

**CZECH UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES PRAGUE**

Faculty of Environmental Sciences

**IMPACTS OF GRAFFITI IN URBAN BUILD  
AREAS: SOCIAL, CULTURAL, PHYSICAL,  
ENVIRONMENTAL**



**MASTER'S THESIS**

Author: Damilola Opeyemi Ojo

Supervisor: doc. Peter Kumble, Ph.D

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## DIPLOMA THESIS ASSIGNMENT

Damilola Opeyemi Ojo

Landscape Planning

Thesis title

**Impacts of Graffiti in urban build areas: social, cultural, physical, environmental**

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### Objectives of thesis

Graffiti and street art have been prominent in urban fabric worldwide and has served to contribute to political, cultural, social, and environmental views. There exists extensive documentation on the history and culture of graffiti, particularly since the late 1970's subway art movement. This has appeared in numerous articles, websites, blogs, and social media documenting it as being an urban counterculture movement.

In this thesis, the student will provide a connection between the two commonly stated facts about graffiti: 1. As art form and as vandalizing private and public property, and 2. Highlighting the positive and aesthetic influences that graffiti has upon the urban landscape and urban culture.

The student will explore the economic and social impacts of graffiti at key locations in Prague 3, Zizkov. He will use site analysis, interviews and surveys to determine both acceptance and opposition to graffiti in the case study area and propose solutions for decision makers in Prague 3 and elsewhere.

### Methodology

The student will conduct a literature review explaining and detailing how graffiti can be easily traced back to have started during the pre-historic times when petroglyphs were used on rock walls to illustrate maps or landmarks, similarly as cave paintings, used for communication. Also in the literature review, he will explain how modern-day graffiti possibly began with the propagation of "Kilroy" a war doodle evolving in the 1940's, that then emerged as a figure of patriotism during the second World War. He will make the connection of modern day graffiti and tagging as an expression of territory, art and cultural expression.

He will conduct an oral and written survey of graffiti artists, government institutions in Prague 3, and also include some of the general public to gauge their impressions (approval / disapproval).

From this survey work and site analysis, he will propose a series of policy solutions for decision makers in Prague 3 to better guide them in supporting the positive impacts and combating the associated negative impacts to the health and economy of Prague 3.

Results will be summarized

Discussion of the body of work

Concluding statements.

**The proposed extent of the thesis**

60 pages

**Keywords**

Graffiti, street art, social impact, urban art

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**Recommended information sources**

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- McDonald, F. 2013. Understanding Graffiti : Multidisciplinary Studies from Prehistory to the Present. Ed by Troy R Lovata, Elizabeth Olton. New York: Skyhorse Publishing.
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**The Diploma Thesis Supervisor**

doc. Peter Kumble, Ph.D.

**Supervising department**

Department of Land Use and Improvement

**Advisor of thesis**

Henry Hanson

Electronic approval: 18. 3. 2019

**prof. Ing. Petr Sklenička, CSc.**

Head of department

Electronic approval: 19. 3. 2019

**prof. RNDr. Vladimír Bejček, CSc.**

Dean

Prague on 11. 04. 2019

**Declaration**

I declare that I have worked on my diploma thesis “Impacts of Graffiti in urban build areas: social, cultural, physical, environmental” by myself and I have used mentioned resources at the end of the thesis.

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Damilola Opeyemi Ojo

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Finally, I wish to thank my family and friends for their encouragement and support throughout my study.

## **Abstract**

Graffiti can be easily traced back to have started during the pre-historic times when petroglyphs were used on rock walls to illustrate maps or landmarks, similarly as cave paintings, used for communication. The modern-day graffiti possibly began with the propagation of “Kilroy” a war doodle evolving in the 1940’s, who emerged as a figure of patriotism during the second World War. Graffiti wasn’t the only subcultural movement springing forth in the city, just as breakdancing and hip hop were also prevalent activities among inner city kids. Graffiti can be described as an antisocial behaviour performed in order to gain attention, or as a form of seeking ecstasy, but it also can be described as an expressive art form.

The study was carried out as an ethnographic research in Prague 3, Czechia, three main participants (public, graffiti artists, and government institutions) were drawn from three core sample frame (residential, commercial, and industrial areas). This thesis tends to provide a connection between the two commonly stated fact about graffiti as art or crime, as well as highlighting its aesthetic, social, and economic impact and finally proposing ways by which graffiti can be mitigated / managed.

## **Keywords:**

*Graffiti, Street Art, Social Impact, Urban Art*

## Abstraktní

Graffiti lze snadno vystopovat až do doby, kdy začaly v před-historických dobách, kdy byly na skalních stěnách používány petroglyfy, které ilustrují mapy nebo památky, podobně jako jeskynní malby používané pro komunikaci. Moderní graffiti možná začalo propagací "Kilroy" válečného doodle vyvíjejícího se ve čtyřicátých letech, který se ukázal jako postava vlastenectví během druhé světové války. Graffiti nebylo jediným subkulturním hnutím, které se vynořilo ve městě, stejně jako breakdance a hip hop byly také převládajícími aktivitami mezi dětmi ve městě. Graffiti lze popsat jako antisociální chování prováděné za účelem získání pozornosti, nebo jako formu hledání extáze, ale lze ji také popsat jako expresivní uměleckou formu.

Studie byla provedena jako etnografický výzkum v Praze 3, v Česku, tři hlavní účastníci (veřejnost, graffiti umělci a vládní instituce) byly čerpány ze tří hlavních vzorových rámců (rezidenční, komerční a průmyslové oblasti). Tato práce má tendenci poskytovat spojení mezi oběma běžně uváděnými skutečnostmi o graffiti jako umění nebo zločin, jakož i zdůrazňovat její estetický, sociální a ekonomický dopad a nakonec navrhnout způsoby, jak lze graffiti zmírnit / řídit.

Klíčová slova:

Graffiti, Street Art, Sociální dopad, Urban Art

## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	i
Abstraktní .....	ii
Table of contents.....	iii
List of Figures .....	iv
List of Tables .....	vi
1.0 Introduction .....	1
1.1 Aim and Objective .....	1
1.2 Research Question .....	2
2.0 Literature Review.....	3
2.1 History .....	3
2.1.1 American History .....	4
2.1.2 European History .....	14
2.2 Graffiti & Modern Culture.....	18
2.3 Grafitti Styles.....	20
2.3.1 Common Styles .....	20
2.3.1.1 Tag Style.....	20
2.3.1.2 Throw Up. ....	21
2.3.1.3 Blockbuster .....	21
2.3.1.4 Wildstyle.....	22
2.3.1.5 Stencil .....	22
2.3.1.6 Mural.....	23
2.3.2 New Trend .....	23
2.3.2.1 Reverse Graffiti .....	23
2.3.2.2 Light Graffiti .....	25
2.3.2.3 Digital Graffiti.....	26
2.4 Street Art and the Global City .....	27
3.0 Methodology.....	31
4.0 Discussion.....	38
4.1 Perception of Graffiti in Public and Private Space .....	38
4.2 Graffiti and Street Art as a Tool to Preserve a City's Cultural Identity .....	54
4.3 The Patronage Effect of Graffiti on Businesses.....	56
4.4 Aesthetic Stand Point.....	59
5.0 Recommendations .....	65
6.0 Conclusion.....	68
References.....	69
Appendix.....	76

## List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Showing the relationship between graffiti and street art .....	2
Figure 2.1: Showing ancient petroglyphs .....	3
Figure 2.2: Brassai's photography.....	4
Figure 2.3: Kilroy's signature found everywhere US forces were stationed .....	5
Figure 2.4: Showing pop culture and graffiti .....	8
Figure 2.5: Showing a musical album cover.....	9
Figure 2.6: Showing graffiti sprayed train.....	10
Figure 2.7: Showing Keith Haring's paint about homosexuality.....	11
Figure 2.8: Showing one of Jean-Michel Basquiat's markings.....	12
Figure 2.9: Blek le Rat's stencil graffiti.....	13
Figure 2.10: Showing a portion of Berlin wall.....	15
Figure 2.11 : Showing West Berlin wall, covered with disgust of people against the wall .....	16
Figure 2.12 :Showing West Berlin wall as it is today .....	16
Figure 2.13: Showing Banksy's artwork on the West Bank wall bordering Israel and Palestine at Abu Dis in 2005. ....	17
Figure 2.14: Showing a mural by Dmitri Vrubel's that portrays the Soviet Union's Communist party general secretary Leonid Brezhnev, kissing the East German Socialist party general secretary Erich Honecker. The words written in Russian: 'My God, help me to survive this deadly love.' .....	18
Figure 2.15: Showing tag graffiti style .....	20
Figure 2.16: Showing an example of Throw up graffiti.....	21
Figure 2.17: Showing an example of blockbuster.....	21
Figure 2.18: Showing an example of Wildstyle graffiti. ....	22
Figure 2.19: Showing an example of stencil graffiti.....	22
Figure 2.20: Showing an example of a mural located in Dejvicka, Prague .....	23
Figure 2.21: Showing an example of Reverse graffiti done by Moose .....	24
Figure 2.22: Showing Alexandre Orion's mural of skull in a tunnel.....	25
Figure 2.23: Showing Light graffiti .....	25
Figure 2.24: Showing digital graffiti via tangible digital graffiti wall .....	26
Figure 3.1: Showing cadastral districts of Prague .....	31
Figure 3.2: Showing study area .....	32
Figure 3.3: Showing Jan Zizka statue on Vitkov .....	42
Figure 3.4: Showing Zizkov Tower .....	32
Figure 3.5: showing monument protection zone.....	33
Figure 3.6: Showing the three core sample frame .....	35
Figure 3.7: Showing areas where samples were drawn from based on the three core sample frame.....	35
Figure 3.8: Showing where graffiti is most prevalent .....	36
Figure 4.1: Showing graffiti on a private wall at 19 Stitneho street, Zizkov .....	39
Figure 4.2: Showing graffiti tagged building frontage .....	40
Figure 4.3: Showing graffiti tagged building frontage .....	40

Figure 4.4: Showing legal graffiti wall along Prokopova street.....	41
Figure 4.5: Showing legal graffiti wall along Prokopova street .....	42
Figure 4.6: Showing graffiti under a railway bridge in Zizkov .....	43
Figure 4.7: Showing graffiti under a bridge at Seifertova street, Prague 3.....	43
Figure 4.8: Showing graffiti under a bridge at Seifertova street, Prague 3.....	44
Figure 4.9: Showing graffiti on Zizkovsky tunnel’s wall .....	45
Figure 4.10: Showing Zizkovsky tunnel’s entrance from Karlin.....	45
Figure 4.11: Showing the first graffiti on the cemetery wall at Bertramka tram stop .....	48
Figure 4.12: Showing other graffiti tag that surfaced on the wall.....	48
Figure 4.13: Showing graffiti on Andel metro station platform .....	49
Figure 4.14: Showing the Andel metro station platform after clean up .....	49
Figure 4.15: Showing a building restored from graffiti.....	50
Figure 4.16: Showing a building restored from graffiti.....	50
Figure 4.17: Showing a building restored from graffiti.....	51
Figure 4.18: Showing a building restored from graffiti.....	51
Figure 4.19: Showing a building restored from graffiti.....	52
Figure 4.20: Showing a building restored from graffiti.....	52
Figure 4.21: Showing a building restored from graffiti.....	53
Figure 4.22: Showing a building cleaned with graffiti back on it.....	54
Figure 4.23: Showing political graffiti on the bridge connecting Vitkov hill with Seifertova street.....	55
Figure 4.24: Showing a business outlet with heavily tagged wall .....	56
Figure 4.25: Showing tagged business outlet .....	57
Figure 4.26: Showing a restaurant tagged with graffiti .....	57
Figure 4.27: Showing tagged business outlet .....	58
Figure 4.28: Showing tagged business outlet .....	58
Figure 4.29: Showing tagged business outlet .....	59
Figure 4.30: Showing graffiti from the legal graffiti wall in Florenc, Prague 1 .....	60
Figure 4.31: Showing graffiti from the legal graffiti wall in Florenc, Prague 1 .....	61
Figure 4.32: Showing graffiti from the legal graffiti wall on Mezi Vodami street, Prague 4...	61
Figure 4.33: Showing graffiti from the legal graffiti wall on Mezi Vodami street, Prague 4...	62
Figure 4.34: Showing graffiti from the legal graffiti wall on Mezi Vodami street, Prague 4...	62
Figure 4.35: Showing graffiti shop .....	63
Figure 4.36: Showing a young chap tagging an artist’s work .....	64
Figure 5.1: Showing some graffiti spray can with prices in Czech crowns .....	65
Figure 5.2: Showing an example of StreetARToronto program .....	67
Figure 5.3: Showing locations where legal graffiti walls can be erected .....	67

## List of Tables

Table 3.1: Showing the three core participants.....	34
Table 4.1: Showing an highlighted result from major questions asked residents and business owners .....	38

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Graffiti and street art have been prominent in urban fabric all over the world, there is no city in the world without walls covered in series of artistic creations, and it is nearly impossible to neglect the existence of this art movement, as it is not in its early stage of development as far as its contributions to political, cultural, social, and environmental views are concerned. There's an in-depth amount of documentation on its history, particularly the late 1970's subway art movement, and in numerous articles, websites, blogs, and social media documenting it as being a counterculture.

Graffiti can be described as an antisocial behaviour performed in order to gain attention, or as a form of seeking ecstasy, but it also can be described as an expressive art form (eNotes, 2011). The linguistic origins of the word can be traced to graffito: a drawing or writing scratched on a wall or other surface (Simpson, 1989) or viewed in its resemblance to the ancient Greek word γράφω / gráphō which can be translated as: scratch, graze, marked / drawn brand (LSJ, 2019).

Graffiti is primarily focused on letters, and those who create the lettering are usually called graffiti writers, while those graffiti writers who have crossed over to the gallery world are called graffiti artists. Although, many a time, they simply want to call themselves artists to avoid any restriction (Manco, 2010).

Riggle in his paper titled: *Street art the transfiguration of common places*, tried to examine the meaning of street in the definition of street art. After his suggestion that street art is a medium to re-enact the connection between art and everyday life (Riggle, 2010). Street art is a visual culture of a city, seen as an artistic expression that becomes visible, vanishes and reappears (Armstrong, 2005). For simplicity, both graffiti and street art have been termed urban art (Lewisohn, 2008) see figure 1.1.

