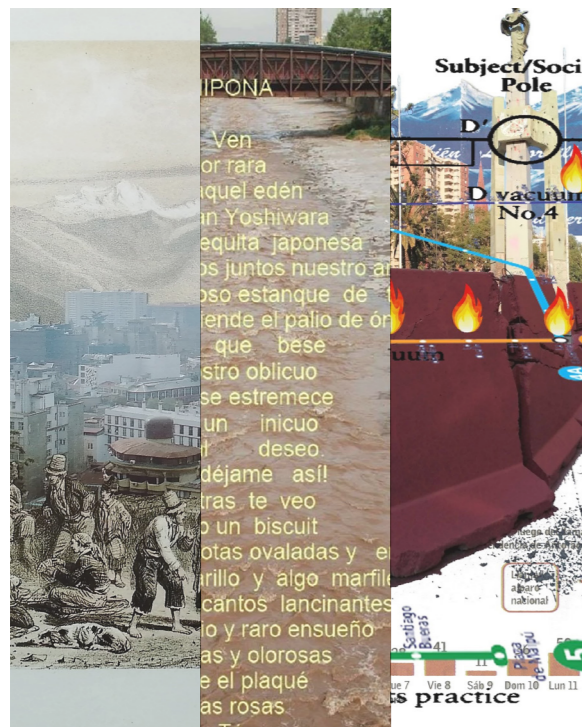


Modernity's Bridge



Anthony McInnery,
Beatriz Maturana
and Museo Benjamín
Vicuña Mackenna

This concluding report is presented as three extended image captions: 1) the initial investigation of the Mapocho River Santiago de Chile 2015–2017; 2) the Project Anywhere proposal developed between 2017–2019 investigating heritage, place, and movable bridges; and 3) the investigation undertaken in the reality of the research site becoming the epicenter of the Chilean October Crisis 2019–2021 (18-O).

A Modern Constitution

In 1989, the Berlin Wall came down in Europe and the Western world acknowledged that its economic model was committing global ecocide. Bruno Latour calls 1989 the “year of miracles.”¹ To paraphrase Latour, the Constitution between nature and science, between humans and things had, through the hybridization of language, discourse, and rhetoric, driven us to be either anti-modern (without ever having been modern) or postmodern, after which there is nothing.

In 1989, Chileans amended the 1980 Constitution imposed by the Dictatorship as a prelude to the return to democracy. In 1989, 95% of registered voters voted in democratic elections. In 1990, Chile returned to democracy relatively peacefully. In a unique, post-Cold War position as the living laboratory of neo-liberal economics, it had just elected a Centre-Left coalition, the *Concertación*. This coalition would be re-elected with different Presidents over 20 consecutive years. These governments reduced poverty from over 50% in 1990 to under 6% by 2010 and delivered two decades of economic growth. They conducted a reconciliation process, the envy of any post-traumatic country, e.g., Argentina, Ireland, South Africa.

