



¿Con qué sueñas...?



**Poverty and Future Dreams among
Disadvantaged Adolescents in Rural and Urban
Cusco, Peru**

[Photos of our own: 1 Pumamarca, 2 Fedetrac]

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Poverty and Future Dreams among Disadvantaged
Adolescents in Rural and Urban Cusco, Peru

Bachelor thesis

Culturele Antropologie en
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Acknowledgement

After a thirty hour long journey, we finally reached our destination: Cusco, Peru. After months of excitement we would finally enter the field and become 'real' anthropologists. Yet, we soon had to find out that the long-awaited participant observation had to wait somewhat more. Only after a troublesome first period of difficulties with getting into touch with our research population and deciding how to best realize the separation of our two sub-researches, we finally made our way into the field. We would however not have reached this point without the help of the NGOs World Vision and Mosqoy. With their permission we eventually joined their staff and got in contact with poor rural communities and urban neighbourhoods.

Nor would we have survived this struggle without the help of our families, friends and our supervisor Marike van Gijssel whom we want to thank here. They convinced us not to give up in difficult times when we were on the verge of getting into panic and even doubted whether we could even write this thesis at all. Eventually however our research improved day by day. We became more fluent in Spanish (and Quechua), got more and more incorporated into the Peruvian culture and got to know and admire the adolescents we talked to. We finally were able to gather the necessary data in order to write our thesis and returned home with notebooks full of data.

Most importantly however, we could not have gathered these data without the adolescents who were willing to share their knowledge and their stories with us. We therefore want to thank all the adolescents who contributed to our fieldwork and made this thesis possible. We learnt a lot from you and your optimism and will never forget the amazing insights we got into the society of Cusco thanks to your help. We hope that all your dreams will come true some day!

Lisa Andernach & Mathilde Bosma

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Introduction

I'm visiting the house of Angelica for the first time. It is situated in a poor urban neighbourhood at the margins of Cusco. When I knock at the door, her mother opens and quickly starts tidying up the living room. She picks up things and keeps apologizing. Then Angelica enters the room. We talk about her life and about the muscle disease she was born with. Angelica tells me how it bothers her not to be able to help her mother in the household. When I ask her what she wants to become in the future she says: "A doctor, so I can help other ill people". I ask her whether it is realistic for her to accomplish this dream but she replies confidently: "*Of course, if you want something really bad it will happen!*"¹

The story of Angelica is only one of the many stories we got to know during our fieldwork in Cusco, Peru. We spent ten weeks from February 11 until April 21 in Cusco to find out more about poverty and future perspectives among poor adolescents. Although Angelica was born in a poor urban neighbourhood and suffers from a chronic muscle disease, we see in the way she imagines her future that she is very enthusiastic and optimistic about it. This raises a number of questions about the relation of poverty and future dreams and perspectives with which we entered the field: What is poverty and how do the adolescents perceive themselves herein? How do they experience and deal with poverty? How do other factors like class and ethnicity contribute to poverty? And above all, how does poverty influence the future projects and perceptions the adolescents have for themselves?

In mainstream discourse, the idea is popular that poverty can be equated with a lack of economic resources. Inequality is measured in income rates and economic growth is seen as an indicator for more development (The World Bank Group 2013). Defining poverty merely as a matter of income, however, falls short of describing the experience of those who find themselves in a condition of poverty (Green 2006). Our study therefore seeks to illustrate the way people experience and deal with a condition of deprivation taking into account their perceptions and the obstacles they face. The question guiding our research has been the following: How do poor adolescents in rural and urban Cusco, Peru deal with poverty in relation to their future dreams? Through investigating the future perspectives of poor adolescents in and around Cusco we get an insight into the ways they cope with poverty. Drawing on Oscar Lewis' culture of poverty, Harvey and Reed (1996) have argued that people at the bottom of society develop their own institutions and strategies which allow them to cope with their conditions. Instead of confirming the stereotype of poor adolescents as helpless victims, we will emphasize their capabilities as agents of their own future. We argue

¹ From Mathilde's field notes 26-03-2013

that adolescents are ambitious, optimistic and try to improve their situation regardless of the obstacles and difficulties they experience in doing so.

With this thesis we thus contribute to the debate on poverty, agency and well-being. The bulk of academic literature focuses on the nature and representation of poverty in general, such as Green (2006) or on the way non-governmental organisations and other aid organisations deal with poverty and fight against poverty (Allen & Thomas 2000; Ypeij 1995; Conticini 2005). Few have however focused on adolescents in their study of poverty, and even less have examined the relationship between poverty and future dreams and perspectives. Besides, research on poverty in Cusco in particular is rare and existing studies about poverty are either very old or only consider poverty in relation to tourism (Den Berghe & Primov 1977; Steel 2012; Sinervo 2011).

Apart from contributing to the existing literature on poverty and agency, our research is also relevant for society. Understanding how adolescents in poor conditions deal with their problems considering the constraints and opportunities of their particular environment is important for organisations who want to help them. Moreover, development policies aiming at improving poverty are ineffective if they are ignorant about what matters to adolescents and do not comply with their livelihood strategies (Conticini 2005). On a micro level, poor adolescents benefit from more effective interventions of development organisations. Most important, our emphasis on agency entails that the adolescents are seen to a lesser extent as powerless “victims” of poverty, thereby gaining more self-esteem and recognition.

We concentrate on adolescents from fourteen to twenty in our study because of their natural aptitude for the subject of our study. Being in a somehow special phase of transition from childhood to adulthood, they are on the threshold of taking the responsibility for their own lives. This fact not only sheds an interesting light on the matter of agency, but is especially useful for exploring future dreams.

The research location where we conducted our fieldwork is Cusco. Looking for a suitable research location we chose Peru due to its high poverty, social inequality rates and its history of rapid urban growth (Kruijt et al. 2002). With an estimated seventy-five percent of the city’s inhabitants living below the poverty line, Cusco is one of the departments with the highest rate of people living in poverty and extreme poverty in Peru (Strehl 2010). Poverty is generally said to be more extreme in the rural areas surrounding Cusco as opposed to more moderate poverty in the urban area (Hall & Patrinos 2006; INEI 2007–2011). This has to do with a lack of infrastructure and the relative isolation of the rural communities but also with

different living conditions. Migration of the rural population to the urban area over the last years has however caused for big problems in the city as well and increases the segregation of different social groups in the city (Steel 2008). We have conducted two comparative studies in the urban communities (*zona urban*) and the rural communities (*comunidades rurales/campesinas*) in and around Cusco to understand how different forms and levels of poverty can influence on future perspectives. This comparison offered us a better insight into the matters of poverty through examining two different groups of adolescents. Comparing the different forms and levels of poverty we were able to draw a more nuanced picture of poverty showing that poverty, even within a region, can be quite different and that therefore a simplistic definition in economic terms cannot do justice to reality. Finally, the rural-urban divide is one that we found to be very relevant to the people themselves. From an emic perspective, people from the countryside are considered to belong to a different socio-economic group than those from the urban area.

The urban poor neighbourhoods are generally found in the higher parts of the city, up the hills that surround Cusco. They are characterized by a bad infrastructure and bad living conditions. Robberies and other delinquencies are not uncommon; insecurity is therefore mentioned as the biggest problem in this area. Moreover, it is really hard for the people living in these areas to find a job, get access to health services and provision of water, electricity and sanitary services is limited. This is a sharp contrast with the clean, safer historical center (Steel 2008). These characteristics are also true for Santa Rosa, Fedetrac and Karigrande, the three neighbourhoods in the district of San Sebastián where Mathilde conducted her research. For her interviews, she had to climb up the hills to visit the houses of the adolescents. The streets were mere sand or muddy when it rained. No playing field could be found in those high areas, no field of grass either.

The rural communities are located around Cusco at various distances. Public transport only supplies the urban area which generally makes it difficult to reach these communities. Lisa's specific fieldwork setting has been made up by different rural communities around Cusco (district of San Sebastián) and the NGO Mosqoy² where adolescents from rural communities surrounding Ollantaytambo (region of Cusco) live to study in the city. For practical reasons she concentrated on the community Pumamarca and the non-governmental organisation (NGO) Mosqoy, but she also visited and talked to people in some other and more remote rural communities. The remoteness and the marginality of the communities confronted her more than once with problems and gave her a fair sense of how the inhabitants of these

² Mosqoy is Quechua for 'dream'.

communities must feel about this obstacle in their daily lives as the market place, health centres, secondary schools, universities and more are exclusively situated in the city. Nevertheless, live on the countryside also has a myriad of advantages as the inhabitants continued to stress the beautiful nature, clean air and relative security as compared to the city. Although the adolescents from the NGO Mosqoy live in the city during the week, they continue to go back to their families every weekend. To reach their villages, they have to cover long distances which they accomplish by bus and by hour-long walks.

In order to reach the rural and urban communities and to get in touch with the adolescents we worked together with 'World Vision'. World Vision is an international non-governmental organization with many branches in Peru and Cusco and exclusively Peruvian staff. They have several projects revolving around health and community development. One of them is a guinea pig raising project that is operated in the rural as well as the urban poor areas of Cusco. The project teaches families how to raise guinea pigs professionally so that they can sell them and supplement their incomes. The families are supplied with material to build the barns and are taught about how to best to make profit out of this business. The NGO visited interested families weekly and we joined them on their trips. During these visits, we were able to get to know and talk to the families and find the adolescents that would become our informants.

The second NGO with which we have been collaborating for the rural area, is 'Mosqoy', a Canadian-Peruvian non-profit organisation that provides scholarships to really good, and thoroughly selected students that have completed secondary school and come from rural communities at a distance of up to three to four hours from Cusco. Apart from paying university for them (often private institutions), there is a house where the students live in shared dormitories during the week and where they get dinner. The students have to pay a contribution of 70 Peruvian Soles per month to the organisation. Once a week, foreign students from a local Spanish school visit the NGO for a cultural exchange.

To answer our research question, we have made use of academic literature and qualitative research. We believe that the use of qualitative research methods for fieldwork is particularly useful for studying sensitive topics like ours. Especially participant observation helped us to create a relationship of trust with informants in order to obtain valid information (De Walt & De Walt 2011: 10).

Entering the field, we have accompanied the guinea pig raising project of 'World Vision' for some weeks and gotten in touch with the inhabitants and especially the

adolescents of the communities on an almost daily basis. Lisa also visited the NGO Mosqoy several times per week to spend the afternoons and evenings with the adolescents there, hanging out, cooking and having dinner with them, visiting their dormitories, chatting with them under a cup of tea or teaching English and German while being taught Quechua. At the communities, participant observation was somehow more challenging but we found our ways participating in community reunions or visiting the houses of the families. After an initial period of making contact and building up trusted relationships, we conducted in-depth interviews. We used semi-structured interviews especially in the first phase of our fieldwork. The reason for this is principally practical as it helped us to gather some general data and to get more familiar with the role as interviewer. The second phase was more devoted to informal interviews and informal conversations. Informal interviews were a logical next step as they were more spontaneous than a semi-structured interview, but still gave us something to hold onto. Next to interviews, we also had informal conversations, as this method is best in reducing the power imbalance between researcher and informant. Furthermore, we used these informal conversations and especially our own observations to complete our data and verify whether the information we were given during the interviews was true. We further tried to vary personal with group-interviews as some adolescents seemed to be more comfortable in the company of their friends. Finally, holding up our field diaries and notebooks belonged to our daily tasks during the ten weeks of fieldwork. On a nearly daily basis we recorded our activities or experiences and jotted down notes.

Although the cooperation with the NGOs provided us a lot of advantages, we are however very aware of the limitations and disadvantages this cooperation involved. Working with 'World Vision' we were both not only bound to the selection they had made of the communities, but also to the NGOs' visiting schedule. While Mathilde could arrange own meetings with the adolescents after an initial periode, Lisa was very much bound to the NGO due to the geographical and infrastructural remoteness of the rural communities. This often proved to be disadvantageous as many adolescents were only free from school and work on the weekends when the NGO did not work. Moreover, especially the most remote communities were visited to a fewer extent which led to Lisa's concentration on Pumamarca, one of the nearer rural communities which was however also characterized by a lesser degree of poverty than even more marginal communities. The collaboration with 'Mosqoy' entailed the disadvantage that the adolescents there were a selected group of the best students of their communities, even if they came from communities much more remote than Pumamarca.

Besides, it was unfortunately not possible to visit these adolescents in their home communities. A better solution would probably have been to live in one of the communities, something that came to our minds many times but which was too difficult to realize in the short time period of our fieldwork.

We consider the representativeness of our data thus to be limited in some regards, in particular for the rural communities. Nevertheless, we believe that the wide range of different communities and adolescents we worked with somehow compensates for the shortcomings described above. While our data certainly do not represent the life and opinion of each individual among our target group, they can be held representative for a large part of Cusco's rural and urban adolescents.

Our thesis is divided into six chapters and the conclusion. To analyze our data we drew from the theory written on poverty, agency, status, class, ethnicity and future dreams. We will explore the most important theoretical concepts in the first chapter and begin with a section on poverty and agency. We will argue that poverty expresses itself in manifold ways and that current definitions of poverty are often too narrow and therefore fail to include the experiences of the poor themselves. Experiences of poverty can be connected to well-being in surprising ways, which is linked to the relativity of poverty. Agency further plays a significant role in developing individual coping strategies to deal with poverty on a daily basis and will be explored at the end of the section. In the following section we will take a closer look on how status, class and ethnicity interplay to shape and are shaped by poverty and influence on agency. Status can be ascribed and achieved; while the former is connected to poverty, the latter is somehow independent from social, economic or ethnic background and reflects an individual's agency. Class and ethnicity are important factors that can limit individual possibilities of gaining status and are important in understanding poverty and the possibilities for agency and the fulfilment of one's dreams. This is followed by a last section about adolescence and future dreams. Future dreams and especially expectations can vary across classes and groups and have to be seen in relation to realistic opportunities, such as given in the context of poverty. While poverty can restrict one's opportunities in life in important ways, it can also provide the motivation to dream beyond class barriers.

The second chapter sets this theoretical framework into the local context. In the light of a selection of our theoretical concepts, we will first explore Cusco and its patterns of poverty and later the rural and urban context and its respective patterns of poverty, class and

ethnicity. Cusco belongs to one of the poorest regions of Peru and its class and ethnic realities shape the life of the rural and the urban population in different ways.

The context chapter lays at the same time the groundwork for the following chapters in which the voices of the adolescents and our empirical data stand central. From the perspective of the adolescents, chapter three and four explore how adolescents from the rural communities perceive and experience poverty, their status, class and ethnic position as well as how they imagine their future. Chapter five and six do the same, but this time from the perspective of the urban adolescents.

In the conclusion, we bring the empirical data on the rural and the urban communities together and discuss them in the light of our theoretical framework. Poverty among the rural and the urban adolescents is characterized by a great relativity which makes it possible for them to cope with their situation and to dream of a better future.

Finally, this thesis includes several appendices. The first appendix includes additional information on our informants. The second appendix comprises a summary of our research in Spanish.

1 Poverty, Society and Dreaming of the Future: a Theoretical Framework

With this thesis we will give an answer to the question how poverty relates to the future perspectives of poor adolescents in Cusco, Peru. Central to the analysis of this question are the concepts of poverty, agency, status, class, ethnicity and future dreams. This chapter aims at reviewing the literature that has been written on these theoretical concepts and at describing our own approach. The first section explores the concept of poverty and the controversy revolving around the definition of poverty. Agency is a concept that further comes short in many of the current official conceptions of poverty. Regarding it as essential to the description of the human subjective experience of poverty, we also explore agency in this section. In the second section, status and class and the ways they influence and are influenced by poverty and ethnic matters are discussed. Finally, we will examine the future perspectives of adolescents approaching future perspectives as dreams on the one side and realistic expectations on the other.

1.1 Poverty and Agency

Definitions of Poverty

Academic literature on poverty is multiple and diverse. Ranging from poverty lines and abstract numbers to more descriptive definitions and conceptions, there is a lot of discussion about what constitutes poverty and how it should be measured. In the context of global development policies, the World Bank has been leading in using an economic definition which measures a person's income. Below the so-called 'poverty line' (1 US\$ per day), an individual is said to be in a state of extreme poverty. This poverty line is accompanied by a corresponding development indicator for countries, the gross national product (GNP) which measures the average economic living standard of the people within a nation (Allen & Thomas 2000: 10-11).

