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## Understanding social identity through children's drawings: Where is your happy place?

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Elizabeth Hampton Hurst entitled "Understanding social identity through children's drawings: Where is your happy place?." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Communication and Information.

John W. Haas, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

Virginia W. Kupritz, Emily A. Paskewitz

Accepted for the Council:

Dixie L. Thompson

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

**Understanding social identity through children's  
drawings: Where is your happy place?**

A Thesis Presented for the  
Master of Science  
Degree  
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Elizabeth Hampton Hurst  
August 2017

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## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the children of war. Writing this thesis and studying the children's drawings created by Syrian refugees residing in Jordan has had a profound impact on my worldview. Though I did not have direct contact with the children in the study, I spent months flipping through their drawings, reading their stories, and researching their circumstances.

I began to realize that it is pure luck or circumstance that each of us are not in the same position that these children are in. No person deserves to go through the terrible tragedies that these children have gone through. These children have had their innocence ripped away from them, seeing things that many adults in our country could never even fathom.

Rather than dedicating this thesis to any one person, the thesis is dedicated to all the children who have experienced war in their home country. It is my hope that this research opens the door to myself and others to continue conducting applied research aimed at further understanding and aiding those who are most vulnerable.

Conducting this research was a truly humbling experience. These children show that there is hope for peace and love on earth. The prayer of St. Francis, a prayer that is said regularly in my home church, seemed so fitting for a dedication to these children:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:  
 where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
 where there is injury, pardon;  
 where there is doubt, faith;  
 where there is despair, hope;  
 where there is darkness, light;  
 where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek  
 to be consoled as to console,  
 to be understood as to understand,  
 to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,  
 it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
 and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Amen.

Here, I wish to highlight the dichotomous relationships between what is good and what is bad. The relationship between hatred and love, injury and pardon, doubt and faith, despair and hope, darkness and light, and sadness and joy. Here, there is hope. Hope that the effects of war: hatred, injury, doubt, despair, darkness, and sadness; the

experiences of these children, may one day be transformed to peace, love, pardon, faith, hope, light, and joy.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As I have worked on my Master's degree, and my thesis along the way, I have been so fortunate to be surrounded by mentors in my program. My committee chair, Dr. John Haas, along with my other committee members, Dr. Virginia Kupritz and Dr. Emily Paskewitz, have all three acted as mentors throughout my two years at the University of Tennessee and as I wrote this thesis. I would like to express my profound gratitude to each of them.

Dr. John Haas was one of the first people to guide me at the University of Tennessee. He helped me to narrow down my research interests and, as I put it, kept me from flailing. I came to the University of Tennessee with so much uncertainty. Uncertainty about my future as a student and researcher. From the very beginning I have loved conducting research and learning in general. Dr. Haas made sure that I was supported in my endeavors and provided nothing but care towards me. He has guided me and shaped me into the scholar I am today and will be in the future.

Like Dr. Haas, Dr. Virginia Kupritz has provided me with care and support throughout my time as a Master's student and while I wrote this thesis. I first met Dr. Kupritz during my first semester of my Master's program in my course on ethnographic methods. Dr. Kupritz showed me how insightful and fun qualitative methods were. The class became a foundation for my future research papers and this thesis. Along with providing me with an amazing research foundation, Dr. Kupritz has been a role model for me. She shows me how I one day hope to be as a professor. She taught me the importance of compassion and caring within teaching and research.

I honestly do not know where I would be without Dr. Emily Paskewitz. I first met Dr. Paskewitz working with her as her research assistant. I truly believe that I learned more in that semester as her assistant than I could have learned in any class. After working with her as an assistant, I took a class on group communication with her. Dr. Paskewitz was the most amazing mentor that I could ask for.

I would also like to thank Dean Rice, without whom this thesis would not be possible. Dean was a major inspiration for me in thinking about humanitarian work. Along with being an inspiration, he is a friend who I am extremely thankful for. He and his wife, Natalie Rice, aided in my transition into graduate school and to Knoxville. They were some of my first friends here in Knoxville as well.

Last, I would like to thank all of my professors who serve in the College of Communication and Information. I have received nothing but support from all of you. Every class that I took was informative and helpful as I grow as a scholar. If not for you, none of this would be possible.

As I transition onto my PhD and continue work as a scholar, I hope to maintain all the relationships, and true friendships, I made here at the University of Tennessee.

## **ABSTRACT**

Civil war and instability in Syria has resulted in mass casualties and the largest migration of peoples since WWII (International Organization for Migration, 2015). The year 2015 witnessed a refugee crisis in the Middle East and Europe, a crisis that continues today. Fleeing danger undoubtedly shapes the identities of refugees, and the identities of refugee children are indeed the most vulnerable. This study examines ways in which Syrian refugee orphans communicate elements of social identity. Utilizing social identity theory (SIT) as a lens to analyze children's drawings, this study not only reveals which social groups are most salient amongst children's orphaned Syrian refugee children in Jordan, but it also examines the positive and negative views of home after traumatic experiences. The drawings analyzed in this study were collected by the Syrian Emergency Task Force during a humanitarian visit to Jordan and were later published online and in calendars. The refugee children were asked to draw, 'where is your happy place?' These drawings provide insight into how children categorize self and others. Such insight provides a window into the multiple identities held by this group of children. Through the analysis of these drawings, potential cross-cultural adaptation needs can be identified. This methodology could prove useful for humanitarian relief groups in the future in communicating with children of all ages when there is a language or cultural barrier.



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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Gruesome images of the complex war in Syria and refugees fleeing the area have flooded media in the United States and abroad. Between the years 2011 and 2016, the violence in Syria has led to the deaths of over 300,000 people and the displacement of 6.6 million people within Syria, with 4.8 million people being forced to seek refuge abroad (Amnesty International, 2017). As refugees continue to be resettled, it is important to understand who these people are. Such understanding may aid relief organizations, along with organizations wishing to help with adaptation and integration of this population into new communities. By knowing more about who this population is before and during the adaptation process, identity gaps between social groups may be recognized and dealt with accordingly. It is important to note that fleeing danger and resettlement potentially shapes the identities of refugees. It has been found that traumatic exposure of any type can disrupt identity development (Berman, 2016). The purpose of this study is to explore the identities held by Syrian refugees. This study makes use of published drawings to gain insight into social the social identification patterns amongst Syrian refugee orphans living in Jordan. More specifically, the goal is to determine which social groups the orphans most identify with using Social Identity Theory (SIT) as the theoretical lens to uncover elements of identity communicated through drawings.

This thesis includes a thorough literature review supporting the guiding question of the study, along with an in-depth description of the methodology, and results of the study. In the following section, SIT is examined in terms of the foundations of the theory,

and how the theory has been applied within the field of communication and in other fields of research. The literature review then examines ways in which children's drawings have been studied. Next, the literature review discusses how refugee identities have been studied in recent history. Last, the literature review more broadly discusses communication and culture. Following the literature review, the methods section discusses data collection and tools for data analysis. The findings of the study are then presented and discussed.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Social Identity Theory**

The process of categorizing self and others through identification is primarily a communicative process, as, “it is through communication with others that we express our belongingness (or lack thereof) to various collectives, assess the reputation and image of those collectives, that various identities are made known to us, and the social costs and rewards of maintaining various identities are revealed” (Scott, 2007, p. 124). SIT provides insight into this process. SIT is a social psychological theory describing intergroup relations, group processes and the social self (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995).

According to SIT, the group(s) one belongs to shapes that person’s individual identity. A group, as defined by Dainton and Zelley (2010) is, “a system of three or more individuals who are focused on achieving a common purpose and whose influence and are influenced by each other” (p. 138). Thus, a group is not conceived of as an aggregate, in which the collection of people is completely random. Because the group is not an aggregate, it has purpose and must balance task communication with socioemotional communication. SIT can help describe intergroup relations, group processes, and the social self (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995). In this perspective, a social group “is a collection of more than two people who have the same social identity-they identify themselves in the same way and have the same definition of who they are, what attributes they have, and how they relate to and differ from specific outgroups” (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995, p. 251). A social group can be small, like a family or peer group, or be large, like a whole community or country.

The cultural identification process, explains Jenson (2003), is largely shaped by the beliefs and behaviors that the individual shares with the other group members. During this process, identification switches from the ego self to group. Hogg et al. (2004) elaborate on this, explaining how personal pronouns change from singular to plural when one identifies with a group. One changes pronouns from I and you to we, us, and them. Thus, group identity is not the same as personal identity; though, it must be noted that the two have an effect on each other. The individual is shaped by the group and the identification with the group becomes a self-identifier. At the same time, individuals within the group form the overall group identity through communication.

SIT allows for the “analysis of intergroup relations between large-scale social categories, which resets on a cognitive and self-conceptual definition of the group membership” (Hogg, et al. 2004, p. 251). Central to this concept is that relationships between groups and how one views other groups is largely based on one’s own membership in a group. Rather than only describing how individuals identify with specific groups, SIT has been widely accepted as a useful framework to understand intergroup relations (Brown, 2000).

SIT has its origins with Tajfel’s early work on social perceptions and some of the darker ramifications thereof, such as racism and prejudice (Tajfel 1959; Tajfel, 1963). Following this work, Tajfel continued to explore the process of social identification through continued work on categorization (Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971). In the early 1970’s, Tajfel began collaboration with Turner, further exploring social identity through social categorization, ethnocentrism, social, comparison, and intergroup relations (Hogg et al. 2004). From this early work, came SIT, or, The Social Identity

Theory of Intergroup Behavior (Tajfel, 1974; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987).

