



GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET

**UNDERSTANDING PEACE & VIOLENCE
FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF STREET-LIVING ADOLESCENTS
IN CUSCO, PERU**

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Abstract

Young people often tend to be depicted either as a risk factor or passive victim. Few youth have the possibilities to actively take part in decision-making processes affecting their lives. However, researchers increasingly criticize this oversimplified view of young people and stress the significance of involving them in social transformation processes. A first step to do so is to consider young people's interpretation and assessment of the world.

Thus, the present research project aims at giving voice to a certain group of young people we hardly hear, namely street-living adolescents in Cusco, Peru, regarding two particular social issues: peace and violence. How do these adolescents conceptualize 'peace' and 'violence'? To find answers to this proposition, individual semi-structured interviews were conducted in combination with the creation of drawings.

The empirical findings revealed a three-folded peace concept, which can be systemized as 'Three Dimensions of Peace.' The street adolescents regard peace not just as the opposite of war or other types of overt violence. Their understanding combines elements that might be ascribed to either 'typically' occidental or oriental ideas about peace. As a result, the 'Three Dimensions of Peace' as understood by the youths complement existing peace theories.

Previous research regarding young people's conception of violence and peace frequently made use of the cognitive-developmental approach. This study's interest, however, is chiefly centered on the individual's relation with the sociocultural environment and its affect on ideas about peace and violence. In accordance with the socialization and ecological perspectives, it can be argued that the youth's understanding of these concepts is influenced by their interactions with the immediate surroundings and by the wider sociocultural setting.

Therefore, this research project additionally explores the street youths' conceptualizations in relation to their specific cultural background and social reality. So as to collect information about their socialcultural context, supplementary interviews were carried out with adults who are experienced in working directly with the street adolescents.

Due to the relation between the youths' social knowledge and their particular social experiences and interactions with their immediate and wider surroundings, the three-folded peace concept gives an idea about the Cusquenian adolescents' perspective of changes that have to be undertaken in their environment in order to improve their own lives but also to achieve a greater level of peacefulness for the whole Peruvian society.

Key words: adolescents, conceptualization of peace, violence, street children, social knowledge, sociocultural environment, Cusco, Peru, peacebuilding

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

BSA – British Sociology Association

CIA – Central Intelligence Agency

CPI – Corruption Perceptions Index

CRC – United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

GTZ – Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit

ILO – International Labor Organization

NGO – Non-governmental organization

OHCHR – Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

QM – Asociación Qosqo Maki

TRC – Truth and Reconciliation Commission

UAE – United Arab Emirates

UN – United Nations

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNICEF – United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund

US – United States

WHO – World Health Organization

Chapter I: Introduction

1 General Introduction

Young people¹ often tend to be seen as mere problems, not assets, in processes of social development, particularly in conflicted societies (Wilson/Zeldin/Collura 2011). In the literature on youth affected by armed conflict they “are most commonly depicted as either passive victims of trauma or active security threats” (Sommers 2006: 5). Scholars, such as Urdal (2006) and Huntington, draw a strong correlation between large youth cohorts (a high number of 15 to 29 year olds relative to the total population) and political violence, arguing that societies with a large age cohort of young males who lack perspectives for the future are more susceptible to political violence (Del Felice/Wisler 2007, Kurtenbach 2008). The ‘youth bulge’ thesis goes hand in hand with the security-related discussion about youths as a threat, which not only includes the risk deriving from terrorism and extremists groups but also the phenomenon of violent youth gangs and organized crime (Kurtenbach 2008). The youth-threat discourse also embraces societies, which are not affected by wide-scale armed conflict, but might experience high unemployment rates and inequality, circumstances that generally favor violence (Del Felice/Wisler 2007). The notion of youths as security threat contrasts with the portrayal of youths as victims. This perception is especially dominant in the field of human rights (Kurtenbach 2008, Rehfeld 2011). Rehfeld (2011) holds that, for instance, “the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) reflects the widely held view that children are in need of protection and should not be treated as full citizens of a democratic polity,” arguing that thirty-five of its forty-one articles protect, secure, and guarantee welfare rights for children, while the six articles that specify some legal and political rights of children (Articles 13–17) “treat children more as a protected class than as active agents” (Rehfeld 2011:142).

These oversimplified views of the youth’s role in social development are increasingly criticized. Young people are gradually more seen as autonomous actors and potential agents of positive as well as negative change (e.g. Del Felice/Wisler 2007, Kurtenbach 2008, McEvoy-Levy 2006, Galtung 2006, Drummond-Mundal/Clave 2007, Fundación Cultura de Paz/ UNOY 2006, Schwarz, 2010). Correspondingly, Wilson, Zeldin and Collura (2011: 407)

¹ In awareness that the categories ‘child,’ ‘youth,’ ‘adolescent,’ and ‘young people’ are socially constructed, historical viable, and highly contestable (e.g. Schwarz 2010, Kurtenbach 2008, Sommers 2006, McEvoy-Levy 2006, Kemper 2005), the differentiation of the WHO is applied: “adolescents are 10-19 years old; youth are 15-24; and young people are 10-24 years old” (Sommers 2006: 4). According to the common UN definition, a child or ‘minor’ is a person aged 0-17 (OHCHR 1989).

stress young people's potential in positively transforming societies, arguing that "it is essential to engage youth, not as 'problems' or 'symptoms' of discord, but as citizens, as contributors;" while La Cava, Clert, and Lytle (2004: 2f) demand: "Decision-makers should recognize youth as 'strategic agents of development.'" Thus, young people are promoted as partners of adults in processes of social development. In addition, nearly all the world's countries have signed on to the 1989 CRC. Paragraph 12 of the convention grants a right to children to be consulted on all issues affecting them (OHCHR 1989):

States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

This right applies to "every human being below the age of eighteen years" (Article 1, *ibid.*). Yet, researchers establish that young people all over the world "feel that their voices are not sufficiently heard in the decisionmaking processes affecting their lives, ranging from family, community or national levels" (La Cava/Clert/Lytle 2004: 2f). Few have the possibilities to actively take part in improving their own life-worlds. "On the contrary, they remain largely excluded from socio-political participation. Worse, often, their voices are muted or instrumentalised" (GTZ 2000: 3), as they are spoken for by adults who claim to know what is in their best interest.

Scholars have worked to surmount this muting. For instance, La Cava, Clert, and Lytle (2004) and Wilson, Zeldin and Collura (2011) stress the significance of involving youths in decision-making processes, arguing that the cost of leaving young people out is too high. Especially young people who are already subject to poverty, unemployment, lack of access to social opportunities, and lack of support are further marginalized. This increases the risk of the youths getting involved with violence and crime. However, young people do not need to be a destabilizing force. The challenge is to identify those most at risk and find ways to engage them in constructive economic, political, and social activities. Thus, opportunities are needed for constructive engagement of young people. Researchers call for 'intergenerational practices' that "bring youth into the center of society by allowing them to partner with adults, in the present, for the common good" (Wilson/Zeldin/Collura 2011: 407). Young people are seen as "current contributors to a just society, and equally important leaders of society" (Wilson/Zeldin/Collura 2011: 411f). In addition, Wilson, Zeldin and Collura (2011) stress the importance to prepare the 'next generation' to take on future leadership. Thus, on the one hand it is acknowledged that one day the world will be placed in the hands of the youth. On

the other hand, the significance of young people's role in the present is highlighted. This perspective perceives young people as autonomous actors (e.g. Kurtenbach 2008, McEvoy-Levy 2001, 2006) who are recognized to have "the ability to shape one's own life and to influence the lives of others" (Drummond-Mundal/Clave 2007: 65). The influence might be positive or negative, as "young people can be agents of peace as well as instability" (Schwarz 2010: 189).

Of course young people differ from adults in their physical, emotional, and cognitive capacity. Some might argue that "children, certainly at birth and for some time after, lack the skills that are reasonably required for a claim to political participation" (Rehfeld 2011: 146). However, "since culture, nutrition, education, and material conditions affect the rate at which a child becomes politically mature, we should expect that the particular age of political maturity varies by culture or historical time frame" (ibid.). In consequence, Rehfeld (2011) argues for participatory opportunities for children while taking into consideration their specific, evolving political maturity. Moreover, a difference needs to be drawn between holding a key position that brings about major responsibilities and simply not to be ignored at the moment of decision-making.

Regarding young people's potential as agents of peace, parallels are drawn to women. Due to their specific characteristics, both societal dimensions are said to have an exceptional potential for peacebuilding. Youths are presented as more 'open for change,' 'idealistic,' 'innovative,' and 'future-oriented' than older generations. (De Felice/Wisler 2007, Galtung 2006) According to Galtung (2006: 265), "For peace to prevail, youth women, and youth and women, should meet often. Older men should meet less." Thus, due to the cost of leaving them out, to their potential as present agents of positive change, and to their role as future leaders and decision-makers, the inclusion of children and adolescents into social transformation processes, in general, as well as peacebuilding processes, in particular, is increasingly postulated.

The promotion of young people's participation involves transforming power relations between adults and the youth. It is a long process of changing attitudes, behavior, and practices, entailing the empowerment of the youth and preparation of adults. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that a conscious collaboration between older and younger generations is essential for any society wishing to improve itself. Only if young people are seen as assets and included in social transformation processes, a society can be achieved in which all individuals are considered equals, where differences are resolved through dialog, and where all people are

treated fairly. A first step to involve young people is to consider their interpretation and assessment of the world. For some time now, social research has taken interest in the youth perspective. One central subject of Peace Studies has become young people's notion of peace, war, and violence. This research project examines the understanding of peace and violence from the viewpoint of street-living adolescents in Cusco, Peru. In the following, previous studies on similar issues are presented.

1.1 Overview over Previous Studies

Studies concerning children and adolescents' understanding of peace, war, and violence can be grouped into three distinct research waves. A first wave of studies took place during the 1960s and 1970s which focused on developmental changes in children's conceptualization of peace and war. The studies involved principally Western European countries (Cooper, 1965: England; Haavelsrud, 1970: Germany; Mercer, 1974: Scotland; Rosell, 1968: Sweden; Ålvik, 1968: Norway). The exception was Cooper's study which included Japanese children and adolescents. During the 1980s and 1990s, a second wave of studies concerning children and adolescents' understanding of peace and war was carried out in Western Europe (Falk & Selg, 1982; Van Kempen, Peek, & Vriens, 1986; Dinklage & Ziller, 1989; Hakvoort & Oppenheimer, 1993) and in Eastern Europe (Von Jacob & Schmidt, 1988; Cretu, 1988), as well as in Israel (Spielmann, 1986), Australia (Rodd, 1985; Hall, 1993), and Canada and the United States (McCreary & Palmer, 1991; Covell, Rose-Krasnor, & Flecher, 1994). (Raviv/Oppenheimer/Bar-Tal, 1999) Similarly to the first wave, special attention was given to developmental changes in the children and adolescents' conceptualization of peace and war. During the last decade, a third wave of investigations entailed children and adolescents' perceptions about war and peace in Northern Ireland (Cairns et al. 2006), Brazil (De Souza et al. 2006), the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the US (Coughlin et al. 2009), as well as Iran (Hashemi & Shahraray 2009). Developmental changes continued to be central; additionally socio-contextual factors appear to be of the researchers' increasing interest. An exhaustive description of all previous studies would exceed the scope of this work, yet a following brief overview covering some of the studies mentioned is intended to provide an informative outline of previously conducted research on the issue in focus.

Ålvik (1968) and Cooper (1965) are regarded as pioneers in the study of children and adolescents' understanding of peace and war. Both researchers followed a line of reasoning "which indicates how one may proceed to disentangle the various factors underlying the

concept development, thus opening up the possibility of explaining how and why variables like age and socio-economic background are related to concepts concerning war and peace” (Ålvik, 1968: 171) In his study on the development of views on conflict, war, and peace among Norwegian school children, Ålvik (1969) followed Cooper (1965) in relating his findings to Piaget’s operational stages of cognitive development. Cooper had found that individuals pass through a series of stages in their development. Besides, they are subject to long and short term influences in their thinking. Hence, it was reasoned that peace and war concepts might be connected to the natural phenomena of intellectual growth. In line with Cooper’s findings, Ålvik (1968) confirmed that by the age of 8 children were capable of defining concepts of war and peace fairly well. The Norwegian children perceived ‘peace’ mainly as the negation of war. Furthermore, Ålvik detected a certain influence of the participants’ socio-economic background on their understanding of peace and war (Ålvik 1968).

Haavelsrud (1970) assessed the ideas about peace and war of children and adolescents in West-Berlin. Consistent with Cooper’s and Ålvik’s discoveries, the young West-Berliner participants also perceived peace as the negation of war. Additionally, Haavelsrud put emphasis on the influence of social and political environments (i.e. the sociocultural structure) on the conceptualization. Results of the study are discussed in relation to socialization processes and political socialization. Haavelsrud hypothesizes “that the communication and influence structure of the social system is a viable force in the formation of certain international orientations” (Haavelsrud 1970: 116). Information sources, such as the family, friends, religion, school and mass media might also have varying impact on the acquisition of views in this matter in different cultural contexts (ibid.).

Hakvoort and Oppenheimer (e.g. 1993, 1998, 1999) have offered comprehensive reviews on children’s understanding of peace, war, violence, and conflict. Their studies have been serving as guiding example for later research. In 1993, the researchers questioned Dutch children between the ages of 8 and 16. According to their findings, there are age-related changes in the ideas about peace, war, and strategies to attain peace. “Until the age of approximately 12-13 years, an increase is evident in the perception of peace as negative peace. After this age, a decrease in the use of negative peace and an increase in the use of positive peace is observed.” From a social-cognitive developmental perspective, the researchers relate this shift from negative to positive conception of peace to the children’s development of mutual role-taking (Hakvoort/Oppenheimer 1993).

A following cross-cultural research project by Hakvoort, Hägglund, and Oppenheimer (Hakvoort 1996, Hakvoort/Hägglund 2001a) examined the reflections on the concept of peace and ideas about strategies to promote peace of children from the Netherlands and Sweden. The study supported earlier findings by showing that children's notions of peace become increasingly complex as they develop, including more and more ideas about positive peace (e.g. respect, tolerance, democracies, and universal rights) instead of just the absence of direct violence (i.e. negative peace). Hakvoort and Hägglund establish that "children's growing ability to understand the complexity of peace issues is likely to be a universal phenomenon due to the child's increasingly sophisticated means of processing information" (Hakvoort/Hägglund, 2001a: 8). At the same time, cross-cultural differences were found, suggesting that children's ideas about peace and war are likely to be related to the sociocultural context they live in (Hakvoort 1996).

By means of different methods and projects, Cairns et al. (2006) studied the impact of the fluctuating peace process in Northern Ireland as contextual factor on young people's ideas of peace, war, and conflict resolution. The overall impression was that the peace process had an impact only on older children and adolescents' concepts of war and peace. Their findings supported previous research that younger children's peace concept tends to involve 'negative peace,' only at an older age the idea becomes more differentiated into multifaceted aspects of peace, such as universal rights and human attitudes. Northern Irish children's basic understanding of peace as the absence of war resulted to be little different from those of children living in societies free from political conflict. One explanation the researchers give consists of "the possibility that children in all Western societies are being influenced by a global culture of violence" (Cairns et al. 2006: 135).

De Souza et al. (2006) investigated the understanding of peace, war, and violence of children in southern Brazil. They defended their endeavor by pointing out a high level of violence in the general Brazilian society and its acceptance as means for conflict resolution. "One could argue, following Galtung's (1969) definition of peace as including the absence of structural violence, that although Brazil has not been at war with another country for centuries, it also has not been at peace" (De Souza et al. 2006: 51). The researchers examined the data for age and gender differences and compared the results to previous studies. De Souza and her colleagues support other researchers' perspective of the peace concept being influenced by the particular context and social environments in which children develop. Furthermore, it was

found that participants seemed to be able to connect their experiences with structural violence as defined by Galtung (De Souza et al. 2006).

The purpose of Coughlin et al. (2009) was to explore children's perceptions about war and peace and to compare the findings across cultural contexts by interviewing children in the UAE and the US. The study revealed fairly similar responses of children in both countries. Yet, while children in the US responded by referring to peace in terms of quiet environments, UAE children were more likely to contrast peace to war. As in other studies, age differences were found in terms of children's understanding of both peace and war.

1.2 Relevance of the Present Study

Previous research on children and adolescents' conceptualization of social issues, such as peace, war, and violence, has mainly focused on the developmental changes in the understanding of these concepts through childhood and adolescence. However, recently the researchers' interest has come to increasingly take in cultural and situational influences on the acquisition of ideas about these matters. Studies on children and adolescents' notions of peace, war, and violence were conducted in various sociocultural settings and focused on young people in three different conflict contexts: in the presence of ongoing violent conflict, in the aftermath of violent conflict, and in the absence of violent conflict. Findings showed that there seem to be commonalities in the understanding of war and peace which can be related to the individuals' shared age-related cognitive development. On the other hand, variations in the children and adolescents' conceptualization are likely to be a result of the differing sociocultural contexts they live in. Yet, there is still a significant need for further research at a local level as well as for cross-cultural comparison in order to obtain a better understanding of contextual influences, including culture and presence of violence in the respective society, on young people's perceptions of peace, violence and war.

As most studies focused on the North of the globe, further research on children and adolescents originating from the South would provide valuable prospect for broad cross-cultural comparisons. Moreover, there is a risk that research focuses principally if not solely on young people from a certain social status who are firmly integrated in a family structure and go to school. Young people who fall out of this category tend to be omitted. Studies involving young people's perception of the world represent an opportunity to give voice to this population not only from differing sociocultural settings but also from various social positions. In addition, information gained as a result of such research may contribute to a

comprehensive theory of social knowledge. Therefore, the present study focuses on a specific local case in South America: street-living adolescents in Cusco, Peru, exploring the adolescents' understanding of peace and violence and how this might be related to their particular sociocultural context.

Cusco is one of Latin America's major tourist hotspots. Still, the department denotes an unsettling number of people living in poverty. This sharp contrast in combination with Peru's recent history makes the city a remarkable sight to conduct a field study. In addition, the case of street-living adolescents appears to be especially interesting due to their particular life experiences and the distinct social context they live in. As of my knowledge, this is the first study on street youths in this matter. Centering the research on peace and violence seems to be reasonable in face of Peru's recent history. The internal armed conflict that plagued the country for two decades is considered to have ended in 2000. So, technically, since then Peru is not at war. However, in its final report, the TRC identifies the conflict as the most severe episode of violence in the history of the Republic, exposing socio-economic gaps and ethnic-cultural inequalities that continue to prevail in contemporary Peru (TRC 2003). Therefore, the present study takes interest in the young Peruvian generation's perspective regarding peace and violence in general as well as the peacefulness and presence of violence in their country today. The following section provides information about the case's general local context.

1.3 Local Context

Peru is located in Western South America, between Chile and Ecuador, bordering the Pacific Ocean. It is a multiethnic country. According to *The World Factbook* (CIA 2011), 45 percent of the population is Amerindian, 37 percent mestizo, 15 percent white, the remaining populace is black, Japanese, Chinese or other. The main spoken language is Spanish, although a considerable number of Peruvians speak Quechua or other native languages. While the country has recently experienced a transition to a more open and democratic government (Altamirano et. al. 2004: 314), the Peruvian economy has also maintained a relatively stable growth over the last years. Although in 2009 in consequence of the world recession growth fell to less than 1 percent, it resumed its increase in 2010 at above 8 percent. Peru's rapid expansion coupled with the government's conditional cash transfers and other programs have helped to reduce the national poverty rate by over 19 percentage points since 2002. However, the level of Peruvians affected by poverty remains high. In 2009, more than 34 percent of the population was registered to live below the poverty line (CIA 2011).

Ancient Peru was the seat of several prominent Andean civilizations, particularly that of the Incas whose empire was captured by the Spanish conquistadors in 1533. Peru gained independence from Spain in 1824. In the following, discontinuous periods of democratic development were repeatedly broken up by autocratic military rule (Holzapfel 2006). In the 1960s, revolutionary leftist movements were on the rise throughout Latin America. The resulting wave of political violence was largely symptomatic of the prevailing economic inequality and anti-democratic political traditions that shaped the post-colonial order. Peru's internal discord would gradually culminate in the 1980s, with the emergence of the Maoist-inspired guerrilla movement called *Sendero Luminoso* ['The Shining Path']. The main period of the armed conflict between the government forces and the guerilla movement was the late 1980s and the early 1990s, before the principle leaders of the guerrilla groups were arrested and convicted on grounds of terrorism and treason (Carrasco 2010). No part of the country was untouched by the conflict. The worst violence, however, was concentrated in the Andean highlands, particularly in the Ayacucho region, where guerilla and government forces competed for control of the native populace through terror.