On closer (anthropological) inspection this definition of poverty is, however, deeply flawed and problematic. Drawing on Rahnema, Allen and Thomas (2000: 11) point out to the rootedness of this conception in the Western hemisphere and the fact that the idea of poverty might not everywhere on earth be the same. Different norms and value systems produce different perspectives of reality and thus of poverty as well: "In many cultures of the world, poor [is] not always the opposite of rich. Other considerations such as falling from one's station in life, being deprived of one's instruments of labor, the loss of one's status or the marks of one's profession..., lack of protection, exclusion from one's community,

abandonment, infirmity, or public humiliation defined the poor” (Rahnema 1992 in Allen & Thomas 2000: 11). There are thus different ideas about the definition and the causes of poverty, ranging from economic ones to social and political ones, such as marginality and exclusion from society³. In this light, poverty such as defined by the World Bank seems to be an entirely modern construct. It should be clear that measuring income not a sufficient tool for defining poverty.

In fact, Green (2006) argues that poverty is a construct that has been created by international development organizations. Introduced by the World Bank in the 1970s, it is questionable whether the concept has the capability to reflect the subjective experience of the so-called poor (Green 2006: 1110-11). Powerlessness is stressed and the lack of specific contents and contexts abstracts poverty from people. Rather than representing the experiences of those classified as poor, the discourse on poverty reflects the power of development agents to describe, define poverty and serves as a justification for intervention (Green 2006: 1112). Besides, this concept of poverty is accused of masking the social processes that make people subject to poverty. Instead of considering poverty as an absolute condition, anthropology considers poverty to be a consequence of social relations. This structuralist approach of poverty stands in contrast to the definition used by of development agents which has been accused of being a-historical and homogenizing. It represents poverty as a subject position which denies the agency of those so categorized (Green 2006: 1116).

Long before the World Bank, Lewis’ (1963) concept of poverty sparked one of the most important theoretical discussions in anthropology and social theory on poverty. Defining poverty as a specific lifestyle, Lewis coined the term 'culture of poverty'. According to Lewis’ culturalist perspective, poverty is a self-perpetuating cycle based upon unique values. Poverty is thus not only physical but also symbolical, describing a whole subculture which makes it difficult to eliminate it. Critics of Lewis have however argued that the description of poverty as an autonomous self-perpetuating subculture existing among the poor implies a sense of fatalism. The idea of a cycle of poverty perpetuating itself from generation to generation through children absorbing the basic values and attitudes of their subculture, in fact leaves little room for agency (Harvey & Reed 1996: 472). Supporters of Lewis in contrast point out to his Marxist roots. According to them, Lewis concept of poverty considers people at the bottom of society to develop their own institutions and strategies which allow them to cope with intolerable conditions (Harvey & Reed 1996: 476). Although Lewis 'culture of poverty' remains a controversial concept, its implications are nevertheless useful: tackling poverty, one

³ See also Ellis (1983). According to her, poverty should be considered having four major dimensions: social, economic, political and legal poverty.

might first consider a change in the value system of the people, removing the feeling of helplessness and emphasizing their agency (Lewis 1963: 9).

During the 20th century, definitions of poverty have further evolved to include the concepts of relative poverty or deprivation which have been promoted primarily by Townsend. Townsend shifted the view from absolute poverty to the relative distribution of resources and participation in society: “Individuals, families and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the type of diet, participate in the activities, and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or at least widely encouraged, in the societies to which they belong. Their resources are so seriously below those commanded by the average individual family that they are, in effect, excluded from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities” (Townsend 1979 in Commins 2004: 62). Although his theory has caused for a critical debate among social scientists in the 1980s, it is important to make our point and emphasizes not only the multi-dimensionality of poverty but also the importance of social relations and exclusion mechanisms in producing poverty.

At about the same time, Sen (1999) designed an alternative approach to human well-being that stresses the importance of other factors than economic welfare. In fact, the relation between poverty and a lack of well-being that is generally assumed is not as evident as one would think. Research on well-being has shown that happiness and life satisfaction are also existent in contexts of extreme and persistent poverty, underlining the importance of the cultural context on influencing the experience of poverty. Poverty and happiness may be unlikely to go together, but are not mutually incompatible as a case study in Bangladesh, known as one of the poorest countries in the world, reveals (Camfield et al. 2009). This further points out to the insufficiency of many of the contemporary definitions of poverty.

Summing up, the concept of poverty as used by the World Bank and development agents is not only biased but also too simplistic and obscures more than it reveals. Being more than only a matter of income, poverty has several dimensions and manifests itself in various ways. The emphasis on poverty as a 'problem to be tackled' obviously diverts attention from the different ways poverty is experienced and from the social relations which produce poverty as an attribute to people (Green 2006). Our study therefore illustrates the way people experience and deal with a condition of deprivation taking into account their personal stories and contexts. By this, we give poverty a human and dynamic face instead of associating it with static and simplistic images of poverty. Emphasizing the agency that people have in dealing with their situation of poverty is one way of doing this. The following section will therefore approach the concept of human agency in academic literature.

Agency

Agency is closely connected to the description of human coping mechanisms with poverty. For a full understanding of agency, an exploration of its counterpart 'structure' in relation to poverty is however necessary.

According to structuralism, all aspects of social life are interrelated. Each aspect of structure structures another aspect; such as gender influences on employment for example. Structures thus seem to determine all aspects of social life (Sewell 1992). This idea can also be applied to poverty. A certain poor milieu can influence all other aspects of someone's life, such as possibilities for employment or participation in society. Bourdieu (1977) preceded this idea with his concept of 'habitus'. He believed that structures of a particular type of environment produce a *habitus*, a system of structured structures which generates and structures practices. According to Bourdieu these practices are however in no way the product of mere obedience to rules but also adapt to the goals of the actors. They enable agents to cope with unforeseen and changing situations (Bourdieu 1977: 72). Giddens added to this idea the dimension of reflexivity. In a similar manner, he argues that human social activities are continually recreated by people, because "in and through their activities agents reproduce the conditions that make these activities possible" (Giddens 1984 in Fuchs 2003: 140). Differently from Bourdieu however, Giddens emphasized that actors are not just blindly living according to structural system but are able reflect on their actions. Therefore, all human actions are said to have a purpose and to be intentional (Fuchs 2003). According to Bourdieu and Giddens, the reproduction of society is thus based on human practices.

Other scholars have termed the focus on structures a 'too rigid causal determinism' (Sewell 1992: 2) and have adopted a more moderate approach focusing on human agency. Sen was one of the precursors in human agency and attributed human beings the ability of self-action and social change (1999). Drawing on Sen, Sewell (1992: 19) defined agency as "the actor's capacity to reinterpret and mobilize an array of resources in terms of cultural schemas other than those that initially constituted the array". An actor is thus capable of allocating resources in different ways and deviating from prevailing ways of using resources. Human agency represents people's ability to act on behalf of goals that matter to them (Alkire 2005: 218) and the capacity to make purposeful choices" (Inglehart & Welzel 2010: 46). Agency can be found in many forms and can vary across cultures, but is inherent of the nature of all humans (Sewell 1992).

A person's agency can however be socially constrained in many ways, as Inglehart and Welzel (2010) have argued. One such constraint is stratification in society. Stratification

is mainly of interest for the powerful whose aim it is to make the lower classes accept the boundaries of a stratified society by using ideologies. These ideologies tend to be continued through socialization which makes that people stay in line with what is accepted in society. Stratification thus limits the horizon within which human agents look for useful role models (Inglehart & Welzel 2010). In a similar manner, Tucker (2012: 168) points out that “[a]lmost every contemporary anthropologist interested in choice recognizes that individual strategies, cultural norms, and sociopolitical circumstances all affect decision making.” It is however extremely difficult to investigate the relative influence of cultural norms on the one hand, and individual strategies on the other hand (Tucker 2012: 168).

In the context of poverty, the concept of human agency is thus of great importance. As argued earlier, poverty should not be considered as an attribute of people but as the effect of particular social relations. When studying these social relations, strategies and actions of both rich and poor come to light (Green 2006). These actions can be seen in the light of human agency. Although poverty imposes restriction on those living in a condition of poverty, they are agents who are capable of dealing with their environment, even under the most extreme conditions. Humans try to solve problems and try to learn to intervene in the social occurrences around them (Ypeij 1995: 12). Dealing with or moving out of poverty is one such an example for human agency, but is frequently hindered by structures such as social class or ethnicity as we will see in the next section.

1.2 Status, Class and Ethnicity

Group boundaries such as social class or ethnicity play an essential role in maintaining the stratification of a society (Barth 1970). As we have seen in the section above, humans are endowed with the capacity of free purposeful action. These group boundaries place however important restrictions or obstacles on their actions and will therefore be explored in the following. Part of the exploration of social class is an analysis of status, as it is a major indicator of social class and reflects how community members perceive the ranking of an individual (Fiske and Markus 2012). The role of ethnicity, which is often interrelated with social class and influences an individual’s status to a certain extent, will be discussed in the last paragraph of this section.

Status & Class

Grusky (1994: 117) defines status as “every typical component of the life fate of men that is determined by a specific, positive or negative, social estimation of honor”, or as Weber (1968: 49) puts it, status is a claim to prestige based on a quality or lifestyle. Status is thus connected to a negative or positive association with certain aspects of someone’s life. Having a certain status is in some cases the result of someone’s own achievements, but in many cases a certain status is not based on someone’s own efforts.

Linton (1936) made a distinction between these cases by formulating the terms ‘ascribed’ and ‘achieved’ status. Status is *ascribed* to someone when a certain status is immediately placed upon someone at birth, independently of a person’s abilities. A status is *achieved* on the other hand, when a person has certain abilities, has put effort in achieving special qualities and has ‘won’ the competition. It is considered that only people with the best and most special qualities achieve a certain status. In this case the context in which an individual born is not relevant. Dependent on the characteristics of society it is determined which qualities are seen as important for the ascription or achievement of a certain status. In most aspects of social life where any form of power is exercised, ascribed status is however the most important factor in determining who is able to obtain a certain position (Linton 1936). Many high positions in politics are for example related to the family someone grew up in.

Nevertheless, individual qualities and indicatives can gain importance especially when a society undergoes changes and new social patterns develop (Linton 1936). In the context of poverty ascribed status is generally low and few profitable. An individual’s agency and capacity of developing distinct strategies and individual qualities thus gain importance.

The degree of possible competition for everyone in society over a certain status can however be limited by classes. Membership of a highly organized society may limit opportunities of an individual to exercise his particular gifts (Linton 1936). The opportunity for gaining a certain status which is not ascribed but can be achieved depends on the characteristics of the society somebody lives in. Status is thus intertwined with class. We speak of class when talking about a number of people who have a certain causal component of their chances in live in common; this component is economic and related to opportunities for income and the possession of goods (Grusky 1994: 113). According to Giddens (1973) classes are related to the structures of social systems which were discussed earlier in the context of agency. As we have seen, structures can structure other elements of social life. Giddens proposes however that this cannot easily been examined when dealing with class analysis. The reason is that although classes are in the first instance purely economic, classes can

become *social classes*. This transition is possible when mobility between classes is possible (the possibility of shifting from one class to another) and people are aware of this possibility. Hindess (1987) gives a further explanation. According to him, economic classes can become social realities whereby class influences patterns of behavior. This is a social process of translation of economic relationships into non-economic social structures (Hindess 1987). Consequently, classes are not necessarily purely economic, but can spread to other factors of social life as well and have an impact on the behavior of the people among a particular social class.

Class and status thus interplay to impose restrictions on human agency thereby shaping the ways poor people can cope with poverty, while class and status themselves directly influence poverty and are influenced by the same. Status can be ascribed and achieved; while the former is connected to poverty, the latter is somehow independent from social, economic or ethnic background and reflects an individual's agency. Another factor that influences on poverty and limits individual possibilities of gaining status is constituted by ethnic boundaries which will be discussed in the next section.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity is deeply intertwined with status and class. Over the last decades, ethnicity has been very much replaced by class in Peru as will be pointed out in the context chapter. Nonetheless, we want to give a short overview about ethnicity especially in relation with status and class.

One of the most prominent theories on ethnicity has probably been Frederic Barth's thesis of ethnic groups and boundaries (1970). Barth approached ethnicity by examining the nature of ethnic group boundaries criticizing the idea of discrete units of people. Before Barth, the general view had been that the maintenance of ethnic group boundaries is unproblematic and results from the relative isolation of ethnic groups, such as implied by cultural differences, language barriers or intergroup hostilities (Barth 1970: 11). This rather static image of ethnic groups has however been replaced by a more dynamic one. Instead of considering ethnic group as culturally homogenous and distinct groups in a primordial sense, ethnic groups are now understood as a state of mind, a sense of belonging and self-definition. Studies on ethnicity have switched to an actor-centred approach that recognizes the classification and construction of the social world through social actors (Cánepa 2008: 5-7). Barth likewise holds that 'ethnic groups are categories of ascription and identification by the actors themselves, and thus have the characteristic of organizing interaction between people' (Barth 1970: 10).

Barth has gone further to explain why despite interethnic contact and exchange group boundaries continue to exist. According to him, ethnic boundaries are fluid and porous and might not be real from an anthropological perspective, but this does not mean that they are not valid and real from an emic perspective (Barth 1970: 9-10). Secondly, he argues that interethnic relations and contact do not lead to the liquidation of ethnic boundaries but, in contrary, are the very basis of their existence and persistence. Thus, instead of blurring ethnic boundaries through acculturation, social interaction between distinct ethnic groups re-enforces these very boundaries (Barth 1970: 10). Other authors like Cánepa likewise argue that instead of preceding cultural encounters, cultural difference is the very product of those cultural encounters such as globalization or Colonialism (1998: 4).

In the context of poverty, status and class it is interesting to consider how stratification is obtained within a poly-ethnic social system. Relationships of inequality and stratification develop when one ethnic group has the monopoly of power over the means of production that are needed and used by another group. This is how hierarchy is defined and when ethnic identity becomes a status, being based on criteria for ascription of origin as opposed to status that depends on performance (Barth 1970: 27-8). The continuance of this poly-ethnic stratified system depends on control mechanisms such as those involved in state control or racist systems. As such, discrimination is a mechanism that ensures the persistence of unequal power structures. Ethnic stratification can thus be retained and stereotypical behaviour is strengthened notwithstanding objective variation and difference (Barth 1970: 30).

Consequently, the role of ethnicity in poverty and future dreams is that it considerably influences inequality and future chances by causing for a specific unequal distribution of power and resources along ethnic group and class lines. In the following section, we will see how future expectations and opportunities are in particular shaped by class or/and ethnic affiliations.

1.3. Future Perspectives and Adolescence

In this section, we explore the future perspectives of adolescents. As 'future perspectives' is a rather vague term we will use the concepts of future dreams and realistic future expectations. We deal with future dreams as life projects and plans for the future. Those include for example occupational interests and career aspirations, but also personal aspirations. Future expectations concern the more realistic side of the dreams and the expectations of the adolescents about the realizations of their dreams. First of all however, this chapter includes

theory about how to define “adolescence” and how childhood and adolescence are constructed in society.

Adolescence.

Adolescence is the time when individuals are especially concerned with their future and when the idea of future work lives moves closer (Sirin et al 2004). Given this fact, most research on future perspectives focuses on young people. However, the category 'youth' cannot be employed without paying attention to its connotation and context. Hall & Montgomery (2000) point out to the fact that 'childhood' and 'youth' are essentially Western categories. They are related to Western notions of age and are thus culturally constructed. However, they are highly prominent in international discourses about young people all over the world. While in reality, childhood and youth are not fixed categories and are sometimes hard to tell apart, in debates they are clearly employed with different aims and connotations. While children tend to invoke the image of purity and innocence, youth is associated with a rather ambiguous phase in life. Between powerlessness and agency, youths are said to occupy an intermediate category, being more responsible for themselves than children and seen as troublesome, rather than in trouble (Hall & Montgomery 2000: 13).

While these categories should not be abolished completely, we consider it important to recognize the ways in which they are employed and to distance ourselves from this simplistic discourse by encompassing the experiences of young people in Cusco, Peru. Throughout our research, we will use the term 'adolescents' to describe our research population. This notice is necessary, as the terms children, youths and adolescents are sometimes meant to use the same categories and sometimes different ones. While for Hall & Montgomery (2000) or Sirin et al (2004) the terms youth and adolescents seem to be interchangeable, most other authors distinguish between children and adolescents and use youth as a summarizing term for both (Ben-Zur 2003; Chavez et al. 2007). The following paragraph thus deals with ‘adolescents’ and the ways they envision their future.

Future dreams, expectations and opportunities

Although different to our research population, Bulbeck's study (2004) of the future dreams of young and affluent Australians in the times of globalization reveals some facts that might be interesting in the context of less advantaged adolescents in Peru as well. Bulbeck argues that globalization and our risk society have led to future dreams in which individualization stands central. Future plans termed 'do-it-yourself-biographies', 'risk-biographies' or 'reflexive

biographies' allude to the idea that everything is possible and that the responsibility for our future lies in our own hands (Bulbeck 2004: 73).

