Independent refugee youth in waiting

Social navigations while in transit in Indonesia

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CHAPTER FOUR

Disbelieving and Playing Roles

Navigating the Refugee Management System in Indonesia

This chapter focuses on how independent refugee youth navigate the outsourced refugee system in Indonesia, which consists of the conventional international refugee regime and the domestic humanitarian aid regime. In navigating the refugee system, independent refugee youth basically aim to achieve refugee status and access humanitarian aid. In order to achieve these two goals, they have to perform separate – yet interrelated – social navigations.

This chapter is divided into two main sections: the first focuses on young people's maneuvers while navigating the refugee determination process, particularly by performing "narrative strategies"; while the second focuses on young people's tactics when navigating access to humanitarian aid, mainly by depicting their vulnerability. In the first section, I will discuss how independent youth deal with the conventional definition of a "refugee," as well as with a general "culture of disbelief" among UNHCR officers. The second section elaborates a discussion concerning the production of vulnerabilities, particularly in terms of age and gender. Overall, this chapter demonstrates that neither strategy is exclusive to a particular goal. The maneuvering to obtain refugee status and to access humanitarian aid may also affect young people's navigations to secure an allowance or be resettled. By demonstrating diverse approaches, this chapter argues that youths' social navigations while maneuvering the arena of the refugee management system in Indonesia in turn influences the implementation of rules and regulations concerning refugees within the system.

NAVIGATING THE REFUGEE DETERMINATION PROCESS

In this section, I will first discuss the official criteria one has to meet in order to be classified as a refugee. I focus on this as part of the structural conditions that must be dealt with by independent youth in order to enjoy asylum protection. Second, I will elaborate on young people's navigations while trying to obtain refugee status, which centralizes their attempts to tell a "good refugee story" to the UNHCR. Third, I offer some analysis of young people's navigations in conversation with the existing international refugee mechanism.

Meeting the Criteria of Being a Refugee

Different from other countries that have advanced refugee protection mechanisms, Indonesia does not have its own mechanism for refugee determination. Instead, the country has given a mandate to the UNHCR to perform refugee status determination and provide protection for refugees. Young people in Indonesia are therefore facing an "outsourced international refugee regime" instead of a national refugee regime.

To be recognized as a refugee in Indonesia, all applicants, including independent youth, must convince the UNHCR's officers. The officers are trained to evaluate a person's deservingness of asylum protection as defined by the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, which states that a refugee is a person who:

> owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (Article 1(2) of the 1951 Refugee Convention, as amended by the 1967 Protocol).

This definition has been criticized as outdated and scholars have called upon the international community to "radically change the

scope of the old term or to introduce a new term" (Betts 2013, 22). The "modern refugee regime" (according to the 1951 Refugee Convention) was created after the Second World War to guarantee asylum to people fleeing persecution by their government. Alexander Betts argues that the definition of a refugee must evolve, as there has been a decline in the number of authoritarian states and an increase in the number of failed or fragile states since the Cold War era (Betts 2013, 2). This means that today, many people are fleeing human rights deprivation due to weak or fragile states that are unable to fulfill the fundamental rights of their citizens, while comparatively few are fleeing from state persecution (ibid). According to Betts, Afghanistan and Somalia – the countries of origin with the most significant number of independent youth transiting in Indonesia – can both be categorized as failed states. Most people from these countries are fleeing state incompetence, not state persecution (Betts 2013, 2). Offering an alternative, Betts has developed a new concept, which he calls "survival migrants," whom he defines as "persons who are outside their country of origin because of an existential threat for which they have no access to a domestic remedy or resolution" (Betts 2013, 23). If utilized, this concept would be expected to accommodate more people in accessing asylum protection, as it is more relevant to today's conditions.

The UNHCR's Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing International Protection Needs is, however, currently still based on the definition of a refugee as outlined in the 1951 convention. This means that many who are arguably deserving of humanitarian protection nevertheless fall outside of the definition of a refugee and will be denied protection. Moreover, with such intense competition, even when a young person's condition is compatible with the refugee definition, many still strategically modify their narrative in order to produce a "good refugee story" and thus increase their chances of securing refugee status. To understand the perspectives of independent youths and their maneuvers when navigating the conventional refugee regime, the following section will elaborate on how young people compose a "good refugee story" and perform their narrative strategy.

Telling a "Good Refugee Story" to the UNHCR

The social navigations necessary to obtain refugee status and access humanitarian assistance start when independent youth first report their case to the UNHCR. The young people are asked numerous questions regarding their identity and their claimed case during the initial registration phase. Their answers are recorded on a form under their case number, and all the data given here must be consistent with the information they will recount later during the refugee status determination (RSD) interview. Therefore, in order for young persons to deliver a "good refugee story," they must have it ready before registration. Here, presenting a good refugee story is analyzed as a form of negotiation within the hegemonic conventional refugee regime based on the 1951 convention.

To be able to deliver a good refugee story, both during registration and more elaborately in the RSD interview, asylum claimants need to combine their narrative and their performance (Cabot 2013, 457). In terms of narrative strategy, modifying their place of origin is one common maneuver. I frequently heard storied from Hazara youth that they had modified their region of origin on their case application. They had heard that many people from Daikundi, Bamiyan, Herat, Kabul, and Mazari Sadar were rejected by the UNHCR, since these areas were considered "safe places." Therefore, they tweaked their story by saying that they were originally from Jaghori in Ghazni Province, because many killings, kidnappings, and bombings by the Taliban have happened there. Modifying their story in such a way also often means not disclosing that they have stayed in a certain place, given that this too might already be associated with certain presumptions. During my research, for example, it was very common for Afghan young people to say they were from "Jaghuri" or "Ghazni," and they did not disclose any other places where they had lived.

Young people understand that "the country of origin informs them [officials] about the nature of the applicants' stories" (Jubany 2011, 83), and they do not want to be categorized as part of a group that will be less prioritized. Ahmad, a Hazara boy whom I met in Medan, told me that his smuggler had forbidden him from telling the UNHCR that he had spent quite some time in Iran.

> I did not tell the UNHCR that I have stayed in Iran for a

> couple of years before I got back to Jaghori [Afghanistan]. My smuggler told me that the UNHCR will reject my case if I say I was living in Iran. I knew I was wrong for telling lies, but I was confused… But I swear to you, that was the only fact that I modified (interview, November 20, 2016).

Ahmad believed that the smuggler's suggestion had been correct, given that by the time I met him, his refugee status had been approved for a couple of years and he was finalizing his preparation to be resettled in the United States. It was indeed a common belief among the Hazara community that Hazaras fleeing Afghanistan would be prioritized over Hazaras who had stayed in Iran and/or Pakistan, because they experience more threats in Afghanistan. Thus, some youths decided to emphasize their ethnicity and not to disclose the fact that they had been living in a country other than Afghanistan.