As it came to fruition, Tajfel and Turner (1979) explain that the theory “takes into account social realities as well as their reflection in social behavior through the mediation of *socially* shared systems of beliefs” (p. 36). The basic idea, as described by Hogg, Terry, and White (1995), “is that a social category (e.g., nationality, political affiliation, sports team) into which one falls, and to which one feels one belongs, provides a definition of who one is in terms of the defining characteristics of the category- a self-definition that is part of the self-concept” (p. 259). Self-definition occurs through group/social interaction. Thus social interaction, explains Tajfel and Turner (1979), provides members with “an identification of themselves in social terms” (p. 40). As discussed above, rather than defining self as singular, such as I or me, through the identification of self through group and social interactions, pronouns become plural and change to us and we.

**In-group/Out-Group Categorization.** Identification not only occurs within the group, but it also is comparative with other groups; as such, group members view themselves as better or worse than members of other groups. Thus identification is both a process of intragroup and intergroup communication and categorization. Through the categorization of self and others, individuals are able to establish and maintain self-esteem (Abrams & Brown, 1989) along with reducing uncertainty (Brown, 2000). Comparing and categorizing others based on group membership in order to boost self-esteem is largely based on characteristics which favor the in-group (Kulik & Ambrose, 1992). Through social categorization, in-groups and out-groups are formed; where, the



in-group defines belonging and the out-group defines the other (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In-group members are trusted and receive more interaction and support; whereas, out-group members are not trusted and are treated with and perceived with negative attitudes and emotions (Mackie et al., 2000).

The process of categorization is shaped largely by shared norms (Turner, 1991), which “are shared cognitive representations that, within a particular context, characterize the behavior of members of relevant out-groups and describe and prescribe the behavior of in-group members including ourselves” (Hogg and Reid, 2007). In their overview of how group norms shape social identity and self-categorization, Hogg and Reid (2007) explain that group norms are cognitively represented as prototypes. Prototypes are the assigned cognitive attributes that define and distinguish a group from other groups. Prototypes allow for the process of assimilation within the group and the labeling of others or realization of contrast with other groups.

Individual characteristics mirror the values within in-groups that one is a part of (Brewer, 1991). In a set of experiments on collective identity, Brewer and Gardner (1996) illustrated how when collective identities are more salient than the personal self, in-group/out-group categorizations become the primary basis for evaluating others. The labeling of self within an in-group, and not part of the out-group, though the process of social identification can create a depersonalized sense of self, where there is “a shift toward the perception of self as an interchangeable exemplar of some social category and away from the perception of self as a unique person” (Turner et al., 1987, p. 50). This has both positive and negative ramifications. On the one hand, this brings a group

closer together through shared identity; on the other hand, it has the potential to create in-group biases (Hsee, 1996), which potentially leads to poor inter and intragroup relations (Terry & Callan, 1998). Through in-group biases, individuals can be more easily influenced by in-group members and essentially ignore out-group members (Heckman et al, 2009). This process may also lead to discrimination and attempted subordination of out-groups due to the depersonalization of out-group members (Ashforth and Mael, 2004).

The process which defines in-group/out-group categorization is known as the meta-contrast principle (Tajfel, 1959). The psychological function of this principle, explains Hogg (2006), is to “maximize the ration of perceived intergroup differences to intra-group differences and thus accentuate similarities within groups and differences between groups” (p. 118). Social identity is actively maintained through the social comparison with relevant out-groups (Festinger, 1954). The meta-contrast principle, also referred to as social distancing, occurs is associated with SIT and often occurs through differentiation of communication patterns (Suzuki, 1998). This strengthens the bond within the group, but also strengthens the categorization of the others and provides rationalization for categorization and identification. Self-esteem of individuals, assert Abrams and Hogg (1988), is enhanced when the contrast between in-group and out-group is more salient. The more the out-group is shone in a negative light and viewed as inferior or less than, the more the in-group is seen as being positive and becomes a self-esteem booster. The meta-contrast principle occurs through social identification.

In their investigation of different forms of social identification, Amiot and Aubin (2012) describe two different types of social identification: group glorification and group attachment. Group glorification places the in-group in the best possible light, while simultaneously denying any criticisms of that group. Group attachment, on the other hand, represents the self-concept through group commitment and inclusion (Roccas, Klar, and Liviatan, 2006). Thus, group glorification describes the intergroup process of social identification and group attachment describes the intragroup process of social identification. Self-categorization, rather than the categorization of others, leads to conformity (Hogg et al. 2004), and can have negative ramifications in task oriented groups such as group-think. Language plays a central role in the processes of group categorization through glorification and attachment (Lauring, 2008). Shared meaning of the group, often through salient glorifying symbols, and social identity salience occurs through the symbolic application of language.

**Multiple Identities.** SIT helps conceptualize multiple identities, as social identities are seen as dynamic (Jetten et al., 2002), multilayered (Pratt and Rafaeli, 2004), and hierarchically structured (Hotho, 2008), across a number of social identities. This study is largely interested in the multiple identities held by a specific cultural group: Syrian refugee children. The children in this case live within an organization (an orphanage) and carry multiple identities (religious, national, familial, and so forth). These multiple identities can be further broken down into nested and cross-cutting. Nested identities exist within formal social categories (institutions) and are classified as higher and lower order identities. Higher-order identities encompass all other, lower, identities (Kramer et al., 1993). Lower identities are nested within higher identities.

Essentially, nested identities are subgroups, or a group within a group. Cross-cutting identities, on the other hand, may be formal or informal cross through other identities and are generally lower order identities.

As described by Hogg and Terry (2001) there are three dimensions of nested identities: inclusive/exclusive, abstract/concrete, and proximal/distal. Inclusive/exclusive refers to the ease of entrance into the group, abstract/concrete refers to the conceptualization of the social group, and proximal/distal refer to the impact that the categorization of self with the identity has on the individual. Indirect impact on the individual, usually seen in higher order identities are distal; whereas, proximal impact is seen with lower order identities, where the effect is immediate or directly effects the individual.

Many intercultural studies have examined multiple through the lens of SIT. Around the world groups of people with differing identities live together under one country. In some cases, such as the case of Taiwan and China, dual national identities cause friction. Generally, ethnic identities are nested within national identities. Huang, Liu and Chang (2004) provide an example of this, where “culture and the identities associated with culture can either be superordinate (e.g. Muslim culture) or subordinate (e.g. Muslim-American culture) to national identities” (p.150). Nested identities are attached to formal social categories and exist on a spectrum of higher to lower identities; where, higher order identities relate to ‘big-picture groups’ (Willettts & Clark, 2014). Cultural/ethnic identities are big picture groups, and big order identities can stand alone (superordinate) or exist within (subordinate) the larger national identity. Rather than existing as nested identities, Huang, Liu and Chang (2004) explain that for those

living in Taiwan, Taiwanese Chinese exists as a double identity which is parallel.

Though these identities have similar roots, they elaborate, the identities are politically separate and the juxtaposition of cultural commonality with political division has led to a “cross-straits of difficulties, and Taiwan’s current dilemma of identity” (p. 150). Rather than highlighting cultural similarities, political division has been highlighted leading to stereotyping and prejudice.

The case of Taiwan reveals how parallel national identification can have negative ramifications. Likewise, nested ethnic identities within the larger national identity can lead to negative consequences. Such consequences, in the case of Iraq was examined through the lens of SIT by Penn (2008) to describe what role institutions play in shaping identity and intergroup conflict caused by the juxtaposition of citizenship verses identity. Political institutions have the potential to both create and subdue ethnic identification. Penn elaborates on this, saying, “ethnic identities can emerge as a consequence of conscious efforts of political elites to further their own goals, and ethnic identities can be socially constructed....ethnic identities may be manipulated through political means” (p. 957). Every state is composed of multiple ethnic groups, in which every individual belongs to at least one of. Individuals must decide to identify with the state as a whole, where the ethnic identity is subordinate, or with wholly with the ethnic group, where the ethnic identity is superordinate. In the case of Iraq, there are three major communities: Shiite, Sunni, and Kurd, each of which shared somewhat proportional legislative seats; with 60% of the seats being held by the Shiite population, 20% by the Sunni population, and 20% by the Kurdish population (Penn, 2008). Each major religious community was seen to identify at a higher level with the sub-group of the religious community (Shiite,

Sunni, or Kurd), over the national identity (Iraq). In this case, the nested religious identities overpowered the national identity leading to conflict. In 2005, when Iraq changed its system from a single district to 18 districts, Penn explains, Sunni Arabs were raised to more power while other groups were subdued. In 2006, ethnoreligious differences compounded by each group having legislative power lead to increased intergroup violence caused by sectarian views, such as bombing squads.

The international cases of Taiwan and Iraq provide more extreme illustrations of the hierarchical nature of multiple identities. A key concept to SIT, and necessary in understanding how identities are rated is the idea of social identity salience. Social identity salience describes how individuals perform the social identity most relevant to the social situation (Haslam, 2003). How the identity rates hierarchically describes the chance of invoking a particular identity, where individuals invoke some identities more than others (Hogg & Terry, 2001). The salience of a social identity may change between groups, where the importance of an identity is different depending on the context.

