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Humanos de Santiago

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HUMANOS DE SANTIAGO

By

Ana Maria Gibson

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for
Graduation with Honors from the
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THESIS SUMMARY

I am a member of the inaugural class of the International Business of the Americas cohort program of the Sonoco International Business Department at the Darla Moore School of Business. As a participant in this program, I spent two semesters living in Santiago, Chile studying at the Facultad de Economía y Negocios at the Universidad de Chile. During my time in Santiago, I learned about the cultural differences between Chile and the United States both inside and out of the classroom. However, despite the measurable, and often profound, differences between the two countries, what struck me the most were the emotions, struggles and triumphs we all share as a human race – euphoria, tragedy, success, failure, etc. It was this observation of the many individuals I interacted with and met every day that inspired my thesis project.

Humanos de Santiago is a cultural thesis project capturing the day-to-day lives of the people of Santiago, Chile through photographs and brief quotations and stories – the perfect culmination of my areas of study – International Business, Marketing, Spanish and Art History. I recorded these pictures and interviews in an Instagram account modeled after the internationally acclaimed blog *Humans of New York*¹ (HONY) created and managed by Brandon Stanton. The description on the Instagram account reads: “*Una cuenta dedicada a las historias de la gente de Santiago, Chile inspirado por @humansofny.*” (An account dedicated to the stories of the people of Santiago, Chile inspired by @humansofny.)

This paper will detail the methodology used and findings recorded throughout the execution of this thesis project for the South Carolina Honors College. Additionally, I will delve into a history of Chile and various aspects of life in Santiago while also highlighting the history and evolution of *Humans of New York* in order to provide some context for the subjects, their comments and the project as a whole. Finally, I will include some personal observations regarding the project and its completion.

CHILE

Brief History

At an archaeology convention in 1998, Monte Verde, Chile was acknowledged as the oldest inhabited site in all of the Americas, dating back 12,500 years. Various indigenous tribes, of which the Mapuche are the most famous, inhabited the land of present-day Chile from north to south until the Spanish arrived in northern Chile in 1535. In 1540, several years after this first expedition, Pedro de Valdivia led a group of men into the Mapocho Valley and subsequently established the city of Santiago on February 12, 1541. For three centuries the Spanish grew their influence and power over the native inhabitants of Chile. One of the most important practices Valdivia established in this new area was rewarding his followers with enormous land grants

¹ Brandon Stanton, “About,” *Humans of New York*, <http://www.humansofnewyork.com/about>.

known as “latifundios.” Many of these great estates endured until the 1960s and played a key role in that period of great conflict and government turmoil for Chile.

Between 1808 and 1810, independence movements sparked revolutions throughout Latin America. Argentine liberator José de San Martín crossed the treacherous Andes Mountains and defeated the Spanish in Santiago; he then appointed Bernardo O’Higgins as the supreme director of the newly established Chilean republic. While a fraction of its current size, the newly liberated Republic of Chile enjoyed relative stability and prosperity for many years.

The strife and resentment still felt between Chile, Peru and Bolivia today stems from what is known as the War of the Pacific (1879-1884). In this war, Chile seized much of what is presently the northern part of the country, including Antofagasta, Arica and the Atacama Desert, from Peru; in addition, they robbed the Bolivians of their access to the Pacific. Bolivia, as recently as last year, still contends the outcome of a war that ended over 100 years ago. The Bolivian delegation to the United Nations brought this issue of port access to the International Court of Justice in 2015; the UN has yet to offer a ruling on the matter.² Additionally, during this time in history, Chile lost much of the Patagonia to Argentina, still a sore point between the two countries, and annexed Easter Island in 1888.

Fast-forwarding almost 100 years, in 1970, Salvador Allende of the Unidad Popular party won the Chilean presidential election making him the world’s first democratically elected Marxist president. Allende’s presidency was full of turmoil and discontent ranging from the country’s congress all the way to the United States of America. Allende championed state controlled enterprise and oversaw a massive income redistribution. Unrest and unhappiness grew amongst Chilean citizens and international relations alike, and in 1973, the first attempt at a military coup proved unsuccessful. In the next month, then unknown General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte replaced army commander General Prats. Although it was believed Pinochet was loyal to the constitutional government, on September 11, 1973, he led a violent “golpe de estado” (coup d’état) and overthrew Allende.

Pinochet’s overthrow led to Allende’s death, allegedly suicide, and the death or exile of many of Allende’s followers. Pinochet’s regime lasted for 17 years until 1989 during which time thousands of Pinochet’s political opponents mysteriously disappeared. The “Centro Nacional de Informaciones” or National Information Center was the most notorious practitioner of state terrorism even going so far as execute many international assassinations. As a result of this corruption and mistrust in both the government and other citizens, today Chileans still have the

² Christopher Woody, “Chile and Bolivia are Still Arguing Over the Outcome of a War They Fought 131 Years Ago,” *Business Insider*, 4 October 2015 <http://www.businessinsider.com/chile-bolivia-sea-access-land-dispute-2015-10>.