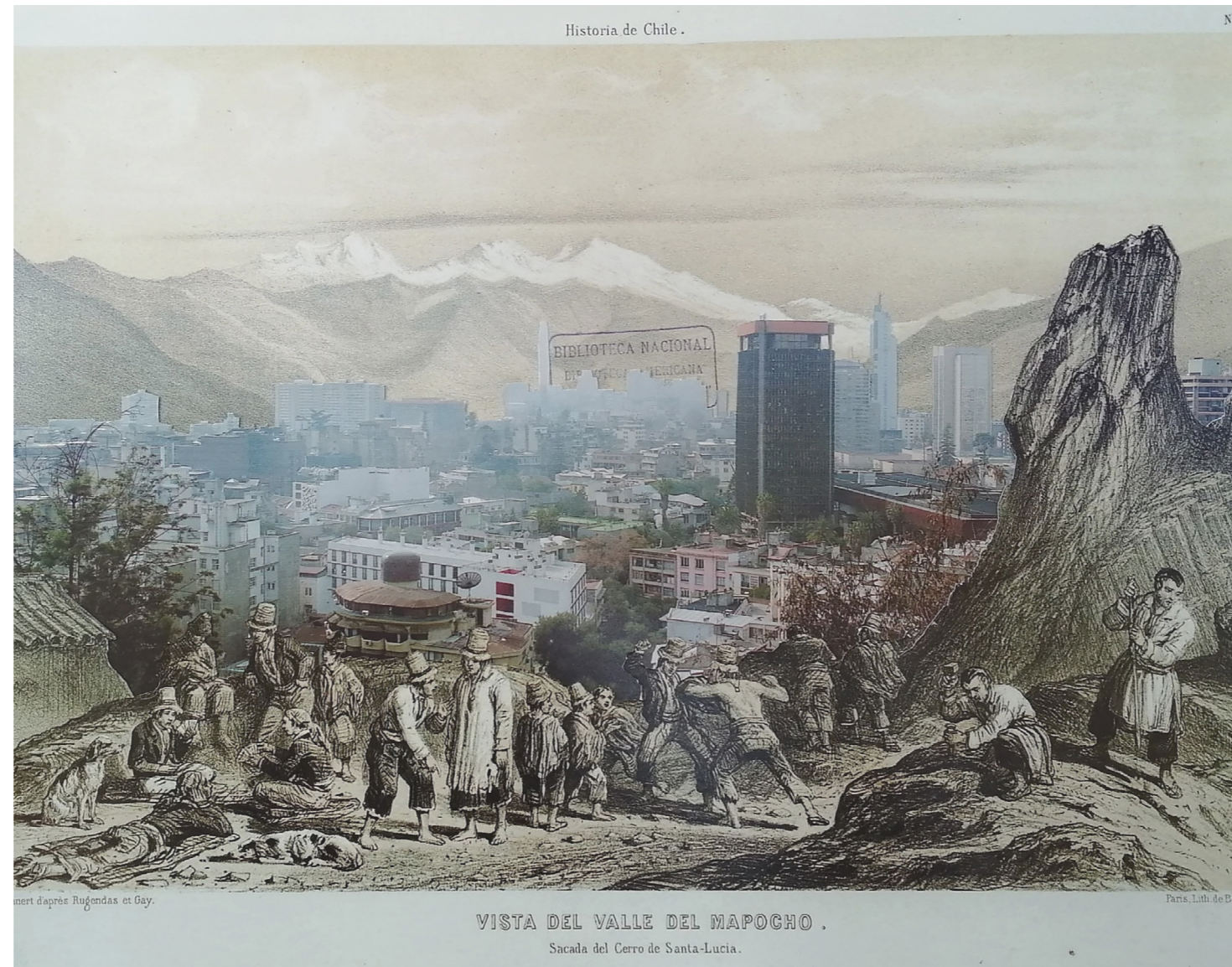
In *Lo Que El Dinero Sí Puede Comprar* (All That Money Can Buy) Carlos Peña argues that Chile was democratic but not modern before 1973, modernised but not democratic during the Dictatorship of 1973–1989, and only modern and democratic after the return to democracy in 1990.² In *Pensar Malestar. La crisis de octubre y la cuestión constitucional* (Thinking Discontent. The October Crisis and the Constitutional Question) Peña analyses the reasons contributing to 18-O, the relationship to the 1980 Constitution and the plebiscite for a new Constitution in 2020.³ Peña does not adequately explain the unprecedented violence and destruction of the protest.

The crisis began on 18 October 2019 with the simultaneous attack of Metro stations and city-wide looting, arson and vandalism sparked by a 30 peso (4 US cents) rise in public transport fares. Fifteen days later, in an interview on CNN, Marxist Historian Gabriel Salazar predicted that it would take four weeks of this type of protest for the Government to capitulate to protesters’ demands.⁴ On 15 November 2019, a Peace Accord was reached where the centre-right government delivered a raft of legislative and constitutional reforms and set the date for a plebiscite for the writing of a new Constitution. Protesters re-appropriated Victor

Jara’s 1971 anti-Vietnam war song “El derecho de vivir en paz” (the right to live in peace) as the anthem and their “protests” escalated, spread, and continued. Peace came with COVID-19 quarantine on 27 March 2020.

This image formed part of a body of hypothetical and realized interventions in the three defining elements of the contemporary Mapocho River. The Museo Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna is named after the nineteenth-century Francophile Intendente of Santiago, the father of Santiago's first modernization. The canalization of the Mapocho River was envisioned by Vicuña Mackenna as part of making Santiago "the Paris of South America."⁵ *Vista del valle del Mapocho, sacada del Cerro Santa Lucia*, 1854 (View of the Mapocho Valley taken from Santa Lucia Hill) is a lithograph produced by F. H. Lehnert based on the drawings of German artist Mauricio Rugendas and French Naturalist Claudio Gay. It appears in the *Atlas de la historia física y política de Chile* by Claudio Gay published the same year. In this image, the origin of the Mapocho River, running through the valley, dominates the background: the snow-capped Andes Mountain range. In the foreground of this lithograph, on top of Cerro Santa Lucia, is a group of male citizens of the young Republic of Chile. In the centre are two, bare fist-fighting campesinos, to the left, a street dog, men playing cards, children and, to the right, geologist-engineers. Cerro Santa Lucia was transformed into an emblematic park by Vicuña Mackenna's modernization in 1872.

From the same perspective as Rugendas' published drawing, in Vicuña Mackenna's public park, Anthony McInnery took a photograph in 2016. Three iconic buildings mark this contemporary skyline. The first, in the midground, is the 1970s modernist, Corten steel tower of the building now known as the GAM. This tower is part of the modernist San Borja housing project 1967–1977. In the chronological and physical middle of this housing project was Salvador Allende's 1000 day promise of a democratic transition to Socialism without falling into dictatorship of the



Anthony McInnery
Vista del valle del Mapocho, sacada del Cerro Santa Lucia, 1854–2015, 2016, Collage, 40 X 60 cm, Exhibited at Museo Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna (MBVM) Santiago, Chile in the artist's solo exhibition *Orillas, Puentes y el Torrente (Edges, Bridges, and the Torrent)*

proletariat.⁶ This promise could be neither kept nor broken as the right-wing military coup occurred on September 11, 1973. The second tower in this photograph, at the same visual height, to the right, is the Torre Telefonica (Telephone tower) located in Plaza Baquedano and completed in 1993. The third tower at this visual height is on the hazy horizon, to the left. Torre Costanera (Riverside Tower) is the tallest building in central and south America and was constructed in 2013.

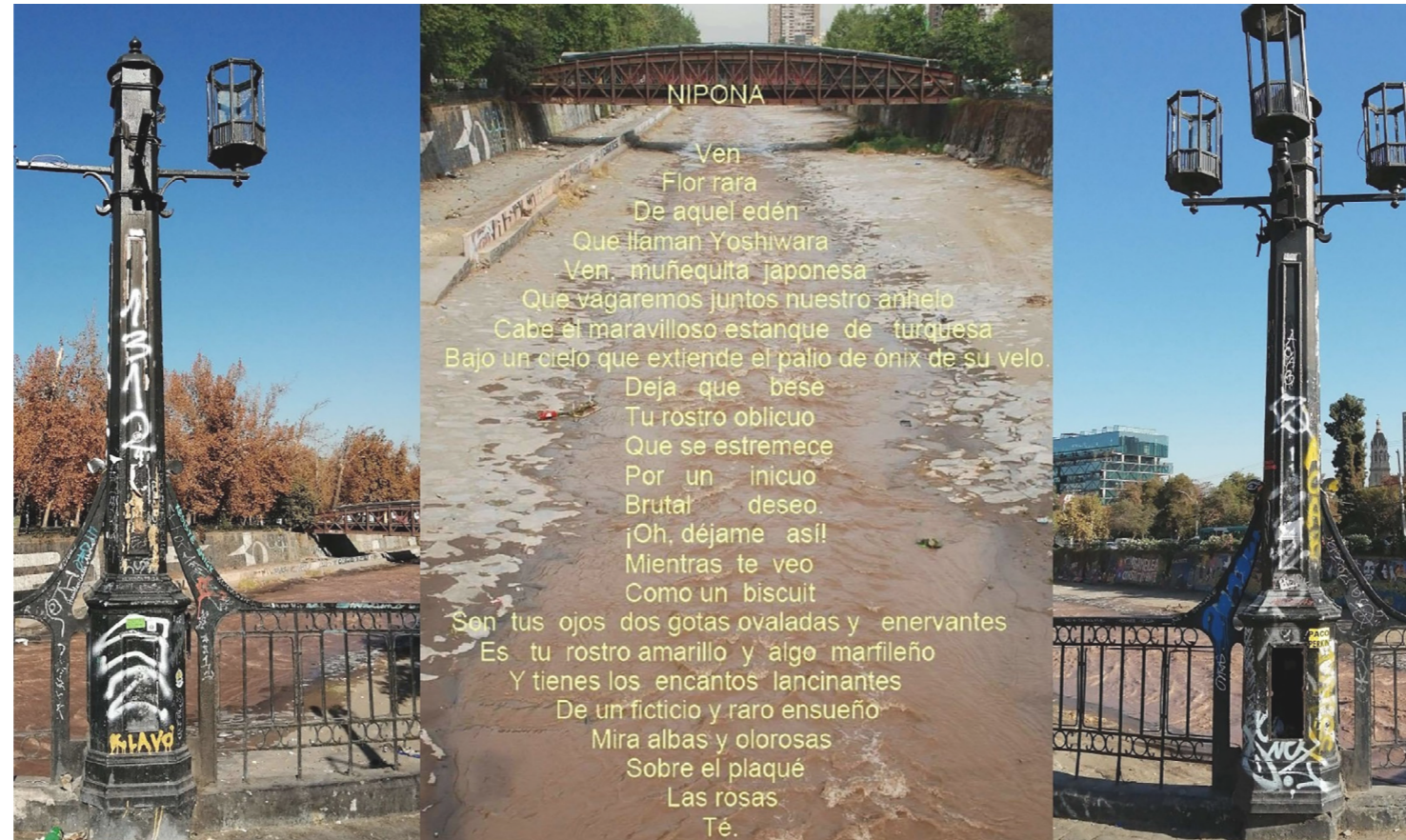
The collage of two views from Cerro Santa Lucia, 1854 and 2016, spatially and temporally bridges Chile's pre-modern and 19th-century modernization with a tumultuous period of the 20th-century "modernisation without modernity" of the 1960s and 70s, to create a landscape architectural portrait of a 21st-century modern, liberal democracy before the October Crisis.⁷