This study seeks to uncover which identities are most salient amongst Syrian refugee children living in Jordan. In order to explore this, children's drawings are used for the analysis. The following chapter outlines previous research on children's drawings.

### **Children's Drawings**

Children's drawings have been used since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century for aesthetic, educational, and clinical purposes (Farokhi & Hashemi, 2011). Freud, explains Farokhi and Hashemi (2011), used children's drawings to understand personality trait differences. Later, Koppitz (1968) used children's drawings to create a taxonomy of

emotional indicators within drawings. The fields of psychiatry, psychology and education have long used children's drawings as a method for assessment (Buck, 1981; Burns, 1970; DiLio, 1970, 1974; Harris, 1963; Koppitz, 1968; Machover, 1980).

Much research has gone into the use of drawings after a stressful or traumatic event. The effect of hospitalization was analyzed through children's drawings by Allen (1978). Later, Johnson and Berendts (1986) used children's drawings to similarly understand the emotions of child oncology patients. Children's drawings have also proven useful as interview methodologies after witnessing family violence (Wohl & Kaufman, 1985) and after experiencing sexual abuse or trauma (Burgess, McCausland, & Wohlbert, 1981). Along with asking children to recall painful or traumatic experiences, drawings have been used as a tool to understand pain levels. Unruh et al (1983) asked children with recurrent migraines to draw a picture of their pain and a separate picture of themselves.

Many have argued that drawings have a communication function (i.e: Callaghan, 1999; Golomb, 1992; Ives, 1983; Stetsenko, 1993). Through research such as that by Bekhit, Thomas, and Jolley (2005), it has been observed that children's drawings act as a conduit to more clearly communicate emotions and feelings in the child's language of creativity. Drawings provide insight into a child's worldview (Crook, 1985), and can provide a 'window' into thoughts and feelings (Thomas and Silk, 1990). Furthermore, drawing can act as a tool for expressing affective information (Jolley, 2010). Because drawing is seen as a form of communication, they can be extremely useful as tools of assessments in interview settings.

In general, children do not like answering interview questions or filling out surveys. Such methods tend to be monotonous. Drawings have been useful as an evaluative tool when working with children (Lewis & Greene, 1983). Driessnack (2005) conducted a meta-analysis in order to explore the effects of drawing as an interview strategy. Driessnack explains that traditional methods for soliciting information, such as directed interviews and surveys are “adult-centered, adult dominated, and biased” (Driessnack, 2005; Bradding & Horstmann, 1999). Rather than asking monotonous questions, drawing allows for an activity during the interview which encourages motoric, visual, and auditory recall, which has proven very useful for clinical interviews (Burgess & Hartman, 1993).

When a child draws, their subconscious wishes, feelings, and perception of the world can be seen through the drawing (Oguz, 2010). What a child draws is influenced by both internal and external factors. Oguz (2010) describes internal, or child specific factors and external, or environmental factors that may impact what and how a child draws. Internal factors include biologic features, maturation, age, intelligence, motivation, arousal and anxiety, physiological status, prior experiences, skill, and child psychology. External, or environmental factors, may include family, school, peer groups, and socio-economic and cultural level.

Drawing may also be a useful tool in communicating cross-culturally with children. Chambers (1983) explains that drawings can be used to break down linguistic barriers, allowing for comparison between groups of different languages and abilities. Cultural symbolism, argues Alden (1983), effects what and how children draw; where culture plays a role of the development of symbolic representations (Wales, 1990).



Thus, culture must be taken into account when analyzing children's drawings. Though certain developmental stages may remain the same across cultures, Wales (1990) argues that culture must be taken into account when analyzing children's drawings, as, culture plays a role in the development of symbolic representations. Alland (1983) also argues that culture plays a major role in what children draw, as, basic strategies for teaching and learning may be different across cultures. Though culture may change, drawing does act as a tool for communication.

What is drawn may be affected by the culture; however, it has long been argued that there is a universal pattern of development in children's drawings and art (Kellog, 1970). Very early on, Cooke (1885) described stages of development through children's drawings and was one of the first to analyze children's drawings. Luquet (1913), assuming that children's drawings were based on cognitive models, proposed five stages of development: fortuitous realism, failed realism, symbolic realism, intellectual realism, and visual realism. The first stage, fortuitous realism, occurs from around 18 months to 2 years old. This stage is largely marked by nonsensical scribbles. The next stage, failed realism takes place from around 2 to 3 years old. At this point, the scribbles become more recognizable and controlled. This age struggles with the co-ordination of the parts of a drawing. Next, the symbolic realism stage occurs from about 3 to 4 years old. At this age, the child can make relationships between details of a drawing. These drawings seem to be simple and are often based on formulas or schemata. From the ages of 5 to 7 years old, the child has entered into intellectual realism. From this age, children can draw elements which the child knows to exist, even if it cannot easily be seen. These drawings are known as x-ray drawings or transparency drawings. This

stage reflects the impact that knowledge has on drawing. Lastly, at around age 8, the child enters into visual realism. At this stage, the child can draw from different viewpoint and considers proportions of objects in the drawing (Luquet, 1913). Rather than a linear pattern of development, like Luquet, Winner and Gardner (1981) describes more of a U-shaped developmental pattern, where middle childhood years see a decline in in expressiveness.

Along with understanding childhood development, drawing has been used to measure intelligence. One of the most influential of tests was the Draw-a-man (DAM) test issued by Goodenough (1926) attempted to measure the intelligence quotient (IQ) in children. Goodenough's (1926) DAM measure included the following assumptions. The first assumption was that drawing is communication and that the act of drawing, to a child, is a language. Second, what children draw is largely based on knowledge. This is contradictory to the idea that children draw only what they see or have seen. Third, art is how children express their ideas of the world around them. The fourth assumption is that as age advances so too does the schema of the drawings, where the child's drawings gradually become more realistic. Lastly, until the age of 10, intellectual development is the most important factor which determines the quality of a child's drawing (Goodenough, 1926).

### **Refugee Identity**

Changes involving identity are situated in communication (Chen, 2009). Refugees undergo a number of changes through displacement and adaptation. Unlike other immigrants, refugees are forced to move and often have little support system from people in their homeland (Semlak et al., 2008). Thus communication with home that

may aid in identity negotiation is stripped. Through the Model of Identity Revision after Refugee Resettlement, Ertorer (2014) found that identity crisis caused by refugee resettlement is “resolved through the community role” (p. 270). This finding reflects the communal or group aspect of identity, as, identity is a bonding agent within groups and groups reinforce and create elements of identity. The negotiation of national and cultural identities within refugees was examined by Craig (2012). Craig explains that “The experience associated with forced displacement and resettlement can continually shape and reshape refugees’ ‘identity construction’” (p. 89). Identities are malleable and fluid. Through interviews with refugees about to become United States citizens, Craig (2012) reveals that successful identity negotiation requires a continuous cycle of adaptation to cultural changes (p. 90).

The process of identity negotiation takes place not just during the resettlement process, but also throughout the duration of a refugee’s stay (Krulfeld & Camino, 1994). As explained through Kim (1998), identity plays a key role in the adaptation process, more specifically, “Achieved outcomes of cross-cultural adaptation experiences at a given time include increased functional fitness, psychological health, and intercultural identity;” which in turn, “facilitate subsequent development of host communication competence and host social (interpersonal, mass) communication” (p. 70). Successful identity negotiation with the new culture leads to successful adaptation and positive outcomes.

Much of the research regarding refugee identities has focused on ways in which to aid in the successful integration and adaptation of refugee populations through identity formation and identity development (e.g. Spencer & Markstrom, 1990;

Oyserman & James, 2011). Fantino and Colak's (2001) ethnographic research focused primarily on the identity formation of refugee children. They explain that "the normal childhood tasks of growing up and finding identity are greatly compounded for refugee children when they come to a new land as strangers who have already led eventful lives" (p. 595). Palmer (2009) offers an ethnographic description of how soccer was used to aid in the re-formation of communal identity in McSpadden and Moussa (1993) examined Karen refugees from Burma, focused on the role that identity crisis, resolution, and distress has on identity development throughout life.

Few studies exist that explore Syrian refugee identity and communication in the wake of the current refugee crisis. The lack of research is most likely due to the fact that this is a current event; it is happening now. One exception to this is reflected in the work of Alhayek (2014), who conducted a critical media study of the online campaign "Refugees Not Captives," aiming to uncover how Syrian women's voices are being marginalized through this campaign, as it reinforces an ascribed 'orientalist' identity to the women (p. 698). A second exception is an ethnographic study of married and widowed Syrian women refugees who are living in Lebanon without a spouse. In this study, Mhaissen (2014), uses ethnography to tell the story of refugee women who, due to their multiple identities as Syrians, refugees, widows or being without husbands, women, and so forth are faced with daily struggle inside the cold tents of a refugee camp. Mhaissen's piece, though not directly focused on identity, describes the struggles of identity negotiation through narratives of Syrian women. Mhaissen concludes, "There is nothing more political, nothing more revolutionary, than women fighting daily battles, resisting hegemonies of states, crossing constructed national borders, questioning

traditional gendered roles, and repoliticizing everyday life” (p.78). The battles the women must fight are battles of change, both internally through the shaping of identity and externally due to the chaotic nature of their surroundings. A third article, by Murray (2015) was the only peer-reviewed and full-text article on the refugee crisis found in the Communication and Mass Media Complete database. The last article is not an empirical study, but rather an evaluation on the integrity of Canada’s integration process of Syrian refugees. Murray describes the ascribed political identity of Syrian refugees in Canada and how racism is playing a political role in the media and among Canadian voters.

