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Lived experiences, migration journey, religiosity, and spirituality depicted in drawings by Latino children and youth crossing the U.S. Mexican border: A qualitative study.

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LIVED EXPERIENCES, MIGRATION JOURNEY, RELIGIOSITY, AND

SPIRITUALITY DEPICTED IN DRAWINGS BY LATINO CHILDREN AND YOUTH

CROSSING THE U.S. MEXICAN BORDER: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

By

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A Dissertation approved on

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DEDICATION

To survive the Borderlands
you must live *sin fronteras*
Be a crossroads
Gloria Anzaldua

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Dulcinea Magalhaes Sato and Takashi Sato,

who taught me the value of education even though they had little access to it. Although

my father is no longer in this world, his visionary ideas profoundly impacted my life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

LIVED EXPERIENCES, MIGRATION JOURNEY, RELIGIOSITY, AND
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Widespread violence forces thousands of Central American children to endure a hazardous journey toward the U.S. Border seeking refuge. In the Latino community, faith serves as a social movement of resistance against oppression, playing a vital role in migration. There is a paucity of research documenting this experience and children's overall journey. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the lived experience of crossing international borders, religiosity, and spirituality depicted in Latino children's drawings used as coping methods to endure the journey toward the U.S. southern border. This investigation employed Art-based approaches to give voices to children's experiences by analyzing 63 drawings gifted to the Arte de Lágrimas. Participatory visual research methodologies (PVRM) guided the analysis. The application of these methods concentrates on describing the drawings' compositionality and color significance. Content analysis followed this process, focusing on the figures' frequency counts in the drawings and a coding scheme based on categories. A concept mapping approach was applied to identifying themes. Study results identified themes related to memories of homeland, connection with nature, sense of community before migrating, facing fears linked to the

border crossing, and religious symbols and language of spirituality as strategies relied on to counter the hardships faced in their migration journey. These findings suggested that children applied the resources before migrating to adjust their behaviors to cope during the travel. Children were fully aware of the perilous journey. Family and a sense of community helped them preserve self-consciousness. Minors applied faith to seek comfort, encouragement, and meaning in the lived experience. It was found that children's drawings can be a powerful data source for amplifying and giving voice to displaced children's lived experiences by telling their stories in visual form. Future studies on the role of spirituality and religiosity in children under risk exposure to serve post-traumatic healing are suggested.

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PREFACE

I am a female mixed-race person of Portuguese, Japanese, African, and Indigenous heritage raised in a Latino culture with multiple lenses of religiosity and spiritual beliefs with a worldview steep in humanistic psychology, which brings these elements to the study design and analysis of the findings. My experience of economic deprivation, social rejection, and limited access to resources of all kinds of means shaped my view of overcoming these challenges. It made me believe in investing in my education to climb the social ladder and acquire knowledge to make meaning of my hurdles. Despite all the challenges, these limitations have not prevented me from having a joyful childhood and adult life. The religiosity and spiritual beliefs in the Latino cultural context were additional resources to build my resilience, and the education path was vital to giving meaning to the adversities. Through a formal education, I learned about the history of immigration of my ancestors. Since then, this theme has become my interest. However, a working volunteer experience with refugee families in Houston, especially children, deeply resonated with me. Despite the unsafe immigration trajectory taken by their family, the children demonstrated curiosity, joy, and openness to learn. From that moment, both themes intersected, and I was eager to learn more about the children's migration experience. Hence, I am interested in understanding how these children build resilience meaningfully and the role of spirituality and religiosity in overcoming odds in childhood.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, an increasing number of vulnerable people have been documented fleeing violence from Central American countries in search of safety and asylum in the U.S. Among these individuals are children, some as young as 12 years- old and younger, who often fall prey to human trafficking, slave trading, and prostitution rings (Krogstad et al., 2014). They enter the U.S. to join an estimated 10.5 million Latino immigrants already living in the United States without legal permission (Gonzalez-Barrera et al., 2020).[1]

Even with the recent increases, mass migration from Central America is not a new phenomenon. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, individuals escaping the plague of civil war and armed conflicts in this area contributed to a massive exodus toward the U.S. (Stinchcomb & Hershberg, 2014). For instance, in 1986, 200,000 Central Americans were granted authorization to live in the country. After residing in the U.S. for one decade they could bring their families, according to the immigration policy in place at that time (Stinchcomb & Hershberg, 2014). Between 1998 and 2001, Honduran, Nicaraguan, and Salvadoran citizens fleeing from natural disasters and civil wars were granted entrance into the U.S. through the policy of temporary protected status (TPS) (Stinchcomb & Hershberg, 2014). Although adults had been immigrating for decades, the mid-2000s brought about a new surge of immigrants, children traveling alone and within family

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[1] According to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health (OMH), Latino or Hispanic population includes person from Cuba, Mexico, Puerto Rico, South or Central American countries.

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units. The child migration surge—children crossing the U.S. border alone or accompanied by adults—in 2014 brought a new mass migration pattern from Central America and Mexico (Hing, 2020).

The immigration policy has been in place since the 1990s for Central American asylum seekers. However, when the new phenomenon of minors attempting to cross the U.S. border became apparent (Hing, 2020), American law needed to address those immigrant children entering the U.S. The Homeland Security Act of 2002, Pub. L. No. 107-296, § 462, 116 Stat. 2205 (2002) defines an "unaccompanied alien child" (UAC) as someone who: enters the United States without legal immigration status; is under the age of 18; and crosses the U.S. border with no parent or legal guardian residing in the U.S. territory to provide for their care and custody (Congress.Gov, 2021). In Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) registered 50,036 unaccompanied minors from Mexico and the Northern Triangle countries—Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador—at the Southwest U.S. border. In FY 2019, 76,020 children crossed the border without adult supervision. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic continuing throughout 2020, a total of 30,557 unaccompanied children crossed the border into the United States (U.S. Customs and Border Protection, 2021).

In addition to UAC, the second group of children arriving at the U.S.-Mexican border consists of accompanied minors. These children travel with their parents or legal guardians to the border and are apprehended by the U.S. government upon their arrival on North American soil. In FY 2018, CBP apprehended 107,212 families at the U.S. Southwest border. By contrast, the number of family units crossing the border in FY 2019 was four times higher than the previous year, totaling 473,682 apprehensions. Although

recorded immigration was reduced, the spread of the Coronavirus was not a factor in deterring many newcomers from migrating. In FY 2020, a total of 52,230 family units attempted to cross the border and were apprehended by the U.S. Border Patrol (U.S. Customs and Border Protection, 2021).

Who are the Children Crossing the United States-Mexico Border

The majority of these minor immigrants once came primarily from Mexico. However, the growth in child migration observed in the last few years has been predominantly youths originating from so-called Northern Triangle countries - Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador (Amuedo-Dorantes & Puttitanun, 2016). For instance, in FY 2021, Guatemalan children apprehended at the U.S. border made up almost half of the newcomers (47%), followed by Honduran (32%) and Salvadoran (13%). The vast majority were boys, accounting for 66% of arrivals and 34% of which were girls (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2021).

In the last five years, the majority of minors crossing the border were between the ages of 13 to 17 (39% were 15 to 16 years old, 33% were aged 17, and 13% were aged 13 to 14). In addition, there has been an alarming increase in the number of infants to pre-adolescents crossing the border. In the surge of child mass migration in FY 2014, 21% of the minors at the border were infants to twelve-year-olds (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2021). They rarely take this journey alone, either traveling with parents or guardians. However, these young children tend to get separated from their parents and guardians when smugglers kidnap the adults and leave them behind with the older children, who may take responsibility for them until they encounter U.S. border patrol authorities (Rodriguez et al., 2019).

Many of these minors come from remote rural areas and speak indigenous languages (Jawetz & Shuchart, 2019). Particularly in Guatemala, where Spanish is the official language, 40% of the population speaks indigenous dialects, and many are illiterate either in their indigenous idiom or Spanish (Jawetz & Shuchart, 2019). These populations suffer rejection and persecution in their home country for being considered at the lower level/classes of society (Patrinos, 2000). Consequently, they feel forced to migrate to the U.S., seeking better opportunities denied to them in their country (Hing, 2020).

Reasons for Crossing the U.S. Border

A substantial body of literature has documented reasons for attempts to cross the U.S. border. The primary reason identified is that families are forced to flee with their children trying to escape generalized violence in their countries of origin (Ataiants et al., 2018; Rodriguez & Dawkins, 2017). The pervasive presence of gangs in their community often results in brutal disputes of regional and economic power (Stinchcomb & Hershberg, 2014). Persecution, extortion, abduction, and rape were daily threats to these families. Thus, they had no other choice but to leave their home and seek protection for their children. Many minors crossed borders alone or were forcibly separated from their family during the migration or while under U.S. custody, accumulating additional traumas with adverse outcomes (Menjívar & Perreira, 2019; de la Peña et al., 2019; Teicher, 2018).

Researchers differ in their understanding of the complex reasons for the rise in child immigration. Donato and Sisk (2015) stressed that there were no obvious single motives concerning the increase in child migration. Overlapping reasons have been

attributed to the decision to attempt to leave the country of origin and cross the U.S. Southern Border, such as poverty, domestic violence, organized crime, attempts at family reunification, need for better education, and job opportunities (Carlson & Gallaher, 2015). Specifically, a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2014) study on 404 unaccompanied children attempting to enter the U.S. from Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Mexico found that 48% of these children were impacted individually by the violence perpetrated by the organized crime gangs in their countries. Children described themselves as targets that were forcibly recruited into organized crime gangs, facing daily threats, witnessing assassinations, and experiencing fear and familial distress (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2014). Carlson and Gallagher (2015) noted that the main fear for boys was gang recruitment and punishment for refusing to be part of criminal activities; for girls, it was the constant fear of being raped. Gilligant and Raghallaigh (2009) pointed out that these minors and families faced trauma in their previous home country, challenges during their journey, and ostracism in the new country once they arrived (Menjívar & Perreira, 2019).

Escaping current danger often prompted the decision to immigrate. However, the promise of uniting with an extended family network is a crucial factor for migrating to the United States. Donato and Sisk (2015) pointed out that there is an association between child immigration and his/her family immigration history. The influx of children and families from Central America and Mexico crossing the U.S. border is linked to an extensive system of family immigration connections. According to the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), Latino child migration is associated with their previous family experience. Children either migrated with their parents or endured a journey by

themselves to reunify with the family unit (as cited in Donato & Sisk, 2015, p. 60). Donato and Sisk (2015) stated that it was unclear why families would put their children in the position to make such a perilous journey alone. However, they noted that in case studies of Mexican families, child migration is a generational phenomenon whereby children, particularly boys, follow in their father's footsteps in the immigration journey. Carlson and Gallagher (2015) noted different reasons for girls: families preferred sending their daughters to the U.S. to protect them from gangs and the risk of sexual assault in their home countries.

Child maltreatment is another reason minors flee their home countries. For instance, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that 21% of Guatemalan children were living under a cycle of harm at home, either physical violence or psychological abuse (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2014). The narrative from these children included a dysfunctional family context where domestic abuse, negligence, and sexual assault were pervasive and omnipresent in their daily lives (Paris et al., 2018). The authors pointed out that these critical factors and risks contributed to child migration from Central America. In addition, societal violence was a determinant factor in leaving home. Carlson and Gallagher (2015) argued that youths and families decided to leave because of gang violence within communities and law enforcement's inability to control these threats. Commonly, the gang members threatened minors' families and hurt children for refusing to join the group. When families reported the situation to the police, the officers failed to protect the citizens (Carlson & Gallagher, 2015). Consequently, the lack of State protection impacted the children's daily lives, especially regarding schooling. Children mentioned that they are forced to leave their

education behind to avoid gang encounters as they are easy prey for gangsters in schools (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2014).

Furthermore, the widespread violence ranked the Northern Triangle countries the most dangerous worldwide in 2020 (Hing, 2020). According to Hing, El Salvador led the top list of the highest homicide rates worldwide, followed by Honduras in third and Guatemala in ninth place. The drug cartel's business model aggravated the situation and inflicted constant threats of coercion, burglary, and stealing on the community (Stinchcomb & Hershberg, 2014). Thus, children and their families had no other option but to engage in a dangerous journey with the hope of attaining protection.

Lastly, some politicians believe that Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) attracts Latino child migration. They argue that such a program creates an expectation that the minors would receive legal permission to stay in the United States, although research findings have concluded that DACA was not responsible for the increasing number of Latino children crossing the borders in 2012 and 2013. Instead, research supported previous findings that the main factor contributing to the minors and family migration was the generalized violence in their home countries (Amuedo-Dorantes & Puttitanun, 2016).

To sum up, the confluence of factors contributing to child and family migration is complex. Many minors have suffered family disruption at various levels and are forced to leave their homes. The decision to leave their home communities is a perilous one. However, additional danger often occurs during migration, where children can be re-traumatized by being exposed to risk factors such as hazards in the physical aspects of

making the trip. Therefore, a broader look at the issue requires examining the immigrant experience during the border crossing.

The Experiences of Children Crossing the U.S. Border

Dastjerdi et al. (2012) noted that unaccompanied and accompanied Latino minors had been exposed to dangerous situations during the crossing, threatening their safety and individual well-being. The route commonly used by migrants to cross the border is considered highly hazardous, especially for vulnerable children (Stinchcomb & Hershberg, 2014). For instance, data collected by Medecins Sans Frontières (2017) from 166 refugees crossing the desert in 2015 showed that 60 percent were raped, and 40 percent suffered other types of sexual assault. Human trafficking was also prevalent. Shetty (n.d.) stated that 20,000 individuals were abducted annually during border crossings. According to Stinchcomb and Hershberg (2014), human trafficking accounts for many abductions due to immigrants' inability to pay debts or meet gang demands. Frequently, undocumented immigrants were forced to work for the traffickers thereby exposing their children to psychological traumas (Stinchcomb & Hershberg, 2014).

Despite families contracting with smugglers to provide safe passage of their children across the border, many minors described the journey as perilous and unbearable (Paris et al., 2018). They reported walking long hours exposed to elevated temperatures and lacking food and water (Chavez & Menjívar, 2010). The life-threatening journey included being left behind in the middle of the desert (Paris et al., 2018), being prey to snakes, drowning in the river, or perishing from dehydration (Chavez & Menjívar, 2010). The experience can be even harsher, resulting in certain near certain death. Without financial means to contract with smugglers or buy bus tickets, many children take the

cargo train called La Bestia, also known as the Death Train, to cross Mexico secretly (Buchanan & Hilburn, 2016). They travel on the train roof, risking their lives to accidents or death. In addition, organized crime groups exploit children by charging fees to travel on the train, and those who lack financial means are thrown off the train or recruited to transport drugs in exchange for transport (Chavez & Menjívar, 2010).

When minors reach U.S. soil, many are apprehended by U.S. border patrol authorities. They may be processed as unaccompanied minors if the adults that they journeyed with fail to prove that they are the minors' parents or legal guardians (Linton et al., 2017). Once screened, they are transferred to the care of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) and placed into a safe shelter, or they are released to their extended family already living in the U.S. while awaiting the immigration hearing (Linton et al., 2017; U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2021). Similarly, children in family units are transferred to Family Residential Centers (FRC) following their expatriation or released into U.S. territory (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, 2021). While examining the children's experiences crossing the border is essential, it is also crucial to analyze the outcomes of being exposed to risk factors.

Trauma Exposure and Mental Health Outcomes

Studies have documented that severe trauma exposure affects immigrant youth's adaptation and emotional well-being, jeopardizing their full potential development (Fawzi & Stein, 2003). According to UNHCR (2014), unaccompanied minor refugees are at higher risk for negative outcomes due to the deficiency of a permanent caregiver upon their arrival. In all migration phases, these populations are exposed to risk factors that can contribute to psychological and physical impairments, such as depression and alcohol or

drug abuse (Lee, 2019). Findings demonstrated that trauma exposure is positively correlated with post-traumatic disorder (PTSD) (Müller et al., 2019; Hynie, 2018), episodes of depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, and lower life satisfaction (Seglem et al., 2014; Fawzi & Stein, 2003), substance, drug, and alcohol abuse (Zapata et al., 2016; Cardoso, 2018). Moreover, a literature review regarding gender differences in psychological health among unaccompanied minors in Europe revealed that girls were more vulnerable to depression and PTSD than boys, while there was no significant gender difference in anxiety and externalizing behavior (Mohwinkel et al., 2018). Other, studies have shown that trauma exposure affects the self-esteem of these children adding further mental health adversities post-migration. For instance, Baily et al. (2014) investigated lawyers' perception of unaccompanied minors' mental health facing deportation proceedings. The lawyers' report demonstrated that these children presented low esteem and behavioral problems, a high level of anxiety resulting in sleep disorders, and episodes of depression affecting their performance at school and social interrelationships.

In addition, unaccompanied minors tend to present emotional impairments that increase the risk for re-traumatization, such as personal injuries or sexual violence and social isolation (Paris et al., 2018). Although research findings suggested that Latino minor refugees are at risk of developing health impairments, not all Latino children refugees display physical or mental health conditions despite the odds (Ballard et al., 2016). Interestingly, a body of literature explores the concept of the "Hispanic Paradox," which illustrates that Latinos in the U.S. have better health outcomes than other racial groups with better socioeconomic circumstances (Donato & Duncan, 2011). Thus, the

following section will explore coping methods that might buffer some Latino minor refugees from developing adverse outcomes.

Protective Factors Contributing to the Coping Behavior

Latino children and families often face life-threatening circumstances during their border crossing. However, not all individuals who experience similar circumstances use the same coping methods to overcome the journey challenges. The differences in these methods may explain a successful border crossing by these individuals. For example, many children display robust coping methods during their journey. One study with unaccompanied minors released from ORR revealed that, although these children presented a high level of anxiety and depression, they rejected the idea of being victims (Baily, 2017). Nevertheless, before analyzing the diverse coping methods used by these populations, it is worth highlighting the protective factors that exist within the youth's culture that might mitigate the migration's harmful effects.

Ayón et al. (2017) affirmed that Latino families have unique resources that have historically helped them defeat the odds of negative outcomes following migration. These resources can be present at the individual level (e.g., hope and spirituality) and the social/ environmental level (e.g., family ties and social networks) and might support this population's tendency to overcome challenges faced during migration, and consequently should be examined by empirical research (Zayas et al., 2017).

Domains That Help to Build Resilience

     A literature review was performed by Cardoso and Thompson (2010) to understand which risk/protective factors were related to Latino immigrants as well as how these factors might shield these populations against adversities. The authors identified four domains that contribute to the resilience of Latino immigrants: individual attributes, family ties, a sense of community, and cultural values. The following paragraphs describe these domains in detail.

     Individual Attributes. Individual attributes are the first identified domain that contributes to the resilience of these populations. Individual attributes are generally associated with biological forces and psychosocial interactions that cause individuals to respond to risks differently than others (Condly, 2006). These internal assets help people strive to address risk factors, and include competence, coping skills, and self-efficacy (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). The authors highlighted the importance of competence in order to endure challenges positively. Competence is an individual asset associated with achievement, leading to a sense of self-mastery and self-efficacy that requires knowledge, skills, or ability (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005).

     Several studies among these populations have linked self-efficacy to academic achievement. Research on successful academic achievement among Latino students suggested that self-efficacy was a positive predictor for math achievement scores and school attendance (Niehaus et al., 2012). Likewise, Latino youth applied other assets such as social competence, intellect, autonomy, and motivation, which were correlated to academic outcomes at all educational levels as well as aspirations to engage for future

plans (Buriel et al., 1998; Torres Campos et al., 2009; Gonzalez et al., 2013; Manzano-Sanchez et al., 2018).

Another individual attribute worth highlighting in this population is self-esteem. A body of literature examining resilience among Latino families suggests that possessing a positive ethnic identity had a relationship with positive self-esteem, which lowered the effects of discrimination, reducing adverse mental health outcomes (Brietzke & Perreira, 2017; Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 2013). Baily (2017) investigated the mental health of Latino unaccompanied children pointing out that these youth emphasized their successful experience in crossing the border rather than reports of being victims of the circumstances. Moreover, Paris et al. (2018) stressed that other skills and abilities, such as assessing the circumstances, were crucial during their migration journey. For instance, the unaccompanied children were more open to sharing their feelings and experiences when the circumstances were less threatening; on the contrary, they could repress emotions in perceived life-threatening situations by facing gang members. (Paris et al., 2018).

Family Ties. The second domain that contributes to the resilience of this population is that of family ties or so-called *familismo*. *Familismo* is a value in Latino families that bonds relationships among family members, influences children in religious belief, fosters cultural competence, helps children to succeed at school, promotes family decision-making to improve stability, and endorses loyalty as well as cohesion (Ballard et al., 2016; Zayas et al., 2017; Campesino & Schwartz, 2006; Jocson et al., 2020). *Familismo* is an essential domain that affects a Latino individual's mental health in which factors such as respect and pride of being part of the family sustain emotional and

material support (Santiago-Riviera, 2003; Marin & Marin, 1991). Study findings suggested that Latino parents and youth' mental health symptoms decreased when the family ties level increased (Ayón et al., 2010). Similarly, monetary remittance is an example of how *familismo* sustains material support within Latino families. Remittances are earnings from overseas labor sent to family members who remained in the countries of origin (Lee, 2019). Many Latino families who remained in their home country rely on remittances for child support, household maintenance, or help to build a new house (Lee, 2019). Moreover, the author stressed that remittances help to keep the family connected even though significant distances separate members.

Sense of Community. The third domain of sense of community, plays a vital role in developing resilience among these populations (Cardoso & Thompson, 2010). Often, Latino families already have an extensive chain of social networks in the U.S., family members having settled there years prior to the immigration, to help buffer the adverse effects of a lack of services and resources available (Ayón & Naddy, 2013). The authors assert that this population depends upon friends, family, neighbors, and communities for emotional, financial, health, and educational support to strengthen their resilience in all phases of their migration to the U.S.

Cultural Values. Lastly, the domain of cultural values is essential to understanding the resilience present among Latino populations (Cardoso & Thompson, 2010). The authors state that cultural values and spiritual systems promote collective connectedness and strengthen family support. Latino families appreciate interpersonal connections stressing values such as deference and loyalty, significant consideration of cultural folklore, shared advice among individuals, and acceptance of various aspects of life also

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contribute to building resilience (Cardoso & Thompson, 2010). Hence, findings suggest that these values counter the harmful effects of discrimination, acculturation, and stressors associated with migration (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2010; Ballard et al., 2016).

Cultural values in Latino families emphasize family cohesion. A study with Mexican families investigated how the fathers' cultural beliefs predicted positive involvement with their children. Findings inferred a positive relationship between fathers' beliefs of men's responsibility within the family and perceived positive fathers' involvement reported by children (Cruz et al., 2011). Similarly, regarding Latina mother-child relationships, studies suggested that sharing migration experiences helps build family resilience and encourages children to develop new skills necessary to succeed in school and professional careers as a path to overcome barriers associated with poverty (D'Angelo et al., 2009; Perreira et al., 2006). Latino cultural traditions also serve as a protective factor and are commonly associated with coping with family separation, maintaining self-esteem, well-being, and healthy family functioning (D'angelo et al., 2009; Trueba, 2002). As cultural values promote social interconnectedness, it is vital to analyze how the sense of community helps to build resilience. In addition, Campesino and Schwartz (2006) stressed that *personalismo*, a Latino cultural value that emphasizes close relationships, influences their spiritual faith to connect with divine deities such as God, the Virgin of Guadalupe, and others. Such religious belief is transferred to kin networks fostering familial union. Thus, parental support often involves nurturing religious beliefs (Perreira et al., 2006). In Latino culture, religious practice also serves as a cultural symbol that shapes their ethnic identity and assists in resistance against social pressure. So, often, Latino families relate their struggles to their religious symbols as a

form of building resilience (Campesino & Schwartz, 2006). Despite the evidence that positive factors impact Latino minors' well-being, far too little attention has been paid to how young Latinos positively cope with risks associated with crossing. Therefore, the coping methods and resources used by these children in this context are worth examining.

Resources to Cope With Stressors

The application of individual attributes, family support, a sense of community, institutional and structural factors, and spirituality were the resources that the Latino community applied to defeat the immigration odds (Cardoso & Thompson, 2010; Zayas et al., 2017; Baily, 2017). At the individual level, these resources helped children shape certain attitudes and behaviors that could be essential survival strategies during their migration journey (Paris et al., 2018). Making meaning of challenging circumstances based on personal agency, cultural identity, and self-worth strengthens their ability to make decisions that in turn shape their attitudes to overcome challenges. Many Latino minor refugees reported self-beliefs that helped them cope with adversities during their migration. They believed that self-determination and courage shaped their mental strengths to succeed during their journey. For these minors, family connectedness was essential to determine their firmness in distressful moments, such as thinking of family members' advice to succeed in their journey so that they could see each other in the future (Baily, 2017).

In addition, children mentioned specific coping practices to deal with negative emotions and thoughts. For instance, some refugee children applied distraction as a coping behavior to transform negative feelings, such as cracking jokes with another person or simply speaking about positive things that could bring them joy (Baily, 2017).

Some minors suggested listening to music to practice relaxation and meditation to distance themselves from stressful circumstances (Baily, 2017). Other children, however, preferred to experience their emotions. Doing that allowed them to cry when they needed to release tension. For these children, after crying, they would feel better (Baily, 2017).

Another crucial coping resource for Latino minor refugees was family support. For children who traveled with family members, family support helped them to stay focused, positive, and in good spirits during the long border crossing (Baily, 2017). Several children stayed connected with family already living in the U.S. through phone, text, or email to report their progress and receive encouragement in tough times during the journey, as well as following their apprehension by U.S. immigration authorities (Baily, 2017). Additionally, the sense of community experienced during the journey was crucial for children, especially unaccompanied minors, in order to cope with challenges. Baily (2017) described that these children reported meeting people from different countries with whom they shared their stories, building a sense of community, and supporting those who traveled alone. Likewise, children traveling with paid coyotes formed large groups with other immigrants helping overcome the difficulties along the journey (Baily, 2017).

Further, a chain of institutional and structural factors provided informal and formal resources to help children cope with migration dangers. Baily (2017) described an immigration culture of local communities designed to help unaccompanied minors by offering shelter, food, water, and even money. Knowing that children could obtain immigration relief established by immigration laws, several children received orientation from family members or from other children, who attempted to migrate previously,

advising them to hand themselves over to the U.S. border patrol officials as soon as they reached the border (Baily, 2017). Similarly, for children traveling with coyotes, the smugglers passed the minors to the U.S. immigration authorities. Thus, in both cases, children were safe from the dangers of escaping U.S. border patrols (Baily, 2017).

Finally, spirituality played a vital role in overcoming the adversities of the migration process. Religiosity was described as a crucial coping attitude employed by Latino children refugees (Baily, 2017). Children prayed for divine protection, read the Bible, and gathered for a church during their journey. These religious coping behaviors helped children find spiritual comfort and strength to endure the border crossing (Baily, 2017).

In short, several children mentioned employing different coping behaviors and attitudes such as self-determination, courage, cracking jokes, making positive statements, listening to music, meditation, and prayers to minimize the stressors faced during their migration process. Faith was presented in every aspect of the coping process and was a significant resource for children to understand the journey experience. Hence, a broader examination of religion as a coping method will illuminate how faith, religion, and spirituality play a role in making meaning of their experience.

Religion as Coping Methods

Before discussing religious coping methods, it is essential first to define the constructs of spirituality, religiosity, and faith as well as differentiate them from related terms. The constructs have been used alternatively to describe how children crossing the U.S. border cope and overcome adversities. These constructs have been used

interchangeably to describe how individuals cope with life stressors (Counted et al., 2018; Roehlkepartain, 2014).

Defining Constructs: Spirituality, Religiosity, and Faith

The conceptualization of spirituality in dictionaries is linked to religious values or something that opposes the physical state (Lexico, n.d.; Merriam-Webster, n.d.). In other words, spirituality does not necessarily involve religious context (Campesino et al., 2009). Spirituality is a fluid construct that can be developed, shaped by personal experiences, and changed through life processes (Delagran, 2016). Usually, spirituality is a broad concept explained as a sacred experience that transcends human experience interconnected to something beyond the common understanding and gives a sense of purpose in life (Delagran, 2016). Spirituality might be connected to religious practice (church, temple, mosque, synagogue). However, it can also be related to a private dialogue with God or other divine figures with powerful characteristics not necessarily embedded with religious institutions. In addition, for some individuals, arts, and nature may work as channels to seek spirituality and meaning in life (Delagran, 2016).

Conversely, religiosity is associated with an organized system of faith (Campesino, 2009). "It is the quality or state of being religious: religious feelings or devotion" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Religion focuses more on an established system of ideas that builds social commitment (Wulff, 1997). Nevertheless, studies have reported that individuals use religion to cope with challenges. As such, religiosity can be described as the process of searching for meaning in life through sacred beliefs (Pargament, 1997).

On the other hand, faith is embedded in both concepts to express the belief in God or other figures with similar divine characteristics, but it can also be referred to as having

a strong trust in someone or something (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Roehlkepartain (2014) suggested that these terms are interconnected and should not be analyzed as synonymous. Instead, they should be seen as a family tree where some members have much in common while others have little.

In Latino communities, religiosity and spirituality were merged and shaped by history (Spanish Christian colonization and evangelization) and culture (indigenous faith practice). The Spanish colonizers imposed religion as a mechanism of domination and cultural oppression upon indigenous communities attempting to create a hegemonic Latin American (de la Torre & Martin, 2016). Nevertheless, the resistance of these communities against oppression that refused to abandon their spiritual beliefs promoted a distinct cultural expression of religion known as *religiósidad* popular or popular religion (de la Torre & Martin, 2016; Campesino et al., 2009).

Popular religion in Latin America contains numerous saints and sacred beings, including saints for protection during illegal migration, beliefs in miracles, and mutual communication between the sacred and the human (de la Torre & Martin, 2016). Simultaneously, Latinos incorporated Western religious beliefs as well. A recent survey conducted in 2020 suggested that most Latinos recognize themselves as Catholics (Statista, 2021), in which religious practice may or may not include Catholic church attendance (Campesino et al., 2009). However, new waves of changing religious beliefs have occurred in Latin America. Malamud (2018) states that 20 percent of all Latin Americans are evangelicals. To illustrate, ten percent of Mexicans have joined evangelical Protest churches recently. The number increases in Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Argentina, and Panama, where 15 percent of the population identified

themselves as evangelicals. In Brazil and Costa Rica, the number reaches 20 percent, and in Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, the number can exceed 40 percent. Hence, this hybridization characteristic of popular religion explains the blending between cultural traditions and religious affiliation, beliefs, and practices within the Latino community (de la Torre & Martin, 2016). This fusion of religious and spiritual beliefs is the pillar of the Latinos' faith, and it is the central resource for building resilience.

Based on the unique character of each individual's faith, the terms spirituality, religiosity, and faith will be used distinctively in this study to capture how Latino immigrants search for connectedness, meaning, and inner comfort when conflicted with the stressors of crossing borders. Each of these terms focuses on one aspect of the inner world. The use of religiosity/religiousness/religion will focus on institutionalized aspects of religious beliefs used to overcome the stressors of immigration. Simultaneously, an examination of spirituality will pay attention to an individual's search for interconnectedness to something beyond their human experience that is not necessarily related to an institutionalized religious practice. Lastly, faith will frame both concepts to refer to strong trust in someone or something that supports the Latinos in order to endure their journey.

One function of religion is to provide a sense of order and meaning in individuals' lives. Often, people turn to religion to find answers and comfort during turbulent times. Faith plays a vital role in people's lives to overcome challenges (Pargament, 2010). Counted et al. (2018) reported a 60% positive association between spirituality and quality of life in patients facing severe illness regarding physical health and psychological functioning. Schuster et al. (2001) mentioned a national survey of Americans' findings

during the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks, whereby 90% of Americans turned to religion to seek support and consolation (as cited in Pargament, 2010, p. 270). Despite the evidence of spirituality present in people's lives, little is known about the role of religion in coping with stressful situations.

Religion is not a synonym for coping. Pargament (2010) argued that the process of coping involves stressful situations in life that may or may not include the application of religious thoughts and practices in order to address the situation. Conversely, religion involves sacred reasoning for understanding the significance of human experience, not only during times of suffering. Religion and coping behaviors may operate independently, overlap, or work together for a period of time and then separate at a point in time.

Offering prayers, attending church, and participating in Bible study are the most well-known religious coping methods (Pargament, 2010). However, other methods may serve more powerfully in challenging times in life. For instance, one religious coping method used to find meaning can be described as benevolent religious reappraisal, in which the stressors hold meaningful benefits for the individual (e.g., a severe illness can be redefined through religion as a resource for significant meanings). A second example of religious coping is collaborative religious coping used to gain proficiency and control. This coping method aims to solve a problem in partnership with "God." The individual may take action toward the solution of a problem, but she/he may also ask for divine guidance (Pargament, 2010).

Additionally, individuals applying religious coping to gain comfort and closeness to "God" may seek a spiritual connection with supernatural forces (e.g., chanting mantras to seek connectedness). Individuals seeking support from clergy or congregational

members to gain intimacy with others and closeness to "God" is another form of religious coping. Lastly, a religious coping method intended to achieve profound life change can be described as religious conversion. Individuals use this coping method when seeking a fundamental life transformation in which the self-image and the sacred are identified (Pargament, 2010). A comprehensive analysis of the religious coping methods indicated that these strategies affect peoples' spiritual dimensions and help them mentally, physically, and socially. Therefore, it is imperative to examine how spirituality works among Latinos and its significance for the social work field.

Importance of Spirituality for the Latino Community

Popular religious practices intertwined forces between mortal human and divine actions that fostered humility in the physical world in the Latino community (Campesino et al., 2009). As discussed elsewhere, in this population, *religiósidad popular* or popular religion served as a social movement of resistance (Broyle-González, 2002). Broyle-González (2002) argued that indigenous-Mexican collective spiritual practice defied the imposed colonial Catholicism through self-agency of empowerment and miraculous narrative as a counter-discourse of the established order. Research findings suggested that spirituality and religious coping mechanisms among this population are associated with resisting social oppression and injustices and helping individuals cope with personal and social challenges (Campesino et al., 2009; Falicov, 2014).

The spirituality and religious practices among Latino community members differ in many ways. First, the nature of Latino culture is collectivist; therefore, this aspect of their faith is rooted within the family and community. Broyle-González (2002) argued that the miraculous narrative mentioned earlier symbolizes a collective protest giving

freedom from daily hardships. The second aspect of Latino spirituality is viewed concerning practice. Even though most Latinos identify themselves as Catholics, their practice does not necessarily involve belonging to or attending church. Latinos devote high respect to members' clergy and add faithful relationships with other saints and deities that allow them to practice their faith at home (Goizueta, 2005). Lastly, Latinos' religious practices reinforce their ethnic identity, helping them cope with personal difficulties and social challenges (Falicov, 2014).