## **1.1 AIM AND OBJECTIVE**

This thesis tends to provide a connection between the two commonly stated fact about graffiti as art or crime, as well as highlighting its aesthetic, socio-cultural, and economic impact.

## 1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION

This thesis will answer questions such as: Is graffiti a crime or an act of vandalism? Why artists do graffiti? Does illegality involved in graffiti play any role for artists? Should public spaces like bridges, tunnels and bypasses be painted with graffiti or left grey? Does graffiti improves aesthetics of the environment? Who is responsible for cleaning or removing graffiti?

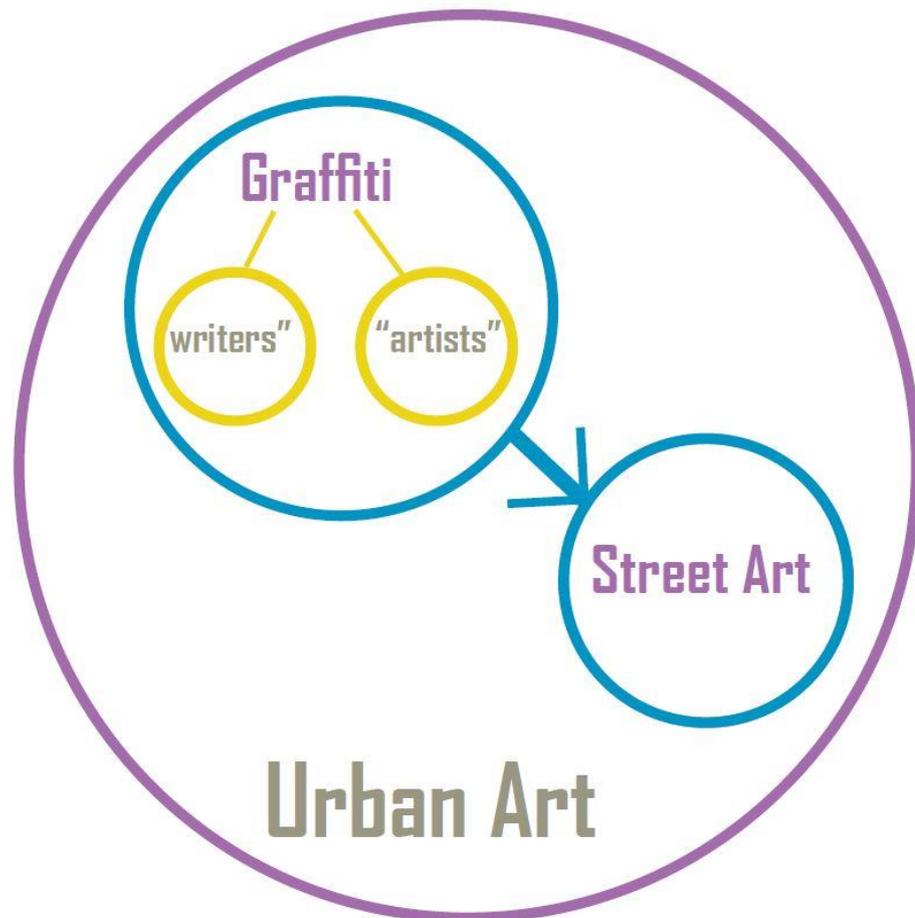


Figure1.1 Showing the relationship between graffiti and street art  
Source: (Bates, 2014)

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

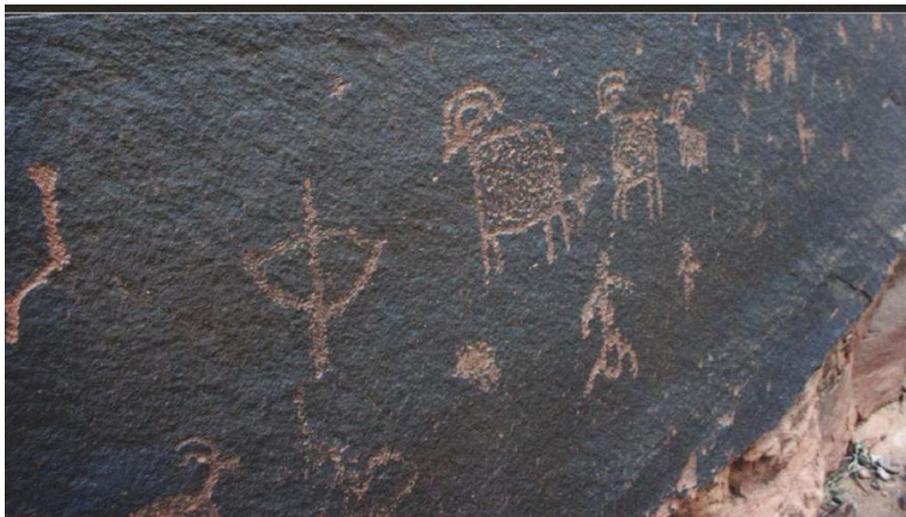
*“Should graffiti be judged on the same level as modern art?”*

*Of course not: It's way more important than that.” - Banksy*

Graffiti is considered by many as a modern and new type of art, but its origin actually dates back thousands of years. I am definitely not referring to graffiti art as we know it today, but lot of cave drawings and carvings are graffiti as well. In this chapter, I will be exploring through the history of graffiti from the pre-historic era.

## 2.1 HISTORY

Graffiti can be easily traced back to have started during the pre-historic times when petroglyphs were used on rock walls to illustrate maps or landmarks, similarly as cave paintings, used for communication (see figure 2.1 below). According to (McDonald, 2013), *“it brightens what seems to be a timeless fixation throughout mankind, drawing and painting on stone and making one’s existence known through images.”* The Roman Empire’s graffiti is more remarkably known for covering a variety of topics, ranging from politics, gladiators, and poetry. These mark-makings exist everywhere on the globe throughout time, and not only serve to strengthen the human need for recognition, however additionally offer an insight in an iconographic way to the layers of graffiti’s historical narratives.



*Figure 2.1: Showing ancient petroglyphs*  
Source: (McDonald, 2013)

Brassai, a creative Parisian photographer well known for his pseudonym, is recognised along with his love for the graffiti he photographed throughout the city in the 1930s (see figure 2.2 below). He saw graffiti as a perpetual part of urban fabric, and celebrated its anonymity:

*The art of the streets is a bastard of ill repute that doesn't even arouse our curiosity, so ephemeral that it's effortlessly obliterated by bad weather condition, or a coat of paint, nevertheless, it offers a criterion of worth as its authority is absolute and overturning all the painstakingly established norms of aesthetics (Lewisohn, 2008).*



Figure 2.2: Brassai's photography  
Source: (Spyer, 2010)

### 2.1.1 AMERICAN HISTORY

The modern-day graffiti possibly began with the propagation of "Kilroy" a war doodle evolving in the 1940's, who emerged as a figure of patriotism during the second World War (see figure 2.3 below). However, during this time, graffiti supporters were very few (McDonald, 2013). With the decline of the urban centres in the mid-20th century emanated pockets of blight and abandonment in many neighbourhoods. Territorial graffiti scrawled on city walls were often gang related.

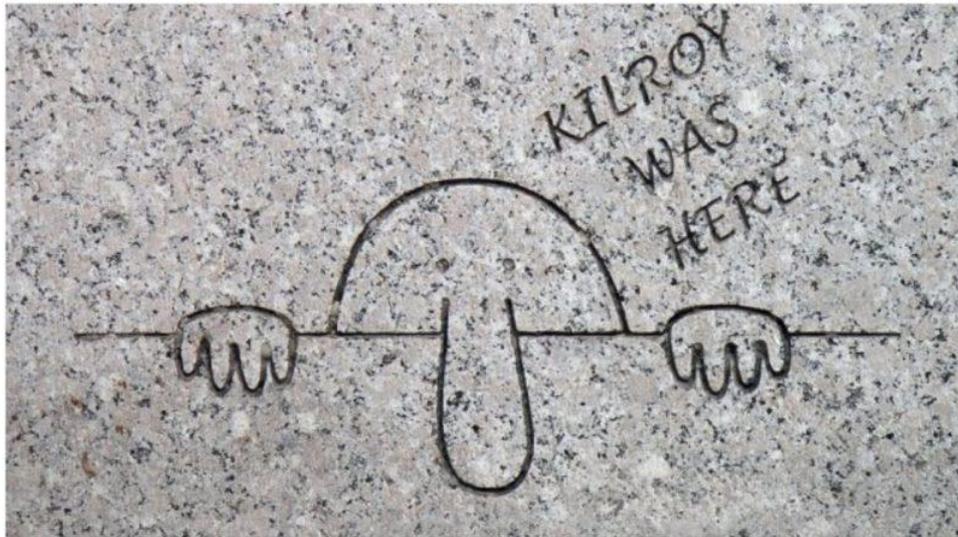


Figure 2.3: Kilroy's signature found everywhere US forces were stationed  
Source: (Dickson, 2017)

In the late 1960's in Philadelphia, "Cornbread" and "Cool Earl" were the two men who founded modern graffiti (McDonald, 2013), this was done as a way to get the attention of girls. They did so by writing their names all over the city sooner than later, they gained attention from the community and the press.

In 1970s, a countercultural shift began the iconic emergence of subway graffiti and hip-hop in New York. This spectacle is extensively documented, beginning with two time Pulitzer Prize winner Norman Mailer's 1973 essay, *The Faith of Graffiti and Henry Chalfant and Martha Cooper's Subway Art* (Bates, 2014). Each of these books were written synchronously alongside the spray-can art that overshadowed the New York's subway system and facilitated the birth of hip-hop and breakdancing. They captured the inner heart of the urban fabric in ethnic neighbourhoods and how the innermost city youth craved for recognition. The movie *Wild Style* is also noteworthy as a representation of New York in the early 1980's. Artists such as Taki 183, Julio 204, Frank 207, and Joe 136 popularized graffiti (Institut for Graffiti, 2001). Taki 183, whose real name is Demetrius was employed as a foot messenger, and he took the advantage of riding the subway, as the subway was where he practiced his "tagging" skills. Taki 183 got his idea of tagging from Julio 204 and Taki began tagging his name in his neighborhood as early as 1968 (Gray, *Graffiti History - 10 Important Moments*, 2015); Julio 204 is a Puerto Rican from a gang known as "Savage Skulls". Juilo didn't get as famous as his successor because he did not tag his name out of the community where he was, he also had to give up tagging early after a few years, because he was sentenced to jail for the act of

vandalism. The other taggers Frank 207 and Joe 167 followed Julio 204's lead and in their soon emerged competition (Harun, 2012). This intense competition led to the tagging of subways, walls, buildings, and other surfaces.

Graffiti wasn't the only subcultural movement springing forth in the city. Breakdancing and hip hop were also prevalent activities among inner city kids. Its audience is vast, and its diversity has an unprecedented multitude of supporters. Although many people are familiar with it, the percentage which are aware of its history, roots, and ideology before becoming a mainstream force is declining (Werwath, 2006). In an underserved environment perforated with drugs & gangs, the youth had to create alternative events as their afterschool activities. As one dancer says,

*"Breaking is when you don't have nothing (sic) to do, and everyone is standing around getting high."* (Silver, 2004). The movie *Wild Style* is credited as being the first film to document the emergence of hip hop as a grass-roots movement, and it portrays how creative actions such as breakdancing, emceeing, rapping, and graffiti were integral parts of the cultural landscape. These movements were seen as inspiration by Director Charlie Ahearn, when he said:

*"I would go to clubs, and there was this whole feeling in the air that all of this was emerging, as this feeling was not just in the Bronx only, it was throughout the city. When the film was released in 1983, it became the second highest grossing film in New York."* (Neumaier, 2013).

Hip Hop as a phenomenon is not simply or just a genre of music. This is important in its relationship with graffiti as a crucial element of it (Hager, 1984), as not so much of that can be said of street art. Therefore in order to go through the history of graffiti, a preamble of its humble beginning is essential. Hip Hop for Tricia Rose is seen as: *"a cultural form that attempts to negotiate the experience of marginalization, brutally truncated opportunity, and oppression within the cultural imperatives of African-American, Caribbean History, identity and community"* (Rose, 1994). She highlighted the reasons behind its emergence as the deindustrialisation and social alienation. Amidst cravings, expectations, anticipations, and social imbalance, Hip Hop's themes, practices, sound, lyrics, practices and style try to find its core essence.

Murray Forman said in his book *'That's the joint'* that: *Hip hop was majorly characterized by public actions that were in many cases simultaneously accompanied by risks of varying*

*severity. From this point of view, hip hop can be perceived as a series of practices with an evolved history, with an ongoing potential to challenge both social norms and legal structure (Forman, 2004).*

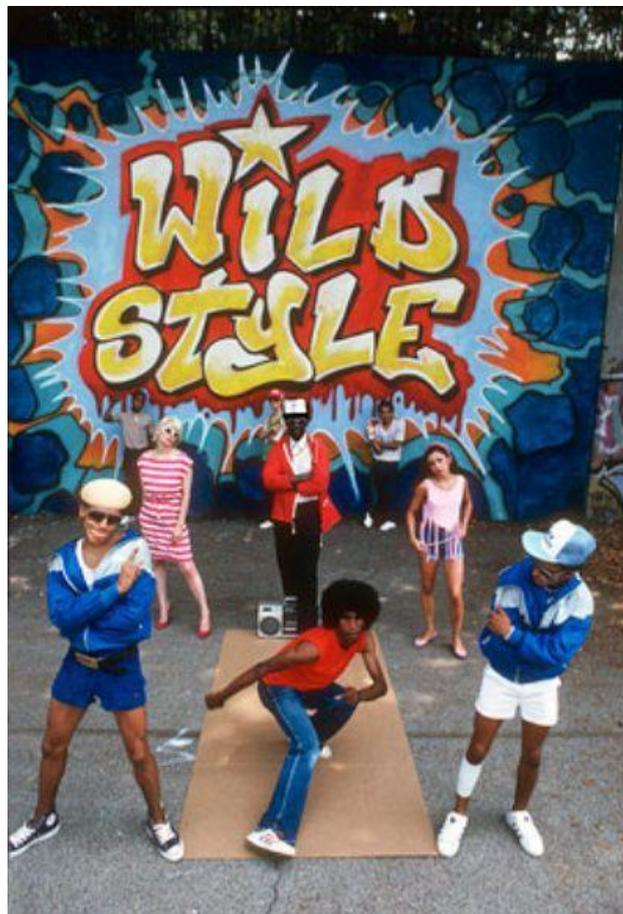
One can easily conclude that Hip Hop is not just an ordinary genre of music but rather a cultural form with a strong historical backup. It came into being as a result of social conditions, an avenue to respond to a society which condemned millions of people under compulsion into destitution, decay, and alienation (Osumare, 1999). A great multitude of scholarly opinions about different areas of Hip-Hop such as its role, nature, trajectory, themes, style, and aesthetics etc. exist. Nevertheless, the very first academic research on the subject of hip-hop was done by David Toop's *Rap Attack: African Jive to New York Hip-Hop* (Toop, 1984), and Steven Hager's *Hip Hop: The Illustrated History of Break Dancing, Rap Music, and Graffiti* (Hager, 1984). They set the ball rolling by paving the way for a lot of scholars to engage with the subject which is relatively new-born cultural form as at that time.