### **Culture and Communication**

This study is situated in culture, the culture of Syrian refugee orphans residing in Jordan. Culture is defined as “a learned system of meanings that fosters a particular sense of shared identity-hood and community-hood among its group members. It is a complex frame of reference that consists of a pattern of traditions, beliefs, values, norms, symbols, and meanings that are shared to varying degrees by interacting members of an identity group” (Ting-Toomey & Takai, 2006, p. 691). Thus, culture is learned and it provides individuals and groups a shared lens from which to view the world. It is through this lens that individuals categorize themselves and others. It is “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others” (Hofstede, 2005, p.6). Through culture comes the process of categorization, a central tenet of SIT.

There are many different levels or types of culture. Some more general or common cultural categorizations include: national and ethnic cultures, gender cultures, professional culture, organizational culture, culture based on the geographical area, and

ability/disability cultures (Collier, 1997). All people belong to multiple cultural categories. Identifying with a particular culture is a complex process, as “All cultures that are created are influenced by a host of social, psychological, and environmental factors as well as in-situations and context” (Collier, 1997, p. 39).

Communication plays a key role in culture. Collier (1997) explains that “Culture is not the people but the communication that links them together” (p. 37). Shared meanings, transmitted through various forms of communication, connect people and create in-groups and out-groups. Culture, as a theory or explanation for human behavior, is a systematic communicative process that is made up of many complex, interdependent components forming a permeable and fluid boundary (Collier, 1997). Most central to this study are the common symbols and meanings within the participants. Symbols are shared, or communicated, through rituals, myths, stories, and legends. Meanings are the interpretation of symbols, events, ideas, and experiences. Symbols and meanings are shaped or created by the group in which they belong (Alvesson, 2002). This study uses children’s drawings to uncover shared symbols and meaning of Syrian refugee children living Jordan. This is completed through the lens of SIT.

### **Purpose and Research Questions**

This study uses drawings as a communicative tool to express social identification. The drawings for this study were collected by the Syrian Emergency Task Force during a humanitarian visit to Jordan and were later published online and in calendars. The refugee children were asked to draw, ‘where is your happy place?’

Based on the literature on social identification and children's drawings, the following general question was used to guide this research:

What group and communal identities are most salient amongst Syrian refugee orphans residing in Jordan?

Through this question as a guiding tool for the analysis, patterns in the drawings were searched for, specifically seeking out patterns of superordinate and subordinate identities along with common social group indicators. Through a qualitative image analysis using semiotics, deeper insight into the identities of this population can be gained. It is hoped that through this knowledge of the culture and identity, future research can be conducted. The methodology for this study is described in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODS

Identity has commonly been studied using qualitative methodology, such as, face-to-face interviews (e.g. Maeda & Hecht, 2012; Drummond & Orbe, 2009). Rather than using interviews, drawings are used for cultural insight. As discussed in the above literature review, when working with children, drawings can act as a powerful lens from which to view identity. The methods for this study are primarily rooted in the tradition of cognitive anthropology.

The cognitive anthropological perspective seeks to understand how groups organize cultural knowledge into a semantic system (Jacob, 1988). The cultural group (Syrian refugee orphans) organizes cultural knowledge through language (drawings) - specifically semantics (Tyler, 1969). The first system to analyze semantics, through semiotic analysis, was created by Spradley (1979) and will be more thoroughly discussed in the analysis section.

Semiotics have been used to analyze cultures along with popular culture and media analyses. In analyzing popular cultural images, Orbe and Hopson (2002) use this method to understand how mass media creates hegemonic meaning for people of color. According to Orbe and Hopson, meaning is “created and maintained when a signifier (or set of signifiers) is closely associated with a particular concept, idea, or identity” (p.220). When analyzing language, semiotic analyses can help to understand the subtleties of a particular language within a culture (Spradley, 1979). This study views children’s drawings as language, and utilizes semiotics to understand the subtleties of the drawings. Rather than using semiotics to analyze spoken language, Orbe and Hopson



(2002) applied semiotics to images. Burger (1991) describes this method saying, “Semiology-the science of signs-is concerned, primarily, with how meaning is generated in ‘texts’ (films, television programs, and other works of art). Here, the drawings from the refugee children are seen as texts rich with cultural meaning.

### **Context**

Communication takes place within a specific context. Context, explains Oetzel (2009) is “the frame of reference for understanding communication behavior” (p. 14). Along with culture, social relationships and historical relationships are included in the context. Particularly relevant to this study is the context from which the refugee population is coming from, which includes historical relationships, along with the current context of the refugee camp.

**The War in Syria.** In recent history, governments around the world faced a migration unlike any seen before. According to The International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2015 marked “the highest migration flow since World War II” (IOM, 2015). This migration flow includes both migrant and refugee populations fleeing violence and instability. It estimates that in 2015 alone, over 1 million migrants arrived in Europe. Furthermore, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports a total of 4,900,741 Syrian refugees registered in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, and Turkey. Of those refugees, UNHCR reports that 47.6% are under the age of 18 (UNHCR, 2017). The number of refugees around the world from Syria continues to increase as violence continues. This study focusses on refugees from Syria, as, they are the largest population of migrants in the current refugee crisis.

Refugees from Syria are fleeing violence in the country. Violence has continued since the mark of the civil war in 2011. The beginning of the war can be marked when the Syrian government violently cracked down after anti-government protests in March of 2011 during the Arab Spring movement, following this crackdown, rebels began to fight against the Syrian regime. By July, the free Syrian army was formed and they began to take up arms against the Syrian regime. Further divisions began to form within the country between secular and Islamic fighters, ethnic groups, and political beliefs and now includes several international participants such as the United States and Russia.

### **Data Collection**

This study uses published drawings to gain insight into social identity. The drawings were collected by a humanitarian group lead by Dean Rice in cooperation with the Syrian Emergency Task Force and the Syrian American Medical Society. Text on the drawings were translated by a local Syrian cultural specialist. Through a series of interviews with Rice, more information regarding the collection of the drawings was obtained and is described below.

The drawings were collected at an education complex in the city of Amman. The children at the center included orphans from the war in Syria, along with Syrian refugee children living in the city of Amman. The children originally came from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds and were primarily children of Syrian civilians. A total of 40 children at the center participated at the study during regular activity time. Students were seated at rectangle tables in groups of five and six. Each table included a box of crayons and a box of colored pencils. Two translators accompanied the group, along with a native English speaker who also spoke Arabic. The children were asked to “draw

your happy place” by the translators. No time limit was given for drawing the pictures. Any questions from the students or teachers were asked to the Arabic translators, who then relayed the questions to the humanitarian workers. The colleague who spoke Arabic and English verified that the translations were correct. During this visit, a total of 64 drawings were collected. Only those images that were published in the 2016 calendar are used for this study. A total of 12 pictures make up the data sample for this study.

Because researchers were not present at the time of data collection, as the drawings used are published drawings, as series of unknowns exist. To begin with, the age of each child is unknown. While the specific ages of the children in the sample are not known, the drawings themselves depict elements of Kellog’s (1970) intellectual, symbolic and visual realism. Language itself also presents unknowns; as, translations can change the meaning of a word. Because the researcher was not there and did not have access to the translator, it is impossible to know if the verb tense, word order, and sentence structure were exact. These slight changes can create completely different meaning to the message receiver, in this case, the child drawing the picture.

### **Artifacts**

This study is a cultural study, as, it utilizes cultural artifacts as a lens into the Syrian refugee population residing in Jordan. Artifacts, explains Schein (2004) include “all phenomena that one sees, hears, and feels when one encounters a new group with an unfamiliar culture” (p. 25). Per Schein, the artifact is a product of the culture. Here, the drawings are a product of the culture being examined. The drawings were collected directly from the group. Furthermore, the calendar in which the drawings are located act

as a separate but important artifact. Many drawings were collected, but only so many were chosen for the Syrian Emergency Task Force 2016 calendar. The calendar is not an artifact from the group residing in Jordan; but rather, it is an artifact of an organization: The Syrian Emergency Task Force. The introduction to the calendar, the pictures in the calendar, the layout, and the drawings all are cultural artifacts from this organization.

**2016 Syrian Emergency Task Force Calendar.** Before going into more detail regarding how the drawings themselves were collected, it is important to first discuss the layout and purpose of the 2016 Syrian Emergency Task Force Calendar, where the drawings are published. Created from pictures and drawings collected in the Spring of 2015, the 2016 Syrian Emergency Task Force Calendar was made by the Syrian Emergency Task Force for fundraising and awareness purposes. The organization is based in the United States, in Washington D.C. The task force has a target audience of American citizens and the United States government. The organization provides advocacy, aiming to educate US decision makers and gain relief support from sources here in the United States. The calendars are in color and include 26 pages of information and space for the calendar dates. The calendars have two primary purposes: to inform and to persuade. The calendar provides information to American public about the dire situation in Syria. The calendar also provides information about what the Syrian Emergency Task Force does and how it has helped. In doing so, the organization increases its credibility. Other than being informative, the calendar has the persuasive goal of fundraising, and hopes to persuade people to donate to the organization.