Latino spirituality and religious practices are deeply embedded in one's daily routine, playing a fundamental role in their life, including deciding to leave home and offering individual and collective support throughout all stages of their migratory route. According to Hagan (2008), four out of five prospective Latino immigrants sought spiritual guidance from clergy regarding whether to migrate. Many Latino immigrants coped with the uncertainties of leaving home by searching for spiritual and religious guidance through the worship of saints and seeking out religious groups, or trustful clergy, for counseling and blessings (Hagan, 2008). For instance, following their decision to leave home, some migrants prayed to divine deities such as *La Virgen de San Juan de Los Lagos*, Lady of Guadalupe (*Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe*), and San Judas Tadeo (the patron saint of lost causes) and waited for a blessing indicating that they were ready to go (Hagan, 2008). The expected divine sign may manifest through reading a passage from sacred books, receiving a blessing from a trustful clergy, or even contracting the services of a reliable coyote who would serve as a guide during the cross (Hagan, 2008).

Scholars investigating the Latino community's religious beliefs pointed out that these signs or messages were powerful and present in the Latino culture, shaping the

people's actions (Hagan, 2008). In the case of prospective migrants, these signs served as a positive indication that they could move forward with plans to leave; on the contrary, without a divine message, the plans should be postponed (Hagan, 2008). The divine negotiation to obtain the migration blessing was a private dialogue with religious institutions. Hagan explained that migrants sought priests or pastors to comfort their spiritual needs, share deeper concerns, and seek guidance when making vital life decisions.

Purpose of the Current Study

Given the significant role of religion in the Latino culture, researchers have invested little effort in addressing religious coping methods present and used by members of this population. Existing studies on spirituality and religious coping have focused primarily on young adults and explored the relationship between spiritual and religious coping with perceived stress, critical consciousness, post-traumatic growth, and resilience (Garrido, 2009; Frank, 2014; Cesar, 2014). However, none of these investigations discussed coping methods and religious behaviors in the context of child migration. Failing to address the application of spiritual coping on migration in this population results in creating a gap in understanding, including the capacity to create meaning to overcome unbearable situations, connect and support each other during the journey, and develop self-awareness in facing challenges. Hence, this study aims to shed light on this void in the field by drawing from first-hand accounts of immigrant Latino minors. These accounts are captured through drawings and will explore children's experiences crossing the U.S. border in the form of their personal drawings. Further, symbols

representing spiritual and religious beliefs in the drawings suggest coping methods used by the children to endure their journey.

Therefore, this investigation explores the following research questions: (1) What do the children's drawings reveal about their life/lived experience before coming to the U.S.? (2) How are children's migration journeys depicted in their drawings? (3) What are the spiritual and religious images depicted in the children's drawings? (4) What are the differences in children's lived experiences and use of spiritual and religious images based on their gender, age, and country of origin? (5) What are other topics depicted in the drawings?

Significance of the Study to Social Work

This project may provide insights to social workers and local communities about the significance of faith within these populations' lives. Research has suggested that spirituality and religious beliefs may help mitigate the stresses and adverse effects of hardships in life (Campesino et al., 2009; Falicov, 2014). Hence, this study may contribute to implementing programs to improve protection for displaced Latino minors and offering comfort and psychosocial support by considering how religion and spirituality support resilience in response to crises (Ager et al., 2015). To strengthen community response institutions that work with Latino minors could share knowledge with their networks about the minors' faith narratives and the social and cultural perspective of their faith. Thus, local providers armed with culturally sensitive skills and consciousness could explore sustainable community resources to help Latino minors overcome adversities faced during migration to the U.S. by promoting a sense of identity, connectedness, and belonging.

Understanding the role of faith in building resilience can provide future-focused thinking by enhancing personal resources in the form of increased confidence in youths' ability to resist the harmful effects of migration and plan for the future meaningfully. In addition, this study will share the children's voices through their drawings in order to express the lived experience of crossing borders as agents of their worlds (Hickey-Moody et al., 2021). Lastly, from the research perspective, this study can illuminate the children's experience through an alternative form of inquiry (drawings), expanding new prospects of scholarship for these populations.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will provide an overview of the theories— (1) risk and resiliency theory, (2) religion and coping theory, and (3) Hay and Nye's theory of children's spirituality— and the literature review that will help frame this study's research questions. This section will illuminate the further understanding of religious coping strategies employed by these children to create resilience (Pargament, 2010; Zimmerman, 2013), explore spirituality in making meaning, increase self-awareness with others, the environment, and the transcendent power all of which combine to support emotional well-being (Hay & Nye, 2006). The chapter will conclude with an overview of investigations that use children's drawings as a research method.

Theoretical Perspectives

Risk and Resilience Theory

Pickren (2014) pointed out earlier studies on resilience from the 1930s to the post-war era associated stress with health outcomes, suggesting individual attributes' role in overcoming stress. From the end of the 1960s through the 1970s, studies on coping and stress linked to health and disease were influential among psychologists. In addition, the role of cognitive factors—appraisal and social support—contributed to the work of hardiness. Meanwhile, due to the long period of racism and oppression in America, studies on resilience became more evident. Humanistic and existential psychology were influential theories in America's post-war era. Such approaches focus on the human potential to overcome adversities in life. These approaches were the foundation for

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developing positive psychology at the end of the twentieth century. Since then, resilience

studies have become the pillar, especially in developmental psychopathology. Different

constructs have been added to resilience, mainly thriving and post-traumatic growth

(Pickren, 2014).

Nowadays, Zimmerman's (2013) research focuses on risk and resilience in

children and youth. Risk and Resilience theory asserts that children and youth possess

inner resources of strength to overcome challenges despite being exposed to risk factors.

Further, risk and resilience theory focuses on inner individual forces by countering or

stabilizing social risk factors that might interfere in the children's and youth's

emotional/behavioral development and health outcomes (Zimmerman, 2013). This theory

seeks to explain why some individuals have not developed the mental and physical health

issues experienced by others despite experiencing similar adversities (Masten et al.,

2007). The fundamental idea of risk and resilience theory is that promotive factors

operate against risk factors to help individuals overcome odds (Fergus & Zimmerman,

2005). Assets and resources are considered promotive factors. Therefore, assets are

considered internal factors, such as self-esteem and self-efficacy, which can be defined as

one's judgments to regulate one's motivation, thought processes, and environment to

obtain the desired goal (Bandura & Schunk, 1981). Self-esteem is related to a sense of

self-perception of worthiness, a judgmental assessment of being a great and valuable

individual (Neff, 2011). In contrast, resources are considered external factors such as

mentors, youth programs, and family support that help children/youth learn and develop

new skills (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). Research supports the understanding that assets

and resources are vital factors in order for children to flourish healthily (Zimmerman, 2013).

Risk and resilience theory can be used as a framework to understand adversities experienced by unaccompanied and accompanied Latino minors crossing the U.S. border employing a strength-based lens. In all phases of migration, minors are exposed to risk factors that can contribute to psychological and physical impairments resulting from violence, food deprivation, and discrimination (Lee, 2019). Researchers examining positive psychological adjustment in immigrant-origin children and youth suggested that maintaining ethnic and host cultures demonstrated a higher level of self-esteem and lower level of anxiety was associated with positive academic outcomes and behavior compared to children from nonimmigrant-origin peers (Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 2013). The recurrent values of *personalismo* and *familismo* are prevalent resources that help Latinos, including Latino minors, buffer immigration stressors (Campesino et al., 2009) by providing a foundation upon which negative experiences can be reframed and evaluated.

Risk and Resilience Models. There are several risk-resilience models discussed in the literature. However, they are not as dissimilar as might be expected. For example, they all share a similar foundation: a sense of belonging when individuals experience security, self-esteem concerning the sense of individual value and worth, and self-efficacy about a person's ability to organize and perform a set of actions necessary for attaining specific results (Mitchell, 2011). The compensatory, risk-protective, and challenge models are the most common resilience models that attempt to explain how protective factors operate in remodeling adverse effects of risk exposure (Cardoso & Thompson, 2010) (See Figure 1).
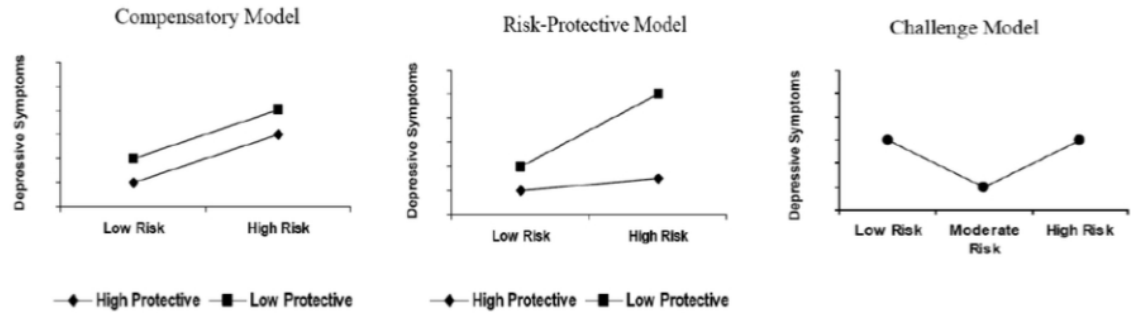
Figure 1Models of Resilience

The compensatory model suggests that a protective factor can be treated as a

neutralizer to eliminate the exposure risk (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). For example,

family support may compensate for children engaging in a violent environment

(Zimmerman, 2013). In this model, the protective factor of family support functions

independently from the risk and may influence outcomes positively.

In contrast, the risk-protective model suggests that protective factors diminish the

correlation between risk and negative outcomes (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). Protective

factors could neutralize or reduce the harmful effects of risk exposure. Mentorship could

buffer children from the traumatic effects of being exposed to gang violence and

developing mental health issues as a result of exposure to gang violence. On the other

hand, the challenge model views risk factors as enhancers of adequate adaptation if the

threats are not excessive (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). A certain level of stress can drive

a person's motivation to overcome challenges. By contrast, a higher level of stress may

lead a person to feel overwhelmed and helpless.

Suárez-Orozco et al. (2018), drawing from the above models, have developed an

integrative risk and resilience model that helps to explain how Latino minors

demonstrated resilience during their journey to the U.S. The model combines major

events surrounding mass migration and anti-immigrant political sentiment in the U.S. Integrating these factors from a risk and resilience perspective can illuminate the adaptation experienced by immigrant children and youth as they evolve in the host country (See Figure 2).

GLOBAL FORCES

Push & Pull Conditions for Migration
~Economic Inequality
~War & Violence
~Environmental catastrophes

POLITICAL & SOCIAL CONTEXTS OF RECEPTION

MICROSYSTEMS

- National & state immigration policies
- Refugee & asylum seeker resettlement programs
- Attitudes towards migrants:
  ~ Nativism v. integration
  ~Assimilationist v. multiculturalist

Neighborhood
- Economic opportunities
- Segregation
- Policing & crime
- Social cohesion & supports

Schools
- Resources
- Quality of curriculum & pedagogy
- Safety & school climate
- Supportive relationships
- Community engagement

Families
- Cohesion & support
- Separations & reunifications
- Inter-generational conflicts—value, belief & goal (mis)alignments

INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

Developmental Competencies
- Biological resources
- Cognitive resources
- Social-emotional resources
- Temperament/personality & motivation

Intersecting Social Positions/Positionality
legal status
race/ethnicity
generation
religion
SES
gender

Coping with:
- Traumatic events
- Deportation
- Xenophobia & perceived discrimination

Ideas-without-borders
~Xenophobia
~Islamophobia
~Long-distance nationalism

Multicultural contexts of socialization
~Navigating between every day routines (home culture; host culture; & global youth culture)

UNDERSTANDING IMMIGRANT ORIGIN CHILD & YOUTH ADAPTATION

Developmental
[universal tasks]
- Self-Regulation & responsibility
- Social relationships
  - Familial
  - Peers
- Academic progress
- Secure sense of overall identity
- Civic participation
- Labor market & professional participation

Psychological Adjustment
[universal tasks]
- Wellbeing
- Self-esteem
- Life satisfaction
- Mental Health

Acculturative/Enculturative
[immigrant-origin specific tasks]
- Acquire host culture competencies
- Host country language acquisition
- Learn & maintain home culture
- Form social, ethnic and national identities
- Develop sense of social belonging, including inter-ethnic peer relations
- Ability to bridge cultures

Figure 2 Risk and Resilience Model

Suárez-Orozco and colleagues' model focuses on three types of positive adaptation by immigrant children and youth: developmental tasks, psychological adjustments, and acculturative tasks. Developmental tasks are associated with behavioral norms and achievement expectations that families, schools, and communities establish for individuals (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018). Developing these tasks can be understood as self-regulation skills and social bonds such as playing, building relationships with close friends, exhibiting positive self-expression, and engaging in social commitment (Suárez-

Orozco et al., 2018). Psychological adjustments can be analyzed as having an elevated level of life satisfaction and self-esteem due to the lack of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The key idea behind this adaptive strategy is how properly refugee children and youth make psychological adjustments in dealing with crossing multiple international borders, navigating personal encounters with individuals from different countries, and being exposed to various stressors. Children may succeed in crossing the border but experience the lasting impact of the high costs of emotional discomfort. Such discomfort inevitably presents mental health issues that impede them from functioning well in various life domains. Conversely, despite facing adversities, the children may overcome the odds and perform satisfactorily at the familial, social, and educational levels. The third positive adaptation, acculturative tasks, represents the tension of adopting the new cultural codes of the host country (acculturation) and practicing their cultural patterns and social codes of origin (enculturation). An example of this is the peer relationships that unaccompanied and accompanied minors form with individuals from different countries to adjust psychologically during the journey.

These three types of adaptation, discussed in Suárez-Orozco's model, are influenced by global forces, political and social contexts, microsystems, and individual levels of psychological and social adjustments. Each influence contributes to Latino minors' adaptation at the individual, microsystem, and macrosystem levels. For example, global forces are driven by economic, political, and social dynamics that impact mass migration. These dynamics create push factors such as a lack of job opportunities and pull factors such as better economic chances, which force individuals to migrate. All factors are particularly real for unaccompanied and accompanied Latino minors from

Central America. Many of these minors flee their countries of origin due to generalized violence with the goal of seeking protection in the U.S. Thus, this force creates significant demographic shifts within their community and creates an imbalance in the social environment for children and youth advancement (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018).

A second influence, political and social contexts shape children's experiences affecting their long-term adaptation. For instance, the militarization activities at the U.S. borders criminalize immigrants, creating a public image of criminals crossing the border without legal permission. Simultaneously, the U.S. immigration policy imposes barriers to granting legal documentation, creating a limbo status in the lives of immigrants. This legal uncertainty produces a fictitious image of illegality that targets immigrants to be deported (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018). As a result, the increasing number of removals from the U.S. leads to family separation, followed by adverse impacts on emotional well-being and developmental tasks (Brabeck & Xu, 2010; Dreby, 2012). By contrast, regions with increased culturally diverse societies tend to support immigrants by adopting policies that facilitate their inclusion, promoting their sense of belonging and well-being (van de Vijver, 2017). If Latino minors, both unaccompanied and accompanied, are granted legal status to live in the country, many risk factors can be minimized, such as discrimination, violence in the host country, financial support, and access to essential resources (Hing, 2020).

Another vital context of the risk and resilience model is the influence of microsystems. The local context through which Latino minors interact and impact their development is based on whether the environment presents threats or protective resources. Examples of microsystems that can be potential risk and protective resources

for child and youth immigrants include neighborhoods, schools, and family contexts (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018). For instance, the presence of family is vital for Latino child immigrants' resiliency and emotional well-being, especially if the family lives in a disadvantaged area (Gonzales & Chavez, 2012; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018).

Lastly, the influence of individual levels of adaptation can be determinant for Latino child immigrants' psychological adjustment, developmental, and acculturative tasks. Children tend to respond differently to external stimuli. Each child is an individual with a distinct personality interacting with the biological, social, and internal motivations that vary as they mature (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018). Mainly, immigrant children's adaptations change over time according to their competencies such as biological sensitivity to the environment (e.g., risk-taking to cross borders), social-emotional self-regulation (e.g., reactions to dealing with discrimination), and sensitive inclinations (e.g., being shy or confident can play a role to build culture competence) (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018).

Suárez-Orozco et al. (2018) pointed out that religion, gender, race, socioeconomic status, legal document status, and immigrant generation can shape newcomers' progress as they develop in the receiving country. Religious practice is a determinant in Latino culture, and faith is commonly used to resist oppression, which can be associated with a protective strength factor (Campesino & Schwartz, 2006; Ayón et al., 2017). According to Suárez-Orozco and colleagues, little research has been performed to examine the relationship between religiosity and resilience among immigrants.

In summary, all resiliency models provide a valuable lens to understand how unaccompanied and accompanied Latino minors build strengths to overcome challenges

during their journey. Specifically, the compensatory, risk-protective, and challenge

models offer a helpful framework for understanding the dynamic between risk and

protective factors linked to children's experiences. Moreover, adding the integrative risk-

resilience model will consider specific factors related to their migration journey, which

can illuminate how these populations build resilience. Ultimately, an intersection with the

theoretical model of religion will address resilience from a religious perspective.

Religion and Coping Theory

Pargament (2010) offered a theoretical perspective on religion and coping,

attempting to bridge the gap between the two dimensions. Sacred, significance, and

search are the key terms within this theory that help understand how religion affects

coping (See Figure 3). For Pargament, religion serves the purpose of seeking meaning in

sacred ways. The sacred is the unique attribute that makes religion special. Sacred is

related to a divine figure with distinctive characteristics to help people search for

significance (Pargament, 2010). The meaning of the term sacred is culturally sensitive.

Thus, sacred could be defined as God, Allah, Buddha, or any being or expression with

holy qualities, including elements and aspects of nature such as animals, trees, or rivers.

Nevertheless, the holy aura embedded in these entities includes beliefs, practices,

feelings, and a relationship with the divine (Pargament, 2010).

The second key term is significance. The term significance is defined in both

objective and subjective manners. According to Pargament, the nature of people is to find

meaning in objects that attach value to the individual. Objective significance can be

attained in anything essential for her/him according to her/his values and goals. For some

individuals, for instance, material possessions hold significance (e.g., a great job, house,

and money). In contrast, subjective significance is related to worth and value perception within the psychological, social, or spiritual sense. In this domain, significance can be self-centered and involves having peace of mind, personal well-being, growth, physical health, meaningful life, or avoiding suffering. For others, significance implies intimacy with others or the desire to make the world better (Pargament, 2010). However, Pargament argues that people need to build significance and hold on to it. In this sense, religion requires constructing, transforming, and holding on to things people value and tie to the sacred. As a process, though, religion involves a search for significance.

Finally, the third key term is search. The search for spiritual meaning is driven by motivation. Individuals need to be moved in some way to find a spiritual sense in life. Once they discover the spiritual significance, people are willing to sustain the meaning in their lives to attain personal transformation (Pargament, 2010). People take four primary searching paths to hold spiritual significance in their lives: searching paths for knowledge, practice, relating to others, and experience. The first path of knowledge is sought to gain confidence and understand the role of religion in search of spiritual significance (e.g., studying religious scripture). The second path of practice involves taking action to develop faith (e.g., ritual practice). The third path, relating to others, means supporting others in their spiritual journey, which will help one's spiritual growth. The final path of experience is grounded in one's personal experience of applying religious concepts and seeing life improvements resulting from religious practice (e.g., meditation, prayer) (Pargament, 2010). Although the search for significance can take alternative paths, they have ultimate destinations in life. The destinations differ among religions, but they can be described as a spiritual presence, Nirvana, eternal life, or the

Kingdom of God (Pargament, 2010). Despite the significance of religion in people's lives, religion is not equivalent to coping (Pargament, 2010).
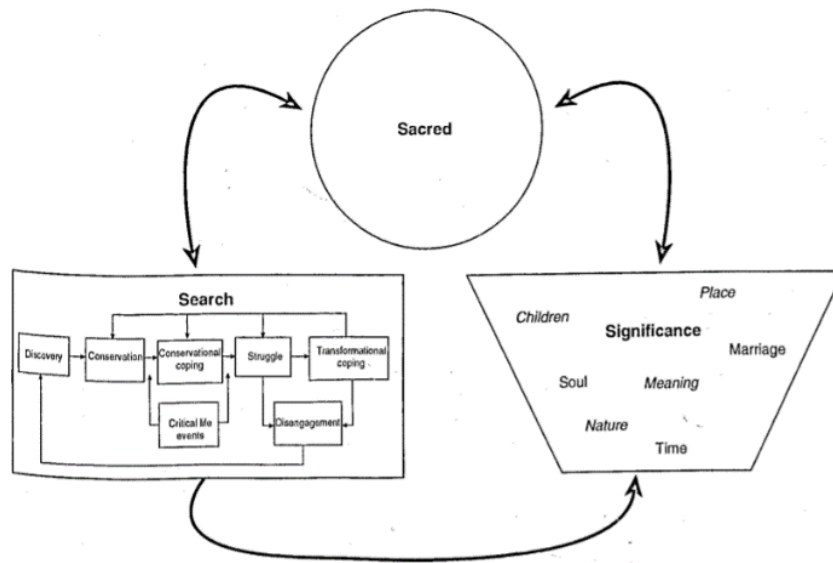
Figure 3 Theoretical Model of Religion

Key Functions of Religion. Pargament (2010) stresses that religion has five key functions in helping people cope with life stressors. First, religion can be the foundation of meaning-making in the face of loss or tragedy, providing social support and connectedness under challenging events. Second, religion helps search for mastery and control to boost self-efficacy and self-esteem, control negative behavior, and improve physical health during challenging times (Pargament, 2010). Third, religious beliefs can help individuals search for social intimacy and closeness to God by fostering a sense of belonging, connectedness, and identity. Fourth, religion benefits from comforting individuals in moments of feeling helpless. Lastly, religion supports the transformation process by encouraging people to explore a new sense of the importance of life itself. Not only is analyzing religious functions relevant to understanding the coping process, but it

is also crucial to understand the role of religion in coping methods while searching for significance when experiencing moments of challenge.

Pargament (1997) suggested that individuals use their religious beliefs for positive appraisals of the ordeal situation. A person in a moment of great suffering due to forcible displacement may look to religious support to define their situation as a path to learn how to survive and grow stronger emotionally. The author affirms that religious beliefs can set stressful moments in a positive sacred perspective without denying or underestimating the challenges. Another positive contribution of religious practices to coping with hardship is associated with creating new circumstances and avoiding negative life events. Pargament (1997) argued that religion discourages individuals from following destructive paths such as alcoholism and drug abuse, violence and oppression, theft, or murder. The religious encouragement to avoid these behaviors can take the form of a sacred liturgy passage. Reading these words, individuals can perceive negative attitudes disconnected from the purpose of religious doctrines. Thus, individuals can avoid destructive behaviors. Additionally, organized religions can help individuals steer away from these destructive paths by creating a unique perspective in life. In sum, religious beliefs can enhance perceptions of threats and shape new paths in life.

Religious Coping Styles. Religious coping styles vary depending on individual characteristics, the type of religion, and the cultural context. Pargament (1997) suggested three religious coping styles: self-directing, deferring, and collaborative styles. In addition, these coping styles are associated with different personal and social competence. The first style of religious coping—self-directing—is less linked to religiousness than the other two styles. People who use this style while facing challenges

tend to be proactive in their actions rather than relying on their perception of God's wishes. These individuals continue to affiliate with their religious institutions, but they demonstrate a deep sense of personal control and an elevated level of self-esteem (Pargament, 1997).

Conversely, the second style of religious coping—deferring—is linked with a person's belief in the concept of God's will. Pargament (1997) argued that individuals practicing this style of coping believe that God provides a solution for problems and makes sense of them. This religious coping style is associated with lower levels of self-esteem, sense of control, and problem-solving skills. Lastly, the collaborative religious coping style involves solving problems in partnership with God based on prayers and a commitment to deep-rooted religiousness. Often, this style is tied to a greater sense of self-control and self-esteem and a lower sense of control by chance (Pargament, 1997).

Although not a coping style in itself, Pargament (1997) identified a religious practice that includes petitioning for divine interventions may be another coping form intertwined with other styles. Prayers for divine intervention to recover from a severe illness are one such example. This coping behavior includes passive and active elements where the control is "sought through God" (as cited in Pargament, 1997, p. 183). To illustrate, the ultimate control of sickness depends on God's plan (passive element of petition). However, the individual asking for divine intervention can strictly follow the doctor's recommendation for her/his recovery while praying five times a day until the medical exams indicate illness-free (active element of petition). Thus, the individual can attribute her/his recovery to divine interventions.

These three styles, as well as the petitioning form of coping, offer a glimpse of how religious coping is expressed and practiced in moments of crisis. The dynamic nature of these constructs is complex and depends on multiple factors by which the individual seeks divine interventions. These factors can be summarized in five W's (who, what, why, when, and where). For example, it is vital to consider who is the figure the individual is seeking spiritual help from (e.g., clergy), what means is the individual using to request divine intervention (e.g., chant), why she/he is asking for holy intervention (e.g., to gain control), and when and where the religious coping is working (e.g., within a religious institution while crossing the border) (Pargament, 2010). Pargament et al. (2000) identified 21 religious coping methods based on the styles of religious coping and the five religious functions. The methods encompass a broad scope, including active, passive, and interactive activities; emotion-focused and problems-focused strategies; and cognitive, behavioral, interpersonal, and spiritual domains. To name a few coping methods as such benevolent religious reappraisal, self-religious coping, spiritual connection, religious helping, and religious conversion. A comprehensive list and a brief explanation of each coping method are provided (Pargament, 2010 Appendix A).

Application of Religion and Coping Theory. In the case of Latino minors, the religion and coping theory is applicable to understanding how these children cope and create meaning amid their journeys. Considering that these minors fled violence and persecution in their home countries, it is fair to assert that this group has lost the sense of value and has little hope of attaining positive outcomes. Thus, they may turn to their faith to adjust to the helpless situation in an effort to maintain a sense of worth and survival (Campesino et al., 2009). Another component of religion and coping theory that can be

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applied to understanding the coping behaviors of unaccompanied and accompanied

Latino minors is a collective religious practice. The collective mindset of religious

practice solidifies bonds and solidarity among individuals in an attempt to overcome

injustice (Campesino et al., 2009). Latino families use their faith beliefs to keep family

members united and support each other in challenging times, including during their

journey (Elizondo, 2000; Baily, 2017).

      While examining how Latino minor refugees build resilience through the risk and

resilience theory lens and investigating the coping methods utilized by these children

through religion and coping theory perspective is worthwhile. Applying a third

theoretical lens—Hay and Nye's theory of children's spirituality—is beneficial to

understanding how these children experience their spirituality to find meaning despite the

journey challenges.

Hay and Nye's Theory of Children's Spirituality

      A scientific investigation of spirituality is not unknown. However, it has been

relegated to social sciences through the 20th Century primarily because of the overlapped

conceptualization of religion and spirituality construction and, thus, it mainly reflected

Western societies´ perspectives (Roehlkepartain et al., 2011). In addition, a complex set

of European history led to an unresolved conflict between the integrity of the intellect and

the religious institutions (Hay & Nye, 2006). Possible influences include, for instance, the

tension between science and religion, the influence of Marxist ideas that religion was a

phenomenon to alleviate the suffering of oppressed people against the exploitation of

working conditions, and the idea that religious institutions served for social control (Hay

& Nye, 2006). It is possible the dominance of these ideas created an abysm of scholarship on spirituality.

Moreover, the bias that spirituality is only pertinent to adulthood eliminates the phenomenon in the lives of children contributing to the shortage of research in these populations (Hay & Nye, 2006). However, a growing interest in this phenomenon has increased in the past few decades. This interest served to link spirituality with human development and thriving in life. This information shows that theorists have integrated spiritual development into youth identity formation as an intrinsic part of human beings to pursue significance in life, meaningful connections to others integrated to the sacred, and contributions to society (Roehlkepartain et al., 2011).

Early investigations on children's spirituality were grounded in cognitive development intended to understand religious or spiritual development, and these terms (religious and spiritual) were used interchangeably (Minor, 2012). The first studies referencing children's spirituality suggested that children were not equipped with sufficient mature cognitive development to understand their religious experiences until they reached adolescence or adulthood (Goldman, 1964). On the other hand, Fowler (1995) argued that children's spirituality was acquired gradually as they matured cognitively, emotionally, and socially from one stage of cognitive development to another. However, Fowler's theory was viewed as too linear and considered only a Western perspective.

Despite the controversy of Fowler's faith development theory, the concept of faith as universal of humankind was the foundation for upcoming studies in the field (Minor, 2012). For instance, the spiritual child movement approach in the 2000s promoted new

perspectives on children's spirituality theories. This movement proposed that children have the ability for spiritual awareness at noticeably young ages, as young as four and certainly by six years of age (Scarlet, 2006). In addition, this approach suggests that this ability is the result of brain development rather than acquired by cultural, familial, or educational systems. Nevertheless, to flourish a child's spiritual development needs support, assistance, and motivation (Benson et al., 2012). The core idea is that, at an early age, children can have vivid, spiritual experiences that assist in the formation of their spiritual development, religious practices, and ethical systems (Scarlet, 2006).

Recently, Mata-McMahon (2016) conducted a review of studies published between 2005 and 2015 focused on children's inquiries about spirituality. The children's ages varied from birth to nine. However, youths were included due to the paucity of studies on these populations. Most of the investigations in this review applied qualitative design. Notably, this review considered definitions of both non-religious and religious spirituality, focusing on teaching and learning. Three major categories were identified: meaning-making and the God relationship, children's spirituality in education, and identity formation concerning one's sense of self. Moreover, children also identified spiritual experiences as wisdom, awe, wonder, and relational consciousness (Hay & Nye, 2006; Berryman, 2009; Scarlet, 2006).

The Core of and Nye's Theory of Children's Spirituality: Relational Consciousness. Hay and Nye's Theory of Children's Spirituality is the most influential theory in the spiritual child movement, which proposes that children's spiritual development occurs at an early age (Minor, 2012). This theoretical framework explores the spiritual development in children and youth regardless of their cultural, social,

religious, and nonreligious backgrounds (Scott, 2003). The key idea of Hay and Nye's theory is that of relational consciousness, defined as "an evolved human capacity for awareness of connections with self, others, the world, and a transcendent power" (Minor, 2012, p. 55).

Scott (2003) stressed that children have a natural capacity to be alert to their surroundings and engage in the world to understand further how things work to create meaning. Hay and Nye (2006) named it relational consciousness, a natural capacity for awareness through which children connect with their inner selves. This awareness allows them to think deeply and intently about their spiritual experiences, build their identity, find a feeling of worth, and encounter meaning and calling in life (Minor, 2012).

In order to distinguish relational consciousness from emotional, social, or moral development, Hay and Nye (2006) borrowed the ideas of the philosopher Martin Heidegger that before naming things in the surroundings, children are already immersed in Being. Even before acquiring language skills, there are no analyses of what is subject or object. Instead, there is a Being to be explored and experienced. For instance, a child in her/his first steps knows that a chair is a thing that can help her/him to stand up even before naming the object as a chair. Hence, the Being is where children can express their worldview and spirituality. This approach suggests that the natural capacity for spiritual experiences allows children "to link their discovery of self and the world in pursuit of a flourishing life" (Roehlkepartain et al., 2011, p.p. 548).

Children's Spiritual Natural Abilities: Three Sensitivities Approaches. Hay and Nye (2006) described a "three sensitivities approach" to analyze the children's spiritual natural abilities—awareness-sensing, mystery-sensing, and value-sensing—through

which children express their world views and communicate such experiences with others. The sensitivity awareness-sensing approach is related to the capacity to be present and attentive to an experience grounded simultaneously in the physical sense and its transcendence (Scott, 2003). In other words, children are curious about how their surroundings work, leading to inquiry, imagination, and concentration (Scott, 2003). Hay and Nye (2006) stressed that this ability to be present in the current moment is considered a spiritual quality, also known in some cultures as mindfulness or attentiveness. The authors highlight that this awareness ability is present at an early age when the children observe the surrounding world to glimpse how it works. However, beginning from the age of nine, children become less willing to verbalize these experiences (Hay & Nye, 2006). As they mature under the influence of cultural factors, this capacity to connect self with others and the environment diminishes the ability to be mindful, thus, impairing the development of insights and perceptions (Hay & Nye, 2006).

The mystery-sensing approach refers to experiencing life to the fullest of the child's imagination, the freshest of experiences, and the richest of possibilities. These experiences may suggest an intense curiosity about the world, its creation, and how life works (Scott, 2003). Some researchers argue that curiosity is part of thinking and inquiry development. Others believe that children's minds easily engage in imagination (Scott, 2003). Nevertheless, the children's ability to navigate reality and imagination can be seen as the spiritual capacity to transcend the concrete, allowing children to incorporate both forms of existence (Levine, 1999) and integrate these forms beyond the self, such as expressions of wonder and awe (Scott, 2003).

Lastly, the value-sensing sensitivity approach refers to analyzing the natural capabilities of children to experience emotions profoundly through which children can express their ideas of worth and value (Hay & Nye, 2006). Value-sensing refers to children's ability to navigate opposite feelings and emotions, such as fear and delight, anger and love, despair and hope (Hay & Nye, 2006). The authors highlighted, in particular, the experience of despair as the potential for generating sensitivity, a significant step to developing spirituality. In experiencing these feelings, children may have transcendent moments beyond the context, leading to a sense of making meaning and carrying this intention through adulthood (Scott, 2003). Scott argued that children are naturally adjusted to their surroundings (emotions and values), and they learn how to assess values and meaning to safeguard themselves from the adverse effects of anger, risk, and danger. He discussed that this process is an intrinsic part of children's emotional, social, and moral development (Scott, 2003). Hay and Nye (2006) argued that this process allows children to be attuned to assessment, meaning-making, and connecting beyond the self in a way that serves children's spiritual well-being. As a result, children may experience peace and contentment derived from a connection with self, others, the world, and a transcendent power (Benson, 2004).

The sensitive approaches described by Hay and Nye (2006) suggested that children can connect their experience of discovering self and their worldview experiences with spirituality, a property that the authors called relational consciousness. This property allows children to relate the "I-self" to "I-others," "I-world," and "I-God." According to this approach, the children's ability to perceive their world in relational terms forms the core of their spirituality. In each sense of awareness of being with someone or something,

children can experience aesthetic insights, religious experiences, and mystical and moral senses. Therefore, based on their personal and cultural values they determine what mystery and being mean to them.

The Dimensions of Relational Consciousness. Hay and Nye (2006) provided valuable framework guidelines for examining children's spirituality as relational consciousness. In this context, underlying dimensions containing various elements help children to express their spirituality. Each dimension comprises unique elements intertwined within the children's spiritual construction. A comprehensive list of these elements provides the body of examples that children make use of to express their spirituality (Hay & Nye, 2006 Appendix B). The dimensions can be described as follows: contexts, conditions, strategies, processes, and consequences.

Context. The contexts are the first dimension identified by Hay and Nye (2006) in which relational consciousness appears. Relational consciousness can arise in four types of contexts: Child-God consciousness, child-people consciousness, child-world consciousness, and child-self consciousness. In the first type of context of child-God consciousness, children express their relationship with God based on their feelings and their concept of God. This reflection ability does not restrict the children in terms of limited religious practice. Consequently, their sense of spirituality can be experienced in atheist and agnostic forms. In the second type of context of child-people consciousness, children are focused on their social life in regard to the child-God context. For instance, children may explore their wishes to make friends by sharing their food, suggesting a sense of spiritual fellowship. How children build relationships may reflect a glimpse of their spiritual life (Hay & Nye, 2006).