In order to strengthen their refugee claims, youths need to ensure that their stories match the criteria. Many believe that their refugee stories have to include "a particular 'problem' in a home country that compelled one to leave, a protracted period of travel, and, finally, arrival in [transit country]" (Cabot 2013, 457). Modification of their area of origin is one such attempt to paint a convincing picture about "problems in the home country." This attempt is usually accompanied by statements that emphasize their (usually minority) identity as the source of their problems. In order to fit into the definition of a refugee, in their claims they need to centralize the fact that they are part of a certain ethnic group, a religious minority, or another threatened social group. They will generally highlight that they belong to a race, religion, or nationality, or are a member of a particular social group or political opinion, that is persecuted in their home country. Shia Hazara from Afghanistan will usually emphasize that they faced threats and discrimination from the Sunni majority; Oromo from Ethiopia have faced repression by the Tygrayan ethnic groups that sit in the government; Rohingya Muslims have faced mass violence in Myanmar; Hindu Tamils from Sri Lanka have faced prolonged ethnic and religious-based conflict; and members of LGBTQI groups, who come from countries where their sexual orientation is criminalized, claim to have faced death threats, persecution, or

severe discrimination.

The trickiest part of presenting a good refugee story is when one has to prove individual persecution; to navigate this, independent youth often perform the "art of improvisation" (Mbembe 1992, 2). Most youths have witnessed and experienced violence and terror in their home countries due to their identities, but this does not mean that they always have individual experience of direct personal threat and persecution. A number of people are in exile for reasons that are not reducible to individualized or even group persecution (Betts 2013, 13). Remembering that many people from fragile or failed states such as Afghanistan and Somalia are not fleeing persecution, yet they still need to prove that they are a genuine refugee, they need to further polish their refugee story. For example, 24-year-old Amal said that he had been working as a mechanic in a car repair shop, which he could explain in great detail. He claimed that one day he was supposed to repair a car that had bombs inside, and suddenly a group of people who said they were government officials came to the shop and took the car. Allegedly, the car was supposed to have been used for a suicide bombing. When the owner of the car had found out that Amal had given it away to people from the government, he had become very angry and had chased him away, threatening him. Amal told me:

> You know, both people who claim to be government officers and also the car owner are Pashtun. All Taliban are Pashtun… We don't know who are Taliban and who are not… In the day they are Pashtun, and at night they become Taliban… so I ran… I have told UNHCR that I am running away from the Taliban (interview, February 3, 2016).

Amal told me that it is true that he had a mechanic shop and that he found bombs inside a car. He admitted that he had experienced the ultimate terror. Thus, although he was unsure from whom exactly he was running, he made a solid and convincing story to the UNHCR that he had run from the Taliban because he believed it in his heart.

Beneduce states that a "narrative strategy" is part of a subject position produced by governmentality (Beneduce 2015, 555). In Indonesia, governmentality is created by the 1951 Refugee

Convention. In this case, the narrative strategy that young people employ is the product of their understanding of what the system wants to hear from them. Given that the current definition of a refugee privileges particular narratives and motivations, rather than identifying the "threshold of fundamental rights" (Betts 2013, 5), polishing their stories on their "area of origin" and the "case of persecution" becomes important, if not inevitable. The decision to polish their story is generally taken after learning about "what previously worked" for others, and what did not.

Although authorship of a good refugee story is a very important skill for all asylum claimants, it must be done strategically. Beneduce notes that "changing [your] name, inventing a story, disavowing your birth-town, or your age, constitutes a painful process, perceived as both a necessary tactic and a dispossession with little possibility of redemption" (2015, 564). In the case of asylum seeking in Indonesia, I came across many cases where a particular narrative strategy had turned out not to be successful, and it was very difficult to "fix" it later in appeal. Fariz, for instance, was staying in an immigrant detention center (IDC). I had known him since I had done my fieldwork in Jakarta, and we had kept in contact after he had reported himself to immigration. One day he sent a message to my Facebook messenger and asked me to edit a letter for him. It turned out to be an appeal of the rejection of his case. In the letter, he confessed that he had given incorrect information about his region of origin; he suspected that this was the reason why his case had been rejected. He explained that he had been forced by a smuggler to tell the false information, but now he was ready to tell the truth. I did the language editing, but never heard from him again. On a different occasion, I asked a senior UNHCR officer what their reaction would be if such letter was submitted to them. He stated:

> I am sorry, but usually that kind of letter does not serve enough to provide new evidence to reconsider their application. And if he did lie once, how could we be sure that he will not lie again this time? (interview, December 21, 2016).

Making a confession to the UNHCR about a previous failed

narrative strategy is a further move to navigate the rejection of one's claim. Since many of the youths I met were very self-conscious about their polished stories, if they failed they supposed that this was due to the fact that they had not been completely truthful, although the real reasons behind the rejection might not be related to this aspect at all. In general, admitting to having polished up a refugee story is an ineffective strategy, given that officials generally respond to such an admission with skepticism. This skepticism in turn triggers another narrative strategy by the applicants. Young people know that the officers do not trust them. With the low success rate for appeals cases, the youths find this to be a reason to continue being "cynical performers," as they are aware that the "audiences will not allow them to be sincere" (Goffman 1959, 11). They learn that being completely honest will not always help them to get refugee status, and so they keep up their narrative strategy by polishing their story to raise their chances of getting their refugee status approved.

Young people commonly acquire information from smugglers or friends in order to prepare a "good refugee story." The youths' point of arrival and location in Indonesia can also therefore affect how they prepare their narrative strategies. If they are self-settled and staying with their ethnic community, they will have more freedom of movement to collect information about what to tell to the UNHCR at registration. But if they go directly to the UNHCR office for registration, or go directly to the immigration office to self-report upon arrival, they will usually receive help from their transporter/smuggler in preparing their story. Young people's relationships with smugglers vary. Most of the young people I met told me that they had only had contact with smugglers during the journey from their country of origin to Indonesia, and during this time the smugglers had given them some instructions and tips. A handful of young people told me that they still had the phone number of their smugglers and occasionally connected their friends with them. A few young people identified people in their community as part of a smuggling network. In general, smugglers have diverse reputations: some are seen as bloodsuckers and others are perceived as saviors. Given that the young people were generally not very enthusiastic to discuss smugglers, and that this was not my focus in this research, I did not pursue more

information on this matter.

Young people's reliance on smugglers' suggestions is also due to a lack of legal support for refugees in Indonesia. Unlike in Australia and many European countries, there is inadequate legal support or lawyers with whom youth can engage in "mutual co-authorship" (Duranti and Brenneis 1986 in Cabot 2013) to compose a convincing refugee story while transiting in Indonesia. The only organizations that provide assistance for the RSD interview are SUAKA and the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), and only those who are self-settled in either Jakarta or Cisarua will have access to these organizations.[1] SUAKA is the only organization that provides lawyers who can support the refugees' claims, while JRS regularly trains its social workers to help asylum seekers prepare for the RSD interview and help them to re-analyze and prepare appeal applications if their case is rejected (interview with JRS social workers, May 9, 2016). Both organizations operate on a request basis, so only those who contact the organizations will be able to access this assistance.

This section has elaborated on young people's narrative and performative strategies when presenting a "good refugee story" to the UNHCR, with a focus on the youths' "art of improvisation" when perfecting their refugee story to make it a good and convincing one. Social navigation is discussed here as a way in which young people negotiate the conventional refugee regime. The next section offers an analysis of why youths feel the need to perform such navigations. The analysis section will shift the spotlight from the youths to the broader system of refugee status determination, in order to understand the social terrain they must navigate.