Of particular importance is the fact that class affiliations seem no longer to play a role in the way young people imagine their future. Instead, adolescents imagine themselves 'choosing between different lifestyles, social ties and identities' (Bulbeck 2004: 73). The so-called 'reflexive biographies' thus imply that lives can be chosen and are determined by the decisions of actors. Self-actualization and the hunger for a 'fuller life' have replaced more modest goals such as family, a car or an improved standard of living (Bulbeck 2004). Although gender is not the focus of our study, it is worth noting that traditional female and male stereotypes are still largely intact, even if they are put into a modern context. While almost all young women across class seek romance and motherhood balanced with work life, young men tend to dream of material comfort, cars, sport and beautiful women (Bulbeck 2004: 81).

However, while young people across class lines desire much the same, their realistic chances in occupational respect are not the same and the less advantaged are unlikely to realize their aspirations (Bulbeck 2004: 74). Bulbeck argues that working class dreams often stand in contrast to structural opportunities. In the US, Canada and Australia, surveys have found that young people's career aspirations often do not match with reality, as especially working class people are dreaming beyond their opportunities that are characterized by structural limitations and low education (2004: 81). Sirin et al. (2004) in fact distinguish between future aspirations ('dreams') and expectations ('realistic chances') as influential factors on the formation of future aspirations among urban youth of Color in the US. Just as Bulbeck (2004), they indicate a tension between the future aspirations and actual limited resources available to the adolescents.

Although future dreams are the same across classes, there are also different actual expectations. Structural constraints, like discrimination prevent youth of Color from accumulating social capital in form of social networks and supportive relationships providing access to work and education (Sirin et al 2004: 439). Despite of similar future aspirations across different classes, there is said to be less confidence to overcome barriers among disadvantaged youths. According to Sirin et al. (2004), future dreams might even be seen as a form of resistance to structural oppression. Resisting the tracking into occupational positions which lack social status and power, future dreams can be a way of escaping and resisting external barriers and inequities of resources (2004: 438).

Summing up, in future perspectives many of our earlier concepts re-occur. *Poverty*, reflected as economic and social deprivation, represents the starting point from which future dreams and expectations are being formed. *Social status* or *class* can determine the realistic chances an individual has or offer the motivation to dream beyond class barriers. Future perspectives can be determined by racism and structural oppression, or reflect *agency* in the form of dreams or success stories. Dreaming of the future can further be a way of escaping social class reality and can stand in contrast with the actual opportunities of an individual. But before we will approach the adolescents' future dreams from their own perspective, the following chapter will give some specific information about the context of our research location(s).

2 Living in Cusco: Context

In this section we will devote our attention to the communities of the adolescents who are in the centre of our research. The environment where we grow up is of great influence on our past, present and future and often considerably influences our life choices and chances. The urban-rural divide in fact is an invisible but sharp line deep-seated in the minds of the people in Cusco themselves. This distinction is reflected in matters of poverty, class as well as in ethnic matters. While the first section gives an overview about poverty and inequality in Peru and the particularities of Cusco, in the second part we focus on the particularities of the urban communities and rural communities respectively.

2.1 Poverty and Inequality in Peru and Cusco

Poverty and inequality patterns in Peru and Cusco are important in understanding the reality of our informants. There has been a spectacular decline in absolute poverty in the country from 42.4 percent of all households in 2007 to 27.8 percent in 2011⁴ (INEI 2007-2011). In analyzing poverty in Cusco, however not only dynamics but especially heterogeneity plays an important role, as the different levels of poverty across the country show. Generally, there is a distinction between the three different main geographical areas, the *costa* (the arid coast) in the West, the *sierra* (the Andean mountains) and the *selva* (the tropical forests of the Amazonian Basin) on the Eastern side of the country (Den Berghe & Primov 1977). Cusco is situated in the *sierra* where according to official figures, in 2011 the highest poverty rate with a percentage of 41.5 percent was registered (INEI 2007–2011). There is also a significant difference in poverty rates between the rural and the urban areas, with rural areas being significantly poorer than their counterparts. While urban areas register a rate of 18.0 for 2011, rural areas document 56.1 percent (INEI 2007–2011). Despite its tourist boom over the last years, Cusco is still the third poorest region of Peru and is looked down upon as backward and under-developed by most people from the Coast (Den Berghe & Primov 1977: 24; Strehl 2010).

2.2 The Urban Neighbourhoods versus the Rural Communities

This section gives an insight into important characteristics and differences between the urban and the rural communities. We will deal with poverty patterns, rural-urban migration, class and ethnicity. The department of Cusco is one of the five Peruvian departments with the

⁴ It has to be mentioned that these official figures measure poverty only in economic terms.

highest number of people living in extreme poverty (Steel 2008); an estimated 75% of the inhabitants live below the poverty line (Strehl 2010). The majority of these people live in the countryside, migration of the extreme poor puts a lot of pressure on the city however (Steel 2008). Urban neighbourhoods, *zonas urbanas* grew rapidly, among others because of the political violence in the countryside during the 1980s and 1990s (Strehl 2010) and later the pauperization of the rural areas (Steel 2008), as well as due to the lack of work in the rural areas (Strehl 2010). This is why the urban poor neighbourhoods are mostly inhabited by first or second generation Quechua speaking migrants from rural areas (Strehl 2010).

This process increased the segmentation of Cusco: outside the historic, touristic and neat center one can find a whole different world of poverty and insecurity. Robberies and other acts of delinquency are part of life in these areas. Besides, people who live in these poor neighbourhoods up the hills of Cusco have difficulties getting access to water and electricity, sanitary and health services and have a hard time finding a job. Infrastructure is limited; roads become mud pools during the rainy season and become dusty during the dry season. The local government invests mainly in the touristic parts of the city, hereby neglecting the poor neighbourhoods, while these neighbourhoods have to deal with several social problems as social exclusion and poverty (Steel 2008). Generally in Latin America social exclusion causes for growth in the informal economy of Latin America, this can also be seen in Cusco (Steel 2012). (Konings & Kruijt 2007:9). The growth of the informal sector not only results in a parallel economy, but also in a parallel society of informality, separated from the formal society. The people living in this parallel informal society are labeled as underclass or lower class or a term used mostly in Latin America 'urban informality' (Kruijt et al. 2002).

The rural communities, *comunidades campesinas* or *rurales*, differ a lot from the urban area. According to (Franco 1994), these differences date back to colonial times when the Spanish rulers focused on Latin American cities to build up their Empire: "The social structure of the Spanish colonial Empire was such that there were great differences between the towns and the remoter rural districts. While the inhabitants of Mexico City and Lima looked to Spain as their guide, in distant mountains or pampa, communities existed with only infrequent contact with a world outside America" (1994: 9).

Apart from being marginalized regarding the city, the rural communities are generally poorer than their urban counterparts. Figures of the distribution of poverty stress the inequality of between these two areas (INEI 2011). Regarding class and ethnicity, the rural area bears some more interesting characteristics. As Den Berghe and Primov argue, in plural societies such as in Peru, class and ethnicity are the "two most widespread forms of group

inequality” (1977: 1). In Cusco, class and ethnicity are almost synonymical. In fact, there is a lot of overlapping between the two categories. Academic literature points out to the enormous diversity of the Peruvian population (Degregori 2000). Older anthropological literature indicates the construction of three ethnically more or less distinguishable main groups in Peru: *indígenas*, *mestizos* and *criollos*⁵. The last group, the *criollos* refers to the main stream coastal culture which is classified as nonindigenous, despite of obviously various other ethnic influences in the area (Den Berghe& Primov 1977: 24). The *mestizo* and *indígena* distinction in reality is better seen as a continuum, the ‘Indian-Mestizo Continuum’ as Den Berghe and Primov (1977: 125) call it in rather old-fashioned terms. Both terms are actually Spanish and are employed primarily by *mestizos*, rather than being terms of self-ascription. Especially ‘Indian’ or *Indio* has a very pejorative connotation and has been abolished for this reason. *Indígena* has for a long time been the official term but since the 1986 military coup it has been replaced by the term *campesinos* which should be translated with ‘peasants’. The reason for this change of name was based on ideological grounds and on the wish to redefine the inferior position of the indigenous in Marxist class terms (Den Berghe& Primov 1977: 126-7)⁶. The point that I would like to make here is however not one of naming, but the volatility and relativity of ethnic boundaries in Peru, especially in the southern *sierra* along the Cusco-Puno road.

There are several criteria that supposedly allow classifying a person as *mestizo* or *indígena*, however they are problematic in some respect, especially from the anthropological point of view. First, there is argued that a darker skin colour is an indicator of indigenous origins. In reality, there is however a much wider range of skin colours and a darker skin is rather linked to exposure to the sun than to ethnic roots (Den Berghe& Primov 1977: 118). The criterion that is probably named most is language. Monolingualism in respect to Quechua is named as an obvious indicator of indigenousness. However, this does little to draw a clear line as it does not work the other way round, nor for bilingualism which is widespread among the rural population around Cusco⁷ (Den Berghe& Primov 1977: 139). A further frequently named indicator is occupation. There are particular occupational activities classified as *mestizo*, while agriculture is associated with the indigenous population. This argument is problematic too however. While it is true that the great majority of indigenous people are

⁵ I should be mentioned that this three-part distinction betrays some of the heterogeneity of the Peruvian population as it does not mention the small but existent minorities of Africans and Asians or other minorities (Esperanza 1992).

⁶ *Cholo* is another term that is sometimes used for this ambiguous category; however it is not used by academic as it is mostly pejorative and strongly indicated the social superiority of the speaker (Den Berghe&Primov 1977: 128).

peasants, this does not mean that every peasant is indigenous. Dress style is another apparently obvious characteristic. Most indigenous women wear traditional home-woven clothing, their long hair is braided in two pigtailed and on their feet they wear sandals made from discarded automobile tires known as *ojotas*. This argument is weakened however by the fact that an increasing number of them wear store-bought clothing in western style or that in occasions of nationalistic pride *mestizos* wear indigenous clothing as well (Den Berghe & Primov: 118-9).

All of these arguments point out to the conclusion that instead of being two strictly separable groups, the people of the rural communities around Cusco are neither purely indigenous, nor really *mestizo*. Ethnic groups in Cusco should be seen in the context of hundreds of years of cultural mixing and acculturation, ethnic relativity and situationality. Ethnicity in Peru is very dynamic and in the view of the Peruvians, class has become more salient than ethnicity. This does however not mean ethnicity is less important as we will see later on. Growing up on the countryside is thus considerably influenced by marginality in a social, economic and cultural sense as we will see in the next chapter that is devoted to the lives of those around which this thesis revolves – the adolescents themselves.

3 Perspectives on Poverty: The Rural communities

It is already dark when the car suddenly turns onto a small unpaved road leaving behind the city lights. For about half an hour, only the headlights of the car lead the way through the rugged cliffs of the Andean mountains along the otherwise unlighted street. As I get off the car, there is a humming noise in the air, a buzzing, made up by a myriad of low voices coming from the dark. Climbing up a small hill, I find myself in front of a building. In front of the building, there are about fifty people huddling in the cold wearing woollen blankets wrapped around their shoulders. There are men and women from all ages and some women carry babies and little children in colourful cloths on their back. On their heads, some women wear white bowler hats and in spite of the cold, men and women alike wear rubber sandals on their bare feet.⁸

The excerpt above depicts the moment when I first arrived at the rural community of Pumamarca. Since this evening however a lot has happened. I have got to know the inhabitants of Pumamarca better, but above all its adolescents and the adolescents of Mosqoy. It is their voices that I will place in the centre of this chapter.

In order to illustrate how poverty influences the future dreams and perspectives of young people, we first need to turn to how the adolescents understand poverty and how they position themselves within their perception of poverty. In the following two chapters, this will be done using the example of adolescents from the rural communities. First of all, I will devote my attention to these adolescents' understanding and experience of poverty. I describe what in their eyes makes a person a 'poor' person and then turn to the ways they experience poverty, whether they perceive themselves as poor and how they feel about their lives. In this description, I will show that poverty is a term that is not always easily applicable to reality and that among the adolescents, there exists a lot of discussion about what constitutes poverty. I will show that the idea the adolescents have of poverty is clearly shaped by their surroundings and the place they grew up in, the rural communities.

3.1 "Para mí, una persona pobres es...": Conceptions of Poverty

"Poverty means that you have nothing, that you don't have the major part of material things. You don't have a house, nor animals, you don't have clothes, you don't have a field, and you don't have to eat."⁹

This section explores the definition the adolescents from the rural communities give to poverty. They consider the lack of basic resources, such as shelter, a field, and money to be

⁸ Field notes, 20-03-2013.

⁹ Interview with Yolanda, 25-03-2013.

most important, closely followed by lacking education and many children. For the existence of poverty they generally blame a lack of support from parents who do not invest in the education of their children but also the government.

In the quote above, the twenty-year-old Yolanda¹⁰ explains to me what poverty is like in her view. Yolanda has been the oldest of my informants. She comes from Cancha Cancha, a rural community situated in the region of Cusco, by foot about three hours from the next bigger town named Ollantaytambo. Yolanda has one of the poorest backgrounds of all of my informants and has come to live with the NGO Mosqoy one year ago. Her definition illustrates quite well the association of poverty with a lack of basic resources, a link that is done by most adolescents and that they often express with *tener muchas necesidades*, being in need. Talking with the adolescents, I find a lot of emphasis on shelter or better, the lack of shelter, as an indication of poverty. The fact of not having a home (*casa*) is often mentioned first when describing a poor person: “They live on the streets. They can also have little houses but don’t meet their expectations because they have many needs...”¹¹ When asking whether she knows any poor person, Paola, an extrovert girl of eighteen years, dressed in a pink adidas jumper and purple jeans, who wears her hair like many young Peruvian women pinned up with a plastic hairgrip, answers that there were some people in her community that did not live in a house but in rooms for rent¹². Home is however not only the physical space described here, but also a social space. To have a home is more than having a house; it includes having the support of a loving family as will become clearer later on¹³.

Next to having a home, the adolescents point out to the importance of a field (*chacra*) for making a living. On the countryside, someone who does not have a field is inevitably poor, as he or she cannot provide nutrition. To have a *chacra*, indeed is seen as the basic resource for making a living and even for making progress in life as José explains to me: “by working hard, they [the poor people] can escape from poverty”¹⁴. In fact, the lack of fields and animals is even considered worse than the lack of money.

Nevertheless, the lack of money, or *la falta de economía*, is an important indicator of poverty. One can have a small house, but without money one can still be considered poor. This lack of money is linked to several other factors, such as having many children. On the countryside, the children rate tends to be higher than in the city which has to do with the fact that children are needed as help on the fields or in the household, as caregivers in old age, but

¹⁰ For privacy reasons we have changed the name of each informant into a pseudonym.

¹¹ Interview with Paola, 18-04-2013.

¹² Interview with Paola, 18-04-2013.

¹³ Interview with Lizbeth, 17-04-2013.

¹⁴ Interview with José, 04-04-2013.

also with the fact that contraception is not very much practiced¹⁵¹⁶. The more children one has, the more money one needs, and this is why poverty was often associated with having many children as for example Mariela points out: “[a poor person] has many children and lacks money”¹⁷.

Who has no money, cannot send their children to school. Some poor people even lack the basic resources to buy paper, pen and other things needed for elementary and high school. Javier, who makes up for his small height with his charming charisma and a smile that according to José Luis, the Bolivian director of Mosqoy, has made every girl at the house fall in love with him, describes poor people like that: “Those who, like in the rural zone, cannot send their children to study because they have few economic resources. The majority of peasants doesn’t study because they can’t afford it”¹⁸. Javier himself is able to study in Cusco thanks to Mosqoy where he is studying tourism to become a tourist guide. His view is held by many other adolescents as well.

Having many children is however not only named as an indicator, but also a reason for being poor. The adolescents name various factors that in their eyes account for the existence of poverty in Cusco. Lacking support is the factor that most adolescents agree on. This lack of support is primarily blamed on parents who do not care about educating their children or on the lack of education in general. José puts it like that: “Some can’t read nor write and this limits them. Another reason can be the lack of high schools and the lacking support of parents. High schools are far away and there is not enough money. Also it could be because of discrimination in the society, but it is not so much the fault of the government. Most of all, it is because of the lacking support of the parents”¹⁹.

Like José, Javier mentions the lack of supporting parents in producing poverty but for him this is the fault of the government. According to Javier, many adolescents in his community are orphans because their parents died when they were young. He goes on explaining that a lot of people die very young because until recently there has been no medical care in his village. “It’s the government that only thinks of the city and not of those of the countryside”, he tells me and when I ask him for the reason, he answers: “it’s because the

¹⁵ Conversation with Alejandro, 11-03-2013.

¹⁶ This was also known to Peru’s Ex-president Fujimori who, allegedly to diminish poverty rates, had about 400.000 indigenous women sterilized during his forced sterilization campaign in 1995 for which he has been accused by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (Latin American Committee for the Defense of Women’s Rights 1999)

¹⁷ Interview with Mariela, 04-04-2013.

