

**Imagining, Appropriating and Silencing:  
Street-working Children's Strategies of Home-making in Public and Private Space<sup>1</sup>**

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**Introduction**

It is a sunny Saturday morning on the Plaza de Armas in Cusco. Pigeons flutter around picking up the grains people spread around for them while water splashes in the fountain. Juan walks across the Plaza. He wears an old jumper and jeans, he carries a small backpack, and his right hand holds a wooden shoe-shining box. His eyes scan the feet around him and occasionally he offers his services. At the sound of a whistle his head bounces up, trying to judge whether it is at a safe distance. A municipal police officer walks in his direction. Juan turns around and walks away lightly, looking over his shoulder every few seconds. The officer follows him for a bit before he gives up his persecution. As soon as he turns his back, Juan turns around as well and walks back onto the Plaza, with one eye scanning for shoes, and the other for the officer. Meanwhile the fountain still makes its merry music, the pigeons still roam about and the cathedral stands there, looking out impartially over the cat-and-mouse game developing on the Plaza.

In this article I will show that Juan's return to the Plaza de Armas, his insistence to work there even though it is illegal, can be regarded as a form of home-making in public space. Home-making is often regarded as a process that takes place in the private sphere. This originates from the idea that the home is closely associated with the house and the nuclear family (Douglas, 1991; Hareven, 1991). However, in the lives of street-working children in Cusco, Peru, the private space is often very limited and their lives mainly take place in the public sphere. This does not mean, however, that these children do not have a home. Home can be made, not only in a very limited private space, but also in public space. In this article, I will analyse the processes through which street-working children in Cusco, make their home both in the private and in the public sphere. To this end I will first reflect on the context and

methodology of my research, I will then reflect on the concept of home, and consequently analyse the process of home-making first in private and then in the public sphere.

### **Objectives**

I intend to tackle two widely held and related assumptions with this article: firstly, the view that children are 'out of place' when they are out of the private sphere; and secondly, that home is necessarily related to the private sphere. I will illustrate that as home can also be made in the public sphere, children can be considered to be at home when they are outside the private sphere. I will underline that children themselves play a very active and creative role in this process. Furthermore, throughout this article I will reflect on the practice of ethnographic research among children, and on alternatives to traditional participant observation and interviewing, mainly through artistic activities.

### **Methodology and Context**

Once the centre of the Inca Empire, Cusco is now the "archaeological capital of America" attracting tourists from all over the world who come to taste what is left of the Inca 'culture' (Steel, 2008). The short-term visitor will remember the neatness of the city centre and the insistence of street vendors. However, the contrast between rich and poor, the seen and the unseen, the 'touristy' and the 'local' is significant in Cusco. One only needs to go a little out of the centre and the paved lanes turn into muddy or dusty roads scattered with holes. Beautifully restored colonial buildings give way to poorly, cheaply and hastily built shacks, expanding as an overflowing river over the surrounding mountains. Lanes between the houses are cramped, steep and dirty; there is little or no street illumination at night just as there is little or no police presence in these neighbourhoods. In the past decades, the informal economy has grown exponentially in Cusco through the restriction of possibilities in formal employment as well as an increasing reliance on monetary economy. The former mainly originated through the rapid urbanisation and rural-urban migration which put pressure on the absorption capacity of formal jobs. This capacity was further restricted through the Structural Adjustment Programmes. These were implemented by the International Monetary Fund in the 1980s and 1990s to tackle the debt crisis, and severely cut the scope of civil servants' employment (Sheahan, 1997). The increasing reliance on monetary economy is mainly tied to this rural-urban migration and is fueled by the recent tourist boom (Strehl, 2010).

Figuring prominently among the informal workers of Cusco are the street-working children. The main activities of street-working children in Cusco are selling, shoe shining, making music, posing for tourist photos, juggling, playing in the streets, begging, stealing, and distributing leaflets. The main motivation to work on the street is to help provide for the family (Ensing and Strehl, 2010). Living with their families in the outskirts of the city in precarious conditions, street-working children are forced into the city centre to search for ways to make a living (Strehl, 2010).

I met my research population in two different places: through my volunteer work in the Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), Inti Runakunaq Wasin (IRW), and in the centre of Cusco, on the Plaza de Armas. Inti Runakunaq Wasin provides day programmes for street-working children, extremely poor children, children considered 'at risk' children, and adolescents with special needs. The ages of these children vary between six and 18 years. In addition to receiving education, the children participate in creative and vocational programs, aimed at personal development and building up self-confidence and self-reliance (IRW, 2013). The Plaza de Armas is the touristic heart of Cusco where both visitors and local families spend their leisure time. The centrality and popularity of the Plaza de Armas also attracts commerce, even though this is officially forbidden in the whole historical centre of Cusco. As a consequence, street vendors of all ages selling tobacco, paintings, jewelry, newspapers, pigeon fodder, or offering their services as shoe shiners flock to the Plaza in an eternal cat-and-mouse game with the municipal police officers. I spent my weekends at the Plaza, talking mainly with shoe shining boys, whose ages ranged from 10 to 15 years old. They all lived in poor neighbourhoods far out of Cusco and it took them about an hour's commute to get there; a journey they made mostly on weekends and during school holidays.

I conducted 11 weeks of ethnographic research at IRW and the Plaza de Armas through participant observation, interviews, and informal conversations. However, I felt that these traditional components of ethnographic fieldwork were not enough and not perfectly suited for my research population. When conducting fieldwork among children, the researcher meets challenges that fall outside the range of general challenges posed by fieldwork (Fine and Sandstorm, 1988). One of these challenges is the level of participation. Although in

anthropological fieldwork there are always questions about the extent to which the researcher can, and should participate, conducting research among children also brings with it the added concern as to whether an adult researcher can really 'know' and understand his or her research population (Fine and Sandstorm, 1988). Another related challenge I encountered while researching a topic as philosophical and abstract as *home* among children, was the difficulty in getting children to talk about such an abstract idea or indeed to have a 'serious' conversation about it. In the face of these challenges, there was the need to develop alternative methods to collect data among the children.

I decided to compensate for the shortage of words by relying on artistic activities. Drawings, paintings and gluing exercises (e.g. gluing emotions to places) became my main source of information. Mitchell (2006) stresses the usefulness of drawing as a research tool, not in isolation but as a basis for conversation. Furthermore, Toren (1999) states that asking children to make a drawing and having individual conversations with each child about their drawings is equivalent to an open-ended interview with an adult. This was also my experience. It was not so much the artistic products themselves that constituted my primary data, but rather the children's discourse about these products, their reactions toward them, and the general behaviour displayed around these activities. With the IRW children, these activities were framed in the context of making a book about themselves. Every child participating in the project wrote, drew and painted a book about him or herself titled "Esto Soy Yo" (This Is Me). I observed and analysed children's behavior in the process of making the book and conducted semi-structured interviews with each child about the content of the book when finished.

With the shoe shining boys of the Plaza de Armas, whom I only saw on weekends, I was more dependent on short informal conversations and hanging out. Nevertheless, I did some creative activities with them too and six participated in a photo project which involved the use of a disposable camera to take pictures of things they liked as well as those they disliked. As a research group with whom my participation was limited, I chose photo elicitation because it enables a window into people's lives in situations where total participation is difficult (Olliffe and Bottorff, 2007). Harper (2002) refers to the power of photo elicitation to bridge the cultural and conceptual gap between interviewer and interviewee by restricting the space for implicit

assumptions. As I participated in the lives of the shoe shining boys only when they were at the Plaza de Armas and as both our cultural backgrounds and conceptual frameworks were very different, I used the photo elicitation method to enhance communication about aspects of their lives that I did not directly witness. Oliffe and Bottorff (2007) further refer to *photovoice* (see also Wang and Burris, 1997) as the discourse that participants articulate through making their pictures. As I will illustrate further below, *photovoice* can be complemented through an exploration of a *photosilence*, and exploration of what is absent in the pictures.

When conducting research among children, truly informed consent can be problematic to attain. Nevertheless I explained repeatedly to the children that I was asking them questions because I was doing research. I explained this as a type of homework about what it means to be a child in Cusco. In the context of IRW I was tied to the ethical rules upheld by the organisation which implied that seeing children outside IRW and also conducting a photo project with them was not allowed. From the shoe shining boys I asked permission to use the pictures they took for my thesis. Ethically, the use of photographs is of course problematic, which motivated me to restrict the use of photographs in this article to a single example, using pictures in which the boys themselves do not figure. Nevertheless, through the exploration of a *photosilence*, this article also underscores the agency children have in what they show and what they keep private in their pictures. To protect their privacy, all the children's names in this article are pseudonyms.

## **Data**

Shelley Mallett (2004: 68) states that:

home is simultaneously and indivisibly a spatial and a social unit of interaction. It is the physical setting through which basic forms of social relations and social institutions are constituted and reproduced. Home is a socio-spatial system (...).

In this definition, home as a socio-spatial system represents the fusion of the house (physical) and the household (social) (see also Saunders and Williams, 1988). I will take this a step further by stating that although the combination of the physical and the social aspect are at the base of the definition of home, the physical aspect of home does not necessarily need to

be a house, it can also be the street, and that the social aspect need not be only the household, it can also be constituted by social actors and interactions in the public space.

If home is cut loose from this association with house and household, one might argue that we are no longer speaking of home-making but of place-making. Place, according to Gieryn (2000: 465) “is space filled up by people, practices, objects, and representations”. Place is doubly constructed: it is “built or in some way physically carved out”, but it is also “interpreted, narrated, perceived, felt, understood and imagined” (Gieryn, 2000:465). In this sense, we can consider place to be a socio-spatial system too. However, I would argue that there is a crucial distinction between home and place. Take, for example, a Shrine of Remembrance. Such a shrine is a *place*: it was a space but it has acquired significance through the meaning that people invest in it. However, no one would claim that this shrine is his or her *home*. This is not only because it is rather impossible to *live* in a shrine of remembrance (*living* is not a necessary precondition for home) but mainly because one will never feel that one *belongs* to the shrine. The centrality of the aspect of belonging to home-making also becomes visible in Hammond’s (2004) exploration of *emplacement* among returnee children in Ethiopia. According to Hammond (2004: 78), “emplacement is the process by which *space* (...) becomes transformed into *place* (...)”. The author explores how emplacement of children in their returnee settlement plays a role in feeling at home. Nevertheless, she concludes that “home for these young children may not be entirely dependent upon emplacement” (Hammond, 2004: 92) as the children still feel that their ‘family home’ (in opposition to their ‘everyday home’) is the place where their parents were born. Hammond (2004: 93) concludes that it will take several generations before people truly *belong* to the returnee settlement and thus before they will truly be ‘at home’.

Hence, in my view, there are four features distinguishing home-making from place-making. First, home-making is tightly related to identity (Tucker, 1994) and a feeling of belonging, as we have seen through Hammond’s (2004) notion of emplacement. Second, home-making is an active process that involves appropriation and therefore contestation of space (Mallett, 2004); while place-making can be the mere interpretation or association of certain feelings with a space, home-making involves the active appropriation which creates a feeling of ownership towards the home. Third, home-making is a relational process (Smith, 2008): while

a space can become a place through individual attribution of meaning, home-making is a process of interaction with related and non-related others. These define the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion from the home. Last, home-making is an emotional process (González, 2005). Place-making can, to a certain extent, also be coined as an emotional process as it refers to the attribution of meaning. Nevertheless, for home-making this emotional process has a defining role. Home is made through the over-emphasis of positive emotions and the under-emphasis of negative emotions.

Regarding the home as more than the house and the household also allows us to conceptualise so-called street children differently. The conceptualization of street children is tightly related to the assumed isomorphism between the home and the house/household and to the assumption that children (should) belong to the private sphere (de Moura, 2002). When children live outside this private sphere they are considered to be “out of place”, occupying a dangerous and liminal position of ambiguity (Lee, 2001: 57; see also Connolly and Ennew, 1996; Ennew and Swart-Kruger, 2003). Nieuwenhuys (2003: 99) takes this a step further, stating “children who spend much of their time outside the safe space of childhood are not only deemed to be out of place, they are also perceived to be out of childhood”. I will show in this article that in the process of home-making in the public sphere the children I observed are neither out of place nor out of childhood through various processes of appropriation. In academic literature regarding children’s dependency on the street (considering children to be human beings under eighteen years old), a basic distinction is made between “children *in* the street” – referring to children working on the street, with connections to their families and with sporadic support from them; and “children *of* the street” – children living and working on the streets without any form of family support (Bar-On, 1997; Glauser, 1990; Williams, 1993). I speak of the children I worked with as street-working children (see also Invernizzi, 2003) to emphasize their “*in* the street” character, as the term “street children” is often connected to assumptions about physical homelessness, which was not the case among my research population.

## **Discussion**

I will start this discussion by considering the making of the home in the private space. Speaking with Lorenzo (12 years old) about the difference between a *casa* (house) and a

*hogar* (household), I was startled by the fact that he articulated his discourse exactly in the combination of social and spatial elements, stating that a *hogar* is a family, or at least people who like each other and live together; and a *casa*, is just a house, without anyone necessarily living in it. However, he added that a family needs to have a house so that they can *sit* together, only then can they be a *hogar*. In Lorenzo's view, one needs a *place* (physical) in which one can *be* (social) a family. What is interesting is that Sofia (17 years old) also referred to the need to have a place to *be* together as a family. She told me that her family has the habit of '*sitting* together' once a week, to discuss family matters, work, or other things. According to Sofia, this '*sitting* together' (the physical being together of the family) is very important for the functioning of the household. Home is thus a socio-spatial system: it consists of a group of people who need a place in which they can perform their group-ness.

According to Mallett (2004) the search for home is always a compromise between the ideal (imagined) home and the real (lived) home. I witnessed this when I asked the children in IRW to draw their houses. The images below are the houses as drawn by two boys: Rodrigo (12 years old) and Sebastián (10 years old). Rodrigo is Sebastián's uncle and they live in the same compound.





Image 1. Rodrigo's drawing of his house

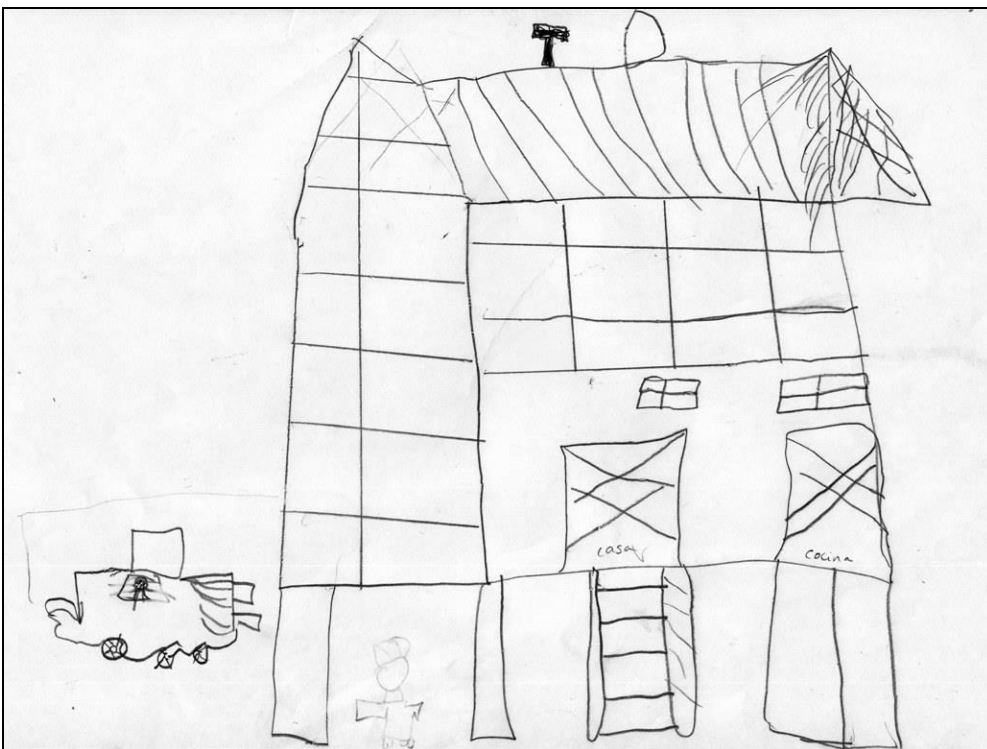


Image 2. Sebastián's drawing of his house

According to Rodrigo, Sebastián's house is the house on the left in his drawing. The house looks modern, it has electricity, it is made of brick, and has a neat roof. Rodrigo's own house (the house on the right in his drawing) looks slightly poorer but still seems to be made of brick

and sturdy material. Sebastián's drawing looks different. Sebastián told me his house was made of wood and stood on poles. His drawing seems closer to that reality than Rodrigo's reproduction. I further asked the children to draw their 'dream house' and talked to them about their houses, about what they would like to change in their houses and what they wished for the future. Throughout this practice, I became aware of the fact that most (real) houses had been drawn encompassing in themselves reality as much as wishes toward that reality. The drawings titled "Mi Casa" (My House) were already a compromise between the ideal (imagined) house and the real (lived) house.

In the interviews I had with the children about their feelings toward- and their wishes for their house one theme came to the fore repeatedly: ownership. Children often lived in rented houses or even in rented rooms within houses. Renting a room or a house brings along insecurity, not only through the feeling that one can be expelled from the house at any moment, but also through the stress of having to pay the rent each month. This stress is shared by the entire family and thus the ownership of the house also concerns the children. As I have argued, home-making is an active process of appropriation that encompasses the wish for ownership. For home-making in the private sphere this process seems to be achieved through imagination of the present situation or plans for the future: children imagine their perfect house to be theirs and they imagine buying (or building) a house for their families in the future.

Imagination, I have found among these children, is central in making home. This imagination in Anderson's (2006) sense, is not the same as inventing: it is a process of constructing and reproducing reality in an imagined, though not completely fictional, way. Concretely, this means that the children thought about, or at least presented, their houses and family situation with a strong emphasis on its positive aspects (love, security, walls, garden, a door that could be locked). This entailed the silence about, and trivialisation of, negative characteristics (boredom, fear, alcoholism, family conflicts, too little physical space for the family, poverty). It was only through asking what they would like to change about their houses that I discovered the negative aspects of the house. Nevertheless, when asked about these, children would often trivialise them. However, what best characterised this over-

emphasis of positive aspects and under-emphasis of negative aspects, was the sheer silence about the negative aspects, not only of one's house but also of one's domestic life.

The clearest example of this silence emerged from the photo project I conducted with the shoe shining boys. Although Oliffe and Bottorff (2007) refer to *photovoice*, in the context of my research it seems more relevant to speak of a *photosilence*. This *photosilence* however, is a clear and interesting example of the active role children play in imaginatively creating their home. I gave disposable cameras to Juan (13 years old), Pablo (12 years old), Cesar (11 years old) and Claudio (12 years old), while Edison (11 years old) and Carlos (12 years old) shared a camera. I asked the boys to take pictures of both things they liked and things they disliked. I only got pictures back of things they liked. Nevertheless, the most interesting observation was the difference between the pictures of cousins Pablo and Cesar. Pablo lives with his father, mother, brother and sister in one of the poorer neighbourhoods in the outskirts of Cusco. They live in a house in a compound which they share with a grandmother and the families of two of Pablo's aunts. One of these aunts is Cesar's mother with whom Cesar lives. His only sister lives and works in Lima sending remittances to his mother. According to Cesar's friends, Cesar's father left after beating him very badly once. The two boys took their pictures roughly at the same time. However Pablo's pictures all revolved around his house and his family members. Cesar, however, did not take one single picture of his house or of his mother. Most of the pictures on his camera were taken up by the center of Cusco, his neighbourhood, and by a cousin who he said he really likes.



Image 3. Pablo's picture of his brother and sister



Image 4. Pablo's picture of his mother and siblings



Image 5. Pablo's picture of his brother and the compound



Image 6. Cesar's picture of a tourist who's t-shirt he really liked



Image 7. Cesar's picture of his aunt (Pablo's mother) and an uncle



Image 8. Cesar's picture of his favorite cousin

As we can see in these pictures, what is positive for Pablo and negative for Cesar – the nuclear family and the house – is over-represented in Pablo's pictures and under-represented

in Cesar's. Instead of taking pictures of the things he did not like, Cesar decided to only take pictures of the things that he did like, even if that meant filling his role of negatives with seven pictures of his favourite cousin. This is just one of the many examples I encountered of the over-emphasis of positive elements of home and under-emphasis, or even absolute silence, regarding its negative elements. In the same line with Cesar's silence about his house and family, in IRW some children categorically refused to draw their house because "*it is ugly*". This led me to conclude that the over-emphasis of positive aspects and under-emphasis of the negative ones is an emotional strategy of home-making. As we will see in the next section, this imagining home by emphasising its positive aspects also takes place in the public sphere.

One of the characteristics of public space is that it cannot be owned by the individual. A public space is mostly owned by the state and should be accessible for everyone (García-Ellín, 2009). Nevertheless I witnessed processes of appropriation and to a certain extent ownership (in the sense of social ownership) of the Plaza de Armas. In the same line of thought, Ursin (2011: 226) refers to how street children and youngsters in Brazil privatize the public space through their (unwanted) presence in a middle-class neighbourhood. The vignette opening this article describes the process of appropriation. The Plaza de Armas is not a completely free place: economic activities are forbidden. The shoe shining boys were thus not only breaking the law by being under-aged workers, but also by being workers on the Plaza de Armas. This made them illegal on the Plaza, giving municipal police officers the right to expel them. The shoe shining boys disagreed with this and engaged in a process of appropriating the Plaza. This appropriation was characterised by perseverance in *being* at the Plaza. Even though time and again they were chased from the Plaza, they kept coming back.

This perseverance made the Plaza theirs, because they *were* there, and effectively the police could do nothing (sustainable) about this fact. To a certain extent, the Plaza de Armas belongs to the shoe shining boys, or at least, they belong to the Plaza. In this ongoing appropriation 'game' between shoe shiners and police we can see that it is through the interaction with the police that the Plaza becomes meaningful; it is in the light of their illegality that the Plaza is owned through this process of contestation and appropriation. Home-making is an active process of interaction between the self and the related other (the other shoe

shiners) and between the self and the un-related other (the police). The related and non-related others define the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion from the home. In the private sphere this process might take place with the family “*sitting together*”; on the Plaza it takes place through contestation of space between the children and the police. Here we see again the combination of social and spatial elements. The Plaza becomes a home because it is a distinct place with specific relations to related and non-related others.

Although I was not able to witness the IRW children in the public space (that is, outside IRW) through their drawings of – and discourse about – the street, they made me aware of another interesting element of home-making through appropriation in the public space. Tucker (1994: 184) considers home to be a place “where we could or can be ourselves”. I noticed that the children stressed their child-ness when referring to the street. This was mainly achieved through the emphasis on play. An example of this came up during the ‘Esto Soy Yo’ project. When I asked the children how their ideal street would look if they were the mayor, the possibility of play in the street was always emphasised in their responses. The image below represents the street as it would look like if Humberto (13 years old) was the mayor. It would have a park for children, and internet café, a municipal pool and a university (UAP stands for Universidad Alas Peruanas). It would also have lights by the side of the road and a safe place to cross the street from the park.



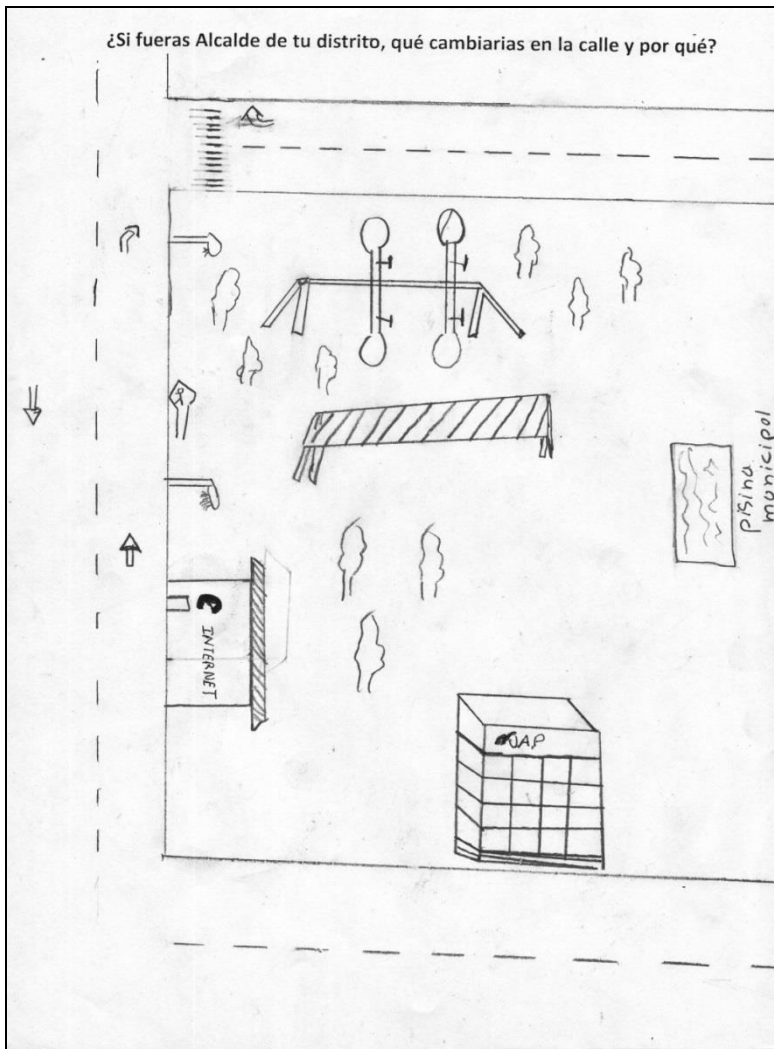


Image 9. The street if Humberto was the Mayor

Most of the children depicted the street as a place where they are *children*, in both the positive sense – the street is a place to play, to hang out with friends, to walk and have fun – and in the negative sense – the street is a place where a child can be hit by a car, where people can abuse children, where it is dangerous for children, where one actually should not play. Although this is a less physical and less perceptible form of appropriation in comparison to the shoe shining boys' appropriation of the Plaza, I believe that, through explicitly being a child in the public space, children create a meaningful 'room' for themselves. To a certain extent they 'own' this room. In this room they are themselves in Tucker's (1994) sense. These children are not 'out of childhood' (Nieuwenhuys, 2003). Rather, they actively stress their child-ness and create a room in which their child-ness is underscored and meaningful. In this

process they create a realm, in the public sphere, where they can be themselves. That is, where they can be *inside* childhood.

Related to the creation of a meaningful room for themselves in the street, I found a very interesting subjectivity about what 'the street' actually is. After witnessing the mostly negative view the IRW children had of the street, I was curious as to how the shoe shining boys, who spent their whole weekends on the street, experienced it. I was rather startled to find that they had the same negative view of the street. When I asked Carlos (12 years old) how he felt in the street (*calle*) he answered: "*Me siento muy asustado porque es muy peligroso*" (I feel very frightened because it is very dangerous). Juan (13 years old) associated lack of respect (people look negatively at you when your clothes are old) and fear (of being robbed) with the street. With his work, however, he associated happiness, when there is work, and boredom, when there is no work. Edison (11 years old) associated security (because of national police officers) but also lack of respect (people who treated him badly), violence (especially during the night), fear (for being robbed), and hatred (towards the people who spoke rudely to him) with the street. Like Juan, he associated happiness and boredom with his work. Focusing on the discrepancy between the feelings associated with work and with the street, I gradually became aware of the fact that the shoe shining boys considered the street and the Plaza de Armas to be two completely independent and different spheres. They associate mostly positive emotions (although sometimes it is boring) with the Plaza de Armas and their work, but they are terrified of *la calle* (the street). On the street, they lack security and fear violence. On the street, people rob, kill, and hurt each other. Ursin (2011: 223) states that the feeling of security (as well as autonomy and belonging) is essential for street children's construction of home in the street. In the context of my research I saw that this security was, again, achieved mainly through imagination.

I concluded that the shoe shining boys consider the Plaza *not* to be the street. The Plaza is just the Plaza –it seems a universe on its own. The street (*la calle*) is the street in their own neighbourhoods and has nothing to do with the centre of Cusco. The positive associations that the shoe shining boys had with the Plaza, making it into a place that had nothing to do with the street, were achieved through the same process of over-emphasis of positive aspects and under-emphasis of negative aspects that I witnessed regarding the private sphere. This

was again present in the pictures taken by Edison (11 years old) and Carlos (12 years old) who took all their pictures in the city. Although they had told me that they did not like the police officers, unfriendly people, or specific parts of the city, they did not include these negative things in their pictures. They only took pictures of touristic places, five star hotels and the flowers on the Plaza de Armas because, as they told me, those were things that they liked in the city. The Plaza was thus a different sphere of existence from the street (*la calle*).

In the relationship the shoe shining boys had with the Plaza, I found the characteristics of home making: they belonged to the Plaza through the active appropriation of it and through being explicitly themselves in this realm. They established domains of inclusion and exclusion, inside and outside boundaries of the home through the relationship with related and non-related others. Through this relationship with a physical place and with related and non-related others, the Plaza became a socio-spatial system, while the street (*la calle*) was a place where the children were afraid, a place they avoided, a place where they did not feel belonging to. This different relationship towards the Plaza was then reinforced through the processes of over-emphasis on positive emotions and silence about negative emotions, which I also witnessed for the imagination of home in the private sphere. Hence, I concluded that although not all public places are suitable for making home, the Plaza was subjected to the same processes of home-making as the private sphere of the house.

## **Conclusion**

In this article I have shown that through engaging actively in processes of home-making children, who spend most of their time in the public sphere, are neither 'out of place' nor 'out of childhood'. This is accomplished through the active creation of their own home and through emphasis on their child-ness. Hence, they create a home where they can be 'in place' and 'inside of childhood'. This home can also be in the public sphere. Olwig and Gulløv (2003: 2) refer to children who create potentially 'subversive' places "as they engage in various kinds of intra- and inter-generational relationships". However, these authors refer to place-making – the attribution of meaning to space. In this article I have explored this process as a process of home-making, not only in private but also in the public sphere. Considering that home-making differs from place-making through four different characterising processes, I have analysed

how the street-working children in Cusco engaged in these different processes and I found them both in the private space and in the public space.

I have found home-making to be an emotional process through the over-emphasis of positive elements and under-emphasis of negative elements both in private and in public space. Secondly, in regards to home-making as a relational process, for the private space, the inner boundaries of the home were defined by *sitting* together as a family. In public space, the inner boundaries were defined through the relation to other children (related others), and the outer boundaries were defined by the encounter with non-related others such as police officers. Thirdly, in the private sphere, home was made through an active process of appropriation through the imagination of ownership. In the public sphere, this was accomplished through the active contestation of space between children and municipal authorities and through the creation of a sphere of existence in which their child-ness set them apart from other people in that space. Finally, these three processes made the home (both the private and the public) into a place of belonging, into a positive place, into a place where the children could be themselves in Tucker's (1994) sense.

These children actively create not only a potentially 'subversive' place, but also a home for themselves both in a limited private space and in the public space. We can thus state that these street-working children, although they spend most of their lives outside the protected and private atmosphere generally considered paramount for childhood, they need neither be 'out of place' nor 'out of childhood'.

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<sup>1</sup> This article is based on the thesis I wrote about my fieldwork: ten Brinke, Sara (2011) *My Place: Street-working Children, Home and Space in Cusco, Peru*. Utrecht: Utrecht University Library.  
Published online: <http://igitur-archive.library.uu.nl/student-theses/2011-0802-201023/UUindex.html>

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