Analysis: Countering a Culture of Disbelief with Disbelief

A good narrative strategy and a convincing performance are indispensable in regards to navigating not only the legal criteria of conventional refugee definitions, but also the "culture of disbelief"

[1] Trish Cameron, a SUAKA lawyer who works closely with refugees in Indonesia, said that it is very challenging to work in an environment that has a limited number of organizational or professional experts who are concerned about refugee issues, as she could not refer refugees to any organizations to access social, legal, or health support according to their needs (interview, August 3, 2016).

prevalent among the officers who determine the refugee status of all claimants in Indonesia. Olga Jubany (2011) has noted that in many cases, the criteria developed to asses asylum applications are derived from officers' own experiences and social prejudices, rather than from laws or regulations. Despite my difficulties in observing actual RSD interviews, I did manage to interview UNHCR officers in some cities, where I could ask them about applicants' stories and how they screen them. To get a balanced perspective, I also managed to join some interview preparation sessions and I recorded what the youths themselves remembered about their application process.

Eligibility screening for asylum protection has been discussed elsewhere as being haunted by a "culture of disbelief" (Jubany 2011) as well as "epistemic anxiety" (Stoler 2008; Bubant 2009; Cabot 2013). Cabot notes that this epistemic anxiety, namely the "pervasive uncertainties that manifest in an endemic climate of mistrust," always occupies the practices of screening for eligibility (Cabot 2013, 454). UNHCR staff, like other asylum screening officers, have been trained to disbelieve through, for example, learning techniques to "identify the lies" and to "investigate inconsistencies" (Jubany 2011, 81–82). In regard to UNHCR staff in Indonesia, they practice circumspection, based on their daily experiences of administrating asylum claims.

UNHCR staff in Indonesia often joked that the young applicants they saw had gone through a comprehensive workshop on "Refugee 101." This thought was usually stimulated when they found similarities in the stories of various youths coming from the same region. For example, Hazara youth who were born and raised in Iran would have similar stories regarding the trajectory of their journey. According to some officers, the stories typically began with the youths working in Tehran or another city in Iran, when they were captured by the police. When they failed to show their documents, they were deported back to Kabul, and this is when they faced threats from the Taliban. Stories from independent youth from Somalia and Yemen also showed similar patterns: there was a bomb blast or armed conflict in their village, so they had been separated from their family, and some neighbors or friends of the family had brought them to Malaysia or Indonesia. Telling the same basic story is generally considered a safe strategy because "it

is so vague… it can't be proven, but equally it can't be disproven" (Jubany 2011, 1984).

Officers' tendency towards disbelief was strengthened not only by hearing similar repeated stories, but also after discovering false claims, including forgery. According to a UNHCR officer in Pekanbaru, one independent youth had claimed that he had received a death threat in the form of a letter from the Taliban. When asked about the evidence, he showed a letter printed on paper decorated with a floral frame. The officer laughed when she told the story to me; for her, it was obvious that the young man was lying (interview, December 1, 2016). Even if they maintain their intention to provide humanitarian protection for all "victims of war," officers may develop a sense of being deceived. And in the long term, the accumulation of distrust felt by many officers can lead to a general "culture of disbelief." Such a culture of disbelief may result in tougher eligibility screening, as the officers develop "counter tactics."

To assess the accuracy of a story, particularly to cross-check the applicant's region of origin, the UNHCR usually involves interpreters who speak the applicant's language or come from the same region. These interpreters will usually be able to identify whether a person was indeed born and raised in Afghanistan, for instance, or whether he/she had spent significant time in Pakistan or Iran, since their accent and their fusion of languages would be different. Aside from this, the UNHCR will also ask for some details of the applicant's claimed hometown; if they have modified their region of origin, they will have difficulties answering such questions. Youths who claim to be from Dire Dawa, Ethiopia, for instance, must be able to provide details about the locations of nearby villages and certain events that have happened there.

In addition to the "culture of disbelief" among decision-makers and bureaucrats, it is equally important to analyze how independent youths themselves also develop an attitude of disbelief towards the officers, a conviction that they will always be suspicious of their story. A circle of disbelief between the officers and the youths is thus created, and this circle may lead to actions by the youths that could endanger themselves and other claimants. As the young people do not believe that the officers will take them as they are, they attempt to create a narrative that would make it harder for

the officers to reject their asylum claim. From a social worker I heard about an independent youth from Iran who had converted to Christianity in order to secure his refugee status, but his case had been rejected. It was rumored that during the interview, an officer had argued that if he simply did not tell anybody about his conversion, then no one would know and the Iranian government would not come after him. After his refugee application had been rejected, the young man had tattooed a large Christian cross on a visible part of his body and had presented the picture to the UNHCR as new evidence in his appeal document (conversation with a social worker, January 2017).

Miriam Ticktin (2006) has written how undocumented migrants in Paris attempt to infect themselves with HIV in order to obtain legal status in France. In the example above, the move by the young man to get a tattoo to support his asylum claim reveals a similar attempt to use the body as a means to claim basic rights. Although I did not come across any cases in Indonesia where applicants had gotten to the point of "self-injury," this phenomenon of using the body is vital to understand how youths try to navigate a hegemonic regime that is haunted by a culture of disbelief. Moreover, this culture will only continue if officers see such actions as blackmail and thus become more apathetic in general about refugees' narratives. Given this situation, the importance of finding even better narrative strategies becomes inevitable.

This section has discussed how independent youth exercise their thin agency within the hegemonic asylum seeking arena that is marked by a culture of disbelief. In the following section, I will further discuss how independent youth in Indonesia utilize and even produce self-vulnerability in order to obtain humanitarian assistance from aid organizations. Previous scholars have discussed how refugees engage in representational strategies and centralize their minority status "to meet the expectations and preferences of aid providers and decision makers" (Ticktin 2005; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2015; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2016, 461). In the following section, I will discuss how youth produce their vulnerability by centralizing their minority status (particularly age, gender, sexuality), and engaging in "victimcy" (Utas 2005) when dealing with organizations such as CWS and IOM.

SECURING ACCESS TO HUMANITARIAN AID: MANEUVERING THE POLICY OF PRIORITIZING VULNERABLE GROUPS

The following section also consists of three subsections. First, I will explain the institutional policy that tends to prioritize so-called "vulnerable groups," and how such populations are categorized. Second, independent young people's navigations to access humanitarian aid from diverse institutions will be elaborated. Given that my research participants included underaged as well as young people up to the age of 24, these navigations were diverse, and young people utilized their age and gender "capital." Third, I will examine the effectiveness of the young people's maneuvering practices.