¹⁸ Interview with Javier, 16-04-2013.

¹⁹ Interview with José, 04-04-2013.

government is from the city, too”²⁰. Javier thus points out to the fault of the government because they generally care less about people from the countryside, a standpoint that is confirmed in conversations with many other adolescents, as for example Paola: “they [the government] say that they are helping poor people but in reality, they never come to the distanced places, they only care about the city. They don’t see that other people need their help, who have no light and water”²¹.

While for a great part, the lacking support of parents and the government are thus held accountable for the problem of poverty, lacking education and knowledge make up another part. Lacking education inevitably leads to few chances for employment, while it is not always the parents or the government who can be blamed for this as Yolanda tells me during a conversation:

Lisa (L): What do you think are the reasons for poverty here in Cusco?

Yolanda (Y): Because of the lack of knowledge, some people don’t find jobs easily. Some don’t educate themselves; they never got education, not in school, nor in high school. They have not even entered the door of the school, never, and that’s why they can’t defend themselves, they are scared to ask because they’re not sure if they’re speaking well [Castilian], that’s why there is poverty.

L: And why have they never gone to school?

Y: Well, there are two reasons. Because they’re lacking economic resources and because... some just don’t want to.

L: But tell me, why would anyone not like to go to school?

Y: Because they think it’s for people with money. You know, poverty is all about money, that what counts is money. Because now in the schools, they always ask you for school materials, already the little children! Because they don’t work, they don’t have the resources to make progress. They only have for eating, eating, working, eating, working, that’s how they life. And sometimes, some people also are too proud or they enter the wrong path of drug addiction and with all that, more and more poverty...²²

In this interview we see how the reasons for poverty stem from a complex reality where many factors are interwoven. Lacking education is a theme that keeps coming back in the narratives of the adolescents, as a main reason for poverty and the main problem to be tackled when eliminating poverty. It should be clear by now that poverty is not a merely economic problem as has been argued in chapter 1 (Allen and Thomas 2000; Green 2006).

Moreover, we have seen that the idea that the adolescents have of poverty is clearly shaped by their own living world. Their idea of poverty is based on what is familiar to them

²⁰ Interview with Javier, 16-04-2013.

²¹ Interview with Paola, 18-04-2013.

²² Interview with Yolanda, 25-03-2013.

and thus based on their experiences of living at the countryside where someone is poor who does not have a house, a field or animals. What on the countryside is a sign of poverty is normal for people living in the city live in rented flats, without animals and fields as we will later see in the chapters on the urban communities. It is an anthropological fundamental that our own environment considerably influences the way we perceive the world, and we have seen that poverty is no exception (Townsend 1979 in Commins 2004: 62). In the following section we will see how this influences the way the adolescents see themselves in relation to poverty.

3.2 “No soy tan pobre”: Experiences of Poverty

As has been argued earlier, subjective experiences are essential to the concept of poverty and have already been neglected too often. It is my intention thus, to dedicate this section to the ways the adolescents I talked with experience poverty in their everyday lives and how they position themselves regarding poverty. I begin describing their basic resources, how their families make a living with subsistence farming and the resulting economic problems, the adolescents' contribution to the family income and finally turn to the question whether they experience themselves as poor²³.

The following vignette is supposed to give an insight into the lives of my informants. It deals with my first interview with Carlos, a seventeen-year-old living in Pumamarca. The week before this interview, I got to know him during a meeting of guinea pig raisers that he attended because his aunt raises guinea pigs and he had nothing else to do. Carlos is living with his mother and siblings at the house of his uncle and aunt, his father was an alcoholic that died some years ago. Upon his death, Carlos has spent some difficult years, moving with two of his brothers to the city to work as mechanics supporting their mother financially that stayed in the village. Only after three years, he could move back and now he is living with his family again. At the moment of our interview, he had just finished high school and was waiting for the entrance examination of the national university in Cusco as he told me. However, I came to doubt this during our interview when he indicated that before entering university, he had to go back to work as a mechanic to finance his studies.

²³ Although one could argue that the self-perception of the adolescents as poor or not poor could be described in the first section on ‘perceptions of poverty’ as well, we both decided to include it in the way the adolescents *experience* poverty as it is here not the case of a general description of poverty, but rather of their own situation and the way they experience poverty (or do not).

It is Thursday morning when I meet Carlos while I'm walking from door to door to find adolescents in the community of Pumamarca. The village seems deserted. Only the smoke coming from the houses reveals the presence of people in the village. At some distance, there is a boy standing in front of a house up the hill. He is around his teens and is observing me as I make my way to him on the rain-sodden path. Coming closer, I happily recognize Carlos. He is a handsome but shy young man with almond-shaped eyes. I ask him for a conversation and he invites me into his house. The dark inside of the house is a stark contrast to the bright day light and for a few seconds my eyes only view the brown adobe walls of the house that look the same inside as outside. A table is the only furniture that is filling the big room whose ground is covered by bare soil. We sit down on a bench that is installed right onto the wall and that is covered by a soft warm rug of sheepskin. A woman and a man sit on the edge of the table and murmur a hello into my direction observing me with a mix of curiosity and suspicion from the corner of their eyes. Carlos's mother is standing behind the house, cooking at the outside stove and his little baby brother is playing on the ground with an old plastic car, while we begin our conversation...²⁴

Like Carlos' house the houses of most adolescents look like. All of my informants live in an own house made of adobe. Many of them are two-stored and some are partly painted at the outside walls. There is a general lack of technology and the houses are poorly furnished. The adolescents live with their families, which include father, mother, and between three and eight brothers and sisters. Virtually all families have only one or two bedrooms and beds are shared with younger siblings. Yolanda's family for example consists of ten persons living in one house and they share only four beds; some family members actually sleep on the ground²⁵.

Also their communities bear many similarities. In the rural communities, there is no running water and I have often seen women and young girls washing clothes in water canalled alongside the street. Electricity has in most cases only been installed recently or not at all as in the community of Yolanda²⁶. Health centers lack almost completely, as do high schools for which the adolescents have to travel long distances.

On the countryside, the fields are the major way of making a living and most of the daily life revolves around subsistence activities. Except for Paola whose family only has a garden where they grow corn, potatoes and peaches²⁷, all adolescents' families have fields where they grow everything from horticulture to especially potatoes and corn. While their mothers are all housewives²⁸, their fathers work as agriculturalists and a few have some other

²⁴ Field notes, 27-03-2013

²⁵ Interview with Yolanda, 25-03-2013

²⁶ Interview with Yolanda, 25-03-2013.

²⁷ Interview with Paola, 21-03-2013.

²⁸ Being a housewife does not exclude working on the fields as I have observed, although this task is usually associated with men.

jobs, mostly for casual earnings, such as carpenter (Mariela)²⁹, taxi driver for the community (Zenaida and Vereniza)³⁰ or carrier for the tourists that hike to the nearby Machu Picchu on a four-day hiking trail ‘Camino Inca’ (Javier)³¹. Most families have animals too such as alpacas, llamas, donkeys, cows, sheep or guinea pigs.

The families’ income is usually very unstable as it depends a lot on the season. Yolanda tells me how her diet has been influenced by the change of seasons and the harvest of the fields: “My parents only work on the fields, with *papas*³². In April, when we have potato harvest we earn a lot, but it depends on the month. In the winter season we almost don’t have any money; we only eat *papa*, *chuño* and *moraya*³³”. She continues to tell that in general, there is not a lot of money to be made on the fields (“We only have enough money to eat, no more”) and sometimes it has been really hard for her: “Sometimes I had a really bad nutrition because all we had was *papa*, *chuño* and *moraya*. Still now, sometimes the money that my parents give to me is not enough for breakfast and lunch”,³⁴³⁵.

None of my informants indicates to have a job at the moment I talk to them; they all live either with their families (as for the adolescents of Pumamarca) and go to high school or university in Cusco every day, or they live in Cusco and go home to their families on the weekends (as for the adolescents of Mosqoy). This does however not imply that they do not actually work: All of them help their families on the fields, in the household, work in small family-owned grocery shops or go to the market to sell herbs and other products to support their families. Others have earlier worked as mechanic, like Carlos, in mobile phone and clothes shops, like Paola³⁶ or as housemaid like Yolanda, who lived with a family in the city supporting the *señora* of the house with the household³⁷.

Although to the western observer, the stories of the adolescents reveal varying degrees of poverty, this is not so clear for the adolescents themselves. Even if they have quite a precise idea of the characteristics of poverty, these images always remain rather abstract and there is a lot of discussion and incertitude about whether they are to classify as poor themselves. The following excerpt from a group interview with four young women from Pumamarca demonstrates this quite well:

²⁹ Interview with Mariela, 04-04-2013.

³⁰ Interview with Zenaida and Vereniza, 26-03-2013.

³¹ Interview with Javier, 21-03-2013.

³² Potatoes

³³ *Chuño* and *moraya* are freeze-dried potatoes that turn either black as for *chuños* and white as for *morayas* through a special washing procedure. They are traditionally made and eaten by the Quechua-speaking people in Peru.

³⁴ The students at Mosqoy receive a warm dinner from the NGO.

³⁵ Interview with Yolanda 25-03-2013.

³⁶ Interview with Paola, 21-03-2013.

³⁷ Interview with Yolanda, 25-03-2013.

Lisa (L): Tell me, what makes a person poor?
(All talking at the same time): A poor person doesn't have money, little money.
 Not a good nutrition.
 No artifacts.
 No education.
 (L): Ok, and a house?
 Marleni (M): Yes, but small, a humble one.
 (L): And here, in Pumamarca, are there any poor people? *(First a long silence and then a discussion breaks out)*
 (M): No, almost none.
 Eliza (E): I think there are.
 Vereniza (V): Yes, there are. Everyone.
 (M): I think almost everyone has a lack of resources... But poor, no.
 Zenaida (Z): For me, honestly, for me a poor person is someone who has nothing, absolutely nothing. But when this person has a house, or a field, then he can already make progress because he has something.
 (L): Ok, and you, how do you think about yourselves and your families? Do you think about yourselves as poor?
 (Z): I think that... Here we all have a field where we can work on and this way we can eat. Thus, I don't feel poor myself.
 [...]
 (M): Yes, there are people who don't even have a house!³⁸

This excerpt illustrates perfectly the problems the adolescents have in describing themselves as either poor or 'no pobre' (not poor). Actually no one describes her- or himself as wealthy or rich, but they describe themselves as 'not poor', 'not that poor', 'a bit poor', or only 'poor' as opposed to 'poor poor' people. The problem that the adolescents feel is apparently that there are always people that are be poorer than themselves (as for those who have no house and live on the streets) and therefore they themselves cannot be poor. Because they feel however poor in a certain sense or at least not like belonging to the wealthier stratum of society, they use categories like 'poor poor', 'poor poor poor' (what they were not) and 'not that poor', 'neither rich nor poor' and 'a bit poor' (what they were). The role that comparison plays in the adolescents' self-perception will later become even more obvious in the context of the urban adolescents who do not consider themselves poor at all.

Although the rural adolescents indicate that poor people have many *necesidades* and a lack of economic resources, there is thus no one-to-one correlation between the latter and

³⁸ Interview with Zenaida, Vereniza, Marleni and Eliza, 26-03-2013.

poverty. 'Real' poverty is considered to evolve from the degree of these needs and the fact if someone has a house and a field. Far away from being simple, poverty thus arises from subtle nuances and comparison as argued in chapter 1 (Townsend 1979 in Commins 2004: 62). The relativity of poverty also plays an important role in well-being as Sen (1999) has argued and as we will see in the next section.

3.3 “(No) me siento feliz”: Poverty and Well-being

The fact that the adolescents do not consider themselves to be suffering from extreme poverty clearly contributes to a better well-being as we will see in this section. However, even if they do not describe themselves as very poor, the lack of economic resources is a reason to worry for many adolescents.

Paola for example tells me that she felt very good growing up and that she has always had a lot of friends. Moreover, she is happy about her loving family. She admits however not to be happy about her economic situation as the latter causes many problems. What affects her most is that she sees her mother being worried about how to make ends meet and taking care of her family³⁹. While some adolescents deny that their economic situation influences the way they feel about their lives, others tell me that they are happy in general but sometimes affected by the lack of money. Like Yolanda, Javier does not always have enough money to eat three meals per day, something that makes him unhappy from time to time⁴⁰. Yolanda even laughs when I ask her whether being happy is important in life and tells me: “No one in my community is happy I think. There is no food, no education, no jobs. There are always problems, problems and problems. If you solve one problem, another is already coming. [...] One can't be happy without money”⁴¹. Yolanda is however a rather extreme case among the adolescents. Instead of generalizing her view, my intention is to draw a more nuanced picture of reality by including this statement.

Despite of their problems, I find that the adolescents contradict the unhappy, pitiable stereotype of poor people as spread in the media. This partly confirms the theory presented in the theoretical chapter on poverty and well-being. In fact, well-being seems to be made up by much more than economic status (Camfield et al. 2009). Even those adolescents that admit to be unhappy sometimes are cheerful and humorous personalities when I see them with their

³⁹ Interview with Paola, 18-04-2013.

⁴⁰ Interview with Javier, 16-04-2013.

⁴¹ Interview with Yolanda, 25-03-2013.

friends. Most other adolescents tell me that they are 'feliz, tranquilo' (happy, calm) and Lizbeth even tells me that she has realized that too much money actually makes unhappy and that a united family living in harmony is much more important for happiness. In fact, all adolescents find that shelter, a family and a satisfying job are more important than money, however, under the condition of having enough money to live without worries.

An important aspect of poverty is thus, that it is highly relative. We have seen throughout this chapter, that conceptions of poverty are formed in a context and shaped from a particular viewpoint. Moreover, the adolescents have a rather abstract idea of poverty in mind which is more often linked to other people than themselves and is difficult to apply on reality. They find it difficult to position themselves within poverty and place a lot of emphasis on not belonging to the poorest of the poor. Nevertheless, they are aware about the problems they have due to their economic situation.

4 Place in Society and Future Dreams: The Rural Communities

“My dream is to be the best lawyer. For example, I’ve always liked the court of The Hague! I decided that because I think with this profession I could change my country. I see so many problems in my community and most of all I feel sorry for the children. There are children who don’t even have the most basic of what they could have. Then, I see Cusco, I see the society, I see Peru... You know, I’m very proud of being Peruvian but I’m not content with the way Peru is like. I would like it to be better, to be a good country.”⁴²

The full meaning of what it means to be from a rural community only really unfolds in relation to the city. At the intersection of the communities and the city of Cusco lies an imagined line separating two seemingly different worlds from each other. On entering the urban area and in encounters with the urban population, the adolescents from the countryside become confronted with matters of class, status and ethnicity and it is here that they perceive their difference and inequality in the Peruvian society most. While this experience has shaped some future dream as for example in the case of Zenaida, it is often surprisingly detached from the ways the adolescents imagine their future. To understand how their future dreams relate to the adolescents’ place in society, I will first pay attention to their perceptions on status and class and their own position herein. Status and class are closely interwoven with matters of ethnicity, as I will demonstrate in section two. The last section finally turns to the dreams and perspectives the adolescents have for their future and which one might find astonishingly optimistic.

4.1 “Cambiar un poco para no ser tan marginado”: The Importance of Status and Class

Poverty and a lack of economic resources are closely connected to a low status within society. Since the adolescents were born in these circumstances, a low status is placed upon them and ascribed by society (Linton 1936). This section therefore explores the meaning the adolescents give to achieved and ascribed forms of status that were described in theoretical chapter.

As Paola tells me, sitting cross-legged on her bed, “there are many ways of gaining status, but it’s in money that status is noted most”⁴³. I have come to Mosqoy on a rainy afternoon and we are sitting on her bed while Lizbeth with whom she shares not only the room but also a close friendship is taking a shower in the bathroom. Loud music sounds from the dormitory next door and I recognize the title song of a famous Bollywood movie that I

⁴² Interview with Zenaida, 26-03-2013.

⁴³ Interview with Paola, 18-04-2013.

know. During a conversation the day before, Lizbeth has confided me how she wishes someone's position in society was defined and how it is in reality: "There are people who think money makes it all, but status shouldn't be made of money or social class but of what someone does or thinks. Unfortunately in reality it's like that: status depends more than anything else on money, so someone who has a lot of money has higher status"⁴⁴.

While all adolescents acknowledge the role of money and class in having a certain status, they often point out to other ways in achieving a higher status. Education and knowledge are indeed seen as one of the main indicators of status and important for becoming successful in life. All adolescents are studying, preparing or planning their studies in the future and are very much aware that without good education, there was no (professional) future for them. Yolanda explains it to me like that: "Education is really important. It's because, you know, if you have a lot of knowledge, you have high status and you can get a very good job. And that's how you can find happiness"⁴⁵. While some like Paola consider knowledge as status by itself ("being a cultured person, knowing a lot about one's country, place..."⁴⁶), others like Yolanda thus see it rather as a way to a good job.