Peru entered a peaceful transition in 2000, only after a series of corruption scandals had caused the unexpected flight of authoritarian President Alberto Fujimori (Laplante 2007). A transitional government took office and the *Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación* [Truth and Reconciliation Commission, TRC] was created. In its final report, the TRC establishes that this internal armed conflict between government forces and the guerilla movement constituted the most intense, extensive and prolonged episode of violence in the entire history of the Republic (TRC 2003). The TRC estimated that approximately 70,000 people had been killed during the war, and thousands more disappeared or were displaced, unjustly imprisoned, and tortured, among other human rights violations. "Indeed, the TRC confirmed that two thirds of the victims were poor farmers, minimally educated, whose native tongue was not Spanish, highlighting that the brunt of the violence fell along ethnic and class lines" (Laplante 2007: 314). The presence of socio-economic gaps and ethnic-cultural inequalities still pose a challenge for the Peruvian society and government. In June 2011, Ollanta Humala won the presidential elections in the run-off, replacing Alan Garcia as President of the Peruvian Republic.

Cusco is located in southeastern Peru and constitutes the seventh largest city of the country. The Andean mountain town was the site of the historic capital of the Inca Empire and declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1983. Thus, since the beginning of the 1990s,

Cusco's tourist sector has been growing rapidly. During the last two decades the city annually receives more tourists than there are residents. Nonetheless, Cusco still belongs to the Peruvian department with the highest number of people living in poverty and extreme poverty (Strehl 2010).

1.4 Definition of Street Children

'Street children' is a contested term. It is said to be insensitive to the differences among all the children that it attempts to classify and to lead to stigmatization. Therefore, some scholars consider it an inappropriate, offensive label (Strehl 2010). It results to be imperative to clarify the concept. Many practitioners and policymakers use UNICEF's definition of boys and girls aged under 18 for whom 'the street' has become home and/or source of livelihood, and who are inadequately protected or supervised (Benítez 2007). It includes children working on the streets but living at home, children helping family members on the street, children working at markets, children living with family on the street, children sleeping in night shelters, children without any family contact, children sleeping temporarily or permanently on the streets, as well as children in youth gangs, etc. (Strehl 2010).

UNICEF distinguishes between children *on* the street and children *of* the street. This categorization is based on the level of family contact. The first category identifies those children and adolescents, who turn to the streets for a livelihood but return home to their families and contribute to the household income; the second consists of those children and adolescents without family support and who have come to depend entirely on the streets for survival. Hence, the essential difference is that 'children on the street' have families and homes to return to at night, whereas 'children of the street' live on the streets and are most likely short of parental, emotional and psychological support which normally a family provides for (UNICEF 2001). Some researchers refer to the former group as 'street-working children' and to the latter as 'street-living children' (e.g. Benítez 2007, Strehl 2010). "However, the group boundaries are fluid, categories overlap and children can move easily back and forth from one category to the other" (Strehl 2010: 4). This study focuses on street-living adolescents. Although these youths might maintain sporadic contact with family members or even return home for certain periods, they generally live in the streets away from their families. They sleep in hostels, in shelters for street children, in rundown buildings or outside. One has to keep in mind that there might be a constant flux between the children's life in the streets and at home. Thus, "Being a street-living child is, as to say, a picture at a given moment in time" (Strehl 2010: 39).

1.5 Street Children in Peru

In Latin America, the problem of children and adolescents working and/or living in the streets has existed for years. The region holds the highest levels of income inequality in the world. Even consistently strong economic growth has not reached many of the region's poorest. "Inequalities of wealth have entrenched poverty and homelessness, holding back children's well-being across the region" (Benítez 2007: 17). In case of Peru, the circumstances in which children are growing up are among Latin America's most critical. This is directly related to poverty. (Strehl 2010) Of all children in Peru under 18 (about 10.7 million), around 60% live in poverty (UNICEF 2008). Some consequences of poverty in Peru are a high child mortality rate, inaccessibility of healthcare of children from poor families, and low school attendance (Strehl 2010). In the last decades, Peru witnessed a rapid growth of its urban areas (GTZ 2000). Massive migration took place from the rural areas to the cities, consisting of people in search of work or protection from the political violence in the countryside of the 1980s and 1990s. In 2007 over 75% of the Peruvian population lived in cities compared to only 47% in 1961. The consequences of this urbanization are a growing informal sector, poverty, and street migration. (Strehl 2010) "Most street-working and street-living children come from poor families, in which the parents are either first or second generation migrants. Sometimes the children themselves are first generation migrants and still have parents living in the countryside" (Strehl 2010: 25).

One aspect related to poverty is child work. Although Peru has obligated itself to the total elimination of child labor by signing ILO conventions 1385 and 1826, and the CRC (Strehl 2010), there are about 2.5 million underage workers in Peru, representing 1 per cent of the GDP (Olivares 2008). In general, it is hard to determine the exact number of working youths because they are not systematically registered and they live spread out. According to a UNICEF Peru (2009) press release, the department of Cusco holds one of the country's highest numbers of child labor; about 80% of the Cusquenian youths aged 14 to 17 work. A study carried out in 1996 by the non-governmental organization (NGO) Qosqo Maki estimated a number of 3127 street-working children aged 6 to 17 in the districts Cusco, Wanchaq and Santiago (Baufumé/Astete 1998). Most working children perform activities related to their households. In rural areas this is mostly on the land, in urban areas mainly in family businesses. Around 70% of all working children are found in the rural areas of Peru (Strehl 2010). In the cities, many of the working youths try to earn money in the informal

sector on the street. Some of them are sent out to the streets by their parents, as they are dependent on the children's contribution to the household economy (Olivares 2008).

However, the existence of child work in Peru is not only related to economic factors but can also be explained by the specific sociocultural circumstances. "Street work serves many purposes within family survival strategies: economic, protective and socialization" (Invernizzi 2003: 331). Existing Andean traditional norms see child work as part of children's socialization process (Strehl 2010). In addition, the Andean society's concept of childhood defers from the widespread occidental believe which characterizes a child as being fragile, immature, irresponsible, and in need of protection. In contrast, in the Andean peasant community, work represents an essential value and the entire family, not just the parents, constitutes the production unit. Therefore, already from the age of about five, children are assigned responsibilities. (Baufumé/Astete 1998) In other cases, the youths strive for (economic) independence and for social recognition by participating in the workforce (GTZ 2000). In the Andean culture, work serves as vital source for self-esteem and independence. "Producir es crear ; ofrecer un servicio es demostrar su utilidad ; recibir una remuneración es ganar libertad y consideración" ['To produce is to create; providing a service means showing one's utility; to receive a payment is to attain liberty and esteem.'] (Baufumé/Astete 1998: 4). Thus, in the Andean rural communities, work done by children is much valued and seen as a means of taking an active part in family and community life. This way of perceiving childhood also remains in parts of the urban population. (Invernizzi 2003) The Peruvian economic system, however, offers hardly any opportunities for the working children (GTZ 2000). In many cases, their poverty considerably limits the children and adolescents' options to choose their work place. Often, they are forced to accept precarious jobs and harsh working conditions, leaving them more exposed to exploitation and rights' violation. (Liebel/Muños 2009) Numerous working youths are found in the informal sector. About 30% of all working children in Peru work in the cities, of which many choose the street as their work environment due to its easy accessibility (Strehl 2010).

1.6 Asociación Qosqo Maki

The contact with the street adolescents was sought with the help of the Asociación Qosqo Maki (QM), where I completed a five-month internship. The local NGO focuses on the informal education of street children and adolescents in Cusco, Peru. QM is divided into three program areas: the dormitory, the children's rights program, and the library. The dormitory provides an overnight shelter for young people who for one or the other reason do not have a

place to sleep at night. The second program area focuses on the support in the exercise of the rights of the child and street work. The library as third program area represents a space for learning and socializing not only for the users of the dormitory but also for the youths in the neighborhood. Here, the youths can make use of the available literature and do research on the internet, are animated to practice writing and reading, receive support in doing their homework, and are offered leisure activities. The library also organizes informative workshops and social educational activities that intend to strengthen norms of cohabitation and values.

QM's general aim is to provide opportunities of development to the youths who work and/or live in the streets of Cusco by assisting them to recognize their abilities and skills and to acquire means to conduct their own development in order to achieve a life away from the streets. The organization's basic approach is based on the concept of "freedom in education which aims at creating opportunities for young people to develop skills through self-governing" (GTZ 2000: 45). QM regards the children and adolescents as social actors and aims at supporting them in becoming key agents in their own development. In 2009, QM received 179 children (5 to 17 years old), most of which stayed only for a short time or at intervals. This demonstrates the fluidity of the street child population (Strehl 2010).

1.7 Aim of the Study and Research Questions

As presented in the general introduction, public discourses frequently identify young people as a risk factor rather than an opportunity or emphasize the youths' vulnerability rather than their resilience. In consequence, young people are often muted and widely excluded from socio-political participation. However, their voices need to be heard, for they are not only the society's next generation of leaders and decision-makers; they already have significant potential as current contributors for positive social change. The challenge is to effectively engage young people in social transformation processes. A first step to do so is to listen to their perceptions and ideas about improving the context they live in. Therefore, one aim of the present research project is to give voice to the street adolescents participating in the programs of QM regarding social issues, in particular peace and violence.

Previous research on children and adolescents' conceptualization of peace provides plentiful evidence that differing meaning and understanding of peace can be related to the different sociocultural contexts. The children and adolescents are members of particular societies, live under specific conditions, and are coined by certain cultural backgrounds. These

circumstances seem to affect their view of social and political issues. Hence, secondly, this study attempts to shed light on how sociocultural factors influence young people's conception of violence and peace. Hereby, it seeks to contribute to a better understanding of contextual influences on social knowledge.

The aims of the present study have been translated to the following research questions:

- (1) How do the Cusquenian street-living adolescents conceptualize 'peace' and 'violence'?
 - How do the street-living adolescents understand the concept of peace?
 - Who do the adolescents hold responsible for peace?
 - What does peace mean for them regarding their personal lives?
 - How do the adolescents define violence?
- (2) How might the adolescents' conceptualizations of peace and violence be influenced by their cultural background and social reality?

1.8 Delimitations

This research project is limited to the study of street-living adolescents' understanding of peace and violence in Cusco, Peru. The group under research includes individuals living in the streets of Cusco, aged 14 to 18. Earlier studies have frequently focused on the concept of war in connection to the concept of peace. This study, however, centers on the conception of peace and additionally takes in the conception of violence.

To explore the Peruvian adolescents' ideas about peace and violence semi-structured interviews are used in combination with the creation of drawings. Additional semi-structured interviews with adult informants serve to gain more detailed knowledge about the street youths' sociocultural background. Moreover, it is made use of field notes and QM's internal documents.

1.9 Ontology and Ethical Considerations

The present research project is influenced by the perspective of social constructivism. One of the forerunners of this line of thought is Immanuel Kant who argued that we can gain knowledge about the world, but it will always be subjective knowledge in the sense that it is filtered through human consciousness (Jackson/Sørensen 2007). Thus, the social researcher's knowledge can be regarded as filtered ideas about reality. Consequently, despite my intention as a researcher to present the adolescents' perspective, I am aware of the likelihood that the

presentation and interpretations of the study's results is based on my subjective perception and coined by my personal sociocultural background. Similarly, Jürgen Habermas held that the social scientist cannot guarantee the objectivity of his or her cognition by assuming the role of a 'disinterested observer.' Instead the researcher should seek the conditions of the objectivity of understanding [*Verstehen*²]. (Harrington 2000) "The social world is a world of human consciousness: of thoughts and beliefs, of ideas and concepts, of languages and discourses, of signs, signals and understandings among human beings, [...]. The social world is an intersubjective domain: it is meaningful to people who made it and live in it, and who understand it precisely because they made it and they are at home in it" (Jackson/Sørensen 2007: 165). By a series of common-sense constructs, people have pre-selected and pre-interpreted this world, which they experience as the reality of their daily lives (Harrington 2000). In conclusion, the concepts of peace and violence are seen as part of the social world, mentally constructed and held by individuals and influencing people's beliefs, principles, attitudes, and behavior. Therefore, this study intends to understand [*verstehen*] the adolescents' conceptualization of peace and violence in connection to their social reality.

As a researcher dealing with other human beings, I am aware of the responsibility to ensure that the physical, social and psychological well-being of the research participants was not negatively affected by the present research project. Hence, the possibility that the research experience might be a disturbing one has to be taken into consideration (Bryman 2008).

First, this study might potentially have affected the adolescents' thinking and awareness about the subject at hand. However, following the interviews it was taken some time to informally converse with each participant about her or his impressions of the research project. This way, it is hoped to have helped the adolescents to process this experience.

Second, to minimize the disturbance to the subjects themselves and to the subjects' relationship with their environment, the participants' identities and records are maintained as confidential as possible. Interviews were recorded, provided that the participants did not reject the use of a tape recorder. However, the participants were given the option to object to the use of the tape recorder. The audio tapes were transcribed. Parts of them are used in the present thesis. Supplementary, data was gathered by means of drawings. In order to provide anonymity and confidentiality, nobody but I and my supervisors are allowed to listen to the recordings and to see the drawings. Both are kept in a safe place. The participants were also

² *Verstehen* in the Weberian sense of interpretative comprehension (Jackson/Sørensen 2007: 164).

free to choose a nickname if they did not want their real names to be mentioned. The names they chose are used in relation to quotations and drawings.

Third, the participation in the study was based on the freely given informed consent of the adolescents. Participants were given as much information as might be required to make an informed decision about whether or not they want to take part in the study (Bryman 2008). The British Sociology Association's *Statement of Ethical Practice* instructs researchers to "explain in appropriate detail, and in terms meaningful to participants, what the research is about, who is undertaking and financing it, why it is being undertaken, and how it is to be disseminated and used" (BSA 2002). Hence, participants were made conscious that they are free to leave the study whenever they wish. Most of the street adolescents maintain hardly any contact with their families. Thus, it resulted to be impracticable to search their guardians' permission for them to take part in the research project. However, as the youths act independently in their everyday life, it is considered to be appropriate to have left the informed consent to them, although they are minors. In addition, the director of Qosqo Maki, the caring organization, was asked for authorization.

Fourth, I am aware that research involving participants of minor age requires particular care. For one, there are disparities of age, power, and status. Besides, it is important to "have regard for issues of child protection and make provision for the potential disclosure of abuse" (BSA 2002). In consequence, special attention was given to provide the adolescents with comprehensible information about the project. In general, the aim was to maintain a research relationship of trust and integrity between the researcher and the participants.

Fifth, in order to validate the study's findings, their accuracy has been checked with participants, across different data sources, as well as with previous studies on the subject.

1.10 Outline of the Study

This study is divided into seven chapters. Following the introduction, the next chapter provides information about the methodology of previous studies before presenting the research design and methodological considerations of the present research project. The third section outlines relevant theories and concepts upon which this study's theoretical framework is built and which will be used in the subsequent discussion. Thereafter, the empirical findings will be presented in chapter four and five. Chapter six contains the discussion of the research results. In the final section, conclusions will be drawn regarding this work.

Chapter II: Methodology

2 Introduction

In Chapter I, different empirical studies about children's conception of social issues such as peace were presented. In these studies, the researchers employed different methods. One possibility is the use of questionnaires. Other methods applied are interviews, essays, poems, drawings, and photocommunication (i.e. taking pictures).

Cooper's (1965) main instrument consisted of an interview schedule to which the participating school-children gave written replies. In contrast, Ålvik (1968) decided to apply a combination of drawings and individual interviews, using some of the questions previously employed by Cooper. Interviews were preferred to written questionnaires, for a prior informal testing revealed that it would not be possible to obtain written results from all children. Haavelsrud (1970) applied Cooper's questionnaire translated into German, yet again in a written form. In contrast, Hakvoort, Oppenheimer, and Hägglund (Hakvoort/Oppenheimer 1993, Hakvoort/Hägglund 2001) chose semi-structured interviews, since "(a) the same interview procedure was applicable for all children and adolescents in the study and (b) this procedure permitted the children and adolescents to consider their points of view" (Hakvoort/Oppenheimer 1993: 68). The research team of De Souza (De Souza et al. 2009) also preferred individual semi-structured interviews, while Cairns et al. (2006) applied a variety of research methods. In their first study, the researchers sought to capture the young people's ideas by means of a self-completed questionnaire. This enterprise, however, appeared to merely have provided a very quick snapshot. The children's responses were partly limited by their literary skills. Therefore, the researchers proceeded by carrying out semi-structured interviews. Yet, this procedure was still seen to have limitations, for both questionnaires and the interviews relied on verbal skills. As a result, in their next study, they used drawings to capture the children's perceptions. An additional study applied poetry because the researchers hoped to obtain more personal reflections and expressions on peace and war. Compared to semi-structured interviews, poetry seemed to allow more emotive responses and less influence by the interviewer. Nonetheless, in their most recent study, Cairns et al. returned to utilize a self-completion questionnaire, their sample being much larger than in the earlier project. Likewise, Coughlin and his colleagues (2009) resorted to interviews based on a previously developed questionnaire.

The different methods used by previous studies certainly all have their advantages and disadvantages. Nevertheless, as it becomes apparent, most researchers favored either written questionnaires or interviews as instruments of data collection.

2.1 Design

This study uses a qualitative approach. According to Creswell (2009), one important characteristic of this kind of research is the focus on the participants' understanding of an issue rather than the meaning that the researcher brings to the project. This adds to the authenticity of the study. In the present research project it is the street adolescents' ideas about peace and violence which are in the center of interest rather than those of the researcher. Critics of the qualitative approach might argue that it is too subjective. However, one particular aim of this study is to give voice to the adolescents by taking a look at peace and violence from their perspective. Moreover, in order to acquire social knowledge, "you must participate in the mind of another human being" (Bryman 2008: 385). Hence, it has to be subjective, since it is about participants' subjective perceptions. Qualitative research represents a form of interpretative inquiry, as the researcher usually makes an interpretation of what she or he sees, hears, and understands (Creswell 2009). The problem is that these interpretations can hardly be separated from the researcher's own background, history, context, and prior understanding. Therefore, in order to assure the credibility of my findings, awareness of my personal background and knowledge is required so as to avoid as much as possible the mixing of my own peace and violence concept with that of the participants during the interpretation process.

This study follows a case study design, entailing a detailed analysis of a single case. The specific case at hand is that of street-living adolescents in Cusco, Peru. The data collection was carried out during my five months internship at Qosqo Maki, a local NGO working with this population. Hence, an advantage is that I was able to spend a prolonged time in the field, which gave me the opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of participants and context. On the other hand, I am aware of the imperative to prevent personal relationships that I developed with some of the participants to overly influence my interpretations. Moreover, it is important to note that the case study cannot be seen as a sample drawn from a known population (Bryman 2008). The study is not meant to be representative of street adolescents in general or in Peru. Rather than to be generalized in that way, the value of the findings is seen in the particular description and themes developed in the context of this specific site (Creswell

2009). Nonetheless, this case study might conduct to further research or serve in comparison to similar studies for the development of a broader theory.

According to Creswell (2009), qualitative researchers typically use multiple forms of data collection rather than rely on a single source. This is also my intention, for the triangulation of different sources of information increases the study's validity by combining all the evidences to build a coherent justification for the findings. First, as frequently practiced by previous studies on children and adolescents' understanding of peace, I opted for individually conducted semi-structured interviews, using a short interview guide while leaving the interviewees a great deal of space in how to reply (Bryman 2008). Being a mental construct, the conceptualization of peace represents an issue that is difficult to observe. Therefore, semi-structured interviews appeared to be a useful way to catch perceptions and ideas about peace. Yet, there is always a risk of the researcher's presence influencing the responses. In addition, not all people are equally articulated and perceptive (Creswell 2009). For these reasons, similarly to Ålvik (1968), I chose to complement the interviews with drawings that the participants were asked to create before the interviews took place. The combination of the two methods offers certain advantages.

First, peace is an abstract concept. Just as Bryman writes about the use of photographs in qualitative interviews, "[t]he kinds of things in which social researchers are interested are often quite difficult for others to relate to. Using a photograph may help to provide both parties to the interview with a meaningful context for their discussion" (Bryman 2008: 448). This also seems reasonable for the combination of drawings and interviews. "Imaginative invention helps children to sort out feelings" (Hakvoort/Oppenheimer 1998: 367). Thus, the drawings can stimulate the interviewees' imagination and help them to put the abstract meaning of peace into their own words. Second, using written questionnaires, some previous studies encountered difficulties related to some participants' limited ability to articulate their thoughts in that way. Through oral communication, this problem can be avoided. Third, the drawings provide a valuable form of expression for participants who feel less comfortable with verbalizing their ideas. Fourth, if the range of instruments to collect data is broadened, findings may be richer and more accurate. Nonetheless, I am aware that the combination of both methods might also complicate the interpretation of the collected data. Besides, if participants don't like to draw or feel that their drawings are not sufficiently pretty, this can negatively affect their motivation, which likewise influences the empirical findings. On the

other hand, in that case, it is hoped that the interviews served as an equalizer. Moreover, hopefully a research relation of trust and integrity helped to avoid this problem.