International Institutions' Prioritization Policy: Setting the Productivity of Vulnerabilities

Vulnerability has increasingly become an important discourse in the humanitarian arena. It is not necessarily required in order to obtain refugee status from the UNHCR, but it is a crucial aspect to advance and secure one's access to humanitarian assistance and even to resettlement. According to social workers I spoke with, the UNHCR and other aid organizations hesitate to openly discuss vulnerability criteria in relation to the prioritization of certain populations, because they want to avoid and minimize simulating particular strategies among refugees (interview, August 23, 2016). Nevertheless, the UNHCR website mentions "groups of elderly," "women," "children (particularly unaccompanied minors)," "people who are ill," and the "physically challenged (particularly those with HIV/AIDS)" as vulnerable groups who need special attention (UNHCR Central Europe 2016). Moreover, in a recent attempt to counter the discourse that the UNHCR resettles terrorists to the US, the organization announced that it refers only the "most vulnerable" refugees for resettlement there. This includes women and girls at risk, survivors of violence or torture, people in need of family reunification, those with medical needs, and at-risk children (see Figure 1). The implication of this prioritization is that refugee institutions in Indonesia provided more options for about half of my participants ("unaccompanied minors" and independent young

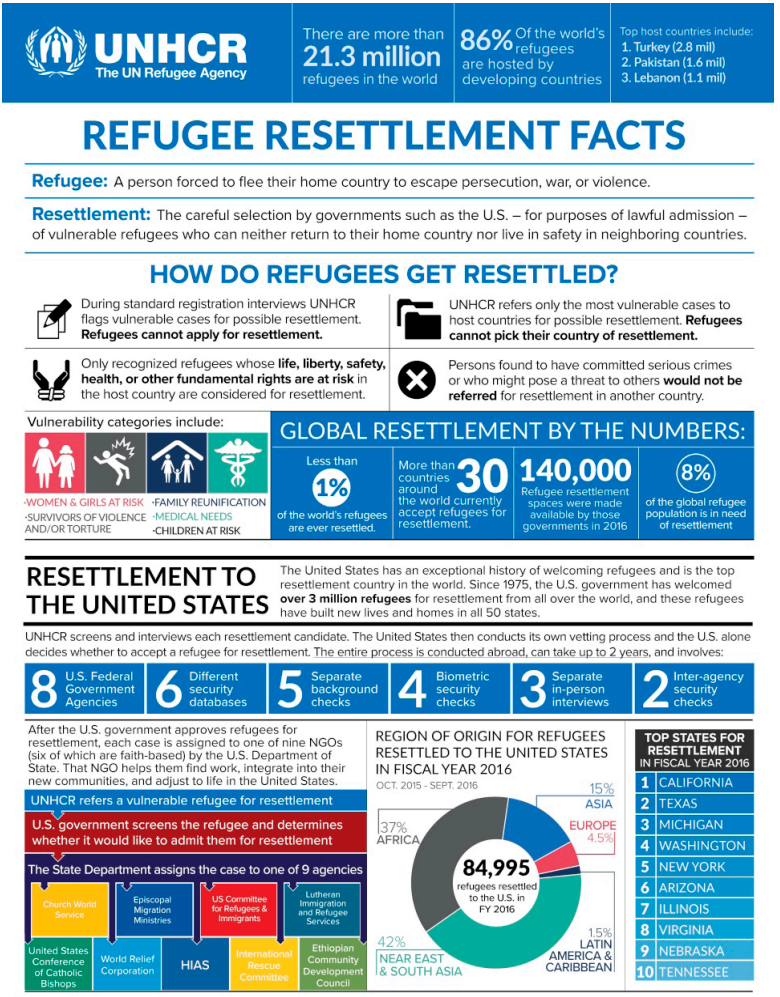


Figure 1. Refugee Resettlement Facts (UNHCR 2016).

women) to get accommodation and financial assistance, but not for the other half (independent young men).[2]

CWS, one of the UNHCR's official implementing partners

[2] Detailed information regarding this was discussed in chapter 2.

for providing humanitarian assistance, also processes refugee populations who are flagged as vulnerable by the UNHCR. The IOM has its own measurements for identifying vulnerable populations. Sometimes it only mentions "vulnerable groups" in general, and sometimes it adopts a more nuanced approach to identifying such groups (Flegar 2018, 379). The IOM website mentions "elderly, disabled, expectant mothers and women with young children" as belonging to vulnerable groups (IOM Juba 2006). Frank Laczko, Director of the IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC), states that "children are among the most vulnerable groups of migrants" (IOM 2019c). Elsewhere, the IOM mentions "women and children" as vulnerable groups who need to be immediately released from detention (IOM 2016). Recently, the IOM released its IOM Handbook on Protection and Assistance for Migrants Vulnerable to Violence, Exploitation and Abuse (IOM 2019b), complemented by the IOM Guidance on Response Planning for Migrants Vulnerable to Violence, Exploitation and Abuse (IOM 2019a). In the IOM Handbook, it defines vulnerable migrants as "migrants who are unable effectively to enjoy their human rights, are at increased risk of violations and abuse and who, accordingly, are entitled to call on a duty bearer's heightened duty of care" (IOM 2019b, 4). In these documents, the IOM centralizes vulnerabilities that are the result of "violence, exploitation and abuse," which offer four determinants of migrant vulnerability, namely individual factors, household and family factors, community factors, and structural factors (ibid, 6).

Being an independent young man over 18 years of age is unfavorable in terms of accessing humanitarian aid, since such individuals do not fall within the spectrum of "vulnerable groups." According to Gading Gumilang Putra, an officer at the JRS, independent young men often end up being de facto the most vulnerable group, since no organization prioritizes their wellbeing (informal conversation, December 21, 2015). The status of being the "least vulnerable" not only prevents them from accessing humanitarian aid in transit in Indonesia, but also disadvantages them in terms of being resettled in a third country.

For refugee communities in Indonesia, the vulnerability criteria are understood through rumors or information received from friends, neighbors, and sometimes smugglers. An understanding of

the benefits of being on the "vulnerable spectrum" is also grasped from observations of previous cases, special treatment, and fast track resettlement. In Indonesia, independent youth in general believe that children and unaccompanied minors will be prioritized for care and resettlement, while women, families with children, and people with certain illnesses are also considered vulnerable and so they too will be released more quickly from IDCs. Refugees in Indonesia do not see the "elderly" as being significantly prioritized, and this aspect rarely appeared in conversation. Particularly for the independent youth I met, the most common vulnerability criteria they produced were related to age and gender; this will be elaborated in the following section.

Borrowing Ruben Andersson's (2014) conceptualization of "the productivity of illegality," the categorization of vulnerable groups by international institutions can be analyzed as establishing a "productivity of vulnerability." Like illegality in Andersson's formulation, organizations locate vulnerability as "a 'problem' to be solved," which demands "'solutions', NGO projects, professional networks, activist campaigns, and journalistic and academic engagements that might otherwise remain unfunded and ignored" (2014, 274). Independent youths respond to this productivity of vulnerability in order to secure humanitarian aid while transiting in Indonesia. The following section elaborates on youths' navigations, using their age and gender to highlight their vulnerabilities.

Youths' Production of Vulnerability: Navigating Aid through Age and Gender

Independent youth are aware of the productivity of vulnerability and they use the discourse to navigate the outsourced refugee system in Indonesia. The young people negotiate their way by doing two things: first, they accentuate their vulnerability in order to conform to the global refugee management criteria; second, they remanufacture their identity (formally or physically) in order to raise their "vulnerability profile." By doing such maneuvers, they not only respond to the productivity of vulnerability maintained by the refugee management regime, but also participate in the production of a vulnerable population: they keep the problem-to-be-solved population in existence.