One thing that recurs in all of my interviews or just by looking around at the streets or on television⁴⁷ is the idea of being a 'leader' and a responsible person. Many adolescents take classes about 'leadership' and persons with a leading role are generally admired. For some, those are "chiefs, leader, people with major capabilities"⁴⁸ who are "getting involved in things"⁴⁹, while for others they are "good and helpful persons, eloquent and friendly who take responsibilities and are honest"⁵⁰. Many adolescents tell me that they would like to be that way as well and admire persons who have a leading position.

In general, the adolescents thus see possibilities to gain a higher status as opposed to the low status that was placed upon them by being born into a particular socio-economic class (Linton 1936). Although the adolescents consider themselves belonging to the lower class as for example Mariela ("I would say I belong to the lower class. The higher class has money and cars. The middle class has enough to live. And the lower class doesn't have any money"⁵¹), all of them are convinced that they are able to 'get higher' by means of their own efforts and motivation. Still sitting on her bed, Paola brushes a strand of hair behind her ear

⁴⁴ Interview with Lizbeth, 17-04-2013.

⁴⁵ Interview with Yolanda, 12-04-2013.

⁴⁶ Interview with Paola, 18-04-2013.

⁴⁷ On the streets as well as on television, I have seen a lot of advertisement for classes where one is taught how to be a leader ('cursos de liderazgo').

⁴⁸ Interview with Mariela, 18-04-2013.

⁴⁹ Interview with Paola, 18-04-2013.

⁵⁰ Interview with Yolanda, 12-04-2013.

⁵¹ Interview with Mariela, 18-04-2013.

and looks at me firmly: “There are no limits for me, I feel capable of getting out of this. I know how to get up and move forward. For me, there are no obstacles!”⁵² Lizbeth, who listened to our conversation while she was combing her wet hair added, “Yes, I would like to change a bit for not being that marginalized”⁵³.

In summary, the adolescents thus put a lot of emphasis on the achievement of status as opposed to the ascription of status. Class lines further seem not to play a major role in their lives as I am told. Considered from an objective standpoint, this perspective contrasts however with the reality where low status and class lines impose important restrictions on the adolescents. Discrimination due to their class background is a major reason why people cannot find a job in the city as we will also see in the urban communities. Yet, lower class status is not the only problem the adolescents have to face on their way out of poverty.

4.2 “Allillanchu kashianki”: The Role of Ethnicity

As stated earlier, there is an imagined line of difference between the rural and the urban population in Cusco. This boundary is made up by class difference but also by ethnic difference, even if people tend to describe the difference in class rather than in ethnic terms which are generally seen as pejorative. In fact, the government has done a good job in eliminating ethnic difference from the vocabulary of its population. During my fieldwork I can hardly ever find someone who knows the ethnic terms I have found in the literature as every difference is termed as ‘campesino’ (peasant) and ‘rural’. This does not mean however, that ethnic difference has simply vanished; it rather lingers under the cover of class difference. The following section deals with ethnicity and discrimination by means of language, lack of education and outer appearance such as skin colour or dress.

As I observe during my fieldwork, almost all of the students of Mosqoy speak Quechua more or less fluently and I have generally recognized a great pride in the Quechua language among the adolescents. Their families are mostly bilingual, although their parents tend to speak more Quechua than Castilian⁵⁴, especially the mothers often know very few or no Castilian. The adolescents communicate with their parents in a mix of Quechua and Castilian. Many like Paola⁵⁵ use Castilian in conversations while their parents speak Quechua at the same time, whereas Javier tells me he only speaks Quechua with his parents. I find Quechua monolingualism to a lesser extent in Pumamarca. Zenaida, Vereniza, Eliza and

⁵² Interview with Paola, 18-04-2013.

⁵³ Interview with Lizbeth, 17-04-2013.

⁵⁴ Our informants generally refer to Spanish as Castilian (‘Castellano’).

⁵⁵ Interview with Paola, 18-04-2013.

Marleni tell me during the conversation I have with them in front of the *salón comunal* that although they all speak more or less well Quechua, they have seen their community changing over the last years. Zoraida who has somehow assumed the leadership of the conversation laments: “You know, before, the people here spoke mostly Quechua, but now I realize that they don’t even greet each other in Quechua!” When I wonder why then during the community meetings I have seen everyone speaking Quechua, Zoraida adds: “Yes, the adults still speak Quechua but the mothers don’t teach it to their children anymore and therefore the children are losing more and more this maternal language. They only learn Castilian”⁵⁶.

One reason why people from the countryside have come to speak less and less Quechua over the last years is that Quechua native speakers are often stigmatized in the Peruvian society. In fact, there seems to be a generation gap developing: While the older generation speaks Quechua fluently and often few Castilian, the younger generation tends to speak less Quechua and prefer Castilian. As María, a fourteen-year-old girl from Pumamarca who is taking care of her older brother’s little shop in the basement of their house, explains to me: “I don’t speak Quechua a lot. Down in the city, they make fun of people who speak Quechua. When you come from the countryside, they discriminate against you”⁵⁷. According to the adolescents, not being fluent in Castilian is not the only reason causing for a low status. Ignorance is also a prejudice frequently associated with the rural population who are thought “not [to] know anything because of their bad education”⁵⁸.

Discrimination and prejudices against the rural population are indeed a recurring issue and linked to other characteristics as well. For example, Carlos explains to me that people from the countryside have difficulties finding a job because of their “bad manners”⁵⁹ or because people from the city despise their reportedly darker skin and their “unkempt outer appearance”⁶⁰. Although I can not always observe this difference in skin colour, it is true to a certain extent and probably stems from the sun that people working on the fields are exposed to. It is interesting to see that people in the city generally try to avoid the sun, wear a lot of sun blocker, hats or in the case of some women, make-up that is clearly aimed at making their skin seem paler.

Furthermore, discrimination is often linked to dress which is illustrated in the excerpt below:

⁵⁶ Interview with Zenaida, Vereniza, Eliza and Marleni, 26-03-2013.

⁵⁷ Interview with María, 27-03-2013.

⁵⁸ Interview with Paola, 18-04-2013.

⁵⁹ Interview with Carlos, 27-03-2013.

⁶⁰ Conversation with Alejandro, 29-03-2013.

Sitting in the empty dining room of Mosqoy, Javier and I are talking about the discrimination people from the countryside are confronted with in the city. "When you come from the countryside, the people from the city lower your self-esteem. They've never lacked anything", he tells me and goes on: "Me too, I was really shy when I moved to the city and at school they insulted me because of my poncho"⁶¹. It was so bad that I've stopped wearing my poncho when I'm in the city. I only put it on when I go home on the weekends and some students here do the same". For a moment, Javier seems sad but this changes rapidly when he offers me to show his poncho to me that his mother herself has woven for him. Together we climb up the stairs to the first floor where he gets the poncho from his dormitory. "Try it on, try it on!" he asks me excitedly and I pull over the shining orange woolen garment with traditional patterns on it. Adolescents passing by from other dormitories look at us curiously and my sight causes for a lot of laughter. With a happy smile on his face, Javier offers me to keep the poncho until the end of the evening.⁶²

Not only Javier renounces on wearing his poncho in the city, for most other adolescents the mere idea of wearing traditional dress is just unthinkable. Many girls indicate that they would never wear the skirts, *faldas* or *polleras*, they mothers and grandmothers wear⁶³. Indeed, all adolescents wear dress in a western style and there is not a big difference between the adolescents from the countryside and the city.

As we have seen, growing up in the rural communities is considerably influenced by marginality in an economic, social and cultural sense. Although I have also experienced a lot of pride among the adolescents about for example the Quechua language, their ethnic origin is most often linked to stigmatization and low status. However, this surprisingly does not influence the future dreams and aspirations of the adolescents the way one would expect as we will see in the following section.

4.3 "Mi sueño es...": Future Dreams and Perspectives

The dreams of the adolescents are as individual as they are themselves but they can generally be divided in the categories I will describe here respectively, namely dreams of a profession or a job, a family and a house and about helping others.

"My dream is to become a good professional! I want to be chef of an international restaurant and travel around the world", Yolanda confesses to me laughing. Studying gastronomy in a private institute, she prepares herself for a career as cook. As many adolescents, she has ambitious goals in life. The students want to become 'professionals',

⁶¹ The poncho is a traditional dress for men that I have often seen among the Andean indigenous population as it is the typical skirt and the bowler hat for women.

⁶² Field notes, 16-04-2013.

⁶³ Interviews with Paola, 18-04-2013; Mariela, 18-04-2013; Zenaida, Vereniza, Marleni and Eliza, 26-03-2013.

ranging from manager of a company over psychologist and tourist guide to lawyer and civil engineer.

Apart from their professional dreams, they dream of having a family and an own house. Based on their own experience of the difficulties of growing up among many siblings, they all emphasized however that they wanted no more than two children (or three in the case of Carlos) so they could afford education for them. Lizbeth tells me of her dream of a 'white wedding': "I would like to have a family when I'm thirty and I've finished my career. You know, one of those weddings with a white dress in a Catholic church". The houses they imagined are modest houses, made of adobe like their own, with two floors and a balcony. While all adolescents express the wish to either stay or return to live at the countryside because they do not like the trouble and bad air in the city, Paola tells me that she would like to have two houses: one in Cusco and one in her community. She imagines herself working and living in the city for a while and then returning to the countryside and maybe opening a big supermarket.

From time to time, the students from Mosqoy return to their rural communities to teach what they have learned in their classes, a task that they complete with joy and pride. In general, helping others, especially their brothers and sisters, families and people from their communities is very important to them and one of the first things they plan to do when they will have their first own income. Yolanda tells me that she is happy because now she can support those that need it more, above all the people from her community who have little education.⁶⁴ Javier plans to "first help [his] little brothers and sister and afterwards the community with money for education"⁶⁵. Different to the ideal of self-actualization and the hunger for a 'fuller life' that most western adolescents hold today (Bulbeck 2004), I find that in the dreams of my informants, family and an improved standard of living stood central.

However, one can argue that for adolescents from a poor background as theirs, even the relatively modest dream of studying (except from the adolescents from Mosqoy of course) and having a job as a professional is very ambitious if not unrealistic. In his study in the US, Bulbeck (2004) found that working class dreams often stand in contrast to structural opportunities. The social and economic reality in Cusco somehow confirms this theory, as the entrance exams of the national university are very strict and private universities unaffordable for the rural adolescents. Without an excellent secondary education, it is very difficult entering the national university and most adolescents like for example Zenaida complain to me about the bad education they have had in the past. Vereniza looks sad when she admits:

⁶⁴ Interview with Yolanda, 25-03-2013.

⁶⁵ Interview with Javier, 21-03-2013.

“Yes, in some part our economic situation limits us a lot in our dreams. We can’t do everything we want without money”⁶⁶.

Yet, the adolescents’ strong optimism in regard to their future perspectives is striking to me. When I ask the adolescents whether they think their dreams are realistic, virtually all of them answer that they are realistic and that they can reach them. Even if some admit that their socio-economic situation indeed makes it harder for them to reach their dreams, for them this does not mean they could not make it at all. The adolescents are convinced that more important than their socio-economic situation is their own effort and motivation. Yolanda explains it like that: “Of course I can reach realize my dreams! If you’re a good student, money doesn’t matter!”⁶⁷.

Unlike Sirin et al (2004: 439) assert, the adolescents from the rural communities have thus not been discouraged by structural constraints such as discrimination but they look into the future with a lot of confidence and optimism. This does however (and unfortunately) not mean that all dreams of the adolescents will come true. It should be kept in mind that this perspective would be too optimistic as compared to the reality we have seen over the last chapters. In fact, instead of being a realistic estimation of their future, these dreams rather reflect the adolescents’ coping mechanism with poverty. In the next chapters we will see how the adolescents from the urban communities deal with poverty in relation to their future dreams.

⁶⁶ Interview with Zenaida, Vereniza, Eliza and Marleni, 26-03-2013.

⁶⁷ Interview with Yolanda, 25-03-2013.

5 Perspectives on Poverty: The Urban communities

After a bumpy ride on muddy roads I arrive in Santa Rosa, San Sebastian. Because the neighbourhood is situated high, the city of Cusco can be seen while going up. Mere sand roads lead to streets with houses, with a bit of grass here and there. A small sign at the door indicates the house of Daniza. The ceiling of the house is made of plastic, which makes the house light, but because the floor is mere sand, everything seems dusty. Around the central space, above, behind some kind of balcony, four small bedrooms can be found. Daniza's father is working wood in the central space in order to get the guinea pig house ready. Furthermore she lives there with her mother, grandmother, grandfather, aunt, three nephews, two nieces, two brothers and two sisters. "Family is important to me, she tells me. We help each other out in difficult times."⁶⁸

This description of the living area and house of Daniza⁶⁹ can also be applied to the situation of adolescents in Santa Rosa, Fedetrac and Karigrande, although some live in stone houses, others in houses of clay, some high, and some really high up the hills. With this vignette I want to make an introduction into the living situation of the adolescents in the urban part of Cusco. The importance of family will be explained in more detail when describing their perceptions on poverty, as will the topics of education and health. The second part of this chapter will consider the experience of poverty by these adolescents. I will describe how they perceive their personal situation, including their well-being, possibilities and limitations.

5.1 "Una persona que no tiene posibilidades": Conceptions of Poverty

Every time I ask one of the adolescents what poverty means to them they answer: "someone who has no basic resources"⁷⁰, "someone who lives on the street and has no money"⁷¹ and "someone who has no possibilities and can't do anything"⁷². Although slightly different, these answers are quite similar. All answers point to someone else, a person, who does not have money and basic resources: water, food and shelter. According to them they possess these basic resources and therefore are not poor themselves. This will be explained further in the next paragraph about the experience of poverty.

When I ask the adolescents if they know someone they considered poor, most of them cannot think of anyone. Yet, Denis, a sixteen year old shy boy living in Fedetrac, can give me

⁶⁸ Field notes, 21-03-2013

⁶⁹ I decided to take four main characters: Daniza, Silvia, Denis and Sergio. I combined the lives and stories of different adolescents and told them, with a few exceptions, by means of these four characters.

⁷⁰ Interview with Emelie, 24-03-2013

⁷¹ Interview with Abdaly, 24-03-2013

⁷² Interview with Angelica, 27-03-2013

an example: “I know a person who is selling potatoes on the streets, but he doesn’t sell much. I think he could better go to the municipality; there are people who help other people find a job.”⁷³ Daniza also knows someone who is really poor. Daniza is a 17 year old girl from Santa Rosa. She is very confident, smart and likes to help other people. She has long, dark brown hair which she wears loose, in contrast to the braided ponytail most girls and women have in Cusco. She always dresses neatly; today she is wearing jeans, with a colorful top and a yellow jacket. She describes the person she considers poor: “I know a woman, she always sits in the same corner of the same streets. I do not think she can improve her situation. Most of the people like her have mental problems or are just not that smart.”⁷⁴ In general the adolescents of the urban communities say they do not live in a poor neighbourhood and therefore do not know a poor person or only from outside their neighbourhood. Sometimes they say poor people only live in the rural communities because the people there lack good education. Some adolescents mention that they do not know any poor people because the people in their own neighbourhood are always supported by their family. The adolescents often live together with their aunt, uncle and grandparents in order to help each other out, as we saw in the vignette opening this chapter.

Having strong family bonds is something all adolescents in the urban neighborhoods mention as something essential in life. Also for Silvia, who is really grateful to her parents that she can go to school. Silvia is a nineteen year old, cheerful girl from Fedetrac. However, she does experience some difficulties in life, which make her feel sad at times. Her brother and father fight a lot, and her parents have a hard time gathering enough money to pay the tuition for their children.⁷⁵ She always wears her hair in a ponytail and is usually dressed in her school uniform or sweatpants and a t-shirt. She explains her parents play an important role in her life. Although she hardly ever sees her father as he works most of the time, she appreciates the fact that he does this so she can go to school. Furthermore, she says she simply would be unhappy without her family. Her family supports her in everything she does in life and is a big part of her social network. “My brother helps me with my homework, I play games with my nephew and I can talk with my sister about everything.”⁷⁶ Also when we discuss people she considers poor, she describes them as “people who do not have family”⁷⁷. This is in line with theory about poverty which considers poverty as something which can be perceived differently in every culture. Rahnema says in Allen & Thomas (2000:11) that poverty is not merely the opposite of rich, but can include the lack of protection or

⁷³ Interview with Denis, 25-03-2013

⁷⁴ Interview with Daniza, 21-03-2013

⁷⁵ Conversation with Silvia, 21-03-2013

⁷⁶ Interview with Silvia, 28-03-2013

⁷⁷ Interview with Silvia, 28-03-2013

abandonment by other people; in this case family. The importance of family is mentioned by others as well; family means you have someone who can support you in difficult times. If your parents lose their jobs, you can always rely on your aunt and uncle or grandparents. Being rich often means that you are able to support your family and help them in any way possible. Family thus can make the difference between being rich or poor, as family can give social support as well as material support in difficult times.

Besides family, education is very important for adolescents in the urban neighbourhoods. They have few possibilities without an education. Denis tells me what going to school means for him. "Going to school makes me happy, I have to work really hard to get good grades, but it means I can go to university later and find a good job to provide for my family. Besides, school is where all my friends are."⁷⁸ The same applies to the other adolescents. Daniza says "Education means everything to me; it means I can get a job, possess a house and pay for the necessities in life. I don't want to rely on my parents for that; they already pay enough for me."⁷⁹ Education means they can improve their life and provide for their children, but it also means they do not have to rely on their family for the basic things in life. Denis tells me that being able to go to school is not possible for everyone in Cusco. "The people from the countryside are not able to go to school or only to bad schools. When they become older they can't find a job in the city and have difficulties providing for their family. They do not have other possibilities than to remain living in the countryside and work on the field."⁸⁰ Other adolescents agree that education in the countryside is worse than in the city.

Additionally, good health is also important, physically and mentally. Especially for Daniza this is important, as her mother is very ill and she knows how difficult this can be; "I can't work besides school, I always have to help my mother when I come home. Besides, I don't have a lot of time to do my homework either. Sometimes it is difficult, but my mother does what she can for our family."⁸¹ If Daniza's mother was not ill, this would mean Daniza had more time to study or work and would have better prospects in the future. Angelica also mentions the importance of health. She is sick herself, and has more difficulties helping her mother, something she finds important. Next to that she has fewer opportunities in the future, as she cannot use her hands very well.⁸²

Finally, I want to consider the reasons the adolescents give for poverty. This illustrates further how they perceive poverty. Earlier I mentioned the lack of good education in the

⁷⁸ Interview with Denis, 03-04-2013

⁷⁹ Conversation with Daniza, 04-04-2013

⁸⁰ Interview with Denis, 03-04-2013

⁸¹ Conversation with Daniza, 04-04-2013

⁸² Interview with Angelica, 26-03-2013

countryside. This is presented by most adolescents as one of the reasons for poverty, as a lack of a good education eventually limits the possibilities of finding a good job. Denis also mentions a difference in personality in the communities: “They feel as though they are worthless, the people in the countryside.”⁸³ According to him this is why they cannot get a job and have fewer opportunities in life. On top of that, the adolescents also mention ‘large families’ as a cause of poverty. According to them this mainly occurs in the countryside⁸⁴. Daniza says: “Having a lot of children means that you also have to provide more food and have to pay more money for education. The people in the countryside often cannot afford this.”⁸⁵ Larger families thus have more expenses and therefore less money. Other reasons for poverty often mentioned are “lack of jobs”⁸⁶ and “lack of help”⁸⁷. Unemployment is a big problem in Cusco which causes for financial problems within families. By “lack of help” the adolescents mean the lack of involvement of the government in providing work and helping the poor. According to the adolescents the government is responsible for a big part of the problems related to poverty in Cusco.

We can conclude that the difference between being poor or not are determined by whether someone has access to basic resources as water, food and shelter and also by whether someone has strong family bonds, access to good education and good health.

5.2 “Yo tengo todo lo que necesito”: Experiences of Poverty

This paragraph will describe the living situation of the adolescents and their experience of poverty. The following vignette shows the lack of facilities in Silvia’s neighbourhood, as well as the way she lives.

It’s early in the afternoon; I’m walking with Silvia through Fedetrac. Children are playing in the streets, running as fast as the chickens chasing each other. In contrast to the neighbourhood where I live myself, no playing field can be found and children have to entertain themselves in other ways. She tells me that it is a good place to grow up though. There is a lot of space to play, although not in playing fields, and there are not many cars, because it’s hard to get here by car. “I don’t need a playing field to play, the only thing I need are my friends”. She did not have a lot of time to play with her friends when she was younger though, as she always has to help her mother in the household. When we walk back to her house, a group

⁸³ Interview with Denis, 03-04-2013

⁸⁴ Interview with Denis, 03-04-2013

⁸⁵ Interview with Daniza, 21-03-2013

⁸⁶ Interviews with Abdaly, 23-03-2013, Carlos, 09-04, Daniza, 21-03-2013 and Silvia, 21-03-2013

⁸⁷ Interviews with Silvia, 21-03-2013, Merie, 03-04, Juan, 19-03-2013

of schoolchildren point and shout: “look, a *gringa*”⁸⁸. Clearly they are not used to having white, blond people around here. We pass the small shop her aunt works owns, she sells a few potatoes, the classic “jelly pudding” and some drinks. Furthermore not a lot of shops can be found around here. Schools are far away as well, the closest public transport is all the way down the hill, only reached after walking down dusty, winding paths.⁸⁹

This observation of the neighbourhood and house of Silvia, which is representative for all adolescents, contrast sharply with how they experience their circumstances. My observations point towards a situation of poverty: no facilities as schools, roads, hospitals, unemployment and small, simple houses. Yet the adolescents do not consider themselves poor at all. One day I talk to Daniza about this topic. When I ask her why she does not consider herself poor she explains: “I got everything I need. I don’t live on the street; I have food, a house and all the basic things for having a good life.”⁹⁰ However, poverty is an issue she finds important to talk about. “A lot of people around me live in difficult circumstances; they can’t find a job or are somehow not able to work. Some people clean houses of wealthier people, they have to take their children with them and eat on the streets. Their children cannot go to school. I feel lucky I have the possibility to go to school.”⁹¹ Notable is that she is really positive about her life, and compares herself to people who have more difficulties in life. When I talk to Denis about whether he considers himself poor, he speaks in a really defensive tone: “I am not poor at all, I can go to school, I live in a house and I always got something to eat. I am not like some other people living on the streets, selling stuff.”⁹² The opinions of Daniza and Denis represent the opinions of all other adolescents. None of them consider themselves poor. As Daniza and Denis, most of them compare themselves to others who live in harsher conditions. This contrast is their main argument for considering themselves not being poor.

5.3 “Me siento feliz”: Poverty and Well-being

When I ask the other adolescents whether they feel content with their life as it is, they all say “yes” without hesitation, and describe their general mood as “happy”. As many others, Denis explains to me: “I have everything I need in my life: the basics for living, a caring family and I can go to school and do whatever I want, I don’t have any reasons for being unhappy.”

⁹³Daniza’s argument for not having any reason to be unhappy is in line with the conditions

⁸⁸ The word ‘gringo’ is often used for foreigners with a white skin, blond hair and blue eyes

⁸⁹ From my observations and conversation with Silvia, 22-03-2013

⁹⁰ Interview with Daniza, 21-03-2013

⁹¹ Interview with Daniza, 21-03-2013

⁹² Interview with Denis, 25-03-2013

⁹³ Conversation with Denis, 16-04,2013

given for a good life in the former paragraph. As they meet these conditions for a good life, they consider themselves blessed and feel happy. Some say they experience difficulties in life however, like Silvia. According to them things would be easier if they had a little more money. They would have higher chances to go to university, as there is more room for students in the more expensive private universities. Also they would have more time to do homework as they would not have to help their parents. Generally, however, they do not feel limited in their possibilities in life and consider themselves happy. When I observe them during their daily activities, they seem happy to me as well. Mostly they have a smile on their face and laugh with their brothers and sisters or friends. This is in line with earlier research on well-being which has shown that poverty and happiness are not mutually incompatible (Camfield et al. 2009). As these youths show us, living in neighbourhoods which are considered poor by economic standards does not mean you cannot be happy.

However, we have to keep in mind that the adolescents can give us a distorted picture of their life. Generally, the adolescents do not want to put emphasis on negative aspects of their lives; they mostly talk shortly and quickly about difficulties they experience. That does not mean however that these difficulties are non-existent. Although they do not like to talk a lot about their own problems, they sometimes describe the difficulties their older brothers and sisters have to deal with, who live in the same circumstances as themselves. For example, Silvia describes the discrimination her niece⁹⁴ experiences when she applies for a job: “she does not get the job because she comes from a poor neighbourhood, I do not understand that.”⁹⁵ Denis tells me about his brother’s unemployment and the problems this gives him: “he still lives in the same house as my parents, but he should have his own house and a family by now. Because he does not have a job he just stays at home all day and does nothing.”⁹⁶ Making the good things bigger and the bad things smaller can be considered a coping-mechanism in order to deal with the sometimes difficult circumstances they live in. As they consider themselves happy, and really seem happy when I meet up with them, this coping-mechanism seems to work very well.

⁹⁴ She lives in the same house as Silvia

⁹⁵ Interview with Silvia, 28-03-2013

⁹⁶ Conversation with Denis, 16-04-2013

6 Place in Society and Future Dreams: The Urban Communities

Not only did I want to know if the adolescents consider themselves poor, as we discussed in the first chapter, but also whether they feel limited in their chances for the future. Firstly, this chapter will shed light on the way the adolescents place themselves in the Cusqueñan society in regards to status, class and ethnicity. The first paragraph starts with what adolescents think determines status. I also wanted to know whether they are limited in certain ways to get good jobs and high positions in politics. Are individual qualities a way to get access to these jobs and positions? Or is this determined by someone's background; or, is status achieved or ascribed? In this context the following topics will be discussed: working hard, personality, income and threatening other people. This paragraph then considers whether class limits the extent to which status can be achieved. I will then discuss the middle class and its characteristics. Finally, this paragraph considers the importance of ethnicity in relation to the possibilities adolescents have in life. I investigate the existence of ethnic boundaries, inequality among different ethnic groups and whether they perceive they experience discrimination themselves.

Secondly, this chapter will emphasize on the future dreams of adolescents. What kind of career do they want to pursue, and do they want a family? Is it possible to fulfill these dreams?

6.1 “Todos pueden hacer lo que quieren”: The Importance of Status, Class & Ethnicity

This paragraph starts with considering the subject of status. Sergio has a strong opinion about status. Sergio is a boy of 17, always dressed in blouse, black sweater and black pants: his school uniform. He acts really nervous and when he talks he stutters a little and pauses a lot. He is however not at all shy and is always eager to tell me everything he knows. He is a serious, hard-working boy with lots of ambitions. He is preparing for university at the moment, but does not worry about his big exam⁹⁷ at all. When we talk about status, he pictures someone working at a municipality, who has worked his way up for years. This is an important point. According to Sergio a status is achieved, not ascribed: “People in my community look up to people who have achieved something and worked hard to get a certain position. When someone hasn't worked hard to get a job, for example at the municipality,

⁹⁷ In order to get into national university, students have to get very high grades for their entrance exam.

people think it is unfair.”⁹⁸ According to him most people at the municipality have worked hard to reach a certain position; he thinks a job at the municipality is possible for him as well. He works really hard to get good grades at school and tries to develop himself by doing work as a volunteer. Not only working hard, but also your personality is important in order to get a high status “you always have to be positive and professional”⁹⁹. In the end, he considers income as the most important determinant for status however: “A high income shows you have achieved something and makes it possible to buy a beautiful house in a good neighborhood”¹⁰⁰. Denis also thinks status depends mainly on income, but when he rethinks his answer, he also thinks personality is an important determinant.¹⁰¹ “Being professional” as a part of someone’s personality is mentioned often by the boys as being important for status. They mean by this that you are serious in whatever you do; work hard and do not let your personal life influence your work. Denis explains that it is important in school as well as when you have a job. “People don’t take you serious when you do not act professional.”¹⁰²

The girls on the other hand, never mention “income” as the main determinant for status. They think the way you treat other people is most important. Daniza says people respect you more when you treat other people right. Moreover she thinks in the end you will more easily reach your goals. “I’m a volunteer; I like to help other people. I think you can learn a lot from helping people and when you need help, other people will help you too. In our neighborhood it’s important to help people; you get more respect from everybody”.¹⁰³ Silvia agrees. “My parents do not have a high income, but my mother does work for the community and spends all the time she has helping other people. She gets lots of appreciation from other women in the neighborhood.”¹⁰⁴ This difference in the perception of status by boys and girls means that gender influences the way you can gain status, as for men a good job and high income is important, for girls helping people will give her status. This is in line with what the adolescents mentioned about their parents occupation. The women are mostly housewives and community workers and thus will gain more status by helping people; the man are the main breadwinners and thus will mainly gain status by getting a better job and increasing their income.

Generally the adolescents think status is important, especially in order to get a good job or to get help from other people. Everybody has the same chances to improve their status,

⁹⁸ Interview with Sergio, 22-03-2013

⁹⁹ Interview with Sergio, 22-03-2013

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Sergio, 22-03-2013

¹⁰¹ Interview with Denis, 25-03-2013

¹⁰² Interview with Denis, 25-03-2013

¹⁰³ Interview with Daniza, 21-03-2013

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Silvia, 21-03-2013

which is mainly done by working hard. They do not feel somehow limited to gain a higher status because they have a certain background.

After considering their ideas about status, I then wanted to know what class meant to these adolescents. As we discussed in the theory, we speak of 'class' when talking about a number of people who have a certain causal component of their chances in life in common, this component is economic and related to opportunities for income and the possession of goods (Grusky 1994: 113). In contrast to the adolescents from the rural communities who consider themselves belonging to the lower class, all adolescents from the urban neighborhoods consider themselves member of the middle class: "I have basic resources, I can go to school, have food and a house. I have all I need. People from the lower class don't have these basic resources."¹⁰⁵ What this middle class characterizes according to them is "having the basic resources in life". What thus distinct them from the lower class is that according to them these people do not have these basic resources. They thus acknowledge a certain common component in their life which connects them to the middle class, however they do not think this class is related to opportunities for income or having certain goods. Silvia says the following about the influence of class in her life: "Belonging to the middle class does not influence my life; I have the same opportunities for getting a good job as people from the upper class. Everybody has the same opportunities and can improve their life, regardless the class they belong to."¹⁰⁶ Denis says he does not feel like he belongs to a certain class: "at school, everybody is the same, everybody wears the same clothes and to which class you belong doesn't matter."¹⁰⁷ Most of them believe that people have their own faith in hand and can reach their goals by working hard regardless of the group they belong to. They believe therefore as well that they can climb up the 'ladder of social classes' by finishing their education and working hard.

What the adolescents say does correspond to reality. The administration of the municipality shows that the inhabitants of these neighbourhoods belong to the lower class. World Vision also regards this group as belonging to the lower class and feel the need to do social work in these areas.¹⁰⁸ The adolescents describe themselves however as middle class, as they say they have everything they need in life and are certainly not poor. They associate the lower class to poverty and thus do not feel like they belong to this class. Furthermore, the

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Sergio, 22-03-2013

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Silvia, 21-03-2013

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Denis, 25-03-2013

¹⁰⁸ Conversation with Yesenia of World Vision, 19-03-2013

adolescents say classes do not have any influence on the adolescents life at all, however, some adolescents told me about discrimination when we talked about another subject. Silvia's niece for example experienced discrimination at work because she grew up in a poor neighbourhood. She also does not have the personal connections which can help her finding a job as some people from wealthier neighbourhoods have.¹⁰⁹ Sergio also told me once how he felt discriminated at school. "Some kids get more help from the teachers than others. The teacher never makes time for me. I think it is because the parents of some other children pay more money."¹¹⁰ These stories about discrimination do point towards influence of class in the life of these adolescents. Belonging to this class makes it more difficult to find a job or get the best help in school.

Finally I want to consider the importance of ethnicity in the lives of the adolescents. Unlike the adolescents in the rural communities, the adolescents from the urban neighbourhoods do not relate to this topic and do not have a lot to say about it. According to Silvia everybody in Peru is indigenous; there is no difference between the countryside and the city according to her.¹¹¹ In general the adolescents from the urban communities did not know the difference between *indígenas*, *mestizos* and *criollos*. Denis also says there is no difference between people from the rural communities and the urban communities. "We are all the same. There are some small differences in traditions and culture, some customs are not practiced in the city and we don't wear traditional clothing. But that doesn't matter; I think we are still the same."¹¹² When I ask him if he feels ever discriminated because of his ethnic background he answers: "I don't, but I think people from the countryside are sometimes discriminated, they talk a bit different, they can't speak proper Spanish. They also wear other clothes sometimes. They don't have access to good education and I heard they have a hard time finding a job."¹¹³ In contrast to the traditional clothes with lots of colours, Denis wears black sweatpants, a big white blank shirt and sneakers. Other adolescents agree there is discrimination against people from the rural communities based on their clothing and skin colour and more importantly because they had a dialect when they spoke *Castellano*. In the urban communities some adolescents, but most of their parents can speak Quechua. Silvia says: "for me being able to speak Quechua is not important, but I think Peruvian traditions are important."¹¹⁴ Ethnicity

¹⁰⁹ Conversation with Silvia, 27-03-2013

¹¹⁰ Conversation with Sergio, 03-04-2013

¹¹¹ Conversation with Silvia, 27-03-2013

¹¹² Interview with Denis, 03-04

¹¹³ Interview with Denis, 03-04

¹¹⁴ Conversation with Silvia, 27-03-2013

does not seem to play an important role in their life. Although discrimination is not uncommon in this group, this is not based on skin colour or the way they speak, but rather on the amount of money they have and where they live as described above.

Although some adolescents experience discrimination in their life, generally they are quite positive about their position in society. A higher status can be reached by working hard, being professional and helping other people. Ethnicity is also not considered to play a big role in their life, they are not discriminated based on skin colour, clothing or the way they speak. Class does limit their possibilities in society however, although they do not recognize this when they are directly asked about this.

6.2 “Ser una buena persona”: Future Dreams and Perspectives

Sergio has his whole future clearly in mind. He does everything he has in his power to work at one of the municipalities in Cusco, or, if possible, at the national government. “My dream is to help other people and to develop myself. The current mayor of San Sebastian is a big example for me, although the national government is corrupt, he tries to do what he can to help the poor.” When I ask why he wants to work at the national government, as it has problems with corruption, he answers: “Every good person can help a bit, not everybody is corrupt, I think I can still help people and change policies in favor of people who lack money.” When I ask him how he wants to reach this goal, he answers: “working hard, I have good grades so I’m not worried. I want to study Law next year. First I have to pass my exam.” Are you going to make it? I ask. “You have to think positive, of course I make it”. I almost feel ashamed asking this question. Of course, as I heard many times before, by being positive you can do whatever you want.¹¹⁵

“Helping people” is a repeating topic when I talk about future dreams with the adolescents. As Sergio, Daniza wants to help other people, that is her biggest dream. Other than Sergio, who wants to help people by changing policies, she has a more direct way in mind of helping people; by studying psychology she hopes to help people who are mentally ill. She wants to open a psychological center especially aimed to help people who cannot afford psychological help. She also considers being a notary at the national government. In this way she can help her family by having a good career as she than has enough money to provide for her own

¹¹⁵ Conversation with Sergio, 03-04

children as well as for her parents and grandparents.¹¹⁶ Some others, as Angelica, want to help people by curing them by becoming a doctor or a nurse.¹¹⁷

Related to the topic of helping other people is having a stable income. Most adolescents mention wanting to be able to provide for their family when they are older. Denis especially wants to help his family by finding a good, stable job: “my eldest sister already works and still lives with my parents, my older brother, my younger brother and I. With her income and that of my father they make it possible for me to go to school. I want to do something in return when I’m older and provide for my parents when they are too old to work.”¹¹⁸ Silvia also wants to have a stable income. “I want to have a family, but before I start having children I want to have a stable income. I saw many families struggling to provide for their children, sometimes they can’t even go to school. My parents also have difficulties providing for my study. Therefore I want to make sure this doesn’t happen to me.”¹¹⁹ Having a good job also means they can have their own house. Most of the parents of the adolescents do not have their own house, it is often of their grandparents, or they pay rent. It is quite special for them to have your own house and it means you are wealthy. “It is my dream to have my own house of stone, where my whole family can live. And when I’m old I can pass it trough to my children.”¹²⁰

Most of the adolescents want to have a family in the future. As Silvia, they first want to make sure however that they can actually provide for their children. However, they emphasize that they do not want a large family: “I have a lot of brothers and sisters, which costs my parents a lot of money to let us go to school. Although my parents can just afford it, I know some examples where parents are not able to let all their children go to school. I therefore want a small family with just two or three children.”¹²¹ Sergio does not want to have children at all. “I want to have a career and be professional. I can’t have that and have a family at the same time.”¹²²

They all want to go to university in order to make these dreams come true, but first they have to finish their education and work hard. Although they think it might be easier to fulfill dreams for people with more money, most adolescents do not consider themselves unable to reach their goals and fulfill their dreams. As I already described earlier, they told me once again: “I can do whatever I want. If you want something bad enough you can make

¹¹⁶ Interview with Daniza, 21-03-2013

¹¹⁷ Interviews with Angelica, 26-03-2013 and Merie, 26-03-2013

¹¹⁸ Interview with Denis, 25-03-2013

¹¹⁹ Interview with Silvia, 21-03-2013

¹²⁰ Interview with Merie, 26-03-2013

¹²¹ Interview with Carlos, 09-04-2013

¹²² Interview with Sergio, 22-03-2013

it.”¹²³ This positive attitude makes them work really hard to fulfill their dreams. “If I wouldn’t believe I could go to university, I would never be able to work as hard as I do now to pass my exam. Being positive and ambitious is something I need in my life. Most friends of mine are the same. But those who don’t will eventually quit school.”¹²⁴

In reality however, it is really hard to find a job in Cusco, as was also described by Denis as he talked about his brother’s unemployment.¹²⁵ Silvia as well told me before how difficult it was for her niece to find a job.¹²⁶ Other adolescents however, told me stories about their brothers and sisters who did find a job, although not always as good as they wanted. Finding a job for these adolescents thus should not be impossible, but certainly more difficult than they perceive themselves. As for going to university, this is evenly difficult. As they describe themselves, there are only a few spots in national university, and the exam which determines who gets these spots are really difficult. Private universities are no option, because none of them can afford this. When looking at their brothers and sisters, I heard about a few who actually go to university. Most of them however are doing a more practical form of education or short courses. This situation illustrates a tension between future aspiration and actual limited resources available to the adolescents (Sirin et al. 2004) as we described in the theoretical chapter. Their dreams might however be seen as a form of resistance to structural oppression (Sirin et al. 2004), in this case resistance against financial barriers they experience to go to university. This is assumable as I always felt this strong will of the adolescents to not let themselves be hold back by the fact that they do not have the same chances to go to universities as adolescents from rich families.

Based on the description of the living situation in chapter one, some theorists would say these adolescents are probably vulnerable and powerless (Green 2007: 1112) as they live in poor circumstances. Based on the data I gathered during my fieldwork, I would say the opposite is true. Firstly, these youths do not consider themselves poor at all. Furthermore, they think that as long as you have the basic resources, everybody has the same chances in life. Daniza says, as many others, that as long as you want something really bad and you work hard, you can reach any goal.¹²⁷ The general thought among the adolescents that by working hard every goal can be reached clearly contradicts the idea of people who live in poor areas as ‘powerless’. Instead it points towards the concept of agency: people can act on behalf of a goal they want

¹²³ Interview with Daniza, 21-03-2013

¹²⁴ Interview with Daniza, 21-03-2013

¹²⁵ Conversation with Denis, 16-04-2013

¹²⁶ Interview with Silvia, 28-03-2013

¹²⁷ Interview with Daniza, 21093-2013

to reach (Alkire 2005:218) and are able to make choices which have a clear purpose (Inglehart & Welzel 2010:46). This thought, that by working hard, every goal can be achieved is also reflected in their future dreams. Their dreams are really ambitious, but they never doubt whether they can fulfill these dreams. Although it might not always be realistic for all of them to fulfill these dreams, the effort they make will certainly increase their chances.

Conclusion

Poverty is often related only to economic factors (Allen & Thomas 2000: 10-11). Our fieldwork showed however a more diverse image of poverty drawn by the adolescents in rural and urban Cusco. The adolescents from both groups related a lack of basic resources to poverty. They included slightly different aspects in these basic resources. Both mentioned having food and shelter, although the adolescents from the rural communities emphasized the fact that an own house belonged to the basic resources one should have. In the urban neighbourhoods this distinction was not made. Furthermore the adolescents from the rural communities mentioned the possession of a field as a basic resource, which was not mentioned by the adolescents from the urban neighbourhoods. Both further emphasized the lack of education as something that distinguishes poor people because the latter often cannot afford sending their children to school. A further emphasis on the lack of money was done by both groups. Both groups of adolescents also mentioned the importance of family as a basic resource. While the adolescents from the urban neighbourhoods considered the lack of family as a characteristic of poverty, the adolescents from the countryside pointed out to the lack of support from the family as a reason of poverty. Further causes for poverty named by the latter were the lack of support from the government and a lack of education. The adolescents from the urban areas by contrast named the lack of work first, then lacking support of the government and bad quality of education on the countryside. The image of poverty that is drawn by both groups thus points out to the many facets of poverty, ranging from economic over social to political marginality (Green 2006).

Not only the perceptions of poverty of both groups differed to some extent, but the ways they experienced poverty did as well. The communities the adolescents live in differ slightly in their degree of poverty, of course not only between the groups but also within the groups. In general, the adolescents from the rural communities live far from the city in marginal areas. They live in houses made of adobe, there is no running water, electricity has often been installed only recently or not at all, health centers lack in almost completely, as do high schools for which the adolescents have to travel long distances. There is a general lack of technology and the houses are poorly furnished. The fields are the major way of making a living in the rural communities and most of the daily life revolves around subsistence activities. However, the yields produced by crops are in many cases not enough to make a decent living and the lack of money is a persistent problem, especially in the context of education. In the urban neighbourhoods on the other hand the houses are for the biggest part made of stone. Although the neighbourhoods are closer to the city center, they are far up the

hills of Cusco. Like in the rural parts, streets are often unpaved and infrastructure is not complete. In the urban neighbourhoods people have other means of making a living, such as taxi driver, technician, cleaning lady in a cafeteria or others which is just enough to pay for food, shelter and education. Summing up, we observed that the rural communities are poorer than the urban neighbourhoods. Poverty in the rural communities is characterized by life on the countryside, by greater marginality and less economic, educational and technological resources. Poverty in the urban areas by contrast is characterized by a lack of facilities and unemployment. This is also in line with academic literature which states that poverty can have many different forms (Rahnema 1992 in Allen & Thomas 2000: 11).

Most striking was however that the adolescents from the urban areas exclusively associated poverty with other people, but never with themselves. Our informants from the countryside described poverty like their peers for a great part by using examples of other people instead of themselves. In contrast to the urban adolescents, they found themselves however poor themselves, even if not very poor. The adolescents from the urban neighbourhoods in turn did not consider themselves as poor at all and claimed to have all the money they needed for food and going to school. In both cases, the adolescents' self-definition as 'a bit poor' or 'not poor at all' can however be considered to be disproportionately positive and not reflecting the reality we observed and that was admitted by them on other moments.

The positive self-image of the adolescence that contrasts a less positive reality can be led back to the high relativity of poverty as Townsend (1979 in Commins 2004: 62) has argued. The adolescents' self-perception was strongly influenced by comparison within their own group but also with other, poorer groups. In both cases, the adolescents compared themselves to people who were even poorer than they were and concluded that therefore they themselves could not be (that) poor. Poverty and especially perceptions of poverty thus result from comparison within one's society or community and is as such opposed to a purely economic approach that measures poverty by global standards such as the poverty line described in chapter 1 (Allen & Thomas 2000).

This point is further stressed by the adolescents' general perception of their well-being. Although both groups and especially the adolescents from the rural communities admitted to have problems due to their socio-economic situation, they pointed out to be happy with their lives. This confirms not only theories on the relativity of poverty but also is also more general literature on well-being in the context of poverty (Camfield et al. 2009). As Sen (1999) has argued, well-being is made up by much more diverse factors than only economic well-being.

Another theory we discussed in earlier in the context of poverty is Lewis' (1963) idea of a culture of poverty which considers poverty as a specific lifestyle. Although this idea implies some form of fatalism where little room remains for agency, we can partly apply this theory to Cusco. Especially in the rural communities, we can see 'values of poverty' which are passed on from generation to generation. The lack of self-esteem Lisa observed during her fieldwork and that Mathilde's informants pointed out to as well is one such an example. Secondly, among some people in the rural communities seems to prevail the idea that 'school is for rich people'. Moreover, there are other 'values of poverty' that can be observed in both groups. Adolescents in the urban neighbourhoods and the rural communities alike are often expected to help their parents in the household due to the necessity of earning money for both parents, large families or health problems of the parents. This gives the adolescents less time for their homework and less energy to concentrate while they are at school. This leads to difficulties for these adolescents to get the high grades they need in order to go to university or even to finish their education at all. Eventually only the lower, less paid jobs remain, which might lead to difficulties sustaining their own families and may ask for help of their children in the household. This closes the circle of poverty.

More importantly, we found however also a lot of data that pointed towards agency and opposed Lewis's theory. As for the lack of self-esteem, more and more focus is laid on building up the self-esteem of the adolescents in school and volunteer programs. Further, even if many of their parents do not speak Castilian at all or well or did not go to school, all adolescents Lisa talked to spoke well Spanish and went to school. Their effort and motivation to start and finish an academic career with success, find a good job and earn good money most importantly proves Lewis' theory wrong. Although some factors could thus point out to a culture of poverty, we believe that this does not completely confirm the existence of a culture of poverty. In fact, the adolescents showed values characterized by the strong will to move out of poverty.

As we have seen in the last chapters, poverty and a lack of economic resources go along with a low status within society. Although the adolescents come from different backgrounds, both groups share the fact that they have a low status placed upon them and ascribed to them by society (Linton 1936). This is the result of a lack of economic resources from which both groups suffer somehow, although to varying degrees. This ascription of status stands in contrast to the possibilities of achieving higher status and which has been emphasized by both groups in a similar manner. While among the urban adolescents especially the girls put a lot

of emphasis on how being a 'good person' and helping others can help you to obtain respect and admiration by others, this was not the case on the countryside. Far from being a meaningful difference (in fact employment patterns concerning gender are the same in the urban and rural research locations), this is likely to be led back to the fact that most informants from the rural communities are female.

An aspect not or at least not directly mentioned in the urban communities which was considered central to status among the adolescents from the rural communities was being a cultured and educated person. This can probably be led back to the fact that education is much less obvious in the rural communities where illiterate rates are high, in particular among the adult generation.

In both groups we found a lot of emphasis on achieved status, whereas ascribed status was acknowledged as being the most obvious and easiest way of having status. This emphasis on achieved status as opposed to ascribed status seems natural as the adolescents cannot change the latter but the former can be gained. This was also reflected in their thinking about class: Although both groups indicated to belong to particular economic classes (lower classes the rural group, middle class the urban group), they claimed that these classes had little to do with their reality. In fact, they found that their social reality was scarcely influenced by their economic class, as opposed to Hindess (1987). More important to them was their own motivation to reach their goals and gain status, thereby crossing apparent class lines.

This statement can however not be left without a further and important comment from our researcher perspective. It is clear that the economic classes the adolescents belong to do shape their living worlds considerably. This became especially clear when the adolescents of both groups described the discrimination they faced in searching a job or at school. As described in the theory on status and class, a highly stratified class society can limit people to climb up the social ladder by using their talents (Giddens 1973; Linton 1936). Working hard and helping people, as described by the adolescents as important ways to gain status, can then be of limited help in the search for a good job or prestigious function. These functions might only be achievable for people with a certain amount of money, good education, and a certain background. Due to economic deficits, our informants generally could not afford the best schools and universities and thus have less chances of getting the best jobs. We thus can state that class imposes important limitations on both groups, even if denied by the adolescents. The positive perception the adolescents have of their own possibilities and opportunities can in turn be seen as a way to cope with poverty. Believing in their own capacities is important in

dealing with their everyday reality of poverty even if it not all individuals might be able to actually escape from their bad living circumstances.

In the rural communities, these class lines were complemented by ethnic difference and discrimination. Despite the government-introduced change from ethnic to class terms, we could observe that ethnic difference has not vanished. Although both groups of adolescents were relatively unfamiliar with the ethnic terms found in the literature and described earlier in the context chapter (Den Berghe & Primov 1977: 126-7), especially the adolescents from the rural communities saw themselves often confronted with their ethnic difference in encounters with the city. While it is was less clear to the adolescents that these boundaries were of ethnic nature, both groups were very clear in what made this difference. Both the adolescents from the rural and from the urban communities pointed out to the Quechua language and the often resulting accent or lack of the Spanish language as the main reason for discrimination from the wealthier urban population. Closely followed was a lack of knowledge and a difference in outer appearance as causing for prejudices against the rural population. Both groups experienced discrimination, although this was among the urban adolescents rather linked to economic resources as they obviously belong to the majoritarian ethnic group. Although learning and speaking the Spanish language fluently can improve one's status considerably as implied by the adolescents, ethnic identity can thus be seen as a status that is based on criteria for ascription of origin as opposed to status that depends on performance (Bart 1970: 27-8). As indicated in the theory, the Peruvian stratified system depends on control mechanisms such as discrimination to ensure the persistence of unequal power structures (Barth 1970: 30). This confirms the structuralist point of view that the roots of poverty are found in the nature of social relations (Green 2006: 1116).