The drawings and pictures are meant to be an emotional appeal to donate to the Syrian Emergency Task Force. The focus of the calendar is on the children and the drawings pull the audience into the lives of the children. Though more drawings were collected, the sample for this study is the sample selected for the calendar, not a randomly selected sample. The findings, then, may be reflective of the overall goal of the Syrian Emergency Task Force.

The cover of the calendar has six pictures total of Syrian refugee children. The first is a large picture of a little girl. To the right are five smaller pictures of children. Above the little girl is the text: "2016 Calendar." In the right lower corner is the Syrian Emergency Task Force label written in both English and Arabic along with a map of Syria filled in with the Syrian flag. The first two pages of the calendar is dedicated to information about the Syrian Emergency Task Force. It includes the mission statement, a description of its programs that aid Syrian refugees, pictures of food being distributed to refugees, a description of advocacy sponsored by the organization here in the United States, and a description of why relief is needed. Included also are photos of their work here in the United States.

The next two pages are also informative. First, it describes legal and media work that the organization has done. Next is a list and description of all the programs in the United States that are sponsored by the organization. Following the list of description is a quote from Dean Rice who is a member of the SETF advisory board and collected the photos and drawings from the children in Jordan. The quote states:

I'm not Syrian, but I am human. These children are our children and they will one day be Syria's leaders. As you look at each face please ask yourself how do you want that

individual to remember us- As agents for change or agents of silence? In a world shaped by barrel bombs there is little in between.

Following this quote is a section about the photographs, specifically about the children in the photographs. Next is a section about the photographer and the person who collected the drawings, Dean Rice. This section reads as follows:

Dean Rice is a member of the national advisory board of the Syrian Emergency Task Force (SETF). In the spring of 2015, he traveled to Jordan to visit the Zaatari refugee camp and meet with various Syrians in exile. The children of this calendar are some of those he met.

He is a Global Security Fellow with the University of Tennessee's Institute for Nuclear Security and serves as an adjunct faculty member at the University of Tennessee's College of Communication and Information. In 2013, Rice received the Society of Universal Dialogue Atlantic Institute "Peace Award" in recognition of his efforts to promote inter-cultural engagement and dialogue.

The fifth and sixth pages of the calendar provides a list of dates and Massacre's that took place in Syria. A total of 42 massacres are listed. This is meant to illustrate the dire severity of the situation in Syria. A description of each massacre with the number of people killed and how the attacks to place is included here. Further information about the number of refugees fleeing the country and ISIS is then provided, along with two more photos of refugee children.

The following pages are dedicated to the calendar itself. Each month takes up two pages, top and bottom. The top includes a photo of a Syrian refugee child or children. The bottom includes the calendar; the number of casualties for that month in 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015; key dates in which major massacres occurred, and a

drawing from one of the children. Below this is information regarding how to donate to the Syrian Emergency Task Force, the logo, the address, telephone number, and email.

### **Analysis**

The analysis of the drawings found in the 2016 Syrian Emergency Task Force Calendar was structured following the qualitative research steps laid out by LeCompte (2000). LeCompte includes five steps for qualitative analyses: (1) tidying up, (2) finding items, (3) creating stable sets of items, (4) creating patterns, and (5) assembling structure. The first step of this was completed by the Syrian Emergency Task Force in the making of the calendars. The drawings remained in the same order that they were in the calendar itself.

The next step, finding items, involved careful note-taking on each image, and marking frequency, omission and declaration of specific items relevant to social identification. Frequency, explains LeCompte (2000) includes items that are recurrent, or occur in multiple drawings. Items that the researcher expects to appear, but never do, should be listed and labeled as an omission. Declaration occurs when the subject tells the researcher to look for a symbol. Because the images are published and the researcher never had contact with the subjects, only frequency and omission will be considered.

Note taking was further broken down into three steps. Each page was divided in half. In step one, careful notes were taken on the first half of each page for each image including notes on frequency, omission, and declaration. These notes were taken in order of: text, people, objects, and color. The drawings were color coded, so that notes on each picture were in a different color. Next, on the opposite side of the page, the

specific notes on what was seen was interpreted by the researcher. In this sense, the left side included note taking and the left side was dedicated to note making on the original notes. In this step, only initial thoughts were written down. Lastly, more careful notes were taken based on the literature review. The researcher combed through all notes, seeking to understand what these notes say about the process of social identification. Notes on social identification and culture were also on the right side with the initial interpretation notes. A total of 114 pages of notes were taken for the 12 drawings.

After the finding items step, the next step was to create a stable set of items. Spradley's (1979) semantic relationships was used as a guide for this section. Semantic relationships", explains Spradley (1979), "allow speakers of a particular language to refer to all the subtleties of a meaning connected to its folk terms" (p. 108). Rather than using text from an interview, the researcher operationalizes the drawings as folk terms. Everything in the drawing becomes text. Through the semantic relationships, the researcher conducted a domain analysis which included an analysis of cover terms, semantic relationships, and included terms.

A domain refers to a symbolic category that includes other categories. To conduct the domain analysis, the researcher first combed through all the notes to make a list of all terms. After combing through the notes, the researcher checked those terms against the initial drawings. From these terms, categories were made by cover terms and included terms. A cover term refers to a symbolic category of cultural knowledge. It is the larger category. For example, the word, 'tree,' could be the cover term or the



larger category that included other terms, such as 'elm,' 'pine,' and so forth. Included terms, then, are all the terms included in the larger category or cover term.

After making the initial cover terms, it was important to conduct an interrater reliability check. By having multiple people select cover terms from the drawings, it was insured that the primary researcher was not the only person who could pick out these categories. The second coder was a fellow graduate student at the University of Tennessee. Before beginning the training session and coding, the primary researcher conducted a preliminary analysis of the first two images. The following steps were used in training the second coder and calculating interrater reliability: (1) Have the new coder read the literature review section on Social Identity Theory. (2) Discuss key terms from the literature for this analysis. (3) Brief the new coder on what a domain analysis is and discuss the selected cover terms. (4) Have the new coder mark what cover terms are seen in the first two images and take notes on why. (5) Discuss findings. (6) Calculate percent agreement, or interrater reliability, between the primary researcher and the new coder. In order to continue on, it was necessary to reach 70% agreement. 75% agreement was reached after the first round of coding.

Once reliability was met, individual semantic analyses were conducted based on the semantic relationship rather than the cover terms (see appendix). Spradley (1979) explains the importance of beginning the analysis from the semantic relationship, as, they "allow speakers of a particular language to refer to all the subtleties of meaning connected to its folk terms" (p. 108). By focusing on the relationship, then, a clearer picture of the meaning could be illustrated. Spradley's (1979) universal semantic relationships were used for the analysis and are as follows:

1. Strict Inclusion
  - a. X is a kind of Y
2. Spatial
  - a. X is a place in Y, X is a part of Y
3. Cause-Effect
  - a. X is a result of Y
  - b. X is a cause of Y
4. Rational
  - a. X is a reason for doing Y
5. Location for Action
  - a. X is a place for doing Y
6. Function
  - a. X is used for Y
7. Means End
  - a. X is a way to do Y
8. Sequence
  - a. X is a step in Y
9. Attribution
  - a. X is a characteristic of Y

Individual sheets were made for each possible semantic relationship (see appendix). At the top of each sheet was the relationship, form, and an example for reference. Below, multiple spaces were created for each domain, with the included terms, semantic relationship, and the cover terms. This step of the analysis made the next step, creating patterns, much easier. From here, patterns are created based first on the cover term and second by the semantic relationship. Doing so allows patterns to emerge. Once patterns are identified, it was possible to assemble structures. This is where patterns are connected to create an overall view of what is being said in the

images. A taxonomy was then created for graphic representations of patterns found within the drawings.

The following chapter describes what categories were found in the drawings, and includes a chart of all cover terms, semantic relationships, and included terms. Patterns are more clearly outlined in the taxonomic representation of the data.

## CHAPTER FOUR RESULTS

The domain analysis yielded seven domains under the following cover terms: in-group, out-group, social identity process, war, national identity, religious identity, family/small group identity. The first three domains, in-group, out-group and social identity process deal with how the categorization process occurs and the folk terms that describe this process. The next domain, war, was the most common theme throughout all of the images. The last three domains, national identity, religious identity, and family/small group identity describe the types of social identities that were apparent in the children's drawings and the folk terms or aspects of the drawings used to describe these social identities. A taxonomic analysis was then conducted on the last three domains to understand what folk terms best describe social identity. In this section, the findings from each domain will be discussed along with the findings of the taxonomic analysis.

The first domain, in group, yielded three included terms, as seen in Table 1 below.

**Table 1** In-Group Domain

<b>Included Term</b>	<b>Semantic Relationship</b>	<b>Cover Term</b>
Group Glorification	is a result of	In-Group
Group Attachment	is a result of	In-Group
More Detail	is a result of	In-Group

Group glorification happened in a number of ways. A picture of victory in war was an example of group glorification, where, the in group is successful in some task. Heart around the Syrian flag, and phrases such as “I love Syria” were other examples of group glorification. Group attachment could be seen through images of groups standing close to one another, hand holding, and standing with the flag or with a religious symbol. Here, proxemics played a role in the analysis. The researcher considered how close people in the drawings were to one another. Last, more detail was given to members of the in group. Members of the in group often had colored outfits on, full faces, hands, feet, and even spoke phrases; whereas members of the out-group had much less detail.

The second domain, out-group, almost mirrored the in-group domain revealing opposite folk terms for categorization. This domain only yielded three domains, as seen in Table 2 below.