Child-world consciousness is the third type of context in which relational consciousness occurs. In this form, children are compelled by curiosity about things in their surroundings, leading to subsequent reflections. Children can experience a deep sense of wonder in nature through this type of context. The natural world has a profound impact on children, even though they may not yet know how to articulate it (Hay & Nye, 2006). A child may express delight about the moon by contemplating its mystery or imagining how to get there. In this example, children can relate the natural world to a context of spiritual consciousness. The last type of context of relational consciousness is child-self consciousness. A child may experience an intense awareness of her/his existence, inspiring her/him to question how she/he got into this world or even the purpose of her/his existence. The child's questions are, in nature, a sense of consciousness of self through which children's spirituality can be manifested (Hay & Nye, 2006). The authors clarified that none of these types of contexts stand alone to indicate the presence of spirituality in children. Instead, the interaction of these types helps identify the spiritual childhood nature. The combination of four contexts can reveal the children's awareness of being within the world, promoting forms of the meaning of their experiences in relational terms. However, there are specific conditions in which relational consciousness can be expressed.

Conditions. The second dimension in which children may express their spirituality is related to conditions. By conditions, Hay and Nye (2006) referred to requirements through which children can voice their sense of spirituality. Unlike the first dimension, conditions are not defined by forms. These conditions include the wording. Hay and Nye (2006) stressed that children need specific language to communicate their

spirituality. By language, the authors affirm that children articulate a particular vocabulary to convey their spirituality. In other words, children may use different language modes to discuss their inner spiritual thoughts based on their circumstances. To illustrate this idea, the authors highlighted that some children might use the Christianity vocabulary reflecting the Western cultural background in which they are raised. Or children may use another religious vocabulary that may not express their religious framework. For example, the diversity of religious frameworks may reflect their experience in school with friends practicing another faith different from what they practice.

Incorporating a theme within their language is another mode of expression that children may use to express their spirituality. Hay and Nye (2006) shared an example of a boy child using the death theme to discuss his difficulty in understanding his parents' divorce, his father's remarriage, and, consequently, the new family re-arrangements. In his reflection, he used the theme of death to reflect his sadness for never having the opportunity to meet his grandfather, with whom he might have had a meaningful relationship. However, this physical separation prevented him from connecting with his grandfather, as the parents' divorce prevented him from connecting with his father and mother. This example showed how this child used the death theme to measure his struggles beyond the physical presence of his family members and reflect the consciousness of his deepest values and principles. Although children can use a great repertory of languages to convey their spiritual views, Hay and Nye (2006) argued that children are aware of the cultural constraints, especially in secular cultures, to legitimate their views. Hence, children can employ strategies to validate their sense of spirituality.

Strategies. The third dimension of relational consciousness refers to the strategies children pursue to sustain their spirituality. Some strategies used by children are not distinct from adult strategies, such as distancing themselves from distractions and concentrating on activities that connect them to a sense of spirituality. Offering prayers, exploring aesthetic and sensory experiences, and engaging in philosophical ideas are strategies children can use to create a state of awareness (Hay & Nye, 2006). Instead of elaborating insights of thoughts that they may have, children pose philosophical questions in which the sense of spirituality is present such as the origin of the world and life. The different answers to these queries led to further reactions that may convey the children's spiritual views (Hay & Nye, 2006).

In the case of children who have not yet reached the developmental ability to grasp abstract ideas, Hay and Nye (2006) suggested that these children think in concrete examples or images. For instance, children can draw images of heaven that portray their ideas of love embedded in human relationships and share their sense of a transcendent being that links individuals to divine power. In addition, younger children can make analogical relations to grasp the emotional meaning of the subject. For example, explaining the holiness of a figure to children is complex. Often to express the ubiquitousness of God (Western perspective), adults may make a comparison with the wind. Children do not see the wind, but they can feel and see what the wind can do. Hence, children may draw significance from God's presence. More examples of these spiritual analogical relations can be described as follows: peaceful places in nature, kindness between people, the soul as a hologram, and God as eternal love, among others (Hay & Nye, 2006). These manifestations of spirituality expressed by children are not

linear. Rather, children tend to change as they mature, so examining how these

transformations work in their spiritual expressions over time is vital.

Process. The fourth dimension that plays a role in the relational consciousness of

expressing children's spirituality in the long term is identified as a process. Children tend

to be ambivalent in their expression of spirituality over time. For fearing embarrassment,

children may use the third person in their narrative to express the views of their spiritual

experience. Hay and Nye (2006) stressed that some children tend to diminish their

spiritual awareness as they grow. The authors argue that this process of change in

children's spirituality may reflect their increasing reasoning and thinking abilities as a

means to reduce their engagement in spiritual conversations. However, this effect may

vary among children. For instance, some children may feel disappointed about their ideas

of spirituality as they are exposed to other thoughts of knowledge. Other children stated

that they lose the memory of spiritual experiences as they age. The process of losing

memory may reflect an inability to recall and articulate these experiences over time

because they simply cannot recall them. In contrast, other children may feel encouraged

and confident to expand their spiritual position as they are exposed to new ideas that

build upon existing beliefs. Others may experience a process of growing self-awareness

as they mature in life. The dynamic of these processes indicates the relevance of spiritual

development in childhood in response to cognitive development and the flexible nature of

spirituality (Hay & Nye, 2006).

Consequences. Finally, the last dimension regarding children's spirituality

addresses the consequences or effects resulting from expressing spiritual ideas. Positive

consequences reflect a sense of oneness, forgetting self, and feeling free by including the

mystical characteristics of spirituality. Other positive effects may include a feeling of peacefulness, tranquility, holiness, and moral integrity. Hay and Nye (2006) added that the positive effects of spiritual experiences could be related to a state of wonder due to something external leading to a search for significance. By contrast, children may experience negative effects as a result of sharing spiritual ideas. For example, children may experience apprehension by feeling frustration or inner conflict when confronted with new knowledge. Moreover, common negative effects on children include the fear of being embarrassed or ridiculed for socially expressing their views on spirituality. The short life span of childhood indicates the role of adults in developing children's spirituality as they grow in order to shape their relational consciousness from early childhood through adulthood.

Application of Hay and Nye's Theory of Children's Spirituality. Hay and Nye's (2006) theory can shed light on how unaccompanied and accompanied Latino minors experience their capacity of awareness through their lived experience of crossing borders to preserve and shape their identity nurturing relationships with self, others, and the transcendent power. The theory can explore the capacity of these minors to extract transcendence meaning from the experience of fleeing their home countries and crossing by connecting it deeply with their inner selves. By identifying the spiritual and religious coping methods depicted in the children's drawings, Hay and Nye's (2006) theory can explore the natural capacity of children to navigate between reality and imagination and how they integrate these perceptions, feelings, and inner self to safeguard their spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being.

In summary, three theories applied to the unaccompanied and accompanied Latino minor population provide insight into spiritual and religious coping strategies employed in their border-crossing journey. The risk and resilience theory proposed by Zimmerman (2013) as well as the integrative risk and resilience model (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018) offer an explanation of how Latino minor refugees adjust psychologically in order to face migration risks. Adding to this body of research, a second view, the religion and coping theory, amplifies the understanding of how these children use sacred strategies to create meaning from adversities. Finally, Hay and Nye's theory of children's spirituality provides a context to examine the intersection between crossing international borders and the natural capacity for the development and application of spiritual experiences used as coping methods.

Studies on Spirituality and Religious Coping Methods

Empirical research addressing spirituality and religiosity as a coping mechanism suggests that faith boosts internal locus of control to regulate negative emotions (Counted et al., 2018). Individuals seek spiritual connectedness to find meaning in life struggles through spiritual transcendence (Southwick & Charney, 2018). Despite the growing scholarship in spirituality in the last decade, the study of Latino children and youth refugees' spirituality deserves more attention. Most of the work in this area has focused on populations experiencing varied circumstances that included depression, substance use, loneliness, academic achievement, or social behavior. Other studies have focused on youth's mental health. For example, Wong et al. (2006) have performed a systematic review to analyze the link of spirituality with adolescents' mental health. Findings suggested that 90% of the studies demonstrated that better mental health was associated

with higher levels of religiosity and spirituality, especially for males and older youth. Some studies have focused on Latino youth and other minority groups' spirituality while living in the U.S. For illustration, Hull et al. (2008) suggested that spirituality and religiosity are associated with resilience among Latino youth, in which church attendance plays an essential reference in social support. Another study suggested that under extreme violence exposure, spiritual and religious experiences may serve as protective factors for Latino youth living in poor neighborhoods (Jocson et al., 2020). These findings supported earlier studies by Pearce et al. (2003) working with Latino and African American adolescents and found that spiritual experiences and religious practice moderated violence exposure and management behavior. Another investigation among disenfranchised Latino youth showed that the use of religious coping strategies moderated perceived victimization and depression, and PTSD symptoms (Epstein et al., 2013). Despite a great deal of research on youth spirituality, few studies focused on children at a very young age. The following paragraphs include two studies examining the theme of spirituality in children. In the first study, the author compares three groups of children: orphans who experienced wars, orphans who have not experienced wars, and orphans with intact families. In comparison, the second study Andrade Vinueza (2017) focused on children indirectly by researching adults who worked with them as participants of the investigation. The methodology and outcomes of both studies will be discussed.

In the first research, Fernando and Ferrari (2011) conducted a mixed-method study focused on minor orphans exposed to war in Sri Lanka. The authors examined how traditional religious systems helped build resilience in these children by assessing their

adaptative and maladaptive development behaviors. The study sample included sixty-two

children, aged 5 to 18, including war orphans and non-war orphans from Buddhist and

Christian orphanages, and a comparison group of orphans with intact families. In all three

groups, children lost one or both parents or were separated from their families and were

either exposed to risks at various levels due to war or other reasons such as financial

stressors. In addition, fifteen caregivers were assessed regarding the influence of their

religious/spiritual beliefs on the children's faith development.

The measurements used by Fernando and Ferrari can be described as follows: For

children, the authors used the sand tray analyses construction and narrative (Jones, 1982)

in which children created their stories. The inter-rater reliability was r=.94, p< .001.

Followed by the sentence completion task (Sattler, 2002), a projective instrument was

used to elicit their emotional, social, and behavioral aspects. The Stages of Faith

interview (Fowler, 1981) was performed, and interrater reliability was r=.92, p< .001.

Finally, the risk and resilience indices were conducted with r=.97, p< .001 interrater

agreement for risk assessment. The resilience index was triangulated with sand tray

analyses and Stages of Faith interview and required no additional interrater reliability.

For adults, the measurements included the sentence completion task and the Stages of

Faith interview. The inter-rater reliability was r=.90, p< .001.

The authors used ANOVA statistical test to analyze the variation among groups

and the coding system to examine the qualitative portion of the study. Results

demonstrated that war orphans showed inner peace and resilience despite experiencing

higher risk factors. Although these children remained in contact with their mothers, they

referred to their caregivers as mothers and other children as siblings. Some children

preferred to remain in the orphanage during their recess instead of going home. This group demonstrated resilience with no internalized conflicts. However, children who had no regular contact with their biological parents had difficulties developing resilience. Similarly, children in the non-war group had opportunities to go home or receive frequent visits from their families and positive relationships with their orphanages' caregivers, creating a positive environment to build resilience. These interactions were crucial to helping children to cope with adversities. Although the children from intact families tended to experience fewer risk factors than the other two groups, this group was described as more competent than resilient.

Concerning faith practices, children applied their religious beliefs distinctly. For instance, the comparison group discussed their faith more philosophically than the other groups. Orphans from the Buddhist faith were more practice-oriented, applying the Buddhist ritual to foster self-reflection and learning that any experience in life is valuable. The Buddhist practice taught these children to accept their trauma and have control over its effects on their lives and gave them a sense of community. No differences were found in the Christian group of orphans regarding faith practice-oriented. Children were resilient and socially competent in both groups with no behavioral problems. Finally, the role of caregivers was essential in the process of resilience building. These individuals, volunteers, tutors, religious teachers, and former residents represented emotional, educational, religious, and social support providing directions for children's lives.

To sum up, children used faith-based practices to support their inner faith, well-being, and sense of belonging. Additionally, caregivers in the orphanages taught children

the value of peace and compassion. The language of orphans demonstrating resilience was related to positive social interaction, religious activities that fostered children's resilience, and engaging in purposeful plans, including studies, careers, and future marriages (Fernando & Ferrari, 2011). Although Fernando and Ferrari's study focused on spirituality in disenfranchised minors, these children's situational context and country of origin differed from that of Latino immigrant children.

The second study focused on children's spirituality through the lens of their caregivers. Andrade Vinueza (2017) conducted an exploratory qualitative study aimed at examining spirituality in building resilience among unaccompanied minors from Central America. A total of nine adults who served these populations participated in the investigation. The participants were seven field workers, two of whom were faith leaders. The author implemented semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions as a research strategy to collect in-depth qualitative data. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and translated. A thematic analysis was carried out to identify emerging topics using NVIVO software to perform data analysis. The themes that emerged from the study included detachment from their land, sharing everything with everyone, vulnerability, and acculturation. Other themes were intelligence, social skills, family bond, support from a shelter, as well as different activities to promote children's spirituality.

Findings suggested that spirituality played a vital role in developing resilience among these children, especially in dealing with existential questions and feelings of connectedness. Besides, special activities not necessarily related to religiosity could enhance children's spirituality, such as sharing a meal or having outdoor activities with

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other children. Finally, there was no pre-requisite for professionals nurturing children's spirituality; however, the adults' spiritual awareness and intentionality were crucial in response to severe experienced traumas. Despite the fact that Andrade Vinueza's investigation shared similarities with the proposed study, the research has several limitations. First, the sample size was small, which may not reflect the population; hence the results should be analyzed with caution. Second, the author neither described the thematic analysis procedure in detail nor the triangulation. Further, the rigor of the data analysis was not mentioned. Lastly, the target population was adults who worked with Latino minors, resulting in only the workers' perspective.

Although both studies investigated spirituality and religious coping, neither used drawings as a methodological approach. Since this study aims to explore spiritual and religious coping methods and children's experiences crossing the U.S. border through an examination of their drawings, the following section will provide a literature review on studies utilizing drawings as data collection.

Exploring Children's Experiences Through Drawings

Arts-based methodology, specifically using drawings for researching children, offers a powerful avenue to give children a voice to express themselves as "Knowledge Holders" who are able to speak and convey the understanding of their experiences (Lenette, 2019; Hickey-Moody et al., 2021). Using minors' drawings as a methodological approach offers a valuable path to investigating the lived experience of the child intertwined with the children's culture, education, and circumstances (Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2017; Clark, 2017; Thomson et al., 2019). As agents of knowledge, children's arts carry forms of ideology, political, and cultural narratives (Hickey-Moody

et al., 2021). Hickey-Moody and colleagues (2021) stated that children's spontaneity in the drawings allowed them to express complex experiences creatively conceiving thoughts through symbolized and affective ways, which may be challenging for children to describe verbally. Empirical investigations of children through arts-based methods have been applied mainly in psychology, investigating child cognitive development and education (Theron et al., 2011). However, few scholars have taken art seriously, especially drawings, as an approach to research. Often, children are seen as vulnerable, passive, and needing care, relying on adults to have their needs met and their voices heard. Consequently, the lack of recognition of children's perception brings doubt to some researchers to examine children as an agent of their own life (Johnson et al., 2012). Another reason is that some researchers may doubt the scientific methodology of arts-based research. McNiff (2008) argues that art-based research has defined methodological parameters and multiple forms of interpretation and outcomes that can expand scientific knowledge. Thus, this section will explore child-centered research using drawings as a practice method.

One study using drawings with children at the end of the 1990s is worth highlighting. Barraza (1999) investigated children from England and Mexico in order to explore their current perception of the environment and their thoughts for the future. Also, the author was interested in examining whether the school culture and educational policies affected the children's perceptions of the environment. A total of 741 drawings of 247 children from eight schools were collected—three schools in England and five in Mexico. Children's age ranged from seven to nine years old. According to the following prompts, children were asked to draw three pictures:

(1) You are approaching planet Earth in your spaceship. Draw it as if you were watching in from space. How does it look? (2) Each one of you has landed in a different place. Nobody can see you because you are invisible. Look at everything carefully and try to draw as many things as possible. (3) Fifty years have passed since your first visit to planet Earth. You are sent down again to the place you visited before. Draw how it looks after so long. (p.53)

The author applied a mixed-method design for data analysis. A content analysis was used for each group of drawings in the qualitative portion. The author built thematic categories based on the response to each question. For instance, the author created five categories for the first drawing prompt: (1) Undefined shapes to depict land or water, (2) Defined shapes to depict land and water, (3) Only water depicted, (4) Undefined countries, including some or all elements (water, animal, plants, houses, and humans), and (5) incomplete drawings. The author built four categories for the second drawing prompt and five for the last drawing prompt. These analyses led to two major areas: children's perceived problems from the present and future world and preferred places to draw. The reliability and validity of this method were double-checked with a second researcher who reviewed the art pieces. For the quantitative assessment, the author used G-test (equivalent to the Chi-square test) to infer differences between countries, between schools in each country, and between schools with distinct cultures and policies.

Findings suggested that children manifested significant environmental concerns in their drawings. Moreover, more than half (54%) of the children displayed negative scenarios for the future. Mexican children were more inclined to draw rural areas. However, children of both countries presented more similarities than discrepancies in

their drawings. The results suggested no evidence that schools with environmental policies would develop a more significant concern in children about environmental problems. Although this study shed light on the use of drawings with children, this investigation was dated more than twenty years ago. Thus, it is interesting to analyze how this method has been performed more recently.

A second study, conducted by Burns-Nader et al. (2014), examined the relationship between children's anxiety due to their hospitalization, parents' coping strategies, and parents' satisfaction with the hospital. The sample was drawn from 48 participants (24 children and their mothers). The children were aged 5 to 11, and the mothers' age ranged from 23 to 57. The authors designed a quantitative method. The data were collected through children's drawings and mothers' data through background questionnaires and two Likert-type scales. The hospitalized children were asked to draw a scene of a person in the hospital by which researchers could assess the children's tension regarding hospitalization. A total of twenty-four children participated, with each child drawing one art piece. To interpret the children's drawings, the authors used a scoring method using the Child Drawing: Hospital Manual, a reliable and valid instrument to assess the level of hospitalized children's anxiety (Clatworthy et al., 1999a, 1999b).

The manual allowed scoring the drawing in three parts; the sum of these parts represented the level of anxiety. The first part regarded the person in the drawing, e.g., the facial expression, person's size concerning the environment, position, color prevalence, and presence of hospital material. The score varied from 1 to 10, where a lower score represented less presence of anxiety. The second part scored for pathological indicators, for example, a body with missing parts, a body depicted as too large or too

small, or the presence of shading. The score ranged from 0 to 60, where lower scores

meant the lesser presence of a pathological signal. The third part scored the general

aspect of the drawing, hinting at coping strategies and feelings of the child, such as

whether the figures in the drawing were depicted in appropriate proportion, happiness,

brightness, or if the drawing represented sadness or disorganization. The score ranged

from 1 to 10, with a lower score suggesting more coping use. Finally, the sum of the three

parts ranged from 15 to 290, and the higher scores indicated the presence of anxiety.

Spearman's correlation was used to determine the interrater reliability and reached at

0.92 between two raters.

Simultaneously, the children's mothers' assessment consisted of a background

questionnaire to collect demographic information and child information related to their

age, gender, and hospitalization circumstances. A Coping Health Inventory for Parents

(CHIP) was employed as a validated self-report scale to measure mothers' coping

strategies and social support received during their child's hospitalization (McCubbin et

al., 1996). The mothers rated forty-five behaviors to assess the coping patterns of their

children. The scale ranged from 0 to 3, where zero meant not helpful, one minimally

helpful, two moderately helpful, and three extremely helpful. Behaviors included eating,

believing in God, and trusting the spouse. The results generated an overall score and three

subscale scores. The coping inventory can be read in two ways: the overall score reads

the coping behavior based on individual indicators, and the three subscales read for

coping patterns based on a combination of individual indicators. The three subscales

reflected the grouping of behaviors. The first group reflected family integration,

cooperation, and optimistic self-definition. Social support, self-esteem, and psychological

stability represented the second group. Finally, the health care situation through communication with other parents and hospital staff represented the third group of behavior. The scores varied from 0 to 135, where higher scores indicated a higher level of a better mother coping. Lastly, a 23-item Likert-type Patient Satisfaction Questionnaire-Revised scale assessed mothers' satisfaction with the hospital (Hill et al., 1992). The Likert-type scale varied from one (strongly agree) to five (strongly disagree). Questions were asked to assess general satisfaction (e.g., "I am satisfied with the care my child receives in the hospital"), giving information (e.g., "I am giving as much time as I need to ask questions about my child's condition or treatments), empathy with the patient (e.g., "The hospital staff does not understand what it is like to have a sick child"), and attitude toward the patient (e.g., "I feel that my child and I are treated as people rather as an illness").

The findings suggested that 67% of the examined children were suffering from a moderate level of anxiety. The authors applied correlations to determine relationships between variables and indicated that children's anxiety levels were negatively correlated with mothers' use of coping strategies. Children's anxiety levels were positively correlated with the times of children experiencing medical procedures. Regarding coping strategies used by the mothers, results indicated that the better mothers were able to cope with the hospitalization situation, the fewer anxiety levels were present in their children. In addition, the more often coping strategies were used, the higher the level of satisfaction with the hospital experience reported by the mothers. The study findings suggested that providing resources to enhance maternal coping behaviors increased the parents' satisfaction with their children's care by the hospital and minimized the effects of

hospitalization on their children. Although this study shed light on one means to perform an investigation with children using drawings as data analysis, the study failed to give children a voice to share and understand their particular perspectives.

Given the need to hear children's voices in interpreting their artwork, two additional studies are considered. Like those mentioned previously, these studies focused on children's drawings as a methodological approach entailing a shared analysis. Researchers not only engaged children to produce drawings but also asked them to participate in the process of analyzing and making meaning out of the drawings (Theron et al., 2011). The so-called "write-and-talk (or write)" technique allows children to give voice to what they want the drawing to communicate, enabling them to explain their artwork (Hickey-Moody et al., 2021). The following section explores two studies with children's drawings applying the "draw-and-talk (or write)" technique for data analysis.

The first study using children's narratives of their drawings conducted by Boles and Winsor (2019) aimed to investigate how children with cancer perceived attending school in the home, hospital, or a traditional school setting through interview-elicited drawings. This qualitative study design incorporated drawings and interviews to elicit information about what the art pieces were communicating. The participants were 10 children between the ages of 6 to 12 years receiving treatment for a solid tumor or blood cancer. Two prompts were given to children to complete the drawings section: (1) Draw a picture of yourself at school before you had (diagnosis name) and (2) Draw a picture of yourself at school after you started getting treatment for (diagnosis name). Eighteen drawings were produced for analysis.

Once they completed the drawing section, the children were asked to describe their art pieces. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. The researchers applied a coding scheme adapted from Cherney et al. (2006) based on expressions of illness, body appearance, social interactions, emotional expressions, and cognitive processes. In addition, the coding considered the drawings' characteristics, e.g., the number and quality of colors used, amount of figures present, and the perspectives of the figures in the drawing. An additional coding scheme developed by Kortesluoma et al. (2008) was used to examine illness expressions and developmental perspectives. Characteristics of the cognitive domain, for instance, were shown in portrayals of reading, writing, or completing homework. In addition, the emotional domain was represented by smiling or frowning, holding hands, or hugging. Two adapted coding schemes were issued to the researchers' team and completed the checklist for each of the eighteen drawings separately. Thirty-six checklists were performed, yielding inter-rater reliability of 84% initially. However, triangulating drawings, transcripts, and researcher observations resulted in 100% inter-rater reliability.

Following the coding process, inductively thematic analysis was carried out in a process mirroring (Boles et al., 2017). Overlapping codes were combined into categories. For instance, codes of "more than one figure," "figures close," and "figures separated" were merged into the social domain category. Once the thematic analysis was concluded, researchers mirrored the transcript of children's descriptions of their art pieces to ensure the drawings' interpretations were grounded in the data. As a result, three themes were inductively developed: (1) social representations, (2) expressions of physical development, and (3) illness or treatment representations. The findings suggested that

children with cancer perceived school attendance as a social experience with implications for instructional techniques and social relationships in educational service delivery. Ultimately, the "draw and talk" technique provides participants with a way of expressing themselves with freedom from tension and anxiety and has proven helpful in offering additional insights into the children's lived experiences (Boles & Winsor, 2019).

Baroutsis et al. (2019) conducted the second study investigating children's experiences using narratives of their drawings. The purpose of the study was to explore the process of learning to write using drawings created by young children as data collection. The study was performed in two public schools in Australia; 217 children aged 4 to 8 years were surveyed with broad, open-ended, and context-specific questions, such as, "What do you want your teacher to know about what helps you learn to write?" Following the survey, children were asked to draw by responding to the prompt: "Can you draw a picture of what learning to write looks like to you?" In some cases, the prompt had to be rephrased: "Can you draw a picture of yourself learning to write?" The researchers were aware of the potential survey interference that impacted the children's art production.

The researchers invited each child to engage in a draw-and-talk section, which was audio-recorded and transcribed for further analysis. Not all children engaged in talking while drawing, but they were asked to talk about their art piece by the end of the drawing production. The art production yielded a total of 197 drawings. The authors applied content analysis focused on frequency counts of the depictions in the visual data, following a coding scheme based on four categories: (1) portraits of the writer engaged with writing (including the human figures, their faces, and facial expressions), (2)

portraits of collaborative writing (including the presence of people in pairs or groups); (3) portraits of the materials of writing (including the presence of writing tools); and (4) portraits of the spaces of writing (including depictions of setting). Specific elements of the categories were considered subcategories, and they were also coded in the drawings. In addition, the art pieces were analyzed according to year levels and categories or subcategories but also considering Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) framework based on the ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions in the drawings by questioning the following: "What is represented?", "Who is the audience?" and "How is the drawing composed?" Lastly, the audio-recorded "draw-and-talk" technique provided additional insights into the drawings analyses.

Findings suggested that across the four categories, 43% of children depicted a portrayal of the writing materials indicating how important it is for children to engage with these materials to promote literacy. Consistently, children positioned themselves as actors in the drawings when they represented fully-bodied figures (Baroutsis et al., 2019); in this study, 33% of the drawings represented the writer as actors, which could indicate some conflicts about successful learning, perhaps showing lack of confidence. While only 12% of the drawings portrayed collaborations during the writing, children mentioned other individuals who helped them in the learning process, but the lack of representation in the drawings suggested that children did not associate writing with social activity and collaboration. Finally, 12% of the drawings depicted representations of spaces of writing. The authors stated that the writing materials and the behavior of the writers are intertwined with the learning spaces. Incorporating the children's narrative in their drawings may free the researcher from bias; however, it is unclear how the authors

conducted the rigor of this study. Another question to bear in mind is that there may be cases where children cannot or are not willing to talk about their drawings. Thus, the next investigation conducted by Oztabak (2020) will explore when the "draw-and-talk (or write)" cannot be employed.

The language barrier can be an obstacle to performing the "draw-and-talk (or write)" technique for further drawing analyses. To illustrate, Oztabak (2020) conducted a study with Syrian and Palestinian refugee children living in Turkey. The investigation aimed to explore the themes related to war and migration in the drawings of refugee children in comparison to non-refugee children regarding similarities and differences in these themes. The researcher employed a case study design as a qualitative methodology using drawings as data collection. The sample included 19 Syrian, 6 Palestinian, and 25 Turkish children between 6 and 10 years old who attended different schools in Istanbul. The first two groups of children were refugees living in Istanbul, while the third group was originally from Turkey; therefore, the third group included no refugees.

Although the researcher did not interview the children individually because of language issues, the children were informed about the study and questioned by a translator in order to collect data. Then, the children were asked to draw pictures of war and immigration themes. The researchers observed the children and took notes while they were drawing. After completing the drawings section, each art piece was described in detail. Following the content analysis, the drawings were coded and organized into categories. As a result, the themes emerged and compared between refugees and non-refugees. To ensure validity and reliability, a second researcher also analyzed the data. The more cohesiveness between researchers' analyses increases reliability (Yildirim &

Simsek, 2013). The author used inter-coder reliability and Miles and Huberman's (1994) inter-code reliability formula (reliability=agreements/agreements + disagreements). The inter-rater reliability result was 0.90, which was considered reliable. Finally, the internal validity was examined through the consistency of the data analysis method with the process.

Findings suggested similarities of symbols of war and immigration themes with Syrian and Palestinian refugee children. The thematic analysis of refugee children's drawings yielded six significant themes, including death (37 codes), warfare (28 codes), despair (18 codes), flags (12 codes), nature (11 codes), immigration (3 codes), and hope (1 code). Interestingly, Palestinian children included more representations of warfare than symbols of immigration. People in the drawing were depicted with sad faces and missing body parts. Also, the presence of flags in both groups symbolized the children of belonging. In terms of color choice, the Palestinian children's drawings were less colorful; instead, the dominant colors were red and black, which may have suggested emotional tension. The images of houses portrayed by Syrian refugees tend to be empty with no roofs, bombs over the kids, and drawn in black, indicating vulnerability.

By contrast, the thematic analysis of non-refugee children's drawings found six different themes, including nature (55 codes), warfare (24 codes), hope (15 codes), despair (13 codes), immigration (12 codes), and death (9 codes). This analysis suggested that Turkish children used their imagination to depict war. For instance, there were figures of battles in the Turkish drawings; however, the human pictures depicted people smiling, images of nature were present, and the use of bright colors was dominant. Overall, findings suggested that Syrian and Palestinian children incorporated war images

from having lived experience; instead, Turkish children were more imaginative about the war. In sum, the current study demonstrated that it is not always possible to apply the "draw-and-talk (or write)" technique to analyze the drawings due to language barriers. However, from the studies above, other strategies can help give meaning to the children's drawings.

Although the evidence reviewed above suggested that spirituality and religiosity played a vital role in creating resilience among children, scholarship on Latino minors entering the U.S. is almost nonexistent in this field. Equally, there is a paucity of studies with children using drawings to investigate the theme of religious coping and spirituality under challenging times. Hence, this study explores the Latino children's experience of crossing international borders based on the images' content and examines whether the spiritual and religious coping strategies are depicted in the art. Further, this study explores art produced by Latino minor refugees, and considers, how their drawings convey this theme and what differences emerge between the groups.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

This study aims to explore lived experiences and spiritual and religious images used as coping methods by Latino refugee children in their migration journey to the United States. This chapter begins with the list of research questions and is followed by an overview and description of the methodology, including a data analysis procedure, rigor of the study, and ends with a discussion of the protection procedures applicable to this investigation when using human subjects.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide this investigation: (1) What do the children's drawings reveal about their life/lived experience before coming to the U.S.? (2) How are children's migration journeys depicted in their drawings? (3) What are the spiritual and religious images depicted in the children's drawings? (4) What are the differences in children's lived experiences and use of spiritual and religious images based on their gender, age, and country of origin? (5) What are other topics depicted in the drawings?

Overview of Methodology

This study employed qualitative methods to investigate how children depicted their lives before migrating, their experience of crossing the U.S. border, and their spirituality and religiosity applied during their journey. This investigation analyzed drawings gifted to the *Arte de Lágrimas: Refugee Artwork Project* by children newly released from detention centers in Rio Grande Valey, Texas. These children and their

families were detained after crossing the US-Mexico border. Drawings were created while the children and their families waited at the bus station to travel to various cities across the U.S. and reunite with family members.

The use of drawings to study children and their experiences is not new. According to Theron et al. (2011), psychologists have primarily used drawings to investigate children's cognitive development. In addition, Merriman and Guerin (2006) pointed out that drawings have been used as assessment tools to evaluate children's IQ, development, and attachment behaviors. In clinical treatment, psychologists have relied on drawings to facilitate children's engagement and progress in the treatment process (Merriman & Guerin, 2006).

Health professionals have been using drawings with children to understand their experience of hospitalization and illness (Fraser & Al Sayah, 2011). Social scientists, including social workers, use drawings with children to give them a voice to identify social issues by capturing their feelings and emotions (Theron et al., 2011). Moreover, art therapists use drawings for educational purposes, emphasizing emotional and personal development, occupational, social, and recreational therapy (Dillenburger, 2016). Although the use of drawings as a method has been applied to different fields, little is known about the perspective of these methods in understanding the feelings and lived experiences of Latino refugee children newly released by the border patrol at the U.S.-Mexican border.

Drawings as Visual Methodology Approach in Research

Literat (2013) pointed out several advantages of using drawings as a research method with children and youth: First, this method's implementation is relatively simple

and less costly than the video or photograph approach. Second, it is suitable to use in a variety of situations and circumstances, particularly when there are social and cultural differences and barriers, such as language and communication hurdles, between the researcher and participants. Third, and most importantly, using drawings as a research method is particularly promising with traumatized children because of the playful aspect of creating drawings. Finally, from the research perspective, this method is versatile in examining different study phases, such as baseline, midpoint, and endpoint. Therefore, such applicability allows the researcher to apply a more holistic evaluation process (Literat, 2013). Theron et al. (2011) explained that drawings are significantly meaningful, and the content expressed is the children's world that needs to be read and interpreted by the artist, audience, and researcher.

Three distinct visual methodologies for interpreting drawings are worth highlighting: textual approaches within visual studies, arts-based or arts-informed methodologies, and participatory visual methodologies (Theron et al., 2011). Textual approaches within visual studies are the first methodological approach to place drawings as a primary data-gathering tool. Textual research refers to additional data such as documents, a book, or a piece of writing through which values, symbolism, or assumptions can be used as crucial information for the study (Miller, 2010). Adding these data sources to the analysis can frame what the data conveys, what other possible information in the drawing can be interpreted, and the situations to which the data can be related (Miller, 2010).

The second visual methodology approach used to interpret drawings is the arts-based or arts-informed methodology. Finley (2008) stated that arts-based inquiry

integrates multiple methodologies that allow researchers to explore diverse perspectives

of human experiences and address issues of social inequity. Arts-based methodologies

work with unsteady and opposing social constructions, which can reveal injustice and

reconstruct praxis (Finley, 2008). Finley suggested that arts-based research connects

affective experiences, imagination, and intellect as the place to know and respond to the

world. Lenete (2019) argued that the participants in art production should be seen as

artists who have the knowledge of their experience and can articulate and share it. For the

children in this study, the drawings can be a way to make meaning of their journey. The

third visual methodology includes participatory visual research methodologies (PVRM).

According to Rose (2018), images are never naïve, as they reflect the producers' vision of

the world in a distinct form. To interpret these drawings, Rose (2018) developed a critical

visual methodology framework by which she highlighted the importance of having a

critical perspective of visual materials. This framework considers four sites of the image:

the site of production, the site of the image itself, the site of its circulation, and the site of

the audience. The author suggested that the images carry meaning through these four

sites.

Site of Production. The site of production refers to where and under which

circumstances the image was produced. Considering features such as technology,

conditions, societal environment, and what the authors want to convey in their work

contributes to the art form, meaning, and effect. In the case of Latino children's drawings,

it is essential to consider, for instance, what type of materials were at the children's

disposal (technology) in order to produce their drawings. Additionally, considering where

and under what circumstances (conditions) the arts were produced can show the

socioeconomic aspect of their experience at that time, revealing the threats and other views imposed by forced migration such as incarceration by immigration authorities.