reputation of being more reserved than many of their Latin American counterparts. In 1989, Pinochet failed to acquire enough votes for a plebiscite. A democratic election occurred and when his opposition, Patricio Aylwin of the Christian Democratic party, won Pinochet surprisingly readily accepted his defeat. The subsequent democratic governments maintained Pinochet's free market reforms, and in 1998, Bill Clinton released 30 years of files revealing U.S. support of Pinochet's initial coup d'état. Since the return of democracy, all presidents have been center-left with the exception of Sebastián Piñera (2010-2014). Today, Chile's president is Michelle Bachelet. She is currently serving her second term.³

Shortly before Pinochet's 1973 coup, the Chicago Boys drafted a set of policies proposing extreme economic liberalization for Chile. These men participated in an intellectual exchange between Chile's Catholic University and the economics department at the University of Chicago, Milton Friedman's alma mater. Pinochet consulted with Friedman regarding economic strategy for the country; the proposal Friedman drafted for him greatly mirrored the recommendations of the Chicago Boys several years earlier. Both the Chicago Boys and Friedman were criticized as "accomplices of evil" for their dealings with Pinochet, but their policies led to great prosperity and economic growth for Chile. "Chileans have become South America's richest people. They have the continent's lowest level of corruption, the lowest infant-mortality rate, and the lowest number of people living below the poverty line." In addition, Chileans can also thank the Chicago boys for minimal devastation in the aftermath of the severe earthquakes the country weathers each year. Because of Chile's location straddling two tectonic plates, the country has very strict building codes, but many argue the wealth the nation enjoys from the reforms of Friedman and the Chicago Boys has resulted in the quality and consistency of reinforcement that has lessened damaged from large earthquakes in recent history.⁴

Copper is Chile's largest export and highly indicative of the country's dependence on commodities. An article published by *The Economist* in 2013, attributed 20% of the country's GDP and 60% of its exports to copper. The same article estimates Chile produces a third of the world's copper. While in recent years, Chile's economy has prospered due to an ever increasing demand ("boom") from China and other developing countries, during "bust" periods Chile's GDP suffers immensely, as shown in the chart below.⁵

³ "Chile: History," *Lonely Planet*, <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/chile/history>.

⁴ Bret Stephens, "How Milton Friedman Saved Chile," *The Wall Street Journal*, 1 March 2010, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748703411304575093572032665414>.

⁵ "Mining in Chile: Copper Solution," *The Economist*, 27 April 2013, <http://www.economist.com/news/business/21576714-mining-industry-has-enriched-chile-its-future-precarious-copper-solution>.



Most recently, the Chilean copper industry made international headlines when on August 5, 2010, a copper and gold mine near Copiapó collapsed trapping 33 men. Two months later all 33 were safely rescued. Many attribute the successful rescue of these men to Chile's positivity and openness to international business relations. Only through the resources and technologies of various companies from around the world was Chile able to safely and efficiently conduct the successful rescue mission.⁶

Another popular and lucrative export for Chile is wine. Spanish colonists were the first to realize the Chilean climate was excellent for cultivating grapes to make wine. For 300 years, Chilean wine was primarily made from the País grape, until such a time when Chileans, rich from successful agricultural and mining endeavours, brought French vines to the country. Chile is now famous for its varieties of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay. Today, the signature red wine export for the country is Carménère. The principal wine-growing areas of the country are: the Aconcagua Valley, the Casablanca Valley, the Maipo Valley, the Rancagua and Colchagua districts, Curicó Valley and the Maule Valley. Most of these regions are fairly dry and irrigated by melting snow from the Andes Mountains.⁷

Unlike many popular travel destinations, Chile is known to tourists for its breathtaking and highly varied landscapes rather than its urban sprawl. Bordered by a vast ocean to the west, an almost unsurpassable mountain range to the east, the driest desert in the world to the north⁸, and glaciers to the south, this great geographic variety for a country that is only 217 miles wide at its widest point, has afforded Chile a certain amount of isolation throughout history. From volcanic

⁶ Alexei Barrionuevo and Simon Romero, "Trapped 68 Days, First Chilean Miners Taste Freedom," *The New York Times*, 12 October 2010, [http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/13/world/americas/13chile.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FChile%20Mining%20Accident%20\(2010\)&action=click&contentCollection=timestopics®ion=stream&module=stream_unit&version=latest&contentPlacement=23&pgtype=collection](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/13/world/americas/13chile.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FChile%20Mining%20Accident%20(2010)&action=click&contentCollection=timestopics®ion=stream&module=stream_unit&version=latest&contentPlacement=23&pgtype=collection).

⁷ "Chile," *Total Wine*, <http://www.totalwine.com/wine-guide/chilean-wine>.

⁸ Angela Fritz, "The 'Driest Place on Earth' is Covered in Pink Flowers After a Crazy Year of Rain," *The Washington Post*, 29 October 2015, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/capital-weather-gang/wp/2015/10/29/the-driest-place-on-earth-is-covered-in-pink-flowers-after-a-crazy-year-of-rain/>.

eruptions to earthquakes to tsunamis, this 2,700 mile long country also has its fair share of fantastic and extreme natural events.⁹

Life in Santiago

The information in this section will be compiled in part from the data of published sources and in part from my own observations having lived, worked and studied in Santiago for ten months. Santiago is home to almost half of the country's population making it Chile's largest city. According to *The World Factbook* published by the CIA, in 2015, some 6.507 million of Chile's 17,508,260 citizens were living in Santiago. As a result of the dense concentration of citizens and Santiago's position in a basin of the Andes Mountains, the city is prone to a crippling smog problem. During my time in Santiago, at the height of the Copa America soccer tournament, a smog emergency forced the city to temporarily shut down. Many cars were parked for a 24 hour period and citizens were urged to stay indoors. The city suffered the driest June on record in four decades; this drought in combination with Santiago's already abnormally high smog levels resulted in the emergency.¹⁰ Despite the ongoing pollution problem, there are many well kept green spaces in the city including Parque Forestal, the setting for many photos in this project, Parque Bustamante, Parque Bicentenario, Cerro Santa Lucia and Parque Metropolitano de Santiago to name a few.