Playing the Politics of Age: Navigating Special Treatment for the 'Underaged'

According to independent youth, accentuating and "adjusting" their age is the most common and effective navigation in the arena of humanitarian assistance. There are two main strategies related to age: migrating at a very young age and simulating being underaged. Complementary to accentuating one's age, young people also perform "victimcy," which will also be discussed as part of their age-based navigations.

Migrating as Underaged

From my encounter with independent youths from Afghanistan, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Iran, and other conflict-ridden countries, it became clear that young people are aware that seeking asylum when underage is a good strategy, since they will receive special treatment and a lot more benefits. One hot afternoon, I was hanging out on a side porch of the CWS shelter and had a casual conversation with 15-year-old Abdullah, an independent boy who was highly motivated to learn Bahasa Indonesia. In the middle of the story about his journey from Iran to Indonesia, I asked him why he had come alone so young and his answer highlighted several crucial aspects.

> I decided to travel as underaged because America, Australia, Canada, and other European countries respect being underaged a lot. In Indonesia also… you can see… here the UNHCR and the CWS help and protect the underaged. Even more so in America… If I come to America as an underaged, I will be able to access free education. I might live with a family who only has one daughter, so it will be four of us. I can get a room for myself and probably even a computer for myself. Education is the right for all children in America, so they will give it to me. If I want to have a job, there will be an organization that will assist me to get a job (Abdullah, casual conversation, August 24, 2016).

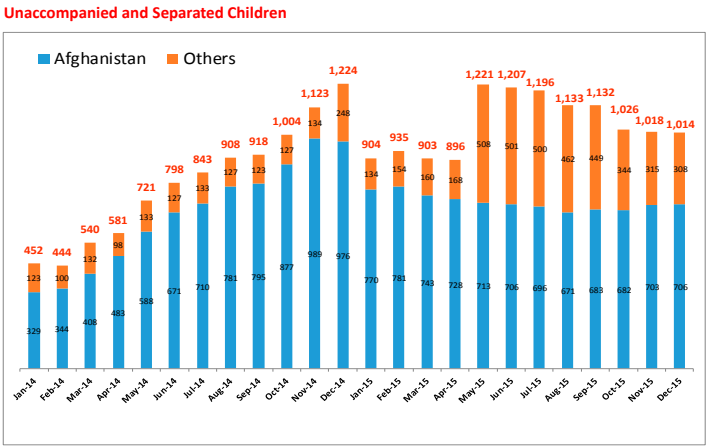
By registering themselves when they are still underage, many young people, including Abdullah, assume that they will get benefits in Indonesia such as easier access to accommodation and

financial assistance, and even an acceleration of their refugee case and resettlement. Figure 2 illustrates the increasing trend for unaccompanied minors and separated children (UASC) to register for asylum in Indonesia from January to December 2014, followed by a leveling out throughout 2015.

Not only Hazara youth, but also youths from Somalia, told me that many underaged boys and girls now travel to Indonesia in the hope of getting special treatment, both while in transit and in the resettlement country. Omar, a 17-year-old boy from Mogadishu, told me that Australia is a good country to work in and that it is good to go there when you are 16 or 17 years old.

> It is good if we are underaged, the Australian government will help us. Maybe they will give us money or assist us. … so now many young people want to go to Australia (interview, July 15, 2016).

In the previous chapter, I discussed the problems of age categorization, emphasizing in particular that social age depends on the economic, social, and cultural environment in which a person grows up. I therefore suggested that maturity (as demonstrated by adult-like behavior) and vulnerability cannot be measured merely by numerical age. The UNHCR and many countries of resettlement nevertheless refer to a global model of childhood when establishing regulations, defining "children" as anyone under the age of 18. Responding to this, young people engage in tactics such as registering with the UNHCR when they are underage, as they will enjoy more and longer benefits as "minors." This is part of a strategic plan of "waiting," as they are aware that they must expect long waiting periods in a transit country (this was discussed at length in chapter 2). By beginning their refugee journey young, this allows them to arrive at an eventual resettlement country still relatively young, so that they will be able to enjoy some benefits there as well. According to Swasti Istika, the then Deputy Program Manager of CWS, the age range of those registering as unaccompanied minors at the UNHCR a couple of years prior to our conversation had been between 15-17 years old; more recently, however, they were seeing many more children aged 8-12 (interview, September 17, 2016) (see Figure 3).



Note: The drop in the population in January 2015 is because many UASC aged-out; the majority of UASC have been registered with the estimated date of birth of 1 January.

Figure 2. Population of UASC 2014 and 2015 in Indonesia (UNHCR Compilation 2016).

Figure 3. An independent refugee boy celebrates his 13th birthday in a CWS shelter. More underage independent youth are travelling alone to Indonesia (photo credit: Henri Ismail 2016).

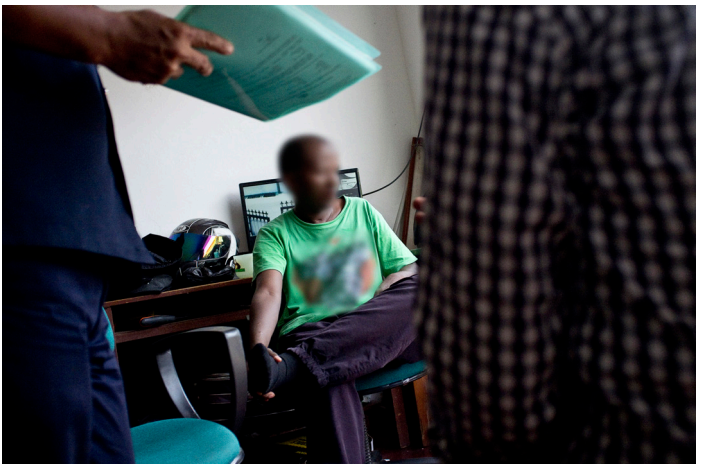


Figure 4. An independent young man who was rumored as being over 18 years old by his peers in the shelter. However, no one talk about it openly (photo credit: Henri Ismail 2016).

Simulating Being Underaged

The second maneuver related to being part of a vulnerable group is simulating being underage. According to an IOM staff member, since the time she had started her career around 2013, almost all of the young refugee applicants she had encountered had claimed to be underaged. She said that allegedly, smugglers have spread information about the benefits of being a "minor." She also remembered that it was around that time (in 2013) that Australia had begun age assessment to accept underaged refugees for resettlement, so many youths were trying to fit into this category (interview, August 31, 2016).

During my fieldwork, I met several youths who had claimed to the UNHCR that they were underage, even though they were actually over 18 (see Figure 4). During a casual conversation with a Somali youth named Ahmed, he told me that he had met several Somali youths who had come to Indonesia and claimed to be 15 or 16 years old (interview, August 25, 2016). Regarding such age "adjustments," Izad, a guardian in a CWS shelter in Jakarta, explained to me: "You know, they do it because the boys generally think that American teenagers are big and tall so it must

be acceptable if they claim themselves to be a 16-year-old boy" (interview, October 24, 2016). The strategy of age adjustment usually begins upon registration with the UNHCR and continues when the young people request special treatment as minors from CWS or IOM. A UNHCR staff member told me:

> Maybe it is part of the people smugglers' "workshop." They [refugee applicants] usually will tell us a template answer that they do not know their birthday but their mother told them that they are 13 or 14 years old. Therefore, many people wrote 1 January as their birthday, since they claimed they do not know the exact date (interview, October 25, 2016).

