"Gracias por los favores concedido"
Animitas and the Everyday Life in Santiago

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Prologue

In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes
- Benjamin Franklin

This expression illustrates how common death actually is. Death is a certainty for everybody; it is part of everybody's life. However, especially in western societies people act as if death does not exist, it is a tamed death (Leferink, 2002:21). We are forever young and even when we age, we remain fit and able to undertake numerous activities during our pension, which we weren't able to do during our years of work. It is a taboo to have a lack of energy to keep up with all the wild fantasies we hold. We want too much and we will have it. We think, feel and act that death and diseases are none of our business.

Even so, death does await us all. It is in fact, the only certainty we have in life. Perhaps besides taxes. Why do not we reflect more often on issues of death and our own mortality more often? It is only after the death of both grandmothers in respectively January and April 2009 that I started to think more frequently about death and how my stance is towards it. Life and death show up, when people are busy making other plans. It is therefore as if we forget how to live our life, and suddenly it is over. Only in moments when we are confronted with death we find the time to reflect about our values and what really matters the most.

Animitas therefore are a sort of reminders that life is transient and that we should enjoy our moments while we still can. Furthermore, the way people take care of animitas shows the love of people for the deceased. People may be dead, but not forgotten.

I would like to thank all the people who made it possible to conduct this research about the animitas in Santiago. Firstly, I would like to thank my mother who always supported me during the process of preparing, gathering data and writing things down. My parents even visited me during field work, which supported me even more in my activities because they reminded me how special the animitas are. Secondly, I would like to thank all the people I have spoken with in Chile. Without their kindness and willingness to share their ideas, this research certainly would not have been possible. In particular, I would like to thank Margaret Snook, who already helped sorting things out during months of preparation in Holland. When I arrived she

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Introduction

By means of researching animitas, a frivolous expression of popular Catholicism in Chile, everyday life and problems relevant to the mass are investigated. Popular religion is part of popular culture, culture of the mass.

This study departs from a pluralistic notion of religion. This means that religious systems such as popular religion and official religion are more than mixtures of former ideological views and the dominant religion as syncretism theories claim. Rather, religious systems are co-existent and complement each other (Sanabria, 2007:240). Through agency, people can choose from different systems, dependent on their possibilities and necessities. In the framework of pluralism, power relations in society are important to take into account. In this case thus the power relationships actors and discourses of official and popular religion.

I will focus on social networks as a coping strategy and how people gain influence in public space through the use of animitas. In particular the notions of space and networks are used to examine notions about hegemony and resistance in urban Latin America, because religion is one of the areas in which hegemony and resistance prevail (Rostas & Droogers, 1993:5).

The public space in which the animitas are placed is contested because space is not free; it is wanted by different actors (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga, 2003:18). After the occurrence of a tragic death in public space when animitas are required, a process of negotiation between different actors starts, regarding the spot where the animitas exists. This is especially striking in city life, because in relatively short distances space is contested differently due to stratification of neighbourhoods. Negotiation processes about placing animitas thus reveals bigger societal issues of inequality (Possemai, 2005:23).

By highlighting the social aspect of animitas, it is clear that people use social networks as coping systems to handle problems beyond their control. This is clear through the themes of favours frequently asked at animitas. These themes are reflections of bigger problems in society such as the inadequate health system in Chile. People do not have sufficient capacities to cope with these problems and use their social capital to cope with these problems and uncertainties. It is therefore

important to conduct research about popular religion, because problems of societies prevail.

Although a significant body of literature exists on popular religion there is very little literature on popular religion in Chile. Moreover, studies of popular religion in city life are not conducted in large amounts. With this thesis, I hope to expand the academic literature on popular religion in relationship to space and networks with this anthropological research which I conducted for an extended period of time from January 28th until April 28th, 2010 in the capital of Chile, Santiago.

First theoretical concepts about space, networks, reciprocity, popular religion and globalization are explained in a theoretical framework. Then I will elaborate on the context of my research and the methods used to achieve these results.

In the next part of this thesis, I will profoundly analyze the data gathered from my research period and explain the theoretical concepts discussed in the first section of the thesis. In following order, I set out the date in three different empirical chapters about the birth of animitas, the social aspects and the spatial element of animitas.

In chapter one concerning the emergence of animitas shows how religious pluralism can take place by comparing religious notions of the church and about animitas. Animitas are needed because the doctrine of the church is not able to completely cover the religiousness of the people. The religiousness of people is conveyed in peoples notions about justice, love and hope. This discrepancy between the official paradigm and people's own notions leads to different concepts of 'true Catholicism' (Leferink, 2002:128). Thus, different cultural repertoires are related to Catholicism. Through agency and dependent on pragmatic issues, people align with certain cultural repertoires.

Chapter two focuses on the social aspects of animitas. Animitas are social enterprises because they are built, maintained and devoted collectively. Together people shape animitas and through the devotion of more than one person, animitas are shaped, because they place flowers or clean animitas as a gift of exchange which enlarges the animita. It is possible to examine the role of social networks in Chilean society because animitas remain or become part of the social networks of people. Through *mandas* people and animitas or saints remain in contact with each other. Moreover, this chapter elaborates on differences in social networks between official saints and animitas as being or hierarchical and egalitarian.

The last chapter about space shows the relations between the locations of animitas. It shows how space is an area of negotiation and how people position themselves in that negotiation. This is related to the commonality of space and how ambiguous space is. The spatial aspect of animitas is important because animitas are always in the public domain. They are an instrument of the people to gain influence over space and how space is used. Through the animitas in public space, the people can indirectly articulate their religiousness and problems they encounter.

In the conclusion, all analyses of the empirical chapters are set out and further elaborated upon. It is a recapitulation of the essence of animitas and of popular religion. The appendixes content a summary in Spanish, reflection on my influence on the research setting and visual references of the animitas. At the end of this thesis, it is shown if academic concepts of popular religion are sufficient to describe animitas and a further recommendations for the examination of popular culture and popular religion is set out.

Theoretical framework

The universal trait that separates humankind from animals is the capacity to think. Notions about death, the afterlife and ideas about a bigger creator or order that has given people the capacity to think, can converge in religion when more people share similar notions. Religion is an expression of psychological universal traits in the way people think, feel and process information (Kottak, 2008:54).

Institutions therefore that claim a monopoly on religion, are therefore political organizations because they want to influence and control a psychological universal trait, property of people of a much bigger community than their own (Fried 1967: 20,21 in: Kottak, 2008:178). Religious leaders are part of this ecclesial organization that, like elite, determine function what religion exactly entails and how it is conducted. The church can maintain their dominant position because the mass has internalised their dominant norms and values. This is called a hegemonic process (Gramsci, 1971 in Kottak, 2008:196).

Through standardisation and homogenisation of rituals, the church invents experts on rituals making that people need the church to perform rituals. Still, religion is not a property of an institution, rather a cultural universal trait of the people (Kottak, 2008:280). It is through popular forms of religion that this universality of religion is shown because people have agency to form their own sort of religion and pick from various cultural repertoires about religion. In Latin America these cultural notions of religion are related to a strong growth of the cult of Virgin Mary. In contrast to a far and distancing God, Maria stands for the mundane world and suffering which plays a decisive role in everyday life. People strongly identify with the suffering Maria had been through (Sanabria, 2007: 187).

In this theoretical framework I will set out the concepts needed for a profound understanding of what popular religion exactly entails. Especially the notion of pluralism is important because it puts emphasis on people's agency and the context of power relationships in which people negotiate. Pluralism opens the possibility for the study of multiple systems at once, instead of choosing. It allows to rightfully reveal the multivocality of people in societies (Eck, 2006: 745,746).

As popular religion is part of popular culture, this is the first concept explained. Then I will explain the term 'popular religion'. Next, origins of popular religion during the conquest of the Americas are discussed, followed by the academic

debate between syncretism and pluralism. Further on I will discuss other characteristics of popular religion directly related to agency and notions of power. Characteristic of popular religion is the contestation of social order, the absence of experts, the importance of rituals and the integration of popular religion in social relationships. Eventually these theoretical notions will be clarified in the empirical chapters about the ideological, social and spatial aspects of animitas.

Popular culture

The 'popular' in popular culture stands for *pueblo,* or the people. It applies to those sectors in society that do not enjoy a lot of status, wealth or power. Therefore it differs for each society or context, which people belong to this sector (Bamat & Wiest, 1993:6). Popular culture therefore, is everyday culture of the mass (Gove et al. 1986 in Sanabria, 2007: 314,315). A frequently used metaphor for popular culture is 'mirror of society'. By mirror or society, insights in larger social issues is meant. However, this mirror shows a distorted image of society because it is not completely veraciously. Still, it always contains a grain of truth (Possemai, 2005:23). This means that during the performance of everyday culture, processes of societal level are reflected. The examination of popular culture is one way to reveal bigger societal processes which affect the people.

A problematic issue of popular culture is its stance towards other expressions of culture. For instance, where is the line between the 'popular' of culture and 'high culture'? For this reason it is hard to give a solid definition which applies to all cases of popular culture. Therefore it is useful to describe popular culture not as a rigid phenomenon with certain characteristics, but rather a field wherein social meaning can be negotiated and contested (Canclini 1996:62 in Sanabria 2007:314 and: Chasteen, 2004).

It is intrinsically of popular culture that it contests the socio-cultural and political-economical hierarchy related to the conquest of Latin America, in which the church was a means of the conquerors to gain power. Through popular culture, people fulfil their needs to question and challenge the public order (Beezley en Curcio-Nagy 2000a).

Just as popular religion, space is a field wherein social meaning can be negotiated and contested (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga, 2003:18). It could thus be an

illustration for the contestation of the people of public order. Space is not empty and cannot be defined under one variable; because spaces are more like events (Casey, 1996:26). The occupants of spaces shape places, therefore, places are closely linked to power. Even though conflicts about space is generally focused on the meaning of a particular site, how people negotiate about space reveal broader social struggles and power relations in society (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga, 2003:18).

Popular Catholicism

Popular religion, and in this case popular Catholicism, is a part of popular culture, it is one of the cultural expressions of the mass. A definition of popular religion is: *"the complex of ideas, notions and religious practices of those self-identified Catholics which belong to the popular sectors of society" (*Bamat & Wiest, 1993:6). In this case, religion is the field of dispute and negotiation between the elite and the mass (Rostas & Droogers, 1993:5). Moreover, during religious feasts devotees express their gratitude through cultural expressions such as traditional dance and food and are cultural bonds between the saint and its devotees strengthened (Graziano, 2007:36).

Before the Spanish and Portuguese conquered Latin America, the indigenous and African inhabitants had a polytheistic faith. This is the first and main reason for the success of the catholic evangelizing in Latin America, in this polytheistic belief system it was possible to adopt European Gods in the pantheon of the Gods. These Gods were an active presence in daily life and were an aid in everyday life. Thus, the absorption of Christian Gods was not a submission of the people to the Catholic faith, but an expansion of *their* Gods pantheon. In this manner, indigenous traditions formed a cognitive framework for the dogma of the church (Graziano, 2007; 72).

Continuity of indigenous habits at the same dates and meanings in the form of Catholic rituals is a second reason for success (Sanabria, 2007: 181, 182, 421). Instead of disrupting habits and religious feasts, they were altered and shaped into a Catholic variant. For this reason, people did not need to literally change their faith; but only altered in their habits. Next and of minor importance, conquerors declared the campaign against idolatry to force the original inhabitants of Latin America to converse to Catholicism (Sanabria, 2007: 181-182). Penalties and punishment of idolatry is the least important because it is the polytheistic framework of the natives before the conquest that led to the success of the spreading of the Catholic doctrine.

Through this framework, Catholicism was not replacing original belief systems, but merely absorbed in it.

All factors mentioned above led to a fusion of catholic faith with local belief systems in Latin America. As we can see, popular Catholicism has always been related to power relations. Because popular religion can differ so much because of its relation to local contexts, it is difficult to speak about one type of Catholicism in Latin America. Some authors even plead against the use of 'popular Catholicism', because of the lack of academic usability (Kselman 1986, Ribeiro 1984, Vrijhof & Waardenburg 1979 in Droogers, 1993:4). Practically speaking, these academics are correct. People who actually practice popular Catholicism do not differentiate between different types of Catholicism (Pieris, 1988 in Bamat & Wiest, 1993:2). Yet it is useful to keep 'popular Catholicism' as an umbrella term because popular Catholicism has enough common characteristics (Sanabria, 2007:183).