Like many other Latin American countries, Chileans take great pride in both their national and regional soccer teams. The country hosted the 2015 Copa America Tournament and emerged victorious! This was Chile's first victory in the 99-year history of the annual tournament played by teams exclusively from the Americas. Chile and fierce rival Argentina remained goalless after extra time, and the final match finished in penalty kicks, 4-1.¹¹ Tournament games were played at stadiums around the country, including the Estadio Nacional Julio Martínez Prádanos (Julio Martínez Prádanos National Stadium) in Santiago. Whenever the Chilean team took the field, you could almost feel the electricity, enthusiasm and energy in the air throughout the day. After a Chilean victory and quite a few "piscolas," excited fans would flock to Plaza Italia to celebrate until carabineros (police officers) broke up the festivities with tear gas and water cannons.

While Chile is not renowned for a national cuisine, Chileans pride themselves on several local specialties in both food and beverage. As mentioned in the previous section, Chile is famous for their wine. Made from the same grapes as Chilean wine, but hardly as well known, is a brandy called pisco. Pablo Neruda, famous Chilean poet, once said of pisco that it's like "a million rays

⁹ John J. Johnson, "Chile," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <http://www.britannica.com/place/Chile>.

¹⁰ "Chile's Largest City Temporarily Shut Down Due to Smog 'Emergency,'" *The Guardian*, 22 June 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/22/chile-santiago-smog-environment-emergency>.

¹¹ "Copa America 2015: Chile Wins First Major Honor After Shootout Drama," *CNN*, 6 July 2015, <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/07/04/football/football-copa-argentina-chile/>.

of sunshine in a single drop.”¹² Pisco mixed with Coca-Cola or any other cola drink, affectionately known as “piscola,” is a popular beverage served at parties or “carretes.” Pisco sour is another popular way to enjoy this Chilean specialty that consists of lime or lemon juice, syrup, bitters and egg whites in addition to the brandy. There is a longstanding rivalry between Chile and Peru regarding the origin and quality of both pisco and pisco sour.¹³ Spanish settlers created the beverage in the 16th century, but the jury is still out as to which country does it best; obviously, I’m a little partial to the Chilean brands! Another popular beverage enjoyed in Chile is the “Terremoto” which literally translates to earthquake. This beverage which is especially popular at Chilean Independence Day celebrations, held annually on the 18th of September, is a mixture of wine, cognac and pineapple ice cream.¹⁴ This traditional drink is also served year-round at La Piojera, a dive restaurant and bar in Santiago.

“Completo” are a glorified Chilean hot dog. The most popular type of completo is the “Complete Italiano,” named because it shares the same colors with the Italian flag. It is served with tomatoes, avocado and mayonnaise, and most Chileans will typically add ketchup and mustard too. “Asados” or barbeques are popular in and around the festivals of “Dieciocho,” the nickname for Chilean Independence Day. Unlike BBQ typical of the United States, Chilean “asados” consist of beef, chicken and other meats cooked over an open fire or “parilla.” Santiago is also overrun with sushi restaurants. It seems as though on every corner there’s another sushi restaurant and a Cruz Verde, a popular pharmacy chain in Chile.

During my time in the city, for better or for worse, I got to experience one of the worst earthquakes to hit Santiago since the disastrous earthquake of 2010. This 8.3 magnitude earthquake struck shortly before 7:00 pm on Wednesday, September 16, 2015 close to Illapel, Chile, a coastal city about 200 miles from Santiago. Twelve aftershocks followed within the next two hours, and President Michelle Bachelet ordered the evacuation of many coastal cities.¹⁵ Bachelet had received severe criticism for not mandating an evacuation of coastal areas after an 8.8 magnitude earthquake struck central Chile in 2010. This earthquake initiated a devastating tsunami and led to approximately 500 deaths.¹⁶

¹² Stephanie Nolasco, “Pisco: The Brandy You’re Probably Not Drinking...Yet,” *Fox News Magazine*, 9 September 2013, <http://magazine.foxnews.com/food-wellness/boozy-beverage-youre-probably-not-drinkingyet>.

¹³ Joanna Prisco, “Peru, Chile Still Sour Over Pisco,” *ABC News*, 3 October 2013, <http://abcnews.go.com/Lifestyle/peru-chile-sour-pisco/story?id=20451576>.

¹⁴ “Ten Wine Cocktails with Chilean Spirit (and Spirits),” *Chile*, 5 April 2012, <http://www.thisischile.cl/10-wine-cocktails-with-chilean-spirit-and-spirits/?lang=en>.

¹⁵ Catherine E. Shoichet and Rafael Romo, “Chile Earthquake: 8.3-Magnitude Quake Strikes Off Coast,” *CNN*, 17 September 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/09/16/americas/chile-earthquake/>.