In many cases, this information would later be found to be inaccurate, as officers learned that the youths in fact celebrated their birthday on a different date.

For those who were staying in IDCs in other areas in Indonesia, claiming to be underaged was a tactic to be released. In an IOM community house in Medan, I interviewed an independent young man from Iran who had been detained in Makassar. He told me that when he was inside the IDC, he had tried to claim that he was 17 years old, but apparently the UNHCR had rejected his claim. I asked why he thought they had not believed him, and he said that maybe it was because he had a beard. Then he added, "No, I was joking. I was actually 21 years old when I claimed to be underaged to the UNHCR inside the detention, so probably they noticed. But it is okay. I am released now and I get a nice accommodation with the IOM" (interview, November 22, 2016).

UNHCR officers are very aware of young people's strategy of age adjustment. A UNHCR staff member told me that another benefit of claiming to be underaged is the expectation of staying in the CWS shelter in Jakarta, so that the person can remain on the UNHCR radar and be closer to the source of information. UNHCR staff make weekly visits to the shelters, so the underaged residents can regularly discuss their problems and the progress of their case. This is different for those who stay inside IDCs elsewhere and who most probably will only meet UNHCR staff during their registration, RSD interview, and on occasional visits.

In Jakarta, I spent more than six months in CWS's special shelters for minors and had regular discussions with its social workers. All of the social workers were aware of the situation that some of the "minors" were not actually underaged. Mira (not her real name), a young CWS social worker, told me once that one of the boys, let us call him Fawad, who was registered with the UNHCR as 17 years old, had once confessed to her that he was actually 24 years old. The confession started with a joke and mockery from Fawad's peers that he liked an Indonesian girl in the neighborhood. Mira teased him and Fawad answered that she had already become his girlfriend. Mira asked about the girl's age and Fawad said that she was 23. Mira continued to tease him, saying that it was not good to have such an older girlfriend, then Fawad replied "*Ibu*[3]… you know, I am actually 24, so I am older than her" (interview, September 13, 2016).

Victimcy: Embodying Homelessness

Another form of social navigation that is performed by independent youth is engaging in "victimcy" through self-staging as homeless and sleeping on the street in front of organizations' offices to beg for assistance. The term "victimcy" – coined by Mats Utas (2005, 408) – is "a form of self-representation by which agency may be effectively exercised under trying, uncertain, and disempowering circumstances." According to Utas, victimcy is used to explain women's agency when they self-stage as a victim of war as part of their social navigation in war zones (ibid). I prefer the term victimcy over "playing the victim" because it helps to emphasize the physical conformity in the youths' self-staging as homeless. In engaging with victimcy, the young people do not only claim that they are homeless, but they embody the condition of being homeless and experience life as a homeless person in order to beg for assistance from institutions.

Independent youth believe that performing victimcy – for instance, by sleeping in front of the UNHCR or CWS office – is very effective. Having learnt of several previous successful cases, young people are convinced that those who sleep on the street

[3] *Ibu* is an Indonesian word to address an older or respected woman. In this case, it means "ma'am" or "miss."

will be transferred to accommodations and will be able to access humanitarian assistance from organizations. The following cases are presented to illustrate how performing victimcy vis-à-vis the UNHCR can be effective.

> Arafat, 16 years old, spent 14 days sleeping in front of the UNHCR building in Jakarta with 13 other independent youths before the CWS transferred them to boarding rooms in the Setia Budi area. When sleeping on the street, they occasionally received food from the local community. When they needed to clean themselves, they were allowed to use a rented toilet for free because the caretaker knew they did not have money to pay (interview, April 14, 2016).

> Amira, 12 years old, who came with his brothers (15 and 10 years old), did not know what to do after their smuggler had left them in a room near the UNHCR office. After being told to register with the UNHCR, they reported that they did not have any place to stay nor supporters to send them money. The UNHCR registration staff did not offer them any solutions, so when an "African guy" told them to sleep in front of the UNHCR's office, they did it. After four days of sleeping in front of the UNHCR office, they were taken to the RPSA (Children Safe House) run by the Ministry of Social Affairs (interview, October 7, 2016).

> Muradi, 17 years old, slept on the street in front of the UNHCR building with ten other boys. Some of his peers had been sleeping there for two months, some had been doing it for a couple of weeks before officers from Buddha Tzu Chi Foundation came and offered them a place to stay. Before bringing them to the accommodation, the Buddha Tzu Chi staff had been bringing them food for a couple of weeks, then they had rented some rooms in a hotel near the UNHCR office. Later, all 11 of the boys were transferred by the foundation to a rented house (interview, September 14, 2016).

Utas formulated the concept of victimcy to reconcile the

opposition between "agency" and "victimhood," as it has been demonstrated that self-staging as a victim can be interpreted as a part of tactical agency (Utas 2005, 408). Independent youths' victimcy – for instance, by embodying homelessness – can also be analyzed as a tactical move to secure access to accommodation and financial assistance while in transit.

Gendered Tactics

Aside from capitalizing on their age, young refugees also centralize their gender identity in order to be able to claim humanitarian assistance, and in some cases to elevate their chances of resettlement. This section will elaborate on the movements carried out by both independent young men and women, who utilize their gender to navigate the institutions' vulnerability-based criteria.

Double Protection: Women on a Solitary Journey

In general, the number of refugee women transiting in Indonesia had been increasing for several years prior to the time of my research. In the case of independent young women, the number was also increasing. Indonesia was seeing, for instance, a growing number of independent girls from Somalia – predictably so, as an effect of the closing down of some UNHCR operations in Kenya (interview with a UNHCR officer, June 17, 2016). UNHCR and CWS staff predicted that in the coming years there would be even more unaccompanied girls and independent young women traveling alone. The officers believed that smugglers and refugee communities had learnt from practice that it is relatively easy for both groups to get protection and financial support. Once an "unaccompanied girl" turns 18, she can still receive financial assistance, because being a "single woman" is also part of the UNHCR's vulnerability criteria; this is not the case for "single men." Figure 5 shows that the population of female asylum seekers and refugees in Indonesia increased from 2,530 in 2014 to 3,439 in 2015, with the population staying in IDCs also increasing in the same period. This differs from the case of children, who started to be prioritized around 2015 for earlier release from IDCs, despite their large numbers. This fact also contributes to young women's aspiration to arrive in Indonesia while underage, to be able to get prioritization from the beginning.

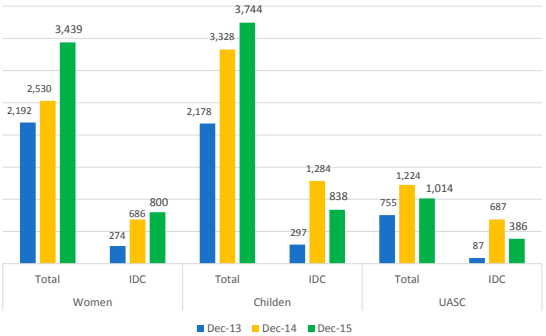


Figure 5. Trends of the Women and Children Populations in Indonesia 2013-2015 (UNHCR Compilation, 2016).