In addition to the semi-structured interviews and the drawings, complementary interviews with adult informants concerning the youths' sociocultural background, Qosqo Maki's internal documents providing information about the participants and street youth in general, as well as field notes about observations that I made during my work placement serve as supplementary sources of information.

2.2 Participants

The original plan for this research project was to select a group of street-living adolescents who participate in the programs of Qosqo Maki, to interview them, and to ask them to draw their ideas about what peace and violence mean to them. This endeavor, however, was easier thought than done, as it turned out during my first weeks of internship. For one, the adolescents at QM generally prefer not to talk about their private lives and display quite strong lack of confidence in strangers. In our first conversations, for instance, many of them lied to me about their names and about where they come from. Therefore, I settled on waiting a couple of weeks to get to know some of the youths and build a relationship of trust with them. Furthermore, as most likely asking the adolescents questions about their personal background would make them feel uncomfortable and produce false data, I decided to additionally talk to persons who are experienced in working directly with the youths: the former president and founder of the association QM, the former along with the current directors of the organization, and two educators who have been working at QM for quite some time now. These adult informants were expected to provide valuable information about the sociocultural background of the street youth in Cusco. Besides, it appeared that most street children would not do anything for anyone if they did not see any personal gain from it. I did not want to pay the participants for the interviews because, according to my judgment, that would make the motivation to partake in the study dependent on money, which again might alter the obtained data. Moreover, it became clear that the number of suitable participants would be limited. One of the street children's characteristics is their volatile way of living. They do not stay in one place for a very long time because, when they sense better money-making opportunities elsewhere, they might move there. Others return to live with someone from their family, for example, an older brother or aunt. Consequently, at the time of my internship, just about 15 children and adolescents regularly frequented QM's dormitory.

After two months of working closely with the adolescents and having built a relationship of trust and respect with some of them, I selected 8 participants for the semi-structured interviews. The selection was carried out according to three criteria: (a) being 'of the street' and therefore making use of QM's dormitory, (b) being aged 14 to 18 years old, and (c) having showed some interest in conversing about social or political matters. The first criterion follows from the case study's focus on street-living adolescents in Cusco. The adolescents share the specific characteristic of not residing with their family and having experience with living on the street. The age group of 14 to 18 was chosen as a second criterion because previous research has shown that at this age a person usually has already reached a certain level of cognitive development³ (Hakvoort/Oppenheimer 1993). Consequently, it is hoped to obtain more differentiated information about the participants' conception of peace and violence. The third criterion about an apparent interest in social issues was necessary in order to assure that the participants bring along some motivation and positive attitude towards the study. All individuals who I approached agreed to take part in the research project. The rest of the street youths at QM did not comply with the set criteria.

It might be desirable to have a sample group consisting of an equal number of boys and girls so as to permit a comparative analysis across female and male participants. Unfortunately, in practice this resulted to be problematic, since, in Cusco, there are usually fewer street girls than boys. Generally, the majority of street-living youths are male⁴. In her study about street children in Peru, Strehl (2010) found that 82% were boys and 18% girls. Only about 2% of the population who makes use of QM's dormitory is female. During the time that I worked at the organization, I encountered no more than five girls that stayed overnight; only one of them was older than 14. Consequently, seven of the interviewees were boys and one was a girl. Thus, the sampling was carried out according to convenience, which resulted from the availability of participants at QM's dormitory as well as the general circumstances of street adolescents in Cusco. All in all, the value of the present investigation is seen in the in-depth exploration of the street youth's reality and perspectives rather than the quantities.

³ This proposition stands in relation with the cognitive-developmental approach and will be given further attention in Chapter III.

⁴ Girls' lesser presence in the streets can be linked to the traditional protection of females in the Peruvian society as well as their responsibilities in the household (Baufumé 1998). Girls also seem to be less willing to leave their families, no matter how negative their experiences are (Liebel 2009). They rather opt for a life in a children's or girls' home (Strehl 2010). Female children and adolescents face more severe discriminations and risks in the streets. (Liebel 2009) "The street girl's vulnerability for dangers such as sexual abuse and violence makes more girls than boys afraid to walk away from home" (Strehl 2010: 48). However, once established their lives in the streets, the girls tend to go back to their families less frequently than their male counterparts do (Liebel 2009).

2.3 Procedure

As previously illustrated, some time was necessary to gain the adolescents' confidence. Therefore, I chose to conduct first the interviews with the adult informants, during which I questioned the interviewees about the street youths' social background, their every-day life, their position in society, as well as their sources of knowledge. An interview guide was used with a list of questions and follow-up questions to make sure that these topics were covered. At the same time, some flexibility was maintained. The interviewees were given space to enroll freely in their thoughts. As a result, sometimes, one topic led to another. All of the interviews were held in Spanish and carried out individually, taking place during March and April 2011 at a quiet and private site, in the little recreation room of the organization or at the respective person's home. Each of the interviews lasted between 45 minutes to one hour and was taped using a voice recorder. The audiotapes were transcribed afterwards.

In May 2011, after two months of working closely with the youths, the time seemed ripe to begin with interviewing the adolescents. My strategy was to approach each of them individually; explain about my research project and my interest in talking to them; and invite them to converse with me while having some refreshment and cookies. Those who I asked agreed right away to my request. Solely one of the boys demanded money in exchange for the interview; though later he still agreed to what I suggested. The cookies and refreshments were used as an incentive. Yet, the main purpose was to create a comfortable, pleasant atmosphere for a casual conversation in contrast to the official interviews carried out by the district's attorney office, which I had been told about. All of the eight interviews took place in QM's small but comfortable and private recreation room and were held in Spanish. It turned out to be a good idea to carry out the conversations individually, for the adolescents notably opened up more to me than they usually did in the library with the other youths and educators present.

Before beginning with the research procedure, I took some time to chat with the participant about other topics in order to make him/her feel comfortable. Then, I informed the participant once more about my research project, that everything in the interview would be treated confidentially, that she/he was not obliged to take part in this project, and that she/he could retreat from the interview any time. Moreover, the youths were free to choose a nickname that would be used instead of their real name. After obtaining the participant's informed consent, I asked him/her to draw a picture of how he/she imagined peace. The choice was free between colored crayons or pencils. All adolescents followed my request, though some expressed

insecurity regarding their drawing abilities. After finishing the pictures, I questioned the participants about what they had drawn; how they would explain to a friend the word 'peace'; who was responsible for creating 'peace'; if they thought there was 'peace' in Peru; what would have to change in order to make their lives more peaceful; and, finally, what was violence for them. The interviews lasted about 15 minutes. Similarly to the interviews with the adult informants, an interview guide was used that permitted some flexibility. The information was recorded either by audio-taping or by making hand-written notes. A few interviewees preferred not to be taped during the conversation. When the interview was over, again I took some time to sit a little while longer with the participant to talk about the study's topic or other issues in order to create a comfortable ending.

As of my convenience, during my internship period I had plenty opportunity to learn about the participants by observing and conversing with them. In addition, I benefited from the experience of my co-workers and from the information written down in QM's internal documents and reports.

In the process of data analysis, previous studies recurrently used a coding system based on the nominal categories as developed by Hakvoort and Oppenheimer (1993). However, in accordance with my research aim to give voice to the street adolescents themselves, I refrain from using predetermined categories in the analysis of the empirical findings. Instead, I intend to stick to the youths' words as close as possible, no more than structuring the data by looking for common themes in the comments. The common themes are summarized and quoted in the discussion section (Chapter XI). All interview quotes are my own translations.

Chapter III: Theories and Concepts

3 Introduction

As established in Chapter II, this study applies a qualitative approach, following a case study design. According to Creswell (2009), a theoretical framework of a qualitative study aims at providing a lens that shapes what is looked at and the questions asked. Hence, in the following, I present relevant theories and concepts before generating the theoretical framework for this research project.

3.1 Peace Theories

Nearly all Western language definitions highlight the absence of war and other forms of overt violence as a central component of peace (Royce 2004). For example, the *Cambridge* online dictionary gives its first definition of the word ‘peace’ as “freedom from war or violence, esp. when people live and work together without violent disagreements,” (Cambridge University Press 2011). The *Oxford English Dictionary* (2008)’s notion of ‘peace’ is cited as “freedom from disturbance; tranquility,” and secondly “freedom from or the cessation of war” (Kellog 2011). The English word ‘peace’ derives from the Latin word ‘pax’ “as ‘a pact (to end or avert hostilities), settlement, peace’” (Royce 2004: 102). It refers to relations between individuals based on a common agreement or understanding (ibid.). Thus, this basic Western conception of peace, as presented in the dictionaries, essentially indicates that it represents an interpersonal condition that is free from violence.

Similarly, Johan Galtung, one of the founders of peace theory, connects the terms ‘peace’ and ‘violence.’ However, Galtung’s peace concept incorporates two essential premises. First, in order to understand and define peace, a subsequent analysis of violence is required. Second, if peace is only to be seen as the opposite of war, important inter-connections among types of violence are left out (Galtung 1990). In 1964, the Norwegian researcher introduced the terms ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ peace in the *Editorial* to the founding editions of the *Journal of Peace Research* (Grewal 2003). In this extended definition, peace equals not merely an absence of direct violence (negative peace) but also absence from structural violence (positive peace). Still, peace is viewed as interpersonal, for Galtung establishes that individuals interact with each other in various systems while pursuing their goals. The set of these systems of interaction for a given group of individuals is referred to as structure (Galtung 1969). The

structure can be made up of humans, sets of humans (societies) or sets of societies (alliances, regions) (Galtung 1996). Naturally, a structure might be embedded into differing civilizations. Therefore, in “Social Cosmology and the Concept of Peace,” the researcher examined the concept of peace in the light of the social cosmology (collectively held ideas about what constitutes normal and natural reality) of various civilizations, ranging from the Occident to the Orient, and pointing out a close link between the conceptualization of peace and the respective social cosmology of a civilization. Galtung holds that while the Occident’s orientation tends to be extrovert and outwards-directed, the Orient’s orientation is more introvert and inner-directed. Thus, “The ultimate in extrovert peace planning is peace for the universe; the ultimate in introvert peace planning is the peace in one’s own soul, intra-personal peace, harmony of mind” (Galtung 1981: 191). For instance, the Hindi word for ‘peace,’ *shanty*, may be understood as ‘well-ordered state of mind’ and the Japanese concept *heiwa* can mean ‘peace within, in order better [sic.] to deal with the outside’ (Galtung 1981). Regarding Gandhi’s *satyagrah* “the oneness of all human beings, and indeed all life, is the basic premise: not only that to hurt one is to hurt us all, but also the positive aspect that whatever good one does is done to us all” (Galtung 1981: 192). Criticizing the dominance of the Latin *pax* (peace in the sense of pact or absence of war) in contemporary peace theory and practice, Galtung argues for a combination of the differing concepts by drawing from various civilizations. The researcher stresses the necessity for a flexible approach to peace, as the world is dynamic, and so are peace concepts. Consequently, for example, “if ‘peace of mind’ [inner harmony] is included in the peace concept, and this is interpreted as identity, [...] then everything reducing or impeding identity becomes violence” (Galtung 1981: 195). Likewise, “if social harmony is peace, disturbance of that harmony is violence” (ibid.). Galtung continued to elaborate on the concepts of peace and violence and introduced the concept of ‘cultural violence.’

According to Galtung’s (1990, 1996) newer argumentations, three different forms of violence exist: direct violence, structural violence, and cultural violence. As already established earlier, apart from its direct form (e.g. assault, riot, terrorism, or war) violence also exists indirectly in the structure of society (e.g. poverty, hunger, discrimination, and social violence). Cultural violence was added as those aspects of culture that can be used to justify or legitimize direct and structural violence, and thus render them acceptable in society. Hence, Galtung differentiates between the explicit act of violence, which damages a person or object; violence built into a political, social or economic system, which lead to some individuals feeling

oppressed or unable to meet their needs; and violence embedded in cultural norms, beliefs and traditions that makes other types of violence seem natural or normal. Direct violence can take a verbal or physical form and harms the body, mind, or spirit. “Indirect violence comes from the social structure itself,” the two major forms of it being repression and exploitation (Galtung 1996: 2). Then again, cultural violence is identified “by content: religion, law and ideology, language, art, empirical/ formal science, cosmology (deep culture) and by carriers: schools, universities, media” (Galtung 1996: 31). All in all, violence was redefined as “avoidable insults to basic human needs and more generally to life.” The four basic needs include: survival needs (negation: death, mortality); well-being needs (negation: misery, morbidity); identity, meaning needs (negation: alienation); and freedom needs (negation: repression) (Galtung 1990: 292). Ecological balance was added as additional need, which, if not satisfied, results in human degradation. “The sum of all five, for all, will define ‘peace’” (ibid.).

In “Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization,” ‘negative peace’ was reestablished as the absence of all kinds of violence. Moreover, Galtung comes to distinguish between different forms of ‘positive peace’: “[D]irect positive peace would consist of verbal and physical kindness, good to the body, mind and spirit of Self and Other; [...] *Structural positive peace* would substitute freedom for repression and equity for exploitation [reinforced with dialogue, integration, solidarity, and participation] [...] *Cultural positive peace* would substitute legitimization of peace for the legitimization of violence; [...] building a positive peace culture” (Galtung 1996: 32).

By relating violence to the structure of society, Galtung is seen to have created a connection between peace, conflict, and development research. However, some researchers found the positive peace concept overly utopian and lacking in rigor (Grewal 2003). Boulding (1977) believes that as the criteria for violence has become wider; the achievement of positive peace has become even more illusory. In addition, he criticizes that the concept of structural violence has been expanded to include all the problems of poverty, deprivation, and misery. According to Boulding, not all poverty cultures are cultures of violence, and not all cultures of violence are poverty cultures. Yet, if poverty or deprivation itself is understood as violence, the persons affected by it might not have to endure direct (physical or verbal) violence, but might suffer from the consequences of poverty all the same. Moreover, Galtung’s peace thinking does offer certain advantages. First, by including structural and cultural violence in the definition of violence, Galtung puts forward an extended notion of peace that concerns all

levels of human organization, including not only international relations but also domestic politics and addressing people not only affected by direct violence but also by other forms of repression and discrimination. Second, Galtung's theories permit to view peace as a process that evolves over time, which makes peacebuilding a continuous challenge in all societies, not only in those affected by war or emerging from violent conflict. Third, if one acknowledges peace as a process, it becomes a condition that can fluctuate across various levels of peacefulness. Therefore, peace turns out to be less utopian, as it no longer represents a final stage. Fourth, as all members of society generally form part of the structure and culture, it obliges everyone as stakeholder with responsibility for creating and maintaining peace.

Nonetheless, it seems that despite having considered Eastern definitions of peace, which tend to underline elements such as (inner) balance and (inner) harmony, these elements are ultimately barely included into Galtung's own peace concept. Although 'direct positive peace' includes 'kindness and being good to mind and spirit of Self and Other,' this appears to be rather a strategy to obtain direct positive peace (refraining from violence against mind and spirit) than the characteristic of inner harmony itself. As Royce states: "Whereas most Western definitions of peace tend to emphasize the absence of violence, Eastern definitions tend to be positive in the sense that peace means the presence of certain characteristics rather than the absence of negative characteristics. A truly global understanding of peace should include both the absence of factors such as violence and the presence of factors such as balance, harmony, and unbrokenness" (Royce 2004: 102). Royce's (2004) thinking about peace is still inspired by Galtung's peace theory and continues to apply the terms 'positive' and 'negative peace' as well as 'structural violence.' As a complementation, Royce intends to further combine deferring Eastern and Western ideas into a joined peace concept. The researcher proposes a model of peace contexts, ranging from the macro to the micro level: ecological "Gaia" peace (with the planet and the natural world); international, political peace (among nations); national, domestic peace (within the nation); local, civil peace (among social groups); interpersonal peace (among individuals/ within the group); and personal, inner peace (within the individual). In addition, Royce differentiates between two dimensions of peace: (1) the 'violence dimension' ('negative peace') measured by levels of violence and (2) the 'harmony dimension' ('positive peace') measured by the degree that individuals/groups/nations engage in mutually harmonious relationships. "These dimensions are measured both objectively and subjectively" (Royce 2004: 108).

3.2 Theories of Social Knowledge

The social world represents an “intersubjective domain: it is meaningful to people who made it and live in it, and who understand it precisely because they made it and they are at home in it” (Jackson/Sørensen 2007: 165). The concepts of peace and violence form part of this social world, since they deal with interpersonal relations, between individuals or groups of individuals. Additionally, if peace and violence are viewed as integral elements of people’s social world and experiences, the concepts also form part of people’s social knowledge (Raviv/Oppenheimer/Bar-Tal 1999). In social constructivism, social knowledge is perceived as a result of a series of common-sense constructs which are formed as people pre-select and pre-interpret this world, which they experience as their daily reality (Harrington 2000).

Raviv, Oppenheimer, and Bar-Tal (1999) present four different approaches with regard to the development of knowledge about peace, conflict, and war: the cognitive-developmental, social learning, ecological, and socialization approach. All of these theoretical approaches “perceive knowledge about peace, conflict and war – like any other knowledge – to be based on personal constructions which are codetermined by a multitude of individual and environmental variables” (Raviv/Oppenheimer/Bar-Tal 1999: 8). Since these variables might alter as the social world fluctuates, knowledge of issues such as peace might also be viewed as changeable and dynamic. On the other hand, this knowledge might be shared by individuals of the same sociocultural context, for it is seen as directly related to the individuals’ experiences and their level of operational thinking. Moreover, social knowledge is likely to influence people’s attitudes, emotions, and behavior (ibid.).

Previous research on young people’s conceptualization of and knowledge acquisition regarding peace, conflict, and violence frequently made use of the cognitive-developmental approach. “Within the field of social-cognitive research, a number of stage theories exist which focus on abilities of interpersonal inference and an understanding of social phenomena” (Hakvoort/Oppenheimer 1999). One influential theory is Piaget’s stage theory for cognitive development, which systemizes a child’s age-related ability to place oneself in the position of others (i.e. role-taking ability). Additionally, Piaget stresses the significance of social factors in the development of knowledge. Social knowledge is regarded as the product of interactions between the maturing individual and the environment. Children are perceived as actively seeking information and new experiences so as to adapt to their environments and to fit existing knowledge structures. Thus, the developing individual is put into the center.

“Instead of perceiving development from the perspective of the social environment (the adults’ perspective), development is studied from the perspective of the child” (Raviv/Oppenheimer/Bar-Tal 1999: 13f). Ålvik (1968) and Cooper (1965) follow this line of thought, linking the development of the ability to relate multiple perspectives regarding conflict with the child’s growing ability to relate multiple perspectives in general (Ålvik 1968). Hakvoort (1996) applies a social-cognitive developmental perspective, which is related to Piaget’s cognitive development approach. The study’s focal point is the cognitive development (i.e. developing role-taking ability) in relation to children’s conceptualization. “Young children are not expected to be able to differentiate between their own perspective and those of others [...] Thus, it is not before adolescence that a differentiation between peace in terms of the absence of war (i.e., positive peace), and peace in terms of a dynamic, interaction processes (i.e., positive peace) will emerge” (Hakvoort 1996: 26f). This alternation is related to a shift in the individual’s evolving understanding of interpersonal relationships. At the same time, it is recognized that the individual engages in dynamic interactive processes with the social environment, which affects the individual’s understanding of social phenomena such as peace and war.

In contrast to the cognitive-developmental approach, which acknowledges the child as with the environment actively interacting individual, the social learning approach perceives the child as relatively passive, molded by environmental factors which modify his/her behavior (Raviv/Oppenheimer/Bar-Tal 1999). Social learning theorists take a behavioral perspective in the assumption that people are fundamentally shaped by the environment through learning processes. These “classical and operant conditioning processes” include imitation, as people learn by observing others. Thus, the social environment is seen as particularly important influence on the individual’s behavior. Bandura proposed the social learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of modeling: “from observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action” (Learning Theories Knowledgebase 2011). “Studies based on this perspective, for instance, have focused on the positive and negative aspects of television as a common source of models for children” (Raviv/Oppenheimer/Bar-Tal 1999: 6).