Site of the Image Itself. Rose (2018) claimed that the image never carries a straightforward meaning; the image interprets the world through its visual content. Every image has several formal features that result in the image itself. For example, the color of choice may reveal the artist's intention for her/his art. In this sense, it is worth analyzing what makes the artist choose specific colors rather than others. The compositionality of the image is another feature highlight that carries visual content. Shapes and spatial organization exemplify how compositionality contributes to the image's portrayal and, ultimately, to the power of the image (Rose, 2018). Arnheim (1974) argued that younger children draw circles to represent almost all objects. However, as their eyes and hands mature, children's skills become more refined, and the levels of complexity in their drawings become apparent.

Site of Circulation. The site of circulation refers to the images' movement from the site of production to another place to be seen by other individuals. Rose (2018) argued that this circulation might alter the image and its compositionality due to the technologies used to transport the image. In addition, the author highlighted that the image's circulation is influenced by several aspects, such as social, political, cultural, and economic, that can be part of another significant process of the image. For example, the children's drawings hanging in an art gallery and depicting war may have a social impact on the societal level, opening a broader conversation about the issue. As a result, the drawings themselves can have a political impact on an institutional level leading to law changes seeking family protection for those affected by the war.

Site of Audiencing. The site of audiencing refers to the individuals who would watch the creation of art pieces by the children while simultaneously engaging in the process of making meaning (Rose, 2018). The significance of this site is considering how different people interpret a single art piece differently due to their social identities and social practices of admiring the art (Rose, 2018). For example, visitors in an art gallery who appreciate the piece by walking silently, contemplating, and analyzing the art qualities tend to be middle-class visitors only because a certain level of education is needed to understand the art style (Rose, 2018).

Rose argued that the researcher decides on which site(s) of visuality she/he wants to focus on in order to determine the importance of the artwork's meaning. Since this project aimed to explore the image, the sites of interest were the production and the image itself. Thus, this study embraced the tenets of arts-based methods, and participatory visual research methodologies (PVRM) guided the overall analysis of the research questions.

Overview of the Research Design

This qualitative study aimed to explore and describe the images depicted in Latino refugee children's drawings by applying participatory visual research methodologies (PVRM). The researcher collected data from the drawings to answer the research questions utilizing the drawings' descriptors provided by *Arte de Lágrimas: Refugee Artwork Project* and specific instruments, the Critical Visual Methodology Framework (Appendix C), the Religious /Spiritual Element Codebook (Appendix D) and the Drawing Religious/Spiritual Element Checklist (Appendix E), identified by the investigator. A content analysis was performed during this phase of the review. Additionally, the

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researcher used a concept mapping approach to identify themes. Concept mapping is a type of diagram that allows the researcher to think visually about how complex phenomena interconnect with one another to make meaning out of messy thoughts (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010; Conceição et al., 2017). This approach proved helpful in understanding how the data was linked, which resulted in identifying the themes. This methodology was suitable for giving meaning to the children's art pieces and providing an increased understanding of their experience drawn from the children's perspective. Since arts-based research focusing on Latino children refugees recently released from detention centers is scarce, this study sought to be descriptive with the goal of informing future studies.

Sources of Data

First, the drawing descriptor was a data source provided by *Arte de Lágrimas: Refugee Artwork Project*. The descriptor included demographics such as age, gender, country of origin, location of art production, description of the image produced, and materials used to make the drawings. Also, members of the project collected descriptions based on an informal conversation with the child about her/his drawing. Questions about the drawing's meaning were asked, and overall observations were collected regarding the child's reactions to their drawings during the art production.

The second instrument for collecting data from the drawings was the Critical Visual Methodology Framework (Appendix C). The researcher adapted the instrument for this study from Rose's critical visual methodology framework (2018). Rose developed a framework considering four sites—production, image, circulation, and audience—from which the meanings of a visual image are made. Each site contains specific questions. For

instance, at the site of production, the questions are: Who is the author? When and where was the art produced? Why did the author produce the art? At the site of the image, the questions are interested in visual meanings, composition, and visual effects. At the site of circulation, the inquiries explore how the image circulates from one place to another, how this circulation changes the image, who organizes this circulation, and the purposes of this circulation. Lastly, the site of audiencing investigates the nuances of public art's interpretation.

For this study, the framework focused on analyzing the production (where the creation of drawings took place and how they were composed) and the image (drawing) sites. Therefore, some questions were adapted for these sites to explore children's drawings as art forms. At the site of production, examples of tailored questions were (1) What kind of relationship existed between the artist and the subject of the image? (2) What emotional reaction, if any, did the child have in describing her/his drawing? Moreover, examples of questions for the site of the image were (1) If the drawing depiction represent home, border crossing, religious or spiritual elements, and other depictions, and (2) What are the shapes used in the drawing? (e.g., circles, squares, triangles, lines) (See Appendix C).

The third instrument that helped the coding strategy was the Religious /Spiritual Element Codebook (Appendix D). To ensure the drawings contain figures with holy qualities, the researcher developed a codebook based on Dowling and Scarlett (2006). In this codebook, the researcher defined elements with religious and spiritual attributes, such as a church, faith, prayer, and heaven, among others (See Appendix D). The

codebook supported the identification of the figures in the drawings containing religious or spiritual qualities.

From the Religious/Spiritual Element Codebook (Appendix D) created for this study, the researcher extracted the most common spiritual and religious elements and built the fourth instrument Drawing Religious/Spiritual Element Checklist (see Appendix E), for collecting data from the art pieces. The researcher used the checklist to mark with the letter "X" whether these elements were included or not included in the drawings.

Sample

A total of forty-five children produced sixty-three drawings gifted to the *Arte de Lágrimas: Refugee Artwork Project's* founders that were analyzed in this study. The drawings were made by male and female children between 7 and 17 years old from El Salvador, Guatemala, or Honduras, who crossed the U.S. border between 2014 and 2021. In qualitative research, the sample size recommended depends on the methodological approach (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In grounded theory, for instance, there is a recommendation for a minimum sample size of twenty participants (Charmaz, 2014). In arts-based research, a sample size of one is acceptable (Siegesmund, 2014).

The sixty-three drawings selected for this study from the *Arte de Lágrimas: Refugee Artwork Project* are a subset of the 213 drawings that were collected from 115 Latinos (children and adults) who crossed the US-Mexico Border in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2019, and 2021. One hundred and fifty drawings were excluded from the analysis because eighty-seven of the drawings were created by children between 1 and 6 years of age, all of which were scribblings typically thought of as having little or no representation intent (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987). The other 63 drawings were excluded

due to: 1) the unknown age of the person making the drawing, 2) the drawing was made by an adult, 3) the drawing was a collaboration of a group of children of different ages, and 4) the drawing was created by a child or adult from a country other than Latin America.

Data Collection

Children and families were apprehended at the border in Rio Grande Valley—a border city in Deep South Texas— and screened, according to immigration policies, to verify that they were not victims of human trafficking. Children apprehended at the border from contiguous countries (Mexico and Canada) must be screened within 48 hours to ensure they are safe to return to their countries. By contrast, children from non-contiguous countries can stay up to 72 hours in Customs Border Protection (CBP) facilities (Kandel, 2017). Afterward, these children and families were transferred to detention centers in Rio Grande Valley—a border city in Texas— until they were authorized to stay in the U.S. According to immigration laws, the time length in detention centers cannot exceed 20 days. However, this time can take longer, for some children and families up to 30 days (Kids in Need of Defense, 2021; Hing, 2020). Once it was determined that the children were allowed to stay in the U.S., they were released from the detention center and taken to the bus station to meet their families elsewhere, where they were authorized to wait for the determination of their final immigration legal status.

The *Arte de Lágrimas: Refugee Artwork Project* partnered with churches and Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley to set up two art stations: the Sacred Heart Catholic Church Relief Center and the McAllen Central Bus Station. The project aimed to invite migrants crossing the U.S.-Mexico border into a space of artmaking to offer

comfort, prayers, and hospitality. Teams representing the *Arte de Lágrimas: Refugee Artwork Project* were set up each year to provide artmaking materials and resources. The participants were encouraged to keep their drawings for themselves; however, many children and adults gifted pieces to the archive collection of *Arte de Lágrimas: Refugee Artwork Project*. These drawings would be used to bring awareness about the child mass migration situation at the U.S. border and give voice to the minors' journey. The project founders set up a website—artedelagrimas.org—on which to display the drawings, as well as provide an opportunity for the public to access parts of this collection, and also to share information about public exhibitions of these drawings in venues such as art galleries, universities, and churches throughout the country (Arte de Lágrimas, n.d.).

The drawings used in this study were made at the Sacred Heart Relief Center or at the McAllen Central Bus Station in McAllen, Texas. When families were released by the Border Patrol at the McAllen Central Bus Station, *Arte de Lágrimas: Refugee Artwork Project* volunteers received and transported refugee families to the Sacred Heart Relief Center where they were given food, an opportunity to shower, and provided with clothes and toiletries. Then, they were returned to the bus station, where project volunteers offered children crayons and paper to pass the time while they waited for their respective buses to take them to various locations in the United States. For families leaving the next day, a team of volunteers worked with the children at the Relief Center, encouraging them in making several types of artworks (Arte de Lágrimas, n.d.).

Children drew their experience guided by the following prompts: (1) How did your home look like in your country? (2) Who do you miss at home? (3) How was your crossing journey? The artwork project team provided the following material to the

children: markers, crayons, watercolor, stamped images, sponge painting, stencils, colored pencils, and varied sizes of paper (7.5x8.5; 9x10; 9x12; 9x13.5; 9.5x12.5;10.5x11.5; 11x14). In addition, project volunteers collected demographic information such as gender, age, country of origin, the year of border crossing, and the meaning of the drawing according to the child's description, as well as the physical description of the participants' art pieces. Some adults were invited to draw as a method to encourage hesitant children to follow prompts and create drawings of their own.

Data Analysis Procedures

The study data analysis plan is outlined in Figure 4 and will be described in the following lines.
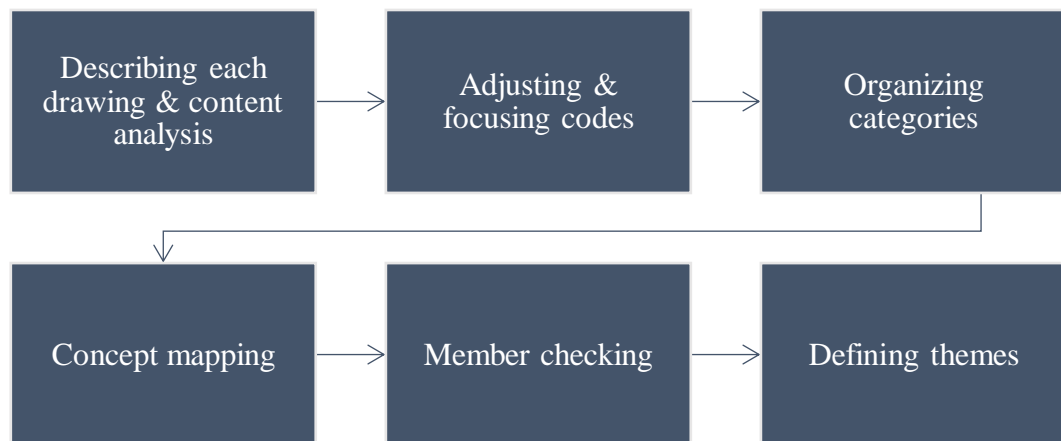
Figure 4 Analysis Plan

The application of participatory visual research methodologies (PVRM) generated data for this study. The data analysis plan was crafted of four phases. In the first phase, the drawings were described in detail, and a content analysis was performed. The researcher applied the Critical Visual Methodology Framework (Appendix C) for each

drawing to extract data from the production site and the image itself. Similarly, the Drawing Religious/Spiritual Element Checklist (Appendix E) gathered data related to religious and spiritual elements. The researcher obtained demographic data and the meaning of the drawing for children using the drawing descriptor provided by *Arte de Lágrimas: Refugee Artwork Project*. This phase of analysis generated 126-word documents.

The researcher created an Excel spreadsheet to gather the data collected. Demographic information such as gender, age, country of origin, and year of crossing were compiled. For the site of production, data extracted were the child's reaction to drawing, the interaction between the child and facilitator, whether the child asked for permission or assistance for art production, the identified relationship between the child and drawing, and the child's reaction towards the drawing production completion. For the site of the image itself, the data extracted were depictions of the drawing, and whether the elements in the art referred to home, border crossing, spiritual and religious coping. If the elements did not fit these classifications, they were sorted as Other Depictions. Content analysis was performed by disjointing the figures displayed in the drawings. In addition, data including the spatial organization, colors used, significance of the colors, size of the central figure, material provided, shapes and other characteristics of the drawings, figures meaning according to the child, and title name were collected.

The second phase of the analysis corresponded to the cleansing, adjustments of the data, and focusing codes. Duplicate contents were assembled. As these contents were from different drawings in distinct years, the researcher decided not to discard them. Similar contents, such as rivers, lakes, and oceans, were clustered. Likewise, the contents

Butterfly, Birds, Ducks, and Fish were also grouped. Contents that did not match the depiction were redistributed. For example, the content Date placed in the Spirituality classification was redistributed to the Other Depiction. In contrast, the Frame Line content was not frequent in the drawings, so it was discarded. Others, such as the Pet, stood alone as a category for the significance of this animal to the children. Some new contents emerged from the drawings. For instance, hidden elements in the drawings were not apparent at first glance, such as a child hiding behind a tree. This relevant detail was noticeable after applying zoom to the drawing, so the discrepancy was fixed. Thus, in the second analysis phase, contents were arranged in the five types of drawings classification—Home, Border Crossing, Spirituality, Religiosity, and Other Depictions—inconsistent arrangements were dismembered, combined, re-arranged, or discarded.

The third phase of analysis focused on organizing the data into categories. The researcher quantified the contents, identified the patterns, and used a deductive strategy to organize them into categories. The Playground category, for instance, emerged from the following codes: Bike, Toys, Shoes, and Playground. Another example of organizing the data into categories is Bodies of Water. This category sets Rivers, Lakes, and Oceans codes. Each category was positioned according to the types of depictions—Home, Border Crossing, Spirituality, Religiosity, and Other Depictions. Some categories could fit simultaneously into distinct types of depiction, such as Bodies of Water, which could fit in both Home and Spirituality depictions. To distinguish them, the researcher utilized the descriptor provided by *Arte de Lágrimas: Refugee Artwork Project* and the art pieces to contextualize different meanings. Simultaneously, new content and categories started to be repetitive, and nothing new emerged from the drawings, reaching saturation. This

analysis phase yielded sixty categories distributed in five classifications of drawings—

Home, Border Crossing, Spirituality, Religious Coping, and Other Depictions as shown

in Table 1.

Table 1

Categories

Home Before Migrating Categories

1. Animal/Insects	Butterfly
	Birds
	Ducks
	Fish
	Beetle
2. Home Utensils/Appliances	Ceiling lamp
	Fan
	Trash bin
	Table
	Stair
3. Clouds	Clouds
	Sky
4. Flowers/Leaves	Curved stamped flower
	Flowers & Leaves
	Pink figures stamped in flower
5. Bodies of Water	Lake
	Ocean
	Rivers
6. Mountains	Mountains
	Hills
7. Planets & Stars	Smiling moon
	Moon
	Smiling Stars
	Solar System (Planets)
	Sun
8. Vegetation	Vegetation
	Grass
	Bushes
9. Trees	Trees
	Trees with fruits
	Coconut tree with fruits
10. Public Way	Pathways
	Road
	Streets
	Stoplights

11. Houses	Houses
12. Human Figures	Family members left behind
	Self-portrayed picture
	Members of community
	Border patrol officers
	Children, babies
	Other immigrants
	Mother/Father traveling together
	Aunt, uncle, grandmother, cousins, siblings
13. Pet	Dog
14. Nature Phenomenon	Volcano
	Lightening
	Rain
	Rainbow
15. Playground	Bike
	Toys
	Shoes
	Playground
16. Fried Chicken	Fried Chicken

Border Crossing Categories

1. **Vehicles used during the journey**	Car
	Boat
	Truck
	Bus
2. **Public way**	Road
3. **Vegetation**	Vegetation
	Bushes
4. **Border patrol officers**	Border patrols officers
5. **Family Members**	Children; siblings
	Mother/Father traveling together
	Family Members left behind
	Babies
6. **Means to cross the border**	River
	Road
7. **Buildings**	Buildings
8. **Cell**	Cell/Detention center
	Cell exit door
9. **Checkpoints**	Checkpoints
10. **Children Incarcerated**	Babies/parents/kids
11. **Self-portrayed**	Self-portrayed figure
12. **Other immigrants**	Coyotes/other immigrants traveling together
13. **Objects in the cell**	Beds

	TV
	Rug
14. Mountains	Hill
15. Snake	Snake or serpent

Spirituality Categories

1. **Animal/Insects**	Butterfly
	Birds, Ducks
	Fish
	Beetle
2. **Clouds**	Clouds
	Sky
3. **Bodies of Water**	Lake
	Ocean
	Rivers
4. **Heart**	Hearts
5. **Nature Phenomenon**	Volcano
	Lightening
	Rain
	Rainbow
6. **Planets & Stars**	Smiling moon
	Moon
	Stars
	Solar System (Planets)
	Sun
7. **Mountains**	Mountains
	Hills
8. **Flowers/Leaves**	Flowers & Leaves
9. **Houses**	Houses
10. **Human Figures**	Family members left behind
	Self-portrayed picture
11. **Words of Spirituality**	Sacred heart, journey, space, universe (titles); peace; love
12. **Pet**	Dog
13. **Vegetation**	Vegetation; grass
14. **Trees**	Trees
15. **Dark background**	Dark background paper
16. **Devil Figure**	Serpent or snake

Religiosity Categories

1. **Words of Religiosity**	Religious words such as "Iglesia"(church in Spanish
	Word Jesus, God, blessings or bless
	Religious hymn

2.	**Church**	Figure of a church
3.	**Crucifix or Cross**	Figure of crucifix or cross
4.	**Jesus**	Figure of Jesus
5.	**God**	Figure of God
6.	**Angel**	Figure of little cousin written "Angeli"

Other Depictions Categories

1.	**Vehicles**	Airplane
		Car
		Spaceship/universe
2.	**Buildings**	Buildings
		Antennas
3.	**Happy Birthday Celebration**	Titled Happy Birthday in Spanish
		Cake
		Candle
		Cutlery
		Table
4.	**Identifiers**	Countries' name
		Age
		Date
		Flag (Honduras)
		Texts in the drawings
		Family members' name
		Signature
5.	**Public way**	Pathways
		Stoplights
		Streets
6.	**Scribbles**	Undefined forms
		Circles (Center-focused piece)
		Smiling face
7.	**Toys**	Gifts from the volunteers

The fourth phase of analysis sought to find themes from the coded data. The concept mapping was applied to visualize the relational phenomena among categories in order to identify themes. The concept mapping can be generated by a software platform or designed as a hand-drawn diagram (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010; Conceição et al., 2017). For this study, the researcher designed a diagram sketch for each art classification—Home, Border Crossing, Spirituality, Religiosity, and Other Depictions— to discover themes. The researcher listed the categories corresponding to each year

according to the drawings' classification making relational connections to finding emerging themes. The following section describes how the themes emerged from coded data.

First, sixteen categories originated four themes for Home Before Migrating. (1) Connected With Nature theme originated from the following categories: animal/insects, pets, clouds, flowers/leaves, bodies of water, mountains, trees, nature phenomenon, planets/stars, and vegetation. (2) Family Together theme resulted from combining human figures and family members categories. (3) Sense of Community theme arose from houses, public ways, and playground categories. Finally, (4) Memories of Homeland theme was built from home utensils/appliances, houses, playground, and fried chicken categories.

Second, fifteen categories formed three themes for Migration Journey: (1) On the Run: Facing Fear and Dangerous Situations theme emerged from nine categories— vegetation used to hide, vehicles used during the journey, public way, family members, buildings, checkpoints, means to cross the border, mountains used to hide, and snake. (2) Traveling Together theme arose from family members and other immigrant categories. (3) "Ice Box": Encounters with Immigration Authorities originated from cell, self-portrait, objects in the cell, children incarcerated, and border officers.

Third, five themes emerged from sixteen categories of Spirituality: (1) Mother Earth theme was the result of connecting the following categories: animals/insects, flowers/leaves, bodies of water, nature phenomenon, mountains, vegetation, and trees. (2) Devil Beings theme was the link between the dark background and the devil figure. (3) Heaven theme originated from clouds and planets/stars categories. (4) Sense of

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Unconditional Love, Ease, and Comfort theme emerged from hearts, child, and pet

categories. (5) Language of Spirituality resulted from words of spirituality category.

Additionally, three themes for religiosity from six categories. (1) Religious

Symbols and Beliefs themes connected to church and crucifix/cross categories. (2)

Language of Religiosity emerged from words of religiosity, singing the religious hymn,

the words of blessing, and God categories. (3) Divine being was associated with the

figures of Jesus, angels, and God categories. The last four themes for Other depictions

emerged from seven categories: (1) My Identity as a Child arose from identifiers, happy

birthday celebration, and toys categories. (2) Locomotion Means as a theme derived from

the vehicle category. (3) My Perception of the U.S. theme emerged from depictions of

buildings and public way categories. Lastly, (4) The Childish Art Expression theme

reflected the scribbles depiction category. Figure 5 demonstrates the concept mapping of

each drawing classification. The definition of each theme was developed.

Home Before Migrating Concept Mapping

2) Pets 2014/2015	3) Clouds 2014/2015/2016
1) Animals/Insects 2014/2015	4) Flowers/Leaves 2014/2015/2016
7) Trees 2015/2016	8) Nature Phenomenon 2014/2015
5) Bodies of Water 2014/2015	9) Planets/Stars 2014/2015/2016/2021
6) Mountains 2014/2015/2016	12) Houses 2014/2015/2016/2019/2021
10) Vegetation 2015/2016/2019/2021	15) Public Way 2014/2015/2019
11) Human Figures 2014	13) Home Utensils/Appliances 2014/2015
11a) Family Members	16) Playground 2015
14) Fried Chicken 2015	

Figure 5 Concept Mapping and Themes

Themes

Connected With Nature

> • Animal/Insects; Pets; Clouds; Flowers/Leaves; Bodies of Water; Mountains; Trees; Nature Phenomenon; Planets/Stars; Vegetation

Family Together

> • Human Figures; Family Members

Sense of Community

> • Houses; Public Ways; Playground

Memories of My Homeland

> • Home Utensilis/Appliances; Houses; Playground; Fried Chicken
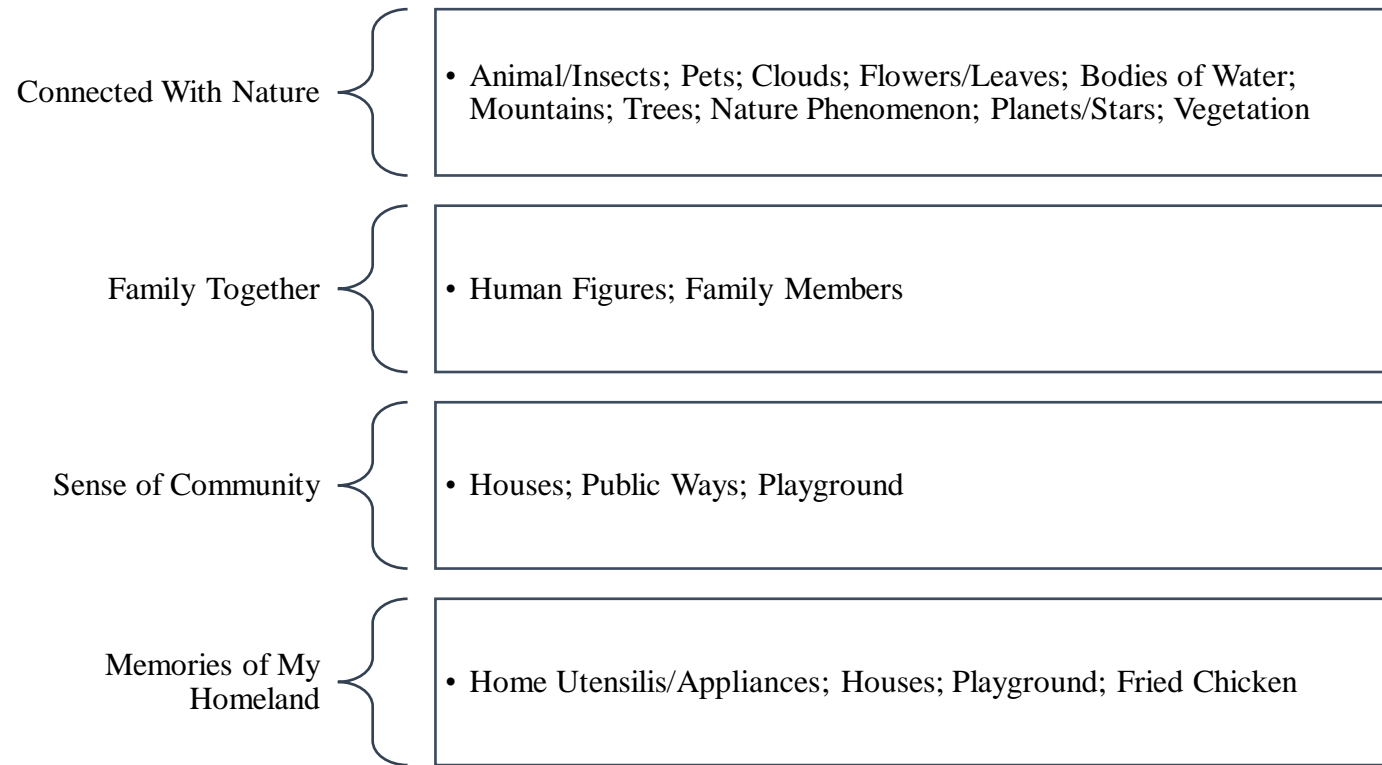
Migration Journey Concept Mapping

15) Vegetation used to hide

2014/2015/2016

6) Vehicles used during the journey

2014/2015

14) Public way

2014

3) Other immigrants

2015

2) Family Members

2014

13) Buildings

2015

4) Checkpoints

2015

5) Means to cross the border

2015

1) Cell

2015/2016

12) Self-portrayed

2015

10) Mountains used to hide

2016

11) Snake

2016

9) Objects in the cell

2016

8) Children incarcerated

2016

7) Border officers

2015/2016

Themes

On the Run: Facing
Fear and Dangerous
Situations

- Vegetation used to hide; Vehicles used during the journey; Public way;
  Family Members; Buildings; Checkpoints; Means to cross border;
  Mountains used to hide; Snake

Traveling Together

- Family Members; Other immigrants

"Ice Box": Encounters
With Immigration
Authorities

- Cell; Self-portrayed; Objects in the cell; Children incarcerated, Border
  officers

Spirituality Concept Mapping

2) Animals/Insets

2014/2015

1) Flowers/Leaves

2014/2015/2016

5) Bodies of Water

2014

3) Nature Phenomenon

2014

4) Word of Spirituality

2014

6) Clouds

2014/2015/2016/2021

9) Planets/Stars

2014/2016/2019/2021

8) Mountains

2014/2015/2016

7) Vegetation

2014

10) Pet

2014

11) Hearts

2014/2015

12) Human figure (grandmother)

2015

14) Devil Figure

2016

16) Trees

2015/2016

13) House

2014/2019/2021

12a) Child
2015

15) Dark Background
2016

Themes

Mother Earth	• Animals/Insects; Flowers/Leaves; Bodies of Water; Nature Phenomenon; Mountains; Vegetation; Trees
Devil Beings	• Dark background; Devil Figure
Heaven	• Clouds; Planets/Stars
Sense of Unconditional Love, Ease, and Comfort	• House; Human Figires; Hearts; Child; Pet
Language of Spirituality	• Words of Spirituality