During my research period, I met very few independent girls and women compared to independent boys and men. I found around 10 unaccompanied girls and dozens of independent young women who were receiving financial assistance from the UNHCR/CWS in Jakarta. The number of independent women who were self-settled, who were detained inside IDCs, and who were staying in accommodation provided by the IOM was, however, much higher than that. In regard to their maneuvering when centralizing their gender identity in order to obtain humanitarian assistance, I interviewed independent Hazara, Somalian, and Ethiopian women who were mostly under the care of CWS, with some variation among those staying in IOM community housing. The data presented here illustrates how independent young women secure access to CWS assistance. Unlike independent young men, most of the independent young women I met did not openly discuss their tactics and strategies when maneuvering the humanitarian regime. However, I observed a deeply performative element – in terms of accentuating vulnerability – that was taken by young women in order to maintain access to humanitarian aid.

Shahida, an independent Hazara girl from Afghanistan, centralized her vulnerability not only during the assessment period, but also throughout the period she was receiving aid. I met Shahida in Jakarta through her friend, who lived in Cisarua, where Shahida

had previously lived. She had come to Indonesia unaccompanied and had initially been allowed to stay with a family in Cisarua. She had no support as her mother, her only parent in Afghanistan, was sick. The family in Cisarua accommodated Shahida for a couple of months until she got into an accident and badly injured her leg. She became a burden for the family and a couple of times she was beaten by the lady of the house, who demanded she pay for rent and meals. She then decided to move to Jakarta to claim assistance from CWS. Although Shahida never directly mentioned it to me, her friend had informed me that Shahida had modified her age to guarantee protection.

> My condition is very weak, I cannot walk without crutches. The CWS sent me to *Puskesmas* [local clinic] and then to a chiropractor, but he said my leg is not functioning anymore. With the help of some people in the Hazara community, I could monthly see a physiotherapist in a better hospital and buy better medicines. The doctor gave me a big discount because I am a refugee… But I destroyed all the receipts from the hospital and saved my medical records in my housemate's room. I didn't want the CWS staff to see it and think I had the money to go to a good hospital. I also hid snacks and food at my neighbors. Sometimes they [the CWS staff] open the refrigerator when they visit beneficiaries' accommodations. If they sense we receive help from friends or family, they would stop the financial assistance (interview, April 28, 2016).

I personally did not encounter a case where a young person's assistance had been discontinued after the discovery of snacks, but I could imagine that, with its limited capacity, the CWS does try to juggle things around to target the "most vulnerable populations." Shahida's statement highlights the awareness of CWS beneficiaries that they must keep on performing their vulnerability in order to maintain assistance. Given that the CWS may re-evaluate one's deservedness of assistance, independent women must continue to centralize their vulnerability. Furthermore, even though they have a longer protection timeline than "single men," they are aware that they are in constant competition with other vulnerable categories,

so they have to keep moving in order to maintain their access to aid.

Young women feel the need to keep performing and centralizing their vulnerability because they are aware of the culture of disbelief among CWS staff towards the beneficiaries. In the assessment interview, CWS officers often question some patterns within the similar stories told by independent young women from the same country. For instance, Hazara independent girls usually claim to have escaped from oppressive traditions such as arranged marriages and child bride practices; Rohingya girls claim to have been child brides and to have undergone underage pregnancy; and Somali girls claim to have experienced sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) such as rape, pregnancy due to rape, and domestic violence (interview with a CWS officer, October 5, 2016). An officer informed me of a Somali girl who had come to the CWS office to ask for shelter and financial support, who had claimed to be a rape victim. The officer expected rape victims to be very vulnerable, depressed, and sensitive to many questions, but she had found the applicant to be rather "presumptuous," demanding to be prioritized. The officer assumed that this meant that the girl and others were being informed by smugglers that their condition as underaged, female, and with an experience of SGBV would mean that they would be seen as having many layers of vulnerability, which in turn would constitute a strong basis to claim protection and assistance from humanitarian organizations (interview, September 30, 2016).

Hearing stories of rape and other forms of SGBV on a regular basis might also create "a tendency for them [officers] to be skeptical and desensitized" (Jubany 2011, 84). The officers' perspective reflects how the truth is often judged "not because of the account, but because of the display of emotions" (Jubany 2011, 85). Indeed, in many cases, claimants' general demeanor does play a significant role in affecting the officers' impressions, as the latter expect asylum seekers to be "miserable and downtrodden" (Jubany 2011, 85). Displaying emotions that are not "consistent" with being unhappy will thus cast doubt over their story. As a result, officers expect applicants to bring more "evidence" of their vulnerability, including how they display emotions and their general demeanor (Jubany 2011, 85). Anticipating this skepticism, independent

women found more convincing reasons to keep centralizing and performing their vulnerability in order to secure their chances of acquiring and maintaining assistance.

Independent Men and their Least-Vulnerable Status

In the following discussion, independent young men's movements when navigating access to humanitarian aid, as well as resettlement, will be elaborated. This section will demonstrate how young men must juggle the vulnerability discourse and related opportunities, and will illustrate which tactics are more effective in facilitating the achievement of their goals.

In Indonesia, the IOM remains the only organization that consistently provides humanitarian aid for independent young men, or in NGO terms, "single men." While "unaccompanied minors," "single women," and "families" are referred to the CWS, independent young men try to access assistance from the IOM by conducting a self-surrender at the nearest immigration office. Given that the IOM only assists those who are "recommended" by the Indonesian Immigration Office, they must be detained and registered by an immigration office. According to a report from the Directorate General of Immigration, as of June 3, 2016, 2,028 people had self-surrendered to immigration offices and temporary shelters across Indonesia (DGI 2016). During my research time, many immigration offices were "closed" to refugees, meaning that they would not receive or register new refugees. The immigration office in Pekanbaru was among the few that was still receiving people. An officer in this office told me in 2016 that they had recently decided to limit the registration process to slow down the number of refugees coming to the area.

> You can see many people sleeping in front of the immigration office because we do not directly register *imigran* who come. Sometimes we register them after a couple of weeks and sometimes a couple of months. If we regularly open the registration, many more would come here from all over Indonesia. If we register 20 people today, 30 new people will come tomorrow. We need to have a certain strategy as well. We slow down the registration to send a message to the smugglers… (interview, November 28, 2016).

Figure 6. A refugee family sleeping in front of the UNHCR Jakarta to demand accommodation and financial support. If they fail, they will conduct self-reporting to Jakarta IDC (left); families and independent men self-reporting to the immigration office in Pekanbaru (right) (photo credit: Henri Ismail 2016).

The attempt by independent young men to report themselves to an immigration office becomes inevitable given that they do not have any other option. Therefore, despite longer waiting periods to register at the immigration office, they still practice self-reporting, as it is the only chance they have to be assisted by the IOM. However, in trying to access the IOM, independent young men are also in competition with other refugees who are not being assisted by CWS or another organization (see Figure 6 left). I witnessed a couple of families and independent young women who had self-reported to access IOM's assistance (see Figure 6 right). So if an immigration office decided to prioritize "vulnerable groups" in the registration process, then independent men would have to wait longer. In 2016, self-reporting still seemed to be a reasonable strategy, given that the IOM was mandated to support the refugee population in Indonesia. Nevertheless, this strategy might no longer be as effective, given that the IOM stopped providing aid assistance to new applicants in March 2018 (Suastha 2018).