The beginning of hip-hop according to vast majority bibliography can be traced to the boroughs of New York, way back in the 70's; specifically in Bronx. Its founding fathers DJ Herc, Kool, Afrika Bambaataa and Grandmaster Flash defined it's major course and shaped it into what it turns out to be (Balaban, 2010).

Hip-Hop consists of four elements: The DJ (the hip-hop music producer), the break dance (hip-hop dance style), rap (the hip hop music, part of which could be the rapper or mc, and/or the singer), and graffiti (the visual art part of hip-hop). It started as a cultural movement in New York in 1973 and gradually, its tentacles were expanded to the whole world, and today, it turns out to be one of the most prominent cultural movement in the world. This can further be explained as observed by Halifu Osumare, as she examined the connectivity of hip-hop. She labelled worldwide hip-hop as "connective marginalities", and argued that youthful mentality with the element of blatant rebellious attitude, which contradicts an adult status quo, helped in its propagation worldwide. She further explained that this dynamic approach is not hazardous to time because it is being "resurrected" in the direction of all socio, political, and economic inequality (Osumare, 1999).

One of the ubiquitous attribute of hip-hop is the concept of realness as it calculates the value of one's authenticity and therefore, it's importance is expressed by the notion of respect.

Authenticity is a performative and constant process that can be observed by various elements that defines it (Williams, 2007). An interesting obligation identified through authenticity is firstly not to follow conventional fashion or narrative, and secondly is to be supportive and adhere to the values which you hold on to, and pledge commitment to represent your stance in your neighbourhood or the community you find yourself (Wright, 2010). Nevertheless, these two requirements are not being advocated by all hip-hop artists or supporters. A lot of critics from the academia and outside of it, most especially fans of hip-hop who are attached to the history behind it disapprove the trend in which the culture has been indulged. (Melker, 2014), (Blanchard, 1999), (Mbe, 2015), (Scott, 2016), The reproofs relate to the overstressing consumerism, drug consumption/abuse, and misogyny which today's hip-hop encourages.



*Figure 2.4 Showing pop culture and graffiti*  
Source: (PBS, 2011)

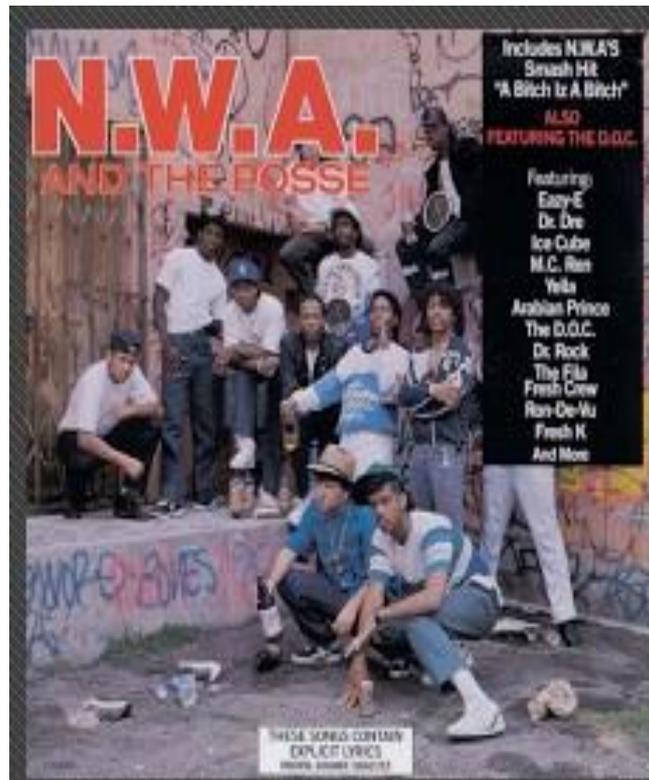


Figure 2.5 Showing a musical album cover  
 Source: (MumbleBee, 2013)

The history of graffiti from the ancient world and the history of American graffiti, starting from the prehistoric markings, to the New York subway scene, and its upshot all over individual cities in the United States is quite important. Since the movement was so prolific and significant, many literatures begin with a rundown of New York freight train graffiti. Documentaries such as *Style Wars* interviewed original graffiti writers, such as Lady Pink, who expressed herself as she said:

*We are folk artists, we are one of the few arts that were started by American kids, by teenagers and just 'cause it was started by a youth culture doesn't make it any less valid. And it's going three-dimensional; we're altering our environment. Is that what graffiti originally was? Yes.* (Tony Silver, 2004).

There is no dispute that the evolution of these different subcultures was done with an artistic awareness of raw talents that had nowhere else to flourish. Even though reactions to graffiti varied from individual to individual, some believe that all graffiti writers are miscreants, others recognise their efforts to change their environment and express themselves. A pop artist, Claes Oldenburg cherished subway art with the following statement: *"You're standing there in the station, everything is gray and gloomy, and all of a sudden a train covered up in*

*graffiti slides in and brightens the place like a big bouquet from Latin America” (Thompson, 2009).*



*Figure 2.6: Showing graffiti sprayed train*  
Source: (Martha Cooper, 1984)

Graffiti has exasperated several individuals in the conventional art circles, which led to the formation of writer’s collectives such as United Graffiti Artists with their assistance. Some of the earliest gallery shows included an agglomeration of styles, from traditional graffiti writers to Pop Art icons like Andy Warhol, Lawrence Weiner and Robert Mapplethorpe (Lewisohn, 2008). Many of the subway artists featured in *Style Wars* were also able to make transition to galleries, even though their time there was brief. Lewisohn attributed their transient gallery time to a lack of excitement.

However, a selected few artists braved the crossover. These collective efforts shaped a network of connections amid both highbrow and graffiti artists, and it was in these interactions that former graffiti writers Jean Michel-Basquiat, Keith Haring, and Kenny Scharf were catapulted into the spotlight. All three of these artists found their beginnings by “injecting elements of street culture into the main stream of contemporary art,” albeit by different approaches (Kasmin, n.d.).

Haring & Scharf met while enrolled in the School for Visual Arts in New York in the late 1970's, and were fascinated by the art in the subways to an extent that they made an effort to paint their own works (Thompson, 2009). Haring was famous for his chalk figures that depicted contentious topics see Figure 2.7 below, while Scharf was known for his recalcitrant elucidations of pop-culture icons (Clyde, 2016). On the other hand, Basquiat was already in the graffiti scene under the alias "SAMO," (Georgievska, 2017), making cryptic messages on walls around the city see Figure 2.8 below. He had a strong predisposition in the direction of pop art, and crossed paths with Haring and Scharf during their time at the Visual Arts School. All thanks to the gallery collaborations of graffiti writers and notable Pop Art figures in the 1980's, Haring, Scharf and Basquiat made a substantial transition where they remain part of the most important artist in the 20th century (Rumsey, 2016).



*Figure 2.7: Showing Keith Haring's paint about homosexuality*  
Source: (Haring, 1982)

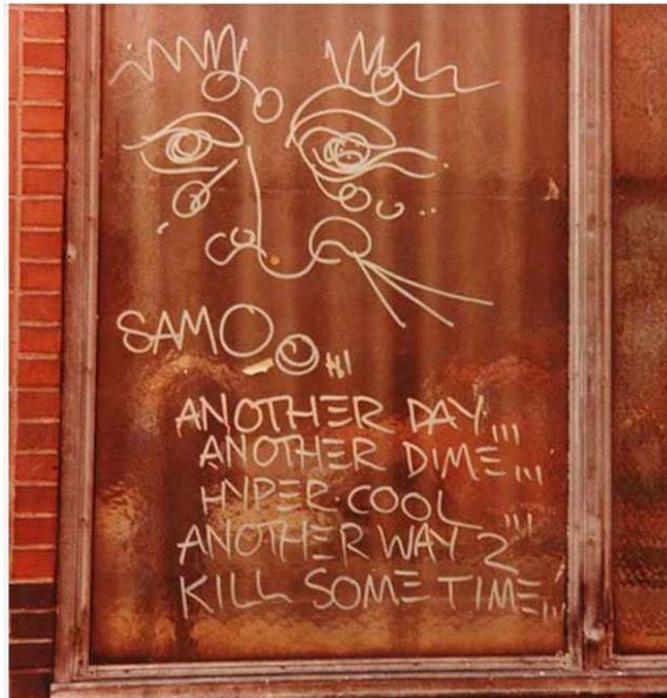


Figure 2.8: Showing one of Jean-Michel Basquiat's markings  
Source: (Gray, Graffiti History - 10 Important Moments, 2015)

Meanwhile, graffiti was still widespread on the subway lines. The Clean Train Movement was implemented in 1989, whereby, a train that has been tagged would not be driven out of the yard. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) finally realized that graffiti writing was majorly about getting tags around town, hence, preventing a train from leaving the yard overwhelmed the whole point of tagging it (Hicks, 1994). This was considered as the final victory for the MTA, but it became another hurdle for graffiti writers (Bates, 2014). They took to the walls and other visible surfaces to do their craft, tagging is often dangerous, potentially deadly and illegal, but it is on this risky illegality that it thrives. There are so many differences between making illegal and legal graffiti. These differences are embedded in the concept, style, space and time. This prompted Mayor Rudolph Giuliani in 1994 to form an Anti-Graffiti Task Force during his term. This was part of Giuliani's stance on "quality-of-life" where he employed couple of efforts to tackle the graffiti epidemic. A designated call line was set up for citizens to report incidences of graffiti, and a 25 member team was utilized to be the "eyes on the street." (Hicks, 1994).

Giuliani's Task Force was so effective that it still remains one of New York's city agencies, graffiti had already begun its migration across the world and its link to hip hop was a catalyst for its travel. "If graffiti in the early 1980's was limited to a rather small audience, hooking up with a musical revolution that flooded every nook and cranny of the globe certainly had the

effect of placing graffiti on the mainstream,” (Lewisohn, 2008). In addition to its link with hip-hop, graffiti was also spread via the media, in the forms of magazines and movies. A fascinating progression was that the aesthetics of graffiti in European urban landscape responded differently. Blek le Rat, credited for being one of the forerunners of stencil graffiti who wanted to apply the New York style in Paris, but soon realized that “American” graffiti did not fit within the Parisian cityscape (Reiss, 2008). His stencils were to reflect the French urban fabric, and were one of the initial exits from traditional spray can art that paved the way for variations on a theme (see figure 2.9 below). As much as architecture is influenced by the physical, social, political, and economical environment, graffiti and street art, also evolved in a specific manner. This evolution has made way for one of the largest countercultural phenomena of the 20th century, and its origins was inextricably initiated by groups of teenagers having fun in the 1970’s. Their yearning to express themselves, to be seen, heard, and acknowledged in a time where their communities had been forgotten became an inspiration for those in similar situations worldwide (Smit, 2012).

Undeniably, its influence is felt worldwide as European spray paint colours were named after the original New York writers (Lewisohn, 2008). Even though it is illegal in the United States to write graffiti on walls or on private properties, people still do it to prove a point, or claim something that belongs to them (ilovegraffiti, 2017). Graffiti is commonly used in the United States as a way of marking gang's territory (Neumark, 2001).



*Figure 2.9: Blek le Rat’s stencil graffiti*

*Source: (Lewisohn, 2008)*

### 2.1.2 EUROPEAN HISTORY

In Europe, stencilling, poster art, and wheat pasting, are some of the most common art and possibly, the most popular street art techniques which emanated from the European revolutionary politics. While hip-hop was majorly related to graffiti culture in the USA, punk was the assumed concept of graffiti helping with the spread of messages. Crass a UK punk band, usually have stencil like images in their videos; they took up a graffiti stencil campaign in the later part of 1970's and on the London Underground system, during the early 1980's with anarchist, anti-war, anti-consumerist, and feminist messages (Gray, 2015). Amsterdam was on the limelight as graffiti became an important part of the punk scene, whereby graffiti art were documented in *Gallery Anus* magazine (Jewels, 2007).

In 1981, Yaki Kornblit, a Dutch gallerist from Amsterdam went to New York in search for talented graffiti artists, as he had plans to present graffiti art in Europe (Institut for Graffiti, 2001). He was hoping that it was going to be like the Pop Art movement which was successful promoted in Europe 20 years earlier. He found a couple of artists and started to bring them to Amsterdam, where he had shows with them at his Kornblit Gallery. Amongst them were artists such as Rammelzee, Dondi, Zephyr, Crash, Quik, Futura2000, Seen, Lady Pink, and Blade. Their artworks were exhibited in Yaki's gallery and also in Boymans van Beuningen Museum (ilovegraffiti, 2017).

This cultural movement from New York had a strong impact on the youth of Amsterdam as they were very rebellious around that time, Amsterdam also already had writing on the streets from punk movement (Meulman, 2013), the import of graffiti from New York had a strong influence on them (Institut for Graffiti, 2001). Not so long after, the screenings of the movie *Wild Style* on British and German TV in 1982 & 1983 were the commencement of modern graffiti movement in Europe. Graffiti swiftly made its way to other western European cities such as Paris, London, Germany, and everywhere else (ilovegraffiti, 2017).

Graffiti is viewed as a democratic means of expression and were used by those in power to communicate political propaganda, as well as those who protested, escalating the opposite ideas (Lisa Waldner, 2013). Berlin is a perfect reflection of this, as graffiti was a symbol of freedom in the West (BBC, 2006). "The West side of the Berlin Wall, was a colorful sight of graffiti which emphasizes the tighter restrictions of society in the East" (Harun, 2012). The Berlin wall started being built on August 13, 1961 by the Communist government of the

German Democratic Republic (GDR) (Editors, 2018). Gradually, the wall was developed into a sophisticated security system of guard towers, electric fences and, concrete walls, distinguishing the West from the East side. During the 80's, the wall was reconstructed and raised up to 12feet in height, it was a perfect height for message board, a blank canvas for dissatisfied individuals and artists of West Berlin to showcase themselves and their opinions (Revolvy, n.d.). Many commentators had stated that the initial impulse to paint on the Wall didn't come from the Berliners, but rather early American occupied settlers consisting of draft resisters, and Turkish migrants, who had in one way or the other used the wall to express their thoughts and beliefs. There was a French artist who goes by the name, Thierry Noir, is claimed to be one of the first artists to have painted on the Wall. He was living in one of the squats near the Berlin Wall as at then, and his initiative was followed by many much-admired and unknown artists, as well as a lot of visitors (Troatin, 2016).



Figure 2.10: Showing a portion of Berlin wall

Source: (Murray, 2017)



Figure 2.11 : Showing West Berlin wall, covered with disgust of people against the wall  
Source: (Davis, 2018)



Figure 2.12 :Showing West Berlin wall as it is today  
Source: Author, 2019

The most famous location in Europe today for graffiti would probably be Berlin, Germany (The Local, 2008). There are beautiful graffiti locations that are intriguing and colourfully animated, as well as other spots that can be offensive and clustered with dull graffiti. Some graffiti can be seen as political graffiti in which people express opinions against political issues. The Berlin Wall also became a place where the first generation of graffiti writers came to meet, some of whom are the children of US servicemen, they brought the booming spirit of their local graffiti culture from the USA to West Berlin (Trotin, 2016). It is one of the major reasons that caused New York graffiti scenes to practically influence initial graffiti writings in Europe. Just as the paintings on the west side thrived, the east side was left blank, whereas, free artistic expression on the other side became a reference point for social and cultural differences of separate societies. There was a change to all this after the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, the whole city then became a playground for artists from both the west and east side, hence, street art flourished in the atmosphere of the newly found freedom. The first set of painted trains in Europe were in Wien, Munich, Dusseldorf, Copenhagen, London, Paris, and Sydney but very rare. There were just few writers, and the writings were quickly removed (Institut for Graffiti, 2001). Nonetheless, European graffiti writers are more engrossed with painting walls (Jirma, 2011).



*Figure 2.13: Showing Banksy's artwork on the West Bank wall bordering Israel and Palestine at Abu Dis in 2005.*

*Source: (The Guardian, 2017)*



*Figure 2.14: Showing a mural by Dmitri Vrubel's that portrays the Soviet Union's Communist party general secretary Leonid Brezhnev, kissing the East German Socialist party general secretary Erich Honecker. The words written in Russian: 'My God, help me to survive this deadly love.'*  
Source: (The Guardian, 2017)

There are some graffiti that people find beautiful and for most part in Europe, there are lots of graffiti and in a way, it has become so accepted. Graffiti has had a lot of influence on Europe and hence, it has become a part of their culture. However, at the same time many people didn't welcome graffiti on the walls of other people's property. It was said that it damages property, and that it cost a lot of money to repaint graffiti-littered walls.

## **2.2 GRAFFITI & MODERN CULTURE**

As earlier mentioned, the 80's saw a couple of graffiti and street artists migrate into the art gallery world, such as, Basquiat, Hambleton and Haring; but the 90's gradually introduced the new breed of creatives that totally changed the face of graffiti. The waning of the USSR in 1989 opened up many Eastern European countries to graffiti (Gray, 2015); the rise of internet helped in sharing graffiti images, and spreading words about the movement. Not until the 1990's that street artists like Shepard Fairey and Banksy made their first moves on this creative note (Jones, 2018), and has gone on and on in dominating it ever since. Banksy, influenced by one of the very first stencil artists known as the father of stencil art, Blek le Rat, a French street artist who was stencilling rats on the streets of Paris in the 80's (Neu, 2017).

The world of street art and graffiti has been theatrically changed since the days of Cornbread, who by the way is now working with The Mural Arts Program that ensures the prevention of illegal tagging (Gray, 2015), as one of the phenomenon surrounding graffiti is getting to be widely accepted in the art market. Edward Seymour, the father of spray paint came up with the aerosol can idea, as he founded *Seymour of Sycamore* company in 1949, and the first colour of spray paint was aluminium (Bellis, 2017). As at then, he would have had no idea just how much his paint in a spray can invention would change the face of our urban landscapes. Banksy's success can be partially ascribed to the fact that he has a huge followers on the internet hence its proliferation of street art and graffiti (Bates, 2014). There are numerous blogs dedicated to sharing these works, some of which are from the artist themselves, but in most cases, they are from the audience (Rushmore, 2013). In an era whereby virtually everyone has a smartphone practically implanted in their hand, and taking a photo is only a fingertip away, not to make mention of being shared in a public forum or on social media.

One of the original blogs that makes graffiti works easily accessible online was, Wooster Collective, it kick started in 2001 as an exploration of a Soho neighbourhood in New York shortly after 9/11 terrorist attack (Bates, 2014). At a time whereby there was tragedy, pain, and anguish, the Schillers discovered their local street art as a pleasant distraction for delight. Over a space of one year, Marc took about 2,000 photos within a four block radius, after which he posted them, and shared the link with about 20 friends whom, he and Sara felt would feel equally inspired as they were. Within the twinkling of an eye, they had over 40,000 hit on their blog (Schiller M. a., 2013).

The Schillers recognised the power of individualistic efforts in advocating for change, It doesn't matter if it's aesthetic or cultural, it could be from prominent artists such as Banksy, or artists that remain largely unknown or unidentified: (Schiller M. a., 2010), *"If we are to believe in the power of ideas, as we must, we must understand that it is not in the thoughts we keep to ourselves but only in sharing them that ideas attain their potential"*.

The multicultural flexibility of this movement has influenced the level in which it has spread on mass media. Universally, art is appreciated in any genre, the national origin, language, or socioeconomic status of the artist or audience doesn't matter (Bates, 2014). Banksy, whose identity is still unknown to the public, has continuously laid emphasis on the fact that he does what he does not for fame or money but to make statements and send messages, just as what

graffiti is meant to do (ilovegraffiti, 2017). His way of dealing with the public and unique approach to graffiti is what has earned him the respect that people give him, which has also made him a key figure for those who argue that graffiti is nothing more than just vandalism (Duncan, 2018).

When the question of whether or not graffiti is an art or a crime arises, there's no universal correct answer. The definition of art is subjective, just as graffiti's definition is subjective as well. Some people considers certain graffiti work as art, but say that others are not. There are two sides to the story (Irvine, 2012).

## 2.3 GRAFFITI STYLES

There are so many graffiti styles and the most commonly used styles by graffiti artists are Tag style, Throw-up, Blockbuster, Wild style, and Mural. These types of graffiti are usually found around neighborhoods or in art museums.

### 2.3.1 COMMON STYLES

**2.3.1.1 Tag Style:-** Tag style is usually the writing of a person's artistic nickname. Commonly written in the corner of the art after which the artist has completely finished working on the art. This style is another way in which recognition are received from people or other graffiti artist. Tagging is written in a lot of different areas so people may see the art, and would it easier to know who it belongs to. This style is prevalent all over the world.

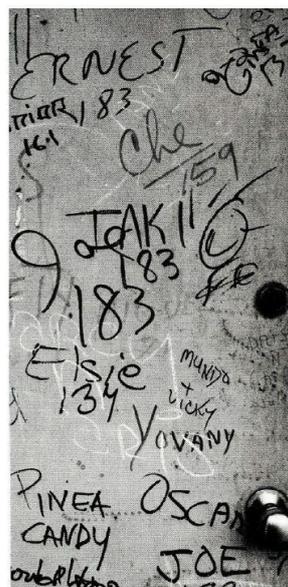


Figure 2.15: Showing tag graffiti style  
Source: (Yigruzeltil, 2014)

**2.3.1.2 Throw Up:-** This is another graffiti style whereby you need two different layers of paint. The first layer is the letters because in this style, thickness is not relevant. After the word has been written out, it is then outlined with another colour; thus, throw-up style.



*Figure 2.16: Showing an example of Throw up graffiti*

**2.3.1.3 Blockbuster:-** In this style, block letters are written and the letters are evenly spaced out which makes them easy to read. This style of tagging can be found in a large open area whereby there is enough space to write out the block letters nice and big.



*Figure 2.17: Showing an example of blockbuster*  
Source: (Watchingpaintdry, 2015)

**2.3.1.4 Wildstyle:-** Wild style is a style in which there is difficulty in understanding and reading it because, the letters are blended with each other, there are also many colours involved. This type of style are mostly found in Europe.



Figure 2.18: Showing an example of Wildstyle graffiti.

**2.3.1.5 Stencil:-** This style is seen as an easy way detailed pieces can be put up. Some see it as being lazy. More pieces can be done in different locations easily by the use of stencil rather than free hand (Graffitocanberra, 2018).



Figure 2.19: Showing an example of stencil graffiti  
Source: (Graffitocanberra, 2013)

**2.3.1.6 Mural:-** It can be defined as any piece of painted art, applied directly on a wall, ceiling or on large surfaces for permanent purpose. The wall could be flat, concave or convex.



Figure 2.20: Showing an example of a mural located in Dejvicka, Prague

## 2.3.2 NEW TREND

### 2.3.2.1 Reverse Graffiti

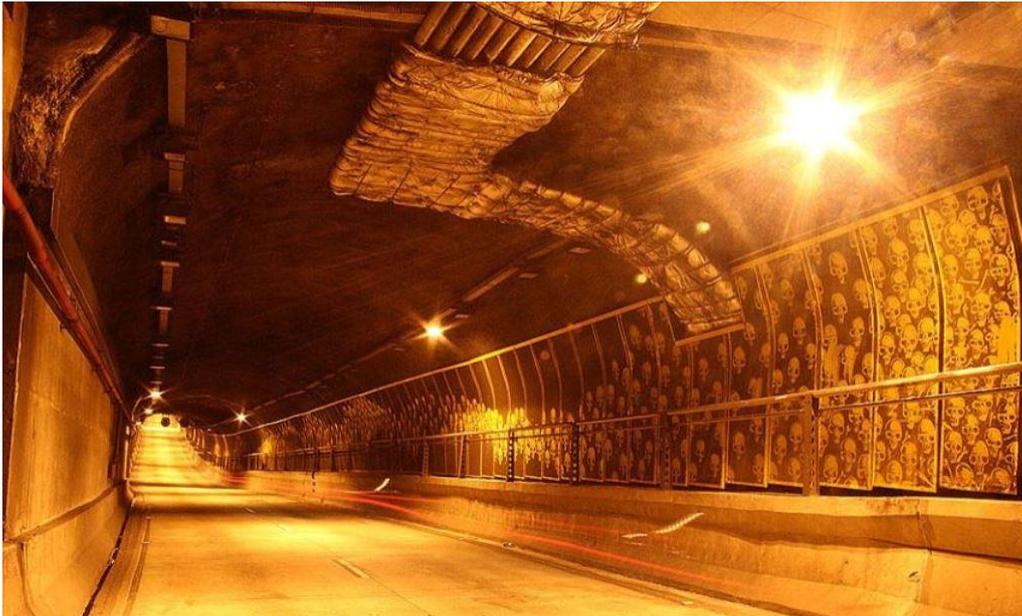
Reverse graffiti also known as grime writing, clean tagging or green graffiti. It's a type of street art that does not deface public property but rather efface it. This form of art actually removes filth from the taggers or scrubbers' canvases instead of adding it to create their imagery. The best thing about reverse graffiti is that it is not illegal, as you can't actually arrest someone for cleaning up city surfaces which are used as canvas (Coppen, 2010), Pace said, *"That's the beauty of the whole project. There has been incidences where we had council guys in police cars stop us while we are working in the middle of the day and ask us if we have been commissioned to do this, and by the time our answer is no, they gave us thumbs up and say keep doing what you are doing"* (Yoneda, 2010).

Paul Curtis a UK artist, better known as Moose is one of the technique's pioneers. His works around Leeds and London has been commissioned by a number of brands, such as Smirnoff, who used his art in an innovative way to convey messages (Kostov, 2014).

Alexandre Orion, a Brazilian, took a more overtly environmental bent, as he turned one of Sao Paolo's transport tunnels into a stunning mural. The mural was made up of a series of skulls, which succinctly reminds drivers of the impact their emissions are having on the planet. The practice puts authorities in a definite moral predicament. According to Paul Curtis, *"The moment this is done, people are made to confront whether or not they like people cleaning walls or whether they really have a problem with personal expression."* (Chapman, 2014).



*Figure 2.21: Showing an example of Reverse graffiti done by Moose*  
Source: (Kostov, 2014)



*Figure 2.22: Showing Alezandre Orion's mural of skull in a tunnel*  
Source: (Kostov, 2014)

### **2.3.2.2 Light Graffiti**

Light graffiti, which is also known as light painting, is an art form via the use of a camera set up for long exposure and a moving light source (Cook, 2014).

Light graffiti is a very simple idea, just as the name implies, rather than making words with spray paint, words, squiggly lines, squares, hearts, or whatever an artist feels like painting can be made with light. The canvas is the air, so there is only limitation by the length of exposure (Peterson, n.d.).



*Figure 2.23: Showing Light graffiti*  
Source: <http://lightbombing.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Sola-light-painter-portrait.jpg>

### 2.3.2.3 Digital Graffiti

The name Digital Graffiti came into being through an early thought whereby, hand free drawn virtual information were supposed to be perceived through an augmented reality display (Wolfgang Narzt, 2013).

Tangible Interaction developed a Digital Graffiti Wall which was built to look and feel the same as the real street art. It is intuitive to use, just anyone can grab one of the digital spray cans and make do with it. Mixture of interactive technology with graffiti techniques with the use of stencils, drips, nozzles; Tangible's Digital Graffiti Wall is the original, invented by the company back in 2007 (Beim, 2007). This interactive digital painting system allows a user to draw graffiti on a virtual 3D canvas with a digital spray can. The system actually visualizes a stereoscopic depiction of the canvas by tracking the head of the user, and also emulates a real-time spray painting by tracking the spray can in the user's hand, as well as, detecting the pressure of the device. The user can also interact with the object on the display after the 3D object painting is complete, and see as it is flying in the 3D environment through a tracked head-mounted display.



*Figure 2.24: Showing digital graffiti via tangible digital graffiti wall*  
Source: (Beim, 2007)

## 2.4 STREET ART AND THE GLOBAL CITY

Over 55% of the world population now live in cities and urban agglomerations; lesser developed regions are moving also in the same direction (United Nations, 2018). The future is the global networked world city. Even though, the globalization of the networked society is unevenly distributed, globalization is primarily enacted through a network of cities (Sassen, 2006).

Temporal performative act, although closely tied to location, determines the practices of street art as well as the works themselves vacillate between the specific materiality of urban space, location of the street, local context, exhibition, distribution, and communication platform i.e. Internet & web. Street artists since time immemorial continually switches code back and forth between the city as a material structure (Mitchell, 2005), the city as information node, and the virtual (Castells, 2000), networked and can be rendered in multiple digital visualizations. Websites and media coverage is on the increase these days and thereby, making a lot of street artists to be seen on a global stage, locally and globally speaking, as they are also contributing dynamically to the global Web museum without walls, also digitally documenting their work as it's being executed. First and foremost, availability of material is an integral part of street art, then the act of doing the art physically in a specific location with specific materials such as stencils, spray paint, direct painting, print and poster paste-ups, and every other imaginable materials (Irvine, 2012). Graffiti artist habitually use location to gain respect within a graffiti artist community, as the appearance of their art in less accessible spaces often contributes to the artist's fame. The difficulty posed by writing in high security areas, or in physically challenging sites proves the artist's physical prowess, and ingenuity (Schultz, 2011). In addition, the appearance of graffiti on specific walls or buildings may contribute greater social or political significance (Bullen, 2016). But more and more, as street art is being made and performed, it's captured in digital form for distribution on Websites, YouTube, Instagram and other social media, as this is the work of art in this age of instant digital dissemination (BLU, 2008). Street art emerged at a time whereby there was accelerated and interconnected urbanization, and it should be of no surprise that street art is most visible in global world cities which are attributed to concentrations of people, built infrastructures, capital, and flows of information are the densest (Irvine, 2012). It's a known fact that street art is a creative outlet, graffiti can be purposefully destructive (Schultz, 2011).

Bombing is the terminology within which this intention is reflected in graffiti writing, and the other is “hit”, which is another name for graffiti tag (Lewisohn, 2008).

There is a general perception that graffiti is offensive (Miller, 2015), because it is said to deface properties. This statement however lies with the viewer. Graffiti context, and its existence in non-art spaces proposed another theory: that objections to graffiti may not be content based or based on taste, but rather, comes from the graffiti’s statement that anyone can be an artist, and the site of art can be anywhere, thereby disturbing the established system of control over the proper placement of art (Irvine, 2012). Stewart posits that those who oppose graffiti do so for its disregard of boundaries and the questions that graffiti raises about the nature of what public art is. Additionally, addressing issues relating to the rightful ownership of public property and the separation of public and private spaces (Stewart, 1987).

Street art can be seen as a response to the concentrated infrastructure in cities with its unequal distribution of resources, property, and visibility. It reflects globalization while resisting being engrossed into its expedient categories (Ursic, 2014). Street artists are said to interrupt the total sense of space produced in modern cities with a local, place-bound gesture (Fantin, 2018). Street artist are also known for traveling to specific locations to do their work in as many contexts as possible, documenting their work electronically as they go.

Being a street artist is fundamentally nomadic and ephemeral, moving around when possible in this connected and rapidly continuous intermural global city. This kind of art is very new, doing works in multiple cities and documenting them in real time via the web or social media platform. Nomadic street artists are now imagining the global city as a distributed surface on which to mark and inscribe visual interventions that function both locally and globally. The act and gesture performed in one location can now be viewed from any other city or location globally, since it is documented and archived, it can also be compared, remixed, and imitated. Banksy’s stencil works is a perfect example for this, as it has appeared on Palestinian border walls, as well as on the walls, and buildings of most major cities, instantly viewable on Google search. Post-Internet generations of artists navigate materials and digital cities in a pragmatic range. The extramural world art has reconceived in materials, conceptual walls, and spaces as the extramural has now become post mural (Irvine, 2012).

Street art is continually an assertion, and a competition for visibility whereby, urban public space is in continuous competition by managing the power of visibility (Mattiucci, 2009). Street art contests two main regimes of visibility

- ❖ Legal and governmental
- ❖ Artworld or social aesthetic on the other

Street art in some instance works against the regimes of governmental laws, accepted aesthetics which creates the conditions within which it must compete for visibility, and a self-evident systems that standardize the mutual world by unconscious rules of visibility and recognition (Irvine, 2012).

Street art recurrently reveals that no urban space is non-aligned, as walls and street landscape are boundaries for socially constructed zones and territories, so are vertical spaces regulated by regimes of visibility. Visual marks left in public urban spaces are technically illegal (except the space is designated for such), and most of the time performed as a nonviolent civil disobedience act. The artists understands that public spaces are normally regulated by property and commercial visibility regime controls (Schiller M. a., 2010), which are appropriated for uncontrollable, irrepressible, antagonist acts from the most recent stencil works and paste-ups on a city building in a publicly accessible space to objects made in the artist's studio, or site specific projects in museums and galleries. Each locations are framed by institutions, legal regimes, public policies, often overlapping, cooperating, and contradictory in a non-harmonizing co-existence.

A clear statement by Swoon in her description of public intervention in city space, is summed up in the Indivisible Cities project which she organized in 2003 with artists in Berlin. She said, *"There is a struggle going on for the physical surfaces of our cities"* (Arranca, 2003), Indivisible Cities are visual and cultural exchange concentrating on artistic interventions in the urban landscape. There is an uprising out of the margins of cities, which is a community of people, more precisely, it is a community of actions, a world floating with ephemera and physical markings made by people who have made up their minds in becoming an active citizens by creating their visual landscape (Irvine, 2012). Every time someone reclaim a billboard for his or her own usage, squiggles their alias across a highway overpass, or use city walls as canvas for their thoughts and images as messages that needs realization, indirectly, they are

participating in that community. They are creating a link to every other person who believes that the vitality of our public spaces is directly related to public participation in the never-ending creation, and rejuvenation of those spaces. Street art is a form of active citizenship that resists any attempt of containment. The doggedness of street art and graffiti in cities all over the world is an evidence of a mutual need for citizens to take a role in their environment (Mitchell, 2005). The deliberation of graffiti as a form of art explains significant characteristics of graffiti; as it is relationship and reception by the public is often antagonistic, as well as its continuous status of being a prosecutable offense (Poliana, 2012). However, this development is probably due to the amalgamation of rebellious attitudes which writers possess, dispute with authorities in regards to regulations being violated by tagging, and the lack of interest by writers in being understood by an audience that is not a graffiti writer (Lewisohn, 2008).

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Study Area

Prague 3 is one of the oldest part of Czech metropolis, this municipality includes almost the whole cadastral area of Zizkov and some part of Vinohrady, Vysocany, and Strasnice. According to 2017 population statistics from Czech Statistical Office, Prague 3 has a population of about 74,559 residents (CZSO, 2019), It has an area of 649ha which is bordered to the north by Prague 8 & 9, south by Prague 10, west by Prague 1 & 2, and to the east by Prague 9 & 10. Important landmarks in Prague 3 are undoubtedly the Vitkov hill which is a National Monument with the statue of Jan Zizka, the television transmitter known as Zizkov Tower, Olsanske cemetery, and the Square of Jiri z Podebrad with the nicely constructed church edifice.



Figure 3.1: Showing cadastral districts of Prague  
Source: (Geoportal, 2019)

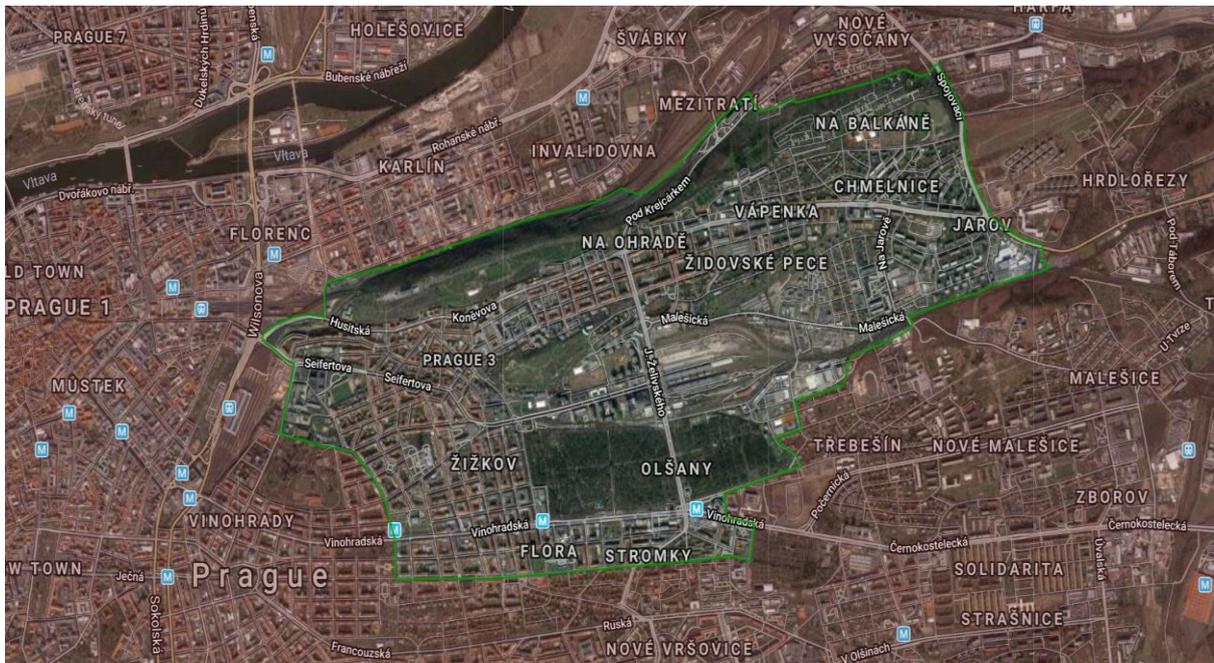


Figure 3.2: Showing study area  
Source: (Cistatrojka, 2018)

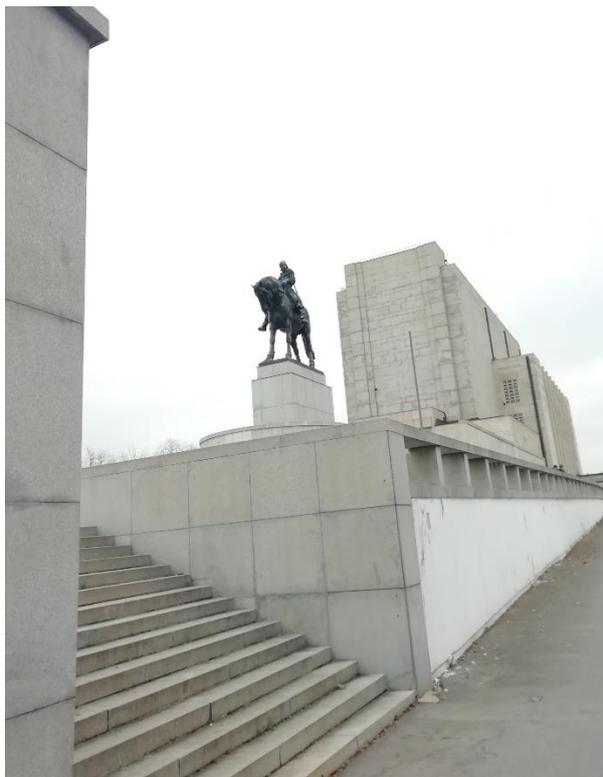


Figure 3.3: Showing Jan Zizka statue on Vitkov



Figure 3.4: Showing Zizkov Tower

Prague 3 was chosen for this research because it has a lot of graffiti on both private and public spaces, also because some properties within the study area falls into the urban conservation or monument protection zone. It also has a huge mix diversity of people living there, both Czechs and foreigners.

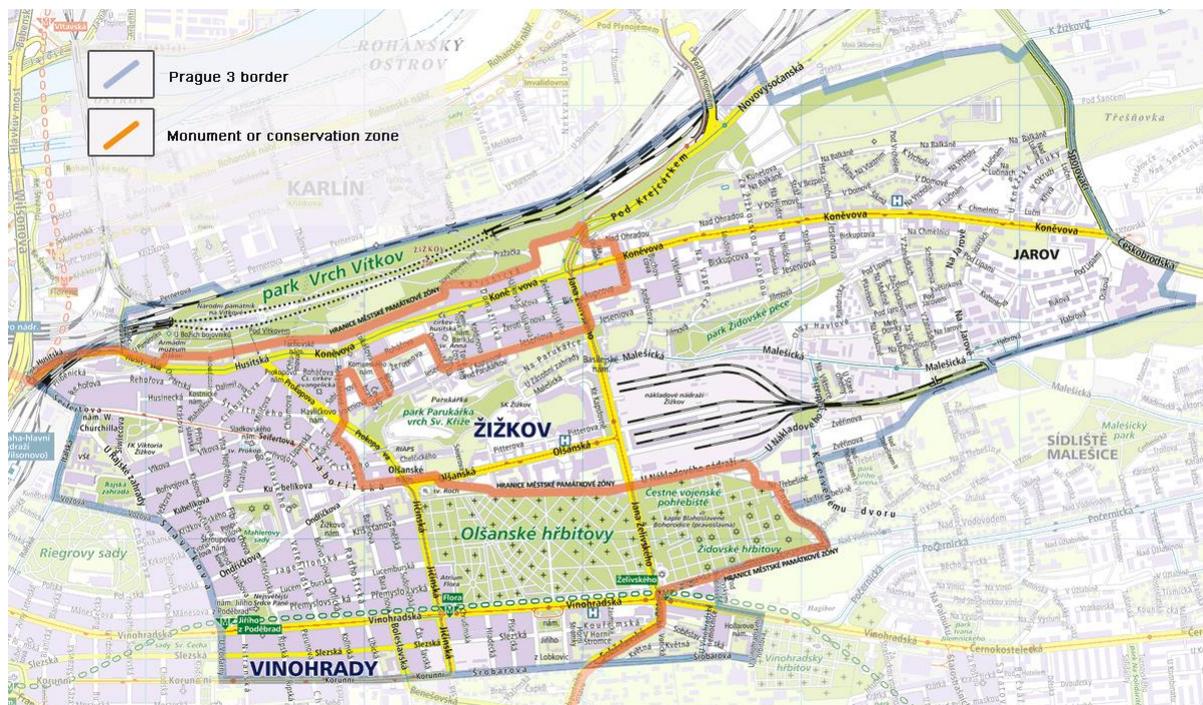


Figure 3.5: showing monument protection zone  
source: (Praha3 Municipal Office, 2016)

This study was carried out as an ethnographic research in Prague 3, Czechia. Ethnographic research is defined as *“the study of social interactions, behaviours, and perceptions that occur within groups, teams, organisations, and communities”* (BMJ, 2008). Ethnographic research data can be collected in three different ways: observation, interviewing and archival research (Angrosino, 2007).

For the purpose of this study, interview method of data collection was used, and the interviews were focused on three core areas in collecting the experience, view, and opinion of participants (see table 3.1 below). According to Warren in the *“Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Method”*, the minimum number of interviews required for a qualitative interview should be between twenty and thirty (Bryman, 2012).

Participant	Purpose
1. Artist	To gather information about how graffiti artists have impacted their immediate environment in their context
2. Public	To gather information about how residents and business outlets view graffiti, and how it has impacted them
3. Government	To gather information about how government agencies such as Police, Czech transportation company, municipality etc are dealing with graffiti

*Table 3.1: Showing the three core participants*

All the artist interviewees presented in this thesis are active graffiti artists from various backgrounds. I had communication with graffiti artists via the internet through social media. I followed a lot of graffiti group on Instagram and Facebook, added graffiti artists as friends and started chatting them up, I also posted the web link to my research questions on the various graffiti groups that I joined. I contacted about 15 graffiti artists, but only 2 gave in to assist me, in most cases when I tell them about my thesis and send the web link for the Survey monkey questions, they read the message without any further response. I also visited a graffiti shop called "Grafficon" on Konevova street in lower Zizkov, where the shop attendant kept saying that he doesn't do graffiti, but he can only assist me by giving the questions to any artist that comes by, so I had to drop my questions there, after which I was told to check back for collection a week from the day I dropped them off.

Snowball sampling was used to sample graffiti artists, snowball sampling technique is often used by social scientists interested in working with a population that is difficult to identify or locate (Crossman, 2018). Snowball sampling is defined as a technique whereby research participants help researchers in identifying other participants relevant to the research (Oregon State University, 2010). while two-stage cluster sampling was used for public respondents. Two-stage cluster sampling is a sample design whereby the first-stage clusters are selected randomly and from the selected clusters, the second-stage sample is also selected by a simple random sampling (Singh, 2018). Three core sample frame were sampled:

residential, commercial, and industrial areas. Within these sample frame, residents and business outlets were interviewed.

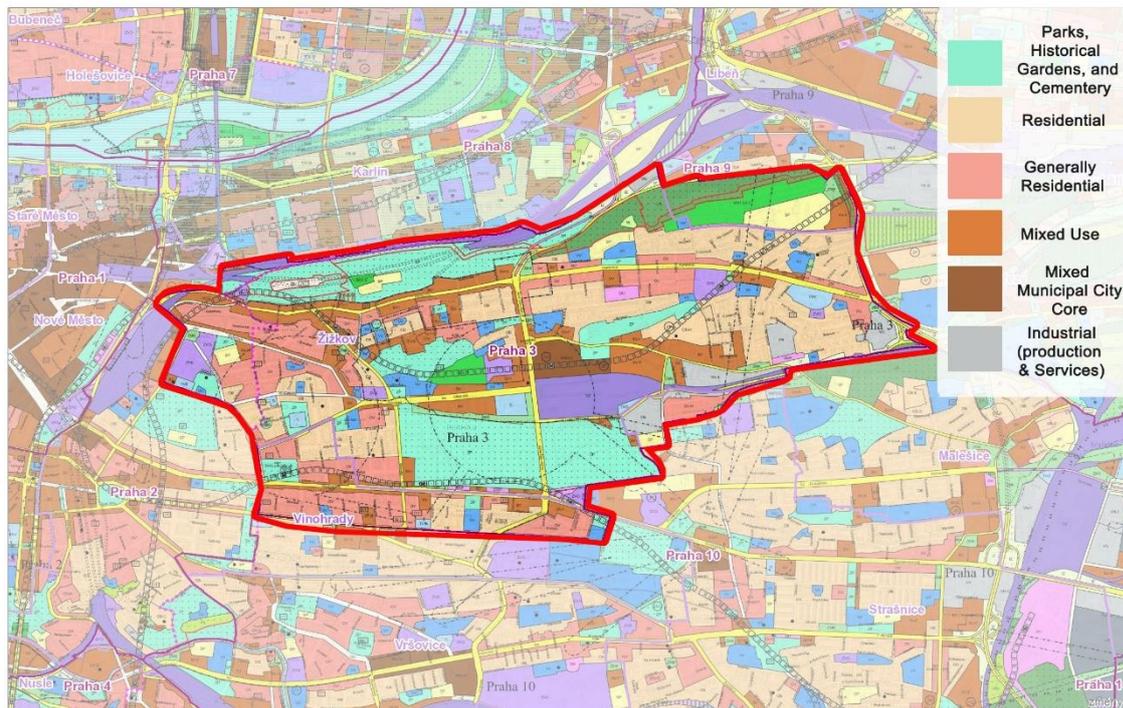


Figure 3.6: Showing the three core sample frame

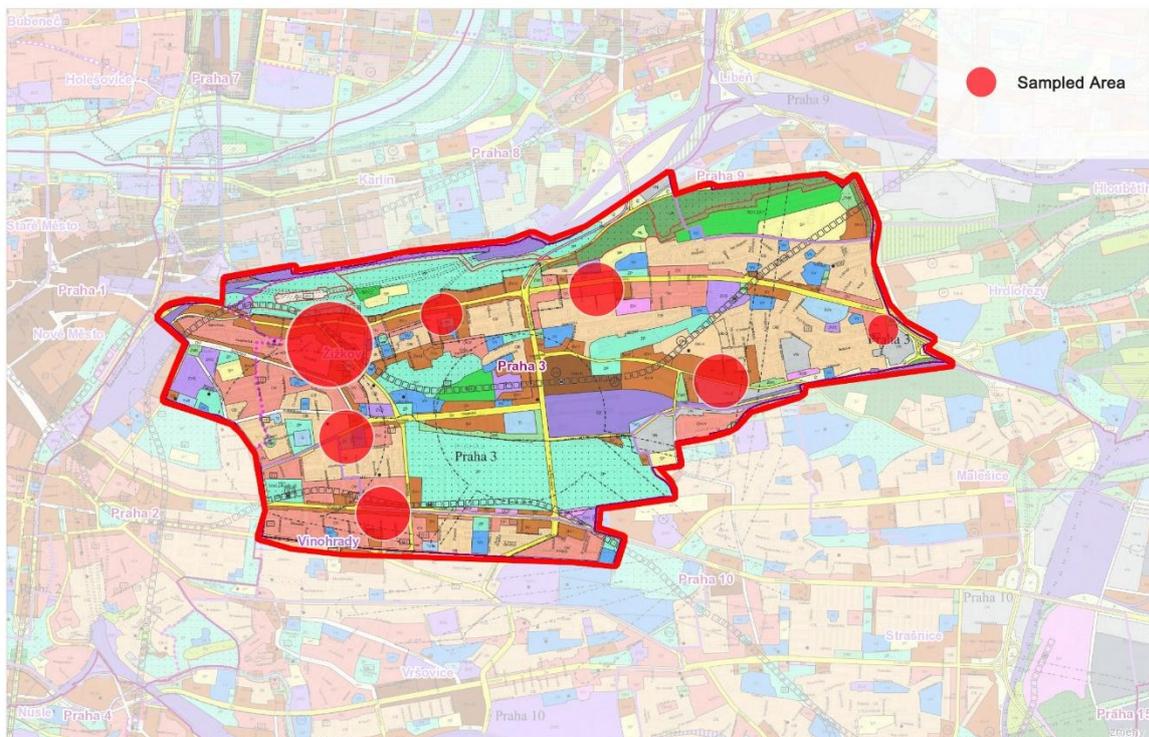


Figure 3.7: Showing areas where samples were drawn from based on the three core sample frame

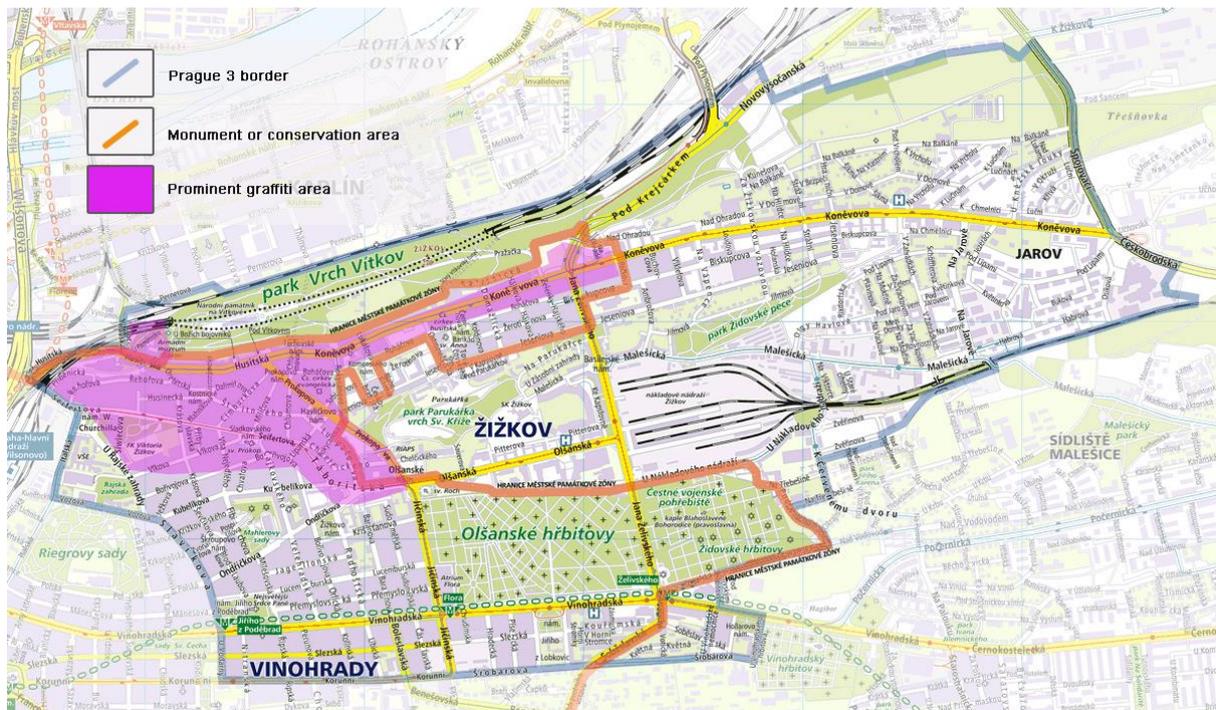


Figure 3.8: Showing where graffiti is most prevalent

Most of the elderly people I approached turned down my request to interview them, probably because I didn't approach them in Czech and couldn't easily give an in-depth explanation of my intention. Even though I used google translator on my phone to give a nice introduction of my intention and what the research was about in Czech. I then decided to approach young adults within the age range of 20 – 45, because I believed that they are more open to foreigners, and can as well communicate in English to some extent.

One of the major challenges I had during the course of this research was my inability to speak Czech. I communicated with my interviewees in English language, as it was the only necessary medium of communication, it didn't provide the needed intellectual freedom for them to speak about such an abstract topic. In several instances, I observed that I was more descriptive and analytical with the words, because my respondents had difficulties expressing their opinions in English, so I had to simplify it for them, at a point I had to translate my questions to Czech and Vietnamese. There was a potraviny I visited along lower Zizkov with the hope of interviewing the shop owner, she spoke Czech to me and I showed her the google translated introduction on my phone with my intentions, after which I gave her the printed questions in Czech, unfortunately she couldn't answer any of the questions, she kept saying "co to je".

I also couldn't get a respondent from the Police station in Prague 3, I wanted to gather information regarding the number of people that have been arrested and prosecuted for

defacing properties with graffiti. I also couldn't get any respondent from the Czech transportation company, I wanted to gather information regarding how they have been dealing with graffiti, in terms of cleaning and removal on the various public transportation medium. But I was told that they can't assist with my enquiry.

## 4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the interviews, I generated data relating to how residents and business outlets view graffiti, how graffiti artists have impacted their immediate environment, and how the municipal office is dealing with graffiti, in relation to aesthetics, legality and abatement.

Major questions	Yes	Yes if its nice/allowed/not vandalism	No
Should there be graffiti in public areas?	13	12	5
Should there be graffiti in private area?	10	4	16
Does it preserve city's cultural identity ?	22		8
	Yes	No, only if there is no option	No
Would you patronize a shop/business outlet tagged with graffiti?	4	8	18
	Yes	Maybe	No
Does graffiti improve aesthetics of the environment ?	8	8	14
	Yes grey	Yes if its good graffiti	
Should bridges, tunnels, and bypasses be grey or painted with graffiti?	7	23	

*Table 4.1: Showing an highlighted result from major questions asked residents and business owners*

The sampled participants were Prague 3 municipal office, six graffiti artists, three business owners and twenty seven residents. They identified: 1) the perception of graffiti in public and private spaces, 2) graffiti and street art as a tool to preserve a city's cultural identity, 3) the patronage effect of graffiti on business 4) the aesthetic stand point. The identified pillars describes the opinions of the participants.

### 4.1 Perception of Graffiti in Public and Private Space

In the narratives of participants, it was noted that their responses represents two general opinion about graffiti: I) Graffiti is basically an act of vandalism, irrespective of the type,

or felt that it can be tolerable in certain situations, and even seen as art. The responses I received made it vividly clear that it's the style, content, and message of the graffiti that matters. The following comment from a respondent sheds more light on this: *"It has to be in the right framework and surroundings in order to earn respect so it cannot be seen as vandalism"*.

The graffiti in figure 4.1 carries the right content and message, as the message and image can be understood by anybody who can basically read English, which invariably might make it not to be seen as vandalism if such graffiti appears on a wall, unlike the graffiti in figure 4.2 and figure 4.3 which are basically in letters that mostly cannot be read or understood by the general public most of the time it appears on a wall.



Figure 4.1: Showing graffiti on a private wall at 19 Stitneho street, Zizkov



Figure 4.2: Showing graffiti tagged building frontage



Figure 4.3: Showing graffiti tagged building frontage

II) Painting on private / public property not allocated for such or without approval, as the case may be, is illegal. Graffiti writers mostly see every wall as canvas, a respondent has the following comment about graffiti: *“graffiti artists have issues with personal ownership”* which makes the normal perception of graffiti as problematic still persist. From the response of 4 out of 6 graffiti artists, they see every wall as a canvas but it has to be in right proportion, location, and environment.

According to Kateřina, a respondent from the department of anti-graffiti, Prague 3 Municipal Office, *“Graffiti is considered to be a form of vandalism, which occurs from third parties when damaging estates with this so-called graffiti art without owner’s consent, If a graffiti is created on legal premises designed for these purposes, it is legal. These area in Praha 3 are located on Prokopova street or at Parukářka”*. See figure 4.4 & 4.5 below.



Figure 4.4: Showing legal graffiti wall along Prokopova street



*Figure 4.5: Showing legal graffiti wall along Prokopova street*

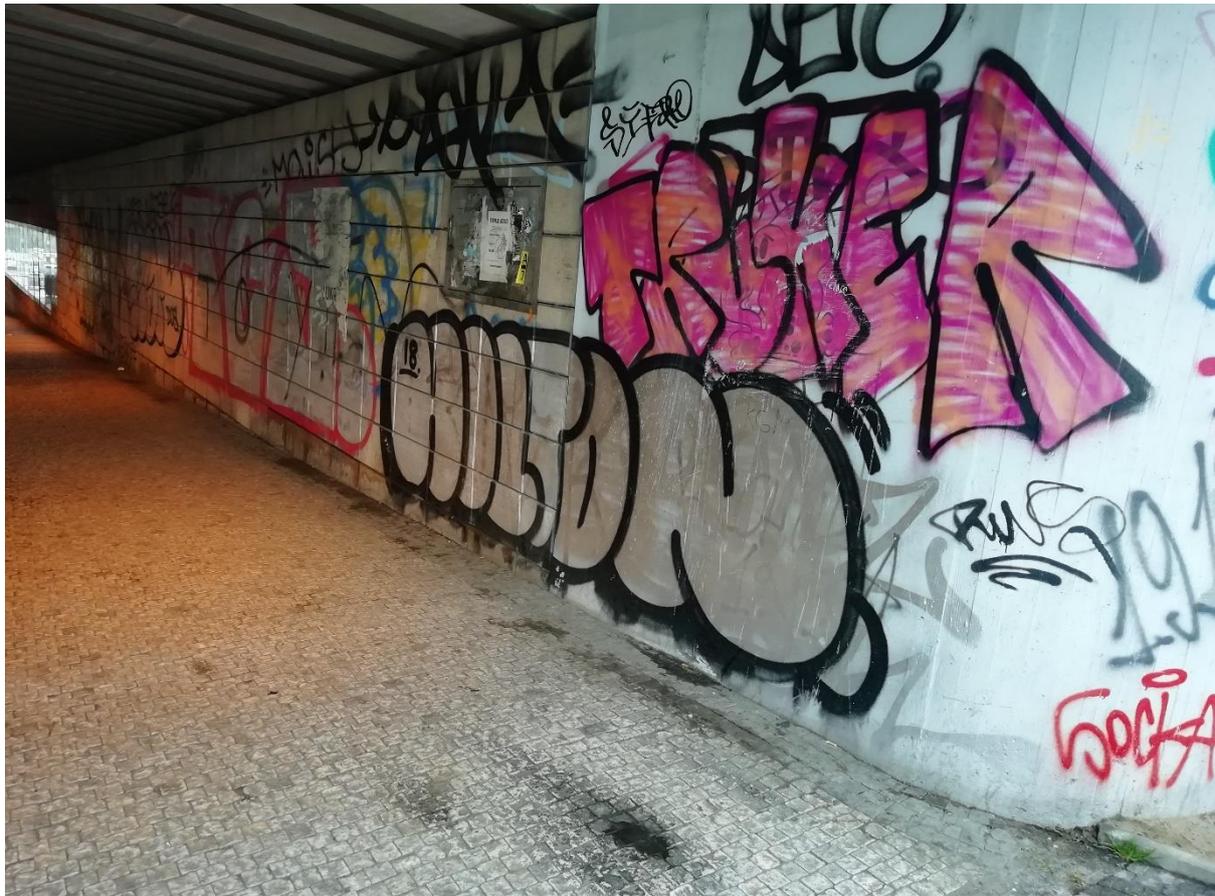
From the response of 23 out of 30 respondents, bridges, bypasses and tunnels can be painted with graffiti, most of these respondents said they would like them to be painted with good graffiti. The question now would be what is the yardstick in determining if a graffiti painted on bridges, bypasses, and tunnels are good graffiti, because what is good, pleasant, and appealing varies from one individual to another.



Figure 4.6: Showing graffiti under a railway bridge in Zizkov



Figure 4.7: Showing graffiti under a bridge at Seifertova street, Prague 3



*Figure 4.8: Showing graffiti under a bridge at Seifertova street, Prague 3*

Figure 4.7 & 4.8 above are definitely not the kind of graffiti that respondents were referring to, as these graffiti are not looking good, and they are just letters that people don't understand. Same cannot be said for the underground tunnel on Konevova street called Zizkovsky tunnel which links Prague 3 with Thamova street in Prague 8. The tunnel runs through a length of 303metres under the Vitkov hill. It was quite interesting that I could spot just one major graffiti on the tunnel wall as the anti-graffiti program gets rid of graffiti from this tunnel. This means that the graffiti might have just been recently painted after the last cleaning exercise on the tunnel wall. See figure 4.9 & 4.10 below.



Figure 4.9: Showing graffiti on Zizkovsky tunnel's wall



Figure 4.10: Showing Zizkovsky tunnel's entrance from Karlin

Katerina from the municipal office also said that the statute that guide's property damage and/or estate with graffiti is: "*§ 228 & 229 zákona číslo 40/2009 Sb., trestní zákoník*" and there are no codes regulating the sale of graffiti materials, which means that anybody can easily acquire one.

*"§ 228 Damage to foreign things*

*(1) Anyone who destroys, damages or makes an unfit foreign thing, and thus causes damage to a foreign property not negligible, shall be liable to a term of imprisonment of up to one year, disqualification or forfeiture.*

*(2) He will be punished in the same way, who will harm another person by spraying, painting or describing it with a color or other substance.*

*(3) The offender shall be sentenced to six months to three years in prison;*

*(a) where the offense referred to in paragraph 1 or 2 is committed by a witness, expert or interpreter for the performance of their duties, \ t*

*(b) if he commits such acts to other things for his actual or supposed race, belonging to an ethnic group, nationality, political belief, religion or because he is actually or supposedly without religion;*

*(c) if he commits such an act to a case which enjoys protection under another law ; \ tor. \ t*

*(d) where such damage causes significant damage.*

*(4) The offender shall be punished by imprisonment for a term of two to six years if the offense referred to in paragraph 1 or 2 is caused by large-scale damage.*

*§ 229 Abuse of property*

*Whoever harms an important cultural, scientific, nature, landscape or environmental interest protected by another law by destroying, damaging, rendering useless or squabbling his own greater value, who enjoys protection under another law, will be punished by imprisonment up to two years, by prohibiting activity or forfeiture" (ČR, 2009).*

It's quite unfortunate that I couldn't get information on how many people have been arrested and prosecuted by the municipal police based on the above cited law guiding property damage. It would have been a good way of showing the efficiency of the Act's enforcement. This Act clearly established the fact that defacing a property is a punishable offence under the law.

Prague 3 Municipal government has been implementing a serious anti-graffiti intervention program since 2017, it involves cleaning/repainting affected facade. This cleaning/repainting operation is carried out by a professional company called fa Austur s.r.o.

Property owners need to sign up for this program through a contract. Once an application is made, the contract will then be prepared. Due to the fact that properties in Prague 3 are under the monumental protection zone, the municipality has to apply for a decision regarding the application's approval from the Department of Heritage Care for the City of Prague. Hence, binding decisions are hereby sent to the property owner, which might take up to two months. After which an order to take action on the affected property can take effect once the binding decision is made.

It is also quite possible to report a new graffiti defacing a building through the established reporting centre. Once they have the complaint, they will check whether the damage is on a building which is enrolled in the program and also ensure removal after consultation with the property owner.

The time gap in making a decision by the district office as to remove graffiti from a building and enrolling into the aforementioned program is cumbersome. It's an obvious fact that if a graffiti is spotted on a wall, if not removed on time, it invites additional graffiti to surface on that wall. An example of this was noted from Bertramka tram stop close to my apartment in Prague 5, the cemetery wall beside the tram stop doesn't have any graffiti tag on it, but all of a sudden, one appeared, thereafter, three others surfaced, see figure 4.11 and figure 4.12. Sometime ago in January 2019, I saw a graffiti in Andel metro station platform which is quite a rare thing to behold in Prague, as most of the graffiti I see in the metro stations are usually before or after the beautifully designed train platforms. Prague transportation company knowing so well that a graffiti invites others to the wall reacted swiftly within a week and cleaned the graffiti, see figure 4.13 and figure 4.14. It's very important that graffiti cleaning or removal is done quickly as soon as they appear on a wall.

According to the anti-graffiti program unit of Prague 3 municipal office, the suitable climatic conditions required for the cleaning and removal of graffiti is 8°C and above. This means that little or no cleaning or removal of graffiti is done during winter especially when the temperature is below 8°C.



Figure 4.11: Showing the first graffiti on the cemetery wall at Bertramka tram stop



Figure 4.12: Showing other graffiti tag that surfaced on the wall



*Figure 4.13: Showing graffiti on Andel metro station platform*



*Figure 4.14: Showing the Andel metro station platform after clean up*

According to the information retrieved from the Facebook account of Prague 3 Antigraffiti Program, in 2018, more than 450 houses have been cleaned in the monument zone zizkov and Vinohrady.



Figure 4.15: Showing a building restored from graffiti  
Source: (Antigraffiti program Prahy 3, 2018)



Figure 4.16: Showing a building restored from graffiti  
Source: (Antigraffiti program Prahy 3, 2018)



Figure 4.17: Showing a building restored from graffiti  
Source: (Antigrffiti program Prahy 3, 2018)



Figure 4.18: Showing a building restored from graffiti  
Source: (Antigrffiti program Prahy 3, 2018)



Figure 4.19: Showing a building restored from graffiti  
Source: (Antigraffiti program Prahy 3, 2018)



Figure 4.20: Showing a building restored from graffiti  
Source: (Antigraffiti program Prahy 3, 2018)

According to information retrieved from the Antigraffiti Program office, in 2017, 2,537 sqm of graffiti surfaces were removed, which cost 1,623,040kc. In 2018, 16,200 sqm of graffiti surfaces were removed, and the cost was 6,075,000kc. When asked if the program has been successful, the respondent said yes, it has been successful. Even though there are still a lot of graffiti looming around Prague 3, it could be as a result of property owners not being aware of the program, because removal of graffiti on an affected property cost nothing more than the time that will be spent on signing the aforementioned contract, or that graffiti keeps coming back to a wall that was once cleaned. Figure 4.21 below shows a vivid example of this on Konevova street, as the wall was recently cleaned from graffiti in 2018, it's among the images on the Prague 3 Antigraffiti Program Facebook page, upon my visit to the property as at the time of writing this thesis, I noticed that another graffiti is now on the wall that was previously cleaned. See figure 4.22.



*Figure 4.21: Showing a building restored from graffiti*  
Source: (Antigraffiti program Prahy 3, 2018)



Figure 4.22: Showing a building cleaned with graffiti back on it

Prague 3 doesn't apply anti-graffiti coatings on walls where graffiti are being removed at the moment. Anti-graffiti coating are paints, coatings, glazes or varnishes that are specially manufactured to prevent graffiti from successfully adhering to a substrate, and also ease cleaning if graffiti is painted on it. Anti-graffiti coatings are being used in many locations around the world, to mention but few are Jackson Town, Wyoming, USA; Town of Oakville, Canada; the city of Auburn, Washington, USA; Los Angeles , CA, USA even made it mandatory for new building owners to apply anti-graffiti coat on their properties (Earth Times, 2009).

#### 4.2 Graffiti and Street Art as a Tool to Preserve a City's Cultural Identity

The historical value of graffiti can't be ignored as street art can describe the story of a city, and its very existence is a sign of urban development. Therefore, street art has a huge role to play for anyone researching the history of a city or a community and, as a carrier of multiple multileveled messages, it seems to have slowly acquired the merits of cultural heritage in its own little way.

In the narratives of 22 out of 30 participants, it was stated that graffiti as part of urban typography, it displays a city's cultural identity because the art is majorly an expression of people living in the city or community. In the words of a respondent: *"Graffiti has the capacity to celebrate cultural identity and heritage, and address political and social issues"*.

As stated earlier, urban art has the ability to address social issues, celebrate community or cultural identity, as well as heritage. An example of this is evident in Berlin wall.

Most of the graffiti in Prague 3 are just letters, I only came across one political graffiti on the pedestrian bridge connecting Vitkov hill with Seifertova street. See figure 4.23 below.



*Figure 4.23: Showing political graffiti on the bridge connecting Vitkov hill with Seifertova street*

### 4.3 The Patronage Effect of Graffiti on Businesses

If you are walking through a street and you noticed some graffiti on a building including the doors, would you want to go into that building if it were a shop? According to 8 out of 30 respondents, they would visit such shop but a respondent said: *“it depends on how close the shop is to my apartment, and only if there is no other option”*, while one of the graffiti artists interviewed said *“Yes, goods are not destroyed with graffiti on the wall”*, two graffiti artists also said they would patronise such shop, but the story might be different if it was a gang tag.

In the narratives of 18 out of 30 participants, their responses were no, as well as 3 other graffiti artist. Graffiti has negative connotations to a lot of people and hence making them associate the environment as a place with criminal activity.



Figure 4.24: Showing a business outlet with heavily tagged wall



Figure 4.25: Showing tagged business outlet



Figure 4.26: Showing a restaurant tagged with graffiti



Figure 4.27: Showing tagged business outlet



Figure 4.28: Showing tagged business outlet



Figure 4.29: Showing tagged business outlet

According to a respondent, *“Graffiti have the potential to make an area look uncared for, and as somewhere you wouldn’t like to shop or live”*. As a result of this, business outlets defaced with graffiti might have fewer people coming through their doors, and thereby leading to less cash going into their coffers.

#### 4.4 Aesthetic stand point

*“Sometimes, graffiti can be an artwork which enhances a boring wall”* this was a comment from a respondent, 8 out of 30 participants were not sure if graffiti has improved or enhanced aesthetics of the environment, 8 out of 30 participants stated that graffiti has enhanced the aesthetics of the environment, while 14 out of 30 participants said it had in no way enhanced the environment. In the exact words of 2 graffiti artists interviewed for this study, one said: *“Yes, but I will like to find cans that are better for the environment”* from the words of another, *“Yes, it depends on which type of graffiti and where”*.

More respondents were of the opinion that graffiti doesn't enhance aesthetics of the environment, but the aesthetic value of graffiti is extensively considered nowadays, with new levels of artistic interest being achieved, as a good graffiti is an art work that can be enjoyed publicly, as well as improve the quality of the environment where it is located.



Figure 4.30: Showing graffiti from the legal graffiti wall in Florenc, Prague 1



Figure 4:31: Showing graffiti from the legal graffiti wall in Florenc, Prague 1



Figure 4:32: Showing graffiti from the legal graffiti wall on Mezi Vodami street, Prague 4



Figure 4.33: Showing graffiti from the legal graffiti wall on Mezi Vodami street, Prague 4



Figure 4.34: Showing graffiti from the legal graffiti wall on Mezi Vodami street, Prague 4

Should there be businesses given license to sell graffiti materials if its usage are mostly illegal than not? There is a store on Konevova street, Prague 3 which sells graffiti material, see figure 3.35. Should graffiti materials be sold to under aged children? The other day, I was in the legal graffiti area in Florenc and I spotted this young boy holding a spray can, tagging an already made graffiti which is kind of against graffiti artists' code, the code forbids tagging an artist's work, see figure 3.36. I just said to myself, if this boy can do this to an artist's work, how much more will he do on a nicely painted wall in the right location and space to showcase his name? These are questions that this thesis can't answer.



Figure 4.35: Showing graffiti shop



*Figure 4.36: Showing a young chap tagging an artist's work*

## 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Codes to regulate the sale of graffiti materials: There should be codes regulating the sale of graffiti materials, such that limited people can have access to it. As of now, anybody within any age group can get hold of a spray can. Also if its more expensive to afford a spray can, the usage of it for destructive purposes will reduce.



*Figure 5.1: Showing some graffiti spray can with prices in Czech crowns*

Tulsa City Council Oklahoma, USA, implemented an approach whereby businesses do not sell graffiti materials to minors unless they have an adult with them (Ely, 2018), this was because private and public properties have regularly been defaced, with ugly scrawls of spray paint on them.

2. Enlightenment programmes: Educating children and the community on the proper usage of graffiti as a tool in enhancing the aesthetics of the community rather than degrading will go a long way in curbing the menace. This programme is already ongoing in Melbourne Australia, whereby over 1000 students in their 8th year at schools across Wyndham Council have already completed the anti-graffiti education program (Atkinson, 2019).

3. Usage of anti-graffiti coating: The application of anti-graffiti coating on a wall can especially pay off, because it makes graffiti removal to be done quickly and efficiently, hence more grounds can be covered in cleaning the municipality from graffiti.

4. Digital graffiti: With the use of digital graffiti, a lot of graffiti writers and artists can paint digitally and post their works online without destroying or defacing public or private properties. One of the major reasons why graffiti artists paint on any wall, either public or private is to spread their names, this can as well be achieved via digital graffiti and afterwards, sharing their work through online platforms. Digital graffiti will also help in the reduction of harmful substances (chlorofluorocarbons) released into the atmosphere by spray cans which depletes the ozone layer.

5. Creating legal spots for graffiti: If more legal spots whereby graffiti artist can perform their art are created, it will curb the menace of illegal painting. Factors such as location, right proportion, and environment provided for legal graffiti is very important too, because artists want to showcase their art, spread their names, and also want people to see their work as well. The city of Toronto, Canada initiated a street art program in 2012 called StreetARToronto (StART), whereby the StART program has been said to be successful in encouraging active transportation such as walking & cycling, made the streets more beautiful and safe, as well as showcasing local artists, mentor emerging talent, reduce overall infrastructure maintenance costs (Toronto, 2019) because the artists bear the cost of painting the walls with murals, property owner of such wall won't need to spend money on repainting the wall. See figure 5.2 below. There are some locations in Prague 3 that can be used for legal graffiti purposes with the sole aim of beautifying the environment and eradicating unmeaningful tags on them. See figure 5.3 below. The question now would be who is to ensure that good graffiti ends up on these walls? Should it be an extra task for the Prague 3 Municipal anti-graffiti programme? I would say yes, because they get to remove the illegal graffiti and hence, they are familiar with graffiti and artists that are creative.



Figure 5.2: Showing an example of StreetARToronto program  
 Source: (Toronto, 2019)

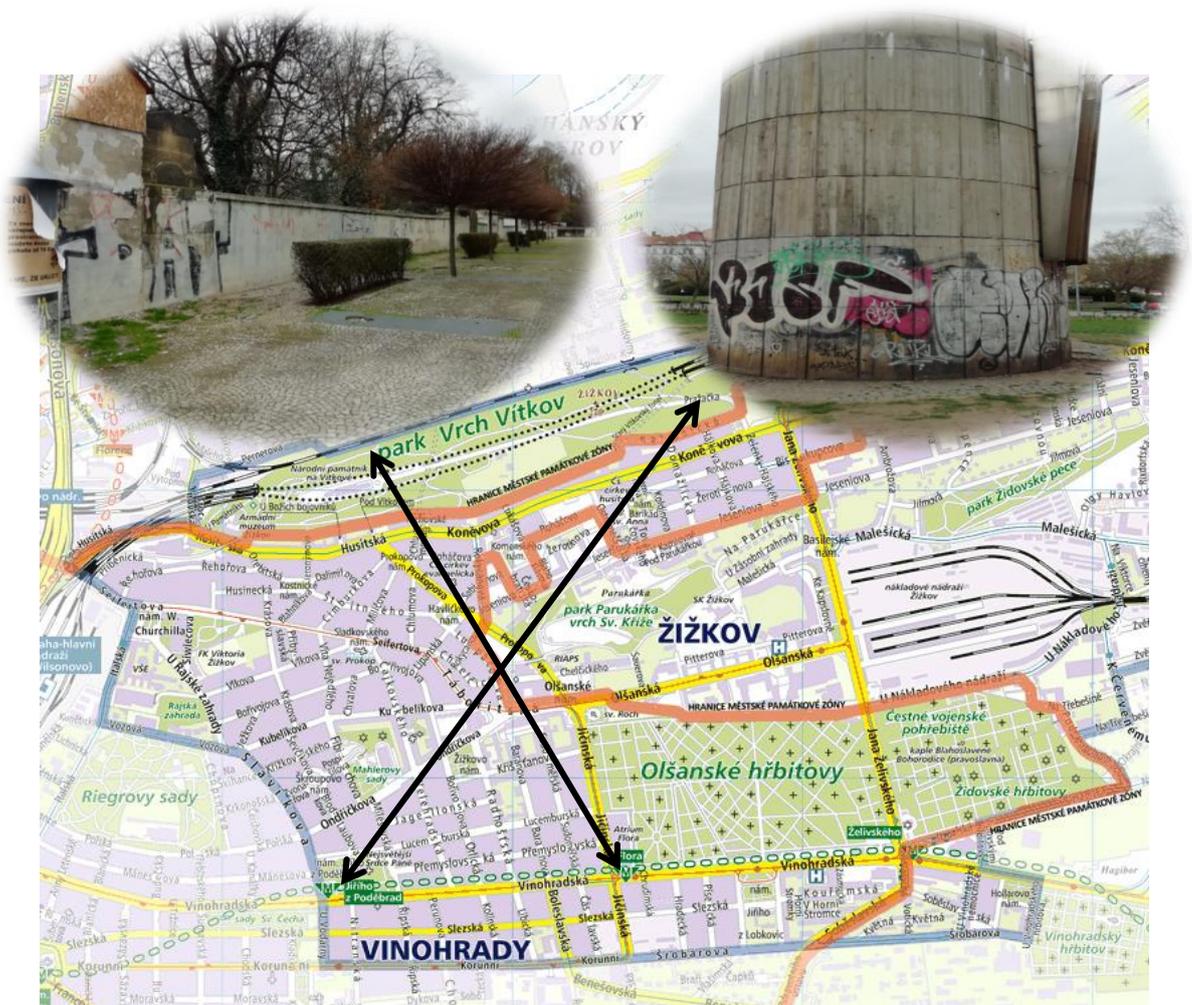


Figure 5.3: Showing locations where legal graffiti walls can be erected

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this thesis has demonstrated urban art as an important part of a community's landscape, as well as highlighting its aesthetic, socio-cultural, and economic impact. The graffiti and street art movements are not fading away, neither are they decreasing in popularity. As a matter of fact, searching Google for graffiti blogs fetches over 184,000,000 hits. A huge amount of time, money, energy, and resources are being put together for its eradication, but graffiti still ends up coming back on the wall.

Graffiti writers and street artists are often simply yearning for their names to be widely known, as well as their art being acknowledged. Graffiti is not only about vandalism or defacing private properties. As Alison Young asserts " Despite the diversity of writers and artists intention, mark making without permission is always a damage according to the Law, irrespective of aesthetics, medium of expression or style" (Young, 2017).

The belief that graffiti is absolutely associated with crime and vandalism is one that is rapidly fading away, with its prolific subculture and wide spreading disrepute in conventional art circles, in such a way that what was previously considered as vandalism is now being sold for hundreds and thousands at important art auctions to high class art buyers in the society and collectors all around the world (Cebas, 2011). Of a truth, though destruction is certainly a goal for some of these graffiti writers, what we need to consider are those art work which seek a higher purpose, of enhancing rather than destroying, of improving rather than degrading, of empowering rather than frustrating. Hence, fulfilling their sense of belonging to the community, expressing their view against something they oppose, reclaiming and beautifying public space such as bridges, bypasses, and tunnels. If these intentions are applied within the right contexts, urban art can contribute significantly to social, historical, aesthetic, and economic values of a community.

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## **APPENDIX**

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

#### **ARTIST**

1. When did you start graffiti ?
2. Why do you do graffiti?
3. What inspires you ?
4. What do you want people to think when they see your work?
5. Would you rather paint legally or illegally?
6. Does the illegality involved in graffiti play any role for you?
7. Do you see every wall as a canvas?
8. Have you / Do you paint on private properties without permission? If yes, why?
9. Have you / Do you paint on business outlet without permission?
10. How do you finance the cost of spray cans and other materials?
11. Have you been hassled by the police at any moment while painting ?
12. Do you think graffiti improves aesthetic of the environment ?
13. Would you patronise a business outlet with graffiti on its wall?

## UMĚLEC

1. Kdy jste začali graffiti ?
2. Proč děláte graffiti ?
3. Co tě inspiruje ?
4. Co chcete, aby lidé mysleli, když vidí vaši práci ?
5. Raději byste malovali právně nebo nelegálně ?
6. Zahrnuje nezákonnost graffiti jakoukoli roli pro vás ?
7. Vidíte každou zeď jako plátno ?
8. Bavíte / maříte na soukromých nemovitostech bez svolení? Pokud ano, proč ?
9. Bavíte / namalujete v obchodní síti bez svolení ?
10. Jak financujete náklady na spreje a další materiály ?
11. Byli jste políčkami, když jste malovali ?
12. Myslíte si, že graffiti zlepšují estetiku prostředí ?
13. Chtěli byste patronovat obchodní zásuvku s graffiti na stěně ?

## **PUBLIC**

1. What do you think of graffiti in public area? Acceptable?
2. What do you think of graffiti in private area (space) ?
3. Have you ever been a victim of graffiti?
4. Do you consider graffiti a menace?
5. Do you think graffiti murals and street art preserve a city's cultural identity?
6. SHOW PICTURES OF SHOPS THAT HAVE GRAFFITI ON THEIR WALL AND DOOR
  - Would you patronize a shop/business outlet like this?
7. Do you think graffiti has affected patronage in your shop?
8. Do you think graffiti improves aesthetic of the environment ?
9. Would you prefer public space such as bridges, tunnel, and bypasses to be left grey or painted with graffiti?

## VEŘEJNOST

1. Co si myslíte o graffiti ve veřejném prostoru? Přijatelný?
2. Co si myslíte o graffiti v soukromém prostoru (prostoru)
3. Byl jste někdy obětí graffiti?
4. Považujete graffiti za hrozbu?
5. Myslíte si, že graffiti a uliční umění zachovávají kulturní identitu města?
6. ZOBRAZUJTE OBRAZY OBCHODŮ, KTERÉ JSOU ZAHRNUTY NA SÍTĚ A DVEŘE
  - Chtěli byste patronát k obchodu nebo obchodnímu závodu takhle?
7. Myslíte si, že graffiti ovlivnil záštitu ve vašem obchodě?
8. Myslíte si, že graffiti zlepšuje estetiku prostředí?
9. Dáváte přednost veřejnému prostranství, jako je most a obchvaty, aby byly šedé nebo malované graffiti?

## GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

1. Is graffiti a crime or an act of vandalism?
2. Are all public artistic expressions legal?
3. How often are graffiti vandals arrested and prosecuted?
4. Are there codes regulating graffiti?
5. Are there codes regulating the sale of graffiti materials?
6. Who is responsible for cleaning or removing graffiti?
7. How much is spent on abatement and removal ?
8. What are the procedures taken?
9. Do you think graffiti improves aesthetic of the environment ?

## GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

1. Je graffiti zločin nebo vandalismus?
2. Jsou všechny veřejné umělecké výrazy legální?
3. Jak často jsou graffiti vandalové zatčeni a stíháni?
4. Existují kódy upravující graffiti?
5. Existují kódy upravující prodej graffiti?
6. Kdo je zodpovědný za čištění nebo odstranění graffiti?
7. Kolik je věnováno na snižování a odstranění?
8. Jaké postupy se provádějí?
9. Myslíte si, že graffiti zlepšuje estetiku prostředí?