¹⁶ Richard Pallardy, “Chile Earthquake of 2010,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 16 March 2015, <http://www.britannica.com/event/Chile-earthquake-of-2010>.

Chileans are famous for incorporating local slang, referred to as “Chilenismos,” into their everyday speech. Below are few examples of popular “Chilenismos” I picked up during my time abroad.

<i>Pololo(a):</i>	Boyfriend or girlfriend
<i>Palta:</i>	Avocado
<i>Weon/Weona:</i>	Dude/girl (informal)
<i>Cachai:</i>	Do you understand?
<i>Weá:</i>	Thing
<i>Bacán:</i>	Cool
<i>La raja:</i>	Cool, great
<i>La zorra:</i>	Awesome
<i>Carrete:</i>	Party
<i>Mino(a):</i>	Boy/girl
<i>Flaite:</i>	Sketchy (adjective or noun)
<i>Pesado(a):</i>	Annoying
<i>Al tiro:</i>	Right away
<i>¿En qué andas?:</i>	What are you doing?
<i>Fome:</i>	Boring
<i>Guagua:</i>	Baby

Additionally, Chileans tend to cut off the ends of words, usually an “s” sound, and speak extremely fast. Let me emphasize this again. They speak *extremely* fast. They are notorious, even amongst other Latin American countries, for having almost incomprehensible Spanish. Also, everyone has a nickname, usually one’s given name with an –ito or –ita tacked on at the end.

Street dogs, also known as “kiltros,” yet another “Chilenismo,” are abundant in Santiago and other cities and towns all over the country. They roam freely around the city and are very friendly. Often times, they are well cared for. Many local residents, businesses or homeless individuals take in these strays. Their adoptive caregivers will put out food and water for the animals and provide them with flannel sweaters in the colder, winter months.

Street vendors selling anything and everything are also abundant in Santiago. From fresh fruit and orange juice to candied nuts to sunglasses to scarves, these vendors can be found in all sectors of the city. While explicitly illegal, their presence is largely accepted by both citizens and police (“Carabineros”) alike; however, occasionally, you will see vendors running from encroaching law enforcement. There is also an entire street designated specifically to clothes, shoes and other items sold by street vendors known as Patronato, also the name of the area’s metro stop. This practice of unauthorized vendors is not unique to Santiago or even to Chile; it is common practice throughout the whole of Latin America. “The typical country in Latin America produces about 40% of GDP and employs 70% of the labor force informally.” In a report published by The World Bank, Chile is used as a benchmark and model for other Latin American countries in terms of economic reform; however, there are still severe consequences that result

from informal markets. Such consequences include sub optimally small operations, misused resources and a congested and burdened public infrastructure.¹⁷

While Chile is currently one of the most prosperous countries in Latin America, there are clear economic divisions in the population. These divisions can be physically seen in the different sectors, or “comunas,” of Santiago, illustrated in the diagram below.¹⁸ While some members of Santiago’s elite live in absolute luxury, some citizens live without the most basic necessities such as electricity, running water and internet connection.



The pink and purple sectors of this map, including Las Condes, Providencia, Vitacura and Lo Barnechea, have the greatest concentration of wealth. “The income share held by the top 10 percent of the population in . . . Chile is 43 percent, compared to 30 percent in the United States . . .”¹⁹ The business and financial district of the city is located in this area and is prominently marked by Costanera Center, the tallest building in Latin America and a visible landmark throughout most of the city. A six-story mall is located at the base of this building; it is one of the largest of many malls scattered throughout the city. At the other end of the spectrum, some of the poorest “comunas” in Santiago include Puente Alto, Maipú, Pudahuel and others located on the outskirts of the city. Other sectors shown in the image above fall somewhere between these two extremes. Despite wealth levels, most homes and apartments in Santiago are not equipped with a central heating and air conditioning systems due to the relatively mild climate of central Chile. Additionally, it is fairly easy to commute to any sector of the city using TransSantiago’s

¹⁷ Norman V. Loayza, Luis Servén and Naotaka Sugawara, “Informality in Latin America and the Caribbean,” *The World Bank*, March 2009, web.worldbank.org/archive/website01241/WEB/IMAGES/WPS4888.PDF.

¹⁸ Lee Harrison, “Two Top Sectors in Santiago, Chile,” *OverseasPropertyAlert.com*, 3 February 2015, <http://www.overseaspropertyalert.com/two-top-sectors-santiago-chile/>.

¹⁹ Gregory Elacqua and Fatima Alves, “Rising Expectations in Brazil and Chile,” *EducationNext*, Winter 2014, <http://educationnext.org/rising-expectations-in-brazil-and-chile/>.

extensive network of metro and bus lines. Santiago's metro is the second largest network in Latin America, only behind that of Mexico City.²⁰

The economic divisions described in the previous paragraph often result in strife and protests, especially in regards to education. Good public school opportunities are scarce in Santiago, so families enroll their children in private school at a very high cost. This system results in much bitterness and animosity as those who can afford the best schools will receive the best education, attend the best universities and earn the best jobs, resulting in a seemingly never ending cycle of inequality. During my time in Chile, another faculty of the Universidad de Chile located directly beside to my own finished, or rather didn't finish, the semester in "toma." The students barred the gates to administrators, faculty and staff and lived barricaded in the facilities for months as a means to protest educational inequality. These "tomas" are not specific to educational matters. During my time in Chile, the Registro Civil e Identificación, the government organization responsible for issuing passports, identification cards, driver's licenses and other important documentation, and even a hospital went into "toma."

Similar to many other countries in Latin America, family is one of the most important aspects of Chilean culture. Many children will live with their parents throughout their time at university and oftentimes until they marry in their late twenties. Families will gather for "once," a small meal between lunch and dinner, and other festivities over holidays and weekends. Today, families and friends stay connected via WhatsApp, an extremely popular communication device that allows smart phones of all types to join group chats both large and small. The application is so popular it has been incorporated as a verb (i.e., "whatsappeando").

Finally, Santiago is a highly westernized Latin American city. A Starbucks is easily locatable in certain sectors of the city, and Kelly Clarkson songs can be heard while shopping in Tottus, a popular supermarket. Costanera Center is home to Nike, Banana Republic and Forever 21, among many other American and European stores. Many students at the Universidad de Chile also had Apple phones and computers. *Inside Out*, *Cinderella*, *Insurgent*, *Jurassic World* and many other films appeared on the big screen in Santiago shortly after their debut in the United States. McDonalds, Dunkin Donuts and Papa John's are located throughout the city. Lider, a supermarket chain owned by the American multinational retailer Walmart, is perhaps the most westernized aspect of life in Santiago. Entering the store, one feels as though they have stepped foot on American soil. The shelves are stocked with Walmart Great Value brand products, Herbal Essences shampoo, Dove soap, Clorox wipes, Doritos, Coca-Cola and even Betty Crocker cookie and cake mixes!

Cultural Dimensions

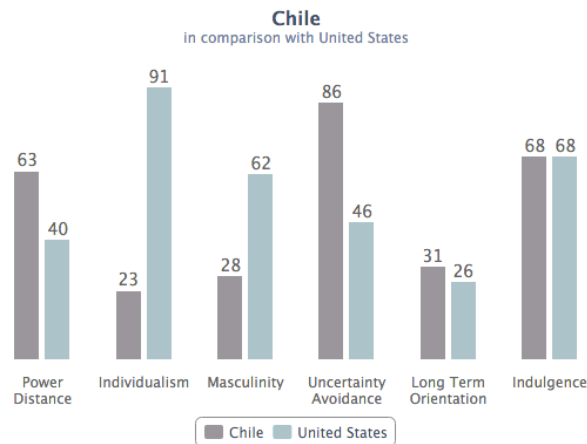
²⁰ "Metro de Santiago: Momentum Continues to Grow," *Global Mass Transit Report*, 1 September 2011, <http://www.globalmasstransit.net/archive.php?id=7677>.

While the purpose of a project such as this is to demonstrate that while we all come from different countries and backgrounds, we are fundamentally the same, many theorists and researchers will argue that the world is not so “flat” as we may like to believe. Two such men are Geert Hofstede and Pankaj Ghemawat, and their culture frameworks, Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions and the CAGE Framework, respectively, carry a lot of weight in the international business community.

A comparison between Chile and the United States using Hofstede’s cultural dimensions can be seen in the diagram below. While the United States and Chile share similar numbers in terms of Indulgence and Long Term Orientation, the two countries are vastly different in terms of Power Distance, Individualism, Masculinity and Uncertainty Avoidance.²¹ While many argue that statistics, such as those used by Hofstede, do not capture the everyday nuances and immeasurable cultural aspects of a society, after having lived in the country for ten months, I must admit that Hofstede is right on the money.

Chileans value personal and familial relationships. Incentives based on individual competition and performance, while highly popular in the United States, would have little to no effect in this collectivist society. This ideology is also reflected in Chile’s low masculinity score. Unlike Americans, Chileans do not live to work, but rather they work to live. Taking the time to enjoy a meal or cultivate a relationship is more valued in Chilean society than working long overtime hours to get a promotion or earn more money. This prioritizing of relationships lends to a very lax time orientation, yet another difference between the United States and Chile. When setting a time for a party, meeting or meal in Chile, it is customary for guests to arrive anywhere from 45 minutes to several hours after that time. This practice can be extremely frustrating for Americans living and working in the country.

²¹ “Chile,” *The Hofstede Centre*, <https://geert-hofstede.com/chile.html>.



The cultural differences between Chile and the United States, or even Europe, were the topic of discussion in many of the International Business courses I took at the Universidad de Chile. Many scholars attribute these customs and differences between Chile and other western countries all the way back to the forces of colonization. The Spanish originally colonized Chile; thus, Chile shares many cultural dimensions with that country. The United States, originally colonized by the English, shares many cultural dimensions with the United Kingdom. I believe these cultural dimensions are in constant evolution, and I foresee a gradual change in Chile more towards an American scale with the next generation.

While there is much more to be said about Chile, Santiago and its people, it is my hope this section served as a concise overview of some of the country's and city's most important traditions, customs, practices and nuances. I was petrified before I arrived in Santiago having no idea what to expect or how my life would change. However, upon my arrival, I was both pleased and disturbed, at varying measures, by some of the differences and changes I encountered and altogether comforted by the presence of the many products and tastes of home.