The existence of the bridge allows us to debate the meaning of the border which is in turn the antithesis of the barrier. We sometimes speak of the language barrier, but language is a border, rather than a barrier.⁸

For Marc Auge, the bridge is the perfect artwork. It is nature transitioning into culture. The bridge is both a crossway *and* a border. All languages can be learnt, and barriers crossed.

The Mapocho River is a natural barrier that historically breached its banks. Its course episodically branched away at the place now called Plaza Baquedano and ran down what is now the main avenue of Santiago, Alameda Avenue. The Mapocho river was tamed in the nineteenth century with a three-kilometer canal crossed by nine, modern Meccano bridges of which four remain today. One bridge is in its original site. The second and third are identical bridges and, in the 1980s, one was moved upstream to sit beside its indistinguishable twin. The fourth bridge was originally named after the Chilean Avant-guard poet, Vicente Huidobro-Garcia who, with Apollinaire in Paris, created concrete poetry. This bridge was renamed Pio Nono (Grandad Pope) after the 19th-century liberal Pope IX. This Meccano bridge was moved downstream in 1986 and was replaced with a wrought-iron railing, imitation neo-classical bridge that kept the name Pio Nono. Like readymade artifacts, the four Meccano bridges were heritage listed in 1996, i.e., the object, not the function or place of transition, was protected.⁹ The Vicente Huidobro bridge, in its new location, is closed as a bridge having been converted into a theatre, and no one refers to it by the poet's name. Interestingly, the Pio Nono bridge is commonly mistaken as real heritage.

The montage of this amnesia and appropriation of history has been updated in the reality of the Chilean October Crisis 2019. Huidobro's concrete poem still sits in the artificial



riverbed of the Mapocho's canal. In the background, the poet's namesake bridge/now theatre, was, after 18 October made into a makeshift first aid center by and for protesters. The imitation Pio Nono bridge connects with Plaza Baquedano, now the epicenter of protest violence and destruction. This imitation heritage bridge is added to the montage and shows the vandalism and graffiti of protesters who also smashed up the pavement of the bridge for missiles to throw at Police.

This is a photomontage of original photographs, media images and graphics concerning “events” after October 18, 2019. It is an urban landscape portrait of the area centered on Plaza Baquedano, now called Ground Zero. On the horizon of this image is the cover of a box of Andes matches with the Andes Mountain range and the words, *La Cordillera es nuestra, las historias también* (the mountain range is ours, also its history). Three vertical structures mark this horizon-skyline: 1) the monument to General Manuel Baquedano in the centre of Plaza Baquedano (centre), 2) the national cultural centre, the GAM, and its tower in Alameda Avenue (left) and 3) the Police monument on the opposite side of Alameda Avenue (right). Underpinning this landscape is the official map of the underground Metro public transport system with the blue line indicating the relative position of the Mapocho River. The bar chart of nationwide “events”, October to November, is the baseline. Ground Zero, as the epicentre of “events”, is interspersed with Bruno Latour’s schema *The modern Constitution and its practice*.¹⁰

After October 18, 2019, the original research site for *The Bridge as a Readymade* became surreal, insurrectional, violent, and destructive.¹¹ Ground Zero was occupied by rioting, burning, looting and vandalising protesters every night, except one, from October 18, 2019, until March 27, 2020. Eighteen buildings in Ground Zero were looted, ransacked, and burnt. All street furniture and infrastructure were destroyed and used in barricades. A soccer pitch area of pavement was smashed up by protesters with hammers and crowbars for missiles. Eighty-five percent of businesses sealed themselves behind protective re-enforced welded sheet metal facades. A four-metre-high reinforced, welded sheet metal wall was created around the GAM’s new theatre extension. All its glass facades were covered in riveted sheet metal. The building was vandalised,

