime favored exactly those traditional mediums and defied pluralistic and new expressions. “Operation clean-up” (Errázuriz 2012) targeted all public murals that evoked the earlier political agenda by the Allende government. TV, a medium that transmitted popular mass culture was allowed and encouraged as it was controlled by the military junta and aimed at being banal and unreflective. With this analysis, my aim was to bring forward this interception of Politics and Art through my research of this specific case study in how Chilean artists, and specifically, CADA became an actor for a re-emerging resurrection of civil society in Chile and how these art actions possibly influenced a new social discourse of resistance in the society it acted within.

5.5 Legacy today

This chapter wants to highlight the importance CADA holds today in relation to the discourse they created during their time active. The actions executed by CADA created a space for dialogue within the authoritarian discourse that allowed people to reflect on their democratic past as well as what could be their future. From their first action and onwards, they continuously worked around the concept of anonymity and leaving their actions unsigned (Neustadt 2001:37). Although they are now known for their work and impact, at the time, being known without being known, left a space for inclusion and participation by the public to interact with the works and, with time, transforming the works into a platform of communication for the democratic movement in Chile.

Though only a fraction of the population may experience particular works of arts and literature directly, the influence of these works is multiplied, extended and reinforced in other ways; through variations and references in popular art and discourse/… (Edelman 1995:2)

The elusive nature of their production and the limited availability to have experienced one of their actions firsthand, made any immediate impact in Santiago and its citizens rather small. But having dared to open up a space for reflection of the current reality must still be considered a turning point in a dictatorial Chile where freethinking was not allowed and also punished if discovered. Their production created an informal space in the border of political
life and popular resistance. A crossover between the physical space where the work was conceived and the unlimited space that is the individual mind and notion of self. Diamela Eltit, is today considered to be on the “original voices” of Contemporary Chilean literature (Nagy 2005:ix) and everybody are still active, in their respective fields, Neustadt 2001:17). In 2015, Lotty Rosenfeld represented, together with fellow Chilean artist photographer Paz Errázuriz, the Chilean Pavilion of the 56th Venice Biennale.8

6 Conclusion

This thesis targeted the critical analysis on artistic policies and its implications on social discourse in the civil society during the Pinochet dictatorship. More specifically, for this purpose, the aim of this essay was to analyze two artworks by the artistic group CADA that was part of a larger artistic and critical movement in Chile during this time in order to strengthen the ideas of the civil society’s discursive power to reflect on its current situation. I investigated two artworks by the Chilean art group CADA who comprised of and can be used symbolically to represent their total oeuvre and historical significance by attempting to answer following question:

1. How did the two artworks analyzed in this thesis re-create the social discourse in the Chilean society 1979 and onwards?

By having this focus for the thesis, my hope has been to provide a deeper understanding on how artists and intellectuals influenced the social discourse in Chile ahead of larger protesting civilian movements for the return to democracy. By proposing the artist as a civil actor who executes his right of freedom of speech by exhibiting works of art, and specifying this idea, through the investigation of the group CADA, my aim was also to highlighting a further discussion on how political liberalization and burgeoning voices can look. My hope has been to say something about how a political voice can take different shapes in a society under repression. As a group, CADA worked under the frame of art activism. As shown in the thesis, this consisted in a thematic approach of ‘art as action’, where the group organized public and urban interventions that without being openly political, created a social sphere and discourse that gave voice to the forbidden political. They worked on a micro level that conceptually dealt with various themes, fragmentary memories, breaking up the official discourse, and also, the appliance of new formats (in Chile) like photography. In retrospect, it is also evident that CADA has taken place in the Chilean art history and played an important role for later generations. CADA’s body of work is ultimately not only a testimony of the period but is also giving latter generations the possibility to reevaluate ideas about resistance and revolt.
visual arts, in itself, is based on form and context, and a way of criticizing the society in which it works in.

Dealing with resistance, it is in theory free from subordination based on external factors. This gives a double meaning for an art group working in a society with a ruling military regime. Firstly, because of the fact, that working with art deals with criticism in one way or the other. Secondly, as the dictatorship of Pinochet imposed a repressive set of rules in which to deal with artistic production, in effect meant that everything made under these circumstances can be interpreted as an act of resistance. The conclusion is then that the primary idea of CADA being foremost a political actor in their art production is of a secondary nature. Just by working in this specific context meant that they worked within a political entity even if their aim could be of a different character. The space they created in this repressive society, automatically gave room and a space for thinkers who thought differently from the repressive state. They created their own space where ideas and desires could flourish outside state control, which in itself is a contradicting claim, as it existed within the borders of a repressed society. This, which ultimately and automatically becomes a political act since it consists of actions that celebrates both the free will to think and express oneself and a subjective opinion, something that goes far beyond the very essence of the meaning of a dictatorship and what it is bound to represent.

It feels safe to conclude for this paper that artistic production in dictatorships can be used as a method to question the formulated social existence and regulations imposed by the dictatorial regime. It might be an importance that is given later on, in retrospect, the canonization of artistic production often comes after its conception, when later generations gives it importance. But, by this logic, that must also mean that they actually were important during the time they were active. The interrelationship between the two affects the other.

In effect during the time they operated, it can’t be argued that they held any significant importance as critical actors for change, as discourse evolves and gets picked up by larger masses, the original messenger might go by unnoticed. It would be difficult to argue that the large protest movement connected to the plebiscite, that engaged large parts of the Chilean society, was aware of from where ‘No+’ originally stemmed from. Their practice integrated the civilians to create their own sentences, and formulating a discourse that, as it later turned out, helped vocalize the political agenda of the re-awakened democratic movements that had
started to voice their demands. But as they were not considered as a real threat to the Chilean state they were able to work under the radar, and commenting on core issues that today are important tools in understanding the social and political situation of then.

A conclusion for this thesis is therefore; in order to understand the momentum the practice of CADA holds today, their contribution of using discourse in the realm of public space as an art form, should regard them nonetheless as an important and critical voice during the dictatorship. Especially “No+” transformed from being a verbal statement of dissidence into a visual symbol of resistance. As language is important are also symbols and the visual power of communication. What makes CADAs practice Art when other written plastered protests are not? Verbal and written resistance has some many different examples worldwide in demonstrations, banners and tags, that it is difficult to pick even one for reference.

The conceptual idea of the artist, and in this case the artists, were in the position to facilitate the process of transition. They expanded the notion of authorship in the participatory process and nature of the work when it received responses from the citizens/population. The language they have used in their art practice is thus determined by the social structure it was conceived in. To conclude, it would be interesting to find more research on this intersection and analysis of Art and Politics, by investigating specific artist positions and how they tend to move in some social strata of ambiguity which allows for, in sense, a level of freedom ahead of the larger masses.
List of Images

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All images courtesy of The Hemispheric Institute, NYC
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