**Table 2** Out-Group Domain

<b>Included Term</b>	<b>Semantic Relationship</b>	<b>Cover Term</b>
Dangerous	is a result of	Out-Group
Demonizing	is a result of	Out-Group
Lack of Detail	is a result of	Out-Group

Rather than group glorification, the opposite occurred with the out-group, where it was portrayed as dangerous. This often occurred through threats, weapons, and images of blood and death. The included term, demonizing, put the fault of the above threats on a specific group. This occurred primarily through the use of flags from the

'other,' machines of war such as tanks, and the people who conducted the threats. Last, in many cases the out group was not drawn in the same detail that the in group was. This was especially true when the in-group and the out-group were drawn together in the same image. In these cases, the members of the in-group had full faces with eyes, noses and mouths along with specific outfits; whereas members of the out-group were only figures and were often missing key facial features or body parts, such as hands or feet. In the cases where the in-group and the out-groups were drawn together, the locations of the groups were separate; where, a line could easily be drawn splitting the page between in-group and out-group.

The next domain, social identity process, deals with the folk terms or images used in the creation of social categories. A total of four included terms came from the initial cover term, as seen in Table 3 below.

**Table 3** Social Identity Process Domain

<b>Included Term</b>	<b>Semantic Relationship</b>	<b>Cover Term</b>
Task Communication	is a characteristic of	Social Identity Process
Socioemotional Communication	is a characteristic of	Social Identity Process
Depersonalization	is a result of	Social Identity Process
Highlighted Differences	is a result of	Social Identity Process

The first two included terms, task and socioemotional communication, are characteristics of the social identity process. Task communication was especially seen

in the images of war, where the individual groups (in-group and out-group) worked together to accomplish the tasks of war. All actions that occurred within a group were coded as task communication. Socioemotional communication occurred in images of families and small groups, images of war, and religious images. Hand holding, “love”, and group prayers are all examples of socioemotional communication within groups.

The next included term was depersonalization. This was noted in images where no people were present. One example of this would be an image of a battlefield with tanks, jeeps, planes, and fire. Though there were shots being fired, flags, and explosions, all of the vehicles were opaque. Distinct groups were present: two groups firing at one another. However, people were not doing the firing, vehicles of war were.

Highlighted differences, the next included term, was apparent through group comparisons. In images that included multiple groups, comparison and differences could be seen through different clothing, actions, text, and objects. Good and bad was one theme that occurred over and over again in these images; images where one individual or groups of individuals, the ‘bad’ group, targeted another individual or group of individuals, the ‘good’ group. This occurred through the use of weapons; where, for example, an individual held a gun to another individual. Or a group fires guns into another group. In every example of this, the ‘good’ group, or in-group, was helpless, and without weapons.

War was by far the largest domain. A total of 22 included terms were found for war with three different semantic relationships: is a result of, is a place for doing, and is used for. The largest group organized within this domain was the ‘is a result of’ relationship, as seen in Table 4.

**Table 4** War Domain A

<b>Included Term</b>	<b>Semantic Relationship</b>	<b>Cover Term</b>
Injury	is a result of	War
Blood	is a result of	War
Death	is a result of	War
Explosion	is a result of	War
Pride	is a result of	War
Victory	is a result of	War
Freedom	is a result of	War
Sadness (face)	is a result of	War
Crying	is a result of	War
Tears	is a result of	War
Victory	is a result of	War
Help	is a result of	War



Injury, blood, death, and explosions were all coded as results of war. Injury and blood were coded as two separate items. Blood was only coded when it existed without people; whereas, in injury showed either a missing body part or blood coming from a person. Some images included both injury and blood, some images only included blood. Death was coded when a person or animal was drawn laying down or an object standing in for a person was upside down, for example, a flipped over jeep. The person or animal laying down would have closed eyes or no face at all. In every example of this, blood was also included in the image. In every example of explosions, no people were present. The explosion came from a nonhuman object, either a tank, bomb, or a plane.

Many of the included terms coded under the relationship 'is a result of' war were representative of emotions. Pride, victory, freedom, sadness (face), crying, tears, and victory were all emotional representations. Crying and tears, it should be noted, were two separate codes. This was because several images included tears coming from an object rather than a face. Crying, then, occurred when tears were seen with a human face. Tears, on the other hand, were only coded when the tears did not include a human face and were coming out of an object, text, or floating alone. Pride and victory, like crying and tears, were very similar. In many cases, images of victory includes images of pride; but not vice versa. The most common images of pride was seen through smiling and flag holding. In every case, victory included an image of war; where the in group, made apparent through flags, overpowered the out group.

The next set of included terms for the domain of war existed under the relationship of 'is a place for doing.' In order to be included in this domain under 'is a

place for doing,' the term had to appear in a violent context; with bullets, explosions, blood, tanks, jeeps, planes, or other weapons. The included terms can be seen in Table 5.

**Table 5** War Domain B

<b>Included Term</b>	<b>Semantic Relationship</b>	<b>Cover Term</b>
Battlefield	is a place for doing	War
Sky	is a place for doing	War
Road	is a place for doing	War
House	is a place for doing	War

In order to be coded as battlefield, multiple vehicles (tanks, jeeps, planes) or people had to be included and firing at each other. In every case, the field was a blank brown space with war occurring on it. Sky was coded as a place for war only when it included air planes. In this case, the plane need not be firing at other planes. Next road and house were both terms for places war occurred when death, threats, weapons, blood, or injury were included in the image.

The last group of included terms under the domain of war existed under the relationship "is used for.' These terms were objects used for war, as seen in Table 6. A total of six included terms were found to be objects used for war. The objects used for war were: plane, jeep, tank, bullets, bomb, and gun, existed alone or with other objects used for war. A gun, for example, did not have to include bullets. Bullets could come out of multiple other objects, such as a plane, tank, or gun. A bomb could exist alone or

come from another object, such as a plane. The most common objects to exist alone were plane, jeep, tank, and gun.

**Table 6** War Domain C

<b>Included Term</b>	<b>Semantic Relationship</b>	<b>Cover Term</b>
Plane	is used for	War
Jeep	is used for	War
Tank	is used for	War
Bullets	is used for	War
Bomb	is used for	War
Gun	is used for	War

The next three domains all centered on types of social identity and were: national identity, family identity, and religious identity. The most common domain theme in these images was national identity. Religious identity only occurred in three of the twelve images. National identity, on the other hand, occurred in eight of the twelve images. Family identity occurred in just two of the twelve images. Within the three domains covering types of identity were texts included in the drawings. As seen in the charts below, any includes terms in quotations are from text written in the drawings.

National identity, as seen below in Table 7, had ten clear included terms. These included terms were linked to the cover term through multiple semantic relationships: 'is used for,' 'is a result of,' and 'is a characteristic of.'

**Table 7** National Identity Domain

<b>Included Term</b>	<b>Semantic Relationship</b>	<b>Cover Term</b>
Flags	is used for	National Identity
Map	is used for	National Identity
“Syria”	is used for	National Identity
Flag in Heart	is used for	National Identity
“My Country”	is used for	National Identity
“My Flag”	is used for	National Identity
Wish for Country	is a result of	National Identity
Prayer for Country	is a result of	National Identity
“I love Syria”	is a result of	National Identity
“My Love”	is a characteristic of	National Identity

The first included term, flags, was the most common example of national identity. Within the 12 images were 26 flags total, denoting both in group and out group belongings. The included term, map, included a map of Syria. The included terms above that are within parentheses were texts that specifically were about Syria. Love was seen in two ways. Either with a flag in a heart, or with the literal text under a flag saying “my love.”

The next domain, seen in Table 8, was family identity. It was comprised of five distinct included terms, along with three semantic relationships: ‘is a place for doing,’ ‘is a characteristic of,’ and ‘is a part of.’

**Table 8** Family Identity Domain

<b>Included Term</b>	<b>Semantic Relationship</b>	<b>Cover Term</b>
House	is a place for doing	Family Identity
Small Group	is a characteristic of	Family Identity
Hand Holding	is a characteristic of	Family Identity
Parents and Child	is a part of	Family Identity
Pets	is a part of	Family Identity

The first included term, house, could exist with a family within it or along. A small group close together also represented family. Hand holding was a clear indicator of a familial relationship, and was seen with what appeared to be parents. A family group of parents and child/children or a group that included animals, or pets, were also family indicators.

The last aspect of identity that was analyzed was religious identity. Six total included terms were linked with the cover term, religious identity: mosque, the word “God,” blessing, and the word, “Ramadan,” and a crescent moon and star. Table 9 illustrates how, or through what semantic relationship, these terms were linked with religious identity.

**Table 9** Religious Identity Domain

<b>Included Term</b>	<b>Semantic Relationship</b>	<b>Cover Term</b>
Mosque	is a place for	Religious Identity
“God”	is a characteristic of	Religious Identity
Blessing	is a characteristic of	Religious Identity
Ramadan	is a characteristic of	Religious Identity
Moon, Star	is a characteristic of	Religious Identity

The first included term, mosque, was a drawing of a mosque. Above the mosque was the text “Happy Ramadan” written in Arabic, along with a crescent moon and star. The word “God” or “Allah” appeared several times, written in both English and Arabic. The word appeared in phrases, such as the phrase “God is bigger,” which was translated from Arabic written above a drawing of a tank and bomb. One blessing was included in the images and was written above a drawing of a family. The blessing was in Arabic and translated to a blessing for the family.