Independent men respond to vulnerability-based prioritization by manufacturing a more vulnerable self. Some young men try to increase their degree of vulnerability by marrying an independent young woman who is also transiting in Indonesia. During my fieldwork in Jakarta, I met Axmed, an independent Somali man, who was a community interpreter. I was expecting him at a workshop but he did not show up. I asked his Somali friend and he said that Axmed had just gotten married to an independent Somali

girl and now they were on "honeymoon leave." I was curious about the marriage procedure for refugees in Indonesia, so I followed up the discussion on marriage. The young man lowered his voice when he answered: "You know… many [independent] men marry here so they can have faster resettlement to a third country." I asked how this works and he explained, somewhat cynically:

> Well… "a family" is considered more vulnerable than "single men." You can wait here forever as a single man and the UNHCR might never resettle you. They will prioritize vulnerable cases so there is always someone in front of you… (conversation, October 3, 2016).

It would be incorrect to conclude from this, however, that the move to build a family while waiting in transit is always simply a pure tactic to maneuver access to humanitarian aid and resettlement. There are many more aspects, such as love, affection, and the human need for emotional support, that come with a marriage decision.

Analysis

Effectiveness of Navigating Aged-based Prioritization

Although young people's navigations using their underage status is anticipated by NGO officers, it is still significantly effective in terms of obtaining special treatment. Some procedures are taken by officers as a "counter tactic," but once young people have been identified as underaged, it is rare that their status will be re-evaluated. According to Ratih Josthy Mautanha, a community-based protection associate at the UNHCR Jakarta office, the UNHCR has developed a comprehensive age assessment system to determine whether a person really is a minor. The method involves complex interview techniques related to the details of their experience that make it very difficult for the young people to lie. The officer said that while the method does try to consider biological age (though only in a limited way), medical examination is not preferred both because it is very expensive, and because its accuracy in predicting age is in the range of plus/minus 5 years, so it is not considered very helpful (interview, May 13, 2016).

I looked in more detail into the UNHCR's age assessment

process, which is heavily based on chronological age, in chapter 3. The assessment is used to decide who is eligible for special treatment, which includes being released from an IDC and being accommodated in special shelters for minors, either under the CWS or the IOM. If someone is considered to be a minor and is travelling alone, does not have any support, and does know anyone in the refugee community, the UNHCR will refer this person to CWS to apply for assistance. According to Swasti, their mandate is to assess vulnerable cases and to provide them with accommodation and financial support.

> If they have a vulnerability claim, we will provide assistance. Compared to a couple of years ago, fewer adults can be found in CWS shelters. However, we do some evaluation during the three-month period, and then we re-evaluate after six months. If we figured out they lied about their age or manipulated their claim, we will stop our assistance (interview, September 17, 2016).

In the case of underaged persons in CWS shelters, one social worker said that if later there is evidence that someone is not underage, the CWS can request that the UNHCR do an age assessment again. However, she mentioned that sometimes the UNHCR is too busy with new cases, so this kind of report does not always get followed up.

> If we are already close to the boys, they will tell us their real age. Someone told me that he is actually 28 years old. If I report this case to the UNHCR to do re-assessment, they will see. If he is very much over-aged, he might be re-assessed. If it is only months away from the overage period, UNHCR will let him alone. If they are already in the shelter, it is more complicated to kick them out if they do not violate rules or do very bad things such as fighting (interview, November 15, 2016).

Reflecting on the social worker's statement and from my own observations, the UNHCR is generally very busy with processing new cases, so most age re-assessment cases are not followed up.

The officers tend to grant protection and assistance to independent youths despite their personal doubts regarding their age. Moreover, CWS social workers rarely request that the UNHCR conduct an age re-assessment, even if they find out later that a person is not in fact underage. This is usually based on compassion felt towards the young people, especially when they do not have any other support in Indonesia. The decision not to report a case is usually supported by the officer's evaluation of the young person's good and cooperative behavior. According to four CWS social workers, their motivation to be social workers was to take care of those in need, especially victims of war. Despite doubts they may have had, these officers usually considered that although the youths might not be underage, they still needed protection because they usually had other vulnerabilities. Besides, social workers generally cannot afford to add more tasks to their busy schedules. Submitting requests for age re-assessment requires more paperwork and an interview process, which takes time and energy. Thus, unless the person in question causes significant problems in the shelter, the officers will let them stay.

I observed that despite officers' personal opinions towards a young person who was no longer underage, they nevertheless continued to follow the UNHCR's guidelines to always assist vulnerable people. This means that young people's navigations of age categories vis-à-vis the refugee organizations in Indonesia are reasonably effective. Although it certainly does not apply to all cases, the success stories indicate that the arena of special treatment for children is fairly flexible and negotiable. Young people's movements as part of their agency-in-waiting is, then, an active dynamic in the social terrain.

In regard to the effectiveness of performing victimcy, Jeffrey Savage, a senior protection officer at UNHCR Jakarta, said that the UNHCR sets the protection of unaccompanied minors as its main consideration, although he realized that such treatment will create a precedent for other youth to sleep in front of the office (interview, December 10, 2016). Although in general the UNHCR refuses all attempts at "blackmailing," to discourage other refugees from doing similar things, the organizations do dedicatedly always try to prioritize children's rights to protection.

Just like the CWS officers' decision not to follow up over-aged

cases in the shelters, the UNHCR officers' decision to provide accommodation for those who perform victimcy by sleeping in front of their office might be considered an "implementation deficiency," which indicates "an inability to put their policies into practice" (Kalir, Sur, and van Schendel 2012). However, this decision must be appreciated, as it reflects how the UNHCR puts human interest before rules and policy. Moreover, it also strengthens the analysis that the UNHCR is part of a global system that is quite flexible for young people to negotiate. Although the decision to be flexible may be interpreted as an attempt by the UNHCR to protect its image and safeguard itself against local, national, and international criticism, the willingness to compromise indicates that UN rules are not stagnant and that there is room for youths to exercise their agency-in-waiting.

I have shown above that performing victimcy is indeed an effective strategy. By conducting victimcy – for instance, by sleeping in front of the UNHCR – independent youth were successfully accommodated faster compared to those who applied for shelters but did not perform homelessness. Aside from securing humanitarian aid, victimcy also strengthened their "good refugee story" that they had fled their country in a hurry and could not reach their family for support.

The Effectiveness of Centralizing Gendered Vulnerability

The previous section discussed how independent young women centralize their gender vulnerability to maneuver the CWS officers' disbelief and skepticism. However, despite officers' personal doubts and skepticisms, it is important to emphasize that all claims submitted by vulnerable groups will be processed with a positive result when there is an available quota. This means that the "vulnerable" will be granted humanitarian assistance while transiting in Indonesia if the CWS budgets allow. It is therefore inevitable that independent young women must demonstrate their vulnerability, particularly by accentuating their gender identity and their economic, social, and cultural situation, in order to maneuver themