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## Street Artivism on Athenian Walls

### A cognitive semiotic analysis of metaphor and narrative in street art

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# Street Artivism on Athenian Walls

A cognitive semiotic analysis of metaphor and narrative in street art

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CENTRE FOR LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE | LUND UNIVERSITY





# Street Artivism on Athenian Walls

A cognitive semiotic analysis of metaphor and  
narrative in street art

Georgios Stampoulidis



**LUND**  
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DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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Lund University, Sweden,  
to be defended at the Centre for Languages and Literature (SOL Hörsalen),  
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*Faculty opponent*

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<b>Title and subtitle:</b> Street Artivism on Athenian Walls: A cognitive semiotic analysis of metaphor and narrative in street art		
<b>Abstract</b> <p>The thesis is a collection of four papers on Greek street art (specifically situated in the city of Athens) with a focus on metaphors and narratives. The overall aim guiding this thesis is to explore how street art in times of crisis can represent sociopolitical issues and in what ways these messages can be conveyed. By using the perspective of cognitive semiotics to address this, a parallel aim is to contribute to developing concepts and methods in this relatively new discipline.</p> <p>Paper 1 presents a set of qualitative and quantitative analyses of rhetorical figures such as metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, hyperbole, oxymoron and personification in street art. A novel and empirically tested data-driven procedure is introduced, one that is informed by cognitive linguistic and semiotic theory for the identification and interpretation of rhetorical figures in crisis-related street art in Athens. The analyses show that, although the methodological protocol can be applied reliably to street art, and can enable the analysts to distinguish metaphors from other rhetorical figures, this genre often requires multiple kinds of sociocultural, contextual and linguistic knowledge to be accommodated in the analysis of the images, in order to achieve a successful and intersubjective interpretation.</p> <p>Paper 2 contributes to the study of figurativity and polysemiotic communication. It discusses the complex phenomenon of metaphor synthetically, offering an approach that may help us to go beyond and overcome challenges among debated issues in metaphor research in cognitive linguistics and semiotics by using a coherent terminology, informed by cognitive semiotics. The data derived from the empirical analysis presented in Paper 1 are used as the basis for the theoretical implications of the analysis in Paper 2, and by extension for the validity of the step-wise procedure for identification and interpretation of rhetorical figures in street art.</p> <p>Paper 3 explores street artists' experiences (on the basis of 10 audio-recorded go-along interviews) by focusing on what motivated their art-making and the verbal metaphors they used in go-along interviews where they were asked about these motivations. Methodologically it emphasizes the need for a theoretical definition of metaphor that should be clearly linked to its operationalization in alignment with the specific data. The results of the study reveal that street artists use a range of highly and moderately innovative metaphors when talking about personal experiences and motivations in relation to their art-making, with respect to situated communication.</p> <p>Paper 4 extends the scope of the thesis to the narrative potential of single static images, such as street artworks. With its qualitative approach, yet drawing on a sample corpus of street artworks, Paper 4 allows us to delve into narratological discussions probing the narrative potential of street art. The findings suggest that single static images can be able to narrate and be interpreted as narrations but only if the underlying story is known in advance.</p> <p>In sum, the thesis contributes new knowledge to our understanding of street art and provides a systematic and empirically grounded account of its figurative and narrative interpretation, with a number of workable ideas offered to the study of cognitive semiotics.</p>		
<b>Key words:</b> Greek Street Art; Urban Creativity; Cognitive Semiotics; Pheno-methodological Triangulation; Polysemiotic Communication; Multimodality; Ethnographic Research; Go-along Interview; Rhetorical Figures; Metaphor Identification Procedures; Verbal and Non-verbal Metaphor; Motivation & Sedimentation Model (MSM); Narrative; Secondary Narrativity		
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# Street Artivism on Athenian Walls

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Georgios Stampoulidis



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A doctoral dissertation at a university in Sweden takes either the form of a single, coherent research study (monograph) or the form of a summary presenting the material and research in a context followed by a number of research papers (compilation thesis). Papers written by several persons may be included in a compilation thesis as well. This doctoral dissertation is a compilation thesis.

Front cover, street artwork by an unknown artist.  
Photograph by © Georgios Stampoulidis, Athens (2018).

Back cover, street artwork by WD.  
Photograph by © Georgios Stampoulidis, Athens, (2017).

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*“Street art is a visual diary on public display”*  
*(Bleeps.gr, 2014, p. 221)*

# Table of Contents

List of papers .....	8
Other publications related to this thesis .....	9
Acknowledgements .....	10
Περίληψη στα Ελληνικά.....	12
List of abbreviations .....	14
<b>1 Introduction .....</b>	<b>15</b>
1.1 Research questions and overview of the papers.....	21
1.2 Outline of the synopsis.....	23
<b>2 Background .....</b>	<b>25</b>
2.1 Cognitive semiotics.....	25
2.2 Sign use and semiotic grounds.....	27
2.3 Polysemiotic communication and multimodality .....	31
2.4 Metaphor and metonymy in cognitive linguistics and semiotics .....	38
2.4.1 Metaphor research in cognitive linguistics .....	38
2.4.2 Metaphor research in semiotics .....	43
2.4.3 Metaphor-metonymy combinations.....	48
2.4.4 Summary.....	50
2.5 A cognitive semiotic theory of metaphor within the Motivation & Sedimentation Model (MSM).....	50
2.6 A cognitive semiotic approach to narrative .....	59
2.7 Urban creativity—art and crisis in the streets of Athens .....	66
<b>3 Methodological considerations .....</b>	<b>75</b>
3.1 Cognitive semiotic methodology and its phenomenological bedrock 77	
3.2 Cognitive semiotic methods.....	80
3.2.1 Conceptual and intuition-based analysis.....	81
3.2.2 Empathy and intersubjectivity .....	82
3.2.3 Quantification .....	84
3.3 Metaphor identification procedures .....	86
3.3.1 Metaphor identification procedures in language and beyond.....	86



3.3.2 Metaphor analysis procedures in the thesis .....	91
3.4 Ethnography .....	95
3.5 Data collection and corpus construction .....	100
3.6 Ethical and legal considerations.....	104
3.7 Summary .....	105
<b>4 Summaries of papers .....</b>	<b>107</b>
4.1 Summary of Paper 1.....	107
4.2 Summary of Paper 2.....	109
4.3 Summary of Paper 3.....	111
4.4 Summary of Paper 4.....	113
<b>5 Conclusions .....</b>	<b>115</b>
5.1 Summary of main findings and contributions.....	115
5.2 Limitations and future directions .....	119
<b>References.....</b>	<b>122</b>

## List of papers

This thesis is based on the following four papers, which are referred to in the text by their Roman numerals. All the papers are reproduced with the kind permission of the publishers. My supervisors contributed with guidance and feedback on the research design of the papers and editorial input on the writing. Any remaining errors or blotches that may remain in this thesis are entirely my own.

1. **Stampoulidis, G., & Bolognesi, M.** (2019). Bringing metaphors back to the streets: A corpus-based study for the identification and interpretation of rhetorical figures in street art. *Visual Communication*. October 2019. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470357219877538><sup>1</sup>
2. **Stampoulidis, G., Bolognesi, M., & Zlatev, J.** (2019). A cognitive semiotic exploration of metaphors in Greek street art. *Cognitive Semiotics*, 12(1). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1515/cogsem-2019-2008><sup>2</sup>
3. **Stampoulidis, G., & Zlatev, J.** (Manuscript). Exploring Athenian street artists' motivations and metaphors in situated communication: A go-along study.<sup>3</sup>
4. **Stampoulidis, G.** (2019). Stories of Resistance in Greek Street Art: A Cognitive-Semiotic Approach. *Public Journal of Semiotics*, 8(2), 29–48. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37693/pjos.2018.8.19872><sup>4</sup>

### *Author's contribution to co-authored papers*

**Papers 1-3** were prepared in collaboration with two co-authors: Marianna Bolognesi (collaborator) and Jordan Zlatev (supervisor). In all three studies, I took the lead in all different stages of producing the papers. In the following, the contribution by the author of this doctoral thesis to the articles is described.

In **Paper 1**, both authors analyzed the data (independently, as the methods report) and contributed to discussing the findings together and drafting the paper, and thus, the study presented in Paper 1 is the result of a close collaboration between the two authors. In particular, I conceptualized the study, collected the data, took the lead in writing and developing the aims and research questions, and outlining, writing and

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revising the paper. Marianna Bolognesi contributed mainly with the statistical analysis. I was the main author of the paper.

In **Paper 2**, I contributed to conceptualizing the study, conducted the literature review and took responsibility for the planning and writing of the paper. Marianna Bolognesi provided considerable feedback and helped shape the empirical research and analysis. Jordan Zlatev provided help with the development of the cognitive semiotic theoretical framework. I was the main author of the paper.

In **Paper 3**, I conceptualized the study, collected the data, developed the research questions, and wrote up the paper. Jordan Zlatev acted as an independent coder for metaphor analysis in the second part of the paper and he also provided considerable feedback at a later stage of the manuscript's development. I was the main author of the paper.

### Other publications related to this thesis

In addition, the author of this thesis has also contributed to the following peer-reviewed publications.

#### *Journal articles*

**Stampoulidis, G.** (2019). Polysemiotic communication vs. multimodality: a conceptual and terminological distinction applied in street art. *SAUC— Street Art and Urban Creativity Scientific Journal*, 5(2), 26–31. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25765/sauc.v5i2.156>

**Stampoulidis, G.** (2019). Urban creativity in abandoned places. Xenia Hotels Project, Greece. *Nuart Journal*, 1(2), 71–75.

**Stampoulidis, G.**, Bitouni, T., & Xyntarianos-Tsiropinas, P. (2018). The “black-and-white mural” in Polytechnio: Meaning-making, materiality, and heritagization of contemporary street art in Athens. *SAUC — Street Art and Urban Creativity Scientific Journal*, 4(2), 54–65. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25765/sauc.v4i2.143>

#### *Conference papers*

**Stampoulidis, G.** (2018). A cognitive semiotics approach to the analysis of street art. The case of Athens. In D. Martinelli (Ed.), *Proceedings of the 13<sup>th</sup> World Congress of the International Association for Semiotic Studies (IASS/AIS)* (pp. 787–797). IASS Publications: Kaunas, Lithuania.

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I am also grateful to Marianna Bolognesi for being a wonderful co-author of the first two papers. Marianna made a contribution to Paper 1 by serving as a reliability coder. The contribution of my co-authors, Jordan Zlatev (supervisor) and Marianna Bolognesi (collaborator), is described in the list of papers.

The thesis also benefitted from the insightful comments of my co-supervisor, Sara Lenninger. Sara, thank you for the walks-and-talks in Malmö when I needed support during different stages of my work. Your feedback on draft versions of all four papers and the introductory summary contributed greatly to improving their clarity. You also played an important role in helping me to understand relevant theoretical concepts. Along with this, I would also like to thank my former supervisor Göran Sonesson, who assisted in the early stages of the project. Warm thanks also to my mock viva opponent Lars Elleström for the fruitful discussion and valuable feedback.

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gave me fruitful feedback about my work. Being part of the group inspired my academic endeavors in several ways and it was a very enriching experience, and thus, I am grateful to you all. Special thanks go to all metaphor scholars and especially the members of the *MetNet Scandinavia* group for the fruitful discussions during the past few years.

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*Malmö, March 2021*  
*Georgios Stampoulidis*



## Περίληψη στα Ελληνικά

Με τον όρο αστική δημιουργικότητα αναφερόμαστε σε δημιουργικές δραστηριότητες και πρακτικές άμεσα συνδεδεμένες με το αστικό περιβάλλον. Ένα παράδειγμα αστικής δημιουργικότητας αποτελεί και *η τέχνη του δρόμου*. Σημαντικό χαρακτηριστικό αυτών των πρακτικών είναι ότι διεκδικούν τα νομικά, ηθικά και πολιτισμικά όρια παρεμβαίνοντας και διερευνώντας εναλλακτικούς τρόπους χρήσης και κατανόησης του αστικού περιβάλλοντος. Από τις αρχές του 21<sup>ου</sup> αιώνα, η τέχνη του δρόμου έχει συγκεντρώσει την ιδιαίτερη προσοχή διάφορων επιστημονικών πεδίων συμπεριλαμβανομένης και της πιο πρόσφατα γνωσιακής σημειωτικής. Η παρούσα εργασία επικεντρώνεται στην τέχνη του δρόμου στην Αθήνα της κρίσης, η οποία περιλαμβάνει αφίσες, τοιχογραφίες και άλλες δημιουργικές εκφράσεις που χρησιμοποιούνται συστηματικά ως εργαλεία επικοινωνίας για την αντιμετώπιση κοινωνικοπολιτικών ζητημάτων.

Τα τελευταία χρόνια η τέχνη του δρόμου στην Αθήνα έχει αναπτυχθεί μέσα σε ένα κλίμα έντονης κοινωνικοπολιτικής και οικονομικής αστάθειας. Από την αρχή της χρηματοπιστωτικής κρίσης το 2008-2009, η εφαρμογή μέτρων σκληρής λιτότητας επέτεινε την ύφεση προκαλώντας ένα τοπίο αβεβαιότητας, αγωνίας, άγχους και ψυχολογικής πίεσης. Μέσα σε αυτό το πλαίσιο, η τέχνη του δρόμου μετουσιώθηκε σε ένα εναλλακτικό και καινοτόμο μέσο καλλιτεχνικής εξερεύνησης και δημιουργίας. Πολλοί Έλληνες και ξένοι καλλιτέχνες χρησιμοποιώντας το ταλέντο και τη φαντασία τους επεδίωξαν να δημιουργήσουν μία παράλληλη πραγματικότητα στην πόλη της Αθήνας παντρεύοντας την απογοήτευση και τον θυμό απέναντι στο κοινωνικό και πολιτικό κατεστημένο με τη χρήση έξυπνου χιούμορ, ειρωνείας και πλούσιου σαρκασμού. Μέσα από την ενεργό εμπλοκή των καλλιτεχνών αυτή η διατριβή διερευνά την πολυπλοκότητα και το δυναμισμό της τέχνης του δρόμου στην Αθήνα την περίοδο της κρίσης κυρίως όσον αφορά στη χρήση ρητορικών σχημάτων και αφηγηματική δυναμική.

Περπατώντας στη σύγχρονη Αθήνα, είναι σχεδόν αδύνατον να μην παρατηρήσουμε την παρουσία της τέχνης του δρόμου σε κάθε τοίχο, σε κάθε γωνία, σε καθεμία δημόσια επιφάνεια. Ιδιαίτερα σε περιοχές του κέντρου όπως τα Εξάρχεια, το Μεταξουργείο, ο Κεραμικός, το Ψυρρή, το Μοναστηράκι, η Πλάκα, το Θησείο, τα Πετράλωνα και το Κουκάκι, οι πυκνοχρωματισμένοι τοίχοι και κάθε λογής επιφάνειες έχουν γίνει ένα αναπόσπαστο κομμάτι της πόλης μας. Οι στενοί δρόμοι και πεζόδρομοι με τις πολυώροφες πολυκατοικίες και τα παλαιά κτήρια μεταμορφώνονται έτσι σε μια πλατφόρμα δημιουργικού διαλόγου και έκφρασης υψώνοντας τη φωνή των καλλιτεχνών. Αιχμαλωτίζοντας σε έργα της τέχνης του δρόμου το φως και τα χρώματα της Αθήνας οι καλλιτέχνες μας ταξιδεύουν στον κόσμο της τέχνης τους.

Με άλλα λόγια, ο καλλιτεχνικός ακτιβισμός στους δρόμους και στους τοίχους της Αθήνας παλεύει για να δώσει φωνή στην επιθυμία για αλλαγή. Χρησιμοποιώντας

τον αστικό δημόσιο χώρο ως πεδίο κοινωνικής παρέμβασης, δημιουργικής διεργασίας και επικοινωνίας οι καλλιτέχνες του δρόμου, ως εκφραστές ενός σύγχρονου και εναλλακτικού καλλιτεχνικού ακτιβισμού, φιλοδοξούν να εμπλέξουν τους περαστικούς, να επικοινωνήσουν τα μηνύματά τους, να εκκινήσουν την αλλαγή και τελικά να ζωγραφίσουν ένα ημερολόγιο στους τοίχους της πόλης αξιοποιώντας στο έπακρο τη δύναμή τους να εκπλήσσουν και να ενθαρρύνουν.

## List of abbreviations

<b>CINEMET</b>	Cinematic Metaphor Analysis
<b>CMT</b>	Conceptual Metaphor Theory
<b>DMIP</b>	Deliberate Metaphor Identification Procedure
<b>DMT</b>	Deliberate Metaphor Theory
<b>FILMIP</b>	Filmic Metaphor Identification Procedure
<b>HIP</b>	Hyperbole Identification Procedure
<b>IRR</b>	Inter-Rater Reliability
<b>MIG-G</b>	Metaphor Identification Guidelines for Gesture
<b>MIP</b>	Metaphor Identification Procedure
<b>MIPVU</b>	Metaphor Identification Procedure Vrije Universiteit
<b>MIV</b>	Metaphor Identification through Vehicle terms
<b>MSM</b>	Motivation & Sedimentation Model
<b>VIP</b>	Verbal Irony Procedure
<b>VISMIP</b>	Visual Metaphor Identification Procedure

# 1 Introduction

The street had its own story, someone painted it on the wall.

*Ο δρόμος είχε την δική του ιστορία, κάποιος την έγραψε στον τοίχο με μπογιά.*

*The Street (Ο Δρόμος)*, Manos Loizos (music),  
Kostoula Mitropoulou (lyrics) (1974)<sup>5</sup>

To write on the wall and to use the public arena in a way that it was not intended to be used is one of art's dreams and one of its meanings.

*Art in the Streets*, Diederichsen (2011, p. 281)

Over the past six decades, densely populated urban areas around the world have seen the appearance of graffiti and street art associated with urbanization and city life (e.g., Austin, 2001; Ferrell, 1993; Macdonald, 2001; Ross et al., 2020; Snyder, 2009; Young, 2014). *Graffiti* is often labelled as senseless vandalism and considered “dangerous, uninvited and illegal” (Macdonald, 2001, p. 3). What is often referred to as *street art*, on the other hand, is commonly considered an artistic practice in both public discourse and scholarly publications (e.g., Avramidis & Tsilimpounidi, 2017, 2021; Bonadio, 2019; MacDowall, 2019; Ross, 2016; Waclawek, 2011), given that street art makes use of an array of images, symbols and graphic techniques with wider artistic styles and methodologies (Irvine, 2012). Yet, the indistinct line between graffiti and street art lies in the fact that in the same city and at the same time, graffiti and street art practices may be momentarily both “legal and illegal, celebrated and condemned, objects of both fear and infatuation” (Ferrell, 2017, p. 29).

Using urban public space as a canvas on which to express sociopolitical dissent or personal animus has an ancient history, but the term street art is a relatively recent invention. The publication of “Graffiti World: Street Art from Five Continents” (Ganz & Manco, 2004) played an important role in the global spread of the term street art. MacDowall (2019, p. 22) points out that “the book’s title suggests [that] street art was designed to span the whole earth, yoking together widely different

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<sup>5</sup> *The Street* is one of Manos Loizos’ most famous and beloved songs. It was released in November of 1974, after the collapse of the Greek Military Junta, and it is sung especially on the 17<sup>th</sup> of November, in remembrance of the 1973 Athens Polytechnic uprising.

styles, materials and contexts into a single term, based on the near ubiquity of a geographic feature ('streets') and a seemingly universal concept ('art')."

In Bengtsen's (2020) view, street art and graffiti overlap to some degree and share three key characteristics: an "openness" and "ephemerality," and the "unsanctioned" nature of doing things in the urban public space. However, there is the need for some differentiations to be put forward. An important distinction between street art and graffiti is that whereas street art often employs a broadly receptive, frequently depiction-based, visual form targeted at a mass audience, graffiti—with its focus on the stylish use of enigmatic lettering that is often close to illegibility and obscurity—tends to primarily address an already familiar and largely enthusiastic audience within the restricted circle of the graffiti crews (for a discussion on commonalities, differences and overlaps between street art and graffiti practices, see Section 2.7).

Considering the fluidity and apparent overlaps between graffiti and street art, one of the first methodological complications to present itself within this project was the need to arrive at a definition of *street art*. Considering *art* as a human creative activity or practice that involves the production of works of both aesthetic value and sociocultural impact, street art could be understood as the aesthetic and sociocultural engagement of artists with their urban and sociopolitical environment.<sup>6</sup> Bengtsen (2020) makes a similar point when examining the overlaps between graffiti and street art:

It is important to realize that street art and graffiti are not just about creating pretty imagery and beautifying urban public space. They are also about acts of "independent agency" (p. 54).

Although numerous definitions of graffiti and street art can be found in the relevant literature (for a recent review, see Awad, 2021), this thesis builds upon a composite and workable definition of the phenomenon in question that was introduced in Paper 4 (Stampoulidis, 2019):

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<sup>6</sup> The line between what is and isn't art is fleeting and conceptually challenging, with different accounts varying significantly. I do not aim for a monolithic account of art with a fixed list of definitional characteristics, but instead for a pluralistic one that may afford changes and developments over time, in regard not only to historical and sociocultural norms but also to contextual activities. For example, many of the street artists who participated in this project adhered to their own categorizations of what they viewed to be a work of art or not. This explains that art refers to a wide spectrum of expressive forms and styles, media and techniques, and practices and movements that cannot be defined exclusively.



Street art may be understood as an open, unsanctioned, ephemeral, creative and contemporary sociocultural medium [practice] in urban space, that typically incorporates two interacting semiotic systems (language and depiction), and thus, polysemiotic, often addressing, but not limited to, sociopolitical issues (p. 31).

In accordance with this definition, street art is inevitably connected with existing social conditions. Ultimately, through the creativity and active engagement of those involved, this thesis explores the complexity and dynamism of the vibrant Greek street art scene in Athens in times of crisis in terms of its figurative and narrative potentials. When walking through contemporary Athens, it is hard not to note the overwhelming presence of street art. Particularly in central districts such as Exarcheia, Metaxourgeio, Kerameikos, Psiri, Monastiraki, Plaka, Thissio, Petralona, and Koukaki (see Figures 1.1 and 1.2), the densely painted walls and other publicly accessible surfaces have become an integral part of the physical appearance of the urban space, taking the form of a politically charged canvas (Avramidis, 2012). The narrow streets and decaying pedestrian walkways are lined with high-rise apartment blocks and falling-apart neo-classical buildings, and the city of Athens is being transformed into a platform for negotiation and dialogue.



**Figure 1.1** Map screenshot in Google Earth (2021). Relative location of field area in the dense Athenian urban fabric. Created by the author.

The exact placement of street artworks in such urban surroundings provides a specific context through which meaning can be generated, obtaining communicative dimensions when placed in symbolically saturated spaces (Avramidis, 2012). Figure 1.2, for example, features a young sad boy sitting painfully and motionless between

two packs of books, with his eyes looking woefully ahead (and upwards). The bottom pile contains the titles “Plato,” “Socrates,” “Politics,” “Modern Greek History” and “Democracy,” while the pile weighing down on the boy’s head reads “Athens Means Luxury,” “No Future,” “Economics” and “Survival Guide.” As the boy (representing the new Greek generation—Greek youth) finds himself trapped in a precarious and inevitably transitional phase between past and present, the artist emphasizes the fact that the present conjuncture of crisis and austerity remains yet to be overcome.



**Figure 1.2** Street artwork by Dimitris Taxis. Photograph by Georgios Stampoulidis, 2018.

The current Athens street art scene has developed within a climate of intense sociopolitical upheavals in turbulent times. Sociopolitical and economic instability since the outset of the crisis in 2008, the implementation of austerity measures and negotiation for bailout packages associated with the *Troika* (European Commission, International Monetary Fund and European Central Bank), a failed referendum in

2015 and a worsening refugee crisis have all created a landscape of uncertainty, agony, anxiety and unfortunate economic suffering. In this context, *art in the streets* becomes a significant means through which artists explore, protest and attempt to overcome the complex historical moment commonly referred to as the Greek crisis. Leventis (2013) points out that Athens in particular has been affected, arguing that the “quantity and scale of street art parallels the ever-increasing intensity of the unfolding state of emergency grappling and crippling the socio-urban heart of Athens (p. 7)”

The “street activism on Athenian walls” referred to by the title of this thesis, *gives voice* to a desire for social *change*, intervention and protest to the community and people in the context of crisis, with its figurative and narrative potentials.<sup>7</sup> In this sense, Athenian street art challenges minds, stimulates thought and cultivates change. The use of the urban public space in the creation and presentation of street art provides artists with a wealth of visual and symbolic source material, and the capacity to communicate salient sociopolitical messages to the broader public, represent the reality of the world and cauterize its negative aspects (Avramidis, 2012; Avramidis & Tsilimpounidi, 2017; Leventis, 2013; Tsilimpounidi, 2012, 2015, 2017; Tulke, 2016, 2017; Zaimakis, 2015). Using urban public space as a surface for interaction, creative process and situated communication, street artists, as social activists, attempt to involve the passersby, initiate change and create an alternative journal of their city, making the most of their power to surprise. As Chaffee (1993) suggests:

the idea of mass communication should not be limited to major high technology and professionalism. There are other significant processes and cultural settings involved in the flow of political information, that often, not exclusively, originate from below by grass-root groups (pp. 3-4).

By highlighting this specific historical and sociopolitical context of contemporary street art in Athens and armed with concepts and methods from *cognitive semiotics*, *the transdisciplinary study of meaning-making* (Zlatev, 2015; see Section 2.1), this thesis endeavors to explore the burgeoning street art scene in a time of uncertainty and struggle.

My work is based upon five years of extensive ethnographic research between 2014 and 2018, with two periods of systematic fieldwork research between January 2015

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<sup>7</sup> Beginning in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, *artivism* - a neologism that combines art and activism - has become a global phenomenon. Although it is a decade-long phenomenon, the significance it has acquired as a creative and artistic process to social life is significant. As a means of social change, it can serve to motivate multiple figurative meanings for artistic expression in cities and contemporary urban environments in order to attract attention to realities and situations that have been driven out of the official picture, and ultimately to regain communication with the social world (see Aladro-Vico et al., 2018).



and March 2015 (Fieldwork 1) and July 2018 and September 2018 (Fieldwork 2). In between Fieldwork 1 and Fieldwork 2, I made occasional returns to the field, including urban walks in Athens (see Section 3.4), as indicated in Figures 1.3 and 1.4. Research also included go-along interviews with 10 street artists. To supplement this, the ethnographic site of my research also focused on documenting the influence of the urban context by keeping fieldnotes and taking photographs and videos.

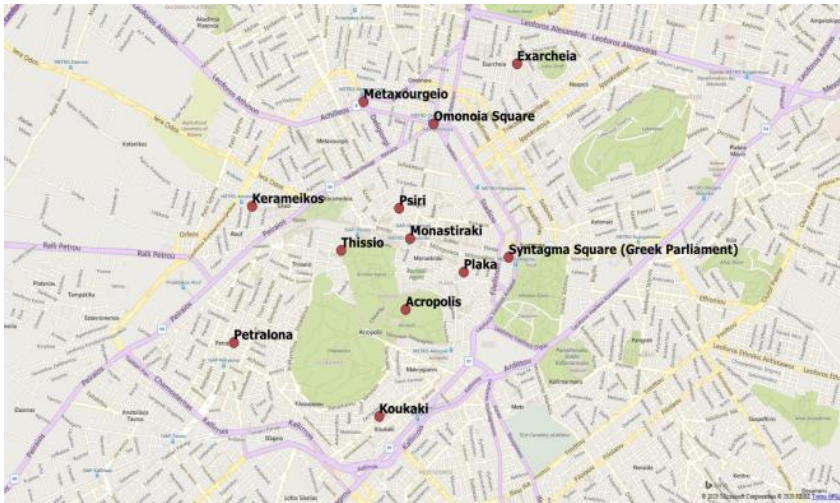


Figure 1.3 Map screenshot in QGIS (2021) of fieldwork location in Athens. Created by the author.

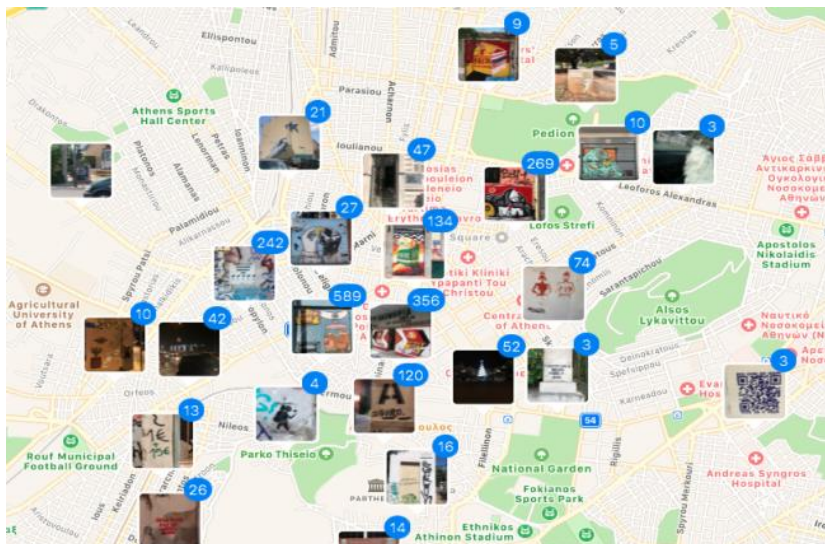


Figure 1.4 Map screenshot of some of the geotagged photographs I took in Athens.

By addressing these issues, this thesis proposes a cognitive semiotic approach for analyzing metaphors as well as other rhetorical figures and narratives in street art, thus contributing to the growing body of cognitive semiotic research that focuses on these phenomena, as discussed in further detail in Chapter 2. The thesis consists of four distinct, yet interrelated, papers. Three of the papers (Papers 1-3) investigated metaphors across semiotic systems (language and depiction), and in the last study (Paper 4), I looked at the narrative potential of street art.

Moreover, the thesis seeks to make some theoretical and methodological contributions to a number of topics of relevance for cognitive semiotics. Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) observation that metaphor is a central aspect of our daily lives, with locus in our minds rather than in our language, sparked a "metaphormania" in the fields of psychology, linguistics, semiotics, philosophy and other disciplines. The growing interest in metaphor has—especially in recent years—led to a focus on increased methodological rigor when it comes to so-called metaphor identification procedures, with the goal of producing reliable, replicable and theoretically valid research.

As explained in more detail in this thesis, two step-wise operational procedures are proposed: one for the identification and interpretation of (verbo-) pictorial metaphors and other rhetorical figures (metonymy, synecdoche, hyperbole, oxymoron, personification) in street artworks (Paper 1), and one for the identification and categorization of street artists' verbal metaphors used in the course of actual social interaction and "real-world" discourse (Paper 3). Paper 2 introduces a synthetic cognitive semiotic theory of metaphor, which contextualizes and explains the empirical findings reported in Paper 1. The go-along method, which is presented in Paper 3, is intended as an ethnographic research tool that helps us obtain contextualized real-time perspectives with a "talk-as-you-walk" manner (Garcia et al., 2012) compared to a sit-down and room-based interview with the street artists. Finally, the thesis adds to research on narrative considering the ability of single static images such as street artworks (and more generally) to invite narrative interpretations, as discussed in Paper 4.

This introduction has provided a general overview of the research context. In the next section, the research questions are formulated in more explicit terms through a short overview of the papers included in the thesis.

## 1.1 Research questions and overview of the papers

The overarching research aim of this thesis is to investigate the street art practice in Athens in times of crisis from the perspective of cognitive semiotics. With respect to this aim, I investigated how Athenian street artists can represent sociopolitical issues and in what ways these messages can be conveyed. In seeking answers to



these questions from a cognitive semiotic perspective, the following interlinked objectives can be formulated to guide the in-depth exploration of street art. I mainly focus on the use of metaphors and narratives in street art as they serve important functions that are central to the process of creation and understanding of meaning-making in general. Moreover, by attending closely to the figurative and narrative interpretations of street art, and their functioning, the thesis apprehends the potential of street art for fulfilling basic human needs for creative expression, as well as communication and social interaction.

Hence, the present thesis aims to address the following main research questions (RQs) in respect to the goals of each paper included in the thesis:

- **RQ1:** Is it possible to identify and interpret metaphors and other rhetorical figures in street art in similar ways, and if so, how can we operationalize this in a reliable way? (**Paper 1**)
- **RQ2:** Are there different levels of metaphorical meaning-making and how can the sociocultural knowledge, genre conventions and contextual information shape metaphorical meaning-making within and across semiotic systems? (**Paper 2**)
- **RQ3:** What meanings do street artists attach to their motivations of art-making and what kinds of metaphors arise in the course of actual social interaction when they are called to describe their work as street artists? (**Paper 3**)
- **RQ4:** Is it possible to interpret street artworks as narrations, and if so, how can street art narrations be perceived and understood by the audience as such? (**Paper 4**)

The main research questions presented above are addressed in four independent yet interconnected papers, which are briefly outlined here and presented in more detail in Chapter 4.

Paper 1 presents a set of qualitative and quantitative analyses of figurative constructions (such as metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, hyperbole, oxymoron, and personification) in street art. An innovative and empirically tested data-driven procedure is proposed, one that is informed by cognitive linguistic and semiotic theory for the identification and interpretation of figurative constructions in crisis-related street art in Athens, Greece. Paper 2 provides a detailed theoretical account of the study of metaphors in street art under the umbrella of cognitive semiotic research. Paper 3 focuses on some practical applications directed towards illuminating the motivations of street artists, probing their descriptions and metaphors used while doing or practicing street art or just while walking along the streets. An operational procedure for the identification and categorization of metaphors used by street artists to express personal and complex experiences is put

forward. Paper 4 explains how street artworks can indeed narrate, but only with the help of *secondary narrativity*, that is, the requirement of sociocultural competence and prior knowledge of previously told and already known underlying stories by both the street art creator and street art audience.

In order to address the aforementioned four main research questions, I have subdivided them into more specific and to some extent operationalizable questions (assessed methodologically), as listed in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1** Specific research questions investigated in Papers 1-4.

Papers 1-4	Specific research questions
<b>Paper 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent is it possible to identify the metaphors involved in street art and to distinguish these from other types of rhetorical figures?</li> <li>• To what extent are the metaphors involved in street art analyzed and interpreted in similar ways?</li> </ul>
<b>Paper 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do universal, cultural-specific, and context-sensitive knowledge interact in metaphor use?</li> <li>• To what extent are metaphors creative in terms of the author's intentions and perceiver's interpretation?</li> <li>• How are metaphors expressed within and across semiotic systems such as language, gesture, and depiction, and instantiated in particular sociocultural media?</li> </ul>
<b>Paper 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the street artists' motivations and in what ways do they express them?</li> <li>• Would they make extensive use of verbal metaphors when explaining their work and motivations in real-world discourse?</li> </ul>
<b>Paper 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can a single image narrate a story? If so, under which conditions?</li> <li>• What kinds of stories are inscribed on Athens city walls?</li> </ul>

## 1.2 Outline of the synopsis

The remainder of the synopsis overview (the coat or 'kappa' of the thesis, metaphorically speaking) is organized as follows. Chapter 2 provides the theoretical background of the entire project. First, central cognitive semiotic concepts such as sign use and semiotic systems are described. Along the way, relevant theoretical approaches of metaphor (and metonymy) and narrative are discussed, and previous studies are reviewed. Special attention is devoted to the novel cognitive semiotic theory of the *Motivation & Sedimentation Model* that lies at the basis of all the papers included in the thesis. An elaborate discussion about urban creativity and street art practice situated in Athens is also offered. Chapter 3 discusses the methodological considerations employed to address the main research questions outlined in Section 1.1 above. Chapter 4 summarizes the four papers included in the thesis. Each paper's summary briefly describes the analytical points brought up in it. Finally, Chapter 5 presents the key findings, revisits the main research questions, outlines the contributions (theoretical, methodological and empirical) that the thesis offers as a whole, discusses some of the limitations, and makes suggestions for

future research. After the synopsis overview, the second part of the thesis is presented, which contains the four original papers.

## 2 Background

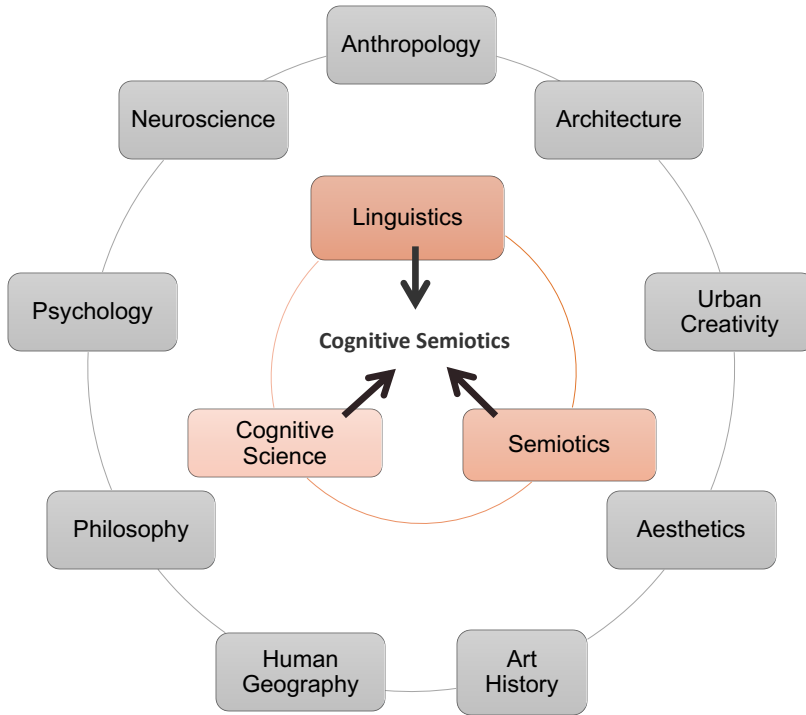
Having presented the map of the thesis in the previous chapter, I present in this chapter a summary of its theoretical background and cover some essential features and basic terminology. I begin, in Section 2.1, by briefly presenting relevant concepts of cognitive semiotics. Section 2.2 offers a number of definitions for *sign use* and *semiotic ground* as interpreted and used in the context of the thesis. Section 2.3 discusses the thorny notion of “multimodality” and the issues surrounding it, leading to a conceptual and theoretical distinction between *polysemiotic communication* and—restricted to perceptual modalities—multimodality. Subsequently, Sections 2.4 and 2.5 focus on metaphor research and Section 2.6 discusses narrative research at some greater length. Finally, Section 2.7 turns to urban creativity studies. After giving a short description of this field and relevant definitions used in the papers, I make some links between cognitive semiotics, the figurative and narrative potentials of street art, and urban creativity.

### 2.1 Cognitive semiotics

Cognitive semiotics has evolved over the past two decades as the transdisciplinary study of *meaning-making* (or else *semiosis*), utilizing theories and methods from the humanities and the social and cognitive sciences on the basis of *phenomenology* (Zlatev, 2015, p. 1044). A number of researchers from several European and North American research centers, stemming above all from semiotics, linguistics, cognitive science, and more indirectly from anthropology, philosophy, psychology and related fields (as shown schematically in Figure 2.1), have entered a transdisciplinary dialogue and exchange over the past two decades focusing on the multilayered phenomenon of meaning-making.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> For a brief review of research in cognitive semiotics, see Zlatev (2015, pp. 1053-1057).



**Figure 2.1** “Entering” into Cognitive Semiotics from Linguistics, Semiotics and Cognitive Science. Incorporating and going beyond different fields of study.

We could say that there are various ways of “entering” cognitive semiotics from different disciplines, as schematically visualized in Figure 2.1. Its transdisciplinarity helps understand complex phenomena and articulate theoretical and methodological considerations about different aspects of (human) meaning-making in communication, and experience more generally. Furthermore, an important facet of cognitive semiotics is the significance it attributes to empirical methods, which strengthen the conceptualizations and articulations of such complex phenomena.

Researchers in cognitive semiotics aim to integrate theoretical and empirical research favoring the use of a particular type of methodological triangulation that can be called phenomenological (Pielli & Zlatev, 2020), using the combination of first-person (e.g., intuition), second-person (e.g., empathy) and third-person (e.g., quantification) methods (Zlatev, 2009). In this respect, as argued by Sonesson (2012), cognitive semiotics is clearly influenced by phenomenology, as one way of “mending the gap between science and the humanities” (Gould, 2003 quoted by Zlatev, 2015). A detailed discussion of the cognitive semiotic methodology and its phenomenological bedrock in particular, is offered in Section 3.1.

Before diving into theoretical and empirical considerations needed for laying out the contours of this thesis, let me first formulate three key features that concern the transdisciplinary *field* of cognitive semiotics. First, cognitive semiotics, as Konderak (2018) rightly puts it, is neither a branch of cognitive science (e.g., cognitive psychology or cognitive anthropology) nor of semiotics (e.g., cultural semiotics, social semiotics or biosemiotics). Even less is it to be understood as particular semiotic theories proposed by scholars such as Eco, Greimas, Jakobson, Lotman, Peirce and Saussure. In short, cognitive semiotics should be understood as a synthesis of methods and theories originating from the disciplines mentioned before, focused on the multifaceted phenomenon of meaning (Zlatev, 2015, p. 1043).

Second, unlike linguistics, cognitive semiotic research operates within and across different semiotic systems, such as *language*, *gesture* and *depiction*. The combination of these semiotic systems in acts of *polysemiotic communication* (Green, 2014; Zlatev, 2019; Zlatev et al., 2020) is spontaneous and allows complex interactions of *sign use*, as I explain in greater detail in Section 2.3.

Third, the field of Cognitive Semiotics, as shown in this thesis, should be understood as considerably more pluralist than cognitive science both methodologically and epistemologically, and thus, with a firmer foot in the humanities. At the same time, as I discuss in Chapter 3 and practice in this thesis, mutual cooperation between semioticians, linguists and cognitive scientists with an open mind towards phenomenology appears to be indispensable in order to embrace a unified account of meaning-making.

## 2.2 Sign use and semiotic grounds

Cognitive semiotics researchers use different definitions of the *sign*. It is common to refer to the classical definition of Peirce below when approaching this concept:

[a] sign, or *representamen* [expression], is something which stands to *somebody* for something in some respect or capacity [...] The sign stands for something, its *object*. It stands for that object, not in all respects, but in reference to a sort of idea which I have sometimes called the *ground* of the representamen [expression] (Peirce, 2003, p. 106, emphasis added).

Consistently with phenomenology (e.g., Sokolowski, 2000) and interpreted from the perspective of cognitive semiotics (Zlatev, 2018), the sign can be understood as a kind of meaning-making semiotic process that requires the experiencing and

conscious Subject (S) to both associate and differentiate Expression (E) and Object (O):<sup>9</sup>

- DEF. A sign <E, O> is used (produced or understood) by a subject S, if and only if:
- a. S is made aware of an intentional object O by means of expression E, which can be perceived by the senses.
  - b. S is (at least can be) aware of (a).

(Zlatev et al., 2020, p. 160)

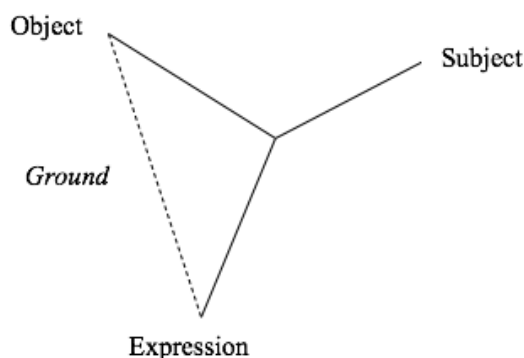
As expressed by this definition, sign use pre-requires an experiencing and conscious subject, either as a producer or as a perceiver. In other words, in this semiotic process there is always an S involved, who should be (at least potentially) aware of the E-O relation in order to perceive it with the help of senses (perceptual modalities; for an elaborate discussion, see Section 2.3). The condition (b) makes the differentiation between the interpretations of signs—from natural ones like smoke to conventional ones like parking signs—to the use of signals, such as bird signals in response to danger or calls for warning. These kinds of signals, for example, may satisfactorily accomplish condition (a), but not condition (b) (see Zlatev et al., 2020, p. 160).

The link between E and O constitutes the *semiotic ground* of the sign. In accordance with Peircean semiotics, three semiotic grounds underlie and constrain the link between E and O: *iconic* (a resemblance-based relation between E and O), *indexical* (a spatio-temporal contiguity-based relation between E and O), and *symbolic* (a conventional-based relation between E and O) (e.g., Sonesson, 2014), as illustrated in Figure 2.2. What is also implicit in the definition is that the Object (existing in the world like a tree, or imaginary like a unicorn) is always represented under a particular *construal* (Sokolowski, 2000; Zlatev, 2016).<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> For related definitions of the sign, see Daddesio (1995) and Sonesson (2014, 2015).

<sup>10</sup> See also Divjak et al. (2020), and references therein.



**Figure 2.2** Graphic illustration of the sign use and semiotic ground (adapted from Ahlner & Zlatev, 2010, p. 314).

These three semiotic grounds may coexist in different levels and degrees in a single act of sign use and, depending on which one is the most *predominant* (Jakobson, 1965), we have iconic signs (icons), indexical signs (indices), and symbolic signs (symbols). It is important to highlight that signs typically combine all three grounds, as stated by Jakobson (1965):<sup>11</sup>

It is not the presence or absence of similarity or contiguity between signans and signatum, nor the habitual [conventional] connection between both constituents underlies the division of signs into icons, indices and symbols, but barely the *predominance* of one of these factors over the others (p. 26, emphasis added).

For example, a predominantly iconic sign is a (realistic, representational) drawing or a painting. An example of an indexical sign without a producer (a natural sign) is the well-worn example of smoke for fire or the smell of the sea as you approach the coastline. A typical indexical sign with an intentional producer is a pointing gesture (Andrén, 2010). Finally, examples of predominantly symbolic signs could be a company's logo, a flag or any word, such as the word "pen," in the sense that a non-English speaker, who did not have contact with the English language before, would not have sufficient ability to establish the relationship between the word "pen" (either spoken or written) and an actual physical pen in the world, unless they were taught to follow such a convention. The first two cases—iconic and indexical signs—are mostly grounded in similarity (resemblance) and contiguity (spatiotemporal proximity or association), respectively, while symbols are conventional although not "arbitrary," as they very often include indexical and iconic grounds as well.

<sup>11</sup> In this citation, "signans" corresponds to Expression, and "signatum" to the *construal* of the Object.



Another important classification is the subdivision of the iconic signs into three sub-types: *images*, *diagrams* and *metaphors*, all grounded in relation of perceiving similarity/resemblance, but in different and quite often controversial ways, as explained in sub-section 2.4.2.

Street artworks typically incorporate a combination of iconic, indexical and symbolic signs, as shown in Figure 2.3.



**Figure 2.3** A street artwork *nein* ('no') by N\_Grams. Photo courtesy of Julia Tulke. (<http://aestheticsofcrisis.org/2015/oxi-no-nein/>, last accessed on December 2, 2020).

The street artwork shown in Figure 2.3 was found in the neighborhood of Psiri in central Athens in June/July 2015. Street artworks like this clearly illustrate the combination of iconic, indexical and symbolic signs in complex combinations. But first, let me put forward some contextual information that could help the interpretation. When in June 2015, the Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras announced a referendum regarding the current state of negotiation between Greece and its creditors, it took a mere few days for the first *όχι* ('no') wall paintings to appear on the streets of Athens. During the following weeks, a plethora of slogans, stencils, and posters, as well as large wall paintings and murals, in favor of the anti-austerity NO campaign emerged on the walls of Athens, reflecting on and contributing to the immediate street art sociopolitical discourse at the time. Slogans

such as “No,” “No to Fear,” “No to Memoranda,” “Proud No to EU-IMF,” “Athens on fire,” “Fight the police,” “Better penniless with drachma than slaves in euro” created a loaded atmosphere in the urban public space (Stampoulidis, 2016b).

Given that the street artwork in question was painted on the wall before the Greek referendum on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2015, it apparently presses for a *nein* (‘no’) to the referendum by using the German word *nein* outwardly painted in the center of the European Union flag. In this way, the artist manages to integrate the word *nein* into the image with the twelve golden stars on a blue background, conventionally standing for the ideals of unity, solidarity and harmony among the peoples of Europe.<sup>12</sup> However, one of the stars is notably *red*—often associated with violence and left-wing politics by convention. It could possibly be interpreted as denoting Greece, if the time and site of its creation are considered, increasing the sociopolitical significance of the street artwork’s message at the time it was found in the streets of central Athens. In sum, the artwork uses predominantly iconicity to denote the European Union flag, and on a metonymic basis (flag for nation), the European Union.<sup>13</sup> Indexically, the artwork “points” to the period and anticipated results of the Greek referendum. However, none of these could operate without the symbolicity (conventionality) of the European Union flag, the German word *nein* and other elements about the historical context that were in many ways remarkable for Greece.

## 2.3 Polysemiotic communication and multimodality

The definition of sign use introduced in the previous section implies that sign use presupposes reflective consciousness, on the side of the producer and/or the perceiver, that a given expression represents an intentional object (see Section 2.2). As pointed out, this distinguishes (the use of) signs like words and images, from signals like yawning and spontaneous laughter.<sup>14</sup> In most cases of everyday human communication, signs appear in complex combinations and interrelations with other

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<sup>12</sup> The design of the European Union flag with the circle of 12 golden stars on a blue background was officially launched in 1955 in Paris. However, it was approved to be used as the European Union flag in 1986 (see <https://www.coe.int/en/web/about-us/the-european-flag>, last accessed on December 2, 2020).

<sup>13</sup> The discussion around metaphor-metonymy combinations at times causes misunderstanding and confusion. Thus, the significance for a systematic and comprehensive metaphor-metonymy distinction and interrelation is discussed in sub-section 2.4.3.

<sup>14</sup> Zlatev et al. (2020) propose the distinction between *sign systems* (e.g., language, gesture and depiction) and *signal systems* (e.g., vocalizations, facial expressions and laughter). In this sense, both sign systems and signal systems form *semiotic systems*, a term used in Papers 1 and 2 of this thesis as synonymous with that of sign systems more narrowly. For the sake of simplicity, the terms “sign system” and “semiotic system” are used interchangeably in the present context.

signs, forming pan-human sign systems such as language, gesture and depiction (Zlatev, 2019). These are explored in further detail in this thesis (see Table 2.1).

Recent work in cognitive semiotics has addressed, both theoretically and empirically, the complex inter-sign relations and their implications in a broad field of studies concerning intersemiotic translation (Louhema et al., 2019), audio description (Diget, 2019), language evolution (Zlatev et al., 2020) and street art (Stampoulidis & Bolognesi, 2019; Stampoulidis et al., 2019).

A conceptual and methodological critique can be made concerning the literature in both cognitive linguistics and semiotics, which conflates polysemiotic communication (in short *polysemiosis*) with the popular and often ambiguous notion of multimodality.<sup>15</sup> Importantly, these two notions are far from equivalent or interchangeable, as explained below and as the concepts are used in this thesis.

The field of Multimodal Studies has developed into a relatively new discipline on its own right. This development has been helped by the publication of a handbook (Jewitt, 2009, 2014a, 2014b), several textbooks and edited volumes (e.g., Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996, 2001, 2006; Kress, 2009; Royce & Bowcher, 2007; Bateman, 2008, 2014; Bateman et al., 2017; Jewitt et al., 2016; Wildfeuer et al., 2019) and the *Routledge Studies in Multimodality* book series (editor: Kay O'Halloran). In addition, the foundation of a journal (*Multimodal Communication*, since 2012), the organization of conferences and workshops (e.g., *Bremen Conference on Multimodality 2014-2019*), and finally the foundation of centers have helped this development.<sup>16</sup> However, the concept of *multimodality* has not been provided a generally accepted definition to date (Devylder, 2019). Indeed, Adami (2016) acknowledges that “multimodality is an admittedly fluid field of investigation and so are its key notions and working definitions” (Adami, 2016, p. 11).

In most cognitive linguistic research, the notion of *modality* is often used to designate the different ways something can be expressed in language, gesture and depiction, and thus, correspond to the notion of a sign system. In gesture and signed language studies (Vigliocco et al., 2014; Cooperrider & Goldin-Meadow, 2017) language and gesture are referred to as “communicative modalities” or “modes of expression” and their combination as “multimodal.”

On the other hand, within the social semiotic tradition, the form by which something is expressed is often referred to as *semiotic modes* or *semiotic resources* in broad terms (e.g., Kress, 2009), referring to any kind of means for meaning-making

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<sup>15</sup> For example, the most recent *Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics*, edited by Dancygier (2017), devotes a whole section to “Language, Body and Multimodal Communication,” using the term “multimodal” in different ways (cf. Devylder, 2019).

<sup>16</sup> *Centre for Multimodal Communication* at the University of Southern Denmark in Odense (Denmark), *Centre for Intermedial and Multimodal Studies (IMS)* at the Linnaeus University in Växjö (Sweden), and *Multimodal Communication and Cognition Laboratory* at Moscow State Linguistic University in Moscow (Russia).

(material, social and cultural) such as language, image, color, music, typography, design and other modes/resources stressing mostly the communicative functions of the form of expression. A further distinction in multimodal studies is that made between *modes* and *sub-modes* (e.g., Bateman, 2014; Stöckl, 2004). But this is problematic, as “there is no theoretical limit to the number of modes that may be recognized in various sociocultural contexts, and this leads to an abundance of modes that are difficult to compare” (Green, 2014, pp. 9-10). In the same manner, another well-known scholar in multimodal studies (Forceville, 2020) acknowledges that “mode” is a fuzzy concept and proposes to define it as closely as possible in relation to sensory perception (Forceville, 2020):

The lack of a precise definition of what counts as a mode, and of the cherished openness of the concept, mode-status can be accorded to any meaning-generating principle or dimension [...] In other words, the whole concept of mode becomes so hazy as to become completely vacuous (pp. 66-67).

A more systematic use of the term can be found in research in psychology, which tends to use the notion of modality to refer to different *perceptual modalities* such as vision, hearing, smell, touch and taste, and to the combination of modalities as multimodal perception (Fulkerson, 2014; Hutmacher, 2019; O’Callaghan, 2012).

Within Media and Communication Studies, Elleström (2010) proposes a holistic understanding of “multimodality” that can be analyzed in terms of material, spatiotemporal, sensorial and semiotic modalities, as (a) multimateriality, (b) multiospatiotemporality, (c) multisensoriality and (d) multisemioticity. These are useful distinctions, but for the purposes of cognitive semiotics, a more organized use of the terms is required. The terminological and conceptual distinction between perceptual modalities (multimodality) and semiotic systems (polysemiosis) that I propose in this thesis tackles the need to converge on theoretically motivated definitions that can in turn be operationalizable in empirical and experimental research.

Papers 1 and 2 show extensively, with several examples, that the terminology around modes, modalities and semiotic resources can be problematic because it confuses semiotic systems with (a) modalities in cognitive linguistics and psychology, and (b) semiotic modes/resources in social semiotics (and more broadly), and there is no one-to-one correspondence between (a) and (b).

From the perspective of cognitive semiotics, I endeavor to offer a coherent terminology, which distinguishes between the notions of perceptual modalities and sign systems (language, depiction and gesture) to enhance their definitional and conceptual clarity. For example, when only one sign system is used in a communication setting, then it is by definition *monosemiotic*. Therefore, in this approach, the term multimodality is restricted to the synergy of two or more distinct but interacting perceptual modalities, thus disentangled from polysemiotic

communication understood as the synergy of two or more sign systems in the act of production and signification (Zlatev, 2019). This is shown in Table 2.1, and the terms in it are elaborated below.

**Table 2.1** The three pan-human sign systems of language, gesture and depiction, with some of their properties (adapted from Paper 2).<sup>17</sup>

Properties	Semiotic (sign) systems			
	Language		Gesture (bodily movements)	Depiction (pictorial)
	Speech (oral)	Writing (verbal)		
<b>Production</b>	Vocal	Material	Body	Material
<b>Perception (perceptual modalities)</b>	Auditory	Visual	Visual (+ Auditory)	Visual (+Olfactory +Tactile)
<b>Degree of permanence</b>	Very low	High	Low	Intermediate
<b>Double articulation</b>	Yes		No	No
<b>Semiotic grounds</b>	Conventional > Iconic + Indexical		Iconic + Indexical > Conventional	Iconic > Indexical + Conventional
<b>Syntagmatic relations</b>	Compositional (Syntax)		Sequential	Possibly sequential

Consider first language, which is a particular sign system, but can be (a) *produced* either through speech (vocal production: oral) or writing (material production: verbal), and (b) *perceived* either through hearing (auditory), or seeing (visual), or both. In the case of gesture and specifically in terms of its production the living body itself constitutes the expression and can contribute greatly to face-to-face communication (Goffman, 1963) and social interaction in so-called pragmatic communicative gestures. Therefore, gesture can definitely be perceived through seeing (visual) but that doesn't exclude the recruitment of other perceptual modalities, such as hearing (auditory). Depiction, on the other hand, requires specific materialities, tools and techniques employed by the artist to this effect, such as spray paint, brushes, stencils and others in the case of street art to produce a static expression with shape, form and color. It can definitely be perceived through seeing (visual modality) as gesture, but the recruitment of other perceptual modalities, such as smell (olfactory) and touch (tactile) is also possible.

<sup>17</sup> This classification focuses on the three semiotic systems, which are clearly both universal and involve crucial signs, making them *sign systems*. There are many other semiotic systems, such as music or dance.

When language is vocalized, it is characterized by a very low *degree of permanence*, whereas when it is in a written form, it is characterized by a high degree of permanence. However, even though gesture is usually characterized by a low degree of permanence, it is not as low as that of speech, as gestures can be paused, allowing “statue”-like images, depending on the communicator’s intentions. In the case of depiction, it can be said to be characterized by an intermediate degree of permanence.

It is worth noting that it is the *medium* (understood as something material in both language and depiction) in which a sign system is realized that will largely determine its degree of permanence (difference between the properties of street art wall paintings and digital paintings, for example; for an elaborate discussion on different kinds of media and their respective significance, e.g., Elleström, 2021). In the case of street art, some artworks may exist on the walls for years, while others can disappear within hours of their completion by being deliberately erased. Ultimately, the pieces will become a momentum to a turbulent period preserved only in our memory. In these instances, the photograph that is then usually disseminated online no longer represents a tangible reality, yet “elongates the ephemerality of the action surrounding street art” by granting them “a kind of eternal digital life” (Ferrell, 2017, p. 34). Nevertheless, ephemerality, in terms of impermanence, and reproduction, in terms of digital dissemination, complicate the meaning of street art as it becomes detached from the exact location and time in which it was once located, which are crucially intrinsic factors for the artwork’s meaning. In other words, this can definitely affect the social meaning of an artwork as this “travels” through increasingly digitized and spatiotemporally displaced areas.

With respect to the property of *double articulation*, all human languages display a duality between phonemes (speech) or graphemes (writing), on the one side, and morphemes (words), on the other. Gesture and depiction signs can be decomposed and analyzed into phrases and units (Green, 2014; Kendon, 2004), but these are meaningful already, and thus correspond to the level of morphemes in language. As such, there is no double articulation in the semiotic systems of gesture and depiction.

In terms of *semiotic grounds*, the one that predominates in language is conventionality (mutual agreement in a given society, which is not the same as “arbitrariness”), even if iconicity and indexicality are also present (Jakobson, 1965). On the contrary, the semiotic system of gesture is dominated by iconicity, “where there is resemblance between the movements of the whole body, or parts of it, and properties of intended actions, objects or whole events” (Zlatev, 2015, p. 461), and indexicality, as is the case with deictic gestures that display contiguity with respect to their referents, such as pointing (Andrén, 2010). Finally, in the case of depiction, the predominant semiotic ground is iconicity (otherwise it would not be depiction at all), with indexicality and conventionality also being crucial, as was discussed

and elaborated previously in Figure 2.3 with the European Union flag (for a discussion on the semiotic grounds in depiction, e.g., Sonesson, 2014).

The last property that can be used to differentiate the sign systems is that of *syntagmatic relations*: the way signs are combined in a temporal sequence in production and comprehension. These relations are predominantly compositional (syntactic) in the case of language, which implies a hierarchical combination of words in the sentence, and of sentences in a text (in either oral or written discourse). In contrast, gesture and depiction have much less systematic ways of compiling sequences of signs, making it more difficult, though not impossible (e.g., Sibierska, 2017), to express complex messages inviting figurative and narrative interpretations. In the case of depiction, for example, there may be possible sequentiality in the case of comics (Eisner, 2004) or medieval paintings, but also in some cases of street artworks, in which pictorial and linguistic signs are painted and put into sequences.

To summarize, communication only through language—in the sub-system of speech for example—is thus both monosemiotic and at least potentially multimodal, when we speak face-to-face. However, when combined and integrated with gestures, which are omnipresent during face-to-face interaction (as for example in a go-along interview, discussed in Paper 3), or depiction with the help of graphic representations and symbols, as in street art messages, we have polysemiotic communication.

For example, a work of street art, consisting of verbal text (language) and pictorial elements (depiction) is polysemiotic, as in Figure 2.4. If it only utilizes one of the sign systems, it is monosemiotic, as in Figure 2.5. In terms of perceptual modalities, it may be either unimodal, if perceived only visually, or multimodal, if it can be potentially perceived through at least two of our perceptual modalities (e.g., *vision* if it is perceived through our eyes, *smell* if it is freshly painted, *touch* if it is a 3D street artwork or we can touch it while walking down the streets).<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> More polysemiotic vs. monosemiotic and multimodal vs. unimodal examples of street artworks are given in Papers 1 and 2.



**Figure 2.4** A polysemiotic unimodal street artwork by Bleeps.gr. Photo courtesy of the artist (used in Paper 1). Reproduced with the permission of the artist.



**Figure 2.5** A monosemiotic unimodal street artwork by Sonke. Photograph by Georgios Stampoulidis, 2018.



Making these conceptual and terminological distinctions is essential for providing conceptual and empirical clarity to this thesis on Greek street art. This allows a principled analysis of the interaction between language and depiction (polysemiosis), and between vision, and (potentially) smell, touch or even hearing (multimodality), as reviewed in more detail in Papers 1 and 2 with recent work on street art metaphors and other rhetorical figures.

## 2.4 Metaphor and metonymy in cognitive linguistics and semiotics

In this section, I outline and briefly describe some of the research on metaphor (sub-sections 2.4.1-2.4.2) and metonymy (sub-section 2.4.3) informed by cognitive linguistics and semiotics (and related fields), pointing out a number of potential issues and debates. I will suggest that many of the different theories that I review can be understood as complementary and not necessarily as opposing one another. Hence, they may be used as joint resources for a cognitive semiotic theory of metaphor such as that introduced in Section 2.5.

### 2.4.1 Metaphor research in cognitive linguistics

Metaphor has often been the subject of controversies, ever since antiquity.<sup>19</sup> The first known study of the phenomenon goes back to ancient Greece, and more specifically to Aristotle in classical times, who in his works *Poetics* (Kassel, 1965) and *Art of Rhetoric* (Freese, 1926/1967) viewed metaphor as an implicit comparison between two things, based on analogy-making (Ortony, 1979; Ricoeur, 1975). Much of the classical approach to metaphor concerned itself with purposeful poetic and rhetorical expressions such as *Juliet is the sun* (cf. Cameron & Deignan, 2006). According to the metaphor theories introduced by Richards (1936/1965) and Black (1979), the meaning of a *Vehicle* interacts with the meaning of a *Topic*, resulting in a metaphorical meaning where the Topic is “metaphorized” in comparison with the Vehicle. However, many of the classical theorists were well aware that these processes were not “only” a matter of language, but also of cognition. As stated by Richards (1936/1965, p. 94), “thought is metaphoric, and proceeds by comparison, and the metaphors of language derive therefrom.”

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<sup>19</sup> The etymology of the English word metaphor derives itself from the Greek word *μεταφέρειν* (metapherein: “meta” meaning “beyond” and “pherein” meaning “to carry” or “to transfer” something from one place to another due to similarity combined with dissimilarity (Danesi, 2004, p. 10).

Cognitive linguistic approaches to the study of metaphors typically stem from the work of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), now known as *Conceptual Metaphor Theory* (CMT) (e.g., Grady, 1997; Kövecses, 2000; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999) and further developments such as *Conceptual Integration* (also called *Blending*) *Theory* (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002). Both of these theoretical frameworks argue that metaphors are primarily matters of thought, underlying their linguistic manifestations. Proponents of CMT have claimed that “our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 3). Further, Lakoff and Johnson argued that conceptual metaphors are anchored in our bodies and brains, and realized as (predominantly) universal and (to some degree) culture-specific “cross-domain mappings” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, p. 47).

In this sense, CMT rejects the traditional notion of metaphor as a poetic and rhetorical device, and instead redefines it as “a systematic set of correspondences between two domains of experience” (Kövecses, 2016, p. 14). In the CMT tradition, the notion of cross-domain mappings refers to (more or less) fixed cognitive correspondences between two so-called domains. The more basic/concrete one is the *source domain* (e.g., MONEY, JOURNEY, WAR) and the more derived/abstract is the *target domain* (e.g., TIME, LIFE, DISEASE).<sup>20</sup> This mapping, supposedly realized in neural terms, is usually denoted by the formula <TARGET IS SOURCE>, as in TIME IS MONEY, or LIFE IS JOURNEY (Lakoff, 1993; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), as shown in Table 2.2. Due to this cognitive linguistic emphasis on the neural nature of metaphor (e.g., Gibbs, 1994; Kövecses, 2000; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1999), the pragmatic role of metaphor in communication is given much less attention.

**Table 2.2** Source-target mappings for the LIFE IS GAMBLING GAME conceptual metaphor (adapted from Kövecses, 2010) (used in Paper 2).

Source: GAMBLING GAME	Cognitive correspondences (Mappings)	Target: LIFE
PLAYERS	→	LIVING BEINGS (HUMANS)
PLAYMATES	→	CO-LIVING BEINGS, CO-CITIZENS
COOPERATIVE PLAY	→	SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
DISTANCE COVERED	→	PROGRESS MADE
DIFFICULTY RATINGS	→	DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED
DECISION-MAKING	→	LIFE CHOICES
GAME-WINNING	→	BEING SUCCESSFUL IN LIFE

<sup>20</sup> Following conventions in cognitive linguistics, small capital letters are used to indicate so-called domains and mappings.

It is important to note that in CMT, there is a clear distinction between the notions of metaphor and *metaphorical expression*. For CMT scholars, the term “metaphor” refers to a “cross-domain mapping” in the body-neural conceptual system, such as that shown in Table 2.2. A metaphorical expression is then a surface realization of this mapping expressed (typically) in language:

In short, the locus of metaphor is not in language at all, but in the way we conceptualize one mental domain in terms of another [...] The word *metaphor* has come to mean a cross-domain mapping in the conceptual system. The term *metaphorical expression* refers to a linguistic expression (a word, phrase, or sentence) that is the surface realization of such a cross-domain mapping (this is what the word metaphor referred to in the old theory) (Lakoff, 1993, p. 203).

Grady (2007) also explicitly points out that “within Cognitive Linguistics the term *metaphor* is understood to refer to a pattern of conceptual association, rather than to an individual metaphorical usage or a linguistic convention” (Grady, 2007, p. 188). This would mean that metaphorical expressions like (1-3) are surface realizations like that of the underlying mapping in Table 2.2.

- (1) If you play your cards right, you could do it.
- (2) Let's share the risk on this one.
- (3) The odds are against me.

There are a number of questions that arise concerning such an account. On the one hand, each mapping is “a fixed pattern of ontological correspondences,” but at the same time, there needs to be “an open-ended class of potential correspondences” (Lakoff, 1993, p. 210). Further, is the mapping in question not a form of *analogy* (Itkonen, 2005)? This question is addressed and further elaborated in the next subsection 2.4.2 and in Section 2.5.

A number of scholars in the tradition of cognitive linguistics (e.g., Deignan, 2005; Kövecses, 2020; Steen, 2008, 2015; and many others) have criticized this theory for its failure to address the sociocultural and contextual aspects of metaphor, and for its excessive focus on neural correlates. This form of criticism has led to the three trends in metaphor studies, on the border of cognitive linguistics and related fields, as discussed below, and further elaborated in Section 2.5 as a contribution from cognitive semiotics.

First, *Discourse Metaphor Theory* (e.g., Cameron & Deignan, 2006; Musolff et al., 2014; Zinken, 2007) from the late 1990s and 2000s onwards has paid attention to the role of sociocultural and linguistic experience as a motivating factor for the use of metaphors. This strand of metaphor research places a renewed focus on the linguistic expression of metaphors, through the development of discourse and

corpus approaches (e.g., Deignan, 2005; Low, 1999; Pragglejaz Group, 2007; Semino, 2008; Semino et al., 2004; Steen, 2017; Steen et al., 2010). This discourse shift takes on board some of the ideas from CMT, including the notion of “cross-domain mappings,” but endeavors to ground this in empirical work.<sup>21</sup> The role of sociocultural conventions in discourse are taken into account, since *form-specific* metaphorical expressions (*metaphoremes*) such as *early bird*, *mind spinning*, *cycle breaker*, *stage diving* or *emotional load* have been used repeatedly and may be found within a culture as result of a common ground that is shared between language users (for a more elaborate discussion on this matter, see Section 2.5).

In this sense, Cameron (2007, 2018) has written extensively about the failure of CMT to address the social nature of language use, which in her view leads to an asocial view of metaphor. In the same vein, Steen and colleagues introduce a three-dimensional model of metaphor (*Language, Thought and Communication*), which has become known as *Deliberate Metaphor Theory* (DMT). With respect to this theory, metaphor is not only seen as the linguistic expression of an underlying cross-domain mapping in thought, but also as a matter of communication in actual language use. In the third dimension of communication, a distinction is made between metaphors that are used as metaphors with the explicit communicative intention to be understood as such, and metaphors that do not have such a function, questioning the property of “deliberateness.”

Second, even more *dynamic accounts of metaphor* focus on the significance of the immediate (situated) context and actual social interaction in which metaphors indeed occur (e.g., Kolter et al., 2012). This has given rise to a great deal of criticism of CMT (e.g., Cameron, 2007, 2018; Deignan, 2010; Musolff, 2006, 2016). Müller (2017, p. 50), for example, proposes that “metaphors come to existence only in the moment: in the moment of watching a film, of hearing and seeing somebody talk, of reading a text.” This is in accordance with the recent transdisciplinary cognitive linguistic and film-analytical framework of *Cinematic Metaphor* (Müller & Kappelhoff, 2018; for a response, see Forceville, 2018) that focuses on face-to-face social interaction. In other words, according to supporters of metaphorical dynamism, language users constantly negotiate in “the process of creating and enacting some kind of metaphorical meaning” (Jensen, 2018, p. 52) in actual social interaction. As part of the development of these more dynamic accounts of metaphor, *ecological* views on metaphor have been proposed in recent years (e.g., Jensen, 2017, 2018; Jensen & Cuffari, 2014; Müller, 2008, 2019). The term “ecological” is intended to be understood as an umbrella term encompassing approaches to cognition that take interaction with the (sociocultural) environment as central (Menary, 2010) and focus on the social contexts that afford different levels

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<sup>21</sup> For example, a number of metaphor researchers proposed, with the help of corpus studies, “procedures” for identifying metaphors in text (e.g., Pragglejaz Group, 2007; for an elaborate discussion on this matter, see Section 3.3).

of creativity and metaphor (Jensen & Greve, 2019). Within this spectrum of theories, the notion of *metaphoricity* (Müller, 2008, 2011; Müller & Tag, 2010) has been emphasized (for an elaborate discussion on the polysemous notion of metaphoricity, see the last part of Section 2.5).

Third, if metaphors are indeed a matter of thought, we are likely to find them not only in language but also in other sign systems. This claim has recently attracted much interest and can definitely be found in figurative constructions expressed by images, using the sign system of depiction (e.g., Forceville & Uriós-Aparisi, 2009; Littlemore & Pérez-Sobrino, 2017; Negro-Alousque, 2014; Pérez-Sobrino, 2016, 2017; Yu, 2009). In a recent collection of studies edited by Šorm and Steen (2018) various approaches are proposed and explained to tackle the structure and the processing of metaphors in single static images.<sup>22</sup> Other recent studies (e.g., Bolognesi, 2016, 2017) have investigated and contrasted how the two sign systems (language and depiction) respectively construct metaphors. All these approaches are informed by and relate to metaphor theories such as those mentioned briefly above.

The debates surrounding different metaphor theories, as shown schematically in Table 2.3, continue to rumble, and have even been characterized recently as “metaphor wars” (Gibbs, 2017). To summarize, multiple theories of metaphor have been proposed during the past decades in cognitive linguistic literature along the following dimensions: (a) metaphors in mind, (b) metaphors in discourse, and (c) metaphors in social interaction.

**Table 2.3** Schematic representation of different metaphor accounts in cognitive linguistics (in alphabetical order). The list is not exhaustive and the borders between metaphor *territories* should not be conceived as rigid. Note, for example, that some names (e.g., Cameron, Deignan and Kövecses) can be found in more than one column.

Metaphors in mind	Metaphors in discourse	Metaphors in social interaction
Fauconnier & Turner (2002) Gibbs (1994) Grady (1997) Kövecses (2000) Lakoff (1993) Lakoff & Johnson (1980, 1999)	Cameron & Deignan (2006) Deignan (2005) Kövecses (2016, 2020) Musolff (2006, 2016) Musolff et al. (2014) Semino et al. (2004) Semino (2008) Steen (2008, 2015, 2017) Steen et al. (2010) Zinken (2007)	Kolter et al. (2012) Cameron (2007, 2018) Deignan (2010) Jensen (2017, 2018) Jensen & Cuffari (2014) Jensen & Greve (2019) Müller (2008, 2011, 2017, 2019) Müller & Tag (2010) Müller & Kappelhoff (2018)

<sup>22</sup> Cognitive linguistic approaches stemming from CMT and Blending Theory have analyzed metaphor (and metonymy) in various visual genres. These include *advertising* (e.g., Forceville, 2017), *film* (e.g., Fahlenbrach, 2016), *political cartoons* (e.g., Dominguez, 2015), *comics and manga* (e.g., Cornevin & Forceville, 2017), *cinematography* (e.g., Coëgnarts & Kravanja, 2015), *artistic paintings* (e.g., Poppi & Kravanja, 2017), and in *music* (Julich-Warpakowski, 2019). Nevertheless, the list is not exhaustive.

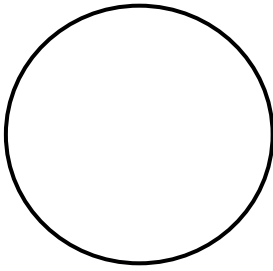
Section 2.5 attempts to show how cognitive semiotics could likely resolve at least some of the debated issues. But prior to that, since it is generally agreed that the challenge is to understand metaphor beyond language, and for ideas on how to do so, it is natural to go to the field of semiotics, which we will do in the next sub-section.

### 2.4.2 Metaphor research in semiotics

As pointed out in the previous sub-section, there has been a growing interest in pictorial or verbo-pictorial (polysemiotic) metaphor, particularly in advertising and cartoons (Forceville & Uriós-Aparisi, 2009, and references therein; Hidalgo & Kraljevic, 2011; Pérez-Sobrino, 2016). This increased interest is largely the result of a growing awareness of the rhetorical effects of metaphor, particularly when the sign system of depiction is involved (McQuarrie & Phillips, 2005). These studies stem mostly from the fields of cognitive linguistics and media and communication.

From the perspective of semiotics, what is lacking in cognitive linguistic and neighboring strands of metaphor, as described in sub-section 2.4.1, is first of all an acknowledgement that metaphors are a particular kind of *sign use*, and secondly, that they are a particular kind of iconic signs (Lenninger, 2019). As introduced in Section 2.2, Peircean theory has influenced the study of metaphors in semiotics, and in particular the notion of *iconicity* (similarity-based or resemblance-based sign relation). For the sake of clarity, according to Peirce (1931/1974), there are three interrelated sub-types of (hypo)icons: imagistic (*images*), diagrammatic (*diagrams*) and metaphoric (*metaphors*) iconic signs.

The first type of iconic sign, the *image*, refers to simple qualities (perceptual properties), which are shared between an expression and its object. For example, the quality of patches of color in a color palette, and the colors of things in the world (Sonesson, 2015), or the shared quality of roundness (round shape) between the image of a circle, as shown in Figure 2.6, and the image of a football (ball), as shown in Figure 2.7. In a way, the image “resembles its object most straightforwardly and obviously” (Coliapietro, 2011, p. 163).



**Figure 2.6** A circle, functioning as image of the ball in 2.7 based on ROUNDNESS.



**Figure 2.7** A football (ball).

In a *diagram*, the similarity in question is not a matter of shared qualities but of *relational* similarities. Peirce (1974, CP 2.277, emphasis added) describes diagrammatic iconic signs as “[...] those, which represent the relations [...] of parts of one thing by *analogous* relations in their own parts.” This in fact corresponds to some degree to CMT’s hypothetical construct of cross-domain mappings, as also argued by Sonesson (2015, 2019).<sup>23</sup> In this sense, cross-domain mappings may be conceived as a kind of diagrammatic relations (but not strictly diagrams), where the *resemblance* (similarity-based relation) takes the form of analogy between entities in the two domains. However, they are not conceived as signs by CMT, as the theory explicitly denies that such mappings have expressions; they are simply mental constructions in the mind of the people in question. Even so, CMT-style mappings are similar if not equivalent with the notion of analogy (Itkonen, 2005).

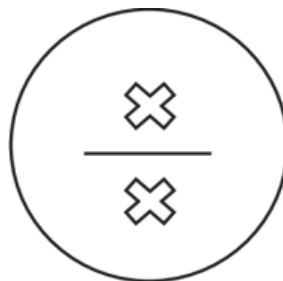
Turning now to the sign system of depiction, Devylder (2018) presents in a simple manner an example of diagrammatic iconicity, in Figure 2.8 (which forms a Gestalt), in contrast to Figure 2.9. Only once the similarity and contiguity in terms of analogous and visuospatial part-whole relations of the features (eyes and mouth) are established, can they then jointly, and not separately, form a representation of a human face (Devylder, 2018, pp. 322-323). Of course, a representational diagram of a human face may also include imagistic perceptual properties, for example, by coloring distinct parts of the human face.

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<sup>23</sup> The Peircean diagram is a much broader category, since it includes all kinds of logical (mathematical) reasonings realized on a diagram, such as graphics and charts with lines and numbers in the everyday language use, as for example, the COVID-19 charts we currently monitor daily.



**Figure 2.8** Diagrammatic iconicity of a human face (Devyllder, 2018, p. 323).



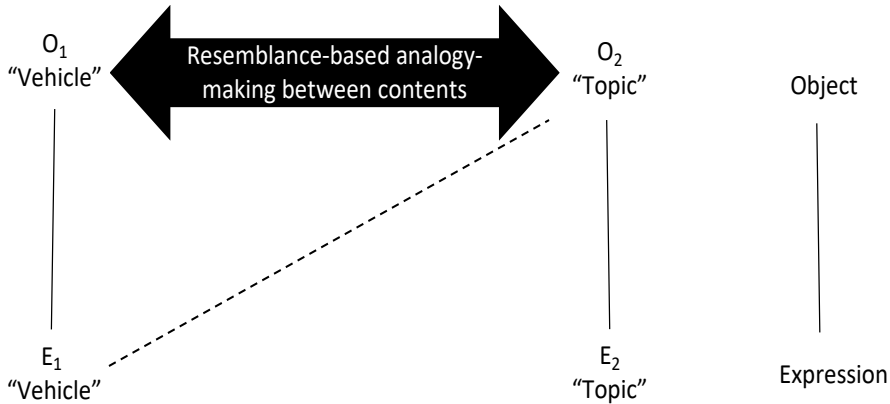
**Figure 2.9** Loss of diagrammatic iconicity of a human face (Devyllder, 2018, p. 323).

Finally, *metaphors*, in the sense of Peirce, are said to represent their object by referring to a *parallelism* with another object. As stated by Van Langendonck (2007, p. 398, emphasis added): “A metaphor, in Peirce’s view, brings out the representative character of a sign by representing a parallelism with something else.” However, there is little agreement among semioticians on how to interpret Peirce’s definition of metaphor and how we can distinguish diagrams from metaphors in practice. One way could be to conceive diagrammatic iconicity as iconicity between expressions and intentional objects (see the sign definition in Section 2.2), and metaphoric iconicity as iconicity between objects and objects, as proposed by Jakobson (1965):

A partial similarity of two signata may be represented by a partial similarity of signantia, as in the instances discussed above, or by a total identity of signantia, as in the case of lexical tropes [...] The metaphor (or metonymy) is an assignment of a signans to a secondary signatum associated by similarity (or contiguity) with the primary signatum (p. 33).

In other words, unlike images and diagrams, in *metaphors* the resemblance in question is not between a linguistic (or other) expression and some extra-linguistic object, but *between two different interpretations* of the same expression in question. For example, in the case of a metaphorical street artwork such as the one shown in Figure 2.11 below, it is the resemblance between the two interpretations (*objects*) (e.g.,  $O_1 \rightarrow$  *concrete dirtiness* of the toilet paper ( $E_1$ ) and  $O_2 \rightarrow$  *moral dirtiness (or corruption)* evoked by the Greek flag ( $E_2$ )) that motivates the use of the given sign (metaphorical street artwork), as it is illustrated in Figure 2.10 (for a more elaborate discussion, see Paper 1).





**Figure 2.10** A schematic illustration of a metaphorical sign. E = Expression, O = Object, 1 = Vehicle, 2 = Topic (adapted from Torstensson, 2019).

Such a perspective can easily be extended to metaphor research from a cognitive semiotic perspective, as a synthesis, which I explain at some greater length in Section 2.5.

This, however, is not the only way to approach metaphor in semiotics. A number of studies of metaphor in semiotics (e.g., Black, 1979; Groupe  $\mu$ , 1992; Ricoeur, 1975) question the nature of similarity/dissimilarity relations and creativity by means of analogies and comparisons based on iconic ground (cf. Lenninger, 2019). For example, in his “interaction theory,” Black (1979) argues that metaphor creates similarity by bringing the related expressions that prevail in a state of tension together rather than exposing some pre-existing and already recognized form of similarity.

Studies employing semiotic approaches to metaphors, and to figurativity more broadly, typically focus on taxonomies of rhetorical figures, of which only one is metaphor, mostly in static images and print advertisements (e.g., Foss, 2005; Jappy, 2011; McQuarrie & Mick, 1999, 2003; Phillips & McQuarrie, 2004; Sonesson, 2015, 2019). Such studies focus on unravelling how images can be fragmented, combined or altered for rhetorical purposes in a given context. In other words, in order to appraise the argumentative functions, rhetorical effects and playfulness of images (such as street artworks), figures such as metaphors, metonymies and many others may be conveyed (verbo-) pictorially for the sake of street art’s communicative potential given an explicit set of genre conventions and clearly defined context relevance (for a review on the role of genre, see Stukker et al., 2016; Tseronis & Forceville, 2017).

Sonesson (2015, 2019) has developed these ideas from a phenomenological point of view perceiving similarity (and contiguity) between expectancies and

divergencies as apprehended from the point of view of the sociocultural *life world*.<sup>24</sup> (Verbo-) pictorial metaphors are most often highly creative and complex in the sense that a form of incongruity (or *anomaly* in Kennedy, 1982) is generated by the intended juxtaposition of (at least) two or more incompatible, and often competing and interacting, representations of pictorially depicted elements (or verbal intertexts), as shown in Figure 2.11. For example, pictorial incongruity as an important factor for (verbo-) pictorial metaphors could be perceived when the image is *out of the ordinary* (violation of perceivers' life world expectations in Sonesson's sense) and juxtaposes pictorially depicted elements that are normally not related and disparate.



**Figure 2.11** GREEK FLAG  $\equiv$  TOILET PAPER by an unknown creator (used in Papers 1 and 2). Photograph by Georgios Stampoulidis, 2015.

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<sup>24</sup> *Life world* is the English translation of the German term *Lebenswelt*, first introduced by the founder of phenomenology Edmund Husserl as an encompassing expression for the world of our experiences (Sonesson, 2015).

However, an important difference between metaphors in language and other semiotic systems is worth noting. In language, metaphors are typically expressed with an explicit directionality, where it is clear what is the Topic and what is the Vehicle. For example, in (4), the sentence is obviously about control (Topic) while the physical meaning of being “on top of” is clearly the Vehicle. This clarity has to do with the definitional properties of language, including that of syntagmatic relations (see Section 2.2).

- (4) I’m on top of the situation.

In contrast, with metaphors in the semiotic system of depiction, the *directionality* is less clearly expressed and more strongly influenced by genre-related knowledge and other types of contextual information, which are integrated during the interpretation of the message. In other words, the presence of pictorial incongruity (tension) and analogy in depiction (as, for example, in Figure 2.11) suggests that a figurative interpretation is needed, but only through the integration of sociocultural and context-specific knowledge are the perceivers able to make the necessary connections with their experiential life world, and establish a directionality between the two interpretations. Detailed discussions of how the analysis of diagrammatic iconicity (analogy-making) is a prerequisite for metaphoric iconicity in street art (and more broadly), as well as the significance of directionality for metaphor interpretation, are provided in Papers 1 and 2, as well as in the following Section 2.5.

### 2.4.3 Metaphor-metonymy combinations

Cognitive linguistic and semiotic studies have witnessed a growing research interest in the role and effect of metaphor in language and other semiotic systems, as discussed in the previous sub-sections. Nevertheless, the attention given to another figure that interacts with metaphor, *metonymy*, is also considerable (for a review, e.g., Devylder, 2016, and references therein). How to discern between metaphor and metonymy is open to discussion, but in general, while metaphor crosses domains (e.g., A IS B), metonymy is considered to be a cognitive process whereby one element is used to refer to a *related* attribute or sub-part of the same associated domain (e.g., A IS RELATED TO B; e.g., Littlemore, 2015). For example, in (5) there is an underlying metonymy, where HAND IS RELATED TO ASSISTANCE. Thus, metaphor and metonymy involve quite distinct cognitive and semiotic processes.

- (5) Let me give you a hand.

A number of studies in cognitive linguistics have investigated the role played by metonymy, alone or in combination with metaphor. Some of these relate specifically to Goossens’s (1990) notion of *metaphonymy* (a metaphor-metonymy compound),

defined as a complex figurative construction that combines metaphor and metonymy (e.g., Kashanizadeh & Forceville, 2020; Pérez-Sobrino, 2017). However, even though the notion of metaphonymy is quite useful to capture the idea that both figures are often intertwined, it does not necessarily help us answer where exactly the line between them lies, within the complex figurative continuum, leaving it at times unclear and ambiguous. So, instead of assuming that metaphor and metonymy are just opposed to each other, we should pay more attention to the ways and conditions that these two figures often come to an interplay and conflation in language and other semiotic systems.

From a semiotic perspective, there is a need to both firmly disentangle and interrelate metaphor and metonymy in the interests of a more precise and systematic analysis. Unlike metaphor, which draws attention to similarities (and dissimilarities) between unrelated elements, metonymy is a process whereby one element is used to refer to a related meaning by means of indexicality. For example, think of the site-and-time specificity of the artwork displayed in Figure 2.3 *being contextually contiguous* to the specific sociopolitical and historical moment of the Greek referendum of 2015 (a site-specific work of art relates and responds to a particular location) or the kind of *physical contiguity* in the sense of actual proximity and presence in the physical urban space where the photograph of the given artwork was taken in the streets of Athens.<sup>25</sup>

In other words, the semiotic grounds of indexicality (contiguity) and symbolicity (conventionality), such as sociocultural background, genre conventions, historical experiences and so on, participate as aspects of iconic meanings (as shown in Figure 2.3 with the subverted European Union flag with the red star). To put it differently, the perception of similarity (iconicity) rarely works in isolation from the perception of contiguity (indexicality) and our ability to form conventionality and more or less stable norms (symbolicity) in a society. As the interplay between different semiotic grounds in a single sign, emphasized by Jakobson (1965), see Section 2.2, there are complex metaphor-metonymy combinations that are relatively frequent in street art (and other polysemiotic practices and genres), but also other rhetorical figures such as synecdoche, hyperbole, oxymoron, and personification (as well as their combination and interaction), which has been shown systematically in Paper 1.

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<sup>25</sup> Different sub-types of contiguity such as *organic contiguity*, *mental contiguity* and *mechanical contiguity*, among others, have been discussed extensively in the semiotic literature, but such divisions fall outside the scope of this thesis and are not discussed further here.

### 2.4.4 Summary

To recapitulate: cognitive linguistic accounts of metaphors have often grappled with the problems of accounting for (a) universality and cross-cultural variation, (b) stability and dynamicity, (c) conventionality, and creativity, and (d) language and other semiotic systems, and have provided a number of different theories emphasizing one aspect or another. Some of these have also dealt with the relation between metaphor and other figures, such as metonymy. However, there have also been persistent debates, and even “metaphor wars” (Gibbs, 2017), indicating that the theories in the field have been relatively one-sided.

At the same time, there have been different approaches to metaphor from the perspective of semiotics, which are also not consistent with one another. If metaphors are a special kind of iconic sign, how are they to interact with the semiotic grounds of indexicality (contiguity) and symbolicity (conventionality)? What about directionality: does it apply to all metaphors, or only to those in language? And how to distinguish between metaphor and other figures such as metonymy, especially in semiotic systems other than language?

Within the synthetic cognitive semiotic framework that I present in the following section, I intend to bring together complementary perspectives from both cognitive linguistics and semiotics, integrating some of the ideas expressed from both but going beyond their individual issues.

## 2.5 A cognitive semiotic theory of metaphor within the Motivation & Sedimentation Model (MSM)

A general theory of metaphor under the encompassing umbrella of cognitive semiotics, as introduced and discussed thoroughly in Paper 2, should be able to account for universal tendencies as well as for extensive cross-cultural variation, and context sensitivity. Further, it should be able to apply to the dynamics of metaphor creation, and not just to static “cross-domain mappings” (see sub-section 2.4.1 for a discussion on metaphor research in cognitive linguistics). Methodologically, it should require clear theoretical definitions matching with operational procedures, allowing us both to distinguish metaphor as the most complex kind of iconic sign and other types of figurativity, such as metonymy, irony, oxymoron, hyperbole, personification, and to analyze their combination and interaction (see sub-sections 2.4.2 and 2.4.3, and Paper 1). Ultimately, it should apply not only to language, but also to other semiotic systems such as depiction, and to combinations of these in acts of polysemiotic communication (see Section 2.3).

This is a long list of requirements, but it has been suggested that the *Motivation & Sedimentation Model* (MSM) is capable of fulfilling them (Zlatev et al., in press).

In particular, it may help to resolve a few misunderstandings and frictions about the complex phenomenon of metaphor, which has attracted the attention of scholars interested in language and discourse for a long time.<sup>26</sup> With its roots in *phenomenology* and *integral linguistics* (Coseriu, 1985, 2000; Zlatev, 2011, 2018; Zlatev & Blomberg, 2019), MSM distinguishes between three fundamental and interacting levels of meaning-making, and links these with two basic operations: *motivation* and *sedimentation*: (a) the *Embodied level* of pre-linguistic bodily experiences and intersubjectively shared embodied structures such as empathy, perception and analogy-making, which motivates (b) the *Situated level* of creative sign use, live social interaction and context-relevant interpretations, which over time sediments onto (c) the *Sedimented level* of resided general conventions, socioculturally shared norms, histories and beliefs. Thus, this model deals with both universal and culturally specific issues, balancing between more or less stable structures and contextual effects, which may be applied to the sign systems of language, depiction and gesture.

To briefly illustrate how this model works, consider a moment in which a metaphorical expression was used for the first time at the Situated level of spontaneous speech, dialogical interaction and improvisation, as motivated by the Embodied level. If this innovative and creative sign use is successful considering context relevance, then it could lead to the continued use of this metaphorical expression with this particular meaning in a given community of people. By repetition, the more successful of such metaphorical expressions will become socioculturally conventionalized, and thus sedimented, as more or less stable norms or conventions, analyzed in terms of *metaphoremes* (Cameron & Deignan, 2006) and *discourse metaphors* (Zinken, 2007). At this stage, metaphorical expressions are more likely to be processed through *categorization* rather than comparison (Bowdle & Gentner, 2005), which corresponds to motivation by the Sedimented level of MSM.<sup>27</sup> Since these three levels of meaning-making are not to be conceived as autonomous, but instead as strongly interrelated, the pan-human and universally shared motivations of the Embodied level will underly both the creative use to be evoked at the Situated level and its conventionalization at the Sedimented level.

In particular, the Embodied level of meaning-making, understood through a phenomenological account, includes pan-human bodily experiences, perceptions of human existence and cognitive processes such as cross-modal perceptual experience

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<sup>26</sup> MSM has also recently been applied to a number of cognitive semiotic studies: the understanding of language norms (Zlatev & Blomberg, 2019), the debates on metalinguistic relativity (Blomberg & Zlatev, 2020), and metaphors (Devyllder & Zlatev, 2020; Moskaluk, 2020; Torstensson, 2019; Stampoulidis at al., 2019; Stampoulidis & Zlatev, manuscript).

<sup>27</sup> According to Bowdle and Gentner (2005), metaphorical processing through categorization works as follows: instead of clear analogy-making and comparison between two potential interpretations (corresponding to the Embodied level in MSM), the categorization view for conventional metaphorical expressions suggests that the most contextually relevant interpretation is treated as a member of a metaphorical category.

(Abram, 1996) and analogy-making (Gentner & Markman, 1997). The latter corresponds to the semiotic ground of diagrammatic iconicity (Devylder, 2018; Itkonen, 2005), as discussed in sub-section 2.4.2. Since this is not the level of actual and creative sign use, as illustrated in Figure 2.12 and explained below, but the deeper level of intersubjective motivations, the cross-domain mappings postulated by many in cognitive linguistics should be attributed to this level, motivating the emergence of metaphors at the Situated level, and their subsequent conventionalization at the Sedimented level.

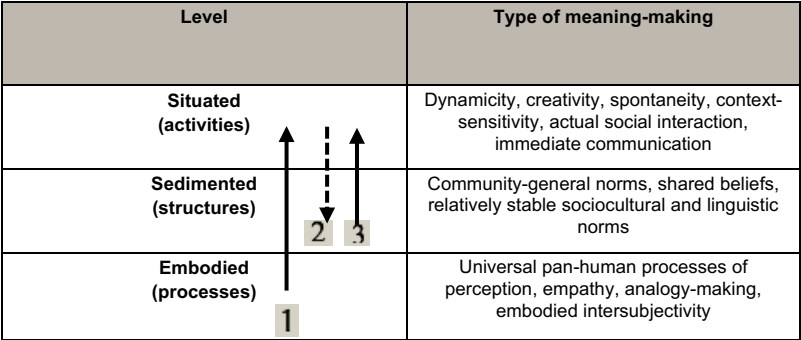
On the highest level of MSM lies the Situated level of meaning-making, which is the most dynamic, creative and tightly dependent on the original context, social interaction and ongoing activities, including the exact moment of immediate communication (as discussed in relation to the more dynamic views on metaphor in sub-section 2.4.1). Semiotically speaking, the Situated level of meaning-making is the level of sign *use*, where signs (in any sign system) are subjected to interpretation, being highly dependent on the immediacy of the situation (see Papers 2 and 3). Yet this level would be impossible without the underlying Embodied level, as noted before.

Further, meaning-making on the Situated level would be impossible without the dialectics with the in-between Sedimented level of meaning-making, which includes relatively stable, yet malleable, linguistic norms and structures, sociocultural conventions, and background sedimented knowledge, realized in phenomena such as intertextuality (discourse in different historical periods), ideology, history (as the memory and perception of events), myths and beliefs (see Section 2.6 for the significance of the Sedimented level in relation to the narrative potential of single static images such as street artworks). The sedimented linguistic and/or sociocultural knowledge can also be geographically or situationally varied, such as different dialects or sociolects or local cultural knowledge and practices (Torstensson, 2019). In other words, the Husserlean concept of *sedimentation*, inspired (metaphorically) by the corresponding geological term, is essential (Blomberg, 2020). As already pointed out, sedimentation is the process that leads to relatively stable and historically derived structures, as summarized by Woelert (2011):

Sedimentation, in spatial terms, describes a process whereby particles collect together and build *vertically*. This vertical process, in turn, leads to the establishment of *horizontal strata that over time form a stable structural configuration*. Thus, sedimentation not only combines structure and process, spatial order and becoming, but also two spatial movements that on the face of it are mutually exclusive: particles sediment in a downward movement, leading to the formation of stratified configurations that grow from the bottom upward (p. 119, emphasis added).

Crucially, MSM emphasizes that none of the three levels is independent or self-determining, as they stand in constant interaction through the two main operations.

The motivation operation, in the spirit of the *Fundierung* relation in phenomenology (dialectics of spontaneous activity and the sedimentation of structures), where more worldly and bodily meaning is seen as providing the foundation for more abstract meaning (cf. Zlatev, 2018), is that which links primarily the Embodied and Situated levels, in an “upward” direction (*solid line 1*): the (potentially) universal experiential and cognitive processes are necessary for the local and contextual significations and activities to arise at the Situated level. In a second step, the situated sign use becomes more or less sedimented “downward” through iteration and frequency of use at the Sedimented level (*dotted line 2*). These, in turn, *co-motivate* future sign use (*solid line 3*), which is thus in practice not fully innovative (and only to some extent creative), as it also presupposes more or less sedimented sociocultural or linguistic norms (Zlatev & Blomberg, 2019). There are more aspects to this model, but the description illustrated in Figure 2.12 can suffice for the purposes of this thesis.



**Figure 2.12** The Motivation & Sedimentation Model of meaning-making, with upward motivation relations (solid lines 1 and 3) and downward sedimentation relation (dotted line 2) (adapted from Papers 2 and 3).

What does the Motivation & Sedimentation Model (MSM) imply about metaphors in general, and about *metaphors in street art*, in particular? A number of recent studies (e.g., Devylder & Zlatev, 2020; Moskaluk, 2020; Stampoulidis, et al., 2019) have explored answers to this question.

- MSM integrates synthetically theoretical perspectives from different metaphor theories that have appeared as opposing, as reviewed in sub-section 2.4.1 (Table 2.3): *metaphors in mind* (corresponding to the Embodied level), *metaphors in discourse* (corresponding to the Sedimented level) and *metaphors in social interaction* (corresponding to the Situated level).
- MSM argues that metaphors are signs instead of mappings, which are only correspondences based on diagrammatic iconicity, serving as motivations



for the use of contextually situated, culturally embedded and dynamic metaphors (sign use) at the Situated level.

- MSM acknowledges that resemblance-based analogies are the dominant motivating factors for metaphor creation and interpretation. In other words, metaphors are primarily the most complex kind of iconic (resemblance-based) signs, rather than analogies or any other type of cognitive correspondences, where the similarity (iconicity) is between two different interpretations of the same expression in any semiotic system (see subsection 2.4.2), and not between expression and meanings (interpretations).
- MSM endorses the significance of creativity, spontaneity, street art performances, context-sensitivity and communicative interplay at the Situated level (with emphasis on dynamic and context-relevant communication), showing that metaphorical expressions can be expressed in semiotic systems other than language, such as depiction (or gesture), and also in the integration of such systems in acts of polysemiotic communication.

As it follows, the theoretical MSM-based definition of metaphor can lead to intersubjectively valid and operational procedures (Devyllder & Zlatev, 2020; Moskaluk, 2020; Torstensson, 2019; Stampoulidis et al., 2019; Stampoulidis & Zlatev, manuscript; Zlatev et al., in press).<sup>28</sup>

*A metaphor is a (simple or complex) sign in a given sign system (or a combination of systems) with*

*(a) at least two different potential interpretations (giving rise to tension),*

*(b) standing in an iconic relationship with each other, where*

*(c) one interpretation is more relevant in the communicative context, and*

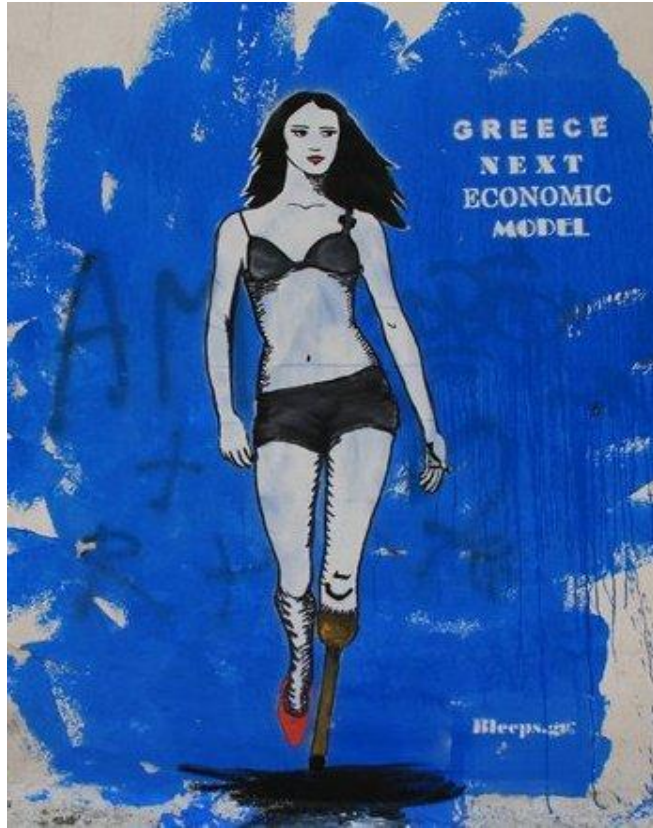
*(d) can be understood in part by comparison with the less relevant interpretation.*

To illustrate, let us consider a polysemiotic street artwork, as shown in Figure 2.13 (used in Paper 1). Understanding and interpreting such an evocative street artwork, the popular reality TV show *Greece's Next Top Model* seems to have inspired the artist (*Bleeps.gr*) to produce a poignantly inventive representation of a woman in lingerie with an amputated leg reading: *Greece Next Economic Model*. This unexpected juxtaposition of the sign systems of language and depiction is apparently used to subvert the pictoriality of beauty that has permeated the contemporary lifestyle world of the mainstream media in order to give an imaginative representation of a country in an emergency situation (for a similar discussion of this street artwork from a sociological perspective, see Zaimakis, 2015, pp. 380-

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<sup>28</sup> Discussion about the empirical and intersubjective validity as well as operationalizability of the theoretical MSM-based definition of metaphor is provided in Chapter 3, Section 3.3.

381). This street artwork may be interpreted in terms of the verbal metaphor *Greece's economy is a cripple*, provided the interaction between the sign systems of language and depiction. The polysemiotic sign complex is then: (a) ambiguous between at least two different interpretations, because the polysemy of the word *model* as either economic or fashion model is nevertheless pictorially conveyed through body shape and catwalk pose (a wooden, pirate-like leg has replaced the female model's leg). Further, the two interpretations (b) stand in a diagrammatic iconic relation to one another, given that both sides of the metaphorical divide are dysfunctional or "broken." There is in addition an indexical participant-for-institution relation, given that the depicted woman may be said to represent the fashion industry, but without the similarity, there would be no metaphorical interpretation. The question of *context relevance* in which the metaphor is created and interpreted is indispensable here for the correct interpretation, establishing a directionality between the two interpretations (Situated level). Thus, given that the street artwork is an ironic commentary on the sociopolitical situation of Greece in times of fiscal austerity and crisis, (c) it is reasonable to assume that Greece as an *economic* model and not as a fashion model is the more relevant interpretation of the metaphor, which (d) may be understood in part by comparison with the less relevant interpretation via the inferences from fashion modelling. In sum, the artist achieves this metaphorical interpretation in highly meaningful and complex ways, contributing to the creation of new knowledge by personifying Greece's economy through a fashion model with an amputated leg. Paper 1 offers detailed discussions of how the analysis of polysemiotic (verbo-) pictorial metaphors and other figurative constructions (in combination or not) may be operationalized and intersubjectively tested.



**Figure 2.13** Greece Next Economic Model by Bleeps.gr. Photo courtesy of the artist (used in Paper 1). Reproduced with the permission of the artist.

In the final part of this section, I examine the polysemous notion of *metaphoricity*. When I previously discussed the dynamic approaches to metaphor in sub-section 2.4.1, I introduced the notion of metaphoricity with respect to ecological views on metaphor creation and interpretation. From an ecological perspective (e.g., Jensen & Greve, 2019; Müller, 2019) metaphoricity can be seen as a scalar notion rejecting the idea of literal and/or figurative meanings as sharply distinguishable notions. In short, metaphoricity appears to be a quite fluid process focusing on creating and enacting metaphorical meaning “entangled with the environment” (Jensen & Greve, 2019, p. 1). Along these lines, Jensen (2017) evokes the notion of *affordances* (Gibson, 1979), and adapts it to refer to

[t]he immediate inter-bodily dynamics and possibilities for impulsive action and thought enabled by the interactive environment in the here-and-now of doing language (p. 257).

In the same vein, Müller (2019) claims:

It is metaphoricity that emerges from the process of face-to-face interaction [...] people perceive, sense, feel, and create metaphoricity. The “product” of this process is not “metaphor” as a static entity or fixed unit of meaning, but metaphoricity, a dynamic, gradable form of meaning [...] metaphoricity is done, not instantiated, it is dynamic and temporal, not static. It emerges in the flow of dialogs [...] here-and-now experience (pp. 63, 77).

Considering the discussion on metaphoricity above, one could ask what kind of implications MSM may have about metaphoricity and how this notion could be operationalized and tested with this model, something that is the topic of discussions in Papers 2 and 3.

In short, MSM implies two types of metaphoricity: *potential* and *actual* metaphoricity. Potential metaphoricity as proposed by MSM is also scalar and should be understood as inversely proportional to the degree of motivation by the Sedimented level, and proportional to the degree of motivation by the Embodied level (Moskaluk, 2020). In other words, the difference between innovative and conventional metaphors, for example, lies in the degrees of relative motivation by the Embodied and the Sedimented levels, respectively. At the same time, it should be reiterated that these two kinds of motivations are not mutually exclusive, which, for example, may result in metaphorical expressions exhibiting a high degree of motivation on both the Embodied and the Sedimented levels (see Paper 3). Consistent with the *Career of Metaphor* model proposed by Bowdle and Gentner (2005), this approach implies that *direct metaphors* (e.g., Steen, 2015), usually in the form of *metaphorical similes* followed by pragmatic signals such as *like* (see Section 3.5 for a discussion of metaphor identification procedures), are more likely to be motivated by the Embodied level, which increases their potential metaphoricity. In this sense, metaphorical expressions that take the form of metaphorical similes are more likely to be motivated by and understood as comparisons due to analogy-making at the Embodied level, and thus, as having a higher degree of potential metaphoricity. In other words, examples like (6), taken from a go-along interview with a street artist (Paper 3), would thus qualify as high on the metaphoricity scale, displaying active analogy-making, and hence the predominant role of the Embodied level.<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, example (7), which displays the metaphorical expression *ready-made*, is predominantly motivated by the Sedimented level (found in the online Greek-English dictionary “Word Reference”). Example (7) would thus qualify as relatively low on the potential metaphoricity scale.

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<sup>29</sup> Metaphorical expressions that are under discussion are underlined.

- (6) I like this balance I have made with my tag, it's like wearing a mask and you don't care about anything and you are out there and you can be yourself. This calms me down. My tag is my mask.
- (7) With my art I don't want to say ready-made things just to be eaten.

At the same time, potential metaphoricity should be distinguished from the actual metaphoricity of an expression, which can only be established at the Situated level (see Devylder & Zlatev, 2020), considering context-sensitivity and the extent to which the attention is drawn to the tension between the two interpretations, and to the iconicity between them either on the level of perceptual properties and experiences (imagistic iconicity) or analogies (diagrammatic iconicity) (see Paper 2). It is this kind of metaphoricity that Müller (2019) is apparently referring to in the citation given above.

To summarize, the Motivation & Sedimentation Model provides a new, and synergetic, perspective in the age-old notion of metaphor. The cognitive semiotic theory of metaphor sketched out in this section incorporates insights from the aforementioned cognitive linguistic (sub-section 2.4.1) and semiotic (sub-section 2.4.2) approaches to metaphor, and relies on the understanding that metaphor is a complex iconic sign that can be expressed in various sign systems other than language. Its key properties are that: (a) it involves some tension between two different interpretations of the same expression, (b) there is an iconic ground between the two interpretations, (c) it involves situated and socioculturally dependent real-life context and (d) the more relevant interpretation is understood in part by comparison with the less relevant interpretation.

In the thesis, the Motivation & Sedimentation Model (MSM) is used as the overarching conceptual framework that holds the whole endeavor together. The model is first introduced in Paper 2 in order to explain the key research findings of the empirical study presented in Paper 1, and it also provides a framework for the second part of the study presented in Paper 3. Papers 1 and 2 focus on (verbo-) pictorial metaphors and other rhetorical figures in street artworks, whereas Paper 3 focuses on street artists' metaphors used in actual social interaction while describing their memorable experiences and motivations of art-making in the streets in the context of go-along interviews. Paper 4, finally, opens up another "hot" topic, from the perspective of cognitive semiotics, which is the potential ability of single static images, such as street artworks (and more generally), to "narrate" stories. The significance of the historically derived Sedimented level of meaning-making, as discussed in this section, with the suggested narratological notions of *underlying story* and *frame-setting* (Section 2.6) is taken up and further elaborated in the next section.

## 2.6 A cognitive semiotic approach to narrative

In this section, I outline and briefly describe certain narratological concepts such as *narrative*, *narrativity*, *narration*, *underlying story* and *frame-setting*, focusing on street art's narrative potential, informed by both classical and cognitive narratological perspectives. However, a detailed review of these theories is beyond the scope of this introductory overview. Due to the breadth of the field, I have to restrict this summary only to narratological aspects used in the thesis, and in particular in Paper 4.

The field of *narratology* (e.g., Todorov, 1969; Genette, 1988; Prince, 2008) is the interdisciplinary field of research that studies narratives from the perspectives of linguistics, semiotics, psychology and philosophy, among others (e.g., Bal, 1997; Fludernik, 1996; Meister, 2009; Schmid, 2005, 2010; Vercauteren, 2012). Much like the notion of metaphor, the concept of narrative has been a point of contention since classical times. In part due to the wide scope of the field, radically different understandings of what constitutes a narrative exist. And again, as with metaphor, the challenge for a cognitive semiotic approach to narrative is to attempt to establish a synthetic account (e.g., Digeet, 2019; Louhema et al., 2019; Li & Zlatev, under review).

Another similarity with metaphor is that most narrative research has been focused on language, with vigorous narratological traditions in both linguistics and literary studies. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the recognition of narrative potential in different sign systems and media in acts of polysemiotic communication may be found from the 1960s and onward (e.g., Barthes, 1966/1977; Bremond, 1964). Elleström (2019) discusses the phenomenon of *transmedial narration*, offering an extensive list of narrative research in a wide range of *media* (pp. 8-9).<sup>30</sup> Elleström (2019) proposes a distinction between two different kinds of media types that (in his account) encompass different materials and spatiotemporal and sensorial properties: *basic media* and *qualified media*. Basic media include both still and moving images, and written and spoken verbal texts. Qualified media, on the other hand, include political speeches, music works, instruction manuals, sculptures and statues, television programs, emails and news articles, which can potentially overlap or change as time passes. To make a connection to the terminological and conceptual distinction proposed in Section 2.3 (Table 2.1), Elleström's basic media would seem to correspond to sign systems (language, gesture and depiction) and qualified media would correspond to different sociocultural practices, genres and instantiations that

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<sup>30</sup> There are different possible ways of understanding trans- or intermediality. From a particular perspective, Elleström (2019, p. 6) argues that "the term "transmedial narration" should be understood to refer to all varieties of transmediality and transmediation where narration is a media characteristic that is significant enough to be observed."

these sign systems naturally combine in acts of polysemiotic communication, such as street art.

Although views differ considerably among narratologists in relation to the question “*what is a narrative?*”,<sup>31</sup> a commonly cited minimal definition of narrative is that given by Prince (2008, p. 19) as “the logically consistent representation of at least two asynchronous events that do not presuppose or imply each other.” Along similar lines, Labov (1972), focusing on language-based narratives, claims that “we can define a minimal narrative as a sequence of two clauses which are temporally ordered” (Labov, 1972, pp. 359-361). However, as has been pointed out in recent cognitive semiotic research on narratives in language and other sign systems (e.g., Diget, 2019; Louhema et al., 2019), these definitions are too broad, leaving unspecified or at least not thoroughly discussed what notions like “logically consistent representation” and “temporally ordered,” imply. Moreover, these definitions reveal the problems associated with directly applying theories developed for language-based narratives to those of other sign systems. Thus, a narrative definition is called for, which should be more elaborate, synthetic, and applicable to other sign systems besides language.

A three-part model of narrative has been proposed by Genette (1980), who called the three levels *narration*, *histoire* and *récit*. In addition, Bal (1997) adopts a version of this three-part distinction as well, using the terms *narrative text*, *story* and *fabula*, respectively:

[A] *narrative text* is a text in which an agent or subject conveys to an addressee (“tells” the reader, viewer, or listener) a story in a *medium*, such as language, imagery, sound, buildings, or a combination thereof. A *story* is the content of that text and produces a particular manifestation, inflection, and “colouring” of a fabula. A *fabula* is a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors (p. 5, emphasis added).

Following Aristotle’s *Treatise on Poetry* (335 BC/1812), many narratologists require that the fabula needs to be organized in a story, consisting of at least three prototypical parts: *beginning*, *middle* and *end*, which do not need to follow this particular order and at times could be either present or implicit (e.g., Allen, 2013; Branigan, 1992). Further, the story needs to be expressed (narrated), and the semiotic systems of language, depiction and gesture can all be used as vehicles for narratives (Prince, 1982).

With the help of concepts from both *classical* (e.g., Chatman, 1978; Genette, 1988; Prince, 1982, 2008; Schmid, 2005, 2010; Todorov, 1971) and *cognitive* (e.g., Caracciolo, 2014; Fludernik, 1996; Popova, 2015) narratology, and the

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<sup>31</sup> See Barthes (1966/1975), Fludernik (1996), Genette (1980), Herman (2002), Ryan (1991), and Schmid (2005).

understanding that narrative should involve both experience-based and communication-based processes, it is possible to propose a synthetic definition of narrative as a cognitive-semiotic schema, consisting of three layers—narration, underlying story and fabula—where its core, the underlying story, consists (prototypically) of three chronologically ordered parts: beginning, middle and end (Li & Zlatev, under review). The underlying story can be seen as historically derived and sedimented in the frame-setting, which consists of sociocultural knowledge, collective memory, myths and shared beliefs (see Figure 2.14). This intermediary layer may be seen as corresponding to the Sedimented level of the Motivation & Sedimentation Model discussed in the previous section.

Levels of narrative		
	Narration	The actual expression "telling" (e.g., street artwork, cartoon) where one or more semiotic systems are employed
Primary narrativity	Underlying story  +  Frame setting	A particular chronological and causal sequence of related events, organized (typically) as beginning, middle and end, which is represented (expressed) by the narration  The <b>sedimented sociocultural experiential background</b> , which shapes human experience and collective memory, and gives perspectives on shared cultural beliefs, histories and myths
	Fabula	A causally and chronologically ordered sequence of events

**Figure 2.14** Layers of narrative with primary narrativity (downward-pointing arrow) and secondary narrativity (upward-pointing arrow), based on a synthetic cognitive semiotic account of narrative.

Considering this cognitive semiotic synthetic account of narrative, which is a minor elaboration of that proposed in Paper 4, this thesis asks if single static images (such as street artworks or cartoons, as those discussed in Paper 4) are able to represent events and by extension narrate stories. Or, in other words, if a single static image can “trigger” a pre-existing underlying story. The qualitative analyses in Paper 4 show that single static images do not narrate stories themselves (*primary narrativity*), and thus lack this capacity, but, on the other hand, they may presuppose and by extension narrate such underlying stories with the help of the sedimented frame-setting, which they can prompt or trigger. Therefore, the proposal is that single images (including statues) may indeed narrate, but only through what I call *secondary narrativity*, that is, “understanding the narrative by going from



underlying story to the narration, under the constraints of the frame-setting” (Stampoulidis, 2019, p. 34), as visualized in Figure 2.14 through the upward-pointing arrow. This means that if we, as street art perceivers/interpreters, do have access to one or more previous told “underlying stories,” then we may be able to understand and interpret a street artwork as a particular kind of narration, reconstructing the whole narrative and its temporal progression.

Over the centuries, aestheticians and art historians have discussed this question, indicating that the perceiver of an image should participate actively in the processing of the given pictorial (or polysemiotic) narration, in the sense of adding information that is not explicitly represented in the image per se, but which is implied to have taken place before and/or after the event represented (see Table 1 in Stampoulidis, 2019, p. 44). In other words, a single static image prompts a narrative interpretation, challenging the viewer’s understanding due to its highly illustrative and indeterminate content. For example, as Schmid (2005) argues, interpreting a single static image narratively requires an elaborate “gap-filling” task that is not needed when reading a language-based narrative. Therefore, along with Wolf (2014, 2017) and many other researchers, I argue that single static images can afford narrative interpretations only given rich background knowledge.

To illustrate, let us suppose that a street artist wants to tell a story about the crisis and austerity times in Greece. This is the underlying story organized (prototypically) as beginning, middle and end, which should be understood as the core of the narrative. The artist then needs to decide the manner in which to narrate this, represented by the street artwork. In other words, street artworks correspond to single static images in which only the expressed part (corresponding to the beginning, middle or end) may be represented, while the other parts remain implicit, ready to be reconstructed by the audience. This is also illustrated in Paper 1, where intertextuality, allusions to historical events and widespread narratives were briefly discussed. This concerns the level of narration, where polysemiotic interaction (often) takes place. Last, the sociocultural background knowledge that both the street art producer and street art perceiver share corresponds to the frame-setting. The importance of background knowledge (a form of sedimented frame-setting) corresponds to the acquired sociocultural knowledge and experiences, myths and beliefs that are historically derived.

For example, in the street artwork shown in Figure 2.15, the character is depicted in black, red and white colors, and represents a schematic Greek warrior. This is an image that could remind a Greek audience of one of the most prominent figures in the Greek War for Independence (1821): *Theodoros Kolokotronis*, whose large bronze equestrian statue in central Athens in front of the Old Parliament House is shown in Figure 2.16.<sup>32</sup> In this street artwork, a modern and subversive resistance

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<sup>32</sup> The given street artwork and monument shown in Figures 2.15 and 2.16 have been recently discussed from a sociological and anthropological perspective by Karanicolas (2019, pp. 222-224).

figure is ready to throw a Euro-shaped Molotov cocktail. The Molotov cocktail has become a prominent global symbol of contemporary resistance movements. This image is meant to mend the temporal divide between the revolution of the *Klefts* and that of modern resistance to the “oppressive structural forces” imposed by the European Union.



**Figure 2.15** Greek guard with €-Molotov cocktail by Absent (used in Paper 4). Photo courtesy of the artist. Reproduced with the permission of the artist.

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During Ottoman occupation, the *Klefts* (brigands) carried out raids and robberies and were responsible for the majority of revolts during the four-century period. After the war, many of the revolutionary heroes were neglected, imprisoned, or even murdered by the newly established state, as their potential political influence was feared. The image of Theodoros Kolokotronis, the *Kleft*, has emerged as a powerful symbol for revolt and resistance (Appadurai, 1981), and Kolokotronis is now acknowledged as a national hero.



**Figure 2.16** Monument to Kolokotronis, Central Athens (<https://www.athensguide.com/omonia.html>, last accessed on October 8, 2020).

The concept of secondary narrativity presented above is productive and can help us analyze the narrative potential of not only (street art) images, but also of many other narrations. Applying it to the example shown in Figure 2.15, this means that if the street art perceiver already has access to one or more “underlying stories”—in this case the shared understanding of *Klefts* and the Greek War of Independence—then they could make the necessary connections to the past, understanding the given artwork as a particular kind of narration. Thus, the whole can be understood as a narrative, and lead to a possible interpretation of the artwork’s meaning, which might be the recurrent struggle between Greeks and foreign invaders. In this sense, the revolutionary figure of Kolokotronis is evoked to represent the modern struggle against both state oppression and financial domination from European Powers. Thus, the interpretation of the artwork and the reconstruction of the whole narrative is triggered by the street artwork itself and further developed thanks to the sociocultural knowledge of the perceiving audience.<sup>33</sup> In other words, it is nearly impossible to convey events through single static images (such as street artworks) that are not already well-known by the beholder of the given image.

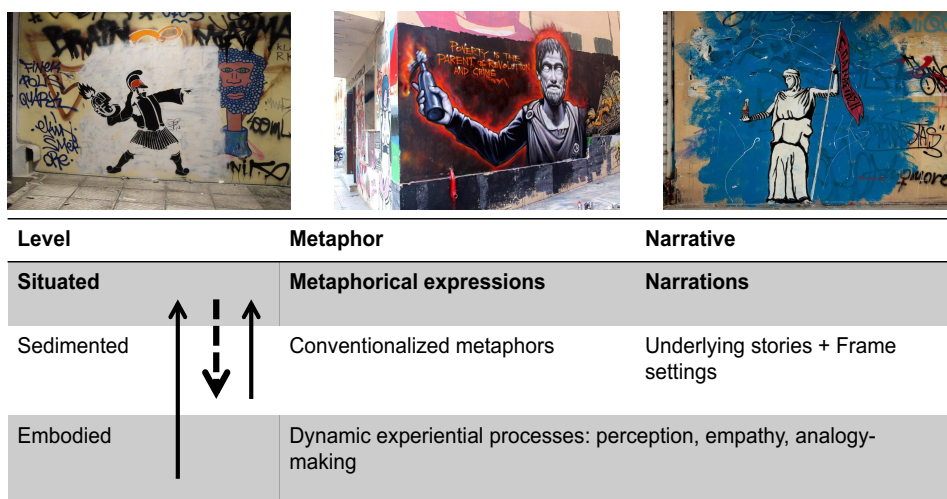
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<sup>33</sup> Forceville (2020) advances the discussion about the importance of *genre knowledge* and proposes that “genre is the most important contextual factor to help constrain what Carston (2010) calls “free pragmatic processes,” which are “pragmatic processes that contribute to what a speaker [or an artist: street artist or cartoonist] is taken to have explicitly communicated but which are not triggered or required by any linguistic [or pictorial/verbo-pictorial, in short polysemiotic] property or feature of the utterance [artwork]” (Carston, 2010, p. 265 from Forceville, 2020, emphasis added).

The study presented in Paper 4 successfully addressed the significance of familiarity with underlying background stories and frame-setting in order to be able to understand single static images such as street artworks as narrations, that is: secondary narrativity. Using the Motivation & Sedimentation Model (MSM) applied previously to metaphor, as described in Section 2.5, the narrative potential of street art (and other single static images more broadly), the notion of secondary narrativity may be understood as a predominant motivation from the Sedimented level, as illustrated below.

Going back to the street artwork with the Greek warrior displayed in Figure 2.15, inciting such sociocultural and contextual projections, as knowledge of the antagonistic situations and histories as well as familiarity with street art genre conventions, is essential for understanding the images as narrations at the Situated level of MSM. These are all instances motivated by the Sedimented level of MSM, which require different levels of sociocultural understanding under the constraints of the sedimented frame-setting. By acknowledging this kind of secondary narrativity as the process that “unfreezes” the narrative, either from the perspective of the creator or the perceiver, one is not far from embracing Fludernik’s concept of *narrativization*: “making something a narrative by the sheer act of imposing narrativity on it” (Fludernik, 1996, p. 34).

Figure 2.17 brings together concepts of metaphor and narrative developed so far, showing the potential of MSM, and in particular the significance of the Sedimented level. For example, this suggests that the rhetorical interpretation of an image (like a street artwork) could potentially involve the interaction of both metaphor and narrative. In other words, given that MSM is a model that differentiates between three distinct, yet interrelated, levels of meaning-making, it is indeed general enough to apply to both metaphors and narratives, and thus, it could be used as an overarching conceptual framework to describe their interaction, which is something that could be explored in future research.



**Figure 2.17** The Motivation & Sedimentation Model is applied to both metaphor and narrative.

To summarize, as the examples in Paper 4 illustrate, single static images, in order to be understood and interpreted as narrations at the Situated level, and thus, be part of a whole narrative, require a viewer (perceiver) who should be active in (re)constructing the narrative, as an antecedently existing meaning possibly intended by the artists. Therefore, the significance of the concept of secondary narrativity lies in the fact that it highlights our impulse to narrativize, as both producers and perceivers, of such images as narrations.

In the following and last section of this chapter, I turn to the exploration of *urban creativity*. After giving a general overview of this field of inquiry and relevant definitions for the thesis, I focus on the practice of doing street art in Greece (and specifically in Athens) at the intersection between crisis, austerity and protest. In the last part of the section, I attempt to draw some parallels between figurative and narrative potentials of images and street art in Athens.

## 2.7 Urban creativity—art and crisis in the streets of Athens

*Urban creativity* is an umbrella term referring to practices and activities within, or in direct relation to, the city. Examples of urban creativity include, but are not limited to, graffiti, street art, urban foraging, parkour, skateboarding and guerrilla gardening. An important characteristic of all these situated urban creative practices is that they push legal, moral and cultural boundaries by intervening and exploring

alternative ways of using, understanding and claiming the city. By applying the concepts of metaphor (Sections 2.4-2.5) and narrative (Section 2.6) developed in the previous sections to urban creativity, this thesis shows the highly meaningful engagement that they perform in the streets of Athens.

In recent years, scholars from fields such as art history, sociology, criminology and law (e.g., Bengtsen, 2014, 2018; Blanché, 2015; Chaffee, 1993; Hannerz, 2016; Hoppe, 2014; Kimvall, 2014, 2019; Riggle, 2010; Waclawek, 2011; Young, 2014) have discussed graffiti and street art practices as multilayered phenomena of human cultural consciousness. All of which come with a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches to interpret street art and graffiti (for a recent discussion on these matters, e.g., Awad, 2021). In the literature, they are often presented in terms of a “chronological cultural development, where street art has been developed out of the graffiti context at around the late 1990s and early 2000s” (Kimvall, 2019, p. 20).

Therefore, the notions of graffiti and street art have been framed in previous research as two related, yet distinct sociocultural practices with different social status. Kimvall (2014) and Young (2014), for example, explore the conflictual discourses around graffiti as either an influential contemporary art movement or as connected to vandalism, which in turn are connected to the statements “graffiti is art” and “graffiti is vandalism,” respectively. Bengtsen (2014), on the other hand, points out that the notion of street art is heavily polysemous, and thus, there is a perpetual discussion on what it encompasses.

Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the emergence of contemporary street art has coincided with a growing number of scholars from a range of academic disciplines pursuing more critical and pluralistic interpretations: architecture (e.g., Avramidis, 2012; Leventis, 2013; Pangalos, 2014), sociology, anthropology and urban studies (e.g., Karanicolas, 2019; Philipps, 2015; Tsilimpounidi, 2012, 2015, 2017; Tulke, 2016, 2017), art history (e.g., Bengtsen, 2014, 2018; Hoppe, 2014), criminology (e.g., Young, 2014), and social media and internet ethnography (e.g., MacDowall & de Souza, 2018; MacDowall, 2019). This thesis contributes to street art research from the perspective of cognitive semiotics. Given that cognitive semiotics aims to integrate concepts and methods from linguistics, semiotics and cognitive science, I suggest a coherent terminology, which distinguishes the notions of perceptual modalities (vision, hearing, smell, touch and taste) and semiotic systems (language, depiction and gesture) (Section 2.3). In this way, the ideas from recent work on metaphors and other figurative constructions (Sections 2.4-2.5) and narratives (Section 2.6) become relevant in the analysis of street art.

Although separated from graffiti, street art is still related to it. The similarity between street art and graffiti, as both being simultaneously physical acts and sociocultural artistic and highly creative practices of social activism, is often emphasized. While visually and structurally different, graffiti and street art practices

overlap in a number of ways, sharing characteristics such as *ephemerality* and *creativity*. In general, the boundary between the two related art forms it is to be understood as fluid and often subjected to subjective categorizations. Acknowledging this difficulty, in this thesis I attempt to explore, through examples, some key definitional features of graffiti and street art. On this note, Avramidis and Tsilimpounidi (2017) summarize some key points in their definition of graffiti as follows:

An unsolicited, frequently illegal, act of image-making, usually produced by the use of spray cans. Its focus is usually on words, tags and pseudonyms and their repetitive display on all kinds of surfaces. It is a very loose term, with multiple aesthetic outcomes and practitioners (p. 4).

Graffiti, for example, created a subculture as a collective illegal activity common to several graffiti crews,<sup>34</sup> whereas street art did not create a new culture, as graffiti did, even if, as the sociologist Tsilimpounidi (2012) notes, it introduced a new visual “street-level language that has twisted, innovated, and filled in the gaps of a culture’s hegemonic discourse” (p. 546).

To scrutinize, the subversive nature of graffiti subculture continues to be reflected in street art interventions. However, street art is arguably more accepted as an art form in large parts of the population due to its willingness to invite city-dwellers and non-members of the crews into the conversation. In addition, whereas graffiti artists “bomb” cities with their tags, indicating their presence, subcultural status and sometimes crew affiliation, street artists are more eclectic in their methods of delivering messages through art. For example, street artists produce less visually cryptic art in comparison with graffiti artists. Many street artists consider their work to be a reflection of, a response to, and an interaction with passersby, with the potential to speak to a variety of audiences in the hope of making a connection with the general public. In this way, street artworks necessarily participate in dialogue with their context and at times address issues specific to a geographic region, which is precisely what this thesis is about.

In addition, a salient distinction between graffiti and street art is the substitution of the semiotic system of language (language-based style) for complex (verbo-) pictorial figurative expressions. According to Waclawek (2011), graffiti continues to be widely understood as primarily language-dominant graphic representation, as shown in Figure 2.18 (and discussed in Paper 2), which is intended to communicate with other graffitiists, often regardless of public recognition.

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<sup>34</sup> The definition and meaning of subculture, as given by Hebdige (1979), includes the expressive forms and rituals of those subordinate groups “[...] the meaning of subculture is, then, always in dispute, and style is the area in which the opposing definitions clash with most dramatic force” (pp. 2-3).





**Figure 2.18** Graffiti artwork by BLZ. Photograph by Georgios Stampoulidis, 2018.

Street art, while not always sociopolitical, perfectly exemplifies the thought-provoking, depiction-dominant and rhetorical potential. Street artists, as shown for example in Figure 2.3 (see Section 2.2), often replicate and subvert symbols of urban environment or EU identity (such as the European Union flag) with sometimes an overtly sociopolitical agenda. In this way, street art reaches a larger segment of the population than graffiti by gradually expanding its communicative and subsequent figurative potential of aesthetically and stylistically disturbing works. In other words, street art is richer in (sociopolitical) messages in acts of polysemiotic communication (see Section 2.3) as a form of artistic activism or artivism.

Moreover, stencils, for example, are legible and thus able to communicate with a greater number of outsiders and street art enthusiasts than graffiti, since they tend to represent overtly fun, political or inspirational polysemiotic messages, as shown in Figure 2.19. Here, for example, a representation of a “Molotov cocktail,” metonymically signifies resistance, protest or even symbolic violence, being juxtaposed with the verbal intertext, which reads *REUSE GLASS SAVE THE PLANET*. This artwork is an example of “environmental street art” (Bengtson, 2018), which may be intended to foster environmental awareness in relation to complex matters like climate change and unsustainable natural resource consumption and to some extent potentially educate people by influencing them to protect the environment. In other words, the artwork’s message may be read with a



degree of irony (since the bottle is to be used as the container of a Molotov cocktail, meant to destroy) as the following: reusing glasses and in general recycling waste glass into a new resource is an effective way to save energy and help protect the environment. From a cognitive semiotic perspective, the polysemiotic interaction instantiated in the given environment-themed artwork eventually leads to a metaphor, which could be interpreted as *Protest is fighting for the environment*. Finally, the metaphorical interpretation of this stencil could potentially trigger its narrativization (as discussed in the previous section) thanks to the sedimented sociocultural knowledge imposed by the perceiver and interpreter in terms of climate change and the impact of saving energy.



**Figure 2.19** Street artwork by an unknown artist. Photograph by Georgios Stampoulidis, 2018.

Another major difference between graffiti and street art is arguably their intent. Graffiti artists are not looking for validation within a system of prestige outside of their own (Wacławek, 2011). Street artists, whether ex-graffiti artists, art-school graduates or self-taught creators, engage with the general public and wish to be attractive to broader audiences.

While doing fieldwork research in Athens (see Section 3.4 and Paper 3), one thing that struck me was how street art was explicitly connected with a mass audience, unlike graffiti, as in the following examples (8-9). One artist, for example, said in a go-along interview:

- (8) The differentiation between street art and graffiti lies in the artist's motivation and goal to communicate with a broader audience. I think it has to do with whether the artist has something to say. Do I practice street art or

graffiti for me just because I want to see my name around, make a fuss and get some fame or do I practice it because I really want to reach out to someone else too outside my close circle? [...] The content makes the main difference! Graffiti as a style is a more closed form of communication. What is the breadth of your audience? [...] So, in a sense, it's not just about my goal, but also about the result of my work.

(Go-along 4, my translation)

Along the same lines, another artist also stated that

- (9) If you do street art, you must take a stand on things. Street art cannot exist without any message or comment, even an indirect one [...] It is in direct relation to the everyday problems Greeks face at present such as austerity, corruption, migration, unemployment, political and economic instability, etc. Our work, as mostly political and social commentary, addresses the “bad” things of Greek society [...] That is to say, we do have a communicative goal [...] we do not make “decorative art,” as many others may do.

(Go-along 9, my translation)

It is indeed the case that, as pointed out by Bengtsen (2014), street art is a rich concept that “cannot be defined exclusively since what it encompasses is constantly negotiated.” Therefore, as glimpsed from the Introduction, in this thesis, I adopt a correspondingly composite definition, understanding street art as

[...] an open, unsanctioned, ephemeral, creative and contemporary sociocultural medium [practice] in urban space, that typically incorporates two interacting semiotic systems (language and depiction), and thus, polysemiotic, often addressing, but not limited to, sociopolitical issues (Stampoulidis, 2019, p. 31).

Street art, in this sense, entails artworks produced with stencil and collage techniques, stickers, posters, wall paintings, projected light and video, and even sculptures in small or, most often, large sizes, which coexist in the same space within blurred boundaries.

To contextualize, let us turn to urban creativity in Greece, where street art and graffiti can hardly be considered a new phenomenon in the Athenian urban space. However, in the last 10-12 years, since *the 2008 Greek riots*<sup>35</sup> and during the Greek-debt crisis, there are notable changes on city walls and more specifically on the walls

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<sup>35</sup> *The 2008 Greek riots* started after the shooting of a 15-year-old student by the police on December 6, 2008 in the Exarchia district in central Athens. Alogoskoufis (2012) argued that the protest actions in 2008 constituted the onset of the 2008 financial crisis: the mass student demonstrations signified the end of the Greek society of the last decades.

of Athens. Images of crisis, social breakdown and protest such as those in Figure 2.20 (taken during anti-austerity protests out front of Greek parliament in central Athens in 2011) have become synonymous with Greece's often turbulent capital city. Given that street art is not necessarily crisis-related (Stampoulidis et al., 2018), and without knowing the explicit motivations of the artists, the only reason to conclude that a given artwork should be classified as crisis-related street artwork is the date of its production. Considering that street art is meant to be (to a large extent) a short-cycle art form produced without expectations of long-standing duration but instead with the intent to promote continuous change merged into the urban landscape, it may be safe to assume that most (though not all) of the contemporary street artworks have been produced after the crisis started in 2008.<sup>36</sup> To this, the quite limited municipal funds for anti-graffiti and anti-street art cleanup campaigns in the era of financial austerity may be added.<sup>37</sup>



**Figure 2.20** Anti-austerity protest, Syntagma square in central Athens in 2011 ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-austerity\\_movement\\_in\\_Greece](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-austerity_movement_in_Greece), last accessed on October 8, 2020).

<sup>36</sup> Paper 3 sheds some light on the experiences and motivations of street artists of Athens, where crisis and austerity have significantly altered the urban landscapes and street artists' lives in often diverse ways.

<sup>37</sup> Most recently, a zero-tolerance policy has been initiated by the Greek government with regard to systematic cleaning of illegal graffiti and street art interventions with the use of a special technique that "protects" facades and walls and may deter future interventions (i.e., the *Adopt your City* program, <https://adoptathens.gr/en/home-en/>, last accessed on December 17, 2020). This falls outside the scope of this thesis, and thus, it is not taken up here at greater length.

As graffiti historian and street art practitioner Pangalos (2014) suggests, nowadays in Athens one can observe “an unforeseen concentration of writings on the city’s vertical surfaces, rendering it one of the most ‘stained’ and ‘saturated’ cities in the world” (Pangalos, 2014, p. 154). In other words, sociopolitical street activism has boomed in Athens in the last decade, serving as a pressure release valve for Greek society in an era of deep economic, political and moral crisis.

With respect to context relevance and emphasis on situated communication and sociocultural knowledge, I focus in this thesis on the emergence of financial, sociopolitical, and migrant/refugee crisis-related vibrant and complex street art in the city of Athens, which readily maps onto the Situated and Sedimented levels of the Motivation & Sedimentation Model (Sections 2.5-2.6). The Athenian walls and streets with the encrypted messages of street artworks and sociopolitical interventions, as an urban representation of intense sociopolitical upheavals, are a rich source for polysemiotic figurative constructions and narrations. In the era of crisis, central Athens is now an urban setting of resistance, with the city’s walls crying out a thousand stories, as Paper 4 shows. In other words, city walls and streets, abandoned buildings, electricity pylons and boxes, shop shutters and any other public surfaces are the artists’ charged canvases (Avramidis, 2012), and sociopolitical circumstances are the materials in a gallery of immense stories and rhetorical figures. Paper 3, as the quotations (8-9) show, addresses the motivations that lead Athens-based street artists to their practice.

As it is discussed in all four papers, social and collective memories of these events have generated a general distrust of political authorities and institutions. In this sense, redefined symbols, deteriorated stereotypes, urban aesthetics, and antiracist and antifascist artworks that are against state oppression, against police violence and against mass consumerism, are the tools for the transfiguration of urban walls and streets into social diaries. In this thesis, street art is widely understood as what the Athens-based street artist *Bleeps.gr* calls “a visual diary on public display” (Bleeps.gr, 2014, p. 221). The thesis also provides ample support for the claim of *WD* that “art in the public space has its own distinct power and often functions as a mirror of modern society” (Stefanidis & Moutsopoulos, 2017, p. 89).

To summarize, as demonstrated in the images and extracts of interviews alongside the analysis in all four papers, street art can indeed narrate, with the help of metaphors and other rhetorical figures, stories of protest and resistance. Last but not least, this thesis reflects the way in which street art steers towards urban creativity and rebellion, exploring the figurative and narrative potentials of these (typically) polysemiotic messages.



### 3 Methodological considerations

Having outlined the general theoretical framework of the thesis and its focus in Chapter 2, I am now in a position to focus on the methodology and data used in the papers included in the thesis. This chapter describes the methods that were employed for answering the main research questions that were given in Chapter 1. The description will be general as it is intended only to give an overview of the methods used, and to clarify the basic methodological assumptions on which each paper is based. A more detailed account is provided within the papers themselves. I begin by presenting the core principles of cognitive semiotic methodology, notably the *conceptual-empirical loop* and *phenomenological-methodological*, or in short, *pheno-methodological triangulation*, and its background in phenomenology. The extensive second part, Section 3.2, describes how relevant aspects of cognitive semiotic methodology are employed in the papers in more detail. Section 3.3, in turn, zooms in on a topic that is popular in contemporary metaphor research: *metaphor identification procedures*. Section 3.4 examines the ethnographic angle of my work, with particular attention to data collection including photographic documentation of the field and the *go-along method* as the one employed in Paper 3. Subsequently, Section 3.5 sheds light on the data and corpus construction that provided the empirical basis for all four papers included in the thesis. Section 3.6 discusses relevant ethical and legal considerations as well as their implications for conducting such street art research, and finally, Section 3.7 weighs some of the benefits afforded by the multimethod research design adopted in the thesis.

Table 3.1 provides an overview of the methods and data used in the papers. As the table shows, the thesis integrates a range of qualitative and quantitative methods, including conceptual analysis (based on the researchers' systematic intuitions), empathy between analysts and between analysts and the participants (central for the analysis of social interaction), ethnographic methods, corpus analysis, and quantitative analysis. These approaches are described in the following sections.

**Table 3.1** Overview of cognitive semiotic methodology and data used in the papers included in the thesis.

	Paper 1	Paper 2	Paper 3	Paper 4
<b>Cognitive semiotic methods</b>	<b>Conceptual and intuition-based analysis</b> (systematic intuitions)  <b>Empathy and intersubjectivity</b> (social interaction)  <b>Detached observation</b> (quantification)	<b>Conceptual and intuition-based analysis</b> (systematic intuitions)	<b>Conceptual and intuition-based analysis</b> (systematic intuitions)  <b>Empathy and intersubjectivity</b> (social interaction)  <b>Detached observation</b> (quantification)	<b>Conceptual and intuition-based analysis</b> (systematic intuitions)
<b>Data collected</b>	Street artworks	This paper is theoretical in nature and discusses the empirical analyses reported in Paper 1	Interviews with street artists, fieldnotes, street artworks	Street artworks and cartoons
<b>Data analyzed</b>	Analysis of 50 street artworks with figurative potential collected between 2015 and 2017 in Athens (and through archival research)		Analysis of 10 go-along interviews with street artists in 2018, which is complemented with the analysis of street artworks	Analysis of 45 street artworks with narrative potential collected between 2015 and 2018 in Athens (and through archival research) and two cartoons from the 1940s

To summarize, Paper 1 is based on a corpus sample of 50 street artworks with figurative potential related to the sociopolitical, financial and austerity crisis within Greece and the EU since 2008 and the migrant/refugee crisis since 2015 in the city of Athens. The data were collected by myself during the period of extensive ethnographic research undertaken in Athens at different periods between 2015 and 2017, as well as by using archival research. Paper 2 is a theoretical contribution to the study of metaphor and polysemiotic communication, considering the empirical analyses reported and discussed in Paper 1 in order to help develop a detailed and synthetic account of metaphors in Greek street art (and more broadly), under the umbrella of the Motivation & Sedimentation Model (MSM) (see Section 2.5). Paper 3 is based on a corpus of 10 go-along interviews with street artists, exploring their motivations and the metaphors they used in actual social interaction. The street artists were asked a series of questions about their backgrounds, the current situation of street art in Athens and their work as street artists. They were also asked to comment on street artworks and pieces in that particular place, and could be documented through photographs and videos. Paper 4 combines theoretical analysis and empirical data: a corpus sample of 45 street artworks with narrative potential gathered during the years of ethnographic research undertaken in Athens at different periods between 2015 and 2018. Theoretically, I propose a definition of narrative

that is shown to be compatible with MSM, and the crucial distinction between primary and secondary narrativity (see Section 2.6), applied to five images (three street artworks and two cartoons).

In the following section, I take a closer look at the key features of cognitive semiotic methodology and methods used in the thesis in turn.

### 3.1 Cognitive semiotic methodology and its phenomenological bedrock

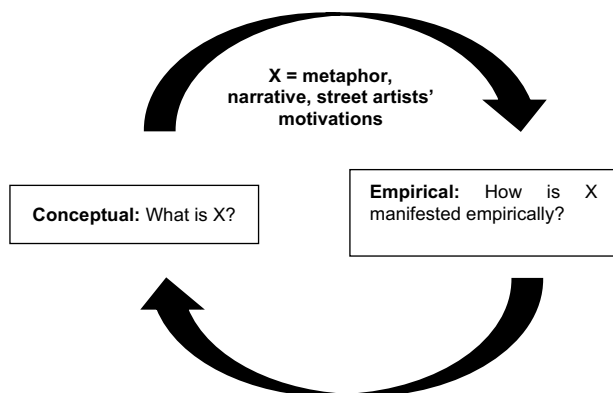
As pointed out in Section 2.1, cognitive semiotics can be seen as “the transdisciplinary field utilizing theories and methods from semiotics, linguistics, cognitive science as well as anthropology and philosophy” (Zlatev, 2015, p. 1044). With its focus on a wide range of research, from semiotic development in children, intersemiotic translation and cognitive semiotic evolution, to metaphor, narrative and polysemiotic communication, it is indispensable for cognitive semiotics researchers to employ an array of models and methods. On the most general level, there are two main cognitive semiotic methodological principles: the *conceptual-empirical loop* (Zlatev, 2009) and *pheno-methodological triangulation* (Pielli & Zlatev, 2020).

First, the conceptual-empirical loop between experience-driven conceptual explication and empirical investigation can be seen as special case of the well-known hermeneutic circle, combined with insights from phenomenology. The main principle is to begin conceptual analysis of any given phenomenon (such as metaphor and narrative) with as few preconceptions and assumptions as possible, and to reach a fuller understanding of this phenomenon by applying iterations of conceptual, empirical and theoretical analysis.

Like traditional semiotics, cognitive semiotics investigates loaded philosophical questions such as *What is X?*, with X corresponding to complex notions such as meaning, language, gesture, empathy, metaphor, etc. At the same time, like cognitive science, linguistics and other fields such as anthropology or ethnography, it typically conducts specific empirical studies, asking: *How is X manifested empirically?* By iterating between such “what” and “how” questions, the goal is to clarify the concepts we started with, and in this way, to provide more adequate answers to the philosophical questions that we would not be able to do if only limited to the conceptual side. The cognitive semiotic claim is that only within such a loop can we approach empirical data (in our case, (a) corpora of street artworks with figurative and narrative potentials and (b) interviews with street artists) in an open-minded and yet theoretically informed way.



This cognitive semiotic principle is applied in all four papers included in the thesis and is schematically illustrated in Figure 3.1.<sup>38</sup>



**Figure 3.1** The conceptual-empirical loop applied to this thesis (adapted from Zlatev, 2015, p. 1058).

Second, cognitive semiotics structures the application of its various kinds of qualitative and quantitative methods by using a schema (see Table 3.2) of three idealized kinds of methods, which is characterized by the type of perspective the researcher takes to the data: (a) first-person method (1PM) such as conceptual analysis (in essence, the systematic analysis of intuitions and individual judgements), (b) second-person method (2PM) such as empathy (implicit in all social interaction), and (c) third-person method (3PM) based on observation (such as the quantification, based on controlled experiments or statistical analysis). The central point is to combine all three kinds of methods in a single project, as performed in the studies presented in Papers 1 and 3, and to some degree in Papers 2 and 4 (see Table 3.1).

<sup>38</sup> The conceptual-empirical loop has been central for recent cognitive semiotic research on intersemiotic translation (Güneş, 2017), iconicity in music (Giraldo, 2020), polysemiotic narratives (Louhema et al., 2020), choice awareness and manipulation (Mouratidou, 2020), audio description (Diget, 2019), non-actual motion expressions in language and gesture (Brink Andersen, 2020), and metaphor (Devyllder & Zlatev, 2020; Moskaluk, 2020; Torstensson, 2019).

**Table 3.2** Pheno-methodological triangulation: three phenomenological perspectives with corresponding methods applied to this thesis (adapted from Zlatev, 2015, p. 1059).

Perspectives	Methods such as	Used in
<b>First-person (1PM)</b>	Conceptual and intuition-based analysis	Individual judgements
<b>Second-person (2PM)</b>	Empathy and intersubjectivity	Social interaction
<b>Third-person (3PM)</b>	Quantification	Statistical analysis (measurements)

But why is pheno-methodological triangulation crucial for the present thesis in particular? First, the ability to conduct conceptual and intuition-based analysis (e.g., Itkonen, 2008; Zlatev & Blomberg, 2019) is essential for identifying metaphors and other rhetorical figures in street art (Paper 1). Second, it is essential for developing a synthetic account of metaphor (Paper 2). Third, it was used for assigning codes, developing a coding scheme and identifying candidate metaphors in verbal passages (Paper 3). Fourth, it was a prerequisite for answering the question if street artworks can indeed narrate and under which conditions (Paper 4).

Another important aspect of cognitive semiotics that is methodologically central is empathy and intersubjectivity, allowing social interaction among analysts or between analysts and external evaluators (Paper1), or spontaneous dialogue between researcher-interviewer and street artist-interviewee or between the analysts themselves (Paper 3). Finally, while quantification provides a more detached and “objective” perspective on the data (Papers 1 and 3), it would not have been possible without the prior use of 1PM and 2PM perspectives.

This primacy of “experience over experiments” is key aspect of the methodology of phenomenology: the philosophical school founded by Edmund Husserl in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and developed by other thinkers such as Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (e.g., Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008). The phenomenological tradition emphasizes the study of human experience and how things are “given” to us in consciousness (Sokolowski, 2000, p. 2). In other words, it is based on “the careful description of what appears to consciousness precisely in the manner of its appearing” (Moran, 2005, p. 1). One could say that the basic phenomenological idea is to depart from the experience itself, and to provide descriptions of the phenomena of the world, including ourselves and others, as true to experience as possible.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> For a discussion of other methods for studying human experience and other cognitive phenomena in empirical research, see Aspers (2009) and Jack and Roepstorff (2003).

The point of departure for many phenomenological approaches is the notion of the *life world* (the English translation of the German term *Lebenswelt*), which is both shared by all human beings, and contains regions that are specific to different cultures, as discussed by Abram (1996):

The life-world is the world of our immediately lived experience, as we live it, prior to all our thoughts about it. It is that which is present to us in our everyday tasks and enjoyments—reality as it engages us before being analyzed by our theories and our science [...] [t]he life world may be quite different for different cultures. The world that a people experiences and comes to count on is deeply influenced by the ways they live and engage that world. The members of any given culture necessarily inhabit an experienced world very different from that of another culture with a very different language and way of life (pp. 40-41).

Since we can only perform analyses from within such a life world, where others are embodied subjects like ourselves, 1PM and 2PM have primacy in pheno-methodological triangulation, as emphasized by Husserl (1973, p. 211), quoted in Zahavi (2015):

to adopt the second-person perspective is to engage in a subject-subject (you-me) relation where I am aware of the other and, at the same time, implicitly aware of myself in the accusative, as attended to or addressed by the other (p. 12).

In this thesis, I build upon the phenomenological bedrock of cognitive semiotics and in the following briefly discuss the methods that I used in the papers.

## 3.2 Cognitive semiotic methods

In the following sub-sections, I describe the methods employed in each paper in more detail. The way that this section is organized allows the reader to grasp one of the main contributions of this thesis, namely the pheno-methodological triangulation grounded in intuition-based, empathy-based and quantification-based analysis.

### 3.2.1 Conceptual and intuition-based analysis

The study presented in Paper 1 investigated if and how two independent analysts with different linguistic and sociocultural backgrounds can independently decide on which expressions are metaphorical based on their intuitive, but nevertheless systematic, judgements. This paper drew methodologically on my empirical data gathered during three years of ethnographic research undertaken in Athens at different periods between 2015 and 2017, as well as archival research. The study focused on the identification and interpretation of metaphors and other rhetorical figures in 50 street artworks, and looked at how two independent analysts can agree (a) in distinguishing metaphorical from broadly rhetorical images and (b) on the analysis of metaphors in street art, given that the analysts were provided with the same operational procedure to be applied to selected street artworks from the corpus sample. See Section 3.3 for further discussion of different metaphor identification procedures in language and beyond, as well as the operational procedures for metaphor analysis introduced in Papers 1 and 3.

Paper 2 discussed the complex phenomenon of metaphor synthetically, proposing an approach that can help us to seek convergences instead of divergences among long-standing debated issues in metaphor research in cognitive linguistics and semiotics by using a consistent terminology, informed by cognitive semiotics. The discussion in the paper employed the conceptual-empirical loop as follows: after asking the pre-theoretical question *what is metaphor (in street art)?*, it proceeded with empirical investigation (reported findings of Paper 1) before returning to the concept of metaphor with clarifications and improvements (see Section 2.5 for an elaborate discussion).

The study presented in Paper 3 explored Athenian street artists' experiences and motivations (on the basis of audio-recorded interviews) that motivated their art-making and the verbal metaphors they used in actual social interaction to make sense of these motivations. In order to analyze the interview transcripts, I used my own intuitions, knowledge and expertise systematized by writing memos (fieldnotes). Memo-writing is a systematic way to document reflections and capture emerging ideas in the process of collecting and analyzing data and to keep track of the development of the coding process. From a phenomenological perspective, memo-writing is important as it helps the researchers to develop their awareness of previous prejudices and to be open to the data facilitating reflexivity (e.g., McGhee et al., 2007). In other words, we first "bracket" our previous understandings, past knowledge and assumptions about the phenomenon in question so as to focus on the phenomenon in the manner of its appearing, thus minimizing their influence on the findings. In order to answer the second research question concerning the street artists' metaphors produced in social interaction, we opted for an operationalization of the theoretical definition of metaphor (see Section 2.5) in the form of a step-wise procedure (see sub-section 3.3.2).

The study presented in Paper 4 contextualized the conceptual-empirical loop as follows: First, the questions *what is narrative?* and *what is narrativity?* in relation to static images were asked, and in order to satisfactorily answer these, an empirical analysis was conducted. Similar to the study presented in Paper 1, the analysis in Paper 4 drew on a corpus sample of 45 street artworks, which is publicly accessible on the Open Science Framework (OSF) at <https://osf.io/nykr6/>. Key insights from different narratological theories were then introduced. Thereafter, the empirical investigation anticipated how narratives manifest themselves in street art (and more generally). Finally, the heavily ambiguous notions of narrative and narrativity were re-evaluated by answering the conceptual questions, as the end-point of the loop. On this basis, the conclusion was drawn that single static images can be able to narrate and be interpreted as narrations, but *only if* the underlying story is known, which lies at the core of the Sedimented level of the Motivation & Sedimentation Model. Having said that, MSM, as discussed in Sections 2.5 (in relation to metaphor) and 2.6 (in relation to narrative), should be conceived as the overarching conceptual framework for analyzing both metaphor and narrative in this thesis.

### 3.2.2 Empathy and intersubjectivity

The study presented in Paper 1 focused on the identification and interpretation of figurative constructions in street art. The independent analysis conducted by the two authors was reported on spreadsheets in batches of 12-15 images at a time in four rounds of annotation. After each batch was fully analyzed, we met, discussed agreements and disagreements in our analyses and negotiated our judgements, before proceeding to the analysis of the next batch. During the meetings, we took notes of the problems encountered, including possible divergent interpretations. However, in order to estimate the extent to which we agreed on the identification and interpretation of metaphorical street artworks, we invited two external evaluators (annotators) to appraise the content of our independent analyses. In particular, we talked independently with them in order to inform them about the scope of the study, the protocols for the analyses and the procedure that we used (as authors of the paper) to analyze the images. Thereafter, we asked them to evaluate our judgements for every step of the procedure. This part of the method is discussed in larger detail in the paper, but in short, what we aimed for with this additional step of interpersonal communication with two external evaluators was to: collect binary judgments (“YES” or “NO”) on the type of information we had identified during our analyses and interpretations of the metaphorical street artworks, as exemplified in Table 3.3.

**Table 3.3** Protocols used to collect binary data from external evaluators.

Image 1	Image ID	TOPIC	EXPRESSION (what looks strange and what we expect to see instead as replacement)	CONCEPTUALIZATION (what is the metaphor)	COMMUNICATION (message of the street artwork)
	Analyst 1	woman	halo, red shoes, bag with euro to be replaced with no halo, normal shoes, baby Jesus or baby in general	money stands for sacred entity, EU sign stands for EU, shoes stand for Greece	40 years of Debtocracy in Greece made money a holy entity
	Analyst 2	woman with a bag of euro money	woman with halo, 40 years, euro sign, red shoes, bag with euro / no halo, replacement: just bag without Euro sign, normal shoes, bag is baby Jesus	Euro sign stands for European Monetary Union, EU bag stands for Jesus halo stands for saint or Mary, blue stands for Greece, red stands for blood (Polytechnic Uprising)	European Monetary Union is bag, Mary is woman with halo, bag is Greek debt of 40 years
	External evaluator 1	YES	NO	NO	NO
	External evaluator 2	YES	NO	NO	NO

The main method of the study presented in Paper 3 was 10 go-along interviews with Athenian street artists, in which the researcher-interviewer takes on an empathetic 2PM perspective.<sup>40</sup> In the context of this method, street artists were encouraged to walk (and in one case, drive) together with me and to discuss their work, in conjunction with photographic documentation, conducted in a careful and considerate way (for a discussion on go-along interviews as an ethnographic method see Section 3.4). The interviews gave rise to relatively spontaneous dialogue between myself and each street artist, allowing both of us to reflect on the topics at hand, and for the street artists to appear as experts and not as “research subjects” (Giorgi, 1989).

The view of participants as experts in the field refers to the *participatory method of research*, in which street artists were involved in several activities in different

<sup>40</sup> The go-along helped obtain contextualized real-time perspectives focusing on others’ practices, facilitating a “talk-as-you-walk” manner (Garcia et al., 2012) as opposed to a sit-down and room-based interview. The go-along can be conducted as a “walk-along” (i.e., conducted while walking), a “ride-along” (i.e., conducted while driving), or a “mixed” form combining the former two types (Kusenbach, 2003).

research phases, such as: they suggested where and when the interview would take place, led the interviews as being the experts with first-hand knowledge of the field, shared key characteristics of their street art life world and, most significantly, participated actively in the analysis by commenting on and clarifying ideas in preliminary versions of the verbal transcriptions and their subsequent summaries. As the aim was the co-generation of knowledge during the interaction of the interviewer and interviewee, Zahavi and Martiny (2019) rightfully parallelize the phenomenological aspect of the go-along interview with the Socratic midwifery: “the task of the interviewer had more in common with a kind of Socratic midwifery, i.e., it was a question of helping the interviewee to obtain new insights of his or her own” (Zahavi & Martiny, 2019, p. 152). In relation to the second research question of the study, how the artists express such experiences and motivations through verbal metaphors when asked to discuss their work, we (as authors of the paper) agreed upon operationalizations of the theoretical definition of metaphor, as noted before, in order to ensure the intersubjective validity of the study. The analysis was conducted in three rounds, with sessions in between to compare our judgements and discuss any disagreements. With respect to 2PM, we first discussed our discrepancies in relation to our systematic intuitions and then our final judgements were negotiated in order to reach near-perfect agreement, as further discussed in the next sub-section.

### 3.2.3 Quantification

The study presented in Paper 1 showed that once the 50 images were analyzed, following a step-wise procedure (see sub-section 3.3.2), a first inter-rater agreement test was performed to measure the degree of agreement between us (as authors and independent analysts) on which street artworks were metaphorical and which were not. An informative measurement of inter-rater reliability is the so-called *kappa scores*.<sup>41</sup> In this study, we used Cohen’s kappa, which is typically used for agreement between two analysts. In this first round of the analysis, we achieved a substantial “almost perfect” agreement ( $\kappa = .865$ ), deciding that 32 out of 50 street artworks were metaphorical. In the second round of the analysis, the external evaluators also displayed a high level of agreement on whether we provided the same or different interpretations of the previously identified metaphorical images. More discussion on this, including qualitative explanations of the kappa scores in

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<sup>41</sup> Inter-rater reliability tests are statistical tests used to measure the degree of agreement among independent raters. The degree of agreement between independent analysts is measured with statistical tests that generate scores ranging from 0 to 1 (usually called kappa scores, referring to the specific measure named Cohen’s kappa, indicated by  $\kappa$ ). The higher the score, the more the analyses are deemed to be reliable, and therefore replicable. By convention, scores above 0.7 indicate strong agreement, while scores between 0.5 and 0.7 indicate moderate agreement. Please note that the interpretation of kappa scores in this thesis is based on suggestions by Landis and Koch (1977, p. 165).

both rounds of the analysis, is provided in Paper 1. The data and analytical procedures of the reliability tests reported in this paper are publicly accessible on the Open Science Framework (OSF) at <https://osf.io/jrv5k/>. Further details about the methodology and procedure are given in the paper.

The study presented in Paper 3, as already discussed in the previous sub-section, applied an MSM-based procedure to a small sample selection of 101 verbal passages with candidate metaphors. The analysis was carried out in three rounds, with two sessions in between to discuss any discrepancies among our individual judgements (as authors and independent analysts). After our first independent round of analysis, the results already showed strong general agreement, with only 10 cases of disagreement. It is worth noting that our general (preliminary) agreement (pre-negotiation rate of agreement 91%) might not have been reached if we had analyzed these verbal passages without applying an MSM-based procedure that we had already discussed and corroborated. In the second round of the analysis, we both agreed that only 4 out of 101 (post-negotiation rate of agreement 97%) passages were non-metaphorical. The steps of the procedure, discussed in sub-section 3.3.2, thus resulted in almost unanimous agreement. In the third and last round of the analysis, we categorized these 97 out of 101 identified metaphorical passages as being motivated by the Embodied and Sedimented levels of MSM in relation to their potential metaphoricity (see Section 2.5), using the procedure and a number of criteria described in detail in the paper. We agreed in 94 out of 97 of the cases. We may visualize the three rounds of the analysis as in Figure 3.2, using the procedure and criteria described in Section 2.4.

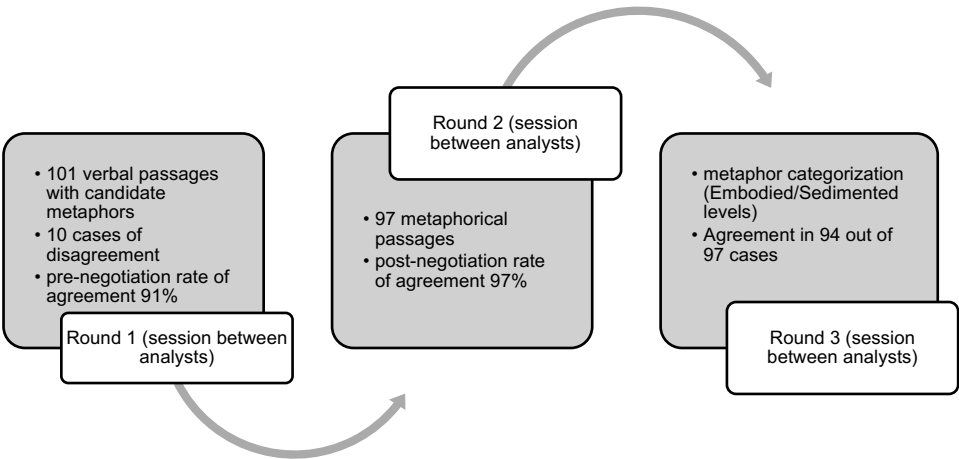


Figure 3.2 Metaphor analysis and categorization in three rounds (Paper 3).



Section 3.3 discusses another matter elaborated extensively in the thesis (particularly in Papers 1 and 3), which is how analysts can identify metaphors in language and beyond by employing reliable and operational procedures.

### 3.3 Metaphor identification procedures

In sub-section 3.3.1, I give an overview of the most commonly used metaphor identification procedures applied to language and other semiotic systems in the last decades, with an emphasis on some of their limitations. In sub-section 3.3.2, I move towards describing and briefly explaining the two distinct analysis procedures adopted in this thesis. First, in Paper 1, for the identification and interpretation of (verbo-) pictorial rhetorical figures (focusing on metaphors) in a sample of street artworks, and second, in Paper 3, for the analysis of metaphors in a sample of verbal passages extracted from the corpus of 10 go-along interviews with street artists.

#### 3.3.1 Metaphor identification procedures in language and beyond

In general, researchers have come to an agreement that metaphor may be found in various semiotic systems beyond language, including gesture and depiction (e.g., Forceville & Uriós-Aparisi, 2009; Gibbs, 2008). However, despite this general agreement, there is still a lack of consensus on the ways that metaphor can be empirically identified and studied in those different semiotic systems. In addition, there is also the conceptual issue: when we speak about “metaphor,” do we mean the same thing? As pointed out in Section 2.4, this does not seem to be so in many cases. Therefore, two crucial methodological questions naturally arise:

- How can analysts decide, in a reliable way, that a given expression is used metaphorically?
- How can this analysis be performed in a precise, empirical and intersubjectively valid way and at the same time make sure that it corresponds to a sound theoretical definition of metaphor?

Given the need for intersubjectively valid criteria to decide what metaphor is and where it can be found, recent research has prompted a number of metaphor scholars to propose a wide range of procedures for identifying metaphors in *language* (e.g., Cameron, 2003; Charteris-Black, 2004; Kittay, 1984; Pragglejazz Group, 2007; Steen et al., 2010), *depiction* (e.g., Bort-Mir, 2019; Bort-Mir et al., 2020; Forceville, 2009; Müller & Kappelhoff, 2018; Pérez-Sobrino & Ford, 2020; Phillips & McQuarrie, 2004; Šorm & Steen, 2018) and *gesture* (e.g., Cienki, 2017).

Starting with the first set of procedures, a preliminary attempt at a procedure for identifying metaphors in language was suggested by Kittay (1984) (Nacey et al.,

2019). This procedure lists a number of criteria that need to be met in order for a *word* to be annotated as a metaphor. One of the suggested criteria is that “the utterance, taken along with its context, displays a discernible oddity or (...) is announced to be metaphorical” (Kittay, 1984, p. 190). The term “discernible oddity” may correspond to the notions of incongruity, discrepancy or contrast between the multiple meanings of two expressions, as has been later adopted by other procedures applied to language and beyond. Notably, Kittay’s procedure has not been tested empirically and did not manage to have a considerable impact on metaphor studies.

At the turn of the millennium, more recent metaphor identification procedures applied to language attracted a good amount of attention from metaphor researchers, including the procedures developed and introduced by Cameron (2003) and Charteris-Black (2004). Cameron’s (2003) identification procedure, which is known as *Metaphor Identification through Vehicle terms* (MIV), is directed towards the assumption that with “metaphor characterized as seeing one thing in terms of another, a Vehicle term points to the ‘another.’ It contrasts with the ongoing discourse topic, yet connects and makes a kind of sense” (Cameron, 2018, p. 23). Cameron’s work represents the Discourse Dynamics approach to metaphor, as discussed previously in sub-section 2.4.1, which acknowledges the dynamics of talk in spoken discourse and dialogue in actual social interaction (for a full description of the procedural steps, see Cameron & Maslen, 2010). Charteris-Black’s (2004) identification procedure involves a careful reading of a small sample of text with the aim of meeting specific criteria that need to be met in order to identify metaphor, specifically “the presence of incongruity or semantic tension—either at linguistic, pragmatic, or cognitive levels—resulting from a shift in domain use even if this shift occurred sometime before and has since become conventionalized” (Charteris-Black, 2004, p. 35).

In 2000, ten metaphor researchers, here listed alphabetically—Alan Cienki, Alice Deignan, Elena Semino, Gerard Steen, Graham Low, Joseph Grady, Lynne Cameron, Peter Crisp, Ray Gibbs and Zoltán Kövecses—coming from different research disciplines and theoretical perspectives, yet with a common interest in metaphor, joined forces and formed a metaphor group, which later became known as the Pragglejaz Group (Steen, 2002).<sup>42</sup> The main goal was to bring together different views and ideas around metaphor in order to complement each other and reach a consensus about a reliable and ecologically valid procedure for identifying metaphors both in written language and in spoken discourse corpora. The group collaborated for six years before publishing the protocol in 2007, as *Metaphor Identification Procedure* (MIP), which is also known as the Pragglejaz procedure (Pragglejaz Group, 2007). The theoretical point of departure was the acknowledgement of Lakoff and Johnson’s metaphor definition as a cross-domain

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<sup>42</sup> The group’s name has been derived from the initial letters of its members’ first names: Peter, Ray, Alan, Graham, Gerard, Lynne, Elena, Joe, Alice, Zoltán.

mapping at the conceptual level (see sub-section 2.4.1), but at the same time focused on identifying specific real-life metaphorically used words in different discourse environments. In other words, MIP was not aimed at identifying the underlying “conceptual mappings,” but rather at identifying the metaphorically used words in discourse (Pragglejaz Group, 2007, p. 1). MIP consists of a series of five steps in terms of a simple semantic test, as summarized by Greve (2018):

1. Read the text to establish a general understanding
2. Determine the lexical units in the discourse
3. Determine the basic sense of each lexical unit
4. Determine the contextual sense of each lexical unit
5. If there is a discrepancy between 3 and 4, code the lexical unit as potential metaphor (p. 314)

However, even the MIP members themselves have acknowledged certain limitations and issues concerning this procedure. One issue is that lexical units may convey metaphorical meaning, rather than longer stretches of discourse such as verbal passages or elaborate metaphorical scenarios (Pragglejaz Group, 2007, p. 2). This issue may point to the second one in relation to the time-consuming process for single researchers or small research groups to use this procedure in an efficient manner, if they have to work on a word-by-word basis. Third, MIP does not formulate explicit and precise guides for the analysts for using the dictionary when making various decisions. Fourth, and most importantly, MIP gives little match between the theoretical definition of metaphor in CMT as a cross-domain mapping at the conceptual level and its operationalization as a contrast between the basic and contextual meanings of a given lexical unit in discourse (cf. Dorst, 2011, p. 61).

MIP was refined later by Steen et al. (2010), with the development of MIPVU (MIP plus the initials of the Vrije Universiteit of Amsterdam).<sup>43</sup> The main differences between MIP and MIPVU can be found in relation to the two following aspects. First, MIPVU deals with multiword lexical units. For example, certain multiword expressions such as *and so on*, *and so forth* as well as phrasal verbs such as *look after* or *blow up* can be regarded as single lexical units in MIPVU. However, fixed idiomatic expressions such as *break the ice* or *snowball effect*, as well as prepositional verbs such as *go through* or *wait for* are still analyzed as separate lexical units (word-by-word). The tricky part here is to differentiate phrasal verbs (corresponding to one lexical unit) from prepositional verbs (corresponding to two or more lexical units) since neither the *Macmillan* nor *Longman* dictionaries used in

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<sup>43</sup> MIPVU also functioned as the bottom line for the advancement of identification procedures applied to language but beyond metaphor. For example, there is the *Verbal Irony Procedure* (VIP) developed by Burgers et al. (2011) and the *Hyperbole Identification Procedure* (HIP) developed by Burgers et al. (2016). Lastly, MIPVU has been the basis for the *Deliberate Metaphor Theory* (Steen, 2017), and the subsequent *Deliberate Metaphor Identification Procedure* (DMIP), developed by Reijnders et al. (2018).

MIPVU protocol make such a distinction. Second, MIPVU operates in the identification of two additional types of metaphor, notably *direct metaphor* and *implicit metaphor*, whereas MIP is restricted to the identification of only *indirect metaphors* (e.g., *the party is on fire*). In the case of direct metaphors, the metaphor is typically formed as a *simile* or *open and explicit comparison*, induced by metaphor signals and other co-textual cues (Steen et al., 2010, pp. 40-41 for an overview of linguistic markers; cf. Goatly, 1997) such as the preposition *like* in the form A is like B (e.g., *the COVID-19 pandemic has felt like a tornado outbreak*). In the case of implicit metaphors, the metaphor is typically formed by substitution or ellipsis, as for example “the use of demonstrative pronouns (e.g., that, this) that refer to an indirect metaphor that is used earlier in a text” (Nacey et al., 2019, p. 5) For a more elaborate description of the differences between MIP and MIPVU, see Nacey et al. (2019, pp. 4-6).<sup>44</sup>

By pulling together MIP and MIPVU, in respect to their common limitations, there are two methodological issues that are still not addressed or resolved in the latter procedure. First, the definition of what counts as a lexical unit and its correspondence to cross-domain mapping is still unclear. Second, both MIP and MIPVU are restricted to word-by-word analysis, and thus, they cannot account for longer stretches of metaphorical expressions in discourse (but only for single or multiword lexical units; see the discussion above) as, for example, with metaphorical scenarios, which is quite often the case in actual real-life discourse. In this sense, the main difference between MIV (Cameron, 2003) and MIP (Pragglejaz Group, 2007) or MIPVU (Steen et al., 2010), is that MIV is based on a discourse-dynamics approach arguing that a metaphor may extend beyond lexical units to a verbal passage, while MIP and MIPVU take the lexical unit as the unit of the analysis. An obvious limit to all these procedures, however, is that they are applied only to language.

With respect to the semiotic system of depiction, Kennedy (1982) broadly discussed metaphors in static images as intended violations or deliberate anomalies for purposeful effect that are universally recognizable, striking the image’s perceiver to grasp the violations. Kennedy (1982) introduced different types of metaphors in static images including a variety of other rhetorical figures, such as metonymy, allegory, euphemism, hyperbole, oxymoron, personification and others. Along similar lines, Whittock (1990) proposed a distinction between 10 types of metaphor in cinema (for a more detailed discussion on this literature, see Forceville, 2008). Likewise, Groupe  $\mu$  (1992) offered a cross-classification of visual rhetorical figures distinguished into those that are *present* or *absent*, and *conjoint* or *disjoint*. Later on, Sonesson (1997) introduced a semiotic model of visual rhetoric, which is inspired

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<sup>44</sup> The aim of the recently published volume, *Metaphor Identification in Multiple Languages: MIPVU Around the World* (2019), edited by S. Nacey, A. G. Dorst, T. Krennmayr and W. G. Reijnierse, is to accumulate and contextualize refinements and modifications of MIP and MIPVU across a range of different languages and language families in an attempt to minimize biases towards English.

and indebted to the Groupe  $\mu$  model, and is dissociated into four rhetorical operations. Yet all these approaches have not been pursued to their operational end.

More recently, Forceville (2008, 2009) and Phillips and McQuarrie (2004) have suggested models for metaphor identification among other rhetorical figures in particular to advertising, as well as traffic signs, comics and cartoons. In addition, the *Visual Metaphor Identification Procedure* (VISMIP) recently developed by Šorm and Steen (2018) is based on its “sister” procedure MIPVU. VISMIP focuses on identifying *visual units* that are potentially metaphorical in static images in genres such as cartoons and advertisements (for a detailed discussion on the VISMIP steps, see Šorm & Steen, 2018). VISMIP then, as its predecessors MIP and MIPVU, is not directed towards the analysis and the interpretation of the identified metaphors in single static images.

Similar to linguistic metaphor identification (MIPVU), it is important for visual metaphor identification (VISMIP) to test the need for comparison. But given that the units under study should be carefully selected and compared (Krippendorff, 2004), important questions arise: How can we define the visual units of the analysis? Are they word-like as in the case of lexical units? VISMIP includes a step leading to a division of images into separate units, which would then be understood as a counterpart to the step in MIPVU: “Determine the lexical units in the text/discourse” (Steen et al., 2010, p. 5).

However, although verbal and pictorial metaphor do resemble each other to some extent, the different properties offered by the semiotic systems of language and depiction (see Table 2.1) impose that a different set of analytical resources and methodological tools is required to study metaphor in each. In particular, in the case of (verbo-) pictorial metaphors due to their presence on the pictorial surface (compared to language), directionality is less clearly expressed and figurative constructions are often more dependent on metonymies (contiguous relations). This could be explained by the fact that, in the case of metaphors, the property of iconicity is prioritized; yet some indexical and symbolic nuances always survive (see sub-sections 2.4.2 and 2.4.3). In many ways, the field of non-verbal metaphor is still in a rudimentary stage and researchers are still struggling to find ways to improve the consistency of their frameworks in order to make their findings more generalizable.

An extension of VISMIP may be considered to be the *Filmic Metaphor Identification Procedure* (FILMIP), developed by Bort-Mir (2019). FILMIP is a seven-step filmic metaphor identification procedure that was recently used for the identification of filmic metaphors in TV commercials (Bort-Mir, 2019; Bort-Mir et al., 2020). Another procedure for analyzing cinematic metaphors in film and face-to-face interaction focusing on the temporality of meaning-making is that of CINEMET, under the novel film-analytical framework of *Cinematic Metaphor Analysis* (Müller & Kappelhoff, 2018). Unlike MIPVU-inspired procedures, it

provides a different kind of procedural steps with a focus on “macro, meso and micro levels of temporality” (Müller & Kappelhoff, 2018, pp. 229-235).

Lastly, the semiotic system of gesture has received the least attention so far in relation to metaphor identification procedures (for a background on this field of study, see Cienki & Müller, 2008). Nevertheless, one recent publication that has been brought to my attention is that of *Metaphor Identification Guidelines for Gesture* (MIG-G), developed by Cienki (2017), and this should be added to the list of MIPVU-inspired derivatives.

After this long summary of identification procedures applied to language and beyond, and raising some of their limitations and potential methodological issues, it is time to shift our attention to the metaphor analysis procedures developed in this thesis, and in particular to those described in Papers 1 and 3.

### 3.3.2 Metaphor analysis procedures in the thesis

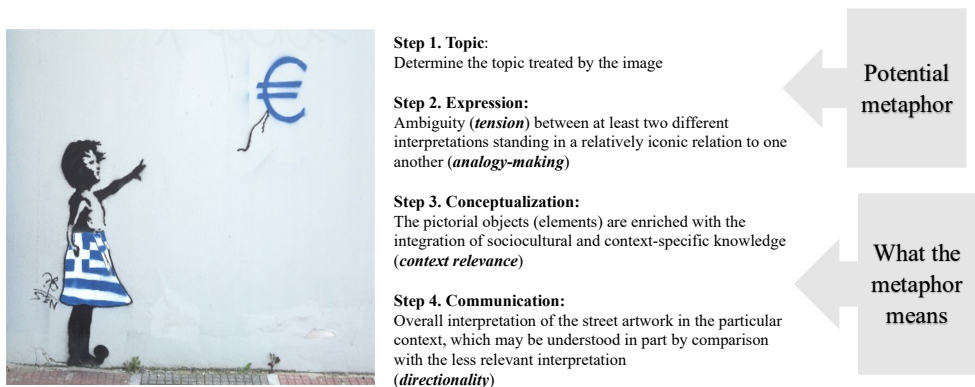
My aim in this sub-section is to discuss and contextualize the need for the development of two metaphor analysis procedures for the scope of this thesis. The more general aim is to suggest two systematic and step-by-step procedures, one applied to the sign system of language and the other to depiction, for identifying and interpreting metaphors and other rhetorical figures in street art (Paper 1), and for identifying and interpreting verbal passages with candidate metaphors in actual discourse (Paper 3), in order to yield more synthetic analyses and firm results, which can be possibly replicated by other researchers.

As noted, in the study presented in Paper 1, we analyzed a sample of 50 street artworks by applying a step-wise procedure to each image. The procedure relied on Steen’s (2008, 2011) three-dimensional model of metaphor, according to which metaphors are phenomena that involve the dimensions of *Language, Thought and Communication* (see sub-section 2.4.1). Extending this model beyond language to visual metaphor processing (Šorm & Steen, 2013) raises further challenges, given that the original definitions and procedural instructions were formulated explicitly for language.

Šorm and Steen (2013) proposed a theoretical model of visual metaphor processing, with the identification of three broad categories involved in the processing of visual metaphors. These categories are (a) *incongruity perception* (what seems strange/weird in a given image, such as colors, shapes and objects, thus identifying the pictorial incongruity within the image), (b) *incongruity resolution* (attempt for resolution of the previously identified incongruity by means of replacement) and (c) *contextual processing* (if and how the given image can influence our contextual interpretation).

In this sense, Steen’s three-dimensional model has inspired the development of the VISMIP procedure with three subsequent levels of *expression*, *conceptualization* and *communication*, specifically for the identification of metaphors in single static images. However, as highlighted in the previous sub-section, both MIPVU and VISMIP have been developed as metaphor *identification* procedures, rather than as procedures that can be used to analyze and interpret metaphors in language and depiction, which basically means that they deliver only binary judgements: YES, the image can be marked as metaphorical, or NO, the image cannot be marked as metaphorical.

Inspired by the work and reflections of the proponents of existing protocols for verbal metaphors (MIP, Praggeljaz Group, 2007; and MIPVU, Steen et al., 2010), we formulated a step-wise procedure to identify and *interpret* metaphors and other rhetorical figures in a sample corpus of street art. Since our primary goal in Paper 1 was to analyze and interpret (verbo-) pictorial figurative constructions in street art, we opted for developing our own data-driven procedure, rather than straightforwardly using the VISMIP procedure. Our four-step procedure, presented in Figure 3.3, is therefore only informed by VISMIP, and the three-dimensional model of metaphor (Steen, 2008, 2011), but it clearly incorporates cognitive semiotic theory and tests its assumptions, going beyond the ambiguous and problematic notion of “visual units” as discussed in the previous sub-section 3.3.1.



**Figure 3.3** Exemplification of a complex metaphorical street artwork analyzed in Paper 1 representing the step-wise procedure for metaphor identification and interpretation.

In order to make a connection between the step-wise procedure visualized in Figure 3.3 and the three levels of the Motivation & Sedimentation Model (MSM), the Embodied level, the Sedimented level and the Situated level, we may highlight that while agreeing on what the image is about (*Step 1: Topic*), and what the incongruities and their replacements were (*Step 2: Expression*), the identification of metaphor (*Step 3: Conceptualization*) and its pragmatic interpretation (*Step 4: Communication*) remained subject to variability. These results suggested that Topic

and Expression are more general aspects, based on universal features of human perception and widely shared knowledge (Embodied level), while the dimensions of Conceptualization and Communication are more socioculturally and contextually influenced. In other words, the shared sociocultural knowledge (Sedimented level) and contextual information such as knowledge of the sociopolitical context (Situated level) affected the way we conceptualized these metaphors and how we made sense of their pragmatic message. Similar results have been recently found in a study focusing on metaphors and metonymies in advertising (Pérez-Sobrino & Ford, 2020): it was easier for two independent analysts to agree on the figurative potential than on the actual interpretation of given rhetorical images. Further details about the cognitive semiotic methodology and procedure are given in Papers 1 and 2, and also in their summaries, provided in Sections 4.1 and 4.2, respectively.

Turning now to the study presented in Paper 3, we opted to develop an operational five-step procedure for metaphor identification and categorization in verbal passages, inspired by the *Discourse Dynamics* approach (e.g., Cameron, 2018; Musolff, 2006, 2016) going beyond the word-by-word analysis and at the same time matching with the MSM-based theoretical definition of metaphor introduced in Section 2.5. Word-by-word identification procedures such as MIP and MIPVU discussed in the previous sub-section, which focus on the lexical units as the units for the analysis, are not suitable for identifying metaphorical expressions that extend over phrases or longer stretches of text, as was the case in Paper 3. In short, after a series of joint theoretical and precoding sessions, we set about individually analyzing the selected interview transcripts using the operational procedure that was formulated as follows:

1. Listen to the audio recordings and read the transcribed interviews multiple times to get a sense of the overall meaning.
2. Look for verbal passages containing expressions that have at least two potential interpretations.
3. Code them as “verbal passages with candidate metaphors” in ATLAS.ti and include them in an Excel coding sheet.
4. Check IF:
  - a. The two potential interpretations are conflicting (*tension*)
  - b. There is general iconicity (analogy) between the two interpretations (*iconicity*)
  - c. One interpretation is more relevant in the communicative context [TOPIC] (*go-along, street art, communicative context relevance*), and
  - d. Can be understood in part by comparison with the less relevant interpretation [VEHICLE] (*directionality*)
5. The verbal passages for which the answers to 4a-4d are YES are coded as metaphorical.

In this study, steps 4a-4d (corresponding to the MSM theoretical definition of metaphor, Section 2.5) were applied to a small sample selection of 101 verbal



passages with candidate metaphors, which were independently coded in an Excel coding sheet by two analysts—the authors of Paper 3—after having agreed upon operationalizations of the theoretical definition of metaphor, as discussed in subsection 3.2.3. The goal was to test if the expressions marked as candidate metaphors met the requirements of *tension* (4a), *iconicity* (4b), *context relevance* (4c) and *directionality* (4d).

To illustrate the procedural steps, consider example (10).

- (10) This reminds me of the Disneyland train (railroad). Within a minute's journey you have experienced situations that you would have never even imagined before what they would be. So, with the help of poetry and street art painting, you may travel with your mind for a long time afterwards. It is that very element that will intrigue you. It will catch your attention.

(Go-along 2, my translation)

Given that this is an excerpt of a transcript of a go-along interview with a street artist, it should be understood as a commentary on the street artist's personal experiences and practices in urban space. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the street artist, as a practitioner in urban space (metaphorically the artist's own studio), is the Topic of the metaphor, which is here construed via the contextually "less relevant" interpretation of a Disneyland train, which is the Vehicle.<sup>45</sup>

Having identified and agreed upon the metaphorical expressions in the data and having read the transcripts several times, we achieved considerable familiarity with them. The task of post-coding discussion involved classifying the metaphorical expressions according to two dimensions—motivation by the Embodied level and motivation by the Sedimented level of meaning-making, as dimensions of the MSM model discussed in Section 2.5. The relationship between these two dimensions was important for operationalizing the notion of potential metaphoricity as a scalar notion, which according to MSM accounts for the scale of *innovativeness*. In particular, the difference between innovative and conventional metaphors lies in the proportions of motivation by the Embodied and the Sedimented levels, respectively (Moskaluk, 2020). At the same time, it should be noted that these two kinds of motivations can also be complementary (for more discussion on potential metaphoricity, see the last part of Section 2.5).

In other words, metaphorical expressions that (a) were accompanied by "metaphorical flags" and typically represented by similes (direct metaphors), as described by Steen (2015), or (b) were explicit and extended metaphorical chains

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<sup>45</sup> The terms "Topic" and "Vehicle" are capitalized here because they relate to metaphor interpretations following Cameron (2018, p. 19) in analyzing metaphor in spoken discourse.

that clearly display active analogy-making and tension between two interpretations were coded as Embodied-level motivated. On the other hand, metaphorical expressions that (c) were found in dictionaries and corpus searches as socially shared conventions in the community or (d) were quite frequently used in the interview transcripts as local knowledge were considered as Sedimented-level motivated. Further details about the operational procedure and criteria for categorizing metaphorical expressions are given in Paper 3.

To summarize, the “systematic use of intuition and interpersonal corroboration” (Devyllder & Zlatev, 2020, p. 255) lies at the core of both metaphor procedures presented briefly in this sub-section. A common objection and critique to this is that intuition is said to not be a reliable method (e.g., Cienki, 2008). However, in fact, intuition as interpreted from the perspective of cognitive semiotics, is not a “subjective” method, such as introspection (or else guesswork), but instead is intersubjective (e.g., Itkonen, 2008; Zlatev, 2016), as emphasized in phenomenology, and acknowledged by the principle of pheno-methodological triangulation presented in Section 3.1. On this basis, our methodological approach to metaphor identification, interpretation and categorization can be said to rely on systematic, methodical and intersubjective intuition-based analysis.

In the next section, I move on to the discussion on my fieldwork that provided the data for all four papers included in the thesis. As can be glimpsed from the Introduction, my work relies on extensive ethnographic research in the street art scene of Athens that stretches from 2014 to 2018. Section 3.4 discusses how I gained access to the participants’ experiences, insights and motivations in situ by assuming an empathetic second-person perspective.

### 3.4 Ethnography

Ethnography is a research tradition that involves a series of qualitative techniques and strategies of social investigation. At its core are fieldwork research and participant observation (for a review on the variation and complexity of ethnographic fieldwork research from an anthropological perspective, e.g., Robben & Sluka, 2012). Due to the central role played by the researcher in the conducting of an ethnographic study, it is important for ethnographers to spend some periods of time in the field, first familiarizing themselves and subsequently winning the trust of the members of the studied group of people. In other words, following Pink (2011), ethnography may be understood as:

a process of creating and representing knowledge (about society, culture and individuals) that is based on ethnographers’ own experiences. It does not claim to produce an objective or truthful account of reality, but should aim to offer versions of ethnographers’ experiences of reality that are as loyal as possible to the *context*,

*negotiations and intersubjectivities* through which the knowledge was produced. This may entail *reflexive, collaborative or participatory* methods (pp. 21-22, emphasis added).

Movement in ethnographic research is not in itself a new phenomenon. As Kusenbach (2018) points out, walking in the field was quite widespread in ethnographic literature throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a number of academic contributions to contemporary discussions of walking-as-method (for a recent review, see Reed & Ellis, 2019) have sketched out the contours of a “new mobilities paradigm” (Sheller & Urry, 2006, p. 207). This may be seen as rooted in the significance of the physicality of space and the “situatedness of being in the world” (Pink, 2008). Such connections between fieldwork and walking in the field have inspired researchers from different fields to pay closer attention to a range of different techniques that emphasize the role of movement and its participatory and collaborative potentials—from interviews on-the-go to walking tours (Pink, 2008). This strengthens the ability of the researcher to build up a negotiated understanding of the research context with the guidance and expertise of the participants (e.g., Evans & Jones, 2011).

Walking is an activity that is a simple and often taken for granted, and has been rarely reported as part of a serious qualitative method, despite the fact that ethnographers do a significant amount of their work on foot (Springgay & Truman, 2018). In recent years, however, walking through and experiencing an environment such as a city has become formalized into an ethnographic method. A specific line of research in mobility studies, introduced by the work of Ingold and Vergunst (2008) on the perception of the environment through movement practices, has been defined as “walking ethnographies.” Walking—either by myself (mostly) or with research participants—played a central role in scrutinizing and familiarizing fieldwork settings. This way of following, exploring and documenting street art “from below,” or from what de Certeau (1984) refers to as a “street level perspective,” was used extensively for the present thesis.

As indicated in the Introduction, fieldwork was set in central Athens. I started researching street art in late 2014 and the beginning of 2015, conducting fieldwork in Athens for my MA thesis “Hope Wanted: Wall writing protests in times of economic crisis in Athens” (Stampoulidis, 2016a).<sup>46</sup> The first part of my fieldwork was the eight weeks I spent in the field in Athens between January 2015 and March 2015 (Fieldwork 1). The second part of my fieldwork was the eight weeks between July 2018 and September 2018 (Fieldwork 2). I made occasional returns to the field between Fieldwork 1 and Fieldwork 2 (2015 and 2018), including urban walks in

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<sup>46</sup> For my interest in graffiti and street art in Athens (and more generally) and then deciding to do research and write academically about such a phenomenon in my master’s thesis, and subsequently in my doctoral dissertation, I am indebted to *Nikos*, my student in 2013 in Athens, who was an active graffiti artist in NSK CREW.

Athens and subsequent photographic documentation of street art, as summarized in Table 3.4. While walking, I took fieldnotes, photographs and videos of street art, neighborhoods, and events that constitute everyday life in Athens, and much of this data has been used in all four papers of this thesis.

**Table 3.4** An approximate overview of time spent in the field in Athens: 24 weeks.

Year	Months	Weeks
2015	January-March	8
2016	December and August	4
2017	December and August	4
2018	July-September	8
<b>Total</b>		<b>24</b>

The focus of my research in Fieldwork 1 was to answer the question of the potential of street art to actively transform the public space into a communicative and sociopolitical arena. The data gathered during Fieldwork 1 created (a) an extensive photographic archive of street artworks with the aid of my mobile phone camera during several days of urban roaming in central Athens and (b) a compilation of eight semi-structured transcribed interviews with Athens-based street artists. Only three of these interviews were conducted face-to-face, in a café in central Athens. Of the remaining five, one was conducted via the online call service Skype and four via e-mail. The interviews were *semi-structured*, which means that they were pre-decided and the same for all participants on one level, but also allowed to vary with the flow of the conversation.

Fieldwork 2 gave me the opportunity to broaden my earlier data collection and answer research questions (that had been raised by Fieldwork 1) with the help of *go-along interviews*. The concept of go-along interviews incorporates multiple forms of movement through the city, where the ethnographer (researcher) and the research participant can engage in a relatively spontaneous dialogue that reveals diverse contextual knowledge of spaces and their functions. It is important to say that the phenomenological method discussed in Section 3.1 is relevant not only to cognitive semiotics in general, but to this thesis in particular. Phenomenological methods overlap with other adequately qualitative approaches and methods, including those of ethnography (Maso, 2001).

The characteristic of ethnography introduced before, following Pink (2011) dictates that only through intersubjective relations between the co-discussants and their research contexts we can arrive at a closer and to some extent shared understanding

of the life worlds that other people live in.<sup>47</sup> It is no surprise therefore that go-alongs have often been referred to as “street phenomenology” (Kusenbach, 2003) in the new mobilities paradigm, cutting across the social sciences and humanities.

The methodological focus of Paper 3 is on the use of go-along interviews with street artists. In this context, I talked with 10 street artists as they guided me through how they view and make use of the city in order to explore their experiences and motivations. The street artists were asked a series of questions about their backgrounds, the current situation of street art in Athens and their work as street artists. They were also asked to comment on street artworks and pieces in that particular place. Nevertheless, it should be noted that each interview was unique in terms of the actual questions asked and the freely emerged conversation between the two active participants (interviewer-interviewee). The first part (a) of the interview was kept broad, asking questions such as “*What is street art to you?*” and “*Please tell me about your experience of painting in the streets.*” Probes were along the lines of “.... and what happened next?”. With (b), questions were more focused on the participants’ experiences concerning the crisis, and with (c), on their motivations to express themselves. Nevertheless, it may be noted that street artists were not prompted to use metaphorical language, since that was an interesting and unexpected outcome of the interviewing process.

The street artists were encouraged to walk (one of them drove) together with me in conjunction with photographical documentation in the direction of creating naturalistic data. Kusenbach (2003) writes:

fieldworkers accompany individual informants on their ‘natural’ outings, and - through asking questions, listening and observing - actively explore their subjects’ stream of experiences and practices as they move through, and interact with, their physical and social environment (p. 463).

Keeping regular fieldnotes was one of the predominant ways that I used for documenting field observations. Fieldnote entries (memo-writing) were usually electronically typed after my meetings with the street artists at the end of the day. I made the decision not to take notes during our conversations, as that could potentially have a negative effect on the flow of social interaction with the artists (Bernard, 2006), let alone the technical and practical difficulties involved. Fieldnotes usually covered the key themes of the conversations that took place, as well as my experiences from the field. All interviews were audio recorded. The street artists were generally open to this, and were comfortable with having conversations audio recorded (see Section 3.6 about ethical and legal considerations).

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<sup>47</sup> For a recent discussion on how the interviewer-interviewee interactions may generate shared meanings within interview settings, see Philipps and Mrowczynski (2021).

As I seek to show in Paper 3, the go-along method emphasizes “what is the relationship between what people say and where they say it” (Evans & Jones, 2011, p. 851), and thus, it was applied to the study. One important aspect that is closely connected with what I discussed before about the phenomenological angle in interviewing is that researchers need to have a great deal of flexibility and creativity when carrying out go-alongs.

Photography and video recordings (only when the artists had agreed upon this) were also used to capture artworks and performances as well as the creation of art itself. Some artists also allowed me to digitally capture the atmospheres and aesthetics of places and spaces at specific points in time, such as in abandoned buildings or while doing art in the streets as, for example, shown in Figure 3.4.



**Figure 3.4** A still image held on a complementary video recording during an audio-recorded go-along interview with a street artist conducted by Georgios Stampoulidis.

By pulling together phenomenology and ethnography from a cognitive semiotic perspective, the go-along method is consistent with the phenomenological concerns for studying human experiences in intuition-based and empathetic ways. In sum, go-along ethnography is a specific method that combines the phenomenological potential of interviewing (2PM) with field observations taken from a first-person perspective (1PM). The main advantage of go-alongs in relation to our study in

Paper 3 lies in its combination of field observation and interviewing street artists as they are observed in situ. Further details about the go-along method and its specifics are given in Paper 3.

Since the analyses in Papers 1-4 are based on data (street artworks and interview transcripts) collected during the period of field research discussed in this section, it is natural to move on to discuss in the following sub-section how I processed the data and constructed the corpus samples used for the analysis in the papers.

### 3.5 Data collection and corpus construction

As noted above, the data I collected for the scope of this thesis during the ethnographic research comprise an extensive living archive of street artworks, field diary notes, as well as a corpus of 10 go-along interview audio recordings and their subsequent transcripts. The photographic data allowed for further reflective analysis during the process of writing this thesis. All this data has been stored securely and coded chronologically and thematically, making access to the audio, visual and written documents readily available.<sup>48</sup>

During the years of my ethnographic research, I took approximately 3000 photographs documenting a street art and its context in the streets of Athens (see Figure 1.4 in the Introduction). From these, I generated two relatively small corpus samples with figurative (Paper 1) and narrative (Paper 4) potential to be thoroughly analyzed for the scope of the studies. The selection of the images that were studied is, however, somewhat limited due to certain criteria. A number of street artworks were analyzed before the design of the samples, and only some of these were selected to be exposed and analyzed in the papers. In both cases, a number of images involving both polysemiotic (language and depiction) and monosemiotic (language or depiction) street artworks were included in order to be able to evaluate and compare the proposed procedure in Paper 1, and the narratological schemes in Paper 4, respectively. Also, my genre-related knowledge of street art as well as my interest in street art (in the context of this thesis) as a genre that expresses sociopolitical issues were taken into consideration while selecting the images for the corpus samples. Thereafter, two more criteria were respected, one for each case: For Paper 1, which drew on a sample of 50 street artworks, any image selected for the corpus

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<sup>48</sup> In accordance with EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), personal data have been pseudonymized and treated strictly confidentially. The personal data including data sets used in the thesis are securely stored in a special research project folder at Lund University (Sweden), satisfying the Swedish Archives Act's requirement to preserve and keep research documents organized. More information on this can be found here: <https://internt.ht.lu.se/en/fo/fak/ht/research-data-storage/>. A guide to the data sets with more details about the content can be found in the research project folder itself. Physical access to personal data may be denied to unauthorized persons.

should have had some rhetorical effect by displaying incongruities (verbal, pictorial, verbo-pictorial), such a representation of unexpected or incompatible elements which may trigger the viewers' attention and stimulate them to stop in their tracks and start working on an alternative (figurative) reading of the image (not necessarily metaphorical, as we show extensively in the paper). For Paper 4, on the other hand, which drew on a sample of 45 street artworks, any image selected for the analysis should have displayed single event representations that may prompt interpretation in terms of underlying stories.

In the case of the 10 go-along interviews with street artists for Paper 3, I organized them and systematically coded them using the qualitative research package ATLAS.ti (Friese, 2019). ATLAS.ti was used throughout all data processing, from organizing, querying and interpreting the transcribed interviews to elaborating reports of the findings. In other words, after uploading to a secure research project folder at Lund University and deleting the actual recordings (interview data) from the recording device, the interviews were verbatim-transcribed and checked for accuracy against the audio recordings. Then, the first step in using ATLAS.ti was to upload into the software the transcribed interviews that were to be included in the analysis, as it is discussed in the remaining parts of this section. A total of 10 WORD documents were uploaded into ATLAS.ti and later saved as a single project.

A following phase consisted of segmenting all the interview transcripts to their corresponding quotations, as shown, for example, in Figure 3.5. Given that the original language spoken was Greek, the written transcriptions used standard Greek orthography. However, I coded all the data using English, because this made it easier to communicate the coding scheme and process to an international audience, as well as to perform the joint discussions and subsequent independent analyses with my co-author. The exemplary extracts for the transcription used in the thesis were based on English translations made by myself. The Greek originals and complementary protocols used in the analyses are publicly accessible on the Open Science Framework (OSF) at <https://osf.io/pqu3c/>.



Ήταν και λίγο βανδαλισμός. Μας ενδιέφερε να καταστρέψουμε και μέσα από την καταστροφή να δημιουργηθεί κάτι νέο.

Στην Αθήνα άρχισα να βάφω σε ηλικία 14-15 ετών. Η εκτόνωση αυτή άρχισε σιγά σιγά να παίρνει μορφή. Δοκίμασα το γκράφιτι και μέρα και νύχτα, και κοντά και μακριά από το σπίτι.

Στην ηλικία των 18 ετών άρχισαν να με εμπνέουν τα εγκαταλελειμμένα. Ο χώρος που μιλάει από μόνος του. Είτε καμένος είτε κατεστραμμένος. Το να δημιουργήσω ακόμα και μία χαζή φιγούρα σε έναν εγκαταλελειμμένο χώρο, αυτό και από μόνο του εξέφραζε πέρα από τον εαυτό μου και τον ίδιο το χώρο. Με τον όρο χαζή φιγούρα εννοώ κάτι πολύ άμεσο. Κάτι το οποίο μπορεί να μην με ικανοποιούσε, χωρίς να υπάρχει μεγάλη φιλοσοφία και μελέτη από πίσω. Τα εγκαταλελειμμένα άρχισαν να γίνονται ο αγαπημένος μου χώρος.

Στη συνέχεια άρχισα να μεταφέρω αυτό το φορμάτ στους καμβάδες. Και έκανα μαύρους καμβάδες από το χρώμα των καμένων και κατεστραμμένων κτιρίων από όπου και εμπνεόμουν.

### Το κτίριο που συναντηθήκαμε

Το μπετόν τριγύρω έχει τα γκρί τα ανοιχτά και τα σκούρα, τα κίτρινα, και με τα πράσινα από πίσω είναι σαν έργο τέχνης.

### Επιφάνειες

Με εμπνέουν επιφάνειες που μπορούν και αυτές να σου δώσουν κάτι από

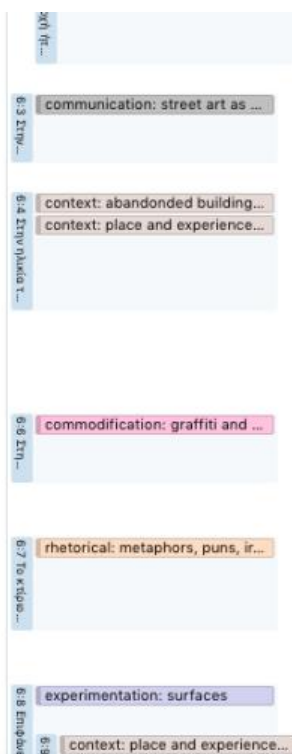


Figure 3.5 Example of segmented interview transcript in ATLAS.ti in process.

As can be seen from the screenshot in Figure 3.5, ATLAS.ti allows the analyst to assign different codes to the same quotation. Groups of codes can also be created, and each of them can be marked with a certain color so as to make the coding process faster (quick recognition of groups of codes). The coding scheme (in process) is shown in Figure 3.6.



**Figure 3.6** A screenshot of the coding scheme in ATLAS.ti in process.

To summarize, the data, analytical procedures and protocols for analysis used in the papers are openly accessible on the Open Science Framework (OSF) with respect to open science practice and securely stored in a research project folder at Lund University, satisfying the Swedish Archives Act's requirement to preserve and keep research documents organized. In the next section, I briefly highlight some of the key ethical and legal considerations that arose while researching and writing about street art with the aim to ethically allow their voices to be heard, while best protecting them from any potentially negative outcomes.

### 3.6 Ethical and legal considerations

The thesis involved work with participants in the form of go-along interviews using audio recordings. Therefore, I thoroughly considered the ethical and legal implications of the study presented in Paper 3 in terms of how to produce, handle, and present data so that the artists who participated in the project were not harmed in any possible way (e.g., Brooks, 2013; Parry & Mauthner, 2004). In this context, a two-page information letter was offered to the artists who I interviewed, giving them details about the purpose and context of the research. They were informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty, and permission for audio recording (or video recording) was also sought. They were also informed that I would handle their personal data to confidentially protect their privacy and anonymity, as requested by the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) policies. An informed letter of consent describing the research and stating their agreement not to appear with their real names or nicknames in the paper, and in the thesis in general, was signed by each and every participant.

To illustrate, there are two important considerations encountered in the study presented in Paper 3. The first consideration refers to anonymity and confidentiality. All real names as well as nicknames of the artists I met and worked with have been changed to Artist 1, Artist 2, etc. pointing to Go-along 1, Go-along 2, etc., respectively.

A second consideration has been described as “drawing the line of what I could observe as a researcher” by Hannerz (2013, p. 95). On a number of occasions, following the street artists in their natural outings, mostly during the night (see Figure 3.4), I found myself being an active observer of them practicing street art painting on somebody else’s property without their consent. This is a matter of criminal activity and *is prohibited* according to the Greek law, as shown in Figure 3.7. On the other hand, being there present in these circumstances was substantially important for the study’s aims to probe the artists’ motivations and how they experience the actual making of street art in the immediate context. It also allowed me to query them about their thoughts and feelings simultaneously without losing their trust and subsequently access in the field.



**Figure 3.7** Vandalizing of the walls is prohibited. Photograph by Georgios Stampoulidis 2019.

### 3.7 Summary

In line with its cognitive semiotic orientation, this thesis acknowledges the importance of combining first-, second-, and third-person perspectives in investigating meaning-making phenomena such as street art. As explained in Section 3.1, cognitive semiotic research involves a continuous loop between conceptual and empirical investigations, and this implies reflecting upon the ways in which this thesis enriched our understanding of figurative and narrative interpretations of street art.

As detailed in this chapter, the thesis uses a multi-method research design, highlighting the sociopolitical context in which the research took place. This type of research design offers a number of merits and strengths, as each method for data collection and analysis offers a unique perspective to study the complex phenomena of metaphors and narratives in street art. The qualitative and quantitative methods employed in the papers included in the thesis allow us to draw a general picture of the figurative and narrative potentials of street art, on the one hand, and on the other,

to investigate street artists' motivations and metaphors used in actual social interaction.

The different methods used in the thesis not only provide a vantage point from which to explore street art from a cognitive semiotic perspective, but also inform and complement each other, building a more complete picture of the phenomena in question. This is the main benefit of the multimethod cognitive semiotic research design adopted and developed in the present thesis. Finally, from the street art perspective, the approach taken allowed me to understand it as a significant means for expression and communication in an era of sociopolitical and economic crisis.

## 4 Summaries of papers

This chapter provides a brief summary of the papers included in the thesis. The summary of each paper below is restricted to the key theoretical foundations, methodological considerations and main findings.

### 4.1 Summary of Paper 1

As discussed in the Introduction, one of the aims of this thesis was to investigate if and how independent analysts can decide, in a reliable, transparent and intersubjectively valid way, that a given expression is used metaphorically in the semiotic system of language and depiction. Thus, the study addressed the first of the four main research questions outlined in Chapter 1, offering a methodological contribution.

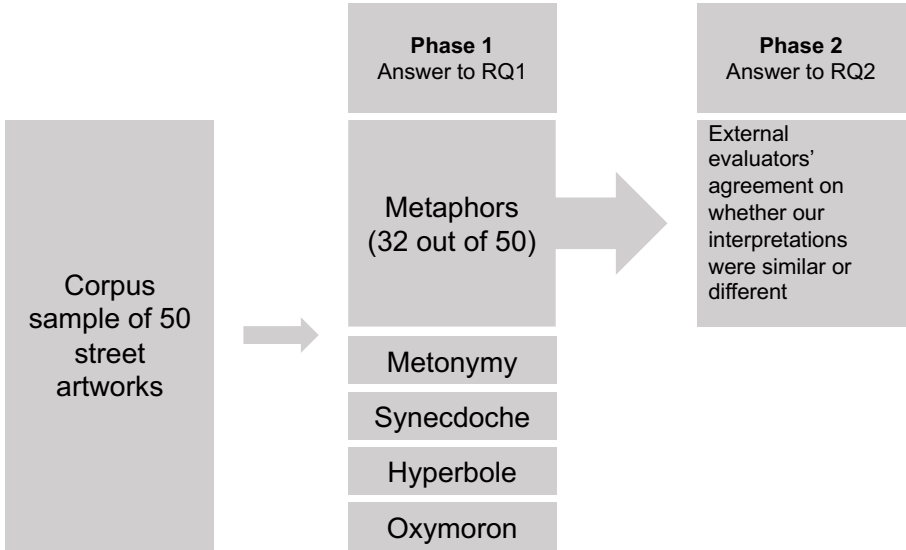
Research on (verbo-) pictorial metaphors is primarily focused on the genre of advertising, leaving other genres under-investigated. To help redress this, Paper 1 (Stampoulidis & Bolognesi, 2019) examined how metaphors and other rhetorical figures (such as metonymy, synecdoche, hyperbole, and oxymoron) are expressed and interpreted in a contemporary (typically) polysemiotic artistic genre such as street art. To achieve this goal, we proposed a theoretical approach, as well as a set of methods and procedures, that can be applied to analyze (verbo-) pictorial figurative constructions in street art from the perspective of cognitive semiotics.

As discussed in Section 3.5, the analysis was based on a corpus sample of 50 street artworks addressing the Greek financial and sociopolitical crisis, which had its outset in 2008. We annotated all 50 street artworks in four rounds to allow for the statistical treatment of the whole corpus sample and the qualitative analysis of the most outstanding examples. The data were gathered between 2015 and 2017, during ethnographic research conducted in Athens (see Section 3.4).

The method of analysis, which is described in more detail in Section 3.2, combined qualitative and quantitative perspectives on the data. In particular, the main contribution of our analysis was an intersubjectively reliable procedure for the identification and interpretation of metaphor and other rhetorical figures in street art. The analysis focused on the development of a four-step procedure (Topic, Expression, Conceptualization and Communication), which was based on the three

dimensions of meaning identified in previous research on visual metaphor (Šorm & Steen, 2018), yet modified and applied to the genre of street art (see sub-section 3.3.2).

Figure 4.1 offers a summary visualization of the analysis process in Paper 1 in regard to the two specific research questions asked. The first question was whether metaphors in street art can be reliably identified and distinguished from broadly rhetorical images (Phase 1 in Figure 4.1). The second was to what extent analysts with different linguistic and sociocultural backgrounds may agree in analyzing and interpreting the same metaphorical artworks, when provided with the same methodological protocols. In order to do this, two external evaluators were involved, who evaluated the analyses of only the 32 out of 50 metaphorical images (Phase 2 in Figure 4.1).



**Figure 4.1** Visualization of the empirical analysis and research questions asked in Paper 1.

The evaluations provided by the external analysts showed a significant degree of agreement with respect to which interpretations were similar and which interpretations differed. More specifically, their independent judgments indicated that, while we seemed to agree on what the potential metaphors were, the analysis and interpretation of metaphors in street art remained subject to variability, with decreasing agreement between our interpretations when moving to the Conceptualization and Communication levels (see exemplification of the procedure in Figure 3.3). The reliability assessment as well as inter-coder agreement tests are briefly described in Section 3.2 and also in the paper.

The combined results showed that, although our model could be reliably applied to street art, and could enable the analysts to distinguish metaphors from other rhetorical figures (metonymy, synecdoche, hyperbole, and oxymoron) within these images (answer to RQ1), this genre usually requires several sources of conceptual and linguistic knowledge to be integrated in the analysis of the images, in order to achieve a successful intersubjective interpretation. This knowledge includes contextual information, sociocultural and historical background, shared conventions and linguistic knowledge.

The mixed approach based on corpus construction, annotation and development of the identification and interpretation procedure used in Paper 1 allowed the exploration of figurative potential in street art both qualitatively and quantitatively. This approach retains the key feature and advantage of qualitative analysis, namely the discussion about the types of knowledge that contribute to the construction of metaphors in street art and the application of the procedure to our empirical data. However, it also has the benefit of quantitative analysis that can be used to evaluate the degree of agreement between independent analysts by using inter-rater reliability (IRR) measures.

## 4.2 Summary of Paper 2

Paper 2 (Stampoulidis et al., 2019) contributed to the study of figurativity and polysemiotic communication. It thus addressed the second research question of the thesis. Its main aim was to develop a synthetic account for the study of metaphors in street art using concepts and methods from cognitive semiotics. The framework was intended to facilitate, contextualize and help explain the empirical analyses reported in Paper 1 regarding the identification and interpretation of metaphors in street art. The data derived from the empirical analysis presented in Paper 1 were the basis for the theoretical implications of the analysis in Paper 2, and by extension for the validity of the step-wise procedure for identification and interpretation of rhetorical figures in street art.

In this paper, we illustrated the significance of the terminological and conceptual distinction between semiotic systems and perceptual modalities, restricting the term “multimodality” to the synergy of two or more different perceptual modalities and subsequently using the notion of polysemiotic communication in the sense of the intertwined use of two or more semiotic systems in the acts of production (see Section 2.3).

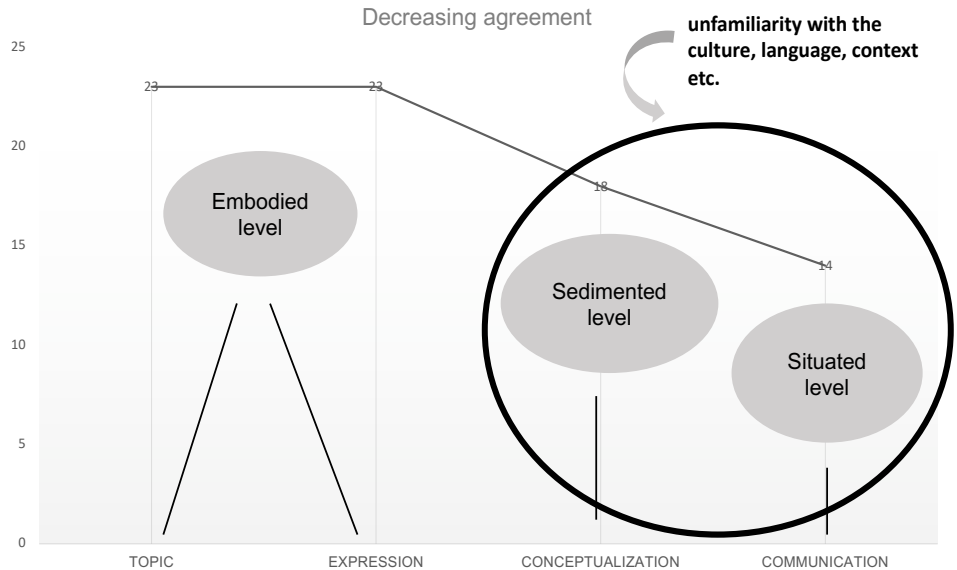
Informed by recent cognitive semiotic research, we employed the Motivation & Sedimentation Model (MSM), which distinguishes between three interacting levels of meaning-making: the Embodied level, the Sedimented level and the Situated level. Consistent with this, we suggested a theoretical definition of metaphor, which



to some degree corresponded to the operational four-step procedure developed in Paper 1 (see sub-section 3.3.2).

We highlighted that similarity-based analogy (iconicity) between two different and conflicting interpretations at the Embodied level may be understood as the dominant motivating factor for metaphor creation and interpretation at the Situated level. At the same time, the semiotic grounds of indexicality and symbolicity based on shared sociohistorical background knowledge (Sedimented level) closely interact with iconicity and subsequently co-motivate metaphor use.

By reviewing the empirical study presented in Paper 1 on rhetorical figures in Greek street art, we showed that the actual metaphorical interpretation is ultimately a matter of situated and socioculturally sensitive sign use, subject to dynamic and creative processes in real-life contexts. The three-level cognitive semiotic framework for metaphor analysis introduced in Paper 2, along with the four-step operational procedure developed in Paper 1, is schematically presented together in Figure 4.2.



**Figure 4.2** Interpretation and MSM implications of findings reported in Paper 1. Substantial agreement on Topic and Expression (Embodied Level). Decreasing agreement on Conceptualization (Sedimented level) and Communication (Situated level).

In sum, Paper 2 argued for a synthetic cognitive semiotic investigation of metaphors in Greek street art by bringing together complementary perspectives from both cognitive linguistics and semiotics, in order to give rise to the (dialectical) synthesis of cognitive semiotics (see Sections 2.4-2.5).

### 4.3 Summary of Paper 3

Paper 3 (Stampoulidis & Zlatev, manuscript) mainly pursued a methodological goal. As anticipated in the Introduction, it was devoted to presenting (a) a method for the study of street artists' motivations in situ, the go-along interview, and (b) a step-wise procedure for the analysis of metaphor in real-world discourse. It thus addressed the third research question of the thesis. Further, given that street artists often adopt highly creative (verbo-) pictorial metaphors in their polysemiotic artworks (Papers 1 and 2), it was natural to examine the flow of occurring social interaction in Paper 3 to see what *kind of* verbal metaphors they use to illuminate their most personal and complex experiences and motivations.

The paper addressed two specific research questions: (a) what are the street artists' motivations and in what ways do they express them?, and (b) would they make extensive use of verbal metaphors when explaining their work and motivations in real-world discourse? With this point of departure, the study presented in Paper 3 may be divided into three parts, from data collection to data analysis.

The first part was devoted to a detailed discussion of the fieldwork research in Athens in 2018, acknowledging some of the logistical challenges and practicalities of conducting go-along interviews on the move (more elaborate discussion in Section 3.4). In this study, we used a phenomenologically inspired method for the study of human experience, namely go-along interviews, in order to explore street artists' motivations and practices first-hand, as they unfolded in real time and space (e.g., Evans & Jones, 2011; Kusenbach, 2003). Go-along is a form of in-depth qualitative interview method, which is based on relatively spontaneous dialogue between the researcher-interviewer and the street artist-interviewee in situ.

In the second part, we illustrated how the use of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) helped to document the analytic decisions in a reflexive and systematic manner. To answer the first research question, the qualitative research package ATLAS.ti (Friese, 2019) was used throughout all data processing, from organizing, querying and interpreting data consisting of transcribed interviews to elaborating reports of the findings. The results showed that three major thematic categories emerged from the analysis of street artists' interviews when they expressed and described the motivations that led them into their practice of street art. These categories were: (a) a sociopolitical practice in the urban public space; (b) a situated and highly creative practice in the urban public space; and (c) a communication practice in the urban public space.

The third part of the paper focused on street artists' metaphors used in actual social interaction. Similar to the study in Paper 1, the analysis in Paper 3 aimed to determine what kinds of metaphors street artists use to describe their work, experiences and motivations. To address the second research question, on the basis of a theoretical definition of metaphor that is closely linked to the operational

procedures for metaphor identification and categorization, we showed that the analysis of metaphors provides an opportunity to show that street artists’ personal experiences are complex and multi-faceted. The measurements between two independent analysts (authors of the paper) and quantification assessments are described in Section 3.2. Taken together, the qualitative analysis and subsequent quantitative measurements (in the form of descriptive statistics) provided a more complete picture of street artists’ motivations, in particular through the metaphors they used in describing their work. They provided simple summaries about the sample and the measures. The results of the study provided evidence that Athens-based street artists use a range of highly and moderately innovative metaphors when talking about personal experiences in relation to their art-making, with respect to situated communication and role of consciousness, which provided further support for the highly creative nature of street art. A more thorough examination of the results may be found in the paper.

Figure 4.3 illustrates the parts of our empirical investigation, in relation to the research questions asked in Paper 3.<sup>49</sup>

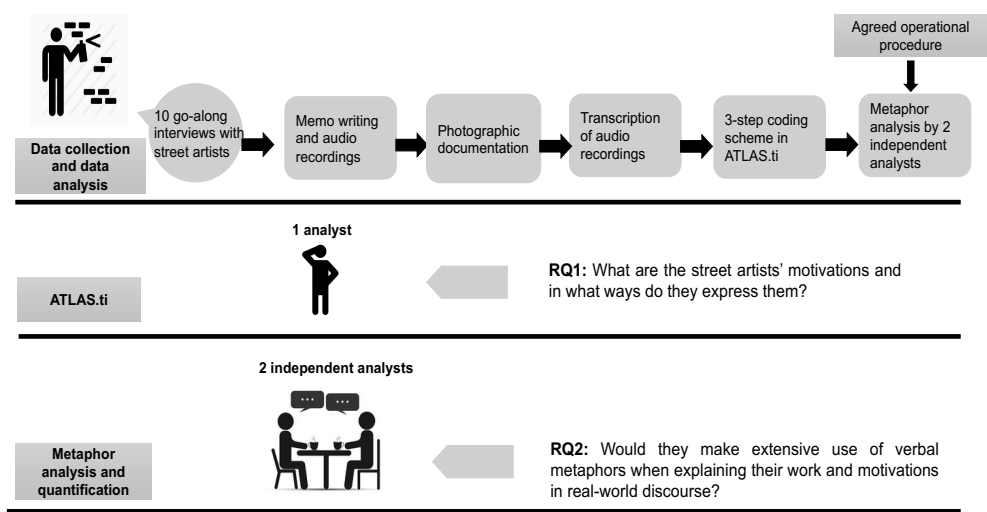


Figure 4.3 Summary of the empirical study presented in Paper 3.

<sup>49</sup> Figure 4.3 draws inspiration from Bort-Mir et al. (2020).

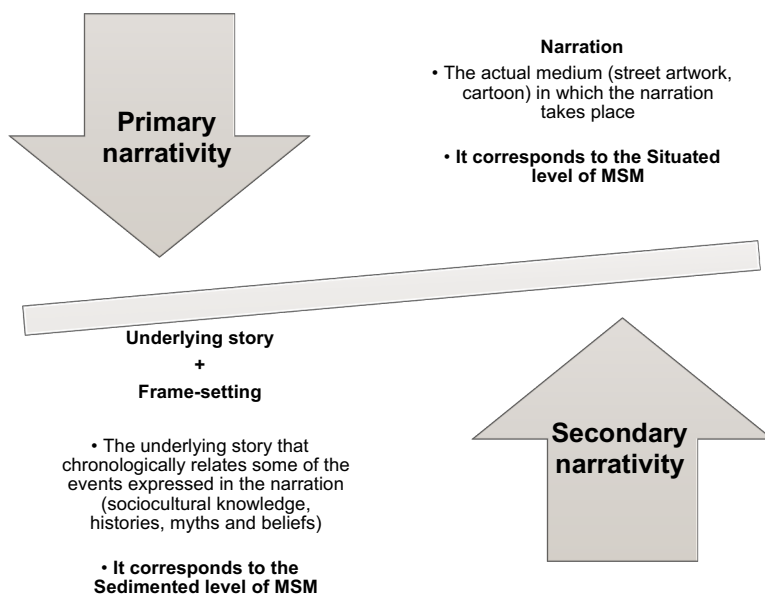
## 4.4 Summary of Paper 4

Paper 4 (Stampoulidis, 2019) extended the scope of the thesis to the narrative potential of single static images, such as street artworks. It thus addressed the fourth and last research question of the thesis concerning the potential of street artworks to narrate stories. One of the motivations behind the study was the relative lack of research on the topic of narrative in street art. With its qualitative approach, yet drawing on a sample corpus of street artworks, Paper 4 allowed me to delve into narratological discussions probing the narrative potential of street art.

This paper addressed two specific research questions. It first examined if single static images such as street artworks can receive narrative interpretations, and if so, under which conditions. It proved to be impossible to answer these questions without both explicit theoretical definitions of the key concepts, and a specific empirical study. Theoretically, I proposed a concrete and applicable schema for analyzing narrative in street art, informed by both classical and cognitive narratological perspectives and interpreted from the perspective of cognitive semiotics, and empirically, this schema was applied to five images (for more discussion, see Section 2.6).

In order to provide a comprehensive account of the narrative potential of street art, Paper 4 drew on a corpus sample of 45 street artworks (and archival research) gathered during the years of ethnographic research undertaken in Athens at different periods between 2015 and 2018 (see Section 3.5).

The results showed that single static street artworks can in fact be regarded as narrations, but only given shared underlying stories and frame-settings with the help of a process that I labelled *secondary narrativity*: understanding a given expression as a narration only after knowing the underlying story. This is schematically shown in Figure 4.4.



**Figure 4.4** A cognitive semiotic proposal for the concept of narrative.

In contrast to narration in language, film, television or some other temporally extended media, single static images may only function as narrations under the conditions of secondary narrativity, which presupposes that both the creator and the perceiver are already familiar with the relevant underlying stories, and share similar background knowledge and contextual experiences. With the help of a series of empirical examples, I demonstrated that only under this condition could a given street artwork (or a political cartoon) indeed narrate.

It was natural to ask how to access more general underlying stories, such as those concerning audacious heroes fighting against powerful aliens, which was apparently the case in the street artworks and by extension in the historically preceding cartoons from the 1940s analyzed in Paper 4. As was discussed throughout the paper and also in Section 2.6, social memories of these events have often been interpreted through historically derived experiences.

Such shared sociocultural knowledge can be theorized as being located at the Sedimented level of the Motivation & Sedimentation Model. Given that MSM is general enough to apply to both metaphor and narrative, it could in future research be used as an overarching framework to describe their interaction. Along these lines, in the next chapter, and in particular in Section 5.2, I discuss how metaphor, metonymy and possibly other rhetorical figures may interact when such narrations are to be interpreted, thus making secondary narrativity possible and triggered along with the rhetorical interpretation of a given image.

## 5 Conclusions

This chapter summarizes the conclusions that can be drawn from this work, addresses some of its main limitations, and provides directions for future research. Section 5.1 starts by summarizing the main findings of the papers in relation to the research questions raised in Chapter 1 and proceeds by highlighting the main contributions that each paper offers. Section 5.2 discusses limitations and future research.

### 5.1 Summary of main findings and contributions

The overall aim guiding this thesis has been to explore how Greek street art in times of crisis can represent sociopolitical issues and in what ways these messages can be conveyed. By using the perspective of the discipline of cognitive semiotics to address this, a parallel aim was to contribute to developing concepts and methods in this relatively new discipline. In order to address these overarching aims, I address here *the four main research questions* of the thesis raised in Chapter 1, paying attention to the thesis's theoretical, methodological and empirical contributions along the way.

The first research question of the thesis concerned the figurative potential of street art: *Is it possible to identify and interpret metaphors and other rhetorical figures in street art, and if yes, how can we operationalize this reliably?* This question was pursued in Paper 1, where a step-wise procedure for the identification and interpretation of rhetorical figures (focusing on metaphors) in street art was introduced and tested. The results of the analysis suggested that although the operational procedure could be applied reliably to street art, to enable the analysts to distinguish metaphors from other rhetorical figures within these images, the street art genre usually requires several sources of conceptual and linguistic knowledge to be integrated in the analysis of the images in order to achieve a successful intersubjective interpretation.

Paper 1 contributed to research on metaphor identification procedures by offering novel methodological insights incorporating cognitive linguistic and semiotic theory, integrated with the help of cognitive semiotics. The operationalization of an intersubjectively valid and replicable step-wise procedure for the identification and

interpretation of metaphors and other rhetorical figures in street art, to the best of my knowledge, had not been considered before. Therefore, the study presented in Paper 1 provides metaphor scholars interested in visual rhetoric with a robust descriptive basis for the establishment of an operational four-step procedure: the compilation of a sample corpus of authentic examples, the significance of the differentiation between the semiotic systems of language and depiction in figurative constructions and their polysemiotic interaction in process, and finally, the issue of inter-rater reliability.

The second research question addressed by the thesis concerned the study of metaphor at large in polysemiotic communication. In particular, it asked the following: *Are there different levels of metaphorical meaning-making and how can the sociocultural knowledge, genre conventions and contextual information shape metaphorical meaning-making within and across semiotic systems?* This question was pursued in Paper 2, which utilized a synthetic cognitive semiotic framework, the Motivation & Sedimentation Model (MSM), combining insights from both cognitive linguistics and semiotics (e.g., Zlatev et al., in press). The conclusion was that street artworks would indeed qualify as metaphorical with both tension (contrast, discrepancy) and resemblance-based (iconic) relations between two different interpretations of the sign use in a given context. The results of the analyses offered some novel insights into how sociocultural and contextual knowledge shape metaphorical meaning-making. Further, MSM shows how metaphors can be expressed in various semiotic systems other than language, instantiated in street art, very often in polysemiotic combinations recruiting one or more perceptual (sensory) modalities.

Paper 2 offered several theoretical contributions. An important one is that it combines insights from several approaches in metaphor studies to gain a more comprehensive understanding of metaphorical meaning-making, advancing the discussion in contemporary metaphor research in cognitive semiotics and beyond. Along these lines, my work contributed to the advancement, refinement and operationalization of an MSM-based metaphor definition and the subsequent notion of metaphoricity. In addition, Paper 2 helped de-conflate perceptual modalities (vision, hearing, smell, touch, and taste) from semiotic systems (language, gesture, and depiction), in a first step, so as to investigate their interactions more systematically in a second step. In other words, the notion of multimodality was restricted to the combination of perceptual modalities and the notion of polysemiotic communication to the combination of semiotic systems. Paper 2 brings new insights into this terminological and conceptual clarification that allowed the analysis of polysemiotic metaphors and other rhetorical figures in street art.

The third research question was: *What meanings do street artists attach to their motivations of art-making and what kinds of metaphors arise in the course of actual social interaction when they are called to describe their work as street artists?* This question was addressed in Paper 3. To answer the first part of the question, the

ethnographic method of go-along interviewing was discussed as the most appropriate for the study of street artists' experiences and motivations in situ. The main advantage of go-alongs in relation to this particular study lies in its combination of participant observation and interviewing. This was in focus, highlighting the connections between multiple meanings in situ placed in the forefront as the foundation for the discussions with the street artists. Three thematic categories emerged from the analysis of 10 go-along interviews in which artists expressed and described the experiences that led them into their practice of street art. These were: (a) a sociopolitical practice in the urban public space; (b) a situated and highly creative practice in the urban public space; and (c) a communication practice in the urban public space. To answer the second part of the question, the Motivation & Sedimentation Model was once more employed. On this basis, a five-step procedure for metaphor analysis in "real-world" discourse that was closely matched to the suggested theoretical definition of metaphor was formulated. The results of the study suggested that Athenian street artists used a range of highly and moderately innovative metaphors when talking about personal experiences in relation to their art-making, which provided further support for the highly creative nature of their endeavor. Such metaphors were shown to be motivated predominantly by the Embodied level of MSM and characterized by their subsequent high metaphoricity, as implied by the theoretical framework that guided the study.

Paper 3 offered two main methodological contributions. Drawing from an ongoing ethnographic research on the Greek street art scene since 2014-2015, the focus in this paper was the phenomenological interview in the study of street artists' experiences and motivations. In this respect, 10 go-along interviews with Athens-based street artists were conducted, in which the participants were encouraged to walk together with me (one of them drove) in conjunction with photographic documentation, with the aim of creating naturalistic data in a careful and considerate way. For this, I followed the phenomenologically inspired method for the study of human experience, which is based on relatively spontaneous emerged dialogue between two discussants (the researcher-interviewer and the street artist-interviewee). Go-along interviewing is a methodological approach to obtain contextualized real-time perspectives by facilitating access to interviewees' experiences and practices as they unfold in real time and space. In other words, the go-along and its attention to in situ impulses and intuitions, a kind of spontaneous and embodied mapping of the urban landscape, seems uniquely suited to this context as it engages with the distinct ways in which street artists habitually move through the city. By doing so, it also added to the growing body of research in mobile ethnography. The second contribution of this paper was related to the study of verbal metaphors used in social interaction and their relationship with lived experience. In this sense, a set of theoretical and operational criteria for metaphor analysis in verbal passages inspired by discourse dynamics approaches to metaphor was developed and intersubjectively tested. Special attention was devoted to metaphorical



innovativeness and conventionality with the help of MSM in order to address the complex phenomenon of metaphorical meaning-making with respect to street artists' metaphors produced in the situated communication in the context of go-alongs. Concurrently, the role of potential metaphoricity as a continuum, emerging from two distinct levels of motivation—the Embodied level of pan-human experiences and the Sedimented levels of linguistic and other culture norms--was discussed and transparently operationalized in a specific data set.

The fourth and final research question concerned the narrative potential of street art: *Is it possible to interpret street artworks as narrations, and if so, how can street art narrations be perceived and understood by the audience as such?* This question was put forward in Paper 4. The analysis showed that it is indeed possible for single images such as street artwork (or cartoons) to function as narrations, but only under the conditions of secondary narrativity, which presupposes that the perceiver already has access to the knowledge of previously told and relevant underlying stories. Only then can a single static image narrate by “activating” the underlying story: this is the essence of secondary narrativity.

Finally, Paper 4 contributed to the current debate in the fields of narrative and narrativity, although with a significantly limited literature review in comparison with metaphor research in the first part of the thesis. In particular, it addresses the long-standing question in the relevant literature about the ability of single static images to narrate or not with the compilation of a sample corpus of 45 street artworks and two historically preceding cartoons from the 1940s (archival research). Overall, the theoretical and empirical analysis supports the pivotal role of historically derived experiences and sedimented knowledge to make a strong case that street art's narrative potential is intrinsically dependent on secondary narrativity, which is a predominant motivation stemming from the Sedimented level of MSM.

To summarize, in respect to the new discipline of Cognitive Semiotics, I hope to have supported several of its essential aspects and to have contributed to ongoing debates in the field as well as to its further development. This thesis has acknowledged the importance of pheno-methodological triangulation in the design of the papers included in the thesis and has spawned a number of insightful and significant contributions to a better understanding of meaning-making phenomena such as metaphor and narrative in street art. For example, using the combination of perspectives, especially the first- (systematic intuitions) and second- (empathy) person perspectives, was vital for the goals of the thesis, which included providing conceptual clarity and helpful tools for methodical analysis, as well as refining key concepts.

Moreover, the thesis has helped develop and establish the Motivation & Sedimentation Model with its application towards non-linguistic data, originally inspired by phenomenology and integral linguistics, yet generally informed by

cognitive semiotics with its conceptual-empirical loop (see Section 3.1). MSM has been essential for the conception and development of the four papers included in the thesis, and was shown to be a befitting framework for the analysis of both metaphor and narrative, as applied to a set of new and authentic empirical data.

Last but not least, I hope to have contributed to a better understanding of how street art can represent sociopolitical issues with the help of rhetorical figures and narratives. I hope to have proposed and elaborated a fine-grained map of cognitive semiotic explorations in the study of street art, even if many aspects remain to be further explored, as the next and final sub-section summarizes.

## 5.2 Limitations and future directions

Despite its many contributions, it should be acknowledged that the thesis also has several limitations. These, however, provide opportunities for a range of future studies.

The compilation of the photographic archive of street art of approximately 3000 photographs during the years of ethnographic research in the city of Athens created a situation in which only parts of the corpus could be used in the studies. This means that the studies were limited in terms of the size of the samples extracted from the corpus. This is particularly noticeable in Papers 1 and 4, in which the representativeness of the data used for the present samples (50 and 45 images, respectively) can provide only tentative generalizations about the figurative and narrative potentials of street art. In other words, I am acutely aware that a larger set of images would be needed in order to draw firmer conclusions concerning the construal of metaphors and other rhetorical figures, as well as narratives within the genre of street art. Moreover, the specific genre to which the corpus-sample construction has been applied in Papers 1 and 4 may have influenced the design of the studies.

Yet the systematic analyses included in the thesis were nevertheless able to contribute to the refinement and development of a cognitive semiotic analysis of metaphor and narrative in street art. Further analyses may utilize the conceptual and methodological tools described and apply them to new sets of data in order to test the replicability of the methods used, as well as to enlarge the number of images analyzed within cognitive semiotic frameworks such as the Motivation & Sedimentation Model.

Another potentially fruitful direction for further investigation concerns the use of crowdsourcing tags for the collected street artworks, in order to theorize and test the knowledge of non-experts concerning metaphors' use in images. A follow-up study to Paper 1, for instance, could use an experimental research design in order to

examine the figurative (metaphorical and other) interpretation of street art. It could be interesting to test, for example, how coders and non-experts of metaphors annotate and describe a number of rhetorical images to which they are exposed, for different amounts of time, using certain methodological guidelines and procedural instructions with a pre-defined set of tags and keywords. This kind of task has already been considered in a recent study on metaphorical understanding in advertising (Bolognesi et al., 2018), but to the best of my knowledge, has not been considered yet in street art.

Future research could also explore how perceivers and interpreters of street artworks construct their own “reading” paths by means of eye-tracking technology applied to rhetorical images. Assuming that “eye movements provide an unobtrusive, sensitive, real-time behavioral index of ongoing visual cognitive processing” (Henderson & Ferreira, 2004, p. 18), this method could provide useful third-person data to a cognitive semiotic study that departs from first- and second-person approaches, as those used in the present study. Eye-tracking studies have recently provided interesting data in marketing and advertising research, but this has yet to be explored in street art.

Further perspectives for future work are suggested by the results of Paper 3, which raise several important questions in relation to urban ethnography and metaphor in real-world discourse. First, there is ample opportunity for further ethnographic work. Future extensions could involve a larger number of go-along interviews with street artists, but also with passersby mapped onto the specific geographic area with the help of participatory geographical information systems (PGIS) (Elwood, 2008; O’Sullivan, 2006). In other words, go-along and geographically mapped interviews with passersby would also reveal important factors in relation to their understanding towards street art practices. One further ethnographic extension to Paper 3 could be a multimodal (multisensorial) approach to the go-along interview in order to encounter the work physically, sometimes through touch, smell, sound and taste, allowing more complexity of *situatedness* to arise (e.g., Seremetakis, 2019, and references therein).

Second, the coding scheme that was developed for the analysis of the interview transcripts with the use of ATLAS.ti has not been checked for inter-rater agreement yet. Such extensions, in the spirit of the second-person method (2PM) of cognitive semiotics, are quite straightforward.

Another future extension to Paper 3 could be the possibility to create geographical and temporal story maps to identify physical locations of high street-art production in Athens (or elsewhere) for educational and other purposes. A *story map* is a data storytelling instrument that has been used in previous studies (e.g., Caquard & Fiset, 2014) to reveal hidden information from data and to present them to users. For example, by plotting out the number of geotagged photographs of street artworks found in my already-compiled photographic archive data, it could be possible to

identify, explore and relate sociopolitically and historically significant events within Athens's street art culture on an interactive map. Another direction in which this work could be extended is the ethnographic research in different cities in Greece in order to allow some more generalizable and comparable insights concerning Greek street art as a whole.

Returning to the metaphors discussed in Paper 3, the procedure for metaphor analysis and categorization was based on an agreed operational procedure, so the results have been checked for agreement and are thus likely to be replicable by other analysts. Nevertheless, the 101 verbal passages with candidate metaphors in the sample is a relatively small number to allow us any significant statistical measurements. Therefore, more data of this nature should be included in a future study.

A more general limitation of this thesis is that, with the exception of Paper 4, it focused exclusively on metaphors and other rhetorical figures (either verbal or verbo-pictorial). Nevertheless, while metaphor and narrative have each been thoroughly discussed in this thesis as two meaningful and highly complex ways for making sense of street art messages, their interrelation has not yet been discussed, with some noteworthy exceptions (e.g., Fitzpatrick & Farquhar, 2019; Popova, 2015; Yacobi, 2011). Future work could thus explore if and how metaphors, as well as other rhetorical figures, is what at least in a number of cases leads to such narrative interpretations of street art, and of single static images more broadly.

Finally, an extremely important and valuable follow-up study to Paper 4 could be the investigation of the narrative potential in street art applied to a larger number of images. This would allow us to get a better picture of narrative and narrativity within and across semiotic systems as well. As I have pointed out in the last part of Paper 4, much work remains to be carried out in terms of both theoretical analysis and empirical research towards the narrative potential of single static images, but nevertheless, this paper provided a case for further investigations in the field.

In conclusion, this thesis leaves ample opportunities for future investigations in cognitive semiotic and street art research. I hope that this work will encourage others to further explore and shed light on the figurative and narrative understanding of artworks placed in the streets around us. For the time being, the street art scene of Athens continues to be one of Europe's most pervasive and vibrant, with the artists contributing to the city's energy and urban rhythm. With this final word, let me pass the baton to the artists who continue to aspire and inspire, to actively engage to effect change, and to shape one of our tremendous common goods, the urban public space.

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# Street Artivism on Athenian Walls

How do Athenian street artists use creativity in activism or activism in their creative practices to construct forms of protest and resistance? What kinds of strategies do they employ? How are sociopolitical issues framed in the messages conveyed by street artworks? This thesis explores such questions with the help of cognitive semiotics, approaching street art as an artistic practice that represents a compelling way to express sociopolitical criticism in times of crisis.

Walking in Athens, it is almost impossible not to notice the overwhelming presence of street art on every wall, on every corner, on every public surface. Especially in central neighborhoods such as Exarcheia, Metaxurgeo, Kerameikos, Psiri, Monastiraki, Plaka, Thissio, Petralona, and Koukaki, the densely painted walls and surfaces of all kinds have become an integral part of the city. The narrow streets and sidewalks surrounding the high-rise apartment blocks and old buildings have been transformed into a platform for dialogue, creative expression and resistance, raising the voices of the artists. In other words, street artivism on Athenian walls struggles to give voice to a desire for change, intervention and protest. Using the urban public space as a field for social intervention, creativity and communication, street artists, as contemporary activists, aspire to engage passersby and communicate their messages, initiate change and paint a diary on the city walls using their power to surprise and encourage. Through the active involvement of the artists, this dissertation explores the complexity and dynamism of street art, with focus on metaphors and narratives, expressed in both images and language.