Syncretism or pluralism?

Another word for the fusion of Catholic faith that the conquistadores brought with the indigenous notions of religion, is syncretism; a 'fusion, mixing or blending' (Lambropoulos, 2001:221). However, is syncretism the right name for the 'blending' of faith and tradition in this case? Moreover, is blending the actual process, act of what takes place? I claim that the theoretical notion of pluralism is more suitable to analyse processes of interaction between cultural expressions, because it allows the coexistence of systems. This is in coherence with nowadays notions of culture as fluid, not as essentialistic (Stewart, 1999: 41)..

Syncretism between cultures can take place when static cultural expressions mix with cultural expressions of another culture. Cultures are in this description rigid and static. In present anthropology is this essentialist notion are rejected and replaced by a notion of culture as loosely related areas of difference between people of for example language, law and religion. Culture is everything but rigid, it is changeable and dynamic (Stewart, 1999: 41).

Secondly, the use of the term by different contexts and disciplines leads to confusion (Lambropoulos, 2001:225-226, Stewart, 1999:45). The most important connotation stems from theological areas of interest, whereby syncretism is synonymous is to the lessening of pureness from religion due to a blending with other

beliefs (Stewart, 1999:46). Even in the field of anthropology alone syncretism does not has a clearly defined status. Boasians used syncretism as one of the phases in the process of acculturation of groups in society, which slowly ended in assimilation (Droogers & Greenfield, 2001:27). Acculturation refers to the gradual exchange of cultural repertoires of groups by multiple contacts as a result of which groups can change but nevertheless remain to exist separate from each other (Kottak, 2008:G1). Studies show that all cultures are already interconnected; none of them is simple or pure. All are hybrid, heterogeneous, diverse (Clifford en Said 1988, Said 1993 in: Stewart, 1999: 41). Inevitably this means that contact between cultures does not have to end in assimilation of minorities.

In addition to the ambiguity of syncretism due to its use in theological context and anthropology there is a third reason for the rejection of syncretism exists, namely the theoretical existence of pluralism. Pluralism is dedicated to the experience of difference, whereby different systems can exist parallel to each other (Eck, 2006: 745,746). Religious pluralism is the co-existence and complementarity of different religious systems (Sanabria, 2007:240). This means that within one society, people can choose from different systems. Because people have agency, they are capable of ascribing and interpreting the meaning of religious notions. This could mean that some people only agree partly with dogmas of the church or create their own. To interpret certain acts differently however, does not mean interpretation of a lesser value or less important (Scott, 1985:43).

Because religiosity is a human trait, and not one of society's elitist circles, it is less the capacity of the rich to steer the poor than the capacity of the poor to penetrate the hegemonic discourse (Scott, 1985: 318). This can be exemplified by the notions of being a 'good catholic'. According to the church, being a good catholic entails participation in masses and the fulfilment of sacraments. Because religiosity is a universal phenomenon, the idea of being a good catholic, does not remain within church walls. Consequently, multiple notions of being a good catholic exist in daily life and not just concepts of the church. An example is a woman who earns her living as prostitute but prays everyday to God and still is convinced she is a good Catholic. According to church's standards, prostitutes are on the margins of society without an honourable job and means of living (Leferink, 2002:128). However, it is the reality of daily life that pushes people to these margins. Especially through identification with the suffering of Virgin Mary people describe themselves as being good or the true

Catholics. The Virgin Mary plays a key role in the everyday struggle because of the association of lifestyles of the devotees, consisting of suffering, aspirations, poverty and struggles. It is certainly not official Catholicism that gave Maria her decisive role (Sanabria, 2007: 187, 188).

Pragmatic issues also have an influence on people's decisions; not all acts deviant from the hegemonic discourse are acts of resistance. For instance, annual taxes by the church can be impossible to pay for some people, making that they seek comfort in popular religion. Both pragmatic issues and agency of the people have influence on their choices for different religious systems.

In medical pluralism, bodies and treatment of bodies are negotiations of cultural identity, social and political situations that reflect power relations in society. The way people treat a disease, has to do with power relations at different levels, like gender or social class. Here it is shown how important holistic treatments of phenomena are to analyze and recognize multiple spheres of influence on phenomena (Kottak, 2008:29). In this line of argument, etnomedication can be a symbolic contra movement and a means of social control against western ideology, social relations and political context at a local and global level (Miles & Leatherman in: Koss-Chioino et. al. 2003:7, 8, 10, and Sanabria, 2007:240). Instead of etnomedication, in a holistic approach being catholic can be viewed as the negotiations of cultural identity in social and political situations that reflect power relations in society.

The mixing of religious symbols therefore, is more than only a fusion. It is part of a negotiation. Syncretism treats situations of mixing between religious systems as static and as the final stage of a process; whereas in pluralism it is possible to describe different ideologies in a given context as fluid and in negotiation, suitable with contemporary concepts of culture. Studies that investigate the borders between cultures in a process of a negotiation are the most important nowadays because still a lot of research is needed to fully understand the fluidity of culture (Lambropoulos, 2001: 223, 224).

Contestation of social order

Many academics claim contesting existing social orders are the most important trait of popular Catholicism, because the disillusions of the existing orders of society (state and church) is the main reason people start practicing popular religion. (Sanabria,

2007:185). Especially the gap between practices of the church and everyday reality of the people can cause friction between official and popular forms of Catholicism (Droogers & Siebers, 1991:7, 8 in: Leferink, 2002: 135).

Popular saints offer compensation, often in symbolical form, for a lack in social services (Graziano, 2007:33). Popular saints are connected to the community and their culture through their traditions, locality, shared problems and marginal position in society (Graziano, 2007:32). The popular saint serves as a representative of the community aiming to embody their interests. As a result, people can claim a spot in dominant order without being dependent on foreign saints, priests, prescribed rituals and costs. Popular religion is thus a platform for the negotiation and resistance of processes in daily life and therefore an expression of power (Graziano, 2007:33).

Devotion of popular saints shows the spontaneous and poetic sides of human determination as a way of trying to grasp control on situations beyond control. Popular saints emerge in interactions of despair, hope, vulnerability and resilience and thus serve as an unique door into the logic and Cosmo vision through which million Latin-Americans negotiate reality and their daily life (Graziano, 2007:ix). Popular saints are therefore used as instruments to ease problems people face in society. Therefore, popular saints are connected with the societal problems manifested in the daily life of its devotees (Graziano, 2007: 278).

Rituals

A profound understanding of rituals, liminality and categorization processes explain how and why categories of good and evil in official and popular Catholicism differ. It is striking that those most condemned and unable to reach heaven in official Catholicism are saints in popular religion Public rituals in popular religion are so persistent because official Catholicism excludes some categories of people in society. Popular religion manoeuvres within a larger framework of official Catholicism to solve those problems.

In general, rituals exist to transfer individuals in ceremonies from one well-defined status to another evenly defined status (Van Gennep, 1977:11). Rituals are thus manifestations of transitions. Sanabria (2007) explains this through the passing of for example seasons or favours. Van Gennep (1977) names these transitional types of rituals, *rites of passage,* which can be identified as different phases in *liminality.*

People with a liminal status are *´betwixt and between'*, they exist outside the normal order of statuses in society (Turner, 1969: 95). This means that the subject of the rite, (a person or group) is without a status. Normal order and rules of society and nature to separate the sacred and profane are not valid, which entails risks. Rites are supposed to limit the risks of transitions, often expressed in terms of contamination (Herts 1960, Turner 1969: 108-109; Douglas 1966:96-8 in: Leferink, 2002:26).

In p*reliminal* rites the subjects are cut of from previous statuses to a liminal phase. This is the first phase in liminality. In the second phase persons or groups in liminal rites remain separated of larger groups to enhance the prevention of contamination. Rites of incorporation into the new world are the postliminal rites. Subjects have a clearly defined, new position in society (Van Gennep, 1977:21). By lack of a proper realization of rituals, not all phases of transition are successful which has the result that subjects are stuck in the liminal phase.

In case of death, a proper funeral is needed for incorporation in the world of the dead. Risk groups in official Catholicism are unbaptized children, a tragic sudden death during for example travelling and by the breaking through of taboos. People without a clearly defined status are not ready for incorporation into a clear status in the afterlife because they exist out of existing structures (Van Gennep, 1977:152, 153, 161). This is the reason why animitas are constructed. Animitas provide aid for those people that in categories of official Catholicism would not have gone to heaven.

Categories of good and evil death thus differ between official and popular Catholicism and thus between sectors of society (Leferink, 2002: 172-174). Without official and standardized rituals, some problems of people would not exist, because official Catholicism invented a stigmatized and a problematical imaged of people who did not fulfil all sacraments and are thus not ready to go to heaven. Tragic death is an umbrella theme in popular Catholicism with sub themes such as violence, unjust, sexuality and just as the importance of public ceremonies next to individual religious expressions (Graziano, 2007:15 & Sanabria, 2007: 184).

Through the extensive use of rituals in popular religion, people are able to adjust categories of good and evil death in official Catholicism so more people can go to heaven. An example is the death of just born babies. In official Catholicism, unbaptized children do not go to heaven but to limbo, a place somewhere in between hell and heaven. In popular Catholicism, the death of unbaptized children is nearly a celebration, because it meant children were touched by the hand of God, e.g. God

wanted to have the children close to him. Mothers are not allowed to cry, because the tears will wet the wings of children flying to heaven (Leferink, 2002: 208).

Popular religion thus creates rituals for those liminal categories in official Catholicism, for whom no other solution than purgatory or hell exist. Because the lifestyle of most people are intertwined and embedded in undesirable categories in official Catholicism, people find through popular religion solutions to deal with stigmatized categories. The devotion of people and the *mandas[1]* people make at animitas are a demonstration of rituals of popular religion.

Lay practitioners

Related to the need of rituals, are experts to conduct those rituals. In this subject, the formation of an alternative cleric is another way of the people to undermine or to move away from the ecclesial power because experts on rituals, such as priests, have the power to decide what is legitimate and what is not in rituals (Rostas & Droogers, 1993: 8 and Bourque, 1993:188 in: Rostas & Droogers 1993:8). Instead of priest therefore, some sort of experts exist. People are however not bounded by assistance or expertise of others to exercise their religion. For this reason, conflicts between popular and official religion can reflect a struggle in social classes, between laymen and scholars (Rostas & Droogers 1993:8).

Lay practitioners are unofficial leaders of a ritual. Numerous are known as *rezadores* or *rezadoras*, which means women and men who pray (Sanabria, 2007:185). In the case of popular altars, the owners of altars sometimes ´decide´ how to devote, ranging from no limitations until instructions printed out on paper (Graziano, 2007:43). It is however by no means comparable to the standardized rituals of the church. At some popular animitas, there are caretakers. However, they do not decide how people should devote. People are free to devote how they want. It differs therefore for example how many candles people place during a visit to an animita[2].

Relationships and reciprocity

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[1] Promises of devotees of how they should return favours.
[2] Fieldnotes, 15th March 2010

The function of the death of saints is different in official and popular Catholicism. In official Catholicism, the suffering, torturing and death stands is an example of how devotees should live their life. In contrast, popular saints often did not live piously like official saints. Even in death, the dead maintain the necessities of the living, such as food, rest, affection and respect (Graziano, 2007:9, Van der Pijl, 2007).

The necessities of popular saints open possibilities for reciprocal relationships. Popular saints need devotees and the other way around. This close relationship stands in sharp contrast with the relationship between humans and God. The highest entity God shifts more to a background position because miracles done are subscribed to saints, not God (Graziano, 2007:5, 9, 12). After a favour is done, people thank the animitas for the act, not God[3].

A symbiotic and reciprocal relationship between humankind and supernatural beings has its origins in indigenous and African discourses, in which religion is focused on daily practices (Sanabria, 2007: 184). People can influence the mercy of the saints by taking care and respecting the saint (Graziano, 2007:9, Van der Pijl, 2007). In this notion of death, popular saints are actors within everyday life of people as an intermediary of God (Graziano, 2007:11, 12).