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┌─────────────────────┐              ┌─────────────────────┐          ╭─────────────────────╮
│ 2)  Church          │              │ 1)  Crucifix or     │          │   3a) Singing       │
│                     │──────────────│     Cross           │          │   Religious Hymn    │
│     2014/2015       │              │                     │          ╰─────────────────────╯
└─────────────────────┘              │     2014/2015       │                     │
                                     └─────────────────────┘                     │
                                                                                 │
        ┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐          ┌─────────────────────┐
        │ 5)  Figure of       │      │ 4)  Angel           │          │ 3)  Words of        │
        │     Jesus           │──────│                     │          │     Religiosity     │
        │                     │      │     2015            │          │                     │
        │     2014            │      └─────────────────────┘          │     2014/2015       │
        └─────────────────────┘                                       └─────────────────────┘
                  │                                                               │
                  │                                                               │
        ┌─────────────────────┐                                       ╭─────────────────────╮
        │ 6)  Figure of God   │                                       │   3a) Words of      │
        │                     │                                       │   blessings or bless│
        │     2015            │                                       │   and God           │
        └─────────────────────┘                                       ╰─────────────────────╯
```

Themes

Religious Symbols and Beliefs	• Church; Crucifix/Cross

Language of Religiosity	• Words of Religiosity; Singing the Religious Hym; Words of blessings or bless and God

Devine Being	• Figure of Jesus; Figure of God; Figure of Angel

Other Depictions Concept Mapping

1) Buildings 2014	2) Identifiers 2014/2015/2016/2019/ 2021	3) Happy Birthday Celebration 2014
6) Public way 2014	4) Vehicles 2014/2016	5) Toys 2015
	7) Scribbles 2014/2016/2019/2021	
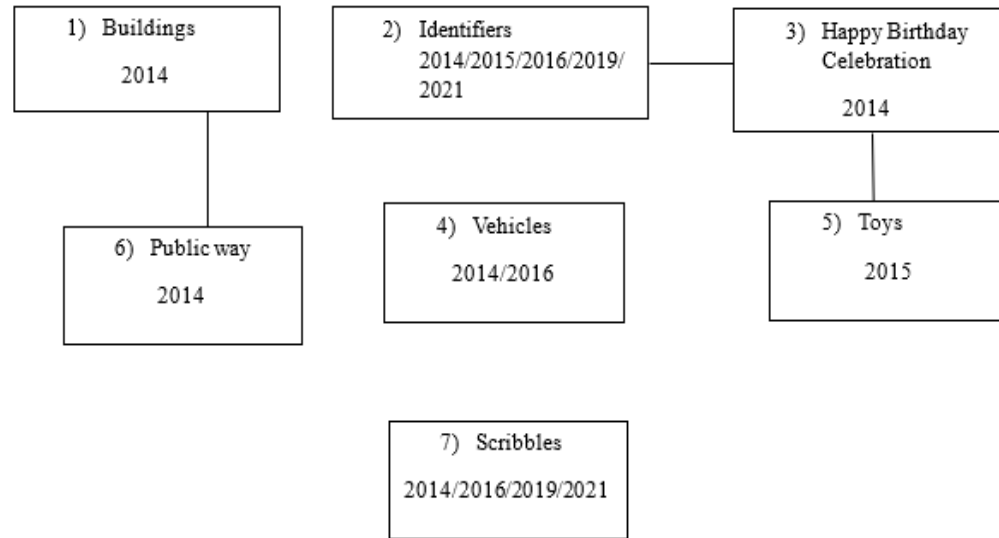
Themes

My Identity as a
Child
{ • Identifiers; Happy birthday celebration; toys

Locomotion Means
{ • Vehicles

My Perception of the
U.S.
{ • Buildings; Public Way

Childish Art
Expression
{ • Scribbles

Rigor

All phases of analysis—drawing description and content analysis, adjustments and focused coding, categorizing, and thematic analysis—were mirrored with the art pieces, drawings descriptor, and appendices C, D, and E to avoid researcher bias. In addition, the researcher added field notes with reflexive thoughts, reactions, impressions, and concerns to mitigate pre-judgment.

To ensure the data reached saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015), the researcher triangulated the themes with the descriptor provided by *Arte de Lágrimas: Refugee Artwork Project* and mirrored the themes with the drawings for each phase of analysis until no additional themes were found. Further, the validation of the themes was verified with one of *Arte de Lágrimas: Refugee Artwork Project's* director, resulting in a 100% agreement reached.

Data Management/Human Subjects Protection

This study was approved by the University of Louisville's Institutional Review Board (IRB number: 23.0340, See Appendix F). The data was coded by assigning participants I.D. numbers replacing their real names. The drawings, narratives, and other demographic information collected in the data were password protected in an encrypted thumb drive or on the University of Louisville's CARDBOX. Only the researcher listed on the IRB has access to the data, and any information available on computers was password protected. Once the data analysis was finalized, the material was returned to *Arte de Lágrimas: Refugee Artwork Project*. The researcher for this study had no contact with the participants. Therefore, there was no potential risk to the participants. No breaches in data security occurred at any point in the study.

Consent Procedures

The artists who provided art for the study gifted all original drawings to the art collection of *Arte de Lágrimas: Refugee Artwork Project.* Since then, the pieces have been placed in the public domain through art exhibitions and the project's website. Thus, consent through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was obtained from the *Arte de Lágrimas: Refugee Artwork Project* using procedures approved by the University of Louisville's IRB (See Appendix G).

Ethical Implications

Some ethical concerns could arise regarding obtaining artwork created by undocumented children. One of these ethical concerns is related to privacy and confidentiality. It is vital to ensure that the researcher is committed to "do no harm" (Zayas et al., 2017). One of the mechanisms to mitigate this issue would be using written consent and assent from the participants. However, for this particular art data collection, written consent was impossible to collect. First, the art pieces were gifted, and additionally, the participants who donated their pieces are no longer available for contact. The final destination of the artists after they completed their art production at the bus station is unknown. Many immigrants adopted invisibility for fear of being deported. Second, the art collection is already in the public domain. As described elsewhere in this document, the pieces have been exposed in art exhibitions throughout the country. Cardoso et al. (2017) suggested the importance of children's role in the family migration process. Therefore, it is vital to capture children's migration experiences and the period of time that they were incarcerated in detention centers on paper to understand how they build resilience and create meaning in the ordeal situation.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

This chapter will present the study findings in four sections. First, the sociodemographic characteristics will be presented. Second, the overall circumstances of the art production (site of production) will be discussed. Third, the site of the image itself will be introduced by examining the content analysis of the drawings, followed by the compositionality of the art pieces where color significance and other composition principles, including placement of primary images, will be explored. Finally, the research questions will be addressed.

Sample Sociodemographic Characteristics

The sample consisted of 45 Latino refugee children who crossed the U.S-Mexican border between 2014-2016 and in the years 2019, and 2021. A total of 20 (44.4%) of the children came from Guatemala, whereas 17 (37.8%) were from El Salvador and 8 (17.8%) from Honduras. Twenty-nine (64.4%) were boys, and 16 (35.6%) were girls. The mean age of the participants was 12 years old (see Table 2).

The majority of the children, 23 out of 45, crossed the border in 2014. Of this number, thirteen (56.5%) children were Salvadoran, and 10 (43.5%) were Guatemalan. Among these children, 8 (34.8%) were girls, and 15 (65.2%) were boys. The mean age was 11.22 years old. No children from Honduras were registered in 2014. In 2015, 7 (46.7%) out of 15 children crossing the border were from Guatemala, 5 (33.3%) of the participants were from Honduras, and 3 (20%) were from El Salvador. Seven (46.7%) children were girls, and 8 (53.3%) were boys. The mean age was 12.4 years old. A total

of five children crossed the border in 2016. One (20%) came from El Salvador, 2 (40%)

were from Guatemala, and the other 2 (40%) were from Honduras. All participants

(100%) were boys. The mean age was 10.75 years old. In 2019 and 2021, one child

crossed the border each year, and they were from Guatemala and Honduras, respectively.

The Guatemalan was a 14-year-old boy, and the Honduran was a 7-year-old girl.

Table 2

Sample Sociodemographic Characteristics

Year/Participants (n)	Total (n=45)	2014 (n=23)	2015 (n=15)	2016 (n=5)	2019 (n=1)	2021 (n=1)
Country						
El Salvador	17 (37.8%)	13 (56.5%)	3 (20%)	1 (20%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Guatemala	20 (44.4%)	10 (43.5%)	7 (46.7%)	2 (40%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
Honduras	8 (17.8%)	0 (0%)	5 (33.3%)	2 (40%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
Gender						
Girls	16 (35.6%)	8 (34.8%)	7 (46.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
Boys	29 (64.4%)	15 (65.2%)	8 (53.3%)	5 (100%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
Mean Age	12	11.22	12.4	10.75	14	7

The Site of Production

   The site of production refers to the circumstances where the drawings were produced based on the following categories: (1) the total number of drawings produced by year, country, and gender; (2) the date and place where the art production took place; (3) the type of materials used by the children; (4) the reaction of the children after receiving the invitation to participate in the drawing process ; (5) the sort of relationship between the artist and the volunteer, and if the children asked for any assistance or permission to draw; and (6) if the children experienced any reaction after the completion of the art production.

   A total of 63 drawings were produced by the children, with thirty-one in August and September of 2014, twenty in January and August of 2015, ten in October of 2016, one in January of 2019, and one in April of 2021. Of the 31 drawings produced in 2014, Salvadoran children drew eighteen, and Guatemalan children drew other thirteen. In 2015, a total of 20 drawings were made by children from El Salvador (6), Guatemala (9), and Honduras (5). There were ten drawings in 2016. One drawing was produced by a child from El Salvador, three from Guatemala and six from Honduras drew six art pieces. One drawing was produced in 2019 and another in 2021, from Guatemala and Honduras, respectively. Majority of the drawings were produced in 2014 by children from Guatemala and El Salvador (See Figure 6).

Figure 6
Total Drawings by Year & Country
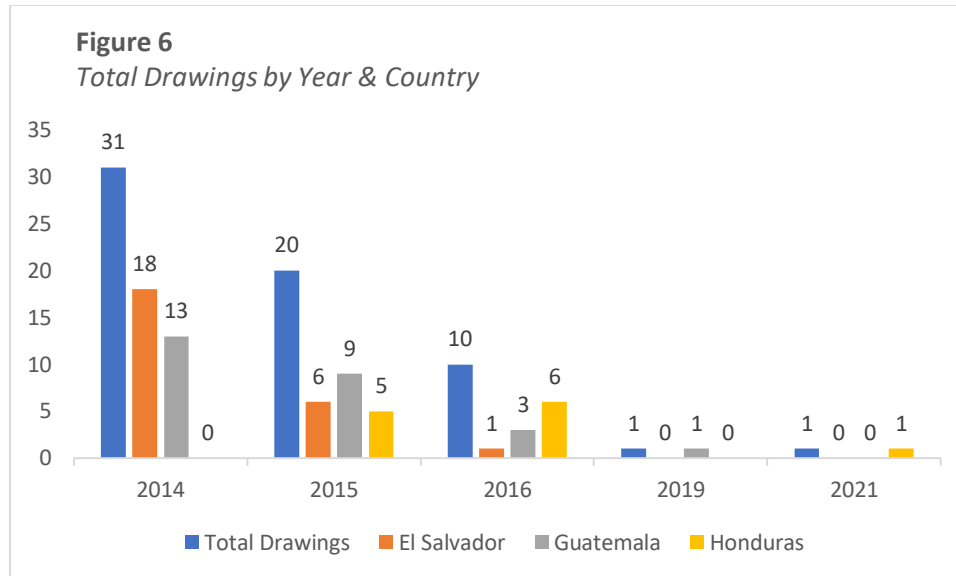
Figure 6 Total Drawings by Year and Country

Turning to the total number of art pieces produced by gender, the results indicate that in 2014 boys produced 22 out of 31 drawings, and girls created 9 out of 31 art pieces. The following year, boys and girls drew ten pictures each, totaling 20 pieces in 2015. The ten drawings produced in 2016 were made only by boys. One drawing for each year of 2019 and 2021 was produced by a boy and a girl, respectively. Overall, boys accounted for more than half of the total drawings (See Figure 7).

Figure 7
Total Drawings by Year and Gender
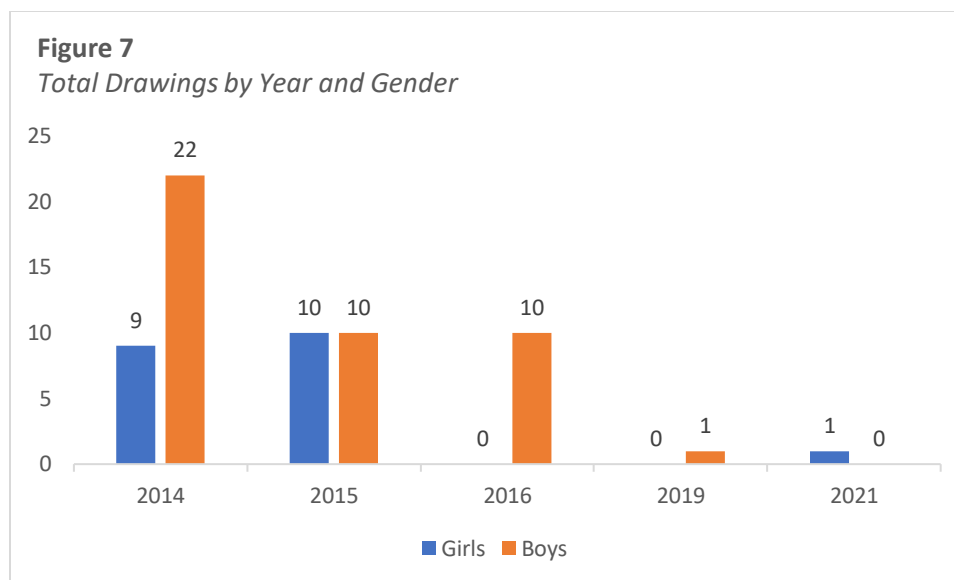
Figure 7 Total Drawings by Year and Gender

As mentioned in Chapter III, the drawings were produced in two art stations: the Sacred Heart Catholic Church Relief Center and the McAllen Central Bus Station in McAllen City, Texas. The volunteers offered white and dark papers in different sizes (7.5x8.5; 9x10; 9x12; 9x13.5; 9.5x12.5;10.5x11.5; 11x14) along with markers, crayons, watercolor, stamped images, sponge painting, stencils, and colored pencils. The *Arte de Lágrimas: Refugee Artwork Project* director described the art session as a "chaotic moment" due to children's excitement. Participants usually took one to two hours to complete their drawings. Fifty-three out of 63 drawings had titles. According to the project director, these titles emerged from conversations between children and volunteers about the meaning of the drawing and children's agreement with the title.

Regarding the children's reactions before and after the art production, such as the relationship between children and volunteers, if the children asked for assistance or permission to draw, it was impossible to collect due to the lack of information in the descriptor provided by *Arte de Lágrimas: Refugee Artwork Project*.

The Site of the Image Itself

The researcher employed content and thematic analysis to find the meaning of what children sought to convey in the drawings. The content analysis was a way to understand what children chose to draw, followed by considering the impact of the prompts given to them, and, as a result, helped the researcher answer the research questions posed in this study. Therefore, this section reports on the content of the drawings, whether the children focused on portraying home, border crossing, spirituality, religiosity, or other depictions. This is followed by an examination of the compositionality of the drawings, such as the arrangement of the main figure—central, at the top or bottom of the page, or whether a combination of display—the size of the central figure, the shape representation of the figures whether vertical, horizontal, rounded or pointed or diagonal line, white or dark background, and an overview of the colors chosen to produce the art pieces.

Content Analysis

Findings from the analysis of the drawings showed that children blended different depictions in their art pieces, resulting in each drawing being composed of several depictions. For instance, drawings that portrayed a house as the only element displayed were classified as home depictions. However, if other elements such as spirituality, religious images, and others were identified in this classification (home), additional labels were given (e.g., home/spirituality, home/spirituality/religious, and home/religious/others). Therefore, the same labeling classification was applied to other elements such as the border crossing depiction. Spirituality and religious elements appeared in the drawings independently, together, or along with other depictions (e.g.,

home, border crossing). The labeling classification used for spirituality and religious elements are as follows: spirituality, spirituality and religious, spirituality and others, as well as religious, religious and others, and religious, spirituality and others.

Table 3 summarizes the drawings' depictions by year. The most frequent depiction was home/spirituality which occurred in 22 (34.92%) of 63 drawings. The next most frequent depictions were border crossing/spirituality/religious and other depictions which occurred in 7 (11.11%) of 63 drawings followed by home/spirituality/religious depiction which occurred in 6 (9.52%) of 63 drawings. Overall, images of spirituality and religiosity were depicted in most of the drawings.

Table 3

Drawings Depictions Distribution by Year

Drawing Depictions	*2014*	*2015*	*2016*	*2019*	*2021*	*Total Year*
Home	2 (3.17%)	2 (3.17%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (6.35%)
Home/Spirituality	11 (17.46%)	8 (12.69%)	3 (4.76%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	22 (34.92%)
Home/Spirituality/Religious	3 (4.76%)	1 (1.58%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.58%)	1 (1.58%)	6 (9.52%)
Home/Spirituality/ Religious /Others	0 (0%)	1 (1.58%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.58%)
Border crossing	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.58%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.58%)
Border crossing/Spirituality	1 (1.58%)	1 (1.58%)	2 (3.17%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (6.34%)
Border crossing/Spirituality/ Religious	2 (3.17%)	5 (7.93%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (11.11%)

Spirituality	1 (1.58%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.58%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (3.17%)
Spirituality/ Religious	1 (1.58%)	1 (1.58%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (3.17%)
Spirituality/Others	5 (7.93%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (7.93%)
Religious	1 (1.58%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.58%)
Religious /Others	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)	0 (0%)
Religious /Spirituality/Others	0 (0%)	1 (1.58%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.58%)
Others	4 (6.34%)	0 (0%)	3 (4.76%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (11.11%)
Total	31	20	10	1	1	63

Compositionality of the Drawings

Compositionality refers to the specific material qualities of an image or visual object. For this study, the drawings' analysis was predominantly based on the following composition: the use of color, the size and placement of the central figure in the drawings, and the content of the art pieces.

Color

Children used various colors to express how they perceived what they were asked to draw. Mainly, they chose vibrant and vivid colors to express how they sensed their houses or homeland before migrating. For instance, the colors green, blue, yellow, pink, and orange were used to depict the contents of nature. Children associated the color green with the tops of trees and brown with the trunks. Blue was used to paint clouds, rivers,

oceans, beaches, and even fish and human beings. Pink was mainly used to draw flowers, hearts, houses, and fruits. Yellow and orange were used alternatively to draw suns, churches, and house elements. Differently, dark colors such as black or grey depicted the children's experience of crossing rivers and roads. Children also associated black and brown colors with detention centers and encounters with U.S. border patrol officers.

Interestingly, light and dark colors were primarily used to contour the drawing instead of coloring it. Also, children used the colors to intensify the value. Value refers to how light or dark colors can be depicted (Rose, 2018). For instance, in Figure 8 M1-51, Participant 14 used yellow to depict trees, and she applied the value technique of lightening and darkening the yellow color, suggesting an ethereal vision as a final result of her art production. Some children used color saturation to intensify the significance of their drawings. Participant 4 in Figure 9 M1-7 used orange for the sun at the top of the volcano and green for the mountain in a vivid way, suggesting nature's relevance to her homeland.

Figure 8 M1-51 Participant 14

Figure 9 M1-7 Participant 4

Another drawing composition that might indicate how safe children feel is

whether the background of the art piece is white (light) or dark. A dark background can

be linked to an unknown situation, while a white (light) background can be associated

with hope (Bang, 2016). Findings revealed that most backgrounds of the art pieces were

white or light, and only one of 63 drawings was dark. In the previous example,

Participant 14 in Figure 8 M1-51 chose to lighten the background. Conversely,

Participant 39, in Figure 10 SA1-47 art piece, chose a dark paper to portray a tree and

moon. Each of these drawings indicates different perspectives. While the first denotes a

bright and illuminated scenario, the second suggests a mysterious landscape.

Figure 10 SA1-47 Participant 39

Although the choice of colors is crucial for understanding the composition of the children's drawings, there are other specific material qualities of an image that can provide insight into the drawings' analysis.

Other Composition Principles

Other features in the drawings that can help in reading children's drawings are the placement and size of the central element(s) of the art piece. Regarding the placement, the leading figure can be placed in three sections of the paper: top, central, and bottom (Zlateva, 2019; Bang, 2016). Thirty-six out of 63 drawings placed the main drawing element at the center of the paper. Fourteen drawings positioned the central element at the bottom. In three drawings, the central figure was at the top of the paper. The leading figure in the art pieces could not be identified in 10 drawings. In other words, no figure was more prominent in the art piece than the other elements. The significance of the central figure might clarify how children project themselves according to their way of thinking and mood (Zlateva, 2019; Bang, 2016). For instance, the central zone may indicate preserved confidence as children focus more on this element. The top zone may show the tendency to think imaginatively or to have a happy mood but also may show the spirituality of this object. On the contrary, the bottom section may indicate a concrete way of thinking or a heavier mood (Zlateva, 2019; Bang, 2016).

Regarding the size of the central figure, in 27 out of 63 drawings, the main figures' sizes were large, 20 were normal, and in 16 drawings, the central figure was small. Children tend to draw large figures to show strength, in contrast, vulnerability can be shown in small depictions, and normal size may reflect vitality (Zlateva, 2019; Bang, 2016). To illustrate the size and placement features in the drawing, in the art piece Figure

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9 M1-7, Participant 4, mentioned above, drew a large volcano mountain to represent her hometown that occupies the central zone of the paper and a tiny house that fits in somewhere in the mountain. The large size of the volcano and its placement on the paper may portray the strength and the power of her place of origin, and, paradoxically, the tiny house might show how vulnerable it can be living in this area since the volcano may erupt at any time. Such a threat can be potentially devastating to the surrounding area as demonstrated in the child's drawing. Even though the analysis of the size and placement of the central figure can assist in understanding the children's drawings, it is vital to consider the forms and contours of the elements in the illustration.

The shape of the contents is another drawing feature that may provide insight in analyzing the drawings. Children draw what they see and capture the world in different shapes, such as horizontal, vertical, diagonal, pointed, rounded, and curved (Bang, 2016). Multiple shapes were identified in each children's art piece. These shapes can give a narrative to the drawings of how children perceive their surroundings. For instance, in Figure 11 M1-49, Participant 12 depicted vertical shapes in houses, a volcano, a church, human figures, a truck, and an airplane. The vertical shape implies more energy to build and maintain the object in this position, giving a sense of vitality (Bang, 2016). Thus, the artist might want to convey the vitality of his community.

Figure 11 M1-49 Participant 12

Conversely, Participant 12 portrayed the horizontal shapes in this drawing.

According to Bang (2016), the horizontal shape can give a connotation of stability, by

which the flatness of a line indicates that an object will not fall. In addition, Participant

12 illustrated the sun, clouds, and some animals in rounded and curved shapes. These

shapes can give a sense of security and comfort instead of pointed shapes that tend to be

more threatening (Bang, 2016). In this drawing, the figure of the mountains holds

stability and peacefulness as they are depicted horizontally. However, they can also be

scary as they are illustrated in a pointed shape. Finally, the diagonal shape gives a sense

of motion (Bang, 2016). In this illustration, the street is seen in a diagonal line on the

right side of the drawing, indicating mobility. Although the compositionality of the

drawings can offer ideas to what is meant by children's drawings, this study did not seek

to interpret the meaning of the art pieces. Instead, the researcher utilized these specific

qualities of the images to frame the significance of the themes that will be discussed in

the following section.

Research Question 1

What do the children's drawings reveal about their life/lived experience before coming to the U.S.?

As shown in Figure 8, there were 376 images of home in 33 of the 63 drawings. Four themes regarding the children's lives before migrating emerged from coded data: (1) Connected with nature, (2) Family together, (3) Sense of community, and (4) Memories of my homeland. The themes implied that children experienced of a dynamic life before embarking on a migration journey toward the U.S. The depictions revealed a pleasant life experience and a sense of community shared with parents, extended family members, friends, pets, and deeply connected with nature. However, although the themes indicated a sense of happiness, sadness also intersected the themes by portraying memories of their ordinary lives and loved ones left behind, including deceased family members.

Figure 12
Total Codes by Drawings' Depictions
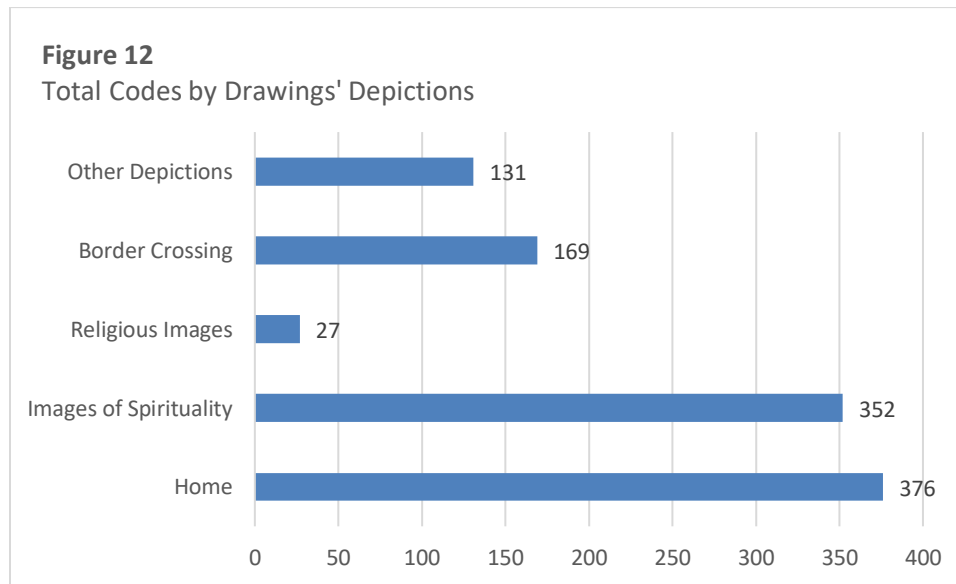
Figure 12 Total Codes by Drawings' Depictions

Connected with Nature

Many children referred to nature in their drawings their idea of home and homeland. Thus, the categories embedded in this theme were animals/insects, pets, clouds, flowers/leaves, bodies of water, mountains, trees, nature phenomena, planets/stars, and vegetation. These elements imply that the children have experienced a connection with their natural surroundings before leaving their homes. To illustrate, in Figure 13 M1-24, Participant 5 drew his life before migrating by depicting his house and family connected with nature. He associated the colors with natural elements, such as green with trees and mountains, blue with clouds, and yellow with the sun. In addition, he focused on this family left behind by colorfully writing the members' names. Interestingly, the colors used to write the family members' names reflected the same colors used to depict nature. This scenario suggests a sense of connection, tranquility, and security, corroborated by the horizontal, rounded, and curved shapes of the mountains, clouds, and sun.

Figure 13 M1-24 Participant 5

Conversely, the house in the picture was placed on the paper from a distant perspective, diminishing its size. The family members' names written in the left-central section of the paper refer to those left behind, indicating the great attention of the child and perhaps evoking negative feelings that may suggest vulnerability. Information collected by an Arte de Lágrimas Project volunteer from the child and mother at the time of the drawing seems to reflect the suggested vulnerability called up in the drawing.

He drew his hometown in this drawing. He asked his mother beside him for the names of his family members. Saying the names of the Family led her to tears, especially her mother's name. He listed these names in different colors. His mother proceeded to ask us to pray for these family members.

Family Together

When children were asked about their lives in their country of origin, they often referred to their family members left behind, deceased family members, or the arrangement of the family before migrating. Drawings were of mother, father, siblings, extended family, self, and/or community members. Participant 34, in Figure 14 M3-25, drew himself and his entire family. A project volunteer shared the following information collected from the child about the drawing.

He and his family were in the U.S. when his paternal grandmother died. His dad was the only son, so he returned to be with his deceased mother. However, Participant 34's mother could not survive alone with children in North Carolina, so she decided to return to be with her husband in Guatemala. The father expressed how it was hard to find work, especially with no education. The artist dedicated this piece to his grandmother and family.
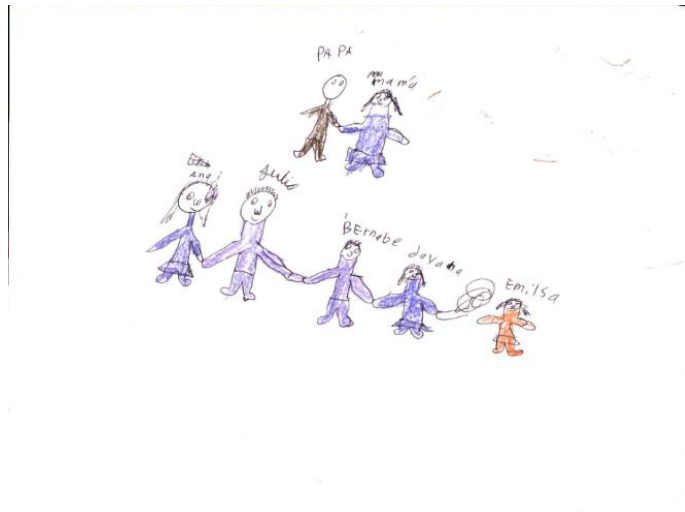
Figure 14 M3-25 Participant 34

Participant 34 highlighted the importance of the family by placing the entire members at the center of the paper. As can be seen, each family member is identified by their name and holding hands, suggesting closeness, and by positioning his parents— *Papa and Mama*—at the top of the paper, the participant seems to experience protection and a happy mood.

Sense of Community

Sense of community is another theme that is revealed in the drawings about the children's experience before coming to the U.S. It refers to children's experience of living as a group where they share the feeling of belonging and a relational connection with families, schools, and religious groups. The images reflective of this theme were houses, public ways, and playgrounds. The images of the houses placed in the drawings not only identified where they used to live but also depicted buildings that made up their community, such as schools, churches, and neighborhoods. Often, children drew streets and pathways that connected different places, indicating a great deal of mobility.

For example, in Figure 15 M1-26, Participant 6 drew her entire neighborhood connected with nature and the pathways united with extended neighbors. The artist

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colored each element of the picture using various colors. However, she avoids painting

the pathways, indicating no obstacle to navigating the community. The horizontal,

rounded, and curved shapes displaced by the clouds, mountains, and sun imply that all

natural elements are interconnected. Furthermore, the vertical position of the trees and

houses insinuates energy to stand, considering that the trees need the energy from the sun

to grow and flourish. Participant 6 suggested that she had lived in a vibrant community.

She titled her art as *Mi Comunidad* (My Community).
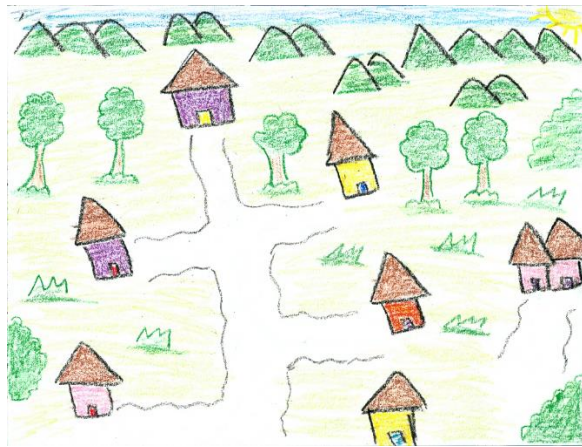
Figure 15 M1-26 Participant 6

Memories of My Homeland

The theme Memories of My Homeland is a recollection of information from

children's homes or hometown and their ordinary activities before leaving their

community. The central images noted in this theme were houses, home utensils and

appliances, playgrounds including toys, bikes, and shoes, and preferred meals such as

fried chicken. To illustrate this theme, Participant 36 produced Figure 16 M4-3, where

she portrayed her house in X-ray to demonstrate details of objects inside the house,

showing family activities in different rooms. A project volunteer described the art piece

based on the child's description as follows:

She prefers to be home and misses everything. She began drawing her house with three rooms. One room is where she sleeps with her brother. The main room is where the family would watch TV together. Outside is a small house (bodega) that stores their bikes, toys, and shoes, and she remembers it surrounded by lush vegetation. Her father had not been home for several years, but now the dangers of gangs have forced them to sell their belongings to escape.

Figure 16 M4-3 Participant 36

Participant 36 portrayed detailed items in the picture, chose vibrant colors, and mostly preferred to contour the images inside the house, intentionally showing her life activities. In the figure, a blue-grass line splits the drawing into two scenarios: In the house set at the top, she depicts family activities, sharing family moments with her family watching TV, and another is the bedroom where she shares with her brother. Below the blue-grass line, she displays a play area where she can be a child in her imaginative world.

Research Question 2

How are children's migration journeys depicted in their drawings?

There were 169 images of border crossing in 13 of 63 drawings (see Figure 8). Focused coding generated fifteen categories ranging from means to cross border, vehicles used during the journey, checkpoints, family members, and other immigrants crossing together to detention centers, border officers, and incarcerated children. Thus, three themes regarding border crossing emerged from the coded data: (1) On the Run: facing fear and dangerous situations; (2) Traveling together, and (3) "Ice Box": encounters with immigration authorities.

Children represented the migration journey as a hazardous experience by which they had to demonstrate survival skills to endure the journey, such as crossing rivers, long instances of driving and walking, and facing scary animals. They illustrated their encounter with American border patrol officers and their experience of being detained in cells. Often, children drew the immigration officers as evil since they were not allowed, in some cases, to be with their mothers or watch television.

On the Run: Facing Fear and Dangerous Situations

This theme refers to narrating the journey of crossing the U.S.-Mexican border by depicting encounters with serpents, thorns, storms, muddy trees, bushes, corn cops, and climbing steep walls. Also included in this theme were transportation means to cross the border, the inclusion of family members, checkpoints, and situations in which children had to hide behind vegetation and hills. For example, in Figure 17 M1-1, Participant 1 depicted his journey of traveling as an unaccompanied minor with a friend. According to Arte de Lágrimas volunteers, Participant 1 was agitated when he produced this drawing as described below.

He drew this art piece about crossing the border. After being held by force in a warehouse, he and a friend were let go in a remote place. Disoriented, they followed the traffic noise, which led them to the Rio Grande. Here, he begins his picture story in the top left corner. He and his friend are hiding behind bushes, preparing to cross the river on an inflatable tube. After crossing, he travels inconspicuously through the woods. Reaching the other side, a lady watering her garden came to their aid, giving them food, water, and a phone call. Then, she drove them to the Sacred Heart Church for further assistance.

Figure 17 M1-1 Participant 1