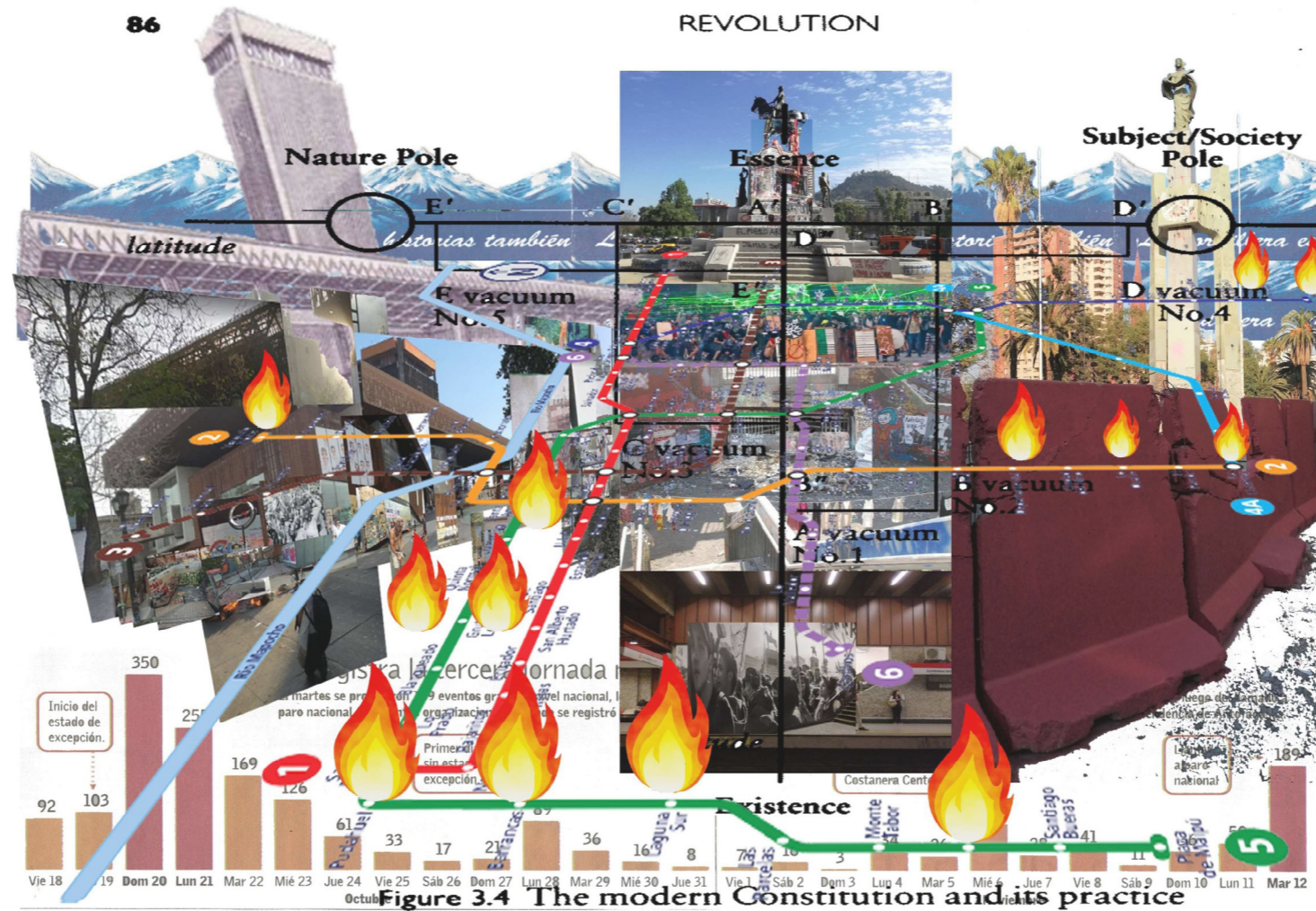


Figure 3.4 The modern Constitution and its practice

burnt, willingly covered in protest graffiti, and used as a first aid center for and by protesters. Opposite, the Police Monument, and behind this the Police Church, had a 2.5 meter concrete barricade installed in January 2020. The estimated material damage in Ground Zero for two months of protest is 106 million USD, not including the Metro public transport system damage of 250 million USD.¹² The protest violence and destruction continued. By March 2020, 104 public transport buses had been destroyed by protesters and the Metro had 77 stations attacked, 20 by arson with six stations and five trains destroyed.¹³

Inverted Reality

Before 18-O, Chile held the highest United Nations Human Development Index in Central and South America, number 42 in the world.¹⁴ One year before 18-O, a public opinion survey identified the number one issues that the government should address: public order, crime, and delinquency. The least important of 13 issues were transport, human rights, and the Constitution.¹⁵ 18-O began by inverting this reality through language, the selective memory of media reporting and the actions of arson, looting, vandalism, and assault presented as legitimate protest.

On October 18, protesters sabotaged the Metro public transport system with simultaneous arson attacks on 20 stations. The violent and destructive mass fare evasion campaign that precipitated this was called *Civil Disobedience*. On October 19, protesters alleged human rights abuse by the Government, Police and Army under the State of Emergency that was declared in response to the nationwide looting, arson, vandalism, and assault euphemistically called *events*. On October 25, the 1.2 million protesters demanded a plebiscite on the writing of a new Constitution and the impeachment of the President for alleged

human rights abuses in calling a State of Emergency. Not one word protested the protesters' violent and destructive *events*.

November 12 recorded the highest daily number of violent protest *events* after the State of Emergency was lifted. These 189 *events* were called *protests*.

On November 15, Chilean pop star Mon Laferte bared her breasts at the Latin Grammy's to reveal the televised message "They torture, rape and murder in Chile." She added she would loot, vandalise, and burn to redress her unsubstantiated claim. Violence and destruction become fashionable *protest events*. On November 18, protopunk Patti Smith rode into Santiago and with her song "People have the Power" legitimised violence and destruction as *fashionable protest* for an older audience. In the devastated public spaces of Santiago, Chilean Feminist collective, Lastesis (the Theses), launched their now worldwide hit, *El violador en tu camino* (A Rapist in Your Path). The first rapists in their lyric's path are the Police, then Judges, the State, and the President. Patriarchal capitalism was the *Systemic Abuse* justifying everyone's words, actions, and beliefs. On November 30, balaclava clad protesters organised and offered free, daytime, bi-lingual tours of Ground Zero called "The art of protest." Later, "Come Live the Chilean Revolution" could be booked on Airbnb events.¹⁶

Nationwide, there were 13,812 protest "events" between October 18, 2019, and March 27, 2020. This does not include the release of the three-song soundtrack. The national cost in material damage caused by five months of 18-O protest was 4.5 billion USD. The cost in lost national economic growth was 3.5 billion USD.¹⁷ The social injury to the body politic would take another 30 years to be evaluated.