Unlike most behavioral and psychological theories, the ecological approach perceives the relationship between the developing child and the environmental systems, such as the family, school, community, and culture as reciprocal. Ecological concepts from biology are used as a metaphor to describe the organisms in interaction with each other and with their surroundings.

While an individual is constantly shaping the environment, the environment equally affects the individual's development. The surroundings are divided into systems. For instance, the micro-system encompasses the relationships and interactions a child has with her immediate surroundings (e.g. family, school, and neighborhood), whereas the macro-system is considered the outermost layer in the child's environment, comprised of cultural values, customs, and laws. (Paquette/Ryan 2011). The ecological approach looks at the interaction between factors in the child's maturing biology (part of the micro-system), his/her immediate surroundings, and the societal landscape. For example, if the school is regarded as key agent in influencing a child's social knowledge, the school's impact might vary according to factors such as the nature of the relationship between the child and school. (Raviv/Oppenheimer/Bar-Tal 1999) Thus, research based on this perspective takes interest in the factors within a child's environment which may contribute to his/her understanding of social concepts, including peace and war.

Similarly to the ecological approach, the socialization perspective focuses on the social context in which individuals form ideas about social phenomena. Attention is given to the way in which social experiences shape the development of knowledge as well as to socializing agents such as the parents, media, and schools (Raviv/Oppenheimer/Bar-Tal 1999). "Socialization focuses on the processes whereby an individual's standards, skills, motives, and behaviors are influenced to conform to those regarded as desirable and appropriate for his or her present or future role in society" (Raviv/Oppenheimer/Bar-Tal 1999: 6f). Yet, in contrast to the social learning approach, which ascribes an individual's modification of behavior to observational learning, socialization is centered around the intergenerational transfer of values and norms. Haavelsrud (2009) along with Hashemi and Shahraray (2009) stress the impact of the sociocultural structure on the development of ideas about social phenomena such as peace and war. "[F]ormal education is only one of many sources of influence in the formation of political orientations competing with other sources of influence such as the family, peers, religion and mass media. At different points in an individual's lifespan, some of these sources are more important than others" (Haavelsrud 2009: 116). "The sociocultural context contributes to cognitive development in two ways. It determines the content of thought, as well as how socialization agents affect the thought process" (Hashemi/Shahraray 2009: 257). Values are understood as part of the sociocultural context. They can be defined as notions "explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable" (Abendschön 2010: 61), which influence people's perceptions as well as their behavior. Consequently, different socialcultural context most

likely provide for deferring socialization processes, including deferring social knowledge. However, “in accordance with an ecological perspective, socialization is not a one-way process“ (Hashemi/Shahraray 2009: 259). Despite the acknowledgment of the sociocultural context’s impact on the individual’s knowledge, individuals are regarded to (re)construct meanings out of each other’s behaviors, thereby being able to produce transformations in the context. Research applying the socialization approach doesn’t perceive the child as passive receivers of input: “The child alters his or her environment and, in turn, is cumulatively altered by the changed world he or she has created” (Hashemi/Shahraray 2009: 250f).

Overall, social knowledge can be defined as the result of a series common-sense constructs, which are determined by a multitude of individual and environmental variables. As those variables might alter, social knowledge is viewed to be dynamic as well. Although the previously presented approaches share this view, individual and environmental factors are weighted differently.

From a cognitive-developmental perspective, social knowledge is seen as the product of interactions between the maturing individual and the environment. However, instead of the environment, the child who actively seeks new information and experiences stands central. Thus, primary interest is taken in the individual’s cognitive development, e.g. a child’s age-related ability to place oneself in the position of others.

In contrast, the social learning approach emphasizes the ‘society’s molding of the child.’ The child is perceived as passive individual who is molded by environmental factors which modify his/her behavior. Social knowledge is seen to be determined by observational learning. Consequently, influential environmental factors are in the center of interest.

The ecological approach looks at interaction between the child and the ecological systems. Opposing the social learning approach, the relationship between the individual and the environment is viewed as reciprocal. Accordingly, the development of social knowledge involves the interplay between changing children and their changing relationships with different societal systems.

Similarly, the socialization perspective focuses on the social context, particularly socializing agents and the individual’s social experiences. Socialization is centered on the intergenerational transfer of values and norms. Nonetheless, the transmission is not viewed as simple, one-way process, as the child and the environment mutually alter and influence one another. Social knowledge is seen to be the result of the individuals’ interactions with the

environment and influenced by sociocultural factors. Thus, depending on the socialcultural context, social knowledge might vary.

3.3 Theoretical Framework

This research project intends to investigate how Cusco's street-living adolescents conceptualize 'peace' and 'violence.' The presented peace theories serve as points of orientation in the subsequent analysis of the Cusquenian youths' ideas about these issues. The basic Western definition refers to 'peace' as an interpersonal condition free from overt violence. Similarly, previous research on children and adolescents' peace concept found a prevalent understanding of the term in the sense of Galtung's 'negative peace' (absence of direct violence). But researchers also detected an apparently age-related shift towards a stronger incorporation of 'positive peace' (absence of structural violence) in the children's conceptualizations. Nevertheless, it is imperative to be open to alternative notions, such as Royce's reasoning about peace, when analyzing the youths' perspective.

Besides examining the street adolescents' conceptualization of peace and violence, the present research project aims at taking a closer look at their specific sociocultural context and its influence on their social knowledge. Young people are seen as potential agents in the transformation of the society who interact in various systems with other societal agents. This view complies with the ecological and socialization approaches which recognize the significance of sociocultural factors in the development of social knowledge as well as the reciprocal relationship between the individual and the environment. In consequence, in the subsequent data analysis (Chapter VI) regarding young people's concepts of peace and violence, a socialization perspective will be taken, while acknowledging the individual as agent in interaction with societal systems. Previously, Chapter IV and V introduce the study's empirical findings.

Chapter IV: Empirical Findings – Sociocultural Background

4 Introduction

So as to gain knowledge about the sociocultural background of the street youths in Cusco, interviews were carried out with persons who are experienced in working directly with the adolescents: the founder and former president of the association Qosqo Maki, the former as well as the current directors of the organization, and two educators who have been working at QM for quite some time now. The interviews served to gain information about the street adolescents' social background, their every-day life, their position in the Cusquenian society, and their sources of knowledge. Subsequently, the information gathered from these interviews is presented.

4.1 Social Background

Where do the children and adolescents at QM come from?

Most children and adolescents who make use of Qosqo Maki's dormitory originate from the Cusco region. As Livia, the former director of the organization, told me: "The majority is from Cusco, from the marginalized neighborhoods. There is a minimum percentage of 30 to 40 percent, who are from the country. [...] The majority is from the department Cusco, but there are kids from other regions, Arequipa, Puno, and Lima. [...] But the majority is from Cusco." According to the founder and former president of the organization, Isabel, some of the children and adolescents even grew up in QM's vicinity. In addition, it was stated by the educator Adrian that the children from the poor Cusquenian neighborhoods often have parents who work on the markets and who frequently leave them alone. Moreover, according to Javier (educator), most of their parents have migrated from the farmer communities in Cusco's provinces to come to live in neighborhoods which are linked with extreme poverty and delinquency. Additionally, he mentioned that usually there is no direct relation between the youths' home and QM, meaning that few of the children and adolescents come directly from their homes to stay at the dormitory. Instead, after running away from home, they turn to the streets, and then find out about the organization.

In general, the educators depicted the children as strong individuals because, from their point of view, the decision to opt for a life in the street requires certain courage and surviving in the street takes a lot of strength. The street-life is seen as a coping strategy to get away from the

precarious circumstances most children have experienced at home. Thus, the street children are perceived as capable actors rather than victims. For instance, Isabel said: “Actually, there is something that seems very important to me to highlight that is that in any case it is their decision rather than the circumstances that sometimes oblige them to choose this option. Very rarely I got to know kids that stayed at QM because their parents told them ‘Go on, leave. I don’t want to see you anymore.’” “They are resourceful kids, of course in their here and right now, no. [...] Their perspective regarding the future, their life ahead, is poor. So, of course they don’t plan ahead. [...] They think of the moment, of how to solve their immediate problem” (Yeny, director of QM). Hence, on the one hand the youths are characterized by a strong personality and their resourcefulness. On the other hand, they are described as only living the moment without thinking about tomorrow.

Why have they chosen a life in the street?

The informants mentioned various factors that lead the youths to choose a life on the street. First, due to the prevalent criminality in the ‘marginalized neighborhoods,’ many parents thoroughly lock the doors of their houses when they leave the house early in the morning to go to work. Their children, however, have to spend the day outside in the streets, where they play, spend time in internet cafes, and mix with street youths. “And bit by bit they are ‘won over’ by the street. And when the parents come to realize that, it’s too late” (Livia). Furthermore, poor families in Cusco often share a small living space among numerous people. So, the adolescents feel pressured by the lack of space and prefer to stay outside. According to Javier, “[p]overty is violence as well. [...] Not to have the opportunity to study or to have those things a teenager needs is violence, too. So, this kind of kids [...] leaves because they have the necessity to make demands.” They turn to the streets in search for a better life. Besides, commonly it is not only material but also ‘emotional poverty’ that the children experience in their homes, as they grow up without the support and caring of their families. Other frequent reasons are the parents’ divorce or the passing away of one or both parents, events which cause a big change in the family structure. When that happens, often the child leaves because, though other relatives might exist, for one or the other reason he/she cannot or does not want to live with them.

Apart from reasons linked to poverty, the interviewees repeatedly stressed domestic violence as main cause, commonly in connection with alcoholism. For instance, Isabel stated: “Well, there is violence in the family, against the mom. The thing is that the boy has to witness how

his father or stepfather beats his mom right in front of him [...]. Maybe sometimes it wasn't violence directly against them, still the violence is somewhat present in the family life, also in the life of the neighborhood and all that. Sometimes, it's also the older brother. The older siblings are quite important in this picture, no." The children can no longer stand the violence in the family or the neighborhood and leave to get away from that.

Sometimes, children opt for a life on the street though their families are financially fairly well off or despite not having experienced violence at home. In those cases, the motivation might be rebelliousness. In the streets, they are free of responsibilities. No one requires them to do things they do not feel like doing. For that reason, many street children prefer not to stay at a children's home where they might encounter a shelter, food, cloths, and education, but are also submitted by strict rules that they are required to follow. In the streets, they feel free of rules; they feel independent. "Above all, the child looks for independence because he/she doesn't want to stay in closed homes. And in Qosqo Maki they found an open door. Like one night they can stay and have a good night, but the next day they can leave and be free. And they can go to work; they can go play; they can go to do whatever they want," as Adrian described it. Livia observed that a child "can spend three days in the street and like the street." Thus, the rule of thumb is that after having spent three whole days in the street, the children usually stay there. Their motives for choosing a life on the street are broad, ranging from unbearable circumstances that push them away from home to the perceived independency and freedom that pull them to the streets. Often the transition from home to the streets is a process, where the child spends increasingly prolonged time away from home.

How is the children and adolescents' family situation?

As I learned from the QM staff, most children still have a family, but maintain little contact with them. "Yes, they also have a family, but, like I said, they left home for a reason. [...] Yes, they have contact, but they don't want to go back to their home, that's the problem." (Adrian) If the parents passed away, there might be grandparents, uncles, aunts, or siblings. In some cases, the children escaped from one or more children's homes. A small number does not know their families, since they were abandoned when they were little. In addition, there is the special case of the children from the country, as described by Livia:

Normally, the peasant families are affected by poverty. The poverty in Peru's mountain regions... especially Cusco has a high poverty index, extreme poverty in the country. Thus, the children, sometimes with the parents, sometimes alone, come down to the city to

sell. [...] They sell in the street. They go back home and contribute economically to the family. [...] They go back home to the country and pay their own enrolment fee, pay the uniforms, the school supply because their parents are not able to assume these costs. [...] There are children who work but part of the day they spend online, in the internet cafes. [...] The kids who used to come only during the school vacations start to come also on the weekends. They like the city and there they get to know other street kids. And they realize that it's not necessary to struggle to earn money, that there are also other ways to earn money, like prostitution, like stealing. [...] That is when the uprooting begins. [...] And generally they come to QM when they've already spent quiet sometime in the street.

The children and adolescents who originate from the country represent an exceptional case, as they have grown up under different conditions and used to be strongly tied up in the family structure. Nevertheless, the contact to the family becomes increasingly weaker. Most of the urban street youths have not completely cut off the contact with their families either, no matter how difficult their situation at home was. "The family remains a reference point, though they might have treated the boy badly" (Javier). Some return home to visit on Mother's Day or Christmas. However, those visits are limited and might not be long or frequent. In the end, the frequency and intensity of the family contact depends very much on the individual.

4.2 Everyday-Life

How do they make money?

The street children's strategies to earn money are broad, ranging from begging to legal to illegal activities. Frequently, it is a combination of different money-making activities. According to the experts' reports, over the years a transformation occurred in the type of activities the street children and adolescents carry out. In QM's first years of operation, it was mostly street-working children that made use of the organization's services. They sold postcards or sweets in the main square, cleaned windcreens, worked as shoe-shiners or as musicians. However, this kind of labor has decreased among QM's users. The interviewees related this development to the local government's aim to evict the street-working children from the public places and the tourists' eyes and the resulting actions of social cleansing. "There is a public decree that gives the permission to expulse not just the kids, but all street vendors who remain near the *Plaza de Armas*" (Livia). "They made the working kids disappear on the pretext that they are thieves, drug addicts, assaulters. There was a local decree that was passed [...] to pick up all kids in the *Plaza de Armas* without confirming well if these kids actually were thieves or assaulting tourists. [...] and they left those children in

nothingness. They didn't have another choice" (Adrian). Thus, today many street children feel that there's no other option for them than stealing or discovered it to be a relatively easy way to make money. However, many street youths do work; others, as stated earlier, combine legal and illegal activities. Javier explained how the occupation also depends on the age group:

Normally, when they are very young they go to the street to *huarapear*. Well, that is Peruvian slang for asking for money. [...] They are in the street, asking for money, or singing, begging, or selling sweets in restaurants, singing with some small shells. Then, when they become older; they acquire a shoe-shining box, wash cars. They continue growing older; they start to learn how to play an instrument, and don't sing anymore but make music which is different. Then, they start working in restaurants, in *pollerías* ['fried chicken restaurants'], in carpentries, in bakeries, in hotels, in already formative jobs.

In addition, the street children's money-making activity might change according to the season. "For example, in the period of January, February, March, there are vacations. It's the rain season. So, nobody would let his shoes shined. Thus, particularly during those months, the majority goes to Quillabamba, Arequipa, some place where they can find other type of work, like coffee, *pallar café* ['coffee bean'] and *chakra* ['small farm'], no" (Isabel).

Adrian observed that sometimes work with fixed hours is unpopular with the street youths, for "[a] child leaves home because he/she wants this freedom. He/She doesn't want to be controlled at home." Thus, if a work place exercises a lot of control and requires a strict work schedule, sometimes the street youth does not stay long in the job because she/he prefers to work flexibly. The street children maintain their freedom when they work independently, for instance, as shoe-shiner. On the other hand, some feel embraced when they do this kind of job, so they prefer to work at a restaurant or bakery, yet with suitable working hours. A severe problem represents the exploitation of the working children and adolescents. Livia:

QM works with street-living children but also has a small group of street-working children. It's a small group. It is important to care for both, no, because both groups are vulnerable, the kids of the street who cut of their family ties, just as well as the working kids who work in closed places, no, in the service of adults who exploit them. [...] The working kids leave home with their parents' consent. They work in certain businesses and go home when they can. Yet, when the parents stop accompanying them, stop caring about their children's situation, that's when they start to be exploited. [...] The child of the street has broken the family tie, has stopped going to school, doesn't study, doesn't have contact with his/her family and, well, is alone. [...] Those children are the ones who suffer most work exploitation because there's no family that accompanies them.

All in all, it becomes apparent that the money-making activities of the street children and adolescents are wide-ranging, depending on their skills and age. Legal and illegal activities might be combined or alternate. In addition, influencing factors that were identified are the local government policy (actions), the season of the year, and the family tie.

How is the children and adolescents' school situation?

Most street children have abandoned school on various grounds. Javier explained:

The school situation is a bit complicated, no, because they are kids who have dropped out of school, the majority for quite some time by now. [...] Those kids have dropped out for different reasons, might be because they are on the street, because of parental neglect, because the education is not their parents' priority, because of different learning problems, ranging from hyperactivity to someone's intellectual coefficient.

Additional causes mentioned by the interviewees were their age (e.g. many teenagers experience a drop in motivation to go to school), the temptations they find in the streets (e.g. internet cafes), or the poor quality of the Peruvian schools that seem little attractive for the youths. One of QM's objectives is to motivate the children and adolescents to take up classes again. Usually, at the beginning of the school year a great deal of QM's users is enthusiastic and enrolls for school. However, shortly after, the number of enrolled students lessens notably. Some of them simply lose motivation. "All of us we have to find a motivation to do things. [...] We have had the motivation because we have lived in a world, like in a family, where everybody has been studying and we saw that our dad studied and had success. In contrast, they haven't had those reference points. [...] They have to find their own motivation" (Javier). Thus, in the absence of role models and support of the family, the street children have to find a motivation for themselves to go to school, for example, the goal to become a psychologist one day. According to Isabel, an additional reason can be found in their way of living as working children. Sometimes they might come to know of an opportunity to earn money in some other region, and they might decide to move to that place to use the opportunity. Hence, necessarily those children drop out without finishing the school year. Even if they do not have to move to a distant place, for many working children the compatibility of school and work poses a serious problem. The *Nuevos Escolarizados* were mentioned as further option for the working children and adolescents. These alternative educational institutes offer regular basic education at alternative times, such as on evenings, weekends or only one day a week. Hence, being able to combine work and school, the youths have the opportunity to finish their studies. However, the educators appeared rather critical

towards these institutions, for they were said to provide poor educational quality, being orientated towards profit-making rather than social purposes. If a user of QM chooses not to go to school, the organization attempts to teach him/her informally basic skills, such as writing, reading, or solving basic math problems. Education is seen as an essential or even solitary way for the children to get away from the streets. Nevertheless, many street children never finish school.

What role do drugs play in the children and adolescents' life?

According to the interviewees, in Cusco, the street children who use drugs mainly consume *Terokal* (glue inhaled from plastic bags or bottles) or marihuana. However, *Terokal* is the most common drug for various reasons. First, “[b]ecause of its price, it’s a cheap substance. In contrast, marihuana costs a little more and other drugs even more” (Livia). However, *Terokal* can be the gate opener to harder drugs and is linked to future alcoholism. Second, the glue is easily accessible for the street youths. Third, the children and adolescents commonly consume *Terokal* together with their peers. Thus, it represents a way of socializing and group affiliation. Usually, the competition among street-working children and adolescents is very high. Isabel explained that “[i]f there are two shoe-shiners or two postcard vendors or two car-washers, necessarily the other is a competitor. You always have to fight. At least playing football or inhaling *Terokal* represents a moment that allows to share.” Fourth, in this brief moment the children forget about the daily worries. “It helps them to handle, to bear the harshness of everyday life” (Livia) because “when you are on drugs, you don’t feel as cold, as hungry anymore” (Yeny). Many children have a bad consciousness for leaving their families or are traumatized by the bad experiences they have had in their short lives. The glue causes hallucinations, which temporarily free them of feeling physical or emotional pain. Fifth, Adrian described how some street children use the drugs to gain courage for fights or stealing acts: “He doesn’t feel scared or intimidated. It serves to get valor for one’s actions.”

However, the effect doesn’t last long and the drug consumption bares severe consequences for the street youths’ health and future prospects. For one, repeated inhaling of *Terokal* damages the lungs and nerve system. “If the kid is a constant consumer, he/she will have a sad and soon ending. He/She could make it to the age of 25, depending on the frequency and the quantity of consumption” (Livia). Moreover, those who are addicted to drugs “are less motivated to do things for the personal development, less disposition to study, less disposition to look for work” (Yeny). Javier explains the reciprocal effect of drug abuse and missing life

perspectives. “The one, who disposes of a lot of time without having anything to do in the street and who doesn’t have any motivation to work on one’s own life plan, has time to focus on drugs. Then again, the drug makes one forget about everything one can do. It’s a combination of the two.” In addition, the street children’s drug addiction exacerbates their exclusion from society, creating a vicious circle: as the youths feel rejected by society, they are even more inclined to escape this feeling of being excluded through drug consumption. Yeny observed: “It is a spiral and you end up on the bottom.” Nonetheless, the QM staff pointed out that not all street children are addicted to drugs and many of those who used to inhale *Terokal* get away from the sniffing after some time.

How would you see the presence of violence in the children and adolescents’ life?

Violence is seen as a daily or permanent factor in the street children’s life. First, many originate from violent parental homes. As Adrian pointed out, domestic violence represents a common ground to leave home: “Wife and father, children and father, children and mothers, everything was aggression, fights, and the boy who turns to the street leaves home already with this image, with this education and shows the same aggression in the street.” Yeny agreed by saying: “It forms part of what they have always lived. Since childhood they have seen this violence. So, there is a circle of violence: the dad beats the mom, the mom beats the oldest child, the oldest child beats the middle brother and that one the other, until they end up beating the pet.” In addition, Livia observed that growing up without the adequate caring, many street children experienced an additional form of violence: “For one, from young age on they didn’t get sufficient attention, an alimentation that didn’t fulfill what a child needs during its first years.” However, she does not fully blame the parents but their poverty for the insufficient care. Nonetheless, QM’s educators emphasized that most street children got to know violence as regular means for solving problems, exemplified through the adults around them. “Boys who beat their mother because they saw that the dad beat her, too. Thus, they thought it was normal. They are very violent, they are very violent. They don’t have other tools to solve their problems apart from violence” (Javier). Thus, “[h]ere in the dormitory they also show this violence, which they experienced,” Adrian observed. The presence of violence among QM’s street children and adolescents was seen as very distinct. Livia detected different kinds of violent behavior among the users:

Among the street kids, the kids at QM, the relation is always violent, the habit of calling names, the habit of fighting, [...] the physical and verbal abuse, the discrimination among them is there. You will notice that at QM the guys who live in the city abuse those guys who come from the country. The term *chotano* ['hick'] might be used. *Chotano* is disrespectful. They call that the guys who come from the country.

Still, Adrian pointed out that despite the heavy fights that sometimes occur there are also feelings of friendship and being like brothers and sisters evident in the dormitory. Problems are also frequently solved through peaceful means, such as the weekly users' assembly where all kinds of issues can be brought up. Nonetheless, Adrian also reported of violent street fights that some are involved in.

Apart from the violence among street youths themselves, they experience violence from the people on the street as well as the police. "The people on the street commonly look at them with certain distrust, certain fear. [...] It isn't violence in the sense that someone hits the other, nevertheless it is violence in life where you feel that they despise you, fear you, and marginalize you for that" (Isabel). The child notices the distrust when he/she walks the street and people draw aside in fear of being robbed by him/her. In addition, "it is the state itself, the police" (Livia). "The national police or the local police are always after them for whatever reason" (Isabel). "When I came to QM, the situation of the street children was simply dramatic because they could be held in custody at the police station for months [...] or they make them pay money to be released [...]. So, those are also forms of violence" (Livia). In general, most interviewees criticized the local authority's way of handling the issue of street children in Cusco.

Additionally, according to the informants' accounts, violence is very pronounced in the Peruvian society in general. "You don't need to be a street child to come across violence in the society. You enter a bus or microbus and someone pushes you, [...] they insult you, they deceive you. So, the violence is very present in our society. [...] I think that the violence is somewhat institutionalized" (Yeny). Livia spoke of violence being "structural" in Peru, which particularly affects the street children: "First of all, it's a violent society that stigmatizes and discriminates against them, not only for living in the street but also for their poverty." As a result, according to Livia, the street children's exclusion and discrimination are doubled. Moreover, Livia explained that in Peru, since colonialism times, discrimination on grounds of heritage and skin color has been extensive:

The people from the capital discriminate against the people from the provinces. The people from the provinces discriminate against those from the districts. The people from the districts discriminate against those from the country. Thus, there is no respect for the person, no, the person's dignity, but primarily the skin color and the financial.

The experts accounted of different forms of violence present in the Cusquenian street children's lives. For one, many of them experienced violence in their families, where they learned from scratch to use violence as the way to solve problems. Consequently, violence is also very distinct in the living together at the dormitory. In addition, the youths encounter violence in the streets among themselves, from the people, as well as the police. Last but not least, the Peruvian society in general was characterized as violent sphere, where the street children are discriminated against and marginalized. The interviewees identified all three of Galtung's (1990) types of violence: direct, structural, and cultural violence. According to the interviewees, many street children have experienced direct violence, for instance, in their families. The discrimination, marginalization, and poverty can be categorized as structural violence, justified by the person's skin color and origin, which make up the cultural violence.

4.3 The Street Adolescents in Society

How is the image that people hold of the street children and adolescents?

In general, the people's image of the street children was depicted as negative. The interviewees spoke of stigmatization and widespread prejudices. Only few people were said to have come to view street children in a positive way, but only those who actually work on the street. Usually, street youths are treated with rejection or even fear. As Adrian stated: "The rejection is strong [...]. You see a child and you are afraid, so you move over to the side. Or they might insult you 'hey you filthy brat.' [...] The same with the authorities, the police, for example, arrest the children; make them pay to be allowed to leave. [...] There are kids who know their rights; they hit them; they don't allow them to speak." Livia described how the street children are stigmatized as thieves:

Just because they make use of the dormitory or because they are street children, they are considered thieves. [...] But that is a false idea of the society. [...] the child might be going to work or simply walking in the street, but the police have this prejudice that he/she is going to steal. So, that is also a form of abuse, of violence in the street.

Similarly, Javier spoke about how the street children were called *pirañas* and generalized as being burglars and lazy. This stereotype brings about negative consequences for the street

children. For instance, if they need to see a doctor, often they might not be attended because the people think they won't be able to pay for the service:

There are lots of prejudices. [...] The clothing, because of how you speak, because of clothing. In Peru if you go to a hospital and you go to the hospital with sandals and all peasant-like, they won't attend you. They will attend the kids badly. In contrast, if you go fashionable, well-dressed, elegant, even more if you as a German [I am German] go, they will attend you because you'll pay.

Yeny observed that if the street children are not seen as *pirañas*, they tend to be perceived as victims, "like poor things that are thrown away without any opportunities and who will end up as beggars in the street, poor wretch, no. So, it's either the danger or the poor thing." Yeny and Isabel were the only ones who accounted also of a few persons who have a positive image of the street children. Yeny related of some people who admire the street-working children's capacity to make their own living while maybe even going to school at the same time; whereas Isabel stated that some people, although few, "come to have a relation of like appreciation and trust with them because they are passing clients [...], however, it is difficult. The majority of clients are by-passers." At large, the interviewees observed that most people do not have the opportunity to get to know the children in order to revise their image.

What is the biggest challenge for them to get away from the streets?

Isabel observed that the street children encounter major problems when they reach adolescence. First, he/she starts to care about what other people think about him/her. So, she/he cares more about her/his appearance. Second, an adolescent boy is always hungry because he is growing and needs more food. Third, the adolescent boy has a girlfriend he wants to treat well, which requires cash. So, according to Isabel, the street adolescents' needs for money erupt compared to a street child who mostly cares about earning sufficient money to buy the daily bread. In addition, the teenager starts to increasingly worry about the future: "The whole question of the future, the question of the family, to meet the family again in a positive way [...]." Future perspectives were also mentioned by Javier and Yeny. For Javier the greatest challenge is for the children to realize that it is up to them to create their own life plan. Yeny pointed out that "the chief challenge is to find the possibilities that allow them to show themselves that they can achieve something [...], to educate themselves, study, qualify themselves, and have the opportunity to find work, show that they are capable."

In addition, Adrian observed that “they don’t go out there with the confidence they should have, like other kids who study and are doing well at work, so, or like worrying about what they are going to eat today, if they are going to have lunch today, where they get money from today. So, it’s a bit counterproductive the situation they live in.” Thus, the children need to be confident in order to find and seize the opportunities to improve their lives. However, the daily worries about surviving are recognized to complicate their situation. Moreover, Livia brought up the psychological traumas most children suffer from, which were caused by the abuse they experienced, and which they need to process. Both, Livia and Yeny, emphasized the importance of affection and acceptance for the youths in order to be able to improve their situation. Adrian identified the rejection by society as additional obstacle. Besides, he saw a challenge for the children and adolescents in knowing their rights: “Sometimes the kids don’t want to understand or don’t want to know the rights they have: the right to education, rights to health, rights to freedom, to walk in the street. They are always exposed to some adult, the police or someone, who tells them something and they have to be submissive like to be quiet.” Furthermore, some youths “are trapped” by drugs or by the fear of confronting life.

Hence, the street children have to face complex challenges: problems that come with being an adolescent, to deal with the psychological trauma one might suffer from, to find the confidence to take life in one’s own hands by finding and using opportunities, and to know and claim one’s rights. Their situation is further complicated by the anxiety of surviving, the society’s rejection, as well as the lack of affection and acceptance.

What would have to change in the street children and adolescents’ life to improve it?

To improve the street children’s life “[t]hey would have to change themselves; the authorities would have to change; the society itself not to reject the kids” (Adrian). In addition, Livia demands adequate aid programs along with well trained professionals for these programs:

Thus, I think that a therapeutic, psychotherapeutic care or intervention is necessary, but also parallel an educational or psycho pedagogical intervention. On the other hand, I sense that it is important that the society itself gives special attention to provide the children with room for recreation. [...] Yet, in addition, there should be educational spaces where they are helped to reflect, take up their situation, to think about, analyze it and how to find a way out of this situation. Because if you don’t help them... they could momentarily get out; they could stop inhaling *Terokal*, even finish school. However, if they are not assisted to overcome the emotional traumas they have, sooner or later they will fall back again.

Moreover, the educators called for opportunities for the youths to study, work, and qualify themselves, so that they can make the shift from informal to formal work. Adrian and Javier criticized the state and local policies. “The state with its policies, which they don’t have well implemented regarding the training centers, would have to change, supply the kids with more work, maybe let them work but in coordination with the municipality, the authorities” (Adrian). Javier observed that many street children think that it is their destiny if they don’t find work or cannot have a good education. “An opportunity is neither to give them clothes nor to find a home for them, instead, an opportunity is to employ people who know their situation and work with them.” According to Javier, the government’s strategy focuses more on security than on social programs: “When is the government going to spend money on them on the regional, municipal level? They are going to spend money, the money when they realize that it’s too late. Then, what are they going to spend money on? On patrols, on security, on helicopters.” However, for Javier the only way to work with the street children and adolescents is to take interest in them while respecting the particularity of their situation and nature. So, at large, it would take a combination of the street youths’ own will, an alternation of the society’s attitude towards them, along with adequate facilitation programs, as well as supporting state policies, which assist the youths, to improve their lives.

4.4 Sources of Knowledge

To what extent do the street children and adolescents have access to the media?

Where do they gain knowledge from?

For the street children and adolescents the most easily reached medium is the Internet, which they access in one of Cusco’s many Internet cafés or at QM. According to the QM staff, this involves the good and the bad: “They have completely free and open access to the Internet, like the good and the bad, meaning they can find everything there, from super interesting books to the hardest pornography.” (Yeny) Besides being a source of information for the youths, it also represents a popular way of distraction. Adrian pointed out: “The internet has also been a negative thing for the kids, so that they don’t work. They don’t study because they are online, not getting good information or learning something but they are looking at other things, games, pornography etcetera. They are spending days, hours like that on the Internet.” However, “there are also local and national newspapers available” (Livia). Additionally, the ones who used to or currently attend classes obtain information and gain knowledge at school.

Yet, the quality of education at Peruvian schools was criticized by some interviewees. For instance, Adrian observed:

Well, regarding the question of education, there is not a lot, lots of help for the kids because, for example, the night schools. That's why there are so many dropouts. For example, the kids go to school, but the teachers, the teachers themselves, come to class drunk. Then, when they notice that a child is on *Terokal* because they have seen him or because of the smell of the body, they reject him. Or a classmate exposes him 'Teacher, this one is on *Terokal*.' Thus, the boy definitely feels excluded from the class and doesn't want to go anymore.

Conversely, the street children are taught formally and informally at the organization. They gain information from the educators, the activities and workshops, as well as the available literature at the library:

Here, we are trying to provide them with semi-formal learning, recreational but educative, like, for example, they fill out word games, crosswords. [...] The educators at QM, we don't need a class room to talk about the importance of health, about the prevention of sexual diseases, or about the birth of such and such person, market problems or politics, events in the neighborhood or at the national or international level. [...] On the steps, the courtyard, or in bed, we can converse with them about these topics. (Javier)

However, according to the experts, the street is where the children and adolescents obtain most of their knowledge by talking to people, observing, and listening. The life on the streets teaches them good and bad things. "The street is an open book. Like they are learning all sorts of things [...], learning good things, learning bad things" (Yeny). "The street itself is an encyclopedia of good and bad knowledge: the conversations among themselves, with the clients, the conversation with the cooking lady who sells the food, the conversation with the driver. That is where they primarily gain informal knowledge" (Javier). For instance, "when a boy shines the shoes of an adult, he asks questions about whatever things, listens" (Yeny). In addition, as many of the Cusquenian street-working children deal with foreign clients, they learn to speak some English. They form their nets of contacts and talk about different issues among their peers. "Also the group, no. Every group always has topics. Maybe not political topics, but issues they are interested in and talk about in small groups" (Livia).

Finally, it is the life in the street itself that teaches them. In some ways they might be more knowledgeable than children of the same age who live at home. Adrian talked about the youths' life experience, saying that "Actually the street child knows more than a child who

lives at home. [...] The street child has more capacity to develop many abilities [...] He/she has more experience. He/she possesses more strength to move forward [...] and of course they always have to because sometimes they don't want to go home anymore." Yeny found similar words: "If you take a child, or two children of the same age, one from home and one of the street, the one of the street probably will have more information about certain issues, for example, how the city works, where to find this or that." Thus, although numerous street children neither attend school nor stay with a family who educates them, they gain knowledge from different sources: the internet, newspapers, QM's educators and programs, their peers, and above all the street where they are in constant contact with different sorts of people; where they observe and listen; and where they gain life experience.

Chapter V: Empirical Findings – The Youths' Conceptualizations

5 Introduction

In the following, the data collected from the street adolescents' interviews and their previously composed drawings are presented. In order to add structure to the gathered information it was looked for common themes along with conceptual developments in the course of the conversations. The presentation of the findings is separated into four topics: definition of peace, responsibility for peace, peace in the adolescents' personal lives, and definition of violence. Concluding, a summary gives an overview of all four divisions.

5.1 Definition of Peace

How do the street-living adolescents understand the concept of peace?

The drawings functioned as an entry point into the abstract topic and as a way of stimulating the street adolescents' reflections about peace. When the participants had completed their illustrations, they were asked to explain what they had created. One of the elements the youths associated with peace was a church. Kevin (14): "the people go to church to get to know God and to be *tranquilo* ['calm,' 'quiet,' 'peaceful,' 'at peace'] [...] they enter the church to pray. The citizens go in to get to know the words of God." Juan Carlos (16) drew a church because "it is peace [...] One thing is that I go to church for a while to be *tranquilo*" and the people "are going to church [...], to the holy mess, to relax a bit." Thus, for the youths, the church holds a religious meaning, as people go there to get to know God and His words as well as to listen to the holy mess or to pray. Yet, on the other hand, it serves as a place where one can be

tranquilo, a state that Juan Carlos described as “relaxing a little bit.” For both of them the church seems to represent a feeling of being ‘at peace.’

Furthermore, the youths described how interpersonal relations would appear in a peace momentum:

You have peace when a person feels good next to the other. (Kevin, 14)

The two friends enjoy themselves. (Angel, 16)

But although he’s like muddled, they tell him ‘Hey, you are losing your cell phone’.
(Juan Flores, 18)

The heart can be many people united [...] to know how to forgive and act according to that [...]. The heart unites us as one family. A family that we have unites us and that means friendship, getting along well, solidarity and to keep going forward like to be like brothers. [...] We don’t have peace in our family. We come to the streets to look for that [...]. We think that the streets are good because we feel that in the streets they listen to us [...]; that our words make us a valid person. (Marisol, 18)

Being friends, being united as one family or brothers, feeling good next to other persons, and getting along well with other people were ways of describing those relations connected to peace; others were showing solidarity, listening to each other, or forgiving. According to Marisol (18), the youths turn to the streets in search of that. The description of how interpersonal relations should look like is contrasted with elements that for the adolescents should not exist in a peace momentum. For Nestor (16) peace is “with other people, but without exploitation, abuses, robberies, or killings.” Kevin (14) said when there is peace there is “no exploitation, wars, this type of things.” He was one of the few who in their very first associations explicitly mentioned the negation of war (‘negative peace’). Marisol (18) described how feeling hatred towards other people is contrary to peace. Hatred is put into relation with war:

Sometimes, we take it to war, having hatred and not peace in our heart. [...] there are many people, no, who... keep this hatred like they start to do bad things to other people. (Marisol, 18)

Moreover, in their free associations with peace, many interviewees described positive emotions, such as laughing, playing with friends, or being distracted. Juan Flores (18) explained how he meant to draw “many people watching two street artists. The street artists make the people laugh.” Kevin (14) and Angel (16) respectively depicted children playing and enjoying themselves in a park and two friends having a good time while playing football.

Angel explicitly said: “For me that’s peace like this playing.” For Juan Carlos (16) peace means “distracting myself.” Besides, one concept that often appears in the youths’ descriptions is *tranquilidad* (‘tranquility’). The young interviewees explained how tranquility can be found in the church or in the country. For them it connoted the calmness found in religion, to be relaxed, or without disturbance:

The people go to church to get to know God and to be *tranquila*. (Kevin, 14)

One thing is that I go to church for a while to be *tranquilo*. And here at peace. [...] Distracting myself, be more *tranquilo* [...], to relax a bit. (Juan Carlos, 16)

A *tranquilo* place, without noise. (Nestor, 16)

For me it’s peace because he is *tranquilo* with his flag and the dove is also *tranquilo*, at peace. And no one disturbs them. (Germán, 16)

Furthermore, it is interesting to see that most of the adolescents mentioned Peru or Cusco or both in their associations. Half of the interviewees described a place in or near Cusco (e.g. *Plaza San Francisco*, *Sanblas*, Municipality of Cusco, *Chincho*). Thus, these youths think about peace in their direct surroundings. Additionally, two street adolescents imagined the Peruvian flag in connection to peace. Germán (16) described a boy running with the Peruvian flag; Kevin (14) illustrated two children proudly “flying the flags of their motherland.” Hence, especially for these two boys, national pride goes along with the concept of peace.

In addition to the widespread focus on Cusco, internationally known symbols were used to represent peace. A white dove appeared in two illustrations. Germán (16) depicted a dove that is *tranquila*, ‘calm’ or ‘at peace,’ without explicitly labeling it as a peace symbol, whereas John Edwar (17) clearly identified the bird with a “flower” in its beak as a symbol for peace. Another element standing for peace according to the youths is the white flag because “the white flag means peace, like free us, bring us peace, we want peace” (Marisol, 18) and because “peace is white, it’s pure” (John Edwar, 17). Marisol (18) made use of two additional elements that for her symbolize respectively peace (the peace sign) or the absence of war and death (a crossed-out fylfot). Besides, she used the Yin Yan symbol to express that in every place where there is no peace, people exist who do want peace and teach the others about peace; and in every place where there is peace, people can be found who are against peace. Furthermore, Nestor (16), Angel (16), and Kevin (14) brought up material-related aspects connected to peace, for example, houses or a farm as well as children owning a dog or bikes.

In the second interview question, the adolescents were asked to put into words what they had associated with peace but were maybe not able to draw. Hence, some interviewees expanded on their earlier thoughts or brought up additional topics, which they connected to peace. Freedom, a concept that was already mentioned by Marisol (18) in the first question, was now also taken up by Kevin (14): “The thing is that here the children can be free, play in the parks... The children can also go to school, be free. Peace as well, no war.” Kevin and Marisol were the only ones who brought up ‘freedom.’ Absence of war was referred to by no more than three out of the eight participants in the first part of the interview.

The motherland and the church as well as being able to play reappeared as central elements linked to peace. Besides, *tranquilidad* was referred to again as being experienced when “playing football,” “distracting oneself,” “going to church,” (Juan Carlos, 16) or “getting along well with the others” (John Edwar, 17), but also in the sense of a “quiet world... not just in the country, a city can be *tranquila* as well, without discrimination, with a good government that is not corrupt” (Nestor, 16). Hence, the meaning of *tranquilidad* expanded to include ‘no discrimination’ and ‘good government.’

Moreover, the youths gave further details about how they picture interpersonal relations in a peaceful situation. According to them, peace can be experienced “on your own as well as with others if you get along well with the others” (Juan Flores, 18). For peace to prevail, the adolescents mentioned that one should “help the persons, support, talk to many persons [...], trust” (Marisol, 18) or “respect the others, look at them well [...], be friends, be compliable” (Angel, 16). John Edwar (17) thought that people should “be calm and get along well with one another.” He brought up images such as “two friends holding each other’s hands or two presidents shaking each other’s hands.” What is more, two of the youths mentioned love as essential for peace, for a “person needs that you are loved, that she is loved, that he is loved” (Marisol, 18). “Peace would be to love one another,” Angel (16) said. In addition, it was pointed out that peace and good relationships with people cannot be bought with money. However, there were persons believing that “with money they will make peace. They’ll have it all, buy the love of a person. And it doesn’t work like this. It’s not like that. You’ll never buy someone’s love with money. Or getting along well with a person or someone’s trust in you, you will never buy that with money” (Marisol, 18).

The first two questions served as a source of information about the street adolescents’ very first associations about peace. Of the eight individuals who participated in the research project, three illustrated a scene in the city center of Cusco, including the public square *San*

Francisco, the square in front of the church *Sanblas* located in the historic district, and a square that exhibits a lot of similarity with the central square *Plaza de Armas*. Another three participants sketched scenes in the country that resemble the landscapes of the districts outside of Cusco, with vegetation and/or mountains next to a little house. The remaining two interviewees kept to representing peace with abstract symbols that are also internationally known symbols (i.e. peace dove, heart, white flag, fylfot, and peace sign). Therefore, it becomes apparent that in their very first associations, the Cusquenian street youths thought about peace either located in their direct surrounding, linked to their own personal reality, or in a rather abstract version, represented by something seen somewhere before but distant from their personal reality. Moreover, peace seems to be conceived as being possibly experienced in the country as well as in the city. Besides, taking into consideration their drawings as well as explanatory comments, for the youths, peace can be experienced alone just as well as with other people present. It was also common to link peace to church or faith, where people can find tranquility. The concept ‘tranquility’ was mentioned frequently, yet given differing meanings, reaching from inner tranquility to being without disturbance or getting along well with other persons. National pride emerged as a new element associated with peace, which, according to my knowledge, did not appear in former studies. In this study, two out of eight picked this as a central theme. In addition, the Peruvian as well as the Cusquenian flag of one illustration are the only elements in all drawings that are colored while the rest are kept in black and white.

In the third interview question, the street youths were asked about how they would explain ‘peace’ to a friend, thus to give an explicit definition of peace. First and foremost, the adolescents used once more ‘tranquility’ to conceptualize peace:

[...] you’re *tranquila* like that. And if you are bothered, that’s not peace. Peace is when you are *tranquilo*, you on your own *tranquilo*. You don’t think about anything and that is *tranquilo*. That is called peace. (Juan Carlos, 16)

Everything is *tranquilo*. No one gets mad. There are no fights. (Germán, 16)

Peace is *tranquilidad*. [...] Yes, to get along well with others, not to be racist, not to see them for what they are but for who they are [...], for what one is as a person, for the character. (John Edwar, 16)

Thus, *tranquilidad* might be to be on your own, without disturbance, having an ‘empty mind.’ However, it might also appear in relation to other people in a situation where the persons get along well with one another and there are no fights. Furthermore, the absence of racism was

included in the concept. So, at this point of the interview the youths added details to their descriptions of peace in the sense of tranquility. Juan Flores's (18) comment brings various aspects together:

There are different types of peace. Peace can be on your own like when you go to the gym and you don't think about anything. If you are a lazybones, you think of bad things, but not in the gym. There you relax, maybe there are some friends, but it's like more on your own. Peace can also be if you get along well with other people. [...] and not just no war... Like religion, tolerance because in the end all believe in one God.

Once more, the adolescents circumscribed interpersonal relations when giving their peace definition. "Getting along well with others" and to "make friends" were important to Kevin (14), who additionally identified positive emotions such as "being happy" or "cheerful" linked to peace. Angel (16) described that for him peace is "to have friends, love your mamas." Love was the central synonym for peace according to Marisol (18): "Peace for me signifies love [...] love towards a person, [...] to make more united." Angel expressed that peace meant "not to do bad things to other people, not to make one cry, respect the elders, everybody in general, including the young ones," whereas Marisol said that for peace to exist, we should "react in an assertive way" because that would make people think. Both emphasized the importance of love and described strategies for human interaction that they reckoned to be essential for peace to prevail.

No more than two street adolescents contrasted peace with war in their answers of the third question. Nestor (16) and Marisol (18) both defined a state of peace as "without war(s)." In general, Nestor articulated a peace concept that deferred from that of the others: "Peace is something with a *tranquilo* government, without corruption [...]. Peace is like in other quiet places, like the country where one doesn't have any trouble but all necessities." A "non-corrupt government" and "the country" as the place where one finds peace did not appear in any of the other definitions. Kevin (14), on the other hand, brought up "freedom" as an additional element associated with peace: "when there is peace, you are not trapped or imprisoned."

In contrast to the visual conceptualization carried out earlier, national pride, the church, or peace symbols no longer played a role in the verbally expressed definitions. However, *tranquilidad* reappeared as central theme. In the drawings' descriptions as well as the following supplementation on their first thoughts, the adolescents depicted 'tranquility' as felt when going to church or being in the country, when playing or distracting oneself, along with

getting along well with others. This concept was amplified in the third question, when the youths became more specific about their understanding of peace. It was stated that *tranquilidad* (thus peace) can be experienced on your own, being without disturbance or having an ‘empty mind,’ but also in relation to others when there are no fights, racism, or war, people are tolerant and get along well. Throughout all three questions, the Cusquenian youths put thought into how interpersonal relations should appear in a peaceful situation. In the first question it was more about describing people being friends or united as one family, as well as feeling good next to one another or having a good time together. However, in the following, strategies appeared of how people should behave, for instance, help and respect others or not to be racist. Other emerging themes were: ‘without war,’ ‘without corruption,’ ‘without killing,’ ‘without exploitation,’ ‘without robberies,’ but also ‘freedom,’ ‘friendship,’ and ‘love.’ Sometimes, it seemed easier for the youths to describe what they excluded from their peace concept rather than what they thought it should take in.

5.2 Responsibility for Peace

Who do the adolescents hold responsible for peace?

After explaining their understanding of peace, the adolescents were asked about who is responsible for peace. According to seven out of eight interviewees, all human beings are accountable for making peace. John Edwar (17), for instance, stated: “All of us are responsible to make peace because [...] not just one person brings peace, all of us bring it;” or “everybody, starting with oneself,” as Juan Flores (18) put it. Sometimes it was explicitly referred to as “everybody” or “all of us.” However, some of the youths spoke of “we,” possibly meaning the youths on the street in general. Nestor (16) replied: “We are ourselves because we cause robberies, killings, etcetera, and the other sees it and it’s like a contamination because they see it and do the same.” Angel (16), on the other hand, specifically talked about “the people of the street who are roaming, robbing, those could be [responsible] as well [...] like the *pandilleros* [‘gang members’].” Some pointed directly to themselves as responsible individual (“I am”). Others particularly held certain professionals accountable for peace, such psychologists who “could go and talk to them [the gang members], ask them especially about what they do” (Angel, 16) or educators who “have studied, and have already been good professionals,” so they “can give you the best advices” (Marisol, 18), and when “let’s say you have a problem with your family and [...] [the educators orientate] you and you feel more *tranquilo*” (Juan Carlos, 16).

Yet, also the presidents were said to have a major responsibility for peace. Nevertheless, it was more the presidents' negative influence that was pointed out. Kevin (14) and Marisol (18) held the national government responsible for wars. Moreover, both criticized the presidents to be corrupt, for instance, Kevin said: "The presidents just try to... try to... are corrupt. That's not good." Marisol mentioned something similar: "Most of the presidents like money. [...] Money and politics, politics and money. For whom? Everything for me, me, me, while in other districts people die of hunger, in Ica, many people." The two brought up a good deal of criticism about the situation in their country. Kevin (14) wanted the Peruvian people to go on strike and to protest for land rights: "We have to decide it's not like that... a strike. The whole nation of Peru goes on strike; protest that there aren't these things, that they don't sell our land." Similar to Kevin, Marisol (18) saw a certain responsibility of the Peruvian citizens, as "we influence by voting, like I say, by voting for a president. [...] Have you seen how many people died under Fujimori? And they want it again." In addition, Marisol showed disapproval about most wealth being located in the capital: "everything goes to Lima because it's the capital. [...] Just the capital has rights? No, all places have rights, all of them." Just as Kevin had mentioned in the first part of his interview, Marisol now also called for free education: "I think education should not have to be paid for because there are many people who don't have cash, sufficient money. There are many people who don't study and who are ignorant but not because they want to be ignorant but because, how do you say, they don't have the money." Furthermore, Marisol was the only participant to mention famous people, the local administration, and the police as having a particular responsibility for peace. An additional topic that came up at this point of her interview was Universal Human Rights and how everybody, including the street youths, possesses these rights and deserves respect.

While reflecting about who is responsible for peace, the adolescents generated certain strategies to achieve peace. Apart from demonstrations and the citizens' power to vote, some youths mentioned ways how each and everyone can contribute to peace in everyday life, such as "by the *tranquilidad* [...], to be *tranquilo*, not to let's say annoy, not to bother" (John Edwar, 17), "respecting the norms [...], being *tranquilo*" (Germán, 16), or "treating people well [...], trying to get along well [...]. Peace is made by speaking with, helping the people. Oftentimes, it's the poor who are more willing to help other persons than the rich people" (Juan Flores, 18). In conclusion, although certain persons (professionals and presidents) were said to have a major influence and responsibility to create peace, the Cusquenian youths underline a general responsibility of all human beings, including themselves.

5.3 Peace in the Adolescents' Personal Lives

What does peace mean for them regarding their personal lives?

While responding the question about responsibility for peace, some of the youths already started to reflect on the state of their surroundings. The next two questions were targeted specifically on how the participants perceive their immediate environment by inquiring about peace present in Peru as well as in their personal lives. Only two interviewees affirmed that there is peace in Peru “because almost everybody shares [...] the things, the majority, some don't, some do” (Angel, 16). His friend, Germán (16), justified his answer with: “everything is *tranquilo*. There are no fights.” When the boys were asked if there had been a moment when there was no peace in Peru, it turned out that they were thinking of peace as the absence of war: “[There was a time when there was no peace in Peru] because I think before, there were more wars. [...] Now there aren't anymore,” Angel said. Germán stated something similar. It is interesting to see that when inquired about how they would explain ‘peace’ to a friend, Angel and Germán focused very much on interpersonal relations, but when asked to think about their own country, both thought about peace in terms of ‘no war.’

In contrast, those adolescents who answered the question about peace in Peru with ‘no’ justified their reasoning with the violence, social problems and corruption which, according to them, existed in Peru:

The problem is the presidents... he should, not like now, put things well in order. [...] They are selling our territories here in Peru... they are selling many things [...], they make schools cost [...], especially with the corruption all that doesn't change. (Kevin, 14)

Because there is a lot of delinquency, many homicides, drugs. Some conflicts with other countries [...], with Chile [...]. Because the people here themselves... I think it's a habit that they rob, the delinquency, alcoholic drinks and everything else [...], all the bad stuff, all the addictive stuff, everything of a bad life. (John Edwar, 16)

Because no one knows peace. They take it as a joke or game. There are robbery, violations, killings, betrayal, and misfortune. There is never peace in the world because always somewhere killing takes place. Nobody knows peace. [...] There are killings and *juntas* [‘the wrong kind of people’], gangs... there is always someone who wants more. (Nestor, 16)

In addition to the social problems, corruption, and open violence, two participants also mentioned “other countries” as well as the “world” in relation to the situation in Peru, which

indicates that at least these interviewees saw Peru in the international context, a perspective that was rarely taken by the adolescents during the interviews.

Those who did not think that there was currently peace in Peru all stated that at some point in history it did exist: “There was a time of peace in Peru when it was pretty *tranquilo*. But that disappeared and the people forgot about it. [...] There was peace when my parents were young, when it was *tranquilo*. If it had stayed that way, we would have peace today” (Nestor, 16). John Edwar (17) pointed even farther back to the Inca Empire: “During the Inca Empire [...], [life] was *tranquila*, everybody got along well, respected the Inca, the Inca respected them, they distributed well [the food, goods], there wasn’t any delinquency, there weren’t any bad things that you can see today.”

Kevin (14), on the other hand, reflected mainly about his own life: “[There was peace] some time ago, maybe when I didn’t know. Until now, I almost never lived in peace [...] sometimes when Peru won [a match] against Brazil, whatever country, it’s also like a moment of happiness, that Peru won or not? [...] When they win you feel happy. That.” Taking into consideration that before Kevin had criticized the presidents’ corruption and inability to create order along with the land issue, it seems that because of the general situation in Peru, he felt not at peace. Only during a few moments of feeling happy about the Peruvian national team winning a match, he said to have experienced peace.

Two of the youths, differentiated between parts of Peru. According to Juan Carlos (16), “In some places there is peace, like in Cusco, and in the villages [...] because in the villages they are more *tranquilo* and more humble;” whereas “[there is no peace] in Lima, in Arequipa, in Trujillo because there is a lot of killing, many robberies, lots of delinquency.” Juan Flores (18) shared this opinion about certain places without peace, where there are “people who fight, thieves like delinquents [...]. There is always corruption in some place; there are always families who abuse. It has always been like that, that in some place peace didn’t exist.” However, “In some places people can have peace, like with my friend Germán... I can ask him to lend me something, and in another moment I give him something; we get along well and we are *tranquilo*.” Both pointed out that in Peru non-peaceful places, where violence and crime persist, coexist with peaceful places, where people are *tranquilo*, calm or at peace. This view correlates with Marisol’s (18) way of interpreting the Yin Yan sign as a symbol for the coexistence of places where there is war with places where there is peace, along with people fighting for peace and people against it.

Afterwards, the youths were interviewed about the changes which had to occur in order to make their personal lives more peaceful. No more than one of the adolescents emphasized that nothing had to change in his life because he said he was *tranquilo*. The others came to reflect about themselves as a person along with the circumstances in their country. One aspect that the adolescents wanted to improve was the violence and crime in Peru, such as “the delinquency” (John Edwar, 17) and “that there are no pickpockets, rapists” (Juan Carlos, 16). Both boys also mentioned that people’s behavior should change: “everybody should be peaceful,” “to listen to their fathers and mothers,” and “work honestly.” Moreover, the street youths expressed requests of the government. Angel (16) demanded “more education, work, these things;” while Nestor (16) claimed help for the poor and fair laws. Nestor also wanted “[a] president that would make the army obligatory like it was before... for qualification” because that would influence people’s intentions: “no more corruption and killing, but work and professionalism.” In addition, Juan Carlos (16) and Kevin (14) articulated their wish for a president(s) that is (are) not corrupt who “should show all orphans and all the people the way, talk to everybody” (Juan Carlos) and who “keep their words, what they say” (Kevin). However, what’s more, the participants turned to themselves and thought about what they wanted for themselves to be more peaceful and how they could achieve that:

My goal is to study and work. It’s the only thing I can do now. I want to finish school and study something. [...] I’ve done many mistakes in life and lost many opportunities that Qosqo Maki gave me. I could have finished school and already go to university. [...] I want to do something [...] There are many things I’m interested in, like computing, talk to and guide people, like a tourist guide maybe. (Juan Flores, 18)

In my own life? [...] That I don’t roam the streets; that I go to work, study, also go to school. (Angel, 16)

I want to achieve something to show my children that I’ve accomplished something, [...] a doctor or lawyer or something [...]. Everybody is master of one’s own life. [...] I would like to change. (Nestor, 16)

My own life? I feel peaceful. [...] [But I’d like to change] my profession [...], more peaceful and more studious [...] and more honest, too. (Juan Carlos)

I’m not that low... usually I’m at peace but I think things should get better. [...] If the presidents don’t do anything it’s mostly my decision. I’d have to improve, try to finish the studies, all of that to live in peace, [...] have a secure job and a fixed pay. (Kevin, 14)

Start with myself, no [...], start to be an example, no, start to distinguish between good and bad things [...], forgive the persons because among us here there are many persons that don't learn to forgive their fathers, their mothers. I felt it as well. [...] I guarded this hatred in my heart and the hatred consumes you and it hurts you, it hurts you. And when you, let's say, forgive, you feel this peace, this liberty, like something disappears from deep inside where it was well guarded and didn't let you breathe, and then it lets you breathe. [...] to help the people [...] mutually give each other [...] give advice. [...] If I want change for me, I've to change myself. I've to change first to make the people change. [...] not to react aggressively, [...] not to insult [...]. If you want, you can. If you don't want to, you won't be able to. (Marisol, 18)

I think I'm peaceful [...] but my initiative would be to converse with the others. (John Edwar, 17)

As demonstrated in the comments above, these adolescents perceive a certain power to take action themselves and acknowledge that, as Nestor (16) put it, they are “the masters” of their own lives. For many of them, making that life more peaceful involves finishing the studies, getting away from the streets, and finding a secure and honorable job. Others, like Marisol (18) and John Edwar (17), spoke about ways of achieving peace in general through personal attitudes and behavior, e.g. forgiveness, helping, and not reacting aggressively but conversing with the others. Marisol even expressed how by forgiving others, one could also find peace inside one's own heart.

5.4 Definition of Violence

How do the adolescents define violence?

The final interview question dealt with the street adolescents' understanding of violence. Apart from two participants who mentioned only physical violence, all of the adolescents identified physical along with verbal forms of violence. Physical violence was described in words, such as “hit things,” “beat someone,” “mistreatment”, “killing”, “violation”, “abuse”, “battering against women and minors,” “you appear with a black eye,” “they twist your hand like that, your foot as well, you could limp or you could also die,” and “you can kill yourself.” As it appears from the colorful descriptions the youths gave, many of them have had first-hand experiences with physical as well as verbal violence. Verbal violence was circumscribed with “to express verbally discriminations,” “bad-mannered,” “lack of respect,” “insult you,” “threats you,” “condemns you out of nowhere.” One adolescent observed that sometimes words can hurt much more than physical aggression. Additional types of violence named were “family violence” and “urban violence.” Moreover, two boys raised Human Rights violations

as a form of violence as in “when someone exploits you” and “[i]n general, violate the Human Rights.” Juan Flores (18) observed that violence “is like a tree that has many roots underneath. [...] Something daily.” Similarly, for Kevin (14) violence is “[s]omething that appears in many occasions [...] because of small problems, or big ones.” Aggression was detected as primary cause for violence. Some youths stress the connection between drug use, aggression, and violence:

When they get mad. (Germán, 16)

[People who are violent] are aggressive [...] with reason, without reason. (John Edwar, 17)

Aggressions [...] when you drink. You are crazy. You could scream at anyone, you could hit anyone [...] because of drinking, because of drugging. (Juan Carlos, 16)

Everything because they sniff drugs [...]. A violent person is aggressive [...], a nervous person [...], you never know when he/she might give you a blow [...]. Violence is [...] about wounds of the heart. Wounds that when, let’s say, they did something bad to you and you want this revenge, this hatred. (Marisol, 18)

Marisol (18)’s comment sticks out because it identifies “wounds of the heart” and “hatred” as forms of violence. Furthermore, earlier in the interview she had mentioned that for her aggression and hatred are the contrary of peace. At this point, others also talked about violence being the opposite of peace, as John Edwar (17) points out: “Peace is tranquility. Violence is like I’m telling you the antonym of peace. [...] It’s the contrary of peace [...] because peace is tranquility; violence is aggression [...].” In addition, Juan Carlos (16) said that if the president changed, “that there will be no more violence, that there will be no more physical abuses,” instead “in all families that there will be peace.” Besides, most interviewees brought across that they disapprove of violence, as it was “a devil” (John Edwar, 17) and “something not acceptable for humanity” (Kevin, 14) because “the thing is you feel bad when they treat you like that, you start to worry, you think about how your life is going to be afterwards [...]. Other people sometimes run away from home, escape, some even hang themselves” (Angel, 16) and because “you don’t learn like that” (Juan Flores, 18).

5.5 Summing up

The drawings as well as the first part of the interview about associations with peace showed that the very first thoughts the Cusquenian street youths had about peace were either strongly connected to peace located in their direct surrounding or rather abstract, represented by symbols. Moreover, the participants located peace in the city as well as in the country and

expressed that it can be experienced alone as well as with others. Throughout the entire interview, *tranquilidad* was a central theme connected to peace, which, according to the participants, might be experienced in different ways: (1) in the church but also when playing, exercising, or being distracted, (2) when getting along well with others, (3) when there is a good government and no corruption. Hence, one might be *tranquilo* alone or in interaction with others. Interpersonal relations in a peaceful momentum were characterized as ‘being friends,’ ‘being united as one family,’ ‘mutual respect and help,’ ‘love,’ and ‘freedom,’ eliminating ‘corruption,’ ‘war,’ ‘killing,’ ‘exploitation,’ and ‘delinquency.’ Although certain persons (professionals and presidents) were said to have a major influence and responsibility, the street youths underlined a general responsibility of all human beings, including themselves, to create peace.

One half of the adolescents did not think there was peace in Peru because of open violence, social problems, and corruption. Two participants thought there was peace (as in ‘no war’), while another two participants differentiated between certain areas or people in Peru. When asked about the interviewee’s own life, no more than one affirmed that nothing had to change in his life to make it more peaceful. The others came to reflect about themselves as a person along with the circumstances in their country. Aspects that the adolescents wanted to improve in their country were the violence and crime along with the education and the government. As it became apparent from the comments, most street adolescents perceive a certain power to take action themselves and portray themselves as ‘masters’ of their own lives. In addition, for nearly all participants, making that life more peaceful involves finishing the studies, getting away from the streets, and finding a secure and honorable job. Several youths spoke about ways of achieving peace in general through certain attitudes and behavior, such as forgiveness, helping, and not reacting aggressively but conversing with the others. Violence was mainly perceived as physical or verbal. Some established a connection between drug use, aggression, and violence. Additional types of violence identified were family and urban violence but also Human Rights violations. Generally violence was seen negatively. Several participants recognized violence as the opposite of peace. The following Chapter discusses these empirical findings along with those of Chapter IV.

Chapter VI: Discussion

6 Introduction

The objective of the present research project is to give voice to the street adolescents regarding the social issues ‘peace’ and ‘violence’ and to gain a better understanding of contextual influences on social knowledge by examining how the Cusquenian adolescents conceptualize these issues and how these conceptualizations might be influenced by the adolescents’ specific cultural background and social reality. In the following, the empirical findings obtained in the drawings and interviews are discussed so as to find answers to this proposition.

6.1 The Conceptualization of Peace and Violence

The term *tranquilidad* stands out as central theme and repeatedly used way to circumscribe peace. Especially when the interviewees were asked to give an explicit definition of peace, they employed this concept. The youths mentioned different forms in which *tranquilidad* might be experienced, and how this can be done alone or together with others. Violence was identified as opposite of peace and mainly depicted in its direct form (physical or verbal). However, Human Rights violations (e.g. exploitation) were also recognized as a form of violence. In addition, violence was implicitly related to corruption, crime, inequality, as well as mental distress, hatred, or anxiety. By taking a closer look at the street youths’ reasoning about peace and violence, a distinct pattern can be made out which is illustrated as follows.

6.1.1 Inner Peace (Spiritual Tranquility)

One way the adolescents used the concept ‘tranquility’ was to describe a state of mind nourished at church, in prayer and in the holy mess, but which possibly can also be found in distraction or exercising. On the one hand, it implies the serenity and inner calmness, which people encounter in faith and the quiet surrounding of the church. On the other hand, ‘tranquility’ might equally represent a sense of being at ease, having an ‘empty mind,’ and not thinking about anything, which can be obtained by watching television or playing football. The same feeling was circumscribed in reference to working out in the gym, when one is by oneself without any “bad thoughts.” This state of mind depicted by the youths can be denominated as peace in the sense of spiritual tranquility. The individual experiences a moment of inner calmness or being free of distress and negative thoughts. This inner calmness was also said to be reached through forgiveness. One adolescent remarked that “many persons

guard hatred in their hearts.” This hatred “consumes you and hurts you,” and by forgiving others, “something disappears from deep inside where it was guarded and didn’t let you breathe.” Thus, this dimension of peace identified by the Cusquenian street youths encompasses the individual and his or her spiritual well-being or inner calmness. It is an inner peace found inside of oneself. Opposing to the spiritual tranquility were mentioned “bad thoughts,” “wounds of the heart,” “hatred,” as well as feeling bad and worrying “about how life is going to be.” These feelings of distress, anxiety, hatred, or worries can be classified as an emotional form of violence. Correspondingly, inner peace and emotional violence stand in relation to each other. In addition, it was pointed out by one of the participants that if someone carries hatred in one’s heart, the person does bad things to other people. Missing inner peace was presented as cause for “terrorism” and “drugs.” Therefore, inner peace is perceived as necessary to prevent violence outside of the self.

6.1.2 Peace in Relation with Others (Interpersonal Tranquility)

Secondly, the concept *tranquilidad* was applied to portray interpersonal relations. For peace might be experienced “on your own as well as with others.” The youths mentioned that when there is peace, “a person feels good next to the other,” people are “united as one family,” and “get along well with one another.” For this to prevail, everybody should “respect the others” and “help the persons.” Activities such as playing and laughing are carried out together. All in all, peace is associated with unison, solidarity, friendship, and love. Thus, the concept refers to an interpersonal tranquility and a person’s harmonious interaction with the immediate surroundings. This interaction was further characterized by the absence of war and quarrels. The people don’t do “bad things to other people,” don’t “get mad,” or do “not make one cry.” Moreover, the individual is free from negative influence from outside, as in “without noise,” not being bothered or disturbed, and not being “trapped or imprisoned.” There are no robberies, delinquency, gang violence, child abuse, rapes, or killings. Aggression was commonly detected as primary cause for violence, leading someone to yell at or hit other persons. One interviewee mentioned that aggression is violence and violence constitutes the contrary of *traquilidad* which is equivalent with peace. Furthermore, all participants linked violence to overt violent acts such as killing, violations or abuse, which earlier had been excluded from peace. Consequently, (direct) violence is viewed as the opposite of peace in relation with others.

6.1.3 Structural Peace (Public Tranquility)

Moreover, in the interviews, ‘tranquility’ was associated with “a quiet world, with a good government,” where the politicians keep their words. People are tolerant and see others “for what one is as a person, for the character.” There is “work and professionalism,” education is free for everybody, and people help the children who are on the street. Thus, this facet of peace features good governance, tolerance, work, education, and solidarity. All these factors constitute a collective well-being. Peace appears as public tranquility, encompassing the individual in the wider surrounding, the society. Opposing to the peaceful scenario were depicted presidents who are corrupt and only think of their own financial benefit, Human Rights violations (e.g. exploitation), racism, education that cost, people who die of hunger in one region while all the money goes to the capital, people who are evicted from their lands, police violence, and disrespect of street children. These elements that were excluded by the youths in their understanding of peace match what Galtung terms ‘structural violence,’ indirect violence rooted in a society’s structure: corruption, exploitation, racism, poverty, inequality and discrimination. In contrast to this structural violence stands the public tranquility described by the adolescents which can accordingly be considered structural peace.

6.1.4 Three Dimensions of Peace

The findings as illustrated above demonstrate the youths’ three-folded peace concept, seeing that the different understandings of *tranquilidad* form three dimensions of peace (Fig. 1). The first dimension encompasses the individual and refers to a person’s inner peace in absence of emotional violence and presence of spiritual tranquility. The second dimension expands to the individual’s interaction with the immediate surroundings and signifies peace in relation with others. There is no direct violence but interpersonal tranquility. The third dimension includes the individual and its wider surroundings, the society. Here, structural peace consists of public tranquility without structural violence. Thus, the street adolescents’ conceptualization surpasses the basic Western interpretation of peace as the opposite of war or other types of open violence.

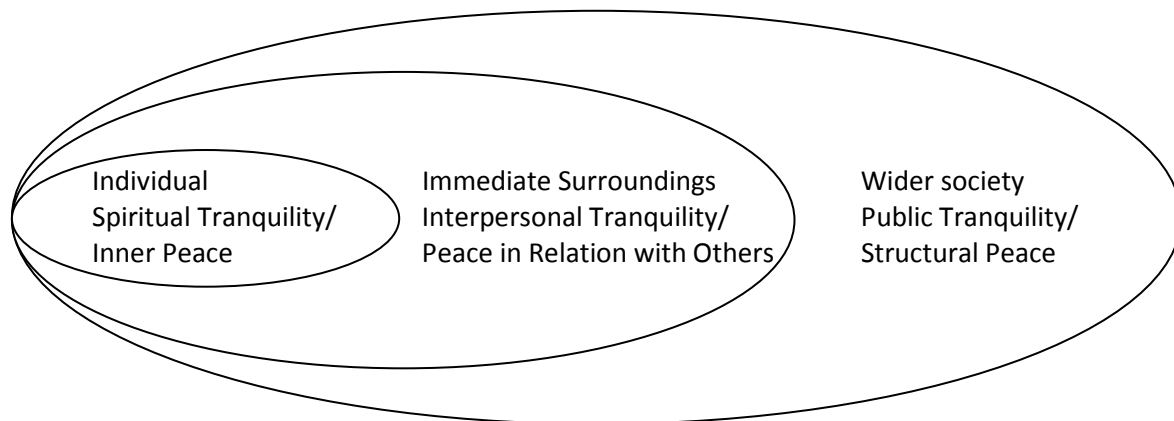


Fig. 1: Three Dimensions of Peace

6.1.5 The Three Dimension of Peace in Relation to Peace Theories

Concerning the street youths' conceptualization, the widespread basic Western interpretation of peace (*pax*) in the sense of absence of war and other forms of overt violence appears to be too narrow. The adolescents' three-folded peace concept combines the Occident's extrovert orientation towards the absence of violence with the Orient's inner-directed orientation towards inner harmony. Although in their depiction of inner peace the youths tended to focus on the absence of distress and negative thoughts, they illustrate a spiritual tranquility that is comparable to *shanty*, the Hindi word for 'peace,' which can be understood as 'well-ordered state of mind.' Interesting enough, when it comes to interpersonal relations, the youths not only talked about the absence of factors such as crime, disturbance, and killings, but also about the presence of factors such as unison, solidarity, friendship, and love. Similarly, public tranquility consists of, for instance, "a quiet world" with "a good government" along with the absence of corruption, exploitation, and poverty. Consequently, elements that are traditionally ascribed to either 'typically' occidental or oriental ideas about peace turn out to be joined in the adolescents' conceptualization.

Galtung (1969, 1981, 1990, and 1996) is seen as one of the founders of peace theory. The Norwegian researcher argues for a richer peace concept by drawing from various civilizations. In his own definition, peace is derived from three forms of violence: 'direct', 'structural', and 'cultural violence.' In accordance with Galtung's understanding of 'direct violence,' the street youths mention verbal or physical acts that harm other people. Additionally, they refer to violence built into the social system such as racism and inequality, which matches Galtung's understanding of 'structural violence.' Their reasoning about violence, however, does not go

so far as to make out ‘cultural violence’ (i.e. violence embedded in cultural norms, beliefs and traditions). Nonetheless, in agreement with Galtung, the adolescents situate violence in opposition to peace. At the same time, they seem to put stronger emphasis on the spiritual dimension. Concerning this facet of peace, the youths demonstrate accordance with Royce (2004) who proposes a model of peace contexts, ranging from the ‘macro’ (ecological peace, with the planet) to the ‘micro level’ (peace within the individual), the latter context being comparable to the adolescents’ depiction of inner peace. Yet, their conceptualization largely leaves out what Royce labeled ‘macro level,’ as their horizon is generally limited to their immediate surroundings, without paying much attention to the globe. International issues related to peace and violence were almost completely omitted by the young Cusquenians. Instead, they focus on themselves, their relation with people close to them, as well as the Peruvian society. Moreover, Royce’s theory differentiates between two dimensions of peace: the ‘violence’ and the ‘harmony dimension.’ Likewise, the youths refer to violence in opposition to spiritual, interpersonal, and public tranquility which might be interpreted as (inner, interpersonal, and public) harmony.

All in all, the street adolescents’ ideas about peace and violence, as systematized by the ‘Three Dimensions of Peace’-model, supplement existing peace theories by accentuating not only the absence of violence in its varying forms but also the presence of positive features, both inner-directed as well as extrovert. The subsequent section takes a closer look on how this conceptualization might be compared to previous studies.

6.2 In Comparison to Former Studies

Some of this study’s empirical findings are consistent with results of previous research. Hakvoort and Oppenheimer (1993) examined age-related changes in the conceptions children and adolescents hold about peace, war, and strategies to attain peace. The researchers observed that after the age of approximately 13 years, the children’s understanding becomes increasingly complex by including more and more ideas about positive peace (e.g. respect, tolerance, and universal rights) instead of just the absence of direct violence (i.e. negative peace). From a cognitive-developmental perspective, age-related differences in the understanding are linked to children’s evolving role-taking ability (Hakvoort 1996). This observation was confirmed by further studies (e.g. Ålvik 1968, Hakvoort/Hägglund/Oppenheimer 2001, Cairns et al. in McEvoy-Levy 2006). Similarly, the present research project detects among the street adolescents the perception of peace as absence of

structural violence apart from the absence of direct violence. Yet, comparable data of younger street children from Cusco is not at hand because the age-group in focus is 14 to 18 years old. Hakvoort and Hägglund (2001) stated that the growing ability to understand the complexity of peace issues is likely to be a universal phenomenon due to the generally shared cognitive development of children. Nonetheless, cross-cultural differences have been demonstrated (e.g. Hakvoort/Hägglund 2001, McLernon/Cairns 2009, Coughlin et al. 2009). This type of variations is said to be sociocultural related, as children's conceptions are considered to be products of their interaction with their specific social, cultural, political environment (e.g. Haavelstrud 1970, Hakvoort/Hägglund 2001, McLernon/Cairns 2001).

Elements used by participants of previous research, such as absence of quarrels, tolerance, equality, friendship, and absence of discrimination, were also applied by the Cusquenian street youths to circumscribe peace. However, other themes emerged that seem to be particular for the present case. Although, according to Hakvoort (1996), irrespective of nationality, peace is often perceived as the negation of war, the Cusquenian youths rarely used 'no war' to define peace. Instead, they were more likely to refer to the absence of other forms of overt violence such as killings, abuse or robbery. Moreover, "war" is completely left out of their violence definitions. These are comparable to young Southern Brazilian's notion of violence, which mainly consist of 'physical aggression,' 'deaths,' and 'robbery' (De Souza et. al. 2006). In Haavelstrud's (1970) study of West Berliner youths' concept of peace and war, friendly coexistence of people and nations was named regarding peace. Hakvoort and Hägglund (2001) reported of elements, such as bilateral cooperation and international aid that the Dutch and Swedish children linked to peace. In difference to these findings, the Cusquenian adolescents did not draw or talk about this kind of issues. Their focus was commonly limited to the Peruvian borders. However, one theme that appeared in the drawings and interviews of this study was patriotism, manifested in the Peruvian/Cusquenian flag and individuals being proud of their motherland. In contrast, as of my knowledge, this theme did not emerge in previous research. Furthermore, former studies frequently used categories to code the data, which are largely inspired by Hakvoort and Oppenheimer (1993). Although these categories include, for instance, 'positive emotions at individual level,' they greatly leave out issues related to what in this case emerged as spiritual tranquility or inner peace.

Hence, the present case stands out for the young Cusquenians' three-folded peace concept in general, their comparatively lesser articulated understanding of peace in opposition to war, their primary focus on their direct environment and manifested patriotism in relation to peace,

as well as their inner-directed conceptualization of peace. Taking into consideration that some findings are consistent throughout research carried out in different social, political, and cultural contexts while others differ, it will be interesting to see how the conceptualization of peace and violence in this particular study might be explained by the participants' specific cultural background and social reality.

6.3 In Relation to the Specific Sociocultural Background

Peace and violence can be considered social issues because they deal with interpersonal relations. Moreover, as they represent elements of people's social world and experiences, they form part of people's social knowledge. In Chapter III, different approaches regarding the development of social knowledge were presented. Previous research on young people's conceptualization of and knowledge acquisition regarding peace, conflict, and violence frequently made use of the cognitive-developmental approach. However, this study takes more interest in the individual's relation with the sociocultural environment and how this affects the individual's ideas about peace and violence.

From a socialization perspective, the formation of social knowledge is viewed as part of socialization processes. Those socialization processes are shaped by social experiences and the sociocultural context. Thus, diverse social experiences and sociocultural contexts might lead to differing social knowledge. Similarly, research based on the ecological perspective takes interest in the factors within a child's environment, which may contribute to his/her understanding of social phenomena. Yet, while the socialization approach gives attention to socialization agents such as parents, the media, and schools, the ecological perspective divides the environment into various systems that interact with the individual (e.g. the family, school, community, and culture). Both approaches perceive the relationship between the developing child and the environment as reciprocal.

In accordance with these two perspectives, it can be argued that the youths' social knowledge, including their conception of peace and violence, is influenced by their interactions in the immediate surrounding as well as the wider sociocultural setting. The street adolescents' immediate surrounding consists of the interactions that are most direct to them on a daily basis. According to the informants, these interactions (or socialization agents) currently consist of the adults at the organization, their peers, people on the street (adult street vendors, clients, tourists, etc.), and possibly the school (teachers, class mates). The Qosqo Maki staff highlighted the street as major 'encyclopedia.' It is where the youths spend most of their time

and obtain most of their knowledge by talking to people as well as by generally observing and listening. The experiences gained from living on the street are acknowledged to bring about particular skills and knowledge. Those who used to or currently attend classes obtain information at school. Moreover, the street youths are taught formally and informally at the organization. Regarding the sources where the street children and adolescents gain their knowledge from, it was reported that the most accessible medium of communication is the Internet. But the youths might also get hold of a local or national newspaper. Furthermore, some of them are still in touch with their family, which despite the contact being more or less frequent might continue to represent a reference point and, thus, form part of the immediate environment. In addition, the adolescents are affected by the greater setting in which they live (the sociocultural context) including cultural or religious norms, laws or customs and which, in this case, is made up by the Peruvian society.

Their rationalizations about peace and violence demonstrate that the young Cusquenians generally link these concepts to their immediate surroundings without paying much attention to the globe. International issues were almost completely omitted by the street youths. Instead, the focus was on themselves, their relation with people close to them, as well as the Peruvian society. In addition, images of the local scenery were widespread in the pictures. The focus on the local regarding peace and violence might be explained by the fact that the majority of the youths originates from the Cusco region. Most of them haven't traveled much. Besides, according to QM's educators, their thinking is mainly centered on the "here and right now." Taking into consideration their precarious living circumstance and daily struggle on the street as described by the educators, it seems reasonable to think that what they care about first and foremost is their immediate surrounding along with national circumstances that might affect their daily lives. At the same time, the youths expressed a strong sense of patriotism in their drawings. This national pride appears to be enhanced by the general Peruvian public, which, from my experience of living in Peru, highly values *la patria* ['the motherland']. On the other hand, in the adolescents' drawings apart from illustrations of local scenes and the Peruvian/Cusquenian flag, internationally known symbols appeared. The white dove with an olive branch in its beak, for instance, represents a traditional Christian symbol for love and peace. Today, the branches of the olive tree form part of emblem on the UN flag. The white flag is an internationally recognized protective sign of truce or ceasefire and request for negotiation. The peace sign was originally designed for the British nuclear disarmament movement before being adopted by the wider anti-war movement. Yet, although the youths

made use of these symbols to represent peace in their drawings, they did not make the connection to the international significance during the following interviews. Thus, the adolescents' ideas about peace might be influenced by outside factors, their conscious thinking, however, remains greatly centered on the inside of the Peruvian borders.

Previously, I established that the street youths' peace concept is three-folded. It was provided evidence that they regard peace not merely as the opposite of war or other types of overt violence. Instead their conceptualization consists of three dimensions of peace: inner peace, peace in relation with others, and structural peace.

In their depiction of inner peace, the youths illustrated a spiritual tranquility or 'well-ordered state of mind' without distress and negative thoughts. This dimension of peace might be related to the specific social experience most Cusquenian street children and adolescents share. Many of them turned to the street because of domestic violence, parental alcoholism, family destruction or lack of care and abuse at home. Resultant from the missing support and caring of their families, the youths frequently suffer from an 'emotional poverty' or are actually traumatized due to the harmful experiences at home. Additionally, it was observed by the QM staff that many street children have a bad consciousness for leaving their families. The family is highly valued in the Peruvian culture. Thus, it is only natural that the adolescents feel distress about not being with their relatives. Furthermore, as one of QM's educators related, some adolescents who have dropped out of school in the course of the school year because of lacking motivation and discipline or negative experiences end up feeling bad about failing to finish the school year. Another educator mentioned that during adolescence the children start to increasingly worry about the future, their life perspectives, and the relations with their families. They care more about their appearance and how they are viewed by others. Therefore, in their description of peace, one can perceive the youths' longing for the tranquility of their spirits in the sense of an inner balance without the 'bad thoughts,' the hatred towards parents, the feeling of not being valued, the bad consciousness, and the worries.

The second dimension, peace in relation with others, combines the absence of factors such as crime, disturbance, and killings with the presence of factors such as unison, solidarity, friendship, and love. The experts' accounts of direct violence experienced by the street children and adolescents are vast and explain the youths' general perception of violence in its direct form (physical or verbal). According to the experts, direct violence represents a daily or permanent factor in the street children's lives. Many originate from violent parental homes,

where they have witnessed aggression among the parents, against their mothers, siblings, and pets or experienced all sorts of direct violence themselves. Furthermore, it was talked about violent behaviors in the neighborhoods where the children grew up. The children could no longer stand the violence in the family or the neighborhood and left to get away from that. Once on the street, the experiences with violence continue. Because the street children lack the support and safety net of a family or neighborhood, they are vulnerable to threats from outsiders and each other. QM's educators described violent fights and insulting among the users of the dormitory. In addition, they reported of violent acts committed against the youths by the national and local police who repeatedly threaten them, chase them, unjustifiably arrest them, make them pay money to be released, and take away their merchandise. Moreover, the street children's presence in Cusco's tourist areas is said to be unappreciated by the local government who have taken measures to expel them out of the city center, which can be called 'social cleansing.'

In addition, according to the interviewees, violence is generally very pronounced in the Peruvian society, manifested in the people's interaction, which might be put into relation with the internal armed conflict that Peru experienced between the years 1980 and 2000. According to the TRC (2003), this internal armed conflict between government forces and the guerilla movement *Sendero Luminoso* constituted the most intense, extensive and prolonged episode of violence in the entire history of the Republic. The number of human losses was greater than those of all the foreign and civil wars that have occurred in Peru since its independence in 1824. The Andean peasant (*campesina*) population was the principal victim of the violence. Most street children originate from poor families, in which the parents are either first or second generation migrants from the rural areas. Sometimes the children themselves are migrants and still have parents living in the countryside. Consequently, if the violence during the civil war was most pronounced in the rural areas, it is likely that their families were or are still affected by it. Nevertheless, in general, the internal conflict revealed "deep and painful divides and misunderstandings in Peruvian society," a society, which now has to face the difficult task of reestablishing the rule of law and holding accountable those responsible for the atrocities (ibid.). Thus, the young Cusquenians know of direct violence because since childhood they have been experiencing aggression themselves, heard and read of it, or witnessed violent behavior in their immediate surroundings as well as in the wider society. The youths highlight problems particular to their environment when they refer to violence as 'insults,' 'verbal discriminations,' 'family violence,' 'urban violence,' 'aggression

due to alcohol and other drugs,' 'abuse' or 'beating.' Besides, according to the statements of the QM staff, the youths have learned direct violence as common means of solving problems from the socialization agents in their direct environment: their families, their peers, the police, and the people on the street.

However, the adolescents also seem to know about interpersonal tranquility in the sense of love, friendship, unison, and solidarity. Accounts of these elements were widespread in the interviews. Moreover, the street youths' drawings show images of friendship and people being peacefully side by side. All in all, the interviews and drawings manifested how the youth aspire to friendly and safe spaces where they can interact harmoniously with others. It was pointed out by the experts that despite the heavy fights that sometimes occur at the dormitory, feelings of friendship and being like brothers and sisters are also evident. Regularly, problems are also solved through peaceful means, for example, at the weekly users' assembly, where all kinds of issues can be brought up. The street children and adolescents learn from and help each other. One of the youths explained that in the street, they have come to find the unison, solidarity, and caring that they missed at home. Another one stressed the relation of trust and being there for one another between him and his friend. The QM staff recurrently emphasized the children's need for affection and acceptance and the educators' intend to give this to them. Therefore, the manifestation of both, the ideas about violence in its direct form as well as the importance of harmonious interpersonal relations, can be ascribed to their social experiences, to what they see exemplified by the nearby interactions (socialization agents), and to what they seem to miss.

Structural peace represents the third dimension and consists of public tranquility without structural violence such as poverty, exploitation, discrimination, and corruption. This understanding of peace can be directly related to particular factors in the young Cusquenians' environment. For one, Cusco is the Peruvian department with the highest number of people living in poverty and extreme poverty (Strehl 2010). Of all children in Peru below 18 years (about 10.7 million), around 60% live in poverty (UNICEF 2008). Most street children who make use of QM's dormitory originate from poor families. As one of the educators observed in accordance with Galtung's definition of structural violence, poverty represents a particular form of violence. Frequently, the families are unable to provide their children with the basic necessities, such as an adequate alimentation and school supply. In their current situation, the children might feel independent but they continue to face an insecure income situation. A boy who sells paintings to tourists might earn 60 dollars from one sold painting on one day, while

he might not sell anything at all for days to come. Most money is spent on food, clothes and other basic needs (Strehl 2010). For many street youths it is difficult to generate additional money to pay for tuition fees and school supply. Hence, in the interviews the adolescents demanded greater equality along with free education in relation with peace.

The street children commonly use the street for income generation due to its easy accessibility and because they prefer to work independently without fixed schedules or rules set by an employer. Just a few of them perform wage labor and are employed by a third party. When they choose a work place, the youths are often forced to accept precarious jobs and harsh working conditions, a fact which leaves them more exposed to exploitation and rights' violation (Liebel 2009). According to one expert, the street-living children who have broken the family tie are more vulnerable to exploitation than their street-working peers who can still count on the support of a family who might accompany them. As a consequence, the youths identify exploitation as one form of human rights violation and a type of violence which should be eliminated for peace to exist.

Furthermore, the adolescents called for tolerance, for people to see others for who they are as a person instead of their social status, and for the eradication of racism. These factors can also be linked to the youths' sociocultural background. For one, the QM staff reported of discriminating behavior among the street children and adolescents at the dormitory. The urban youths disrespectfully call the ones from the countryside *chotano*. According to the experts, this habit of calling names and insulting on grounds of heritage and skin color dates back to colonialism times. Similarly, in its final report, the TRC (2003) establishes that during the civil war, there was a significant relationship between poverty and social exclusion and the probability of becoming a victim of violence. The violence affected unequally different geographical areas and different social strata in the country, as the peasant and poorly educated populations from rural areas, the Andean and jungle regions, and of Quechua and Ashaninka origin suffered most. It was stated that the veiled racism and disrespectful attitudes as well as significant ethno-cultural inequalities still persist in the Peruvian society (TRC 2003). Even today, an individual's social position generally draws on certain features, among others: the skin color indicating the ethnic background, the last name (e.g. Hispanic or Quechua), the parents' origin, and the attire. Moreover, the educators broadly highlighted the particular stigmatization of and widespread prejudices against street children. As they are often associated with delinquency and drug use, they face discrimination, disrespect, and rejection. If not with pity for the 'poor victims,' the people on the street commonly look at the

street youths with distrust or even fear. As a result, the children feel depreciated and marginalized. Hence, their discrimination and exclusion was said to be doubled by their situation of living in the streets in addition to their poverty.

Apart from tolerance and equality instead of racism and discrimination, the adolescents stressed the existence of a good government which is not corrupt. The QM staff did not talk about corruption in the interviews. However, according to the Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2010, Peru occupies rank 78 out of 181 countries with a score of 3.50, which indicates corruption to be rather common in Peru, for 0 equals highly corrupt and 10 equals highly clean. (Transparency International 2010). Most probably the youths have heard people talk about this subject or read something about it, for they frequently stressed the absence of corruption in a peaceful momentum.

As previously demonstrated, poverty, exploitation, discrimination, and corruption seem to be deeply entrenched in the Cusquenian street adolescents' sociocultural context, which contributes to their understanding of social phenomena such as peace and violence. Thus, structural peace just as the other two dimensions of peace can be deduced from the youths' particular social experiences and interactions with their immediate and wider surroundings. In consequence, conceptualizations of peace and violence as part of the adolescents' social knowledge are likely to be affected not only by their cognitive development as maturing individuals but also by their sociocultural context.

6.4 In Reference to the Adolescents' Agency

During the course of the research project the adolescents' perspective on their own role regarding the realization of greater peacefulness became apparent. As reported by QM's educators, people's image of the street children is usually coined by prejudices and stigmatizations. The youths are rarely perceived as strong individuals who make their own living by working on the street. The image is usually that of victims who were thrown away and who will end up as beggars on the street or of a threat, *pirañas*, who are lazy and will try to steal from them. On the other hand, the educators themselves generally depicted the youths as strong individuals who are capable of surviving on the street. Instead of the simple assessment of the street children as passive victims or active threats, the educators recognize them as agents who actively chose the option of a street life as a coping strategy, underlining the youths' resourcefulness along with their capacity to take measures themselves. Still, it was also pointed out to pose the greatest challenges for the children to realize that is up to them to

turn their lives into something positive, to have the confidence in oneself, and to seize opportunities. This was said to be complicated through the psychological traumas most youths suffer, the society's rejection, as well as the missing opportunities and support.

In contrast, the adolescents principally saw themselves as autonomous, capable agents, who are 'masters' of their own lives. In their opinion, by finishing the studies, getting away from the streets, and finding a secure and honorable job, they could make their own lives more peaceful. In addition, the young Cusquenians stated that each and everyone, not just the presidents or other adult people, is responsible for peace. Besides, the youths recognized themselves as peace agents. Despite identified personal limits, they manifested a general disposition to generate peace in their proximal surrounding in relation with others through forgiveness, by helping others, by not reacting aggressively, and by solving problems through talking. Hence, from their perspective, they are capable to change their own lives and to influence their environment. This auto-perception contrasts general public discourses as well as the Peruvian society's prevalent image of the street youths as threats or victims. However, this simple view risks omitting the street children and adolescents' potential to become active agents for positive change in the transformation of their own lives as well as the society as a whole.

Chapter VII: Conclusion

As established in Chapter I, in public discourses, young people often tend to be depicted either as a risk factor or passive victim. However, researchers increasingly criticize this oversimplified view of the young people's role in social development by presenting them as autonomous actors and potential agents of positive as well as negative change. Accordingly, it is argued to create opportunities for the constructive engagement of the young generation in decision-making processes affecting their lives. For young people are not only perceived as future leaders and stakeholders but also as current contributors to a just living-together as well as equally important leaders of today's society. A first step to engage the youth in social transformation processes is to consider their interpretation and assessment of the world. Therefore, one aim of this thesis is to give voice to a certain group of young people, the Cusquenian street adolescents, regarding two particular social issues, peace and violence.

Hence, it was asked how the adolescents conceptualize 'peace' and 'violence.' To find answers to this proposition, as frequently practiced by previous studies on similar issues, it was opted for individually conducted semi-structured interviews in combination with drawings that the participants were asked to create before the interviews took place.

By taking a closer look at the street youths' reasoning about peace and violence, a three-folded peace concept was detected, made up of 'Three Dimensions of Peace:'

- The first dimension encompasses the individual and refers to a person's inner peace in absence of emotional violence and presence of spiritual tranquility.
- The second dimension expands to the individual's interaction with the immediate surroundings and signifies peace in relation with others. There is no direct violence but interpersonal tranquility.
- The third dimension includes the individual and its wider surroundings, the society. It suggests structural peace as in public tranquility without structural violence.

The model displays that...

- ... the street adolescents regard peace not just as the opposite of war or other types of overt violence.
- ... their conception contains the individual's state of mind as well as her or his interaction with others in the immediate environment.

- ... the individual is perceived as part of a wider society and affected by the society's structure.
- ... the street youths recognize the relevance of peace regarding themselves as a person, themselves in relation with others, as well as themselves in the Peruvian society.

Therefore, the 'Three Dimensions of Peace' as systematizing model regarding the street adolescents ideas about peace and violence supplements existing peace theories. The model accentuates not only the absence of violence in its varying forms but also the presence of positive features, both inner-directed as well as extrovert. Consequently, it combines elements which might be traditionally ascribed to either 'typically' occidental (outwards-directed towards the absence of violence) or oriental (inner-directed towards inner harmony) ideas about peace.

The present study as well as previous investigations regarding young people's understanding of social phenomena demonstrated that some findings are consistent throughout research carried out in different social, political, and cultural contexts while others differ. The coexistence of commonalities and differences in the conceptualization of social issues might be explained by the children's universally shared cognitive development leading to a growing ability to understand the complexity of these issues on the one hand, along with the children's differing sociocultural environments affecting their understanding on the other hand.

Thus, the second intention of the present research project is to shed light on how sociocultural factors influence young people's conception of violence and peace. The empirical results discussed are not to be generalized to Peru as a whole or Peruvian street children in general. It is recognized that the study was surrounded by specific social and cultural conditions and dealt with a small group of street-living adolescents from one Peruvian city. Still, it is hoped to contribute to ongoing research on the contextual influences on young people's social knowledge in Peru and elsewhere by showing that the sociocultural background does seem to play a significant role regarding the conceptualization of peace and violence.

Peace and violence can be considered social phenomena and part of people's social knowledge. In contrast to numerous previous studies, this research project's particular interest is centered on the individual's relation with the sociocultural environment and how this affects the individual's ideas about peace and violence. In accordance with the socialization and ecological perspectives, it can be argued that the youths' social knowledge, including

their conception of peace and violence, is influenced by their interactions in the immediate surrounding as well as the wider sociocultural setting. By relating elements of their ideas about peace and violence to the Cusquenian street youths' cultural background and social reality, the present study demonstrates that their notions actually can be explained by the youths' particular social experiences and interactions with their immediate and wider surroundings.

Accordingly, their three-folded peace concept gives an idea about the youths' perspective on changes that have to be undertaken in their particular environment to improve their own lives but also to achieve a greater level of peacefulness for the whole Peruvian society. If merely *pax* in the sense of absence of war and other forms of overt violence was strived for, important elements of the adolescents' interpretation of 'peace' would be left out. From their point of view, higher levels of peacefulness would have to fulfill requirements for all three dimensions of peace: inner, interpersonal, and structural peace.

Hence, in order to accomplish positive social transformation, it is essential to recognize young people as assets, to take their interpretations and assessments of the social world serious, and to engage them in conscious collaboration with the older generation. This applies for organizations and aid programs targeting young people as well as for international, national, and local policy decisions affecting their lives.

The local NGO Qosqo Maki, for example, intends to provide street children and adolescents in Cusco, Peru, with opportunities of development. QM's central approach is based on the concept 'freedom in education,' which aspires to create prospects for young people to develop skills through self-governing. The organization regards the children and adolescents as social actors and aims at supporting them to become key agents in their own development. Therefore, different mechanisms of participation have been established in order to engage them in decision-making processes at the different institutional levels. For instance, within the scope of the weekly assembly, the youths together with their tutors decide upon rules for the dormitory and activities to be carried out together. Moreover, for every night spent at the dormitory each user contributes one *Nuevo Sol* to the common purse, which is used by all of them and serves to pay for the shared breakfast as well as to finance group activities decided upon in the assembly. Its aim is to build a sense of responsibility and group identity. Besides, the youths participate in general evaluations and have the opportunity to share their views in the bulletin *El Chambeador*. Thus, in many ways QM serves as guiding example for organizations in the field of development cooperation regarding the engagement of young

people. However, from my experience at the organization, the practice often turns out to be different from the theory. Sometimes, the street children lack the maturity or interest in participating; and sometimes the consideration of their perspective seems to be rather pro forma than effective. There is still need for improvement of the participation mechanisms, such as the users' assembly. A first step would be to assign the children and adolescents full responsibility for the operation of the assemblies because frequently they are still led by an adult. A further step could be to apply the 'Three Dimensions of Peace' as envisioned by the street adolescents as guideline at a higher institutional and operational level, for example, regarding the design of programs and the definition of lines of action.

So as to engage them in transformation processes on a national level, a consultative group formed by Peruvian youths from different social positions and regional origins could assist local and national governments in an advisory way by bringing in fresh ideas and recommendation from their particular life experiences.

Raising young people's awareness concerning social and political problems and assisting them to find their position in society might encourage the young generation in Peru and elsewhere to envision a better future and motivate them to put that vision into action. Yet, engagement brings about responsibility. In order to prepare the children and adolescents for the increased responsibility, it is needed for the societies as a whole to acknowledge the young generation's capacities. This would involve the transformation of power relations between adults and youths in general and, consequently, feature a long process of changing attitudes, behavior, and practices.

Regarding further research on the topic in focus, it would be interesting to see whether the 'Three Dimensions of Peace' reappear among youths from different sociocultural backgrounds or if this represents a unique case. Furthermore, additional research is needed on concrete ways of constructive collaboration between the generations concerning social transformation processes in Peru and elsewhere.

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Appendix

A1) List of Informants

Qosqo Maki Staff

- Adrian – Educator (male, 49 years)
- Livia – Former Director (female, 51 years)
- Yeny – Director (female, 41 years)
- Javier – Educator (male, 33 years)
- Isabel – Founder & Former President (female, 66 years)

Street adolescents

- Germán (male, 16 years)
- Kevin (male, 14 years)
- John Edwar (male, 17 years)
- Nestor Enrique (male, 16 years)
- Angel (male, 16 years)
- Juan Carlos (male, 16 years)
- Marisol (female, 18 years)
- Juan Flores (male, 18 years)

Note: The adult informants' full names as well as the adolescents' real identities are not listed for reasons of confidentiality.

A2) Interview Guide – Sociocultural Background

Your name is..... and how old are you? What is your function at Qosqo Maki? How long have you been working at QM? In what way are you in contact with the street children and adolescents?

Before beginning with the questions, I want you to know that you are not obliged to participate in this interview and that you may drop out of the interview at any given moment.

Part I: Social background

- (1a) Where do the children and adolescents at QM come from?
 - Is something known about the origin of the youth who sleep at the dormitory?
- (1b) Why have they chosen a life on the street?
 - What factors lead the youth to leave their homes?
- (1c) How is the children and adolescents' family situation?
 - Do they have a family?
 - In what way do they maintain contact with their families?

Part II: Everyday-life

- (2a) How do they make money?
 - What kind of work do they do?
 - What other money-making activities exist?

- (2b) How is the children and adolescents' school situation?
 - Are they inscribed at a school?
 - How are their chances to finish school?
- (2c) What role do drugs play in the children and adolescents' life?
 - Are there youth who use drugs and if so what kind of drugs?
 - In what way do the drugs affect their every-day lives?
- (2d) How do you see the presence of violence in their life?
 - To what extend do they have experience with violence?
 - How do they solve their conflicts?

Part III: The street-adolescents in society

- (3a) How is the image that people hold of the street children and adolescents?
 - How are they viewed in society?
 - How are they treated?
- (3b) What is the biggest challenge for them to get away from the streets?
 - How are their chances to leave the streets?
 - What makes it difficult for them?
- (3c) What would have to change in the children and adolescents' life to improve it?
 - What would have to be different?
 - How could it be better?

Part IV: Sources of knowledge

- (4a) To what extend do they street children and adolescents have access to the media?
 - Do they have access to the media?
 - How do they obtain information?
- (4b) Where do they gain knowledge from?
 - How do they gain knowledge?
 - How do they know what they know?

A3) Interview Guide – The Youths' Conceptualizations

Your name is..... (Do you want to choose a nickname?) and how old are you?

Before we start with the questions I want you to know that I'm interested in your ideas. There are no right or wrong answers and I will not inform you about my own ideas on these topics. You should also know that you are not obliged to participate in this interview and that you may drop out at any given moment.

Part I: Free association by means of drawings

- (1a) Could you explain to me what you have drawn?
 - What comes into your mind when you hear the word 'peace'?
 - Do you know what goes with 'peace'?
 - Anything else that comes into your mind?

(1b) Is there more you can think of that you maybe weren't able to draw?

Part II: Peace definition

(2a) How would you explain the word 'peace' to a friend?

- Do you know what it is, peace?
- Can you explain the word peace to me?
- How would you then explain it to a friend?
- You may start with "Peace, that is..."

Part III: Responsibility for peace

(3a) Who do you think helps most to make peace?

- What is he or she doing?
- How does he or she do it?
- Are there more people who help to make peace?

Part IV: Situation in Peru

(4a) Do you think there is peace in Peru?

- Why do you think there is (no) peace in Peru?
- Was there a moment when there was peace in Peru?
- Can you explain this to me?

(4b) What changes are necessary to make your life more peaceful?

- Is your life peaceful?
- How could it be more peaceful?
- What would have to change?
- Is there something else that would need to be different?

Part V: Violence

(4a) In your opinion what is violence?

- What happens when there is violence?
- If you think of violence, what comes up in your mind?
- You may start with "violence, that is..."
- Is there something else that goes with violence?