Participant 1 used four colors in his art piece. As can be seen in the picture, dark green is associated with the trees' top, brown with the trees' trunk, and blue with the river and a small car. Orange depicts the soil slightly shaded in a way that the human figures can be seen crossing the river, hiding behind the trees, and approaching the lady on the other side of the street. Black is primarily used as a contour. The human figures are small, and their presence in the drawings is hardly noted. In addition, the entire art piece is produced in diagonal shapes. Following from the top left of the paper, a line of trees is placed diagonally, as well as the river. Successively, the child drew the same pattern in

the subsequent events of his journey until the lady came to their aid. Thus, the diagonal pattern suggests movement, and because it is due to fleeing from a dangerous situation, it also implies distress.

Traveling Together

The theme Traveling Together refers to representations of children enduring the cross-border journey with others, whether this be their parents (or one of them), siblings, adults who are not relatives or legal guardians, friends, or even coyotes. Often, the drawings represented family travel on roads, crossing rivers and bridges, and illustrating each checkpoint throughout their journey. Participant 28, in his Figure 18 M3-10, for instance, portrayed his family and himself on the road to a volunteer as follows.

He drew his journey experience to the Texas-Mexico border. In the center is his homeland, the only color scene. He, his father, and his 5-year-old sister walked six days before catching a ride to the Guatemala-Mexico border. After crossing the Suchiate River by raft boat, they traveled by bus to the Texas-Mexico border. They crossed and were detained at a detention facility for several days. They were finally released and taken to the McAllen Central Bus Station. He titled his drawing Mi Jornada (My Journey).

Figure 18 M3-10 Participant 28

Participant 28 placed his colorful homeland in the middle of his journey, contrasting with the blackness of his journey, suggesting the heaviness of the situation. The vertical position of himself and his family and the buildings indicate they are moving. The journey depiction is set in the middle of the paper, suggesting that this is the child's focus. There is a sense that despite the perilous journey, they must proceed.

"Ice Box": Encounters With Immigration Authorities

This theme refers to children's experience of imprisonment in detention centers or cells where they and their families were held after arriving in the U.S. Several drawings linked features of cells with "Ice Box." Children called it an "Ice Box" because of freezing temperatures and limited communication access. In addition, categories of objects in a cell, children incarcerated, and border officers are also portrayed within this theme.

Participant 39 illustrated his experience of being detained in his drawing Figure 19 SA1-46 which volunteer related as follows.

He began by saying, prefiero estar en mi casa (I'd rather be in my house). But then he proceeded to talk and draw about his experience in the detention center he had just left. He first drew the EXIT door, followed by the blue bunk beds. He then described his regimented schedule, which included meals and school. The TV and alfombra (rug) were in another area. Participant 39 explained how he felt enclosed and could not even use the phone like he could at home.
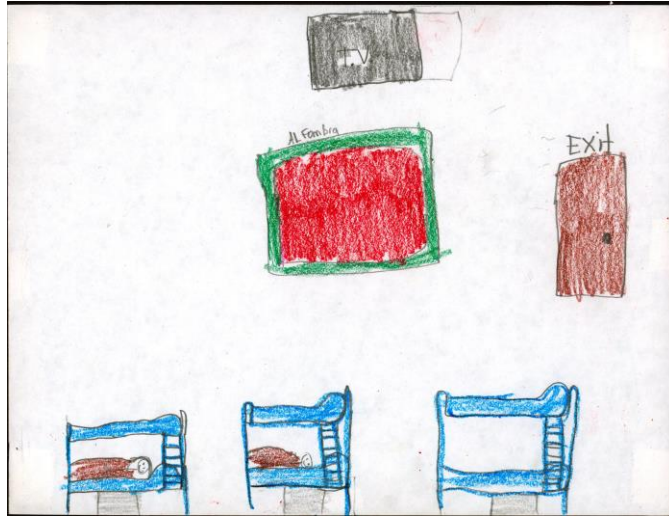
Figure 19 SA1-46 Participant 39

In the drawing, the exit door is closed showing the children being incarcerated. Interestingly, the brown color of the Exit door is the same one used to depict the body of the children. The children are placed in beds without any indication of interaction with each other. The red rug is placed in the picture's central zone, directing the child's attention to it. The red is hot and vibrant. Since it is usually associated with blood, fire, and intense sentiments (Bang, 2016) it may suggest conflicting emotions toward the situation.

Research Question 3

What are the spiritual and religious images depicted in the children's drawings?

There were 379 images of spirituality and religious images depicted in 51 of the 63 children's drawings (see Figure 8). It is worth noting that spiritual and religious images intersected with other depictions. For instance, spirituality depictions are broadly expressed in home depictions but can also be seen in border-crossing and other accounts.

Overall, children conveyed a sense of spirituality by connecting with nature. Some depictions explored the language of spirituality through words of journey, love, peace, blessing, and attitudes of gratitude. Many children portrayed the sky with planets,

stars, sun, and clouds, using primarily vibrant and bright colors, and evoking harmony

between all things. In addition, depictions of love expressed gratitude, being loved by

family members or divine beings, and figures of houses and churches as places of refuge.

Also, children demonstrated love and comfort through a deep bond with animals,

especially dogs, frequently referring to them as their best friends. However, children also

conveyed horrifying moments by portraying encounters with serpents and other scary

animals and even labeling U.S. American border officers as evil. In experiencing these

moments, children confront their fear, which is a potential place to create sensitivity.

There were fifteen categories and five resulting themes of spirituality were

derived from the coded data. Examples of the categories include mountains, bodies of

water, planets, clouds, trees, stars, devil figures, hearts, human and animal figures, words

invoking spirituality, and houses. The derived themes from these categories are: (1)

Mother Earth, (2) Language of Spirituality, (3) Heaven, (4) Devil Beings, and (5) Sense

of Unconditional Love, Ease, and Comfort.

Mother Earth

The Mother Earth theme refers to a nature depiction where all animate beings and

inanimate elements are interconnected, providing resources to nurture bodies with fruits,

fish, and air. Also, Mother Earth refers to a home where children can experience joy,

deep connection, and a place to be a child. As seen in Figure 20 M1-43, Participant

9 conveyed the harmony of the natural elements of her homeland. On the upper page, the

clouds, trees at the top of the mountains, and the smiling face of the sun are merged with

a river that crosses the middle of the drawing, of which water flows to another river

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placed at the bottom of the page. The upper positionality of the natural elements may

suggest a happy mood and spirituality, which can be expressed by the smiling sun.
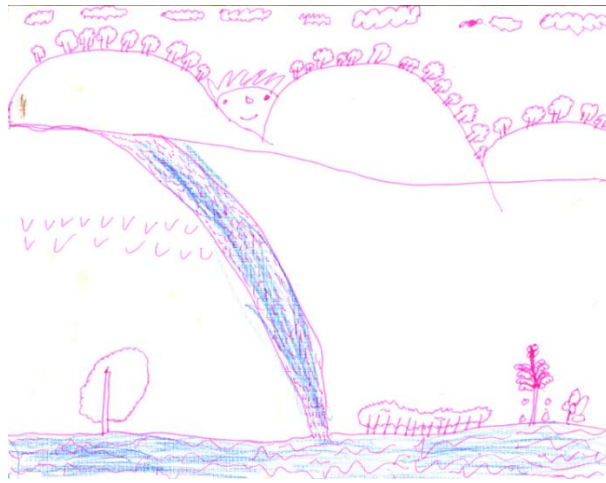

Figure 20 M1-43 Participant 9

Interestingly, the connector river may work as an equilibrium force between the

upper (happy mood and spirituality) and lower position (heavier mood), suggesting

stability. In addition, the diagonal shape of the connector river implies movement,

bringing resources from the mountains to the other river that feeds and enhances the

surrounding vegetation life. The resourcefulness coming from the mountains is blue to

convey the translucency of the water. Thus, this drawing suggests a strong connection

between the child and nature, demonstrating that nature is a pleasant place in which to be

a child.

Language of Spirituality

The Language of Spirituality theme uses metaphors to explore complex and

abstract ideas such as journey, love, blessing, and words of appreciation, e.g., thank you,

gratitude, and peace. To illustrate, in Figure 21 M3-9, Participant 27 depicted his border

crossing and wrote the word *Paz* (Peace) closer to the sun. The Arte de Lágrimas Project

volunteers explained:

He drew on his journey experience. It begins as he walked toward the car and traveled through Mexico. Then he crossed the river and remembers this as the most dangerous moment in the entire journey. The volunteer asked if God was with him. He then wrote "Paz" over the river and said he felt God's peace in the raft. Finally, he walked through the prickly and thorny bushes. He and his father were apprehended and detained for several days before being released to the McAllen Central Bus Station. He gave a title to his drawing, "Paz (Peace)."

Figure 21 M3-9 Participant 27

The artist described the crossing river as the most dangerous of his journey. In his drawing, the child positioned himself in front of the river and slightly turned himself around, smiling at the audience as he wanted to demonstrate confidence to endure the cross that was about to start.

Participant 27 portrayed the road, truck, and checkpoints (U.S. and Mexico) in dark colors as a threatening journey, leaving the river, fishes, an inflatable boat, trees, a bird, and the sun in light colors, possibly implying hope and protection. In addition, the rounded, curved, and diagonal shapes of the sun, roads, and rivers suggest movement,

tension, vitality, and comfort interacting with each other. Finally, the word *Paz* (Peace)

conveyed his spiritual connection to cope with hazardous crossing.

Heaven

This theme refers to a symbolic place that represents degrees of spirituality. The

concept of heaven integrates the planets, stars, sun, and moon existing harmoniously and

visible to the naked eye. It is often described as the holiest place where divine or

unknown forces originate to operate on the Earth. The Latino children's drawings

commonly portrayed the sky with clouds, sun or moon, birds, stars, and planets.

Notably, Participant 21 depicted the entire solar system in his drawing Figure 22 M2-

9. The child placed the Earth on the upper section of the page, indicating some spiritual

connotation, perhaps expressing that the planet Earth is part of a cosmic being.
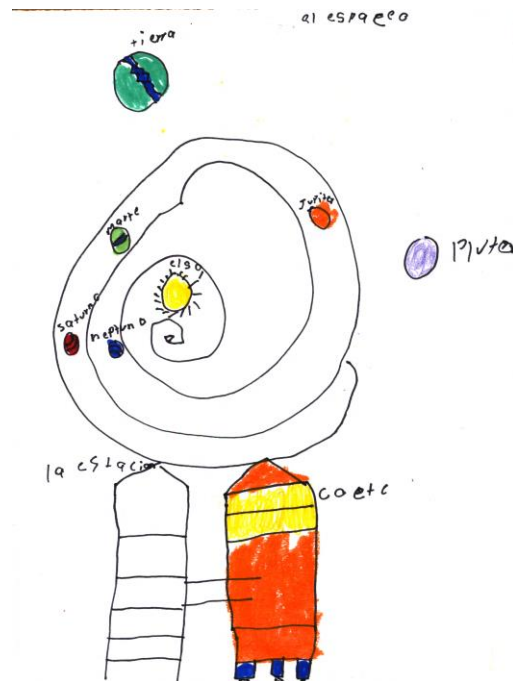
Figure 22 M2-9 Participant 21

In comparison, the other planets – Jupiter, Mars, Saturn, Neptune, and the sun –

are placed in the middle of the page in a spiral resembling a mandala and bound to the

sun by gravity. The planet Pluto is far to his right but connected to others. The rockets are placed on the bottom of the paper and in a vertical position, remaining grounded and suggesting vitality expressed by the brightness of yellow and orange colors. The rounded and curved shape of the mandala may indicate an uplifting mood called upon to deal with challenging situations.

Devil Being

The Devil Being theme refers to a figure that can take the form of an animal, a human being, or any symbolic image that the artist identified as a devil figure (Dowling & Scarlett, 2006), such as the serpent, and by which children experience feelings of fear, horror, and scary. Participant 41, for instance, depicted a giant serpent in Figure 23 SA1-31 to convey the most terrifying point of the journey. The project volunteer explained *when asked about his journey, he remembered a fearful moment when he encountered la serpiente (the snake) in the desert.*
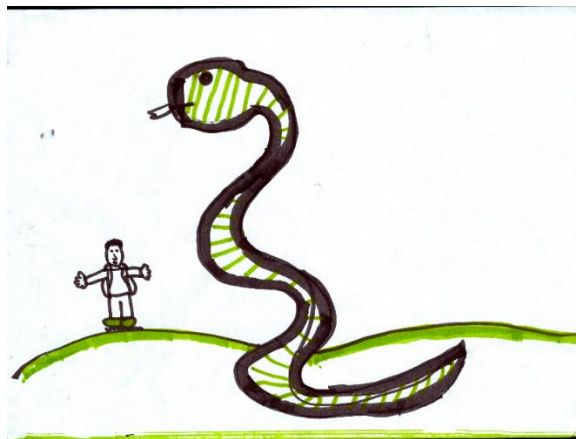
Figure 23 SA1-31 Participant 41

As can be seen, the artist portrayed himself as small when confronted by the animal, perhaps showing vulnerability. By contrast, the artist focused his attention on the giant reptile by placing this element in the central zone of the paper. The animal is in a vertical position, confronting the child, and seems ready to attack him. The child looks

frightened and paralyzed on the ground, maybe not knowing what to do. Interestingly, the child is portrayed with open arms. This encounter highlighted the child's experience connecting with his inner fears, which can be an opportunity to create awareness as an essential knowledge to face insecurity.

Sense of Unconditional Love, Ease, and Comfort

This theme refers to a safe place to escape from the dangers of the earth. Usually, children portray houses with their families while experiencing protection and love. Moreover, it refers to the heart's shape associated with God, compassion, and protection. Also, Latino children associated unconditional love with images of pets, especially dogs, to whom they have a special attachment, referring to them as their best friends. For instance, in Figure 24 M2-7, Participant 20 portrayed a scene of her family house, including her dog.

> She began by drawing her house surrounded by a big flower garden and fruit trees. She also remembered her grandmother, her uncle, and her pet dog. Lastly, she drew a big pink heart above to represent her love for all of them. She labeled her art piece Mi Casa (My Home).

Figure 24 M2-7 Participant 20

The natural element (flower and a tree with fruits) shows her connection with nature. The curved and rounded heart may indicate a comforting feeling, and the fact that it is placed at the top of the page suggests the spirituality of the object. The heart represents her love for everyone but may convey the unconditional love expressed by her grandmother, uncle, and dog. Also, it may provide feelings of care, protection, trust, and bonding with each other. Finally, the non-judgmental aspect of love may allow her to experience protection.

Religiosity

The religiosity theme intersects with multiple depictions in the drawings. Children conveyed religiosity when displaying their home or community portrayals by drawing church, crucifix, figures of Jesus, God, and Angel, and writing words of religiosity such as blessing. A total of three themes emerged from the coded data: (1) Religious Symbols and Beliefs, (2) Language of Religiosity, and (3) Divine Being.

Religious Symbols and Beliefs

The Religious Symbols and Beliefs theme refers to objects of devotion for some groups of Christians, such as a cross depicted in a t-shaped instrument or a crucifix with the same shape but with the image of Jesus's body. Alternatively, the Religious Symbols and Beliefs theme can be linked to a sacred place where people come together for worship (church). Participant 19, in Figure 25 M2-1, displayed three crosses at the top of a church in a homeland scene surrounded by nature. According to the Arte de Lágrimas Project:

An 11-year-old boy came here with his mom from Guatemala. They traveled for 15 days off and on the bus. Participant 19 receives top grades in his school. He drew this piece in gratitude for the help he and his mom have been given.

Figure 25 M2-1 Participant 19

Participant 19 displayed his drawing along the entire page, placing the church at the center, suggesting significant attention to this element. The artist used four colors to convey his message. He applied black to contour the drawing and associated red with apples. The yellow and orange colors were predominant. The trees' tops are painted yellow, while the sun and church are orange. Both colors are warm, but in particular, by using the orange color, the artist linked to the sunshine, which is commonly associated

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with warmness and vitality. Nature is harmoniously depicted. The clouds, birds, and trees are horizontally aligned, suggesting stability. Thus, the artist conveys serenity.

Language of Religiosity

The Language of Religiosity theme refers to words that children have written in their drawings to express religious beliefs, such as God or bless (or in Spanish *Dios* or *bendiga)* and words or songs present in the children's narrative collected by the Project's volunteers. In their drawings, children conveyed their faith practice in their hometown. In addition, the language of spirituality appeared to express their religious beliefs in distressed situations. Participant 10, when asked to draw his hometown, drew a church and wrote in Spanish *La Casa de Dios* (The House of God). As can be seen, Figure 26 M1-44 is a multicolored church art piece whose title is written in blue. The title and the church figure are large and placed on the central page, suggesting that the congregation might be a vital source of strength to him.
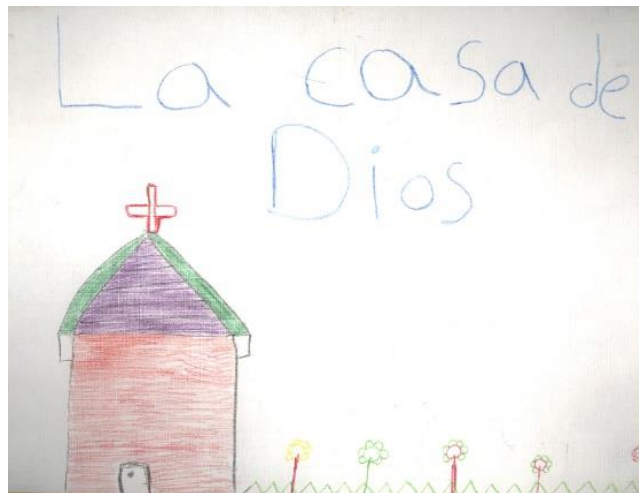
Figure 26 M1-44 Participant 10

In another example, Participant 20 portrayed her border crossing in Figure 27 M2-8 as dangerous. The volunteer explained as follows.

She drew her journey to the United States. She and her mother first traveled by car and then by bus. She remembered that the road was long and gray (left side). Her picture narrative ends with them crossing the Rio Grande on a makeshift raft. She first drew the rocks in the river and beside the riverbanks. She then drew the makeshift raft in the middle of the river with her and her mother inside it. The volunteer asked, "Did anyone say goodbye to you?" She replied, "My aunt." She placed her aunt on the Mexican side of the river, waving goodbye. The volunteer then asked, "Was there anyone else?" Not saying anything, she removed the rosary from around her neck and traced the crucifix over the Rio Grande River. She then began to sing the hymn, "En la Cruz, en la Cruz, yo pimero vi la luz, y las manchas de mi alma yo lavé, y allí por fe yo vi Jesús, y siempre feliz con El seré (At the Cross)." She and her mother sang those words while on the raft."
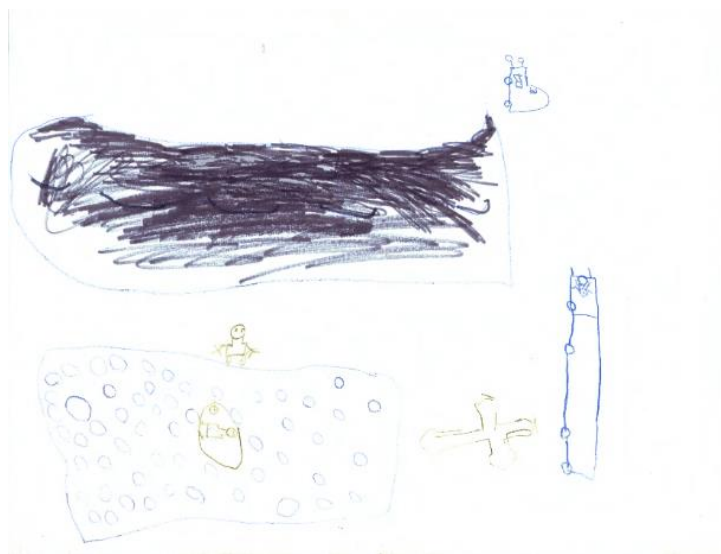
Figure 27 M2-8 Participant 20

The artist displayed a dark river to express the dangerousness of the crossing. At the bottom of the page, she placed a cross, indicating they were applying religious coping in times of tribulation.

Divine Being

This theme represents the depiction of God, Jesus crucified on the cross, and angel figures. These figures have superpowers to protect children from danger. Similarly, for some, angels signify the highest form of pure beings who express love and compassion. According to Bang (2016), the superpower figures are placed at the top of the page, which might represent the spirituality of these elements. Participant 36 explained about her *Viaje a los Estados Unidos* (trip to the United States) in Figure 28 M4-6.
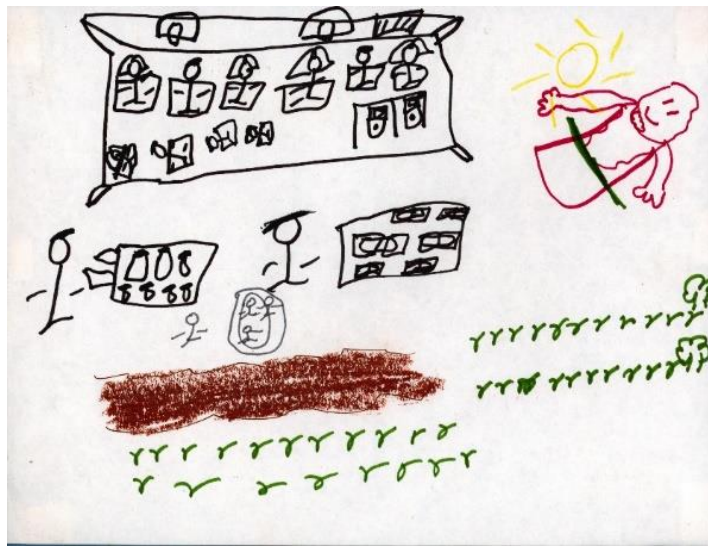
Figure 28 M4-6 Participant 36

This art piece is a self-portrait image where the artist, her baby brother, and her mother are locked in a cell. The artist portrayed the detention center where children, including babies, and their parents slept together. She recalled wearing wet clothes in a cold room. Below the detention center scenario, the artist drew her journey across the river with the help of coyotes (paid guides) at the point when they surrendered themselves to the U.S. Border Patrol. As shown, the river is displayed in brown, and according to the *Arte de Lágrimas Project* volunteer, she intentionally selected this color

for the river. The dark river depicted might express her distress about crossing the river. Remarkably, she drew a smiling God with a beard closer to a bright sun. The volunteer said, *although she was afraid, she knew that God was with her*. Therefore, Participant 36 contrasted her fears of uncertainties and dangerousness with a superpower God figure to convey her feeling of being protected.

Research Question 4

What are the differences in children's lived experiences and depiction of spiritual and religious images based on their gender, age, and country of origin?

Latino children produced a total of 63 drawings for this study. Forty-three were from boys (68.25% of the total), and 20 (31.75%) from girls. Findings demonstrated that 60% (12 out of 20 drawings) of the girls illustrated depictions of home, home/spirituality, and home/spirituality/religious/others compared to 48.83% (21 out of 43 drawings) of the boys. Conversely, there was a slight difference in depicting border crossing between the two genders. Boys displayed 20.9% (9 out of 43 drawings) depictions of border crossing, while girls 20% of the girls (4 out of 20 drawings). Differently, 13.95% (6 out of 43 drawings) of the boys showed other depictions interests, but girls demonstrated no interest in producing other depictions in their drawings (see Table 4).

Table 4

Drawings Depictions By Gender

GENDER	Girls (n=20)	Boys (n=43)
Home	5% (1)	3% (3)
Home/Spirituality	45% (9)	35% (15)
Home/Spirituality/Religiosity	5% (1)	6.97% (3)
Home/Spirituality/Religiosity/Others	5% (1)	0
Border	0	4.65% (2)
Border/Spirituality	0	9.30% (4)
Border/Spirituality/Religiosity	20% (4)	6.97% (3)
Spirituality	5% (1)	2.32% (1)
Spirituality/Religiosity	5% (1)	2.32% (1)
Spirituality/Others	5% (1)	9.30% (4)
Religiosity	0	2.32% (1)
Religiosity/Spirituality/Others	5% (1)	0
Others	0	13.95% (6)

Concerning using spiritual and religious images based on gender, it is interesting to note that both symbols intersected all drawing classifications. Elements of spirituality and religiosity were illustrated together or separately in all different depictions. Girls demonstrated more use of spiritual and religious images in the drawings than boys. Girls accounted for 95% (19 out of 20 drawings containing spiritual or religious symbols), while boys accounted for 74.41% (32 out of 43). The results showed that girls were

likelier to depict their experiences by illustrating their home or homeland. Also, girls

drew more spiritual and religious symbols in their drawings. Border crossing depictions

were slightly similar between girls and boys.

Regarding the demographic of the age group, 51 drawings were produced by

children between the ages of 7-12 (80.95% of the total), and 12 drawings were from the

age group of 13-17 (19.05% of the total). Home was the most illustrated depiction, with

83.33% (10 out of 12 drawings) of interest among the age group of 13-17, followed by

the ages of 7-12, with 52.94% (27 out of 51 drawings). Concerning spiritual and religious

symbols shown in the drawings of different ages, results revealed that 100% (12

drawings) of the age group of 13-17 depicted these images in their drawings, compared to

76.47% (39 out 51 drawings) of children aged between 7-12. Thus, results showed that

teenagers (age group of 13-17) were more inclined to depict their lives in their homeland,

and 100% of them displayed symbols of spiritual and religious coping methods in their

drawings (see Table 5).

Table 5

Drawings Depictions By Age

AGE	7-12 (n=51)	13-17 (n=12)
Home	7.84% (4)	0
Home/Spirituality	37.25% (19)	41.66% (5)
Home/Spirituality/Religiosity	5.88% (3)	8.33% (1)
Home/Spirituality/Religiosity/Others	1.96% (1)	0
Border	3.92% (2)	0
Border/Spirituality	3.92% (2)	16.67% (2)
Border/Spirituality/Religiosity	5.88% (3)	33.33% (4)
Spirituality	3.92% (2)	0
Spirituality/Religiosity	3.92% (2)	0
Spirituality/Others	9.80% (5)	0
Religiosity	1.96% (1)	0
Religiosity/Spirituality/Others	1.96% (1)	0
Others	11.76% (6)	0

Finally, from 63 drawings produced by children, 26 (41.27% of the total) were made by Guatemalans. El Salvadoran children made 25 drawings (39.7%), while Honduran minors created 12 (19.04%) art pieces. Results showed that all children from these countries were interested in depicting their lives in their home country (see Figure 6). However, Guatemalan children ranked this interest with 65.38% (17 out of 26 drawings) compared to 44% (11 out of 25 drawings) from El Salvador and 41.66% (5 out

of 12 drawings) from Honduras. The images depicting the border crossing were the

second-highest choice of content for each country. Honduran minors rated 25% (3 out of

12 drawings), children from Guatemala produced 23.07% (6 out of 26 drawings) of

border crossing depictions, and El Salvadorans ranked 16% (4 out of 25 drawings)

drawing this theme. Lastly, depictions of spiritual and religious images had no significant

difference among countries. These images appeared in 84.61% (22 out of 26 drawings) of

the art pieces from Guatemalan children, followed by 80% (20 out of 25 drawings) of El

Salvadorans and 75% (9 out of 12 drawings) of Hondurans. The results indicated that

home depictions are prevalent in Guatemalan drawings and slightly above spiritual and

religious symbols compared to other countries (see Table 6).

Table 6

Drawings Depictions By Country Of Origin

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	El Salvador (n=25)	Guatemala (n=26)	Honduras (n=12)
Home	4% (1)	11.54% (3)	0
Home/Spirituality	36% (9)	42.31% (11)	33.33% (4)
Home/Spirituality/Religiosity	4% (1)	7.70% (2)	8.33% (1)
Home/Spirituality/Religiosity/Others	0	3.85% (1)	0
Border	0	3.85% (1)	8.33% (1)
Border/Spirituality	8% (2)	7.70% (2)	0
Border/Spirituality/Religiosity	8% (2)	11.54% (3)	16.67% (2)
Spirituality	4% (1)	0	8.33% (1)
Spirituality/Religiosity	4% (1)	3.85% (1)	0
Spirituality/Others	16% (4)	3.85% (1)	0
Religiosity	0	3.85% (1)	0
Religiosity/Spirituality/Others	0	0	8.33% (1)
Others	16% (4)	0	16.67% (2)

Research Question 5

What other topics are depicted in the drawings?

Depictions present in children's drawings that were not classified as home, border

crossing, spiritual, and religious images were categorized as Others. The most common

content in the drawings falling into this classification were the country's names and flags,

identifiers such as age, vehicles, names specifying buildings as schools, and signatures, among others. A total of 131 other depictions were found in just six drawings (see Figure 8). Four themes emerged from coded data: (1) My Identity as a Child, (2) Locomotion Means, (3) My Perception of the U.S., and (4) Childish Art Expression. Children conveyed in their drawings the things they enjoyed the most or something that was appealing to them at that moment.

My Identity as a Child

Several children wanted to add an identity to their art production. My Identity as a Child theme refers to identifiers placed by the authors in their art pieces, such as family members' names, countries' names or flags, toys, signatures, and dates of the art production. In comparison, others depicted pictures of important moments such as happy birthday celebrations. For instance, Participant 7 in Figure 29 M1-59 illustrated a birthday cake with sizeable happy birthday wishes written in Spanish. The child wanted to celebrate his sister's birthday. Colorfully displaced figures occupy the entire page, and the drawing's theme indicates vitality.

Figure 29 M1-59 Participant 7

Locomotion Means

Children displayed their favorite toys or objects that they were enthusiastic about. The Locomotion Means theme conveys any vehicle children used during the crossing (cars, trucks, buses, boats, makeshift rafts). Also, it refers to the child's favorite themes, such as trucks, airplanes, spaceships, or space rockets. Participant 3 in Figure 30 M1-12 drew a large colorful aircraft placed at the central zone of the page. Two cars are displaced at the bottom alongside two buildings with two antennae at the airport. The constant flow of aircraft and vehicles suggests dynamicity that may infer the children's mobility.

Figure 30 M1-12 Participant 3

My Perception of the U.S.

Children portrayed their primary perception of the U.S. after being released from immigration detention centers with depictions of buildings, traffic lights, streets, and families in the U.S. To illustrate, Participant 8 in Figure 31 M1-41 labeled his art piece *La Ciudad* (The City). He created this art piece in response to the project volunteer question about what he saw upon arriving in the U.S. He drew the city of McAllen. He illustrated the city streets with a stop light and added a line with eight colorful buildings. He depicted the streets in gray. The artist's color choice enhanced the sense of coldness in his art production.
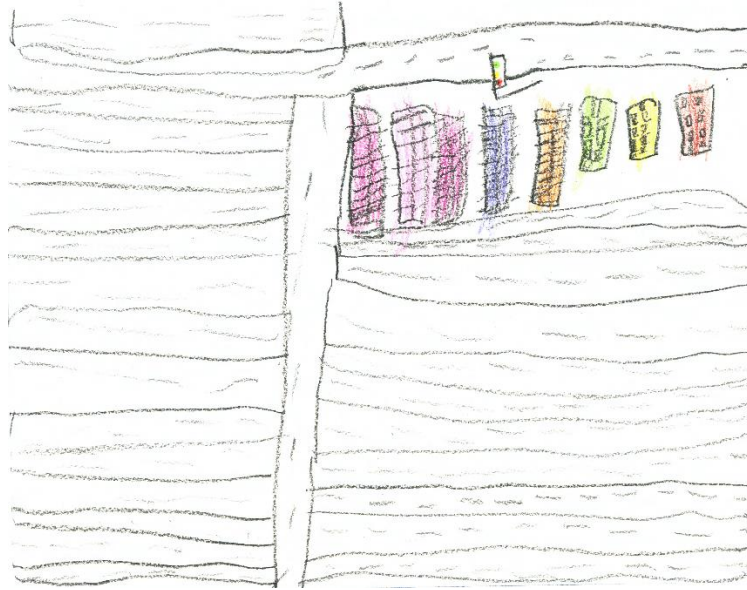
Figure 31 M1-41 Participant 8

Childish Art Expression

This theme refers to drawings represented by undefined forms, smiling faces, and scribbles. Although scribbled drawings are typical for young children (ages between 1 and 4 years), this art expression was present in this study which included older children (Lowenfeld, 1987). For example, a 7-year-old boy in Figure 32 SA1-49 depicted rounded scribbles with the predominant color of red. Bang (2016) states red is a warm color often associated with blood and fire. As shown in Figure 32 SA1-49, the red circles are intense and chaotic. The meaning of the art piece was not collected by the *Arte de Lágrimas: Refugee Artwork Project.*
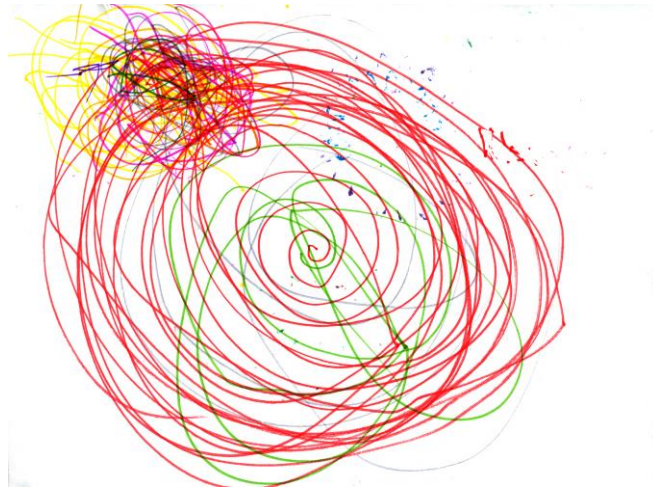
Figure 32 SA1-49 Participant 40

By contrast, a 10-year-old boy in Figure 33 M1-3 depicted several colorful undefined forms alongside a smiling face and sun. The project volunteer explained as follows.

Volunteer: What is it? Artist: Can't you see? It's the universe. Volunteer: Oh, cool! Why do you like it? Artist: There are no borders there. In this picture, he drew himself in outer space. He is smiling in his spaceship, flying freely through a borderless universe.

Therefore, childish art expression is never empty of meaning and can be explored to give voice to the child.
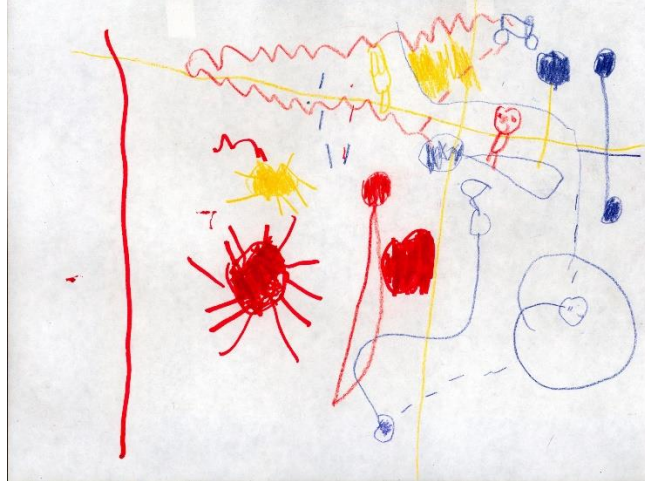
Figure 33 M1-33 Participant 2

Sixty-three drawings produced by 45 Latino children who crossed the U.S.-Mexican border were analyzed in this study. Regarding their experience in border crossing, children's drawings conveyed a perilous journey in family groups with many risks and challenges faced from the known and unknown encountered during the journey. Findings showed that the drawings of the Latino children were characterized by depictions of nature, connection with family, community, and animals/pets, with most being spiritual and religious images and artifacts.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

This chapter briefly describes and discusses key themes, followed by a proposed theoretical model derived from an analysis of drawings by Latino children who crossed the Southern U.S. border in 2014-2016, 2019, and 2021. The strengths and limitations of the study are presented, along with implications and recommendations for policy, future research, and social work practice. The chapter ends with conclusions.

Summary of Key Themes

The drawings—both positive and negative depictions of the children's experience—were able to be organized into 5 themed categories—home before migrating, migration journey, spirituality, religiosity, and other depictions. Within each category, analysis of the drawings using arts-based methods revealed themes related to nature, family ties, the language of spirituality and religiosity, self-identity, encounters with U.S. border patrol officers and scary animals, the danger of crossing borders, and feelings of fear (See Table 7).

Table 7

Summary of Study Themes

HOME BEFORE MIGRATING
Connected with nature
Family together
Sense of community
Memories of my homeland
MIGRATION JOURNEY
On the Run: Facing fear and dangerous situations
Traveling together

"Ice Box": Encounters with immigration authorities
SPIRITUALITY
Mother Earth
Language of spirituality
Heaven
Devil beings
Sense of unconditional love, ease, and comfort
RELIGIOSITY
Religious symbols and beliefs
Language of religiosity
Divine being
OTHER DEPICTIONS
My Identity as a child
Locomotion means
My perception of the U.S
Childish art expression

Home Before Migrating

Analysis of Latino children's depictions of home before migrating revealed connections to nature, including special bonds with animals and natural phenomena. Present in some of the drawings were cheerful life experiences indicated by family ties and community and sharing daily activities with friends and neighbors. In other drawings, by contrast, the expression of a certain level of gloom was present by depicting memories of family members left behind. Portrayals of the homeland were filled with natural elements and exuberant nature depictions, showing its natural richness. This finding was expected as it is common for children to express universal portrayals, such as nature, houses, humans, and animals in these circumstances (Malchiodi, 1998; Zlateva, 2019).

Many children emphasized the natural quality of the day or the night, even putting the sun and moon together with smiling faces, indicating that opposites can be harmonious. Others show a strong connection with nature—to indicate the importance of certain elements—by choosing saturation coloring techniques on the houses, trees, suns,

or bodies of water. According to Malchiodi (1998), children draw their surroundings, highlight what is meaningful, and invite the audience to their stories.

Adding family members, friends, and neighbors with nature's resources can indicate a sense of belonging as the family connection is a positive attribute in Latino families supporting children's emotional well-being (Ballard et al., 2016; Zayas et al., 2017; Campesino & Schwartz, 2006; Jocson et al., 2020). Cardoso and Thompson (2010) have described family ties as one of the domains influencing Latino children to succeed in various dimensions of their lives and considered one of the motives for migrating toward the North (Carlson & Gallaher, 2015).

The theme of family together depictions of family gatherings, sharing favorite meals, and playing with other children in their communities is consistent with those of Ayón and Naddy's (2013) assertion that friends, family, neighbors, and communities play an essential role in Latinos' lives and help to strengthen their resilience before, during, and after they migrate to the U.S. Similarly, drawings of Latino children traveling together with one or both parents, siblings and other adults forming a large community of travelers supporting each other when they yield to border patrols care. This result is consistent with Baily's (2017) findings, which showed that children experienced a sense of community traveling together with parent(s) and others in a group, forming an informal migrant network. Also, traveling together was a source of building resilience, increasing solidarity, and creating a shared identity (Hagan, 2008).

Some children illustrated enjoyable moments with memories of favorite toys, recollections of happy family or neighbor gatherings, and objects. Others sketched family members, friends, and pets left behind not as sad but with happy expressions. According

to Steele (1997), difficult memories and emotions can be hidden from the child's conscience by choosing to paint the "happy picture" to diminish the pain of unpleasant moments.

Migration Journey

Concerning the experience of crossing borders, Latino children depicted images portraying themselves as conscious of the trip and the journey's challenges. The images were about the border crossing, especially about being detained and encounters with American border officers. They also illustrated terrifying moments of crossing the river as part of their journey, fear of being caught by Mexican immigration authorities, of being lost during the journey, or being separated from their parents and other adults. These findings are consistent with those reported by Soto and Garza (2011), who also found in drawings created by Mexican children living in the U.S. illustrations of the arduous journey to the U.S. and encountering immigration authorities when asked to reflect on their border-crossing experiences.

The unorganized and scattered placement of various elements illustrating the migration journey in children's drawings has been interpreted as expressing distress (Malchiodi, 1998). An example is Figure SA1-50, where Participant 43, a 14-year-old boy, spread scribbled and circled figures, a sun, moon, tree, cloud, and a rainbow all over the paper (See Appendix H). He titled the art piece "Scenes From the Trip." Speaking to a volunteer, he described his journey as scary due to dangerous animals where he had to disguise himself to escape the perilous situation. Baily (2017) found similar results describing unaccompanied Latino minors' experience of despair by recalling traumatic memories of their journeys.

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Vulnerability and confusion about being incarcerated can be seen in the drawings of being imprisoned and controlled by immigration border officers. For instance, in Figure 19 SA1-46, as stated to a volunteer, a 10-year-old boy related conflicts with being in jail, questioned the lack of freedom and expressed his thoughts by giving the art piece titled "Exit," his ultimate desire to be at home (See Appendix H). Similar findings have been reported where children describe inhumane detention conditions, referring cells to Ice boxes due to freezing temperatures and unfair treatment by the American immigration authorities (Baily, 2017; Soto & Garza, 2011; Brabeck & Xu, 2010; Linton et al., 2017).

Spirituality

The children's drawings contained a variety of images (i.e., words of peace and appreciation and abstract ideas of journey), which can be said to evoke spirituality. They convey complex emotions, inner faith beliefs, and the interconnectedness with nature (i.e., images of mountains, sky, sun, clouds, vegetation, trees, and animals). The spiritual content can be understood by examining the drawings' composition principles, such as the placement and shapes of figures in the drawings. According to Bang (2016), the higher the drawing element on the paper, the more the artist may suggest happiness and spirituality in their art. Other composition principles that suggest spirituality are in the shapes of the drawing elements. For instance, suns and mountains were often depicted in rounded and curved shapes, which imply comfort and console (Bang, 2016). The vertical shape of trees, flowers, and vegetation implies energy and activity as natural vegetation needs energy from the sun to process the chemical reactions necessary for flourishing (Bang, 2016).

Although the connection between nature and spirituality has yet to be described in children's drawings, Hay and Nye (2006) argued that the natural world profoundly impacts children. Children have a genuine capacity to be aware of their surroundings and connect with their inner selves. Egri (1997) argued that nature-centered traditions such as shamanism, goddess spirituality, and neopaganism emphasize human beings' physical and spiritual connections with animate and sacred nature (p. 413). From the Central American indigenous viewpoint, natural forces gained holy characteristics since they were perceived as the ultimate source of life. For example, the symbolism of the sky held a sacred attribute for Aztecs.[2] Sun and rain were seen as the most dominant forces that ruled the Aztec societies. Therefore, both natural elements—sun and rain—were worshiped as gods (Aguilar-Moreno, 2009). Thus, investigating the impact of the natural world in shaping Latino children's spirituality can be enlightening.

Additionally, spirituality was represented metaphorically in the children's drawings through illustrations of hearts with wings, words of appreciation, and blessings representing God's love. According to Brandt et al. (2023), metaphors can reveal how children represent and think about abstract concepts. Another way to understand how children may express spirituality is by sharing things (Hay & Nye, 2006). Many of the children drew their art pieces and then presented them as gifts to the volunteers to convey gratitude for their support.

Another way to express spirituality is to connect with opposite feelings (Hay & Nye, 2006). However, children have difficulties in connecting emotional conflicts (Malchiodi, 1998), so being able to draw images to access these emotions not only

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[2] Central American Indigenous people that prospered in central Mexico between the 14th and 16th centuries (Aguilar-Moreno, 2009)

acknowledges their experiences but also may build sensitivity, which is a requirement to develop spirituality (Hay & Nye, 2006). For instance, children who experience the loss of family members may introduce a spiritual theme such as death to reflect her/his feelings and the sorrow for not being able to connect with those who shared solid bonds and unconditional love (Hay & Nye, 2006). In this study, in Figure M3-17, Participant 32 included her grandparents in the drawing, who could not join the journey. She shared with a project volunteer how much they are missed, but she was hopeful that one day they would meet again in heaven after they die (See Appendix H).

Lastly, children can share the same quality of relationship with their pets, which may be seen as a representation of spirituality. In this study, Latino children referred to pets left behind as their best friends. Kateryna et al. (2022) stated that "special relationships connect children and their pets" (p. 503). In addition, there is a belief that animals carry spiritual meanings. Eliade and Doniger (2020) referred to shamanism, stressing that some animals represent the guardian spirit belief. Others believe that pets help children develop sensitivity (Serpell, 2010), a vital aspect of spirituality (Hay & Nye, 2006).

Religiosity

It is not known whether the children carried religious objects during their journey, but their drawings included crucifixes, churches, and the figure of Jesus. According to Hagan (2008), immigrants often carry religious objects with them during the journey. The role of these sacred objects is to be a source of encouragement, comfort, as well as companionship, and solace during their journey. In Mayan Indigenous cultural practices,

people often carried talismans that they believed to be sacred and protective (Hagan, 2008).

To what extent children's drawings of religious objects signal a way of coping is not certain, but studies have found religious coping to be comforting during the migratory journey (Carlson et al., 2012; Baily, 2017; Andrade Vinueza, 2017; Lusk et al., 2021). In this study, children might have coped and sought encouragement and mastery through reliance on religious objects when facing challenges during the journey. Also, they may have aided in establishing tangible intimacy with God by enhancing connectedness between the divine and the ordinary, resulting in social support to comfort children and their families during stressful events (Pargament, 2010).

In addition, reference to religiosity was evident in the words used in the drawings. Latino children used words and phrases to express gratitude, including God and Jesus. Also, volunteers shared information that some children mentioned singing Christian hymn lyrics during their journey. There were also illustrations of Jesus crucified on the cross, depictions of hearts, and God (e.g., in Figure 28 M4-6, the artist depicted a smiling God close to the sun) (See Appendix H). As related to project volunteers by the children, the words and phrases were associated with protection during border crossing, home, and gratitude toward the volunteers.

One interpretation of the drawings of God and Jesus crucified is feeling and being protected. From a biblical perspective, Jesus and his crucifixion represent love for all, and an opportunity for reconciliation (Jolley & Dessart, 2023). Similarly, the presence of God and hearts in the drawings might provide a sense of connection. According to Hay and

Nye (2016), children may experience awareness of being in the world, navigating to opposite feelings, creating meaningful insights, and experiencing inner peace.

Differences in Drawings Based on Gender, Age, and Country of Origin

Gender

Regarding gender differences, findings revealed that girls showed more depictions of their homeland and were more inclined to illustrate spiritual and religious symbols in their art pieces. This difference follows Golomb's (1990) ideas that girls tend to draw landscapes, animals, and love-related scenes. According to Bang (2016), when children, especially girls, intend to show figures as spiritual beings, they place them higher on the paper, where the sky typically appears (Malchiodi, 1998). Although boys depicted similar religious symbols in their drawings (e.g., church and crosses), they were more interested in vehicles, airplanes, and machinery. Nevertheless, investigations examining how gender impacts content related to Latino children's experience of mass migration need further examination.

Concerning depictions of border crossings, findings showed hardly any difference between genders (20.9% of boys versus 20% of girls). All genders displayed a sequence of events showing a straightforward narrative of their journey, with most border-crossing events illustrated with rich details. These results are similar to findings by Vega (2023) who notes that the concept of border is omnipresent in immigrant families, especially those from Central America.

Age

Drawings made by children, 7 to 12 years of age consisted of homes connected with nature, including illustrations of animals, birds, and family members. A plausible

explanation for these serene drawings is that it was a way for children to make sense of their overwhelming circumstances. Malchiodi (1998) came to similar conclusions after analyzing 4,000 similar drawings—of beautiful landscapes framed by birds, butterflies, memories of homeland and family members, and cheerful children playing in surrounding areas—from children incarcerated in Nazi concentration camps in Czechoslovakia (the Czech Republic today) in stating that children try to reconcile overwhelming events or negative feelings by drawing positive themes that allow them to create new optimistic alternatives to the world.

Conversely, drawings by teenagers (13 to 17 years of age) included examples of spiritual and religious artifacts, indicative of wanting to make meaning of their ordeal journey. Similar findings were described by Baily (2017) in a study of unaccompanied Latino youth, 13 to 17 years of age, which revealed that they applied religious faith to cope with the uncertainties of the journey toward the U.S. and time in detention centers.

Country of origin

Guatemalan children depicted more home images and conveyed more spiritual and religious symbols in their art pieces compared to drawings made by children from other countries. This may be because in this study most of the drawings were done by Guatemalan children. It is noteworthy that most children apprehended by the U.S. border are from Guatemala (47%), with indigenous cultural influence (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2021; Jawetz & Shuchart, 2019; Patrinos, 2000).

Other Depictions

Children's drawings also included figures and images such as their names, family members' names, ages, dates, and country's flag. By adding these identifiers in their

drawings, children communicated essential aspects of their identity that are of value to them to others. Malchiodi (1998) reported similar findings and concluded that children often share their art production to demonstrate self-pride, self-esteem, and worth. Several children in this study sketched different modes of transportation, such as cars, trucks, airplanes, and rockets. Vehicles were depicted in drawings of the border crossing experience and encounters with the U.S. immigration authorities, as well as of ordinary life in the homeland. Vega (2023) also found vehicle images associated with American border patrol in the drawings of Mexican children to portray scenes of authority. Additionally, the first impression of the U.S. was depicted with high buildings, streets, and traffic lights, less colorful, and no cars or people around. Similar findings were noted by Sertzen and Torres (2016), where Mexican children depicted the urban landscape of the U.S. in their drawings.

What would be ordinarily considered "scribbles" also made up this other category of drawings. Usually, these are common in drawings of children who are between eighteen months and four years when their hand-eye coordination is still maturing and their engagement with art materials is exploratory (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987; Arnheim, 1974). However, children in this study were older, aged between 7 and 17. For instance, Participant 2, a 10-year-old boy in Figure 33 M1-3, drew figures all over the paper unorganized, including dots, lines, a sun, and a small human figure (See Appendix H). Participant 2 explained to the project volunteer that the scene represented the universe, a place without borders. A possible explanation is that these types of drawings are a way to free up tensions and express experiences of anxiety, nervousness, hyperactivity, and/or

emotional distress in migrating, crossing, and being detained at the U.S.-Mexico Border (Malchiodi, 1998).

Understanding the Children's Drawings Using the Theoretical Lens

The lens of risk and resiliency theory (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005; Zimmerman, 2013), religion and coping theory (Pargament, 1997), and Hay and Nye's theory of children's spirituality (Hay & Nye, 2006) can be used to understand children's drawings of their lives before migration, migration journey, border crossing, and detention. Risk and resilience theory (Zimmerman, 2013) stresses that protective and promotive factors counter exposure to risk factors, buffering their harmful effects. Protective and promotive factors can operate on self-esteem and self-efficacy at the individual level, while family relations, social connections, and cultural values operate at the societal level to enhance overall well-being and functioning (Brietzke & Perreira, 2017; Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 2013; Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005; Ballard et al., 2016; Zayas et al., 2017; Campesino & Schwartz, 2006; Jocson et al., 2020; Cardoso & Thompson, 2010).

From a risk and resiliency theory perspective, elements identified in the children's drawings which are interpreted to be promoting and protective factors are traveling together, home and family members left behind, and connections to community, pets, nature, as well as sacred figures and words conveying religious beliefs. These functioned as buffers against the risks faced during the journey. All of these represent a sense of community that might have together functioned to buffer exposure to, and harmful effects of risks encountered during migration.

According to religion and coping theory, people turn to religious coping to seek comfort from and closeness to God, to acquire mastery and control over their

circumstances, and to find meaning (See Appendix A) (Pargament, 1997). The children's drawings of sacred figures (i.e., crucifixes, Jesus, God, Churches) and words associated with religiosity can be indicative of seeking comfort and closeness to God. Children's drawings of singing religious songs or praying during the border crossing are suggestive of children's ways of acquiring mastery and control of their situation. Finally, finding meaning is evident for example in an image of a floating God (in Figure 28 M4-6) interpreted as God's protection during the border crossing (See Appendix H).

Hay and Nye's theory of children's spirituality is centered on the relational consciousness framework through which children can naturally express their spirituality based on five intertwined dimensions: *contexts, conditions, strategies, processes, and consequences* (See Appendix B) (Hay & Nye, 2006). The first dimension of *context* in relational consciousness can arise in four ways: Child-world consciousness, child-people consciousness, child-self consciousness, and child-God consciousness. Child-world consciousness in the drawings is observed through sketches of border crossing. Child-people consciousness is conveyed in drawings that evoke family ties and a sense of community, which might have helped children build resilience and connect with their inner strengths. Child-self consciousness is children's full awareness of their circumstances, an example of which is being protected by traveling companions. Child-God consciousness was evident in the drawings in images where children expressed spiritual and religious connections.

The second dimension of *conditions* was illustrated in children's drawings of metaphorical figures such as hearts with wings to represent God's love and presence. The third dimension of the *strategy* was observed in words and phrases associated with

spirituality written in the drawings, such as peace or blessing. The fourth dimension of the *process* was not possible to determine since the drawings were a one-time, not an ongoing, snapshot of children's experience. Finally, the dimension of *consequences*, which refers to the effects of expressing spiritual ideas, was communicated via illustrations of peace, tranquility, and serenity despite the journey's challenges. See Figure 9 which depicts represents a comprehensive and integrated model of spiritual and religious coping methods from the study results.
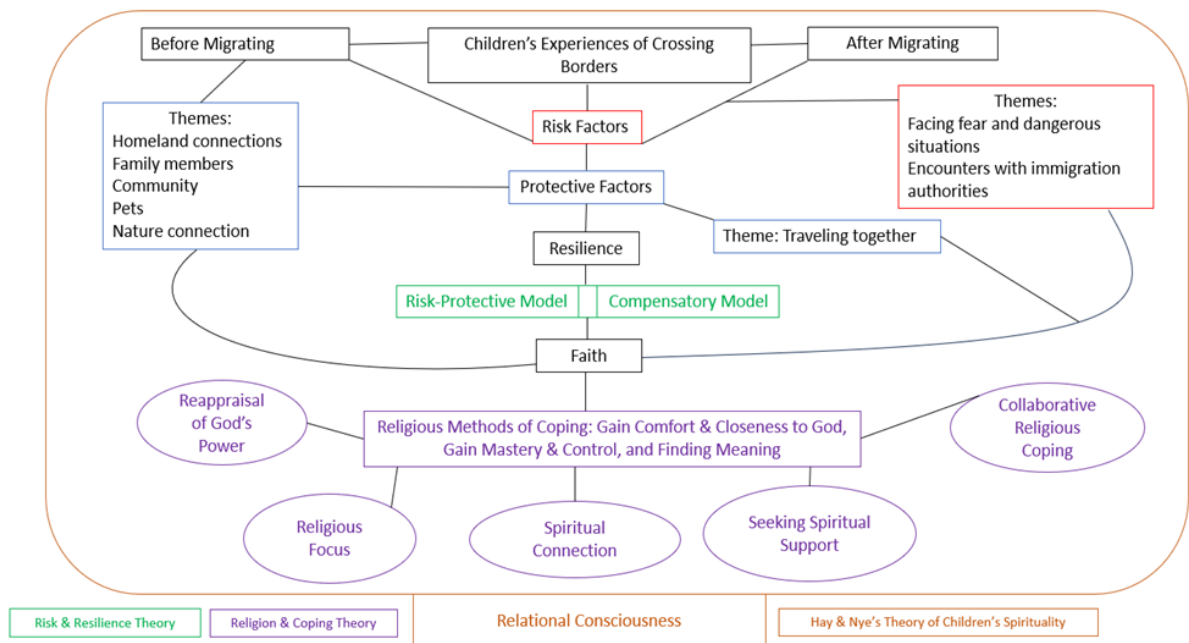
Figure 34 A Comprehensive and Integrated Model of the Theories Applied in the Analysis of Latino Children's Drawings

Strengths

    This study was unique in using the drawings of unaccompanied and accompanied Latino minors recently released from immigration detention centers to examine their experiences crossing the U.S. southern border. Further, to date, no study has explored the spiritual and religious symbols suggesting coping methods used by this population as a

strategy to endure their journey. This exploratory investigation aimed to be descriptive to inform more comprehensive studies on the spirituality and religiosity of unaccompanied and accompanied Latino children using drawings as an inquiry method.

Regarding research design, the strength worth noting is that this methodology gave narratives to children's drawings that were previously silenced. In addition, applying participatory visual research methodologies (PVRM) was suitable for collecting data from the Latino drawings as the children were unavailable to ask about their interpretation of their art pieces. This methodology allowed the researcher to describe each drawing in detail, revealing nuances of the art pieces. Lastly, the validity agreement was 100% reached, and the themes that emerged from the data were validated by one of the *Arte de Lágrimas: Refugee Artwork Project's* directors.

Limitations

Direct access to Latino children's voices was not possible. Participants engaged in art production (made drawings) in transit between being released from immigration detention centers and arriving at bus stations to reunite with family members already living in the U.S. The responses from the "draw and talk/write" technique where children talk or write about what they drew varied possibly due to time constraints or children's availability to talk and variability in the number of different project volunteers documenting the responses. In addition, the volunteers were no longer working on the project, so reaching them to ask questions or clarify information was impossible. Furthermore, the findings are not generalizable beyond the drawings examined. The age group—7 to 17—was too broad. Biological, emotional, and social growth among children

could not be analyzed as these and other demographic data were not available for analysis.

It is worth noting that visual data is, in nature, broader compared to structured interviews. It is subject to double cultural interference. One lens is from children who produce art according to their cultural background. The other lens is to what extent the researchers can understand the drawings based on their social-cultural context. To avoid this issue, it is vital to be aware that the drawings are the product of individual experience, perception, and cultural background. From the researchers' perspective, it is suggested to use various triangulation techniques, such as children's narratives, written interviews, and participatory drawing (Literat, 2013). It is vital to keep in mind that the interpretation of visual material is unlimited due to its subjectivity attached to it and the subjectivity brought by the participants (Rose, 2018). In this study, some measures (i.e., the analysis process was mirrored with the art pieces, drawings descriptor, and field notes) were taken to limit double cultural interference and subjectivity and interpretation but they were not eliminated, resulting in the possibility of some conclusions, over-interpretations, and generalizations.

Implications and Recommendations

Examining the drawings of Latino minors crossing the U.S. Southern border demonstrated voices of courage, hope, and faith. These findings have important implications for developing policies that promote resilience in situations of crisis, offering room for researching resilience from faith perspectives by considering different lenses of theoretical approach and, ultimately, practical implications regarding social work practice.

For Policy

Ataiants et al. (2018) reinforced using the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) to frame actions promoting the child's dignity and particularly respecting the children's right "to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion" and the recognition from the States of the rights for adequate living that promote children's physical, emotional, spiritual, moral, and social development. The authors cited that the U.S. has signed the document but did not ratify the CRC, which has enormous implications for violating the rights of unaccompanied and accompanied Latino children for not being legally accountable with the CRC parameters. The unwillingness to be responsible for the children's rights reinforces the negative narrative toward Latino children, which is corroborated by the current immigration policies that amplify the xenophobic attitude (Ataiants et al., 2018).

Unaccompanied and accompanied Latino children's drawings revealed confusion about being detained. Legislators must improve immigration policies to safeguard children's rights and provide comprehensive protection acts considering the articles from the CRC to mitigate the harmful effects of encounters with immigration border officers. Children who fled their home countries, escaping the violence and enduring arduous journeys crossing the border, can be re-traumatized while in the custody of U.S. officials. Therefore, the need for improvement in U.S. policy and its procedures becomes urgent for the safety and well-being of unaccompanied and accompanied child immigrants.

For Research

Literat (2013) argued that participatory drawing research needs to be a more examined method in qualitative research. Few studies with unaccompanied and

accompanied Latino children have addressed their experience and coping with crossing the Southern border using their drawings. Hence, this gap creates considerable opportunities for research. As a result, there are a variety of prospects in qualitative and quantitative empirical analysis.

There has been no investigation using arts-based methodologies with Latino children released from immigration detention centers to examine their experience. Future research applying drawings to collect data should seek to access the children's voices using the "draw and talk/write" technique to help children speak or register the meaning embedded in their drawings. Likewise, a study's sample with a broad range of ages may limit the drawings' analysis considering the stages of development. Malchiodi (1998) argued that children's drawings reflected complex aspects related to emotional factors that are influenced by their stage of development, educational-socio-cultural aspects, and art-production context. Prospective investigations should consider all demographic information, including the children's educational level, to better understand the picture analysis.

Regarding the association between resilience and faith, results deemed from the drawings surrounding the topic of unaccompanied and accompanied children's resilience using spiritual and religiosity as coping methods revealed that Latino children accessed their faith to overcome the challenges in the pre-during-post migration journey. Benson et al. (2003) suggested that faith is a positive resource for human development. However, more studies are needed to understand faith in social outcomes in the long term. Thus, longitudinal studies with Latino children would help researchers understand the role of spirituality and religiosity in the long term and impact children as they grow.

For Social Work

More comprehensive trauma-informed training and cultural information about these populations, including the faith component to endure the challenging journey, is essential to change the current narrative that misrepresents them by not considering the children's voices. The research reveals that Latino children experience high levels of stress during the border crossing, and the use of faith is an essential aspect of bonding social networks and keeping their hope for a successful journey, mitigating risk factors. For this reason, a multidimensional social work approach should combine psycho-social-spiritual resources as strategies to safeguard their overall well-being and post-traumatic recovery.

Conclusions

This research has explored Latino children's experiences and their resilience in departing from the countries of the Northern Triangle, completing a journey full of stressors, and crossing the U.S. Southern border. Analysis of children's drawings showed that Latino children keep strong bonds with their homeland and families left behind before migrating. Depictions of spirituality and religiosity in their art pieces demonstrated that Latino children articulated complex sacred beliefs to seek protection, love, and meaning during the journey and after the border crossing.

Further, studies pointed out that the structural circumstances in the Northern Triangle countries related to high levels of violence and poverty promote the rising number of minors at the border attempting to join family networks in the U.S. Under these circumstances, child mass migration should not be surprising. Gramlich (2023) reported that the surge of caravans of families, including infants, migrating from Central

America toward the United States remains high. The rising number of children at the border and the inability of existing U.S. immigration policies to protect these children suggest that they are at risk for exploitation and abuse. Therefore, it is fair to assert that a humanitarian crisis needs to be addressed by recognizing that these children need protection in the form of legal status that can identify and address the best interests of the children in question.

Additionally, the literature review that documents the migration of these youths suggests that there is room to explore the uniqueness of the child migration experience. The added investigation may produce outcomes for policy change and stimulate the field of social work to build model approaches to address resilience to overcome the post-traumatic stress of the aftermath journey. From an academic perspective, more attention is needed to explore the children's experiences during the migration and the role of faith in understanding how children make meaning of their surroundings and how they build resilience and self-identity through their experiences. Exploring new research on this topic would expand upon established thought. In addition, the public acknowledgment of children's rights to physical, emotional, spiritual, moral, and social development established by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) places faith as an essential dimension of children's growth and, therefore, deserves more attention from the academia community.

Integrating faith beliefs with different disciplines—e.g., social work, theology, psychology, philosophy, anthropology, and neuroscience—as the capacity of awareness would expand the knowledge of how spirituality and religiosity operate at body levels of regulation. Lastly, from a phenomenological perspective, recognizing faith as part of

human development would contribute to examining aspects of purpose in life based on

respect for others, including humans and nature, where constructs of awareness, wisdom,

and self-development would shed light on reflecting the interconnectedness of all things.

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Appendix A

RCOPE Subscales and Definitions of Religious Coping Methods

Religious Methods of Coping to Find Meaning	
Benevolent Religious Reappraisal	Redefining the stressor through religion as benevolent and potentially beneficial
Punishing God Reappraisal	Redefining the stressor as a punishment from God for the individual's sins
Demonic Reappraisal	Redefining the stressor as an act of the Devil
Reappraisal of God's Powers	Redefining God's power to influence the stressful situation
Religious Methods of Coping to Gain Control	
Collaborative Religious Coping	Seeking control through a problem-solving partnership with God
Active Religious Surrender	An active giving up of control to God in coping
Passive Religious Deferral	Passive waiting for God to control the situation
Pleading for Direct Intercession	Seeking control indirectly by pleading to God for a miracle or divine intercession
Self-Directing Religious Coping	Seeking control directly through individual initiative rather than help from God
Religious Methods of Coping to Gain Comfort and Closeness to God	
Seeking Spiritual Support	Searching for comfort and reassurance through God's love and care
Religious Focus	Engaging in religious activities to shift focus from the stressor
Religious Purification	Searching for spiritual cleansing through religious actions
Spiritual Connection	Experiencing a sense of connectedness with forces that transcend the individual
Spiritual Discontent	Expressing confusion and dissatisfaction with God's relationship to the individual in the stressful situation
Marking Religious Boundaries	Clearly demarcating acceptable from unacceptable religious behavior and remaining within religious boundaries
Religious Methods of Coping to Gain Intimacy with Others and Closeness to God	
Seeking Support from Clergy or Members	Searching for comfort and reassurance through the love and care of congregation members and clergy

Religious Helping	Attempting to provide spiritual support and comfort to others
Interpersonal Religious Discontent	Expressing confusion and dissatisfaction with the relationship of clergy or congregation members to the individual in the stressful situation
Religious Methods of Coping to Achieve a Life Transformation	
Seeking Religious Direction	Looking to religion for assistance in finding a new direction for living when the old one may no longer be viable
Religious Conversion	Looking to religion for a radical change in life
Religious Forgiving	Looking to religion for help in shifting to a state of peace from the anger, hurt, and fear associated with an offense

Appendix B

The Dimensions of Relational Consciousness - A Framework for Children's

Spirituality

Contexts
Child-God consciousness
Child-people consciousness
Child-world consciousness
Child-self consciousness

Strategies
Explicit
Mental/physical withdrawal
Focusing, concentration
Seeking relation or dialogue
Seeking/exploitation aesthetic/stimulation
"Philosophizing"
Implicit
Meandering questions, puzzling
Imagining
Reasoning
Searching for meaning
Moralizing
Staying with a mood
Dreaming
Playing, escaping reality
Concrete/abstracting combining

Processes
Avoidance
Sidetracking
"Third-personizing"
Sliding between contexts