Because the purpose of this study was to analyze identity, specifically social identifier within refugee orphans living in Jordan, the three domains for identity were

turned into a taxonomy to further analyze the connections, as seen in Figure 1. The purpose of this taxonomy is to unveil relationships between included terms, aiding in further understanding regarding the conceptualization of various aspects of identity within the population. The images themselves revealed folk terms used within the population. The taxonomy above allowed for the creation of major and minor categorizations of social identity from the folk terms.

The analysis of social identity yielded three major categories: National Identity, Family/Small Group Identity and Religious Identity. Though the population certainly holds many more identities, these were the only identities found in the images analyzed. No other images of social groups were found such as schools, work places, or sports teams.

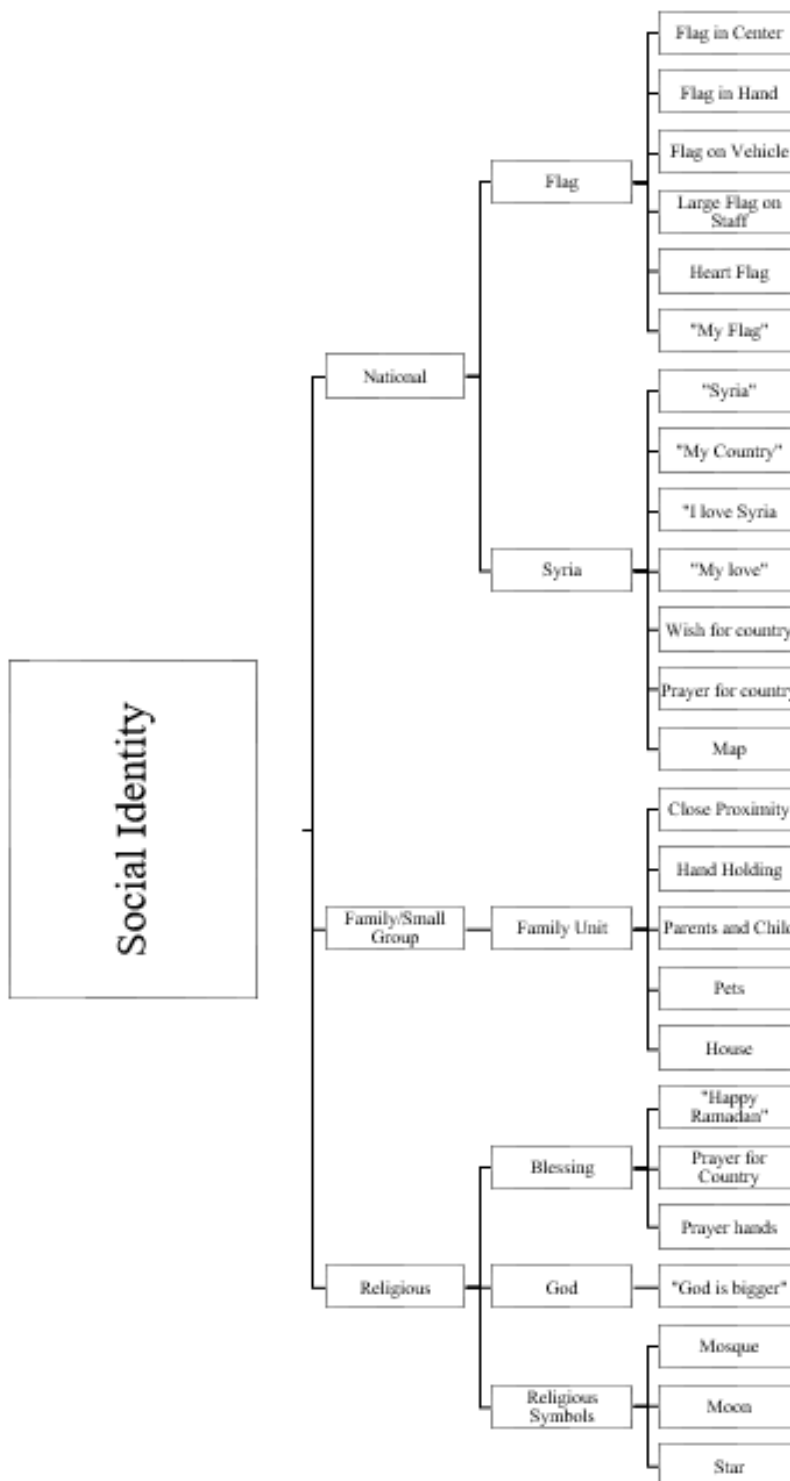
Through the grouping of major categories, minor categories could be found. National Identity had two minor categories: Flag and Syria. Family/Small Group had one minor categories: Family Unit. Religious had three minor categories: Blessing, God, and Religious Symbols.

The creation of minor categories allows for the grouping of folk terms. First we see how each major category most described by the population through the minor categories, then all of the ways in which the minor categories are described can be seen. Of course, these descriptions are seen in the drawings, rather than through a typical interview. The minor category of flag under National Identity had six descriptors: Flag in Center, Flag in Hand, Flag on Vehicle, Large Flag on Staff, Heart Flag, and the text "My Flag." The minor category of Syria under National Identity had seven descriptors including: the text "Syria," "My Country," "I Love Syria," "My Love," Wish for

Country, Prayer for Country, and a Map. The minor category of Family Unit within Family/Small Group had the following five descriptors: Close Proximity, Hand Holding, Parents and Child, Pets, and House. The minor category of Blessing under Religious Identity had three descriptors: "Happy Ramadan," Prayer for Country, and Prayer hands. The next minor category under Religious Identity was God with the single descriptor of "God is Bigger." The last minor category under Religious Identity was Religious Symbols with three descriptors: Mosque, Moon, and Star.

These findings provide insight into how Syrian refugee children living in Jordan categorize their own carried identities along with insight into the conceptualization of in groups and outgroups within this population. The vast domain of war further provides insight into the formation of identity along with understanding for the researcher and readers as to how this population views and has experienced war and violence. The following section provides a more in-depth discussion regarding how these findings relate to SIT, along with the significance of this research, research limitations, and future research.





**Figure 1** Social Identity Taxonomy

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION

This applied research study sought to uncover the following general question: What group and communal identities are most salient amongst Syrian refugee orphans residing in Jordan? Through the analysis of children's drawings using semantic relationships, it was found that three types of social identities are most salient in this population: national, religious, and family identity. Through a thorough domain and taxonomic analysis, the process of categorizing these identities led to a deeper understanding of the process of in-group and out-group categorization along with a deeper understanding of multiple identities, especially in this population.

#### **Theoretical Implications**

By seeking to uncover salient identities of Syrian refugee orphans, this thesis has many theoretical implications. SIT has been studied and applied across many fields, though, it has its origins in social psychology. This study further links SIT to communication studies and implies that social identity is communicative. The process of identification, then, is communicative *and* cognitive. Along with revealing the communicative aspects of SIT, this study illustrates the process of in-group and out-group categorizations and answers questions about multiple identities, as discussed below.

**In-Group/Out-Group Categorization.** This study provided insight into the process in which in-groups and out-groups are categorized within the population. In the labeling of in-groups, group glorification and group attachment both occurred, along with more detail given to those belonging to the in-group. In juxtaposition, out-groups were

drawn as being dangerous, were demonized, and were drawn with a lack of detail. These are all characteristics of the metacontrast principle, which states that similarities within groups and differences between groups are highlighted in order to strengthen in-group identity and belonging. Though this study was only interested in a very specific cultural group and is not generalizable across all populations, this this study provides another example of how SIT and the metacontrast principle holds true.

Other aspects of the social identity process were also apparent through the analysis of these images. Both task and socioemotional communication were illustrated within groups, both in-group and out-groups. This is important because in order to be considered a group, the group must balance both types of communication, otherwise the group is no more than an aggregate.

Also key to the process of social identification is depersonalization. Images that showed groups with no people, and therefore no self, highlighted the concept of depersonalization. Social identification, or the labeling of self and others as part of larger groups can cause the perception of self to change as an interchangeable part of a larger group, where the unique person is no longer the focus. This can lead to a depersonalized sense of self and others.

**Multiple Identities.** Everyone carries multiple identities and these identities are hierarchically placed within cognitive prototypes which are then expressed and made relevant through communication with others both belonging to one's group(s) and not belonging to one's group(s). The primary purpose of this study was to uncover which identities were most salient amongst Syrian refugee orphans living in Jordan. The three salient identities in these drawings were national, religious, and family identities. Of

these, only one was a high order identity, being national identity. The other two identities exist within the larger national identity.

The current context of Syria makes the salient national identity especially complicated, as, multiple groups are fighting within Syria against each other identifying as Syrians. All of the flags seen in this sample of drawings belonged to the Syrian Free Army. This group is in conflict with the group led by the current leader, Bashar Al' Assad. Both flags were seen in the drawings, though, the Free Syrian Army flag was always drawn in a positive light and correlated with in-group belonging; whereas the Assad Regime Flag was drawn as loosing or in a negative light and correlated with out-group belonging. Rather than being nested identities, these identities are superordinate and higher order identities that are parallel to each other, which causes friction and leads to violent intergroup relations.

Religious and national identity are intertwined within the culture and the findings, showing that these children had the most folk terms or ways to describe national identity and only portrayed three social groups, religious, national, and family makes sense within the current context. Even though Syrians are seventy-five percent Sunni whereas Assad's family is Shia Alawite, the sample of drawings consistently represented national identity as the most common domain theme. This high order identity of nationality was foremost in the minds of these children and may reflect their desire for the Syrian Free Army to be in charge of Syria rather than the Assad Regime- a Regime where the Assad family has been in power since the 1970's (father, then son) with political oppression and high unemployment, along with the Arab spring and its successful protests in neighboring Arab states.

Family identity was the most proximal form of identity; where, the relationship with the family directly and immediately impacts the individual. Furthermore, family identity was the most concrete of the three identities. This religious and national identities are more abstractly conceptualized, though, as seen in this study, clear and unified symbols are used as identifiers across the population. For example, the signifier for national identity, the Syrian Free Army flag was seen 25 times, with only one flag being different. This flag was the National Syrian flag under the Assad regime and was on fire and on the ground in the drawing. Thus, though national identity is distal and conceptually more abstract than an individual's family, the flag represented a common folk term across the whole population to represent national identity.

**Trauma.** By far, the largest shared domain from this sample was war. There were more folk terms to describe war than any other cover term. 22 shared terms were used to describe war. War and the effects of war were a shared experience across the population and undoubtedly shaped the social identification of the children in this study. Experiencing and fleeing violence was a shared experience that bonded the group together.

The analysis revealed that the group saw both positive and negative results of war. Injury, blood, and death, all common terms describing war, were shared negative views of war; whereas, pride, victory, and freedom, all positive results of war, were shared positive views of war. It was apparent through these drawings that these children had seen death and had seen war itself. The drawings were insight into personal experiences and the detail given to means of war and places for war could only have been done using first hand experiences considering the age of the children

involved. More research is needed on the effect that shared trauma has on social identity within groups, especially within groups of children.

### **Methodological Implications**

The use of children's drawings as a tool for interviews opens more possibilities to work with children. As researchers interested in human communication, it is necessary to work with children. Much of how humans communicate is learned, both tacitly and formally, as children. This occurs largely through social groups. Groups are part of nearly every aspect of the human experience. As described by Frey (1994): "From birth to death, small groups help define who we are and want to be, how we live and relate to others, whether we will be successful professionally, and even how we are put to rest after we die" (p. 2). Most individuals spend the majority of their lives in groups. Socialization occurs in groups, humans live and work in groups, and so forth. Socialization into groups, and the later identification with a group, occurs through communication and begins at birth.

This method can also help to ease cultural and language barriers. As discussed in the literature review, it has been argued that there is a universal pattern of development in children's drawings. Though not discussed in the findings, this was very apparent in the drawings. Many of the pictures looked just like what one might expect a children's drawing to look like here in the United States. A bright yellow sun in the corner, blue skies, flowers, people drawn in similar ways. The culture and context shaped the overall content and patterns throughout, but the universality still remained the same. How drawing occurs is universal and can be used as a tool of analysis across cultures.

One clear application for this research is the focus on drawings as a tool for interviews. As discussed in the literature review, drawing is a form of communication and acts as a language for children. The method used for the domain analysis in this study came from Spradley's (1979) book on ethnographic interviews. Rather than using spoken interviews and spoken responses, drawings were used to uncover folk terms. The use of drawings when working with children of another culture can be useful in bridging cultural and linguistic gaps. Furthermore, the literature on children's drawings illustrates that artwork is often used when working with children who have been through a traumatic experience. There is no doubt that the refugee orphans have undergone great trauma. This methodology may provide a therapeutic release, while having practical uses for assessment aiding in recall of sometimes painful events. The domain analysis and taxonomy from this study can be used to create interviews using the cultural understanding of the population. Thus, this research yields a methodological tool for ethnographers to further explore.

### **Limitations**

Though drawings were used to help limit cultural and language barriers, these barriers still existed. The most notable language limitation occurred at the collection of the data in Jordan. The researcher was not present, so it was impossible to know how the question, "where is your happy place" was translated and interpreted. Though these unknowns existed at the fore end, the drawings still provide great cultural insight into the identities of this population.

Though this study offers insight in to group identification through SIT, this data is not generalizable. Due to its interpretive nature this research will provide insight into a

very specific group of people, Syrian refugee orphans in Jordan. In order to develop more generalizable data, quantitative data would need to be gathered across a larger segment of refugee populations and include multiple ages along with national and ethnic refugee populations. Along with drawings, surveys could also be used to determine elements of social identification. Correlations between variables could then be calculated to determine salience of self-categorizations. Potential limitations include gaining access and gaining trust within the population.

### **Future Directions**

There are many uses for the data that may be collected. Perhaps through the understanding of which identities are most salient amongst the children, aid workers and workers in the orphanage can have a better understanding of the culture that they are working with. Thus, this study has the potential to help close culture gaps. In the future, this study could also prove helpful for individuals helping in cultural integration and adaptation, such as second language teachers. Workshops can be developed using the cultural understanding from this study. These workshops could aid in the identity negotiation that must take place for successful cross-cultural adaptation. Furthermore, this research can aid international governments in knowing just who the refugee populations are. This information could potentially supply governments with more information about both who is being let into countries and who is being left out to wait in refugee camps. Along with providing a stepping stone for future research with this population or other groups of Syrian refugees, this research can be continued to study communication processes and the process of social identification through the use of children's drawings.



Furthermore, this research offers perspective into an aspect of the theory that has not been largely studied; identity formation and self-identification of refugee populations. As was revealed in the literature review, there is a major paucity of applied communication research

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION

This applied study was a communication study seeking to understand the process of social identification amongst Syrian refugee orphans living in Jordan. Though the primary theory for this study came from social psychology, this study was a communication study, viewing communication as “the lifeblood that flows through the veins of groups: (Frey, 1994, p.2). The social identities revealed in this study were a phenomenon of communication. The groups and signifiers for the groups emerged through communication. Identities are maintained, shared, inscribed, and shaped through communication with others. The drawings analyzed in this study were a form of communication; as, they communicated aspects of identity and were a response to the question “where is your happy place?”

This thesis began by identifying the population and the severity of the current refugee crisis. The literature review then defined identity and group identification, along with providing a thorough review of SIT, ways in which refugee identities have been examined, and how children’s drawings have been analyzed. Through qualitative research methods, specifically structured methods derived from cognitive anthropology, this thesis aims to provide more information about the identities of Syrian refugees through the general research question: What group and communal identities are most salient amongst Syrian refugee orphans residing in Jordan? Through the analysis of children’s drawings, it was found that national, religious, and family identity are the most salient identities amongst this population. Another important finding was that war was an experience that had shared folk terms and bonded the group together. Furthermore,

ways in which social categorization, such as the meta-contrast principle, were illustrated through the analysis.

This research has a variety of uses and applications and resonates with current events. It is hoped that this study is expanded in the future to include the analysis of more drawings and possibly even compare drawings with interviews. There is a great paucity of research with both refugee populations and with children, especially in the field of communication. Through such applied communication research, it may be possible to aid refugee groups around the world. This research may also prove useful for government agencies and relief organizations by providing cultural insight into this population as the first step for intervention and aid.

Though research should test and further theories within the field, applied research has the potential to take theoretical understandings to a whole new level. This study sought to better understand the culture of a group that is suffering great loss, both as refugees and as children of war. It is my hope that this research leads to future research with this group and others. The gaining of cultural knowledge is the first step to identifying needs within a group. It is impossible to communicate and work with a group without completing the first step of gaining cultural knowledge and appreciation.

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## APPENDIX



## Semantic Analysis Form

1. Semantic Relationship:
2. Form:
3. Example:

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Included Terms

Semantic Relationship

Cover Term

## VITA

Elizabeth Hampton Hurst was born in Newark, Delaware, on 11 March 1992, the daughter of Ruth A. Hurst and Dudley J. Hurst. She grew up on a beef farm in East Tennessee with her sisters Christine M. Hurst and Rebecca A. Hurst. After completing high school at Wartburg Central High School, she went on to Georgia Wesleyan, an all-women's college in Macon, Georgia, where she completed a Bachelor of Liberal Arts in 2014 with concentrations in both music and communication.

During her undergraduate career, Elizabeth was very active on campus and in the community. On campus, she acted as the campus music minister, was captain of the Equestrian Team, was a member of the auditioned women's choir, was the Equestrian Club Treasurer, and was a lead member of the Wesleyan Admissions Volunteer Experience. Along with completing regular volunteer work in the community, she also was a paid singer at St. Joseph's Catholic Church. Upon graduation, she moved to Germany, where she took intensive German language classes over the course of a year. After returning from Germany, she began working on her Master's in Communication and Information Science, in the School of Communication Studies at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

During her time at the University of Tennessee, Elizabeth dove into her research, with special interests in intercultural communication, identity formation, cross-cultural adaptation, migrant population, and interreligious dialogue. Many of her research interests derived from her time growing up in rural Appalachia, and time spent in Germany. Elizabeth presented her research at multiple conferences, receiving top paper awards twice: once at the University of Tennessee's CCI Annual Research

Symposium and again at the Southern States Communication Association annual conference. Along with presenting at multiple conferences, Elizabeth worked as both a research assistant in her first year and taught a unit of Public Speaking her second year. Elizabeth will graduate with her Master's of Science in August of 2017 and will continue on to complete her Doctor of Philosophy in Communication Studies at the University of Oklahoma.