These class and ethnic lines are important to keep in mind when regarding the future dreams and perspectives of the adolescents. Although both groups of adolescents are characterized by a different level of poverty, their future dreams are remarkably similar. Both groups put great emphasis on their wish to help other disadvantaged people, thereby contributing to society. They further dream of a good job with a stable income. A stable income is inevitable to them before starting a family. Both groups are aware of the importance of having a small family of two or three children in order to be able to afford education for them. The adolescents from the rural communities also express the wish to have their own house, which is not stressed in the urban neighbourhoods, probably because an own house is more obvious on the countryside.

Most importantly however, they are all very optimistic about their future. Although there are clearly difficulties in making these dreams come true, the adolescents continued to point out the role of their own motivation. Putting a lot of effort in reaching their goals, they were convinced they could make it. This contradicts the idea of poor people as 'powerless'. Instead it reflects the theory about agency which states that people can act on behalf of a goal they want to reach (Alkire 2005:218). Nevertheless, there is an important discrepancy between their future dreams and reality as has also been indicated by Bulbeck (2004: 81). Both groups, although to a different degree, experience limitations in possibilities due to low status, class and ethnicity as we have seen. Thus, although their dreams are really ambitious, they do often not consider these limitations in any way. This finding is both remarkable in a way that it demonstrates the optimism and agency of the adolescents, but at the same time makes many of their future dreams unrealistic

Summing up, we have seen at the example of our informants that poverty and the experience of it are very much influenced by the way people deal with it; in daily life and above all in relation to their future. Unlike the generalizing and simplistic images of poverty in developing countries, our data have illustrated that poverty can be manifold and that its meaning only fully unfolds when relating it to the people who find themselves in a situation of poverty. Poverty is not an attribute, such as the term 'poor people' might imply, rather, it is the description of a situation that results from unequal social relations. One's perception of poverty arises from comparison and is thus shaped by the living worlds someone is familiar with.

The perception of poverty considerably influences ideas and perspectives of the future, which finally brings us back to the guiding question of this research: How do poor adolescents in rural and urban Cusco, Peru deal with poverty in relation to their future perspectives? Our research has demonstrated that the adolescents we talked to deal with poverty in remarkable ways. Instead of being discouraged by the daily obstacles and difficulties they have to face on their way to the future, they confront poverty with a lot of optimism. In order to reach their dreams, they work hard and believe firmly in their own efforts as the key to move out of poverty and improve their situation. The comparative component of our research has additionally helped us to understand poverty from different perspectives and to consider whether different forms and levels of poverty influence future perspectives. We found that already in two places as close as our two research locations, conceptions of poverty can differ. This is a further reminder of the insufficiency of poverty in economic terms. We further have

seen that future dreams reflect to a certain degree the living circumstances of both groups of adolescents, as for the emphasis on helping other people in difficult living conditions. The fact that the future dreams of both groups are similar reflects the strong optimism of both groups, independent from their difference in levels of poverty.

Even if the estimation to escape from poverty by merely one's own efforts is in most cases too optimistic in a society that is as unequal as the Peruvian, this coping mechanism gives us important insights into the matters of agency, poverty and well-being. With these insights we are able to contribute to theoretical debates revolving around these topics. Most obviously, we make a contribution to the debate on the definition and nature of poverty. We have shown that defining poverty in purely economic terms does not reflect reality. In contrast, we have confirmed that poverty can be perceived differently by different groups and in different cultures (Rahnema 1992 in Allen & Thomas 2000:11) and that its meaning arises from comparison (Townsend 1979 in Commins 2004: 62). Furthermore, we participate in the discussion of Lewis' culture of poverty (1963). Although we found some evidence that would confirm the cycle of poverty implied by this theory, the positive attitude and efforts of the adolescents for a better future contradict a culture of poverty among these adolescents. This fact can also be seen as a contribution to the debate on agency. Although agency is clearly not the solution to the entire problem of poverty of which social structures of inequality and discrimination make up a great part, it can certainly be considered a key factor to social change and the move out of poverty. Our insight into the lives of the adolescents confirmed that even if structures impose important restrictions on humans, they are nevertheless able to act on behalf of their own goals (Alkire 2005: 218). Not less important, we make a contribution to the debate on well-being among the poor. Our results have shown that human well-being is indeed more than economic well-being (Sen 1999); it depends to a large extent on the way poverty is experienced and dealt with in a certain cultural context. By showing what matters to poor adolescents in Cusco, we finally make an important contribution to academic literature on adolescents in a condition of poverty.

To conclude, we consider the adolescents' emphasis on agency a strong reminder for development agents to attack the roots of poverty instead of merely treating its symptoms. Instead of imposing the western point of view of poverty and development, it is important to support the own efforts and strategies of the adolescents and join them in their struggle to escape from poverty by removing the obstacles of discrimination in an unequal society. This

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Information about Informants

Rural Communities

Alejandro

28 years, did not belong to my target group but nevertheless provided me with useful information during our conversations. He comes from a middle-higher class family in Cusco and helped me to understand the subject of my research from another perspective. As a friend, I often exchanged my thoughts with him and asked him for advice.

Carlos

17 years, lives with his mother and siblings at the house of his aunt in Pumamarca. He lost his father when he was thirteen to an alcohol addiction. Although Carlos described the relation with his father as difficult, the family got in even worse (economic) troubles upon his death. Together with his brothers he went to live in Cusco to work as a mechanic. Only recently he has returned back home to live with his mother again. His dream is to become a civil engineer.

Lizbeth

18 years, lives at Mosqoy since the beginning of the year and studies computer science. She is an excellent student and one of the bests of her class. Before, she lived in Taccac a rural community near Ollantaytambo. She is a cheerful person and would later like to study psychology when she has a good income.

Zenaida

17 years, lives in Pumamarca. When I got to know her she was preparing for the entrance exam of the local public university. Her biggest dream is to become a successful lawyer, maybe at the court of The Hague. A few weeks later, she failed the exam which she ascribed to the bad quality of her high school education. When I left, she was preparing for the re-sit exam.

Vereniza

17 years, lives in Pumamarca. Apart from making a living with their fields, her father is taxi chauffeur for the community. Her dream is to make a career in the tourism business and to be a successful person. It is important to her to help her family.

Marleni

17 years, lives at Pumamarca. She wants to study gastronomy and has four siblings.

Eliza

17 years, lives at Pumamarca. Her dream is to study accountancy at the national university.

Javier

17 years, lives at Mosqoy since the beginning of this year and studies tourism. He wants to become a tourist guide because he admires people who are educated and know a lot about Cusco and its region. He comes from the rural community of Huilloc and his parents work once a month as carriers on the Machu Picchu. Next to Yolanda, his community is one of the only ones where traditional indigenous dress is still worn.

José

18 years, lives at Pumamarca. He is studying agronomy at the national university and his dream is to work in his fathers company and support his family.

Paola

18 years, has come to live with Mosqoy this year and studies administration. She has four brothers and sisters and some of the older ones support the family financially. Paola is a very self-confident young woman who has a lot of friends. Later, she would like to be the manager of a restaurant or a supermarket.

Mariela

16 years, lives in Pumamarca. She has two older brothers and a younger sister. One of her brothers is the leader of the community's adolescents and her father earns an additional income as a carpenter. The family's difficult economic situation has her older brothers not allowed to go to university. Nevertheless, Mariela's father promised her that she will be the first of her family who will be able to study. Her dream is to study design and open a shop for wedding dresses and to be a famous singer.

Yolanda

20 years, lives at Mosqoy and studies gastronomy. She has come to live with the NGO one year ago. Before, she lived in the rural community Cancha Cancha where she is still returning to on the weekends. Cancha Cancha is one of the most remote communities, situated in the region of Cusco, near the next bigger town Ollantaytambo. There is no public transport from her community to this town that can only be reached by a three-hour walk. Her dream is to become a cook and travel around the world.

Urban Neighbourhoods**Daniza**

Daniza is seventeen years old and lives in the neighbourhood Santa Rosa. She always likes to help people and is a volunteer at World Vision. She lives with her parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, nephews and nieces. As her mother is sick, she has to help a lot in the household. She wants to be a psychiatrist or work as a notary when she is older.

Silvia

Silvia is a cheerful girl of nineteen who has three brothers and lives in Fedetrac. She is one of the few who says her parents have financial problems. Besides she does not see her father often and there have been lots of fights in her family in the past. Her big dream is to become a singer, but she is studying administration at the moment.

Denis

Denis is a sixteen year old boy from Fedetrac. He is shy but has a strong opinion about some topics. He lives with his parents, older sister, younger brother, and his older brother who is unemployed. He hopes to work in the field of tourism in the future.

Sergio

Sergio is seventeen years old and lives in Santa Rosa. He often wears his black school uniform and a tie. When he talks he stutters a bit, he is not shy and always has to say

something about whatever subject. He is serious, has a lot of ambitions and works hard.
He wants to work at the municipality or even at the national government in the future.

Appendix II: Resumen

"Nuestro sueño es un mundo sin pobreza". Eso es la misión del Banco Mundial y las Naciones Unidas tienen el ambicioso objetivo de reducir la pobreza mundial a la mitad para el año 2015. En efecto, en muchos de los países llamados en vías de desarrollo estamos asistiendo a la creciente brecha entre ricos y pobres. La desigualdad se mide entonces en las tasas de ingresos y el crecimiento económico es visto como un indicador de más desarrollo.

Sin embargo, la definición de la pobreza simplemente como una cuestión de ingresos no llega a describir la experiencia de aquellos que se encuentran en una condición de pobreza. Nuestro estudio se ha planteado por lo tanto como objetivo ilustrar como la gente experimenta y hace frente a una situación de pobreza, teniendo en cuenta sus historias personales y contextos. A través de la investigación de las perspectivas de futuro conseguimos una mejor comprensión de cómo los adolescentes en Cusco, Perú tratan con la pobreza. Nuestro objetivo era mostrar que hay múltiples maneras de hacer frente a la pobreza. En este contexto, nuestra investigación se centró específicamente en el concepto del agente de cambio (*agency*). En lugar de confirmar las imágenes existentes de los pobres como víctimas atrapadas en su condición miserable, demostramos la importancia de *agency* entre los adolescentes desfavorecidos, teniendo en cuenta que la gente en 'el fondo' de la sociedad desarrolla sus propias instituciones y estrategias que les permitan hacer frente a sus condiciones.

En el período Febrero, Marzo, Abril de 2013, realizamos entonces una investigación cualitativa en Cusco, Perú sobre las perspectivas del futuro de los jóvenes pobres. Examinamos la siguiente pregunta por medio de dos estudios comparativos: “¿Cómo los jóvenes marginados de las zona urbana y rural en Cusco, Perú, tratan con la pobreza en relación a sus perspectivas de futuro?”

Nuestra investigación es una comparación entre el campo y las zonas urbanas. Colaboramos con adolescentes de los barrios pobres de la zona urbana (Santa Rosa, Fedetrac y Karigrande) en el distrito de San Sebastián. Las características de los barrios son mala infraestructura y malas condiciones de vida. Es muy difícil para las personas que viven en estas áreas encontrar un trabajo y obtener acceso a los servicios de salud y la provisión de servicios de agua, electricidad y sanitaria. Además colaboramos con varias comunidades de la zona rural como Pumamarca y unas comunidades cerca de Ollantaytambo, de donde vienen los adolescentes de la ONG Mosqoy. Estas comunidades están más lejos de Cusco y se caracterizan por la lejanía y la marginalidad con respecto a Cusco. La chacra es la principal forma para sustentar y generalmente no hay muchas facilidades en estas comunidades.

Trabajamos con la ONG World Vision, con ellos fuimos a los adolescentes en las zonas urbanas y rurales.

A través de investigar las perspectivas futuras nosotras queremos contribuir a diversos debates teóricos, p.ej. acerca de la pobreza. Discutimos “la cultura de pobreza” y perspectivas de Sen (1999) sobre las diferentes formas de pobreza. Además, el debate de *agency* es importante. Pensamos que personas pueden usar las comodidades como quieren y pueden actuar para alcanzar un objetivo (Alkire 2005:218). Otro debate trata del bienestar. Como Sen (1999) nosotras pensamos que es posible ser feliz en una situación con extrema pobreza. Otros conceptos teóricos son estatus, clase y etnia. Para nuestra investigación, utilizamos diferentes métodos. Por supuesto, utilizamos la observación participante. Además, hicimos diferentes entrevistas: entrevistas semi-estructuradas, entrevistas informales y conversaciones informales.

Nuestra investigación muestra lo siguiente. Primero, los adolescentes consideran que una persona es pobre cuando no tiene las básicas para vivir como una casa, agua y comida. Generalmente, los adolescentes de la zona rural no piensan que ellos son muy pobres. Los adolescentes de la zona urbana piensan que no son pobres del todo; pero en las comodidades, si piensan que ellos son un poco pobres. En la mayor parte, sin embargo, los adolescentes asocian pobreza con otras personas. Ellos se comparan con personas que tienen menos posibilidades y por esta razón los adolescentes tienen una imagen positiva de sí mismo. Este resultado se opone a la percepción de pobreza como puramente económica. Esto es también evidente en la percepción del bienestar. Aunque ambos grupos y especialmente los adolescentes de las comunidades admitieron tener problemas debidos a su situación socio-económica, señalaron que se sienten felices sobre su vida. Esto confirma la argumentación de Sen (1999) que dice que el bienestar no sólo depende de factores económicos.

En consideración de estatus y clase, ambos grupos declaran pertenecer a determinadas clases económicas (clase baja para el grupo rural y clase media para el grupo urbano); alegaron que estas clases no son tan importantes en realidad. Más importante para ellos era su propia motivación para alcanzar sus metas y ganar estatus, de este modo cruzando las líneas aparentes de clase. Sin embargo, las clases económicas influyen a las vidas de los adolescentes en realidad, porque durante otras conversaciones los adolescentes comentaron sobre discriminación y otras dificultades. Pero percepciones positivas pueden ser una forma de hacer frente a la pobreza, también cuando no es posible escapar de sus circunstancias adversas en sus vidas. Especialmente para los adolescentes de zonas urbanas la etnicidad también influye en sus vidas. Para ellos, la etnicidad es un motivo de discriminación, por los adolescentes de la

zona urbana discriminación tiene una relación con recursos económicos. Finalmente, las perspectivas futuras de los adolescentes son muy similares. También, todos eran muy positivos ante su futuro; cuando se pone mucho esfuerzo para llegar esta meta, se le hará. Este resultado confirma la idea de agencia; personas pueden actuar en nombre de un objetivo que quieren alcanzar. Pero hay limitaciones para alcanzar sus sueños, ya que sus sueños no son realistas por parte. Pero nosotras creemos que no es imposible cuando ellos quieren alcanzar una cosa mucho.

Después de considerar los resultados de nuestra investigación, queremos responder la pregunta central. Nuestra investigación ha demostrado que los adolescentes hablaron para hacer frente a la pobreza de una manera notable. En lugar de desanimarse por los obstáculos y dificultades diarias que deben afrontar en su camino hacia el futuro, se enfrentan a la pobreza con mucho optimismo. Con el fin de alcanzar sus sueños, ellos trabajan duramente y creen firmemente en sus propios esfuerzos como la clave para salir de la pobreza y mejorar su situación. El componente comparativo de nuestra investigación ha contribuido, además, a entender la pobreza desde diferentes perspectivas y considerar si las diferentes formas y niveles de pobreza influyen en las perspectivas futuras. Se encontró que ya en dos lugares tan cercanos como nuestros dos lugares de investigación, las concepciones de la pobreza pueden ser diferentes. Este es un recordatorio más de la insuficiencia del concepto de pobreza en términos económicos. Por otra parte, hemos visto que los sueños futuros reflejan en cierta medida las circunstancias de vida de ambos grupos de adolescentes, en cuanto al énfasis en ayudar a otras personas en condiciones de vida difíciles. El hecho de que los sueños de futuro de ambos grupos son similares refleja el fuerte optimismo de los dos grupos, independientemente de la diferencia de los niveles de pobreza.

Estos resultados contribuyen a los debates de pobreza, agencia y bienestar. Pero también son importantes para la sociedad. Es importante para ONGs entender la manera en la que los pobres adolescentes hacen frente a pobreza y piensan sobre pobreza. También es importante que la sociedad, el gobierno y los ONGs no piensen sobre los adolescentes como ‘víctimas’, pero como actores que pueden realizar sus sueños y alcanzar sus objetivos. Por lo tanto, es importante apoyar los propios esfuerzos y estrategias de los adolescentes y unirse a ellos en su lucha para salir de la pobreza mediante la eliminación de los obstáculos de la discriminación en una sociedad desigual.