In October 2020, COVID quarantine was lifted. Every Friday afternoon since, in Plaza Baquedano, balaclava wearing protesters loot, burn and close the city center for five hours in protest. The heritage listed churches of San Francisco de Borja church (the Police Church) and Asunción, both in Ground Zero, were destroyed by protest arson attacks to mark 18-O's first anniversary. Fifty percent of registered voters turned out and 80% voted to write a new Constitution by a Constitutional Assembly. In November 2020, an international survey in eleven global cities found that 70% of respondents had read or knew little or nothing about 18-O yet, 50% believed it would be positive for democracy in Chile and 23% didn't know.¹⁸ In January 2021, the front page of El Mercurio shows the appropriated *Fridays for the Future* looting, arson, and vandalism, now called looting, arson, and vandalism, as the number one issue that the Government should address.¹⁹

1 Bruno Latour, *We have never been modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1991), 8.

2 Carlos Peña, *Lo que su puede si el dinero comprar* (Penguin Random House Group, 2017).

3 Carlos Peña, *Pensar el malestar: La crisis de octubre y la cuestión constitucional* (Penguin Random House Group, 2020).

4 Gabriel Salazar, "Si el presidente Piñera tuviera un mínimo de conciencia histórica y sensibilidad social, él dimite," CNN, July 11, 2019, https://www.cnnchile.com/programas-completos/gabriel-salazar-pinera-conciencia-historica-sensibilidad-social-dimite_20191107/.

5 "BENJAMÍN VICUÑA MACKENNA: EL INTENDENTE QUE CAMBIÓ SANTIAGO," 2017, *Museo Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna*, https://www.museovicunamackenna.gob.cl/647/w3-propertyvalue-43408.html?_noredirect=1.

6 The building at the base of the Corten Steel tower was originally the UNCTAD III building, the most important urban project of Allende's government. The building known as the GAM is built over parts of the UNCTAD III building that remained after 40% of the building was accidentally destroyed by fire in 2006. The "transition to socialism" paraphrases Carlos Peña observations in 2007 about the Right-wing's alibi for the coup and, again in 2021, Peña's comments concerning the options for the Left wing in the 2022 Presidential elections post 18-O.

7 Carol Illanes, Matías Allende and Christian Bartlau, *Trabajo en utopía: Monumentalidad arquitectónica en el Chile de la Unidad Popular* (Santiago: Adrede Editora, 2014).

8 Marc Augé, "The Symbolism of the Border," in *Of Bridges and Borders Vol. II*, ed. Sigismond De Vajay (Zurich: JPR|Ringier, 2014), 10.

9 "Here is a thing that I call art, but I didn't even make it myself." As we know, "art," etymologically speaking, means "to hand make" (1959 interview with Marcel Duchamp by George Heard Hamilton about the Readymade).

10 Bruno Latour, *We have never been modern*, 86.

11 An analysis of the situation formed the basis of the report presented at the Art Anywhere virtual conference, Venturing Panel presentations in March 2020. <https://www.artanywhere.net/venturing>.

12 ATISBA Monitor, Estallido Social. Eje Providencia Alemada 2019.

13 "Balance daños 19 de octubre," *Metro de Santiago*, October 19, 2019, <https://www.metro.cl/noticias/balance-danos-19-de-octubre-2019>.

14 Pedro Conceição, *Human Development Report 2019. Beyond income, beyond averages, beyond today: Inequalities in human development in the 21st century* (New York: United Nations Development Programme, 2019). <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr2019.pdf>.

15 Centro de Estudios Públicos, "Mayo 2019 ESTUDIO NACIONAL DE OPINIÓN PÚBLICA N° 83," June 13, 2019, *Encuesta CEP*, <https://www.cepchile.cl/cep/encuestas-cep/encuestas-2010-2019/estudio-nacional-de-opinion-publica-mayo-2019>.

16 This was removed by Airbnb but was advertised for a price of \$25 per person that included goggles and a bottle of water.

17 Mario Mercier, "Recuento de un estallido," *El Mercurio*, October 18, 2020.

18 Estudios de Fundación Marca País, "Socios de Chile creen que la actual situación tendrá efectos positivos en la democracia del país," *El Mercurio*, November 22, 2020.

19 Diego Rojas and Daniel Inostroza, "Expertos Piden reforzar estrategia preventiva para frenar violencia de los Viernes en el centro," *El Mercurio*, January 23, 2021, <https://digital.elmercurio.com/2021/01/23/C/O93TJFAB#zoom=page-width>.