Thus in popular religion, people and saints create and maintain reciprocal relationships of exchange. Different kinds of reciprocal relationships exist, namely generalized, balanced, and negative reciprocity related to social distance between the subjects of exchange (Sahlings 1968, 2004; Servica 1966 in: Kottak, 2008:359-360). People need a norm of reciprocity to know how to behave in relationships. In generalized reciprocity the giver does not expect something in return directly. Exchanges are expressions of close personal relationships, not primarily economic transactions (Kottak, 2008: 360). In balanced reciprocity the giver does expect something in return, although not immediately. A lack of mutual exchange will strain the social relationship. Balanced reciprocity is found outside members of the same band or household, between members of more social distance such as relatives, friends and neighbours (Kottak, 2008: 360). In negative reciprocity, exchange is manifested between subjects of a large social distance wherein subjects try to maximize their interest (Kottak, 2008: 360).

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[3] See the appendixes for photographs of thank you notes.

The relationship between popular saints and people is one of equality. Through the mutual exchange of goods, both parties gain. Both parties expect something in return. Therefore a relationship between popular saints and people is one of balanced reciprocity. In case of the animitas, this is also true. People need the animitas to grant favours and animitas need people to fulfil in their needs[4].

The relationships people maintain with saints are also a strategy of the people to expand their network. By broadening networks, people have more chances at achieving goals they otherwise could not have reached. The expansion of networks can thus be seen as an adaptation to poverty *(Stack, 1975 in: Kottak, 2008:401).*

Moreover, people are described as poor if they are not part of networks that can provide those services. In general, people and communities embedded in various social networks have a stronger stance against poverty and are less vulnerable (Moser 1996; Narayan 1996 in: Woolcock and Narayan, 2000:3) In this sense, social networks are coping strategies, another way for people to receive goods they otherwise could not have obtained.

Relationships are strengthened during religious feasts. During those feasts, the owners of shrines throw parties in honour of the saint, the real patron of the party. Costs are covered by donations to the saint year-round. Thus, money is used in several manners; by distribution to the poor, by recovering of shrines and sometimes it is stolen. Thus, during religious feasts, informal economy prevails. In this manner popular shrines are an informal social service wherein goods circulate in a community (Graziano, 2007:38-40). Popular religion thus can serve as a social levelingmechanism for inequalities within communities through reciprocal systems of exchange.

Popular religion in the era of globalization

Everybody is affected in their wellbeing, sense of identity or security due to the dynamics of capitalism in the globalization era we live in (Bamat & Wiest, 1999:1). People experience a globalized world as a place full of movement, changing and intermixing of contacts (Inda en Rosaldo, 2002: 2). Through these changes many experience inequalities that are not easy to explain. Examples of threats are

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[4] Fieldnotes, 03-03-2010

secularisation, individualism and development of science, whereby death and religion grow further apart from the peoples life-worlds (Leferink, 2002: 20-22). People need surviving strategies, on cultural grounds too to regain grip on the circumstances. One of the strategies of cultural significance is the (re) invention of tradition. *Invented traditions* are practices of ritual nature that emerge within a short, dateable period. People focus on the shared identity and social cohesion of the group by focusing on continuality of the past (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1993: 1-5).

Conclusion

Popular religion is a way people express their religiousness they cannot fully express in institutions of religion. People need popular religion, because religion is a universal trait, it is impossible to capture fully in institutions of religion (Kottak, 2008:54). Through pluralism, it is possible to study multiple religious systems and the way they interact, whereas in syncretism, rigid notions of culture remained to be held in which the outcome of religious systems is labelled. Syncretism has its focus on dominance, whereas the approach of pluralism emphasises on the agency of different actors and religious expressions as processes (Droogers & Greenfield, 2001:27).

Other characteristics of popular religion are directly related to agency and the context of power relationships in which negotiation between actors prevail (Graziano, 2007: ix). Characteristics of popular religion are lay practitioners of rituals, because rituals are not standardized (Graziano, 2007:43). Further, popular religion is often an indirect contestation of the social order which people form due to disillusion of existing institutions (Sanabria, 2007:185).

Reciprocity and social network are other important traits of popular religion. In popular religion, a permeable border between the world of the living and the world of the dead exist. Because of the reciprocal relationships between saints and people and the way people practice popular religion, in between other practices of daily life, popular religion is a form of everyday religiousness (Graziano, 2007:33). Further, much emphasis is placed in popular religion for rituals, created for mainly those categories of people that are excluded of a place in heaven due to the doctrine of the official religion (Graziano, 2007:15 & Sanabria, 2007: 184).

Through the theories I provided a deeper understanding of the way popular religion is shaped. In upcoming chapters I will further explain and exemplify

theoretical notions through the animitas, an expression of popular religion in Chile. At the end of the thesis, once all analyses are done, theoretical notions about popular religion are reconsidered.

Context: Animitas in Urban Chile

The structure

My first encounter with animitas was on my way from the Arturo Merino Benítez airport towards the centre of Santiago. Different types of miniature houses, decorated with candles inside, flowers and a cross on top were located on the side of the road.

These structures are called *animitas,* expressions of people to mark the place of a tragic death. *Animita* is a diminutive form of the word *anima,* which means 'soul' in Chile. They represent individuals who died tragically. As a result, all animitas are different in shape, scale, colour, location and are different objects displayed. Several standard elements are candles, flowers, a cross, objects that refer to the fallen person such as pictures and presents for the deceased one. Because of the individuals animitas represent, it is nearly impossible to make a standard list of characteristics which is appropriate for all animitas. Yet it is possible provide a description of characteristics of the most common form of animitas which I will call, the 'classical animita'[5].

The classical animita consists of an element of a house; build on a sort of platform to maintain a border between the place of the animita and the outside world. The thought behind it is that the soul needs to be anchored in a place to find its peace, exactly on the spot of death[6]. Animitas emerge therefore in dangerous areas where chances of accidents are higher. Moreover, the popular sectors of society where popular religion is present most vividly are usually in more dangerous areas.

The wide range of varieties of animitas can be explained because animitas are part of popular culture, made by the people. There are no homogenized forms of animitas because there are no laws, organizations or experts who decide how an animita should look like. The shape of animitas range from only a cross to a football-park or a villa.

Ideology

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[5] For an example, see appendixes 1
[6] Lira Latuz, Claudia 07-04-2010.

One of the main beliefs surrounding animitas is that if people pray at an animita, they help the soul to reach heaven (Graziano, 2007:9 and Leferink, 2002:284). Once in heaven, the soul is able to help the people on earth with worldly problems by its access to God. This is why often people refer to angels at animitas.

Because it is an oral cult, numerous ideologies exist about the meaning of animitas or what happens after death. One of the most frequent ideologies is about the '*animitas en pena*'. In this version, the soul lingers on earth, unable to reach heaven and unable to obtain a normal life. People build animitas to call the attention of the soul and to calm them[7]. The bodily aspect of death is therefore not important because is is the occurrence of death as an event that plays the pivotal role if an animita appears or not. Even when an animita grows out into a cult, most people do not know what happened to the body. In case of Chile's most famous animita, a grave exists but enjoys compared to the animita a status of anonymity[8].

Some exceptions are several animitas on the general cemetery of Santiago, when the body is present. In some cases people visit tombs of their relatives and decorate them, in other cases, they treat tombs as animitas because they are surrounded by a cult, such as La Novia, Carmencita and former president Balmaceda[9]. This can be the case because people do not have a place to build an animita because they do not exactly know where death has taken place[10], or a cult started to grow related to the grave and people start to ask favours[11]. It is still however, not the bodily aspect that attracts visitors.

Origins

The *apacheta* is directly related to the animita. In the pre-Hispanic era, the apacheta was an expression of the indigenous nature-related faith in Pacha (Earth) Mama (Mother), large piles of accumulated rocks to be found in the northern-centre of Chile, Bolivia and Peru (Moscheni Sossa, 2008:12). The cosmologic indigenous world view, in this part related to the Quechua and the Aymara, entailed that all of nature resembles a universe abundant with sacred places. The Apachetas are one of those expressions of sacred places in nature. It is said that the souls of sorcerers or witches

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[7] Lira Latuz, Claudia 07-04-2010.
[8] Fieldnotes, 18-03
[9] Cristián, 18-03-2010
[10] Fabiola, 18-06-2010
[11] Pepita, 20-03-2010 and fieldnotes, 18-03

rest in these spiritual places to interact with the living, either in a beneficent or a prejudicial manner for the ones asking for favours (Girault, 1958:37).

Apachetas are representations of martyrdom (Girault, 1958:34). Here we can directly see the relationship between the Apachetas and the animitas. Animitas are built for people who died tragically, so that they can function as monuments for the people that suffered. Moreover, both animitas and Apachetas represent spirits who can interact with God as a medium (Moscheni Sossa, 2008: 13).

In earlier days, one had to pay respect to the Apacheta if one was to encounter it. If not, one could provoke the spirits and call out curses or bad luck. People had to stop, pay respect by leaving another rock on the pile of stones or leave a gift to the spirits (Girault, 1958:37).

Spanish intruders did not respect to indigenous faith and tried to evangelize the original inhabitants into Roman-church-loving people. One way of converging original inhabitants to Roman Catholicism was by putting a cross on top of the apachetas. Today, the apachetas continue in a different form, still as large piles of accumulated rocks, in most cases still covered by a cross (Girault, 1958: 45).

Catholicism and Animitas

Catholicism is the dominant religion in Chile, 70% of the population of 15 years or older are Catholic (INE, 2002:25). This percentage is less than the census of 1992 shows, where 76,7 % of the inhabitants older than 14 of age are catholic.

In general, the church respects the cult of the animitas in so far as they serve as a means to keep the moral standards up. The church holds masses for the deceased and they agree in general that the animitas are a required expression of the people to remember their beloved ones. When animitas are regarded as saints and people don't feel the necessity to go to church, priests don't respect them. On the whole, the church and the animitas exist peacefully in one society without interference[12].

Chilean Society

This thesis is partly about the stance of different socio-cultural sectors in society, mainly between the elite and the people. Before drawing conclusions, it is wise to

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[12] Interviews with priests 10-03-2010, 11-03-2010, 13-03-2010, 15-03-2010

compare findings with actual facts about wealth distribution, the health system and schooling so as to understand circumstances of 'the people' in a more profound way.

Although Chile has had an average annual growth rate of seven per cent and has been the most economical successful country in Latin America, Chile is one of the nations with the greatest income inequality (Contreras, 2003:181).

The Gini-coefficient shows how income is distributed in each country. The scale is from zero up to one hundred where zero represents absolute equality and a value of one hundred represents absolute inequality. Chile ranks number forty-four in the world-list of Human Development Index in which 182 countries participate. The value of the Gini-coefficient in Chile is 52.0[13] which means that Chile is positioned at number 17 in the top-20 of countries in the world with the highest Gini-coefficient, although the HDI of Chile is relatively high. This indicates that as a developed country, one of the major problems in Chile is associated with the unequal distribution of wealth.

In Chile, the level of education is directly related to the height of income. For those not able to pay school tuition, public schooling is provided. However, there is a big difference in quality between public and private educational institutions. Good schooling guarantees success at the job market. Well educated people have more chance on a good job and therefore a better salary. With that salary they can pay for the same high educational standards for their children. Thus, education is the main explanation for income inequality (Contreras, 2003:197).

Just as in educational systems, the health system shows the same discrepancy in quality between private and state institutions. People that cannot afford health expenses of private institutions constitute of 60% of the population, namely the urban and rural poor, lower middle class people and the retirees. Waiting time and service are of such a lesser quality that public health institutions do not provide sufficient service although Chile's health system is among the best in Latin America and near performances of health systems in most industrialized countries (Manuel, 2002: 61, 67)

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[13] http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/indicators/161.html accessed 19-05-2010)

Methods & Techniques

"…*what* the ethnographer finds out is inherently connected with *how* she finds it out.
As a result, these methods should not be ignored" (Emerson et al, 1995:11).

Reflection on methods is important because methods determine what date the researcher collects. The data are products of the employed methods and therefore, it is important to reflect upon the latter (Emerson, 1995:11).

Before I started to conduct research, I set up a theoretical framework in the Netherlands. Then I flew to Chile for a three months research about the animitas. Because of this, I already had a biased view of popular religion before I landed, because of my theoretical preparations. It made me looking from a different perspective than if I had not had theoretical preparation, because theoretical frameworks shapes one's mind because the theoretical framework determines what we identify as key components (e.g. actions, conversations, individuals) of research. Therefore the theoretical framework is one of the key influences in what we will observe and record (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002:68).