Forcing a conclusion
Magnification
Self-identification
Interiorizing
Forgetting
Changefulness

Conditions
Religious language
Language about beliefs, including beliefs
about death
Autobiographical language
Language of fiction
Language of play and games
Language about time and space
Language about values and morals
Language of science and technology
Language of the natural word

Consequences
Calmness and peacefulness
Holiness
Goodness
Oneness
Impressed
Wonder
Quest for understanding
New clarity
Sense of worth
Thankfulness
Strangeness
Perplexed and frustrated
Inter conflict
Embarrassed
Ridiculed
Undermined
Search for supportive comparison

Appendix C

Critical Visual Methodology Framework Sheet

Number of the art piece: Date of production: Artist's gender: Artist's age:
Country of Origin:

Production of the image

1) When and where was this piece made?
2) What were the materials provided for this drawing?
3) What was the reaction of the participants when they were invited to draw?
4) How was the relationship between the artist and the facilitator before, during, and after the activity? Did they have to ask for any assistance or permission to make it?
5) What kind of relation is there between the artist and the subject of the image? What kind of emotional reaction, if any, did the child have with her/his drawing?

Image itself

1) In overall, what is the depiction of the drawing? ☐ Home ☐ Border crossing ☐ Religious elements ☐ Spiritual elements ☐ Other depictions
2) How many figures are present in the drawings? And what are the figures in the drawing?
3) How the figure(s) is (are) distributed in the drawing?
4) What are the colors used in this art piece and the significance of the colors choice?
5) What are the shapes used in the drawing? (e.g., circles, squares, triangles, lines)
6) What are the materials used in this drawing?
7) What do the figures mean or represent?

Appendix D

Religious/Spiritual Element Codebook

1. **Religious building:** Refers to a place where people gather for worship. For instance, the church is where Christians come together as a community seeking religious and spiritual development. In other faith traditions, it can be a synagogue (Jewish), a mosque (Islamism), or even at home as Mexicans' faith practice.

2. **Angels:** Refers to invisible and sexless beings, expressing love and compassion for human distress. They can appear in various forms depending on the culture.

3. **Wonder and Awe:** Wonder refers to a feeling of admiration and appreciation of things more significant than ourselves. Awe refers to a feeling of reverence towards a divine being, but also it can be fear. Both terms can describe the appropriate human response to God.

4. **God for children:** God for young children tends to have multiple dimensions. They refer to God as super knowing, super perceiving, has creative power, and immortal. Thus, God for children may exist in different forms.

5. **Language of Spirituality:** Refers to metaphors to explore more complex and abstract ideas. Language of spirituality includes journey, health, hunger, and struggle. Also, it can be words such as God or Lord (*Dios or Señor),* Jesus*, f*aith (*fe*), love (*amor*), compassion (*compasión*), bless or blessing (*bendecir or bendición*), or words of appreciation such as thank you or gratitude (*muchas gracias or gratitud*).

6. **Heaven:** Some faith traditions recognize heaven as a symbolic place. For instance, in the Christian sacred texts, heaven is where Jesus comes down from and, after his resurrection, ascends back to sit at God's right hand. For Muslims, different heavens represent degrees of spirituality. The origin of the concept of heaven is the planets that are visible to the naked eye.

7. **Saints:** Refers to the holy women and men in all faith traditions who conform to one or more of the meanings given to the concept of a saint (e.g., San Judas Tadeo, the patron saint of lost causes).

8. **Devil figures:** Suggests figures representing fear, horror, or scary. The figure can take a form of an animal, a human being, or any symbolic image that the artist identified as a devil figure. Refers to evil figures as the cause of suffering in the world. It is described as chaos and has elements of fear. For instance, the devil can be represented by various symbols, such as the serpent (in Hebrew texts).

9. **Death:** Refers to a figure that the artist has stated or suggested as death. For instance, a cemetery, a human body, or an animal lying down on the floor, about which the artist identified the figure as dead.

10. **Sacred symbols:** Refers to objects or places to express devotion to religion. In Western culture, for instance, it can be chaplet, candle or incense, bible, deities image, altar, crucifix or crosses, among others.

11. **Faith:** Refers to trust, commitment, orientation toward Life, and response to a faith tradition.

12. **Prayer:** Refers to a religious ritual, a connection between the individual and spiritual power. It can be in Spanish "oración."

13. **Heart:** Refers to the heart's shape associating with God, compassion, and protection.

14. **Ecology:** Refers to the appreciation and act of caring towards all the creatures in nature. For instance, in the Hebrew Scriptures, nature is associated with God's creation; thus, it is the human responsibility to protect them. In American Indian spirituality, man, woman, and child, the spiritual world was not separate from the everyday experiences in Life. From sunrise to sunset, sand to minerals, nature elements have sacred meanings and show connections between Native people and "Mother Earth."

15. **Mexican American religion and spirituality roots:** Refers to polytheist religious practice of indigenous people. The worship of Quetzalcoatl (the feathered serpent) and Tezcatlipoca (the smoking mirror) was their religious practice before the forcible conversion to Catholicism. Today, the most popular sacred figure is La Virgen de Guadalupe. Also, El Dia de Los Muertos (Day of the Dead) celebrations mark the passing of the deceased people.

Appendix E

Drawing Religious/Spiritual Element Checklist

Number of the art piece: Date of production: Artist's gender: Artist's age:

Country of Origin:

Marc with "X" letter whether the following element is included or not in the drawing. To check the box "included," the element must be evident in the drawing or assigned as a religious or spiritual element. Use the critical visual methodology framework (appendix C) to check if the child assigned religious elements in her/his artwork.

Element #	Element in the drawing	Included	Not included
1	Church		
2	Angels or other associated to		
3	Crucifix or Crosses		
4	Planets		
5	Stars		
6	Devil figures		
7	The word "God or Lord" or "Dios or Señor"		
8	Figure of God		
9	Saints or deities		
10	Death		
11	Candle or Incense		
12	Chaplet		
13	The word "faith" or "fe"		
14	The word "love" or "amor"		
15	The word "compassion" or "compasión"		
16	Prayer or attitude of praying		
17	Heart (s)		
18	The word "Jesus"		
19	Figure of Jesus		
20	Words "bless or blessing" or "bendecir or bendición"		
21	Words of appreciation "thank you or gratitude" or		

	"muchas gracias or gratitude"		
22	Bible		
23	Other religious/spiritual elements		

Please, if other religious or spiritual element(s) were identified in the drawing use this space to describe it (them).

Appendix F

IRB Study Approval

Human Subjects Protection Program Office
300 E. Market Street, Suite 380
University of Louisville
Louisville, KY 40202

UNIVERSITY OF
LOUISVILLE

DATE:	June 01, 2023
TO:	Bibhuti K Sar
FROM:	The University of Louisville Institutional Review Board
IRB NUMBER:	23.0340
STUDY TITLE:	**Lived Experiences, Migration Journey, Religious Coping Methods, and Spirituality Depicted in Drawings by Latino Children and Youth Crossing the U.S.-Mexican Border: A Qualitative Study.**
REFERENCE #:	764367
DATE OF REVIEW:	05/31/2023
CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS:	Christy LaDuke 852-2541 clpepp01@louisville.edu

This study was reviewed on 05/31/2023 and determined by the Chair of the Institutional Review Board that the study is exempt according to 45 CFR 46.101(b) under Category 4. The study was approved under child risk category 1.

This study was also approved through 45 CFR 46.116 (D), which means that it has been granted a waiver of informed consent.

Documents/Attachments reviewed and approved:

Title	Version #	Version Date
Data Extraction Forms	Version 1.0	05/04/2023
IRB Proposal	Version 1.0	05/04/2023
MOU	Version 1.0	05/04/2023

Requirements for an exempt study:
1. Any study documents submitted with this protocol must be used in the form in which they were approved.
2. Human Subjects & HIPAA Research training are required for all study personnel. It is the responsibility of the investigator to ensure that all study personnel maintain current Human Subjects & HIPAA Research training while the study is ongoing.
3. Personnel amendments must be submitted to the IRB to add/remove research personnel from your study team.
4. If your research focus or activities change, please submit an Amendment to the IRB for review to ensure that the indicated exempt category still applies.

Additional reporting, such as submission of continuation reviews or closure amendments, is not required.

For guidance on using iRIS, including finding your approved documents, please follow the instructions at https://louisville.edu/research/humansubjects/iRISSubmissionManual.pdf

Site Approval
Permission from the institution or organization where this research will be conducted **must** be obtained before the research can begin. For example, site approval is required for research conducted in UofL Hospital/UofL Health, Norton Healthcare, and Jefferson County Public Schools, etc...

Privacy & Encryption Statement
The University of Louisville's Privacy and Encryption Policy requires identifiable medical and health records; credit card, bank account and other personal financial information; social security numbers; proprietary research data; and dates of birth (when combined with name, address and/or phone numbers) to be encrypted. For additional information: http://louisville.edu/security/policies.

Implementation of Changes to Previously Approved Research
Prior to the implementation of any changes in the approved research, the investigator must submit modifications to the IRB and await approval before implementing the changes, unless the change is being made to ensure the safety and welfare of the subjects enrolled in the research. If such occurs, a Protocol Deviation/Violation should be submitted within five days of the occurrence indicating what safety measures were taken, along with an amendment to revise the protocol.
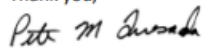
Unanticipated Problems Involving Risks to Subjects or Others (UPIRTSOs)
A UPIRTSO is any incident, experience, or outcome, which has been associated with an unexpected event(s), related or possibly related to participation in the research, and suggests that the research places subjects or others at a greater risk of harm than was previously known or suspected. The investigator is responsible for reporting UPIRTSOs to the IRB within 5 working days. Use the UPIRTSO form located within the iRIS system. Event reporting requirements can be found at: http://louisville.edu/research/humansubjects/lifecycle/event-reporting.

Payments to Subjects
In compliance with University policies and Internal Revenue Service code, payments to research subjects from University of Louisville funds, must be reported to the University Controller's Office. For additional information, please call 852-8237 or email controll@louisville.edu. For additional information: http://louisville.edu/research/humansubjects/policies/PayingHumanSubjectsPolicy201412.pdf.

Thank you,

Peter M Quesada

Peter M. Quesada, Ph.D., Chair
Social/Behavioral/Educational Institutional Review Board
We value your feedback; let us know how we are doing: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CCLHXRP

Appendix G

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN

ARTE DE LÁGRIMAS: REFUGEE
ARTWORK PROJECT

AND

MS. DOROTY MAGALHAES SATO, DOCOTRAL
CANDIDATE, UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE, KENT
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), while not a legally binding document, does indicate a voluntary agreement to provide doctoral candidate, Ms. Doroty Sato, access to Arte de Lágrimas' digitized artwork collection for her dissertation project on immigration and spirituality at the University of Louisville, Kent School of Social Work. The chairperson of her dissertation project is Prof. Bidhuti K. Sar, Director of the Doctoral Program at the Kent School of Social Work.

Overall Project Goals, Services and Outcomes:

As stated in the Ph.D. Program Handbook at Kent School of Social Work, "the primary requirement of a dissertation is that it contributes to the knowledge base of the social work profession. It must represent independent work and be based on original research. Dissertation committees will have at least four members and must include one member outside of the Kent School. If the outside member does not have a primary appointment as UofL faculty but is otherwise qualified, they may be granted ad hoc approval to participate." (Version9.1.20, p.9)

Research

For Ms. Doroty Sato's dissertation project, she will be focusing on unaccompanied Latino minors or youth Latino refugees/immigrants/asylum seekers, specifically from Northern Triangle countries in Central America. More specifically, she will investigate the spirituality disposition among these populations and their overall life satisfaction after being resettled in the US.

Dataset

Arte de Lágrimas: Refugee Artwork Project is a traveling art exhibit and archive aimed to bring public awareness to the lived experiences of asylum-seeking children, youth, and adults after their release from immigration detention in the US-Mexico Borderlands. The exhibit is curated by co-directors Reverend Dr. Gregory L. Cuéllar and Mrs. Nohemi Cuéllar.

Term One: This MOU shall begin upon approval of dissertation project and dissertation advisory committee. The agreement is renewable from year to year, unless either party gives notice of intent to withdraw from the project.

Term Two: Agency Provisions: Arte de Lágrimas: Refugee Artwork Project will provide the following services in specific support of this project:

a. Facilitate access to Inventory List of its artwork collection.
b. Facilitate access to its digitized artwork collection.
c. Provide pertinent information about individual pieces in the digitized artwork collection.
d. Facilitate interviews with former volunteers of Arte de Lágrimas: Refugee Artwork Project.
e. Dr. Gregory L. Cuéllar will serve as a member of the Ms. Sato's dissertation advisory committee.

Term Three: _Agency Provisions:_ Ms. Doroty Sato, Doctoral Candidate at the Kent School of Social Work will provide the following services in specific support of this project:

a. Assist project directors and volunteers in processing and describing the digitized artwork collection of Arte de Lágrimas

b. Assist project directors in enhancing future scholarly access to the artwork collection.

Term Four: _Termination:_ This MOU may be terminated by either party, for any reason, by giving 30 days written notice.
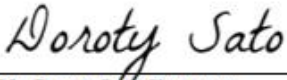
Arte de Lágrimas: Refugee Artwork Project

Dr. Gregory L. Cuéllar, Co-founder

Title

1/27/21

Date

Ms. Doroty Sato, Signature

Doroty Sato, Doctoral Candidate

Title

1/27/21

Date

Appendix H

Latino Children's Drawings Collection

Year 2014 – M1 August

Figure M1-1. Participant 1
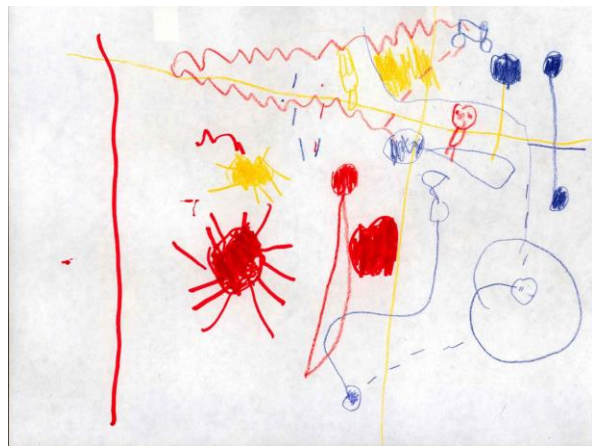
Figure M1-3. Participant 2

Figure M1-6. Participant 3

Figure M1-7. Participant 4
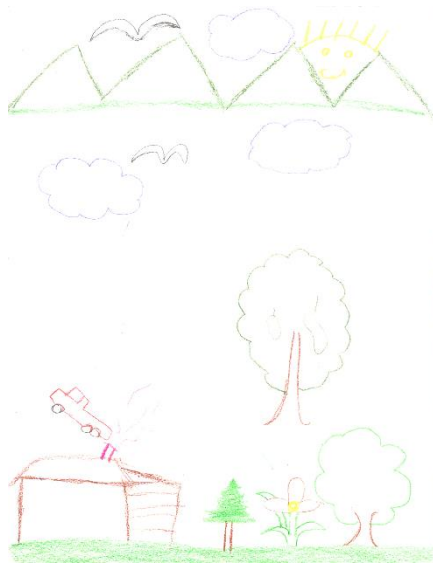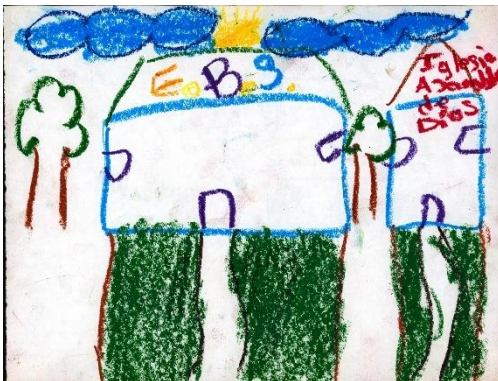

Figure M1-10. Participant 2

Figure M1-12. Participant 3
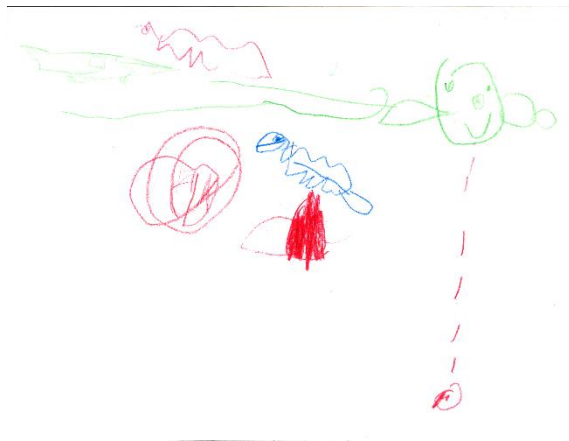
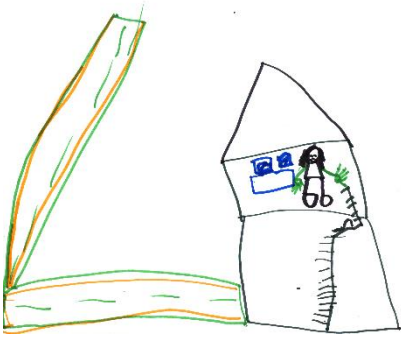Figure M1-14. Participant 2

Figure M1-24. Participant 5

Figure M1-26. Participant 6
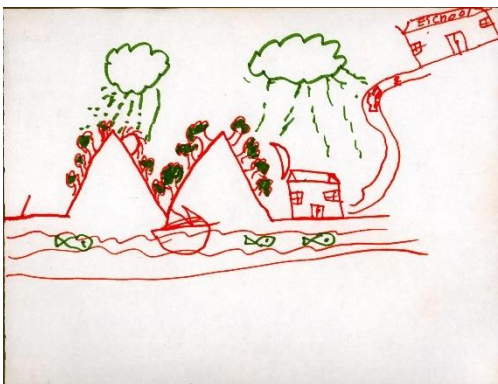
Figure M1-34. Participant 7

Figure M1-40. Participant 8
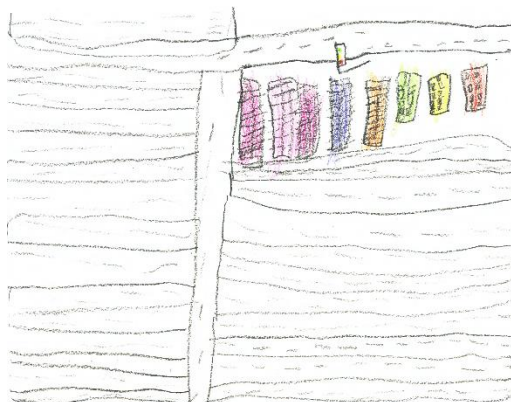
Figure M1-41. Participant 8

Figure M1-43. Participant 9
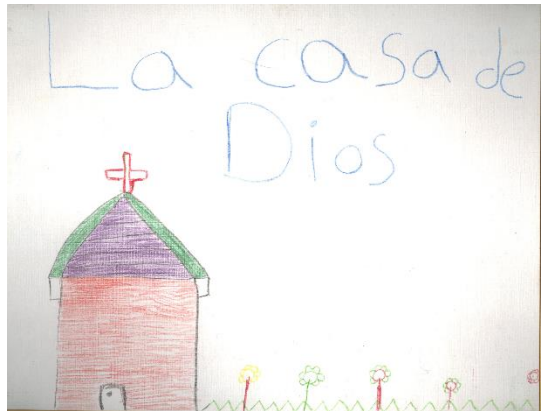
Figure M1-44. Participant 10

Figure M1-47. Participant 11

216

Figure M1-49. Participant 12

Figure M1-50. Participant 13

Figure M1-51. Participant 14
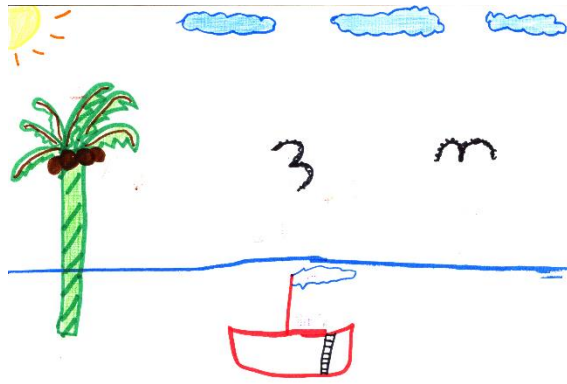
Figure M1-53. Participant 15

Colores de Casa

Figure M1-57. Participant 16

Figure M1-58. Participant 17

Figure M1-59. Participant 7

Figure M1-65. Participant 18

Year 2014 – M2 September

Figure M2-1. Participant 19

Figure M2-7. Participant 20
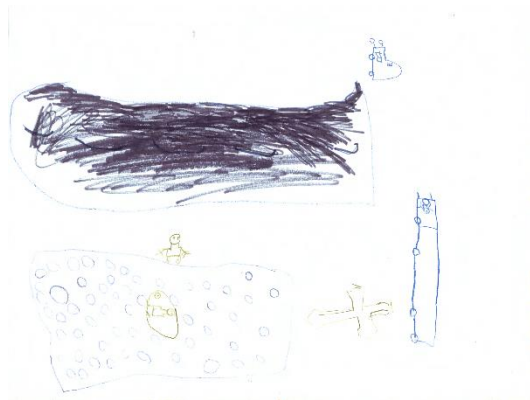
Figure M2-8. Participant 20
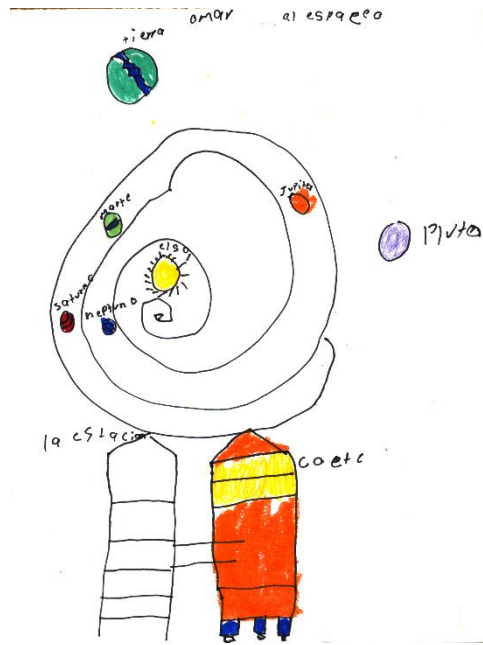
Figure M2-9. Participant 21

Figure M2-10. Participant 21

Figure M2-11. Participant 21

Figure M2-15. Participant 22
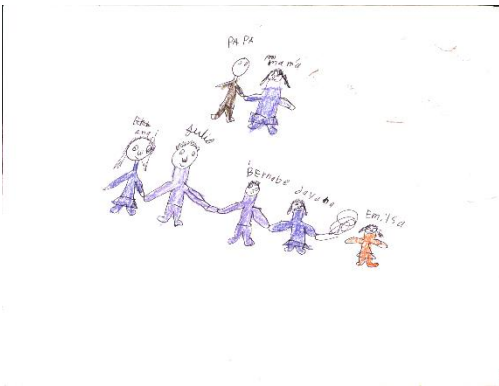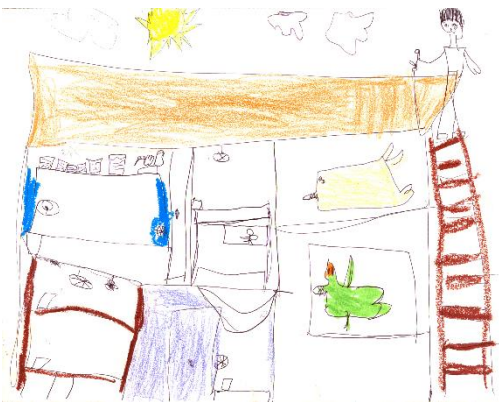
Figure M2-16. Participant 23

Year 2015 – M3 January

Figure M3-2. Participant 24

Figure M3-5. Participant 25

Figure M3-7. Participant 26

Figure M3-9. Participant 27

Figure M3-10. Participant 28

Figure M3-11. Participant 28

Figure M3-12. Participant 29

Figure M3-13. Participant 30

Figure M3-14. Participant 31

Figure M3-15. Participant 32

Figure M3-17. Participant 32

Figure M3-20. Participant 33

Figure M3-25. Participant 34

Year 2015 – M3 August

Figure M4-2. Participant 35

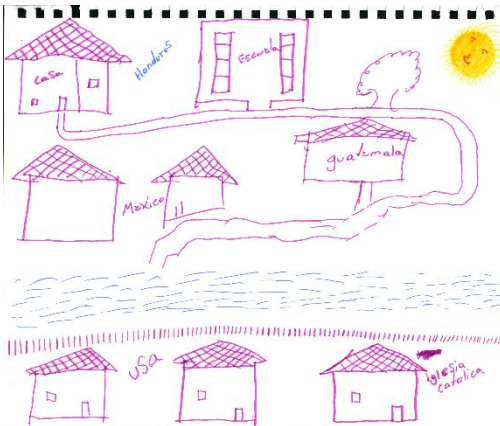Figure M4-3. Participant 36

Figure M4-6. Participant 36

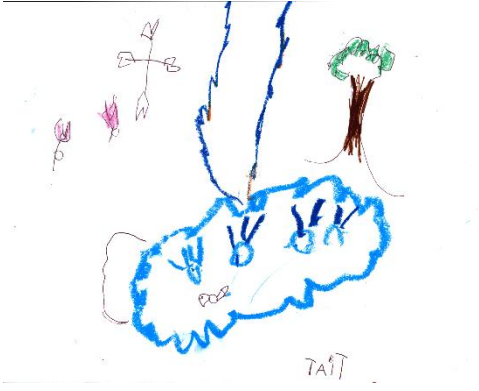Figure M4-12. Participant 37

Figure M4-17. Participant 38

Figure M4-18. Participant 38

Figure M4-24. Participant 35

Year 2016 – SA1
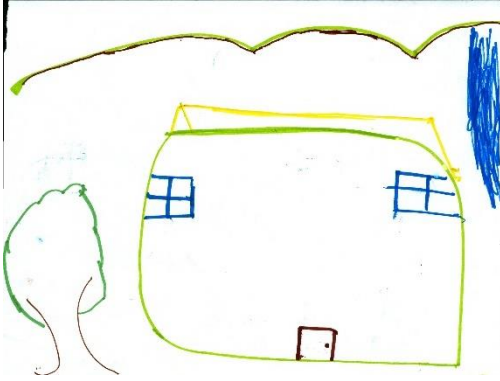
Figure SA1-2. Participant 39
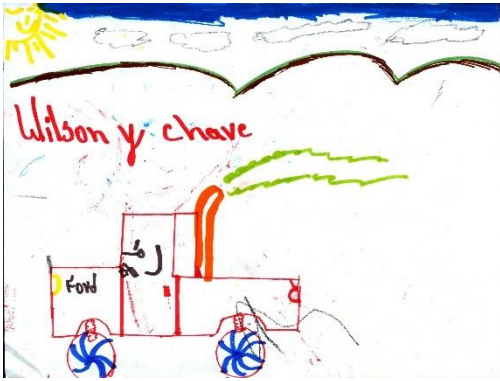
Figure SA1-25. Participant 40

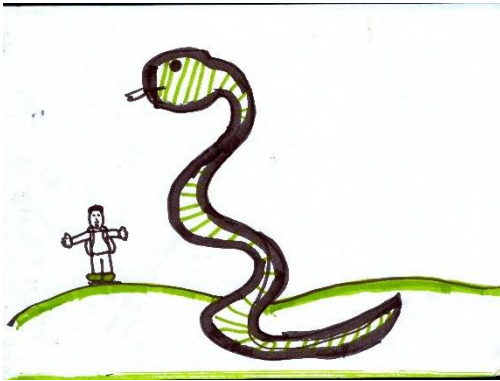Figure SA1-26. Participant 40
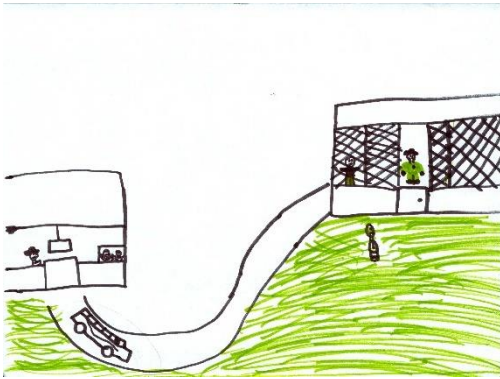
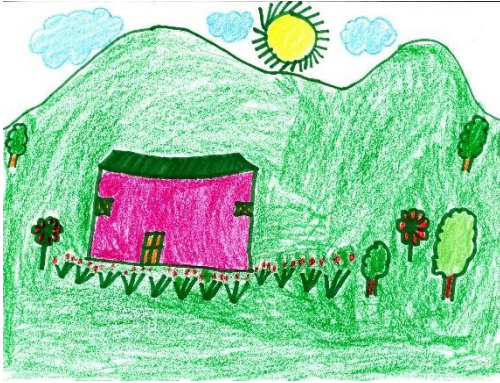Figure SA1-31. Participant 41

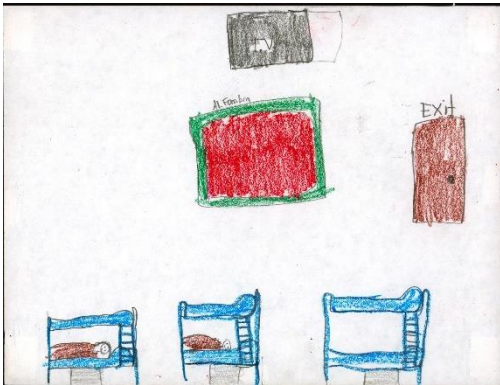Figure SA1-32. Participant 41

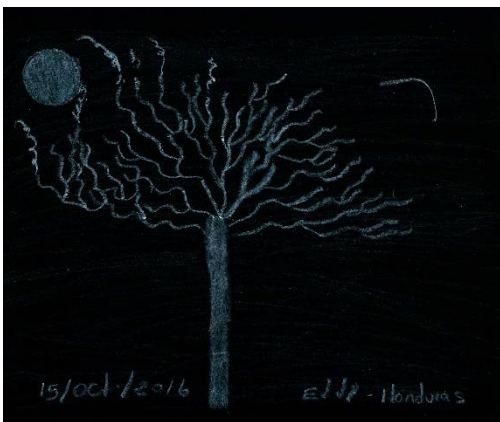Figure SA1-44. Participant 42

Figure SA1-46. Participant 39

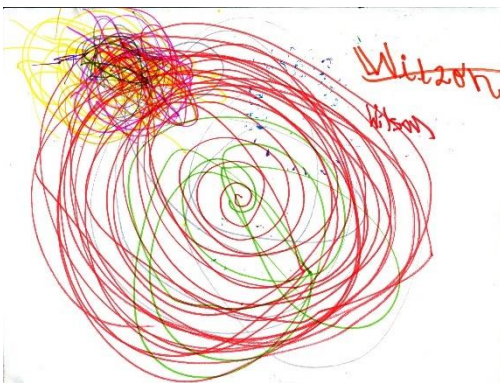Figure SA1-47. Participant 39

Figure SA1-49. Participant 40

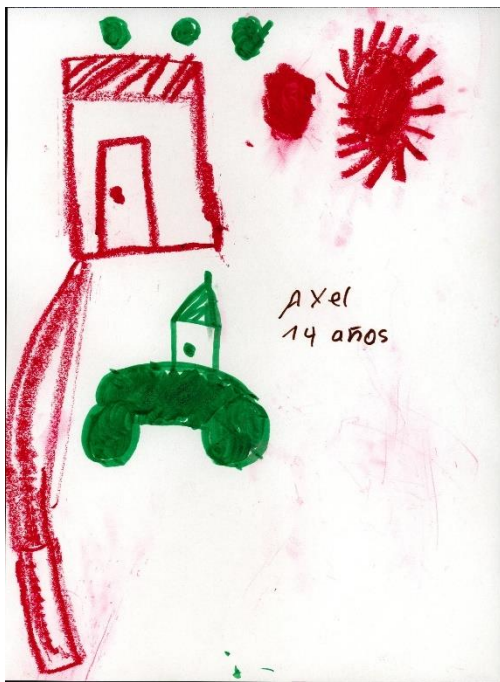Figure SA1-50. Participant 43

Year 2019 – B/M

Figure B/M-4. Participant 44

Year 2021 – B2

 Figure B2-4. Participant 45

CURRICULUM VITAE

Doroty M. Sato

Ph.D.| Kent School of Social Work | University of Louisville | +1 (832)
610.5869 & +55 21 98065.4160 | doroty.sato@louisville.edu |
dorotysato@gmail.com

EDUCATION

University of Louisville – Kent School of Social Work
Ph.D.   **2024**

University of Houston - TX
Master of Science   **2015**
Human Resources Development

Fundacao Getulio Vargas – Rio de Janeiro - BR
Master Business Administration   **2002**
Human Resources

University Center Celso Lisboa
Bachelor in Arts & Science   **1993**
Psychology

LANGUAGES

Portuguese– native language
English– speak fluently and read/write with high proficiency
Spanish and German– speak, read, and write with basic competence

RESEARCH INTEREST

Refugees/mass migrations – mass migrations and refugee crisis in war-torn
countries; restriction/deprivation of refugees' rights and freedom; the intersection
of spiritual and religious coping in mass migration; child migration; children
victims of war
Human rights and minorities – Social, economic, racial, sex, and religious
discrimination; minorities and their political representation or lack thereof;
children's rights and violations thereof.
Latinx immigrants – Latino immigration; refugee crisis in Venezuela; migration
movement in Latin America.

ASSISTANTSHIP EXPERIENCE

SW322 Issues in Policy & Service Delivery
2021
SW101 SW Orientation
2020

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Dissertation Research   **2020-2024**
University of Louisville
Lived Experience, Migration Journey, Religiosity, and Spirituality Depicted in
Drawings by Latino Children and Youth Crossing the U.S. Mexican Border: A
Qualitative Study
Dissertation Chair: Dr. Bibhuti Sar

Quantitative Data Analysis   **2018-2019**
University of Louisville
Mentoring Program Evaluation – Adelante Hispanic Achievers

Qualitative Data Analysis
University of Louisville   **2023-Present**
GBHI PIC Program Process Evaluation.

University of Louisville   **2023**
Co-coder
Organizational Factors Exploring Refugee Resettlement Workers' Lived
Experiences: Exploring Burnout and Work Engagement (Dissertation of Eva
Nyerges – Ph.D. Social Work)

University of Louisville   **2019-Present**
"Not Strong Enough to Protect Children": Using Photovoice to Identify Systems
Risks Among Youth Orphaned due to HIV/AIDS in Vietnam.

University of Louisville   **2022-2023**
Statewide Refugee Mental Health Needs Assessment Study

University of Louisville   **2019-2020**
HOOF Camp: A qualitative study of human-equine interaction for at-risk youth.
Mindfulness and Biobehavioral Health Lab and Human-Canine Dynamics Lab

University of Louisville   **2018-2019**
Experiences of Social Exclusion and Inclusion Among Emerging Adult Refugees
From African Great Lakes Region

EXHIBITION EXPERIENCE

Art-Advocacy Research Exhibition
Byun, K. Harris, L.M., Williams, S., Osezua, V., Scoggins, C., Coleman, L., Bloomer, R., **Sato, D.** & Hambrick, M. (2021, June 26 - July 18). The Landscape of Crisis: How Contemporary Asian Art Visualizes a Time of Devastation [Art-Advocacy Exhibition]. SPACE XX Gallery, Seoul, Korea.

Harris, L.M., Williams, S., Osezua, V., Byun, K. Bloomer, R., **Sato, D**. & Hambrick, M. (2020, March 21). Our World Our Say Photovoice Project [Video file]. Retrieved from
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3uBODfFB1KFXEnAmYH4MCGhMWlZdeFfU

Byun, K. Harris, L.M., Williams, S., Osezua, V., Scoggins, C., Coleman, L., Bloomer, R., **Sato, D**. & Hambrick, M. (2020, February 21 – 2020, April 24). Our World Our Say Exhibition #2: Understanding HIV Risk and Resilience Among Adolescents Who Have Been Orphaned by HIV/AIDS in Hai Phong, Vietnam [Art-Advocacy Exhibition]. Retrieved from: https://mailchi.mp/cranehouse/crane-house-weekly-3108413

Byun, K. Harris, L.M., Williams, S., Osezua, V., Scoggins, C., Coleman, L., Bloomer, R., **Sato, D**. & Hambrick, M. (2020, January 10 – 2020, February 6). Our World Our Say Exhibition #1: Understanding HIV Risk and Resilience Among Adolescents Who Have Been Orphaned by HIV/AIDS in Hai Phong, Vietnam [Art-Advocacy Exhibition]. Retrieved from: https://louisville.edu/art/exhibitions/all/our-world-our-say

On-Line Exhibition
TK-21 La Revue - Human Health and Art
Our World Our Say: Understanding HIV Risk and Resilience among Adolescents Who Have Been Orphaned by HIV/AIDS in Hai Phong, Vietnam
https://www.tk-21.com/TK-21-LaRevue-no105?lang=fr#Our-World-Our-Say-Exhibition-1

PUBLICATIONS AND PAPERS

1. Moore, S., Meeks, N., Hewlett, N., Harris, L., Ricks, R., Amarsaikhan, U., **Sato, D**., Simpson, D., Cash, E., Cowand, A., Clark, N., & Sephton, S. E. (2024). A qualitative study of human-equine interaction for At-risk Youth. *Children, Youth, and Environments* (Submission under analysis).

2. Harris, L.M., Bloomer, R., Williams, S., Osezua, V., **Sato, D.**, Thang, N.D., Byun, Kyoungmee & Hambrick, M. (2022). "Our World Our Say": Using photovoice to explore and respond to systems risks identified by youth affected by

HIV and AIDS in Vietnam. *Journal of Community Practice* (Submission under analysis).

3. Osezua, V., **Sato, D.** & Harris, L.M. (2020). Experiences of social exclusion and inclusion among emerging adult refugees from African Great Lakes Region. *J Pub Health Issue Pract* 4(1):165. https://doi.org/10.33790/jphip1100165

CONGRESS

1. **Sato, D**., Sar, B., Cuellar., G., Rote, & Winters, A. (2024, May 29-31). *Lived experiences, migration Journey, and resilience depicted in drawings by Latino children crossing the U.S.-Mexican border* [E-poster presentation]. Twentieth International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry. University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, United States of America.

2. **Sato, D**., Sar, B., Cuellar., G., Rote, & Winters, A. (2024, May 24-26). *Lived experiences, migration Journey, and resilience depicted in drawings by Latino children crossing the U.S.-Mexican border* [E-poster presentation]. Nineteenth International Conference on the Arts in Society. Seoul, Republic of Korea.

3. Harris, L.M., Byun, K., Bloomer, R., Williams, S., Winters, A.M., Nguyen, T., Osezua, V. & **Sato, D.** (2024, May 24-26). *Our World, Our Say: Leveraging arts to promote health equity in partnership with youth impacted by HIV/AIDS in Hai Phong, Vietnam* [Paper Presentation]. Nineteenth International Conference on the Arts in Society. Seoul, Republic of Korea.

4. Byun, K, Harris, L.M., Bloomer, R., Williams, S., Winters, A.M., Nguyen, T., Osezua, V. & **Sato, D.** (2024, May 24-26). *Art making as inquiry: Utilizing interdisciplinary expertise to create an arts-based program for youth impacted by HIV/Aids in Hai Phong, Vietnam* [Creative Practice Showcase]. Nineteenth International Conference on the Arts in Society. Seoul, Republic of Korea.
5. **Sato, D**., Sar, B., Cuellar., G., Rote, & Winters, A. (2024, January 29-February 02). *Using arts-based methods (ABM) and participatory visual research methodologies (PVRM) to understand Latino children's experiences of journeying to and crossing the U.S.-Mexico border* . Winter School 2024. University of Amsterdam. Amsterdam, Netherlands.

6. **Sato, D**., Sar, B., Cuellar., G., Rote, & Winters, A. (2024, January 10-12). *Using arts-based methods (ABM) and participatory visual research methodologies (PVRM) to understand Latino children's experiences of journeying to and crossing the U.S.-Mexico border* [Poster Presentation]. Seventh European Congress of Qualitative Inquiry. Helsinki, Finland.

7. Sar, B.K., Nyerges, E.X., Harris, L.M., & **Sato, D.** (2023, October 26-29). *Exploring the barriers to mental health care access among refugees in the*

United States [E-poster presentation]. Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) 69[th] Annual Program Meeting, Atlanta, GA.

8. Ballard-Kang, J., Rhema, S. Nyerges, E.X., **Sato, D.**, Harris, L.M., Adams, N., Archuleta, A., Sar, B.K. (2023, July 21-23). *Examining the Refugee Health Screener-15 (RHS-15): Providers' processes and perceptions.* [Poster Presentation] North American Refugee Health Conference (NARHC) Calgary, Canada.

9. Rhema, S., Ballard-Kang, J., Nyerges, E.X., **Sato, D.**, Harris, L.M., Adams, N., Archuleta, A., Sar, B.K. (2023, July 21-23). *Perpetuating stigma: Provider and refugee perceptions of mental health undermine continuity of care.* [Poster Presentation] North American Refugee Health Conference (NARHC) Calgary, Canada.

10. Harris, L.M., Bloomer, R., Williams, S., Nguyen, T., Osezua, V. **Sato, D**. Byun, K. & Hambrick, M. (2023, January 13). *"Not Strong Enough to Protect Children": Using Photovoice to Identify Systems Risks Among Youth Orphaned Due to HIV/AIDS in Vietnam* [Paper Presentation]. Society for Social Work and Research. Phoenix, AZ.

11. Harris, L.M., Bloomer, R. Williams, S., Osezua, V., **Sato, D.,** Byun, K., Hambrick, M. & Thang, N.D. (2021, July 21-23). *"Not Strong Enough To Protect Children": Systems Risks Identified Among Youth Who Have Been Orphaned Due To HIV/AIDS In Vietnam: A Photovoice Project* [Paper Presentation]. Sixteenth International Conference on Interdisciplinary Social Sciences, Oxford, England.

12. Osezua, V., **Sato, D.** & Harris, L.M. (2021, May 19-22). *Intrinsic and extrinsic coping strategies of African refugee youth attaining post-secondary education* [E-poster presentation]. Seventh International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry Panels, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

13. Moore, A., B.A., Harris, L. B., Ph.D., **Sato, D.,** M.Sc., Hewlett, N.E., M.Ed., Meeks, S., Ph.D., Simpson, D.M., Ph.D. Sartain, M., M.A. Cowand, A., B.A., Clark N.B., Shah, A., Sephton, S.E., Ph.D. (2020, December 3-4). *HOOF Camp: A Qualitative Study of Human-Equine Interaction for At-Risk Youth* [Poster Presentation]. American Psychosomatic Society.

14. **Sato, D.,** Osezua, V. & Harris, L.M. (2020, February 8-9) *Experiences of social exclusion and inclusion among emerging adult refugees from African Great Lakes Region* [Poster Presentation]. III Seminario Depac Construindo uma Ciencia Humanistica at BSGI Associacao Brasil SGI. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

15. Osezua, V., **Sato, D.** & Harris, L.M. Experiences of social exclusion and inclusion among emerging adult refugees from African Great Lakes Region

[Poster Presentation]. Fifteenth International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, United States of America.

RELATED EXPERIENCE TO HUMAN RESOURCES

Master Word Service (Houston – TX)
HR Practitioner   **2016**
* Provided support in statistical analysis of metrics to improve internal procedures and research opportunities

NACE International (Houston – TX)
Intern – University of Houston HRD Graduation Project   **2014 – 2015**
* Led the upgrade and customization of NACE International's online learning management system (LMS) used by over 140 employees in San Diego, Houston, Malaysia, and China.
* Coordinated focus groups for engaging employees to utilize the LMS, for discussing the LMS's value and identifying its KPIs, and building an employee development plan to be linked to the LMS.
* Conducted project regarding performance management by identifying the challenges/issues and formulating recommendations for changes/improvements that address the challenges and increases the effectiveness of the process.
* Conducted project regarding organization development by articulating the diagnosis and recommendations which would impact in the whole organization in terms of transformation by leveraging the process of learning and talent development.
* Attended a Cross-Cultural Program by University of Houston in Czech Republic for investigating how the current strategic leadership development works and what is being done for the future by having meetings with leaders of international and national companies in Prague.

VEL - Vale Energia Limpa (Rio de Janeiro – BR)
HR Manager   **2011 – 2012**
* Designed entire recruitment and selection process from sourcing, through screening, interviewing, assessing, selecting, hiring, and onboarding.
* Managed the recruitment and selection with minimum external cost by using network and social media.
* Executed and managed implementation of more 6 programs and processes for a startup by using the People Soft System including occupational health, pay roll, internal communication, training and development, onboarding and internship programs.
* Coordinated career and succession processes as well as employee performance evaluation programs, and managed internships programs.
* Coordinated over than 40 leadership development programs for VEL Directors, General Managers, Managers, and Coordinators.

Repsol Sinopec Brazil (Rio de Janeiro – BR)
Senior Recruiter   **2008 – 2011**

- Hired approximately 50 professionals for the main Exploration & Production business which required highly experienced and specialized professionals as well as for the corporate areas, 10 professionals for Repsol Lubricant, and 35 interns including trainees.
- Improved the quality of hire by tracking and using of key metrics to drive continuous improvement and to make better recruitment decisions.
- Managed the entire internship program in the company.

BCH Energy (Rio de Janeiro – BR)
Senior Recruiter   **2007 – 2008**

- Managed the recruitment, selection, and hiring of personnel for the opening of the Brazilian subsidiary of BCH Energy International Oil & Gas Company, for both main office and for operational bases as well as managed on-boarding programs for 70 new hires.
- Coordinated a U$ 22,500 Cross-Cultural training for all BCH Energy expat rig superintends, which significantly reduced the internal cultural conflicts between Canadians and Brazilians.

Windsor Hotels Chain (Rio de Janeiro – BR)
HR Analyst   **1997 – 2006**

- Managed the recruitment and selection as well as training and development.

MUDES Foundation (Rio de Janeiro – BR)
HR Analyst   **1995 – 1997**

- Managed the recruitment and selection, welcoming programs.

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Survivors of Torture Family Health Center (Louisville – KY)
Psychosocial Well-being Evaluation   **2021**

- Collected data on the refugees' psychosocial well-being to identify areas of need for their adjustments in the city.

Brookdale (Houston – TX)
Hospice Volunteer   **2016**

- Provided resident/patient care and support services

CHI St. Luke's Health (Houston – TX)
Custom Service   **2016**

- Provided patient/guest customer services assisting them with discharging

Angel Reach (Houston – TX)
Youth Support   **2016**

- Provided youth homeless support to starting an independent life

Refugee Services of Texas (Houston – TX)
Welcome to refugees in Houston   **2015**
- Offering a welcome Thanksgiving dinner for refugees' families.

Kids Cafe (Houston – TX)
Children Support   **2016**
- Assisting with meal preparation for daily distribution.

TEDx Houston (Houston – TX)
Custom Service   **2015**
- Registration and check in guests as well as behind-scene organization.