HUMANS OF NEW YORK

Brandon Stanton created a blog entitled *Humans of New York* in the summer of 2010.²² The purpose of this blog was to interview, “. . . his subjects and ask them about their lives, their struggles, their disappointments and their hopes.” Brandon grew up in Atlanta, Georgia and later attended the University of Georgia where he graduated with a film major. He moved to New York City and began blogging photos of the people he met on the streets of the Big Apple. Despite no formal training in journalism or photography, in a little over three years, Brandon had amassed more than one million followers over several different mediums of social media for his

²² Brandon Stanton, “About,” *Humans of New York*, <http://www.humansofnewyork.com/about>.

blog.²³ While *Humans of New York* has quite a large following in the United States, almost everyone I approached in Chile had never heard of the account. Brandon even admits, “New York is a giant place and no matter how big you get, there's still going to be a ton of people who haven't heard of you.”²⁴ Most recently, Brandon received international attention for an open letter to Donald Trump and was cited by Elle UK as “the nicest man in America.”

I found this project to be a full time job. From taking the pictures and conducting the interviews, to editing the photos, to posting the pictures on Instagram and managing the social media account, there weren't enough hours in the day to devote the kind of time I would have liked to the account. Brandon told *The Guardian* he spends two hours every day taking pictures, and that he never takes a day off. In the same interview, Stanton also said that every two out of three people he asks agree to be photographed. Many professional bloggers like Stanton have been forced to “quit” their accounts, because they become too all-consuming and psychologically damaging.²⁵

Apple introduced the iPhone 4 on June 7, 2010.²⁶ That means, more than likely, Brandon first began his blog using an iPhone 3 or iPhone 3GS – only the second and third iPhones ever made. In addition, one of Stanton's main mediums for sharing his photos, Instagram, was only launched the very year he started his blog. In the past six years, technology and the role of social media have greatly evolved in such a way that can only be beneficial to Stanton's project. In fact, cell phones, specifically smart phones, appeared in almost 7% of the pictures of my own project.

OBSERVATIONS

How did you decide on a thesis topic?

I started considering a variety of different thesis topics in early 2015. I knew I wanted to complete my project while I was studying abroad, but I didn't quite know what my topic should be. My roommate, Fran Toro, also a member of the IBA Cohort, and I loved *Humans of New York*. One day, we had a conversation about our love for the blog and exchanged a few of our favorite posts. It was at that time Fran suggested that I should create a similar social media account or blog during my time in Santiago for my thesis. I almost instantaneously said no. I had all sorts of excuses. “I don't speak Spanish well enough.” “I don't have time.” “I don't have a good camera.” “I'm too scared.” However, after some encouragement from friends and family, I decided to take the risk, success or failure, and just do it.

²³ Julie Bosman, “A Fisherman in New York's Sea of Faces,” *The New York Times*, 6 November 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/07/business/media/humans-of-new-york-by-brandon-stanton.html?_r=1.

²⁴ Corinne Jones, “Brandon Stanton's New York Stories,” *The Guardian*, 2 November 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2013/nov/03/brandon-stanton-humans-of-new-york-pictures>.

²⁵ Rheana Murray, “Instagram Star Quits Social Media, Reveals Her ‘Dream Life’ was All a Sham,” *Today*, 4 November 2015, <http://www.today.com/news/instagram-star-quits-social-media-reveals-her-dream-life-was-t5372>.

²⁶ “Eight Years of the iPhone: An Attractive Timeline,” *Time*, 27 June 2014, <http://time.com/2934526/apple-iphone-timeline/>.

How did you complete the project?

Put quite simply, I approached random individuals in and around Santiago and asked to take their picture, capturing whatever they were doing at that instant, be it sitting on a park bench, walking their dog, working, etc. After I took several photos, I asked these people a question either regarding the action they were currently performing (i.e., Do you like your job?, Are all of these your dogs?, etc.) or a more profound question (i.e., What is your greatest achievement?, What is currently the most challenging aspect of your life?, What is your biggest dream?, etc.). I then posted these pictures with the most interesting parts of the interview, in both English and Spanish, to an Instagram account. IRB approval was not required for the completion of this project.

How did you choose the subjects?

I watched several videos about Brandon's methodology in capturing his photos and stories for *Humans of New York* before beginning my own project. The most important key he shared (and that I would second after completing my own project) is approaching subjects with confidence.

I normally approached subjects that were seated and alone. Brandon also said he always got more honest and real answers from people who were alone as they couldn't be influenced by the opinions of counterparts. Additionally, there was almost always something I found interesting about my subjects – their hair or outfit, their pet, a book they were reading, etc. After a while, I perfected what I call "The Ask." I would walk the parks scanning for subjects. When I saw someone who interested me, I would take off my sunglasses and the lens cap on my camera and turn the camera on. I would stand up straight, put on a big smile and approach the subjects. I learned you had to move fast and with confidence in the beginning of the conversation otherwise the subjects soon became wary and antsy.

Where did you take the pictures?

I took the majority of the pictures for this project in several parks, and their surroundings areas, near my apartment. I found these areas to be the perfect setting for capturing the best possible pictures and engaging in the most rewarding conversations. Parque Bustamante and Parque Forestal are heavily shaded, so it made for good lighting at whatever time of day. Additionally, people in parks are more at their leisure than those walking down busy sidewalks. At the beginning of the project, I attempted to approach subjects that were merely walking down the street, but I found they simply rejected my proposal or answered very quickly and continued on their way. The parks were also full of people at any time of day or any day of the week. Finally, I felt safe in the parks. Being a woman and approaching strangers, I always had to make sure I was acting in the smartest and safest way possible. I ventured into different areas of the city throughout the project, but sometimes I felt too unsafe or out of place to successfully capture great pictures and stories.

What was the hardest part about completing this project?

I consider myself to be a people person, and I take a lot of pride in that. That being said, the hardest part of the project for me was approaching each and every person, asking to take their picture and to talk to them. It was extremely intimidating and humbling. I was always afraid they wouldn't be able to understand my Spanish or I theirs! It was nerve-racking, but somehow I was able to muster the courage to take almost 200 pictures.

Additionally, it was very hard to receive criticism regarding my captions in Spanish on the Instagram account. While these attacks were, obviously, a blow to my self-esteem and self-confidence, they were disheartening to me in a much larger sense. The purpose of an account such as this is to reinforce the age-old saying, "Don't judge a book by its cover." These people had no idea Spanish was my second language, as I remained anonymous until the final post on the account. However, I had a feeling if they knew they would have shown more compassion and understanding. Some of the criticism was very harsh and unfeeling. These commentators did not seem to care that an actual person was putting a lot of work and effort into the Instagram they were looking at on their phone. Social media has become a forum for many to say whatever they want without fear of the consequences hidden behind the shield of technology.

What was the most rewarding part of this project?

I had several truly genuine and in-depth conversations throughout the course of the project. One in particular that stands out in my mind was a conversation I had with a woman who was crocheting in Parque Bustamente. She was so nice to me that I didn't feel intimidated to get to know her and take some really awesome shots. We talked about her family and her life experiences, and she asked me all about my time in Chile. We parted ways with a hug. It was experiences like that one that made my thesis project so worthwhile.



“Hola Perrito!”

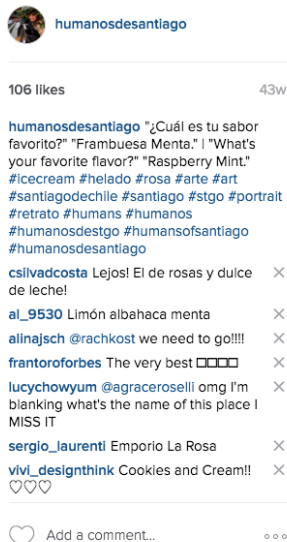
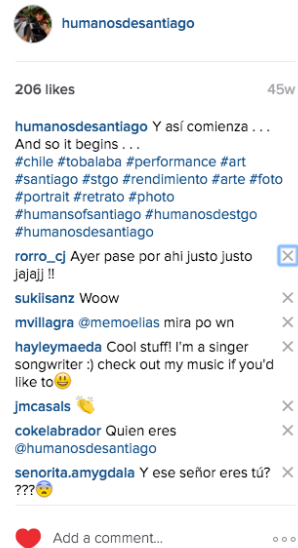
In the original blog, Brandon has, for a lack of a better term, a subset of the account which focuses on photographs of children and their eccentric style choices. He captions these photos, “Today in microfashion . . .” I decided in the early stages of the project that I would create my own unique subset for Humanos de Santiago. As mentioned earlier in this paper, there are many stray dogs, and cats for that matter, that roam the streets of Santiago. I thought these friendly creatures would make the perfect subjects for such a subset of the account; boy, was I right! Captioned “Hoy en animales de Santiago . . .” (Today in animals of Santiago . . .), these pictures received a sensational amount of likes and comments. With the exception of the first picture posted to the account, a picture of a stray dog lying in the grass has the most likes of any on the account – 175. I posted 12 pictures as part of this subset averaging 109 likes per picture. The pictures of humans averaged only 80 likes!



Which pictures got the most likes and comments?

Apart from the pictures of animals (previously discussed), the picture with the most likes was the very first picture I took for the project and posted on the account. While I didn't interview this subject (He was a street performer posing as a human statue and couldn't break character.), he saw I was photographing him, and he posed and looked specifically at my camera. We exchanged a nod and slight smile as I walked away.

The picture that received the most comments was one I snapped of a worker at my favorite ice cream place in Santiago – Emporio La Rosa. The question I felt was the most obvious to ask in this particular scenario was what the worker's favorite ice cream flavor was. "Frambuesa Menta" or Raspberry Mint was his answer. To my surprise and amusement, when I posted the picture to the Instagram account, many followers responded with their own favorite flavors!

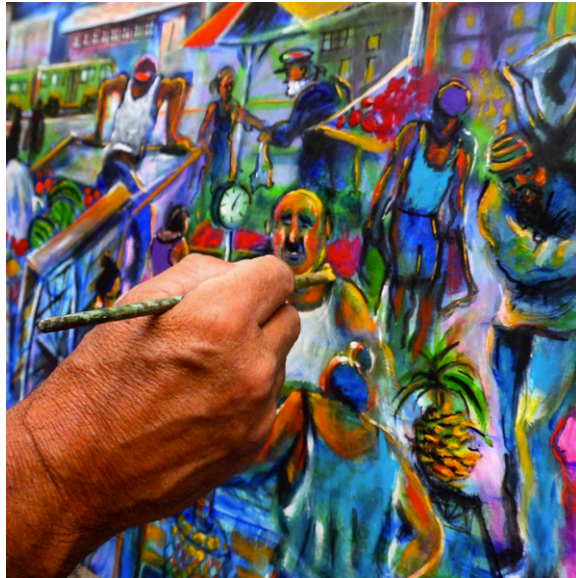


What is your favorite photo?

I selected my favorite photo, or rather photos, with great difficulty. As I reviewed the account, every photo brought back memories of Santiago and the people I interacted with making it hard to select just one! Esthetically speaking, my favorite photo is the picture that closely focuses on the hand of a man creating a painting. I love the dynamic movement of the painting and vibrant colors of this photo. Also, the artist's answer ("I was born with a pencil in my hand.") was one of the best responses I received while capturing these photos.

Holistically, my favorite photo is the picture I captured of a lesbian couple sitting on a bench in Parque Forestal. When I first approached the girls, I automatically assumed they were sisters or friends. They threw me for a loop when they said they were a couple, and in a way, they shamed

me. I was slightly embarrassed I didn't think to ask if they were a couple. Not only do I love the way the picture turned out, but I enjoyed hearing their story and struggle, getting to know the girls and learning more about the LGBTQ community and fight for equality in Chile.



 **humanosdesantiago**

120 likes 14w

humanosdesantiago "Nací con un lápiz en mi mano." I "I was born with a pencil in my hand." #art #arte #portrait #retrato #santiago #chile #stgo #santiagodechile #humans #humanos #gente #people #humanosdesantiago #humanosdestgo #humansofsantiago

 Add a comment... ○ ○ ○



 **humanosdesantiago**

134 likes 13w

humanosdesantiago ¿Ustedes son amigas o hermanas?" "No. Actualmente somos una pareja. Estábamos juntas por tres años, pero todavía no es aceptable para nosotros demostrar afectación en las calles y enfrente de nuestra familia. A causa de eso, vivimos solas para vivir como queremos." I "Are you guys sisters or friends?" "Actually, we're a couple. We've been dating for three years, but we don't show affection in the streets, or even in front of our families, because the LGBT community is not widely accepted here in Chile. We have our own apartment, so we can live and love freely." #LGBT #humanos #humans #people #gente #retrato #portrait #photo #foto #art #arte #humanosdestgo #humansofsantiago #humanosdesantiago #love erikmontecinos 🍌🍌 @agrupacionrs ✕

 Add a comment... ○ ○ ○

What is your favorite story?

Of course, I have more than one favorite story! One of these was my conversation with a waiter. I asked this man about the most difficult thing he was struggling with in his life at that moment, and his answer was quite a bit more in depth than the responses I was used to receiving. He told me that he wanted to buy his own place, but as a waiter, when applying for loans, he was only able to put the minimum wage he earns which did not accurately reflect his total salary with tips. Because of this, no bank had been willing to give him a line of credit. This is one of my favorite

stories, because I loved the man's honesty and vulnerability, and my heart went out to him in his struggle. Additionally, I was personally very proud of how far I had come with my Spanish at that moment in order to be able to understand and converse about a relatively complex topic.

My other favorite story came from a conversation I had with a father and his son who had Down Syndrome. Teletón is an annual charity event that has been held throughout Chile since 1978. In the weeks leading up to the event, the country is bombarded with advertisements and promotions to encourage participation. In early December, the 27-hour telethon is held to raise funds for children with developmental disabilities. The fundraising goal for the organization is always to raise more money than the last year.²⁷ I have participated in USC Dance Marathon, a volunteer organization at the University of South Carolina that raises money for Palmetto Health Children's Hospital, since I was a freshman, so I was excited to see what Teletón was all about during my last few weeks in Santiago. On the day of the event, there were several volunteers giving massages for donations at the entrance of the metro stop closest to my apartment. These young volunteers all had Down Syndrome. I got to talking with a man and his son. The man told me that his son had his own massage business. He also beautifully said that Down Syndrome is not a disability of children but rather of their parents. He said every child has a talent, and it's a parent's job to help them cultivate it.



²⁷ "Historia," *Teletón*, <http://www.teleton.cl/teleton/quienes-somos/historia/>.



What's the weirdest thing that happened to you while completing the project?

Completing this project was, on the whole, very entertaining and quite interesting at times! Various subjects asked me if I wanted to sit down and smoke marijuana with them. Another older man, a poet, invited me to come to the bar he worked at in the evenings to continue our conversation. Still others would give me their e-mail address or business card and ask for a copy of the picture when all was said and done. But perhaps the strangest thing that happened to me while completing the project was when I was handed fruit by older women – on two different occasions! These women were eating their fruit throughout our interviews, and after we had finished talking, they asked if I would like a piece. In Chile, it would be considered extremely rude to refuse such an offer from an elder, so I felt obliged to accept. However, rather than handing me the fruit, the women simply reached over and popped the piece of fruit in my mouth like we had known each other for years!

CONCLUSION

All in all, this project was an extremely challenging, humbling and rewarding process. I consider this thesis a success solely based on the fact that I conquered my fears and completed project to the best of my abilities. I didn't receive the kind of openness and vulnerability in every picture that Brandon seems to coax from his subjects in New York City. I attribute this in part to Chilean's reserved nature and in part to my less than perfect Spanish. However, what I did get was a little glimpse into the life of each subject which was exactly the objective of the project!

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