However, anthropological research relies heavily on a grounded-theory approach. A grounded theory based approach means the inductive process of finding results from the data instead of verifying hypothesis made on forehand (Emerson et al. 1995:143). To be able to work in the field of this method, one has to use techniques to obtain the tacit information as ground for the analysis and writing through participant observation (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002: 4). Participant observation is one of the several research methods in the category of qualitative research. Other methods used are semi structured interviewing, observation, collection and analysis of texts (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002: 2)

The key elements of participant observation are the shared living condition in the same context of the native for an extended period of time. In my case, I did research in Santiago for three months in a row. The research was conducted in the native language, which in Chile is Spanish. Everyday conversation is used as an interview technique and the observer participates in aspects of daily life from the participants that are outside the research setting. The researcher observes informally during leisure activities (hanging out) and can analyse data inductively through the

explicit recording and analysis of information gathered through observation and interviews recorded as field notes. Lastly, the researcher also uses tacit information in addition to explicit data e.g. things people communicate themselves about their culture (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002:1-4).

In my research I used qualitative methods of participant observation, informal or semi-structured interviews and further data research. After conversations and observations, I transcribed my notes as fast as possible to maintain the freshness and richness of details. During the process of writing up the field notes I tried to stick to reality as much as possible by not only capturing the literal expressions of people but also their facial expressions, acts, tone of voice, environment and choice of words. This is necessarily to eventually find the tacit, close understanding of culture (Emerson et al. 1995: 14) and to make a decent ethnography[14] whereby the researcher must '*represent the particular world he has studied…for readers who lack direct acquaintance with it* (Emerson et al, 2002:169).

During those three months of fieldwork in Santiago, I wrote a three-weekly progress report on my findings to evaluate progress and findings with my supervisor. Hereby it was necessarily to analyze findings and to re-think methods and techniques about how to obtain data that were missing up to a certain point.

Back in the Netherlands I start to further analyse data by using techniques such as reading all of my field notes as a data-set, asking questions about field notes to deepen understanding, multiple coding techniques such as open coding, focused coding and elaborating possible theories/ideas about data already made in the field.

All in all, it is important to keep in mind that even though patterns are found in the data and that I do use a grounded theory approach, data are never pure. It is the ethnographer that creates data because he / she analyses data and makes linkages and seeks connections (Emerson, 1995:167). I did the research the best I could, but the result remains an interpretation of what *I* interpreted of a social situation studied (Emerson, 1995:147).

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[14] Definition by Van Maanen (1988:ix) : *"The peculiar practice of representing the social reality of others through the analysis of one's own experience in the world of the others"*.

Chapter 1: The Birth of Animitas

Animitas are built only under certain conditions and for certain people. The circumstances have to do with the qualification of death and of the victim made by the people. Important factors are the empathy people feel for the tragic death, the location of death and the extent of injustice.

The cult of the animitas is so frivol because people cannot fully express their religiosity in official Roman Catholicism. Ideas of the people about justice, empathy and hope in (after-) life are expressions of religiosity of the people, i.e. popular religion. Animitas are thus an expression of religious pluralism, because they are a complementation of the church's doctrine. If religiosity was bound to the church, many people from the popular sectors of society would not have a chance to reach heaven. The people therefore have their own categorizations of good and evil and concepts of 'true faith' in which they can negotiate possibilities for a spot in heaven (Leferink, 2002:128).

People refer to the suffering Jesus and especially Maria when referring to 'true faith', related to a daily struggle for survival and suffering[15]. In other words, people create notions of being a good Catholic through the personification of a distance God in the daily suffering of Jesus and especially Maria (Sanabria, 2007: 187, 188). Particular of Chile, mothers of disappeared people during the dictatorial period, remained strong by relating their suffering to the suffering of Maria after losing her child[16]. By making this comparison, apparently official Catholicism does not display the true aspects of religion. People claim that Catholicism is supposed to be a religion of the humble people, in contrast to glamorous churches and expensive clothing of priests[17].

Priests claim people are reluctant of church practices because of discrepancy between the behaviour aspect and preaching of priests. Further, they state faith is truly alive in poor sectors of society, because of faith's inherent element of necessity[18]. Although animitas start as an act of remembrance of somebody, animitas can turn into a cults; especially when the sense of injustice some people can not reach heaven is the

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[15] Fieldnotes 08-03-2010, 15-03-2010
[16] Fabiola, 18-09-2010
[17] Diego, 26-02-2010
[18] Priest Juan in Santiago, 10-03-2010

larger. People start praying because they resist this part of the doctrine of the church. The more injustice is done, the more people pray to make it undone.

Thus, in the birth of animitas categorization mechanism of the people are shown that differ from the church. This explains the agency people have because they shape their own religiousness and can choose from different religious repertoires. This is in other words, religious pluralism.

Through numerous examples of the popular animita Marinita, and less popular and even abandoned animitas, I will show the stages that animitas go through. At the end of this chapter I have shown people's agency through categorizations of good and evil in respect to official Catholicism and why this is an example of religious pluralism.

1.1 A tragic death

Chile was classified to participate in the World Cup in 1998, to be held in France that year. People celebrated this important event with street parties. In the middle of the night, one celebrating soccer-fan was hit by a taxi, and died. He was seventeen years old[19].

People started to place candles and flowers immediately on the spot he died, on the corner of the street. Then, after two or three weeks, a little chapel appeared. It happened overnight[20]. This shows how animitas emerge after tragic accident. It is the empathy feel and the need to remember what happened that makes people initiate making animitas[21]. People feel something unjust had happened and they want to remember this event so that people will be remembered by this awfulness as a sign out of respect. The tradition to remember tragic incidents on sacred ambiguous spots in public space has its origins of the Apachetas.

After a tragic death of somebody, the qualification of death begins. The people make an unconscious decision about whether a tragic death is worthy of an animita. When for example a rich person dies, although it is horrible, this does not necessarily means an animita arises due to the people who have to make an animita, but also by

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[19] Cristián, See appendix
[20] Cristian, 15-04-2010.
[21] Maximiliano, 09-03-2010

the qualification of death. For instance, why should 'normal' people feel empathy for a rich person? [22] People have to identify with the deceased to feel true empathy before building animitas.

1.2 Growth

She had just reached the age of four and lived with her mother and step-father. Her name was Marina. On the 28th of May 1945, her stepfather took her to the park for a stroll. At the end of the day Marina was to be found dead at the bottom of a tree in the middle of the park. People say that this little deaf and mute girl Marina was violated and later killed by her stepfather[23].

People placed candles underneath the tree where Marinita was killed. Marinita was well known in the neighbourhood and people found out what happened to her through stories of neighbours, Marinita did not have a lot of family besides her mother. People started to bring flowers and brought Marinita gifts which they placed on or under the tree. People start to spread the news that Marinita granted wishes, and the first thank you placard was made of wood, and placed on the tree[24].

Nowadays, that same spot where Marina was killed has grown into a shrine in honour of Marinita. Six adults from the neighbourhood built a structure together for Marinita which now had the status of a powerful *animita milagrosa*, translatable as animita capable of doing miracles. Marinita has her own caretaker, Oscar, who promised to take over the care of Marinita from his mother after her death. The mother of Oscar was the foster parent of Marinita. He already takes care of her for over thirty years[25]. Devotees from all over the world come to Marinita to ask favours[26]. In other words; Marinita has become a popular saint.

The example of Marinita shows how animitas grow from a shrine for the remembrance for a person into a popular cult. Her shrine is still related to what happens, but people that visit Marinita were not directly related to her. The shrine is no longer only a remembrance of a person. The most important condition under which

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[22] Maximiliano. 09-03-2010
[23] 23-03-2010 Oscar, caretaker of Marinita.
[24] Oscar, 23-03-2010
[25] Magín, 18-03-2010
[26] Fieldnotes, 26-03-2010

animitas can flourish, is how tragic death is and a positive environment for the oral recommendation and spreading of that same story of the tragic death[27].

Comparing the death of Marinita with the death of the soccer-fan in the paragraph above, most people will think that the death of Marinita is more tragically, particularly because Marinita was so young, pious and indefensible[28]. Out of this qualification of how tragic death is, people base their empathy on certain stories behind animitas which influences their decision to pray for the soul of an animita[29].

The first 'miracle' animitas perform are usually granted to a neighbour that was praying to remember the animita and simultaneously asking for a favour or help in everyday life[30]. Through this first person, the critical stage of spreading popularity begins. Factors that contribute to the growth of animitas in this phase is the integration of the animita in the neighbourhood, i.e. are people familiar with this person and is the death therefore more personal? Signs of public devotion are proof that the animita grants favours and thus are another contributing factor to the growth of animitas. The more favours an animita grants, the more people show their devotion and thus the larger the animita grows, physically speaking[31]. When animitas are perceived as being more powerful, more unrelated people to the person which the animita represents will approach it because these people have desires they would like to see fulfilled.

Lastly, the place where the animita is situated depends on if the animita grows faster, related to the amount of people passing the animita each day and how easy it is for people to visit an animita. Furthermore, if an animita is located outside the area of residence from its acquaintances, chances for the animita to flourish into a cult are small because people to start the cult have difficulties visiting the animita[32].

1.3 Death

Some animitas however, are not from that magnitude that they keep attracting new devotees. Animitas that do not grant wishes have a greater chance at being abandoned then popular animitas that often keep attracting new devotees[33].

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[27] Fieldnotes, 29-03-2010
[28] Fieldnotes, 29-03-2010
[29] Maximiliano 09-03-2010, Margareth, 10-03-2010, Lira Latuz, 05-04-2010
[30] Magín, 18-03-2010
[31] For examples of display thankfulness for granted favours, see appendixes
[32] Magín 18-03-2010
[33] Fieldnotes, 08-04-2010

Animitas are abandoned when for example relatives move or die. This also counts for the popular animita Marinita; she has one care-taker now, what will happen if he is no longer there? Animitas do not have eternal life, although popular animitas have more chances of survival through the constant flow of new devotees than small animitas only visited by relatives. However, even when an animita is fallen out of grace or abandoned, nobody takes it away out of fear of reprisals of the animita, because the place where the animita is located still belongs to the animita[34]. Therefore, nobody is entitled to tear the animita down.

1.4 Conclusion

After a tragic death, a classification process arises wherein the people decide if an *animita* is appropriate for these tragic events. In this classification, people's sense of religiousness prevails related to ideas about justice and empathy. The *animitas* in Chile are so persistent in their nature, because in official Catholicism, people can not fully express their religiousness. Besides the morality of the church, people create their religious morality, crystallized in notions of being a good Catholic (Leferink, 202:182), or the true essence of Catholicism (Sanabria, 2007:183).

Maria and Jesus are very popular by the people of the popular sectors of society, the people can identify with the suffering of Maria and Jesus. The people transform the Catholic religion to their own humble lives full of struggles. Instead of merely resisting, the people thus penetrate the hegemonic discourse of official Catholicism by going back to the roots of Christianity and related lifestyles similar to theirs. In this manner, it is the incapacity of the church to fully capture the religiosity of the people and remain to be the representative of Catholicism.

Animitas are visual manifestations of the church incompleteness of Catholic faith. Animitas are thus an example of religious pluralism, because they exist besides official Catholicism and meanwhile complement the official doctrine. Cases of animitas in this chapter have shown that animitas are built for those people outside the 'legitimate' categories of official Catholicism i.e., those people in the liminal categories of official Catholicism (Van Gennep, 1977:152, 153, 161). Moreover, the larger the discrepancy between categories of official Catholicism of good and evil and a tragic death, the more empathy people feel and the stronger their urge to pray to the

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[34] Magín, 19-03-2010

animitas. Therefore, the more popular animitas are generally cases of tragic death outside the 'salvation reach' of the church. Because tragic deaths are often related to poverty, the practice of popular religion reveals the negotiation about inequalities in society en large (Graziano, 2006:ix).

Chapter 2: Networks & Reciprocity

In this chapter I discuss how people in Chilean society use social relations as coping strategy by examining how people treat the animitas, because animitas are part of their social network. Animitas are an expansion of networks when people had not met the person for whom the animita is build for. It is a continuation of social networks when people were connected with this person and they maintain this relationship.

Social capital, or social network, is one of the capacities of people to increase possibilities to ameliorate everyday life. In other words, one can use social networks to achieve something, to receive goods and to manoeuvre socially. It is a coping strategy especially for people who do not have a lot of resources in the formal sectors of society. For common people, social networks are the most important resource they have (Moser 1996 and Narayan 1996 in Narayan, 2000:3). Therefore, when one's social network is dying out, this could have drastic consequences. That is why animitas are maintained. People need social networks to cope with poverty and insecurity about the help of institutions.

Social relationships function by a norm of reciprocity. This norm deviates between groups and between societies. If there was not a norm of reciprocity, social relationships would die out because people would not have a common agreement about how to treat each other, what to expect and what to give in return (Kottak, 2008: 360). In case of the animitas, this is balanced or symmetrical reciprocity. This is one of the forms of reciprocity and is found among relatives, friends, neighbours and co-workers (Kottak, 2008:360).

Cultural notions about the norm of reciprocity and the use of social networks arose out of the social relations in social order existing from the conquest. These are respectively patron- client relations between boss and worker and egalitarian relations between co-workers[35] . Nowadays in Chile, title and profession still are very important and upwards social mobility hardly possible[36]. The two types of relationships are demonstrated in the relations people have with animitas as egalitarian relationship, which they maintain through balanced forms reciprocity. This is because animitas led similar lives to the devotees. The hierarchical relationship is shown through the relationships people have with 'higher' divine entities, namely the

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[35] Fabiola, 10-09-2010
[36] Magín, 18-03-2010

official saints and God. Official saints are also part of the networks of people, because they are their patrons to help people in daily life. Spanish conquerors used the church and official saints to place hierarchy in relationships between people and divine entities, because of the monotheism in Catholicism.

As mentioned earlier, before the conquest a polytheistic pantheon of Gods existed without clear notions of hierarchical relationships between divine entities and humankind (Sanabria, 2007: 182). The cult of the animitas however, is so special because it is based on equality and balanced reciprocity. People use their egalitarian relation with the animitas to gain from the animitas bond with God. Even though animitas are not higher in rank as people and did not lead special lives because they represent people who were poor, animitas are in close relationship with God. This is a way in which the people show that God is merciful with the poor. People create the notion of Catholicism as a religion for humble people in whom they can identify with the personification of God in Jesus and Maria with their similar lives of suffering (Sanabria, 2007:186).

First I will explain why animitas in particular and the dead in general, remain part of social networks of people, then how people expand their social network through making contact with new animitas. Further I will show how social networks and thus animitas are used as a coping strategy. Lastly, it will be clear how social networks function through reciprocity. Through the use of mandas, it will be demonstrated how this norm of reciprocity works and how animitas serve as a coping strategy.

2.1 The living dead

"This is my family", Edith says, while holding a collage of four children. One is a baby girl, the others are eight year old boy of eight years old, a chubby five year old girl and a very small baby. "I have another girl of twenty-three years old. This is her baby of one year and four months". She says tenderly. But I thought you told me that a girl of you lay on the cemetery? I said a little bit surprised. "Yes, that is true, that is my baby girl". She points at the baby girl in the left bottom corner. "She takes care of us". Why did she die? I ask cautiously. She talks fast and not sentimental. "She was

in a coma, like a vegetable. She lay there, mute… She had a pre-infarct. But I know she stays with us".[37]

This example shows how people stay in touch with their dead. When relatives die, this does not mean necessarily that they are no longer part of life. When Edith showed her family to me, she presented her deceased child as well as part of her family. She has conversation with her little child and in turn, her baby takes care of her and her other children. We can therefore speak of the living dead. People remain close with their relatives even after they have died. When people place an animita for a relative or acquaintance, this is not any different than remaining an other type of eternal relationship. In that sense that people use animitas firstly to remember the deceased.

People speak also about the person the animita is dedicated to, not the other way around. Visits to animitas or tombs remain very personal. People say for instance: "I am going to Romualdito" instead of "I am going to the animita of Romualdito". People name their interaction with the dead 'conversations' and can have very good 'talks' when speaking to deceased and animitas[38]. At *La Novia[39]*, somebody even left a scribbling-pad and pencils for other people if they needed to write to La Novia[40]. There, people write detailed accounts of their love life and leave those papers in her tomb. People treat La Novia as a friend. In one letter, a girl writes that it did not work out between her former boyfriend and they broke up. A couple of weeks later, she met another guy with whom she from then on had a relationship. There is no reference at all about thankfulness for La Novia for help, or the position of La Novia in the afterlife. This girl just wrote down what happened in her love life to keep La Novia updated[41]. Furthermore, on national holidays or the birthday of the deceased, people decorate tombs and animitas as if they were still alive[42].

When somebody acquaints with a new animita therefore, we can interpret this as an expansion in networks, because people create a new bond with somebody that did not exist before. People describe the relationship they have with animitas, even when they did not have met this person living as a relative, brother or close friend[43].

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[37] Edith, 31-03-2010
[38] Fieldnotes, 12-04-2010
[39] 'the bride'. It is an animita that grants favours located on the cementery. See the appendixes
[40] Fieldnotes, 18-03-2010
[41] Cristián, 18-03-2010
[42] Fieldnotes 18-03-2010
[43] Fieldnotes 08-03-2010, 23-03-2010, 30-03-2010

This relationship between animitas and people resembles the egalitarian notion of relationship between co-workers, stemming from the conquest.

Even in virtual space, animitas literally belong to the social network of people. For instance, a facebookpage is created for La Novia, next to a general facebookpage about animitas and blogs about the history of animitas[44].

2.2 Approachability

Animitas are easily approachable through different tactics. The first reason is related to the similarity in lifestyles. Animitas are built in honour of 'normal' people who lived similarly in the same socio-economical sectors of society and are therefore easily identifiable with. This stands in sharp contrast to the relationship people have with canonized saints[45].

Secondly, a lot of animitas are built in the environment of a community where they had their friends and family. They were once part of the community devotees that are living in now. Thirdly, animitas almost always exist in the diminutive form of a name[46]. Romualdo changes into Romualdito and Marina into Marinita. By making the name more informal, animitas are easier accessible and more profane. They are not elite but part of 'our kind'.

Furthermore, people conduct very 'normal occupations' during their time spent at an animita. In addition to religious activities such as praying and placing, people clean animitas, sell and leave flowers. Moreover, these acts are performed between other daily activities, not at a specific date or time. There is no rigid line between religious activities and everyday life. For example, when people leave presents, these could be presents for living people.

Lastly, as already mentioned, people merely have conversations with the animita rather than praying[47]. All these reasons lead to the relatively narrow gap between animitas and devotees. Contact with animitas is inviting to start when situated close to one's neighbourhood, especially when animitas are immensely decorated and have a crowd of people surrounding the animita. People can approach animitas easily because they maintain their equal statuses.

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[44]   Fieldnotes, 15-02-2010
[45]   Fieldnotes 08-03-2010
[46]   Magín, 19-03-2010
[47]   Juanita, 08-04-2010

2.3 Coping strategies

People expand their social networks by incorporating new animitas because of their needs. Themes that frequently arise in questions asked at animitas are problems with health, economical problems, job opportunities, love and protection. These themes are beyond the people's capacity to regulate. Thus, animitas function as an extra certainty as a way to cope with uncertainties, emerged out of disillusions from existing social orders[48]. Further explanation coping strategies. Favours asked and only granted when people have true faith. To make a *manda* in other words, is a coping strategy in another way to gain strength in striving what people aim for[49].

It is perfect for people to turn to animitas for help, because of the approachability of the animitas for the people. Through the animitas, people can narrow the gap between God and them because animitas serve as a link in the chain between God, being the highest divine entity, and humankind. As a medium, animitas have to transform the offers of the people, shaped into products as flowers, prayers, candles and similar items into love for God and vice versa. Therefore, animitas are instruments of transformation between the sacred and the profane.

Through their death of martyrdom, animitas stand close to god. It is said that the more tragic death is, the more power animitas have and the closer animitas are to God. This is the religiousness of the people, in which Catholicism is a religion of the humble and the poor. Although animitas did not live life as piously as official saints, they too deserve a spot in heaven, in contrast to official forms of religion. It is especially through the martyrdom of animitas that they gain popularity[50]. Martyrdom is a theme widespread in popular religion although official saints of martyrdom are popular by the people as well.

Besides people that need animitas for the granting of favours, animitas also need people to flourish. Without devotees, animitas cannot grant favours and grow into cults. Animitas are dependent on the devotion of others as an advertisement in order to grow. In contrast to official saints, who already have acquired their status as saint and helper, animitas remain in need of devotees for popularity and status of helper. In sum, animitas and people are mutually dependent on each other.

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[48] Maximiliano 09-03-2010 and Priest Andreas, 10-03-2010.
[49] Ricardo 07-04-2010, Juanita 08-04-2010.
[50] Maximiliano, 09-03-2010 and Cristián, Magín 19-03-2010

Because animitas are part of the social network of people, devotees can use the animitas easily as a coping strategy for manoeuvring. In other words, animitas are part of the social capital of people. However, favours granted by animitas are not without something in return.

2.4 Mandas as norms of reciprocity

Because animitas and people have an equal status, they have a balanced form of reciprocity (Kottak, 2008:360). People and animitas are mutually dependent on each other. One performs thus not without any balanced manifestation of reciprocity in return. People visit animitas because they grant favours but need to make a *manda,* when asking for favours. A manda is translatable into something similar to a promise[51].

For example: *"Marinita cured my two daughters from depression where the doctors failed to do so. I went to Marinita, prayed to her and asked for help. Now, for almost thirty years, I pay respect to Marinita every week. She is very powerful"*[52]. The *manda* this devotee made was to light candles every week. This person has already been doing so for nearly thirty years. Logically, because there can be severe consequences when one fails to pay their *manda.* So, most people rather not try. *"During the pregnancy of my student's wife, they performed a manda at Santa Teresita de los Andes. They promised to visit Teresita every month or so, but did not comply. His wife had a miscarriage. I felt very sorry for him, but he had peace with it. It was like it happened. They did not perform the manda and he was convinced that was the reason of the miscarriage"*[53]

The aspect of reciprocity is very strong. If the animita grants somebody a favour, one has to give a favour in return. If this agreement is damaged, the norm of reciprocity is out of balance because the animita already granted somebody a favour, without receiving something in return. The negative consequences of 'betrayal' of this mutual reciprocity can vary from the lack of protection, the reversing of a favour or punishment. This aspect of revenge or malicious behaviour against people reveals the human aspects of saints in popular religion (Sanabria, 2007:186). Animitas are

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[51] Margaret21-03-2010, obras publicas 06-04-2010, magin 18-03-2010, maximiliano 08-03-2010
[52] Pepe, 30-03-2010
[53] Joyce, 11-04-2010

personages with the same needs people have and can therefore become passionate when their needs are not fulfilled. This is related to the malicious traits of the Apachetas in the era before the conquest. However, this stands in sharp contrast with official saints who piously stand above earthly needs and therefore never need to take revenge. As we can see concepts of relationships as hierarchical between patron-client and equal as between farmers founded in the conquest, are still interwoven in Chilean society.

More extreme forms of reciprocity reveal in the economical aspect related to popular religion. People make *mandas* to animitas and remain related to this animita. Besides devotion and taking care however, informal economical processes arise. In case of the two caretakers of Romualdito, each of them has a box for donation. It is more than caretaking, they *earn* there living by donations made by people who pray at Romualdito[54]. Moreover, during religious feasts money gained at animitas in donation boxes is used to revive the shrine and distributed among the poor in the community (Graziano, 2007:38-40). Markets surround religious feast whereby people do not only sell religious items but also clothing, food and for example jewellery. In case of the cave of Lourdes, there are all-round market stands[55].

2.5 Collective activity

The social aspect of animitas is even clearer through the collective character of the animitas. Animitas are built collectively, maintained collectively, controlled collectively and people have to pay their manda collectively.

Animitas are built collectively; because different people take care of the animita. Different people place candles, clean the structure of the animitas or add new decorations[56]. Secondly, they are maintained collectively because numerous people conduct different activities there. Some people clean, others pray and others pay mandas. The paying of mandas is often done by placing thank-you placards. Because numerous people place these placards[57], the growing of animitas is thus the product of devotion by multiple actors.

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[54] Magín, 18-03-2010
[55] Priest Andreas 10-03-2010, observation Cuasimodo and Virgin de Lourdes 18-02-2010
[56] See chapter Birth of an animita for more details on how an animita emerges.
[57] Fieldnotes. See appendixes for examples of placards

Furthermore, they are controlled collectively because responsibility for the animitas is carried out by multiple persons. This is related to social control of the animitas. People in the neighbourhood know who the main care-taker is of an animita. The main care taker can lend permission for altering of the animita[58] and has the main responsibility over the animita. However, it is a responsibility of all. Oscar for example, places the gifts Marinita receives overnight in a cupboard and replaces them the next morning because robbery is common[59]. When Oscar is not present, other people notice and take care of the animita, e.g. social control is the way animitas are regulated.

Part of the cult of animitas is the collective display of devotion. People notify other that they have made a *manda*, and they perform this *manda* in public. One example is the annual journey to the Virgin de Lo Vasquez on the highway between Santiago and Valparaíso. As I stated before, part of popular religion is the devotion of the virgin because the suffering of the virgin is similar to the daily struggle of people (Sanabria, 2007: 186). Therefore, people make also mandas at the Virgin and other official saints, mainly of martyrdom. In this way, Catholicism is perceived and shaped as a religion of the humble. On the 8th of December the highway is closed off for motorized traffic for the yearly pilgrimage to the temple of the Virgin. People go there every year as a *manda* for the Virgin that they helped them. They go by foot, bicycle or horse[60]. In case with the animitas, people are proud to show which placard belongs to them and are happy to show others that they have made a *manda*. If people have made a manda at an animita, this is one of the first conversational topics covered in a conversation about animitas[61]. Moreover, a significant amount of the placards are displayed with name and date.

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I showed that people maintain connections with their dead and animitas by keeping them in their social networks. I also demonstrated how these social networks work by means of balanced reciprocity, both gain from their relationship. The norm of reciprocity is formulated through *mandas* or, promises.

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[58] Gonzalo, 13-03-2010
[59] Oscar 15-04-2010
[60] Margaret, 12-02-2010
[61] Fieldnotes , 30-03-2010

norms of social relationships created during the conquest prevail through the relations people have with animitas and official saints. Animitas are so special because people feel related to them through equal statuses, related to egalitarian relationships between co-workers during the conquest. This differs drastically from the relationships people hold between official saints and God, which are hierarchal relationships. These are comparable to those of client and patron during the conquest.

The social aspect of popular religion serves as a coping strategy in the social network of people to ameliorate life through favours, by encouraging own capacities of the people and by creating chances of informal economy. People need large social networks to cope with insecurities of obtaining resources of products beyond people's control. Social networks are one of the capacities most used by the poor (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000:3). In all aspects of the animitas, this social element prevails. From the start, animitas are a collective enterprise; they are built, controlled and devoted collectively. This insecurity is created by disillusions from existing orders to fulfil their needs, both state as church. Again, popular religion serves thus as a 'mirror of society' in which larger problems of society prevail (Possemai, 2005:23).

Chapter 3: Death in Public Space

The power of place will be remarkable. – Aristotle, physics, book IV.

"People urinated, day after day, always in the same corner. It was next to a liquor store, so it were probably drunk people who came back to the liquor store to buy more booze, and meanwhile had to take a leak. Then, a grandmother put down a candle in the same corner. She wanted to do something about it I guess. Suddenly, more and more candles appeared. And then suddenly... Somebody placed a little house!" She looks at me sparklingly and laughs out loud. "It is incredible! And the best part of the story is, that it is a very strong animita that receives a lot of 'thank-you' notes! Nobody ever died there; it used to be a pee-spot![62]"

The grandmother in this story decided she wanted, and she claimed influence in public space by putting down candles, even though nobody died. This shows that animitas are part of the world and that they can function as a vehicle to solve problems, even if they do not directly grant favours. In this case, an animita emerged to deal with contamination in a public area in use. The grandmother in this anecdote decided that piece of public space needed to be reformulated in order to change the way this corner was used. In this manner, the border between the world of everyday life and the religious realm is even less rigid.

This story exemplifies how the act of placing an animita can be an act of power. It is a means of people to negotiate about space, and defining what the purpose is of that place. By erecting an animita, space is defined as a place for popular religion and therefore in use for a certain group of people who practice popular religion.

This chapter treats theories about pluralism and power-relations in relationship to space. Public space is supposed to be 'property' of everybody and nobody in particular. Nevertheless, space is charged with socio-political issues and interests between different parties (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga, 2003:18). In the end however, some actors or groups obtain the final right to actually claim and occupy space. In respect to the animitas, space is directly claimed by the people to be part of the religious realm. Spaces become meaningful places due to a certain event, for example a tragic death. The places where animitas are located are forever ambiguous because

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[62] Lira Latuz, Claudia 07-04-2010.

the places are 'contaminated' by tragic accidents. Through this event, places where animitas are located are forever portals between the sacred through the connection of the animita with heaven, and the profane of its contact with everyday life[63].

This is the reason why those places are heavily contested if the government interferes, because this is inherent to disrespect of the popular cult and death of people from the popular sectors of society. One question that remains however is how different actors negotiate about space and place, related to how space is classified, exactly because there are no rules about animitas at all; negotiation about animitas is necessary and possible.

First I will show how the contestation of places differ due to stratification of spaces, in other words, spaces differ in popularity. Then the commonality of these places is discussed. Through the comparison between different places, namely the cemetery, a normal neighbourhood and the highway, the stratification of spaces will be shown. Using the example of Romualdito, I will show how negotiation about space manifests itself. At the end of this chapter it is clear how space is contested differently due to stratification in the city and commonality of spaces and how animitas function as a means for the people to claim power and gain influence in public space.

3.1 Stratification and Contestation

Within Santiago, there are definitely differences in demand and reputation. Spaces in the city are different from each other due to the stratification it represents from the society. The stratification in Santiago in neighbourhoods reflects in the emergence of animitas. It is not true that there are no animitas to be found in higher class neighbourhoods, however, animitas located in higher-class neighbourhoods are significantly lower in number than those located in middleclass neighbourhoods and poorer areas[64]. In the higher classes of society, it is more common to remember the dead at the cemetery, not through an animita[65]

Similarly, even within a neighbourhood, there are differences in the way space is contested. The qualification of the usefulness of space, or in other words, the demand of a limited piece of space is not bounded to local neighbourhood names.

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[63] Lira Latuz, Claudia 07-04-2010.
[64] Field notes 16-03-2010
[65] 07-04-2010 conversations with teacher and receptionist at yoga office in Las Condes, 09-03-2010 Maximiliano Salinas

There are nuances to be found. I will show the diversification of space within a neighbourhood through two examples.

On the intersection between Avenida Vicuña Mackenna and Enrique Olivares, a small animita is located in remembrance of a male adolescent who died through injuries after a traffic accident during the celebrations of a soccer match won against France in '98. Several times the government removed the animita, because it was located in the middle of the street. After numerous demolishment and reconstructions of the animita by the government and family members, the physical appearance of the animita is not more than a rock; without inscriptions about the person connected to this animita, without thank you messages or gifts. The government however, does not attempt to remove it again[66].

On the street corner parallel to Av. Vicuña Mackenna, namely of Avenida Colombia and Avenida Santa Amalia, another animita arose in remembrance of another car accident. It was a policeman who drove his bike and crashed with a car. This animita is very popular, people come to ask favours and leave thank you messages[67].

The first animita did not flourish, the second one did. The former was removed several times before eventual placement, the latter remained standing from the first moment. The popularity of animitas is thus related to demolishment. E.g. if an animita is demolished or taken away, it logically does not receive the chance for attention and widespread popularity because it is simply not there. It is a condition for popularity that the animita remains standing. When animitas remain standing however, it does not automatically mean that it grows into an animita who performs miracles.

Avenida Vicuña Mackenna is one of the main streets down from the centre to the southern outskirts of Santiago. The metro-line is situated on this street. It is therefore logical to speculate that the government did not want this part of public space marked by an animita. The actions of taken away the animita by the government and rebuilding it again by the family, is the negotiation process about the space for this animita. Clearly, the family members felt the strong need to put down the animita exactly at that spot. At the end of this negotiation process, an animita is standing, but

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[66] Interview Cristián, 15-04-2010
[67] Interview Cristián, 15-04-2010

in a modest form without commemoration of a specific event. Only family and friends know what happened, it remains a small cult, so far[68].

The classification of space is related to stratification in society. In Santiago, the qualification of space is not rigid and spaces are interpreted differently by different actors. Even in a middle-class neighbourhood of La Florida, two animitas built in streets parallel to each other; qualification and classification of spaces differ.

3.2 Commonality

So spaces and places differ from each other. Space is contested, but contested differently (Casey, 1996:26). Take for example housing prices, from sky-high in the centre and elite neighbourhoods to low in the periphery, neighbourhoods with bad reputations and *poblaciones*[69]. Especially in Santiago where the population density is high, space is heavily contested in some places. The way people treat the spatial issue of the animita illustrates how different actors negotiate about spaces and places.

Space is contested and controlled differently by the qualification of how public space is, measured by the commonality of spaces. In Santiago, it is the commonality through which can be seen how public space is controlled. In higher class areas, space is referred to as property of individuals and henceforth controlled anonymously. Pavements in front of villas in higher class areas in Santiago such as Las Condes are taken care of through housekeepers, not by the people who actually own the pavement. This is in contrast to the poblaciones where space is more regulated socially. Pavements in front of poblaciones are literally property of everybody who lives there. People not only sweep the pavements, they also water the plants and take care of the trees[70]. Thus, if a tragic incident was about to happen in the poblaciones, everyone has the same right to place an animita. In las Condes however, pavements are far more restricted to certain apartments.

However, some places are more ambiguous in commonality, i.e. how much space is shared among social actors, then others. Clearly defined areas are the city-centre, high-class neighbourhoods and poblaciones. The centre is public space 'owned' by the government; people do not live there but are welcome to use the space

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[68] See the appendix for photos of this animita
[69] Lower class neighborhoods where people have a common/shared garden and entrance.
[70] Fabiola, 21-09-2010

for a certain amount of time. Higher and lower class neighbourhoods are well-defined areas because the socio-economical status of the residents does not vary much which results in a clear defined aspired control system. More ambiguous places are the cemetery and neighbourhoods with mixed socio-economic statuses of residents.

3.3 The cemetery

In areas of the city where the government has relatively large influence on the shaping of space, it is more difficult or nearly impossible for the people to put down an animita. Even at the general cemetery in Recoleta, the biggest cemetery in Santiago with a surface of 86 hectares and more than two million deceased[71], the way people honour or keep their dead alive is regulated. Although no laws exist about animitas, officials from the cemetery govern the space of the cemetery and also the animitas that exist on the cemetery. This is made possible, because of the fact that it is a cemetery; the government named and marked this piece of land and so the government is more entitled than in other places how people should treat their dead. The slogan of the cemetery is: "*un museo al aire libre"* which is translated as "an open-air museum". Therefore it is not without consequences how people decorate graves because this is part of how this museum is formed.

Inside the graveyard a couple of tombs show great similarities to animitas in the form of popular saints. The tomb of former president Balmaceda for example, is widely known for students to aid them during exams. Students write favours to comply with or without *manda* on pieces of paper and they throw them inside the chapel. The walls of the tomb are full of little text messages written with ballpoint, pencil and even graffiti to ask for favours and to grant the former president a sort of placard. Another popular saint widely known is 'the bride' or *'la novia'*, already mentioned in chapter two about networks. It has been said that she died on the day of her wedding and died in her bride's gallon. Now, people decorate, write and throw written letters in her tomb to ask for a happy love life[72].

According to Cristián, the municipality tries to govern the tombs of la novia and Balmaceda by cleaning it and thus removing messages on paper and scribbling on

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[71] http://www.cementeriogeneral.cl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=44&Itemid=10 accessed 31-05-2010.

[72] Fieldnotes and interview with Cristián, 19-03-2010
   Conversation with Maria 05-04-2010

the tombs, every couple of months. However, this does not affect the people in their devotion.

"*People feel connected with this president, because his death is in line with loads of other deaths during the formation of labour unions. His death meant something for the people, because a lot of people died during the protests and manifestation in the struggle for workers rights. The people who take care of the grave keep it clean, the graveyard workers or family of the deceased*".

The grave of La Novia and president Balmaceda serves in this case as a replacement for an animita somewhere in another public space because people don't know exactly where they died (in case of la novia) or because there is no other alternative. The devotion even after cleansing of the tombs remains strong because the people feel strong senses of empathy.

In fact, every four months these tombs are cleaned, on behalf of the graveyard officials [73]. Therefore, it seems that the regulations of the cemetery are designed to control devotion to certain popular saints. However the myths are documented in the general book of the cemetery publicised in 2006 under the chapter myths and legends[74]. In this book, the cemetery is viewed as a city of the dead, a place where the history of Chile comes alive. It is an open air museum where visitors are restricted to certain rules. However, family members or devotees are allowed to construct and shape the museum. Moreover, staff of the cemetery know the myths and are more than happy to tell them to visitors[75].

The cemetery as an institution attempts to regulate cults of La Novia or former president Balmaceda by cleaning tombs. As noticed by Cristián, the cult is not affected by this regulation, it doesn't stop. Thus, the flourishment of cults is dependent on the willingness of the officials of the cemetery as it is a place of the government, although people have to pay for a place on the cemetery[76]. This is an example of how the government or institutions gain control at popular religion, depending on the place where it is situated.

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[73] Fieldnotes 08-04-2010
[74] "Cementerio General, Guia Histórica y Patrimonial",
[75] Fieldnotes 14-03-2010
[76] www.cemeteriogeneral.cl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=42&Itemid=33
accessed 21-06-2010

3.4 Highways

Highways are an example of an undefined public space, undefined because it is not clear who owns it, but clearly not very wanted. The space next to the highway is not contested heavily, because it is unfit for living purposes or shopping possibilities. Therefore, it is very easy and often done by the people to place an animita on the side of a highway. The government do not demolish them, because they do not care for animitas. To demolish animitas, is more work than to let them be. Highways therefore, are for the people easily claimed spaces. Perhaps also, because highways are situated outside city-life, and the cult of the animitas is said to be more related to traditions of rural areas in Chile. So, cults of animitas outside the city have besides more space, also more visitors or 'backing' (cultural background) to flourish[77].

However, problems arise when the government or organizations decide to alter the highway, for example by widening of the traffic lanes or altering of highway curves. Highways need to be altered on dangerous spots to reduce future accidents. The reason people know which spots of highways or large routes are dangerous, is because of the animitas arisen out of the accidents. Consequently, animitas need to be removed from those spots on or next to the highway where altering takes place[78].

In line with other organizational cases in relation to the animitas, there is no policy because there are no laws to protect or regulate animitas as a form of popular religion. Even though, every project that needs altering in living possibilities/public space needs to present a proposal with documented animitas included, from 2002 onwards[79]. This is however no set rule. It is more an expection and a habit. When a project fails to include animitas in its concept version, it needs to be ameliorated because 'other projects do include the animitas' and 'everybody knows they exist and respects them'[80].

When an organization wants to use the place the animita is standing, this poses a problem, because animitas are directly related to the place of death; they are not erected a couple of meters beside it. However, nowadays all animitas need to be documented (with GPS) and classified as visited or abandoned. The abandoned animitas can be taken away without any problems. Apparently in spirit of these

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[77] Maximiliano,09-03-2010.
[78] See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nIzLo2ZPzPs for a short film about moving an animita.
[79] Rodrigo Lopez, 01-04-2010
[80] Rodrigo Lopez, 01-04-2010.

organizations, these animitas do not have value because nobody visits them anymore. The ideology of a lingering soul on that same spot thus does not play a pivotal role in the decisions. Even so, by means of a ritual, workers of the programme build new houses and perform rites de passage to transfer the souls of animitas from one clearly defined place to another (Van Gennep, 1977:11). Workers remove the objects of animitas to new houses, make a cross and demolish the old animita[81]. This is a negotiation about space and animitas[82].

Clearly, animitas next to the highway are very powerful instruments of the people. Animitas are connected to that space next to the highway. When a project arises, the government or institution who works with these animitas has to document animitas and find a solution[83]. In one of those projects, one prototype of animita was designed to replace old animitas. In total, 83 new animitas were built in that same style. This had disastrous consequences for the popularity of specific animitas though because the uniformity of the new animitas. The animitas were no longer products of the people. Therefore, nobody visited the new animitas anymore after some time had passed[84].

3.5 Negotiation about space

In former examples such as the cemetery, highways and stratification in city life in lower class neighbourhoods and higher class neighbourhoods, space was clearly defined in respect to the 'entitlement of space'. Just as the case of the two animitas in neighbourhood 'la Florida', public space is sometimes ambiguously interpreted in relation to who is most eligible to claim that space. In these spots, the dynamics and negotiation is the strongest because it is unclear who is most eligible to claim space. In case of Santiago, we could call this ambiguous space, 'middle class – space'. How negotiation about space works is shown through the example of Romualdito.

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[81] Fanny Canessa 19-03-2010
[82] For an example of changing the site of an animita, watch:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nIzLo2ZPzPs 'cambiando la animita'
[83] See http://www.scielo.cl/scielo.php?pid=S0717-9962005006000005&script=sci_arttext for explanation of the project to replace and rebuild animitas. See www.e-seia.cl and type in 'autopistas' as tipe of project to find documents related to highway altering, including in some of them, animitas.
[84] Cristián 15-04-2010, Fanny Canessa 19-03-2010, Rodrigo Lopez 07-04-2010

"For me, faith moves mountains". She smiles timidly and her eyes grow large and wet. *"It's already been there for so long; as long as I can remember it. I cannot even remember when I went for the first time! It has always been like this. My grandmother used to take me, as a child. It's been here for so long..."* Her hands unfold rapidly whereupon she is stroking the back of her hand. Something changes in her expression. From a timid posture, she looks at me fiercely. I'm trying to grasp it, but cannot put my finger on how she feels exactly. *"They tried to take it away you know! But they couldn't! The machine stopped working and could not remove Romualdito..."* Her head leans slightly to the right side towards her shoulder, removes her glasses and pads her eyes. *"This really is his place. And everyday, so many people come by to pray... From the morning to the evening. It is hís place!"* With straightened back she looks at me, with a big smile. She looks proud[85].

This quote exemplifies that the public space where animitas in exist, is contested. The animitas are a striking example to exemplify the issue of public space, while animitas can be used as an instrument to claim space. It is therefore, an instrument of power. For Cecilia, Romualdito in the area of Estacion Central is a place he marked. Like she said, *"it is <u>his</u> place".*

Romualdito is located on the intersection of San Francisco de Borja with Avenida Libertador Bernardo O'Higgins[86]. Alameda is Santiago's main avenue which crosses Santiago from East to West. When Romualdito grew too large, the railway company ('they' in Cecilia's story) interfered and gave orders to sack Romualdito because it was worsening the view seen from Alameda. This happened in the mid thirties and forties, when Romualdito already had developed into a significant cult. In According to Cecilia and most devotees, machines stopped working when the railway company tried to demolish Romualdito. What actually had happened is that the workers hired to tear down the wall ran away in panic[87].

This shows how large the cult around Romualdito already was. The cult around Romualdito even grew stronger because of this event. Negotiations about the place Romualdito is located have not ended though. The wall nowadays, about ten meters long, is half of what Romualdito's length used to be. The shopping centres

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[85] Cecilia, 24-03-2010.
[86] Avenida Libertador Bernardo O'Higgins is Also known as Alameda.
[87] Public Works department, municipality Estacion Central 08-04-2010

behind Romualdito needed more space to load commodities and so the wall was shortened[88].Now the government tries more and more to participate in this cult around Romualdito; it placed a sign for tourists[89]; there is information about Romualdito at the website of the municipalities where Romualdito is located, Estacion Central[90]. Moreover, Romualdito was nominated for a national monument in 2003 [91]. This illustrates that Romualdito is a very popular animita, now accepted by the government. People asked and received permission to sell in front of Romualdito's shrine, to gain more luck in business[92].

Besides the cult of Romualdito, there is no interest of the government to use animitas as a tourist highlight. On tourist sites and offices, no information is found on animitas[93]. Still, even an animita this old and popular as Romualdito is in the negotiation process, as it is to be seen from limitation of space of the wall, because it is located next to a public space controlled by the government, Alameda. The negotiation process continues because people again try or need space for devotion of Romualdito. In a couple of week's time, new caves and crossed stood next to Romualdito as fulfilment of a manda, that will not be removed easily. In other words: the negotiation about Romualdito between the devotees and the government, tipped the point to the side of the devotees. However, the negotiation process between the people and the state is still continuing.

In short, public space is not empty. I showed how people with different backgrounds negotiate about space and how this negotiation is influenced by space and how it is related to power holders. Because, in some places some groups have more influence than others. The negotiation processes about animitas show how these groups gain control and power over these places.

3.6 Expansion of space in devotion

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[88] Cecilia 30-03-2010 and Juanita 17-03-2010
[89] See photos in the appendixes for the sign of Romualdito
[90] http://www.estacioncentral.cl/turismo2009.html (accessed 16-03-2010)
[91]

http://www.monumentos.cl/common/asp/pagAtachadorVisualizador.asp?argCryptedData=GP1TkTXdhRJAS2Wp3v88hCtbxpyKW2yh&argModo=&argOrigen=BD&argFlagYaGrabados=&argArchivoId=617

[92] Maria 17-03-2010
[93] Interviews tourist offices 24-03-2010, 25-03-2010

Animitas exist on the internet in different forms such as blogs, videos on youtube and facebook-fan websites. Some websites are more descriptive of nature than other; on some youtube blogs, pictures are shown in a slide-show in honour of a fallen acquaintances or family member[94], as a *manda* or to prove the miraculous power of popular saints[95].

Not all websites about animitas are written by devotees. Websites not made by devotees generally emphasize the 'true history' of an animita, and an explanation of what an animita entails[96]. Videos on youtube can roughly be divided in two categories; those of devotees and those of interested in animitas, again to emphasize or to expose the use of animitas to a bigger crowd. As already mentioned in chapter two about networks, facebook pages exist for animitas in general and one for la novia in particular [97].

Besides descriptive pages about animitas made by people interested by the phenomenon, internet offers an extra portal for devotion. On the facebookpage of Orlita, people excuse themselves for not having visited her tomb or they are reminding Orlita favours they asked her for. The page of Orlita functions like a facebookpage of a living friend. It is used as a means of communication even though people do not leave messages frequently[98]. Internet thus functions as an extra portal where the animitas can mediate between God and humankind; it is therefore, an extra space of devotion. In case of Orlita, on the tomb of *La Novia* on the cemetery, a marble placard, normally shaped as a thank-you note, has written the whole URL. Friends of Orlita are found in all stratifications of society. The higher-educated though, are friends of Orlita out of respect or interest, not because they visit animitas. Devotees are people with low educational level until folk-universities[99]. The cult of the animitas is widespread in Chilean society, but it remains a *popular* faith, faith persists mainly in the popular sectors of society.

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[94] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9G4FafHYgTQ&feature=related December 29, 2007 — *"lo queremos mucho tío Claudio, siempre lo recordamos y vivirá por siempre dentro de los corazones de todos sus seres queridos, estoy orgulloso de ser su sobrino" "We love you so much uncle Claudio, we will always remember you and you live forever beloved in the hearts of all, I am proud to be your nephew".*

[95] http://romualditodeestacioncentral.blogspot.com/

[96] http://urbatorium.blogspot.com/search?q=animitas, http://cachandochile.wordpress.com/2008/11/11/animitas/ and http://www.animitaslahistoriaoculta.blogspot.com/

[97] http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/orlitaromerogomez?ref=ts and http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/Animitas

[98] Writer blog and facebook page orlita romero Gomez 05-04-2010

[99] Ibid.

Even though internet is a new place for devotion, it is a recent phenomenon. To give an example, posts of animitas on youtube start to date from 2007 onwards, only three years ago. Youtube videos are not very popular. At the moment, animitas on the web do not replace animitas in real life. They are extensions of an existing phenomenon. However, as it is a very recent phenomenon this may change in the future.

3.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown how space is contested and negotiated in the public domain, focusing on the way people treat the spatial issue of animitas. I have shown that placing animitas are claims for power because it is a means of the people to gain influence in public space. The people need animitas to claim influence, because public space is contested (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga, 2003:18). Through animitas people can gain influence they otherwise could not have achieved. The degree in which it is contested in the city is related to stratification of neighbourhoods.

Unambiguous places such as highways, higher class neighbourhoods have a low level of negotiation, because it is clear who is most entitled to claim spaces. This is related to the commonality of spaces that implements the way space is controlled. Negotiation about animitas on the cemetery exemplifies how people try to shape space in an area of government control. Other examples are Romualdito and two animitas in 'La Florida' which illustrated the dynamics of negotiation in ambiguously defined areas.

In this era of globalization, internet serves as an expansion of space. In this virtual space, people place blogs and pictures of animitas out of devotion and interest. Because it is a new phenomenon, the futures of animitas on the internet remain unclear.

General Conclusion

This study is conducted to investigate larger problems in societies, related to power relations between the elite and people through the lens of popular culture, in this case popular religion. In the first part of the thesis, the theoretical framework regarding concepts of popular religion is explained, in order to analyse the animitas as an expression of popular religion in Chile. In the three following chapters, the empirical data gathered during fieldwork in Chile was analysed and divided into sections related to the emergence, social aspects and location of animitas. Through highlighting these three different aspects of the animitas, it is shown how popular religion reveals negotiation levels between different actors of societal level (Chasteen 2000, 2004, Handler, 1994 in Sanabria 2007:315).

In chapter one, t*he birth of animitas,* people's own religiousness in contrast to the doctrine of the church prevails. Animitas exist mainly because the people who die in public space could not reach heaven according to church standards. However, people's own ideas about justice and morality form a 'true Catholicism', differentiated from the church (Leferink, 2002:128). In the people's categorizations of good and evil, manifested in the animitas and closely related to the suffering of Jesus and Maria, people can manoeuvre within the hegemonic discourse of the church. Thus in the birth of animitas the agency of people prevails. The existence of animitas besides official Catholicism and as a complementation on church's doctrine shows how religious pluralism works. People are not bounded to one dominant system that can only 'blend' with other forms, because culture is comprised of repertoires and not fixed elements. People have the agency to pick from different religious repertoires, dependent on pragmatic issues (Sanabria, 2007:240).

Chapter two about networks elaborates on the social aspect of animitas. People use animitas as part of their social capital, therefore it is possible to investigate how social networks. Concepts about reciprocity and social networks were created during the conquest; differing from hierarchical relations between patron-client and egalitarian relations between farmers. God and official saints are part of the hierarchical network of people. Although official saints can serve as patrons for people, they do not have the same needs as devotees. Therefore the animitas are so special, because they have an egalitarian, not hierarchical relationship with devotees. People and animitas remain equals, even though animitas are in heaven. *Mandas* are

the crystallization of the balanced norm of reciprocity between animitas and people. This is related to the concept people have of religion; being a religion of the humble whereby God appears as a merciful divine entity with the poor close to him. The poor thus penetrate the hegemonic discourse of the church about what Catholicism exactly entails (Scott, 1985: 318). Because social capital is used as a coping strategy to obtain resources otherwise hard do receive, social capital serves to enhance persons own capacities and the coping with insecurities. Social networks are one of the capacities most used by the poor (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000:3). Animitas are social enterprises from the start as they are built, and they remain social by means of social control and the collective display of devotion through the compliance of mandas.

The last chapter showed how space is contested. In space, different actors negotiate (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga, 2003:18). Placing an animita is in some places easier and more natural than in others. This is related to the commonality of space and how ambiguous space is. People gain influence through placing animitas because people can decide how public space is used. Animitas thus serve as an instrument of the people to indirectly demonstrate to the world what struggles they encounter in everyday life.

Through animitas, people show more than only their religion. It is the daily struggle they encounter but moreover, the persistent and love for life they have to continue, even though this might be hard. People remain their sense of faith and feelings of hope during hardships. It is their love for life and the will to continue that makes the people practice popular religion. Animitas are placed in public space as to remind the world that death does awaits us; animitas are a remember to live, and love life while we still can.

Besides maintaining of hope during situations of hardship, animitas exist because people want to remember the dead. To remember the deceased serves as another means to tame death. Death is thus no longer something to be scared of or something that is neglected. The people that once existed in social networks remain part of their network. They are not forgotten once they are out of sights and their physical presence is no longer there. It is through the dead that life is more bearable instead of harder to bear. This is especially prevalent when animitas grow out into cults.

In this thesis I thus focused on the social, spatial and ideological aspects of popular religion. Because popular religion is only one manifestation of popular

culture *(*Bamat & Wiest, 1993:6), new conclusions and theories about popular religion inherently explain something about popular culture. There is a significant body of literature which states that popular culture is a field wherein negotiation levels between different actors of societal level prevails (Chasteen 2000, 2004, Handler, 1994 in Sanabria 2007:315 & Possemai, 2005:23). However, *how* this contestation is manifested remains unclear in the literature. Therefore, the spatial and social elements are different angles to examine popular culture, to become more aware of the ways in which popular culture contests existing orders and how people cope in everyday life. From this problem oriented approach, governments or organization could find solutions for the problems of the mass that are of big importance.

Reflection

"So you're doing research in something you don't believe in[100]?"

As I did my research on popular religion, most of the topics were about religion, ideology or the influence of religion on life. Understandably, my religious viewpoint thus was an issue for the informants. With respect to my own religious background, when asked, I referred to my Christian education I had. If people asked further questions about my religious viewpoints nowadays, I answered that I was not a practicing Christian but that I still felt open for religious viewpoints other than mine. I mainly tried to lay attention to the fact that animitas do no exist in Holland and are for this reason are very interesting to me. This encouraged the people I had interviews with to explain more elaborately and it made the conversation more freely. In the first month of research I described myself as being agnostic, yet most people interpreted this orientation in the same line as being atheistic, which created large distance.

Differences between my worldview and 'the Other' perhaps made the first encounter more difficult than one between religious persons. However, most people were happy to tell everything they knew about the animitas, and in most cases I could successfully manoeuvre myself into the position of a willing student. Further, I started to build *rapport* in relationships because of the increasingly amount of time devotees and I spent together. This refers especially to the caretaker of Marinita and some of the experts I have spoken with.

Other personality traits of importance were gender, age, and European background. In all, I encountered that most people only found it the more interesting to see an adolescent European girl trying to understand the animitas, their popular and beloved shrines. The most devotees I interviewed were women, and I have the impression that our shared gender only increased the amount of trust.

Being a non-native Spanish speaker posed the most severe limits to participation and conversations. For three months in Holland and three more intensive weeks in Santiago, I followed Spanish courses. After almost two months, I was able to follow almost everything in conversations. In those first two months I have spoken to a lot of people. However, differences in my language level were of such a significant level that certainly I could have gained more data in the first section of my

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[100]   Fieldnotes, guy painting houses

fieldwork had I spoken Spanish fluently from the start. Still, most people were aware of my language skills and limited their speed of talking and chose carefully easier words. Nevertheless, native Spanish-speakers would have had a considerable advantage in this point.

This research of the animitas is conducted in order to obtain my bachelors degree in anthropology. Besides a short assignment in November 2009 to practice participant-observation in Holland, I had no experience in doing anthropological research. I first encountered difficulties with approaching people. At the animitas, people pray and ask for favours. Later I found that most people are happy to share their knowledge and viewpoints about the animitas. However, first I found it inappropriate to approach people in the short time they were praying. Though, if I did not approach them, I would not have relevant people to talk to and thus to gather data. By spending more time at the animitas I found out that not the people were reserved for conversation, I was. Maybe a more experienced researcher would have had less difficulty with approaching people.

Language skills, personal background and training of the researcher are general aspects worth of taken into account to evaluate anthropological research. People should be familiar with the personal background and experience of the researcher in order to find out if systematic errors are made (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002:80). After all, a well-known critique of anthropology as a study of human behaviour is its impossibility to strive for objectivity because results are dependent on interpretations of researchers (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002: 81).

Besides my influence on the setting , a non-representative group of informants can also influence the outcome of data. Although three months is a short period to conduct qualitative research, I have met and spoken to a wide range of people from different backgrounds, gathered from different places and who belong to different sectors of society, e.g. professors, priests, devotees, non-Catholics, students, elderly and expats. Thanks to the diversifications of people I have met, I am confidently enough about the representatively of conducted interviews in respect to a larger amount of practitioners of popular religion.

Resumen en Español

Animitas son altares donde alguien murió trágicamente. Creencia es que el alma da vueltas alrededor de lugar de la muerte y que la alma necesita un lugar anclada para describir su pace. No hay solamente una forma de animitas porque no hay reglas, organizaciones o expertos que pueden decidir como una animita tiene que parecer. Formas de animitas varían mucho, de solamente un cruz hasta un villa.

El culto de las animitas es tan frívola en Chile porque la gente no pueden expresar sus ideas de religión completamente dentro el Catolicismo de la iglesia. Las ideas de gente sobre justicia, empatía y esperanza en la vida y la vida eternal son las formas en que la religiosidad de la gente es basada. Animitas pueden crecer hasta santos popular cuando la muerte es injusta en formas extremas. En esta forma, la gente pide favores a las animitas que las pueden concebir porque están cerca de Dios. Entonces, Dios es la fuerza que hacen los milagros pasar.

Animitas son expresiones de religión popular, es decir, religión de los sectores de la sociedad que no tienen mucho estatus, dinero o poder. Por investigar las animitas como una expresión popular, podemos describir problemas que son relevantes para el pueblo. A partir de la teoría de pluralismo, religión popular es un proceso de negociar. Esta teoría es diferente de la teoría de sincretismo, donde expresiones de religión son productos finales de una mezcla juntado de varias expresiones de religiosidad. Con pluralismo lo es posible de tener foco al *agency* y fuerza de los devotos. Relaciones de poder están en base de la teoría de pluralismo.

Gente usan las animitas como un ensanchamiento de su red de conexiones social. Los son muy importante para ellos porque están *doping strategies*. Gente usan su red de conexiones (Network) para alcanzar cosas que en otra manera no se pueden alcanzar. Animitas y devotos tienen una relación de reciprocidad en donde están iguales. A contraste de la relación de los devotos y santos oficial, que es jerárquico.

En espacio público donde las animitas están, reuniones juntos acotores (en general el estado y el pueblo) se manifiestan. Lo es especialmente evidente en las ciudades, a cause de la estratificación de los barrios. Dentro las negaciones sobre colocaciones de las animitas se manifiestan las grandes problemas de la sociedad y la desigualdad.

Resumiendo, a través de las animitas como religión popular, se pueden mostrar las relaciones de poder, fuerza y *everyday life* del pueblo. Religion popular y cultura popular donde religión popular es un elemento constitutivo, son maneras perfectamente para estudiar e investigar los grandes problemas de la sociedad.

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http://www.scielo.cl/scielo.php?pid=S0717-9962005006000005&script=sci_arttext
www.e-seia.cl and type in 'autopistas' as tipe of project to find documents related to highway altering, including in some of them, animitas. (accessed, 20-06-2010)

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http://www.animitaslahistoriaoculta.blogspot.com/

http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/orlitaromerogomez?ref=ts and

http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/Animitas

Appendixes: pictures of Animitas

Appendix 1
Title: Classical Animita
Reference: http://farm4.static.flickr.com/3158/2967361422_f36d849b3f_o.jpg
(accessed June 25th, 2010)

Appendix
Title: Animita Romualdito
Location: On the corner of the street Borja with Av Libertador Bernardo O'Higgins, municipality Estacion Central, Santiago de Chile
Reference: romualditodeestacioncentral.blogspot.com/ (accessed June 20th, 2010)

Title: Sign for Romualdito
Reference: http://granrinconsantiago.blogspot.com/2008_12_01_archive.html
accessed 06-06-2010

Title: Thank you notes at Romualdito
Location: On the corner of the street Borja with Av Libertador Bernardo O'Higgins, municipality Estacion Central, Santiago de Chile
Reference: http://rolando.smugmug.com/photos/538134687_igSro-M.jpg (accessed June 25th, 2010)

Title: Small animita in La Florida for a died soccer fan, Santiago de Chile.
Location: Located on intersection Avenida Vicuña Mackenna and Enrique Olivares,
Rerence: photo's made by Cristián Salazar.

Title: Animita that grants wishes, La Florida, Santiago de Chile.*Location: Intersection* Avenida Colombia and Avenida Santa Amalia*Reference:* Photo's made by Cristián Salazar

Title: Animita that grants wishes, La Florida, Santiago de Chile.*Location: Intersection* Avenida Colombia and Avenida Santa Amalia*Reference:* Photo's made by Cristián Salazar

Title: La Novia
Location: Cementerio General
Rerence: http://farm1.static.flickr.com/33/62524548_f8973c1cdb.jpg (accessed, June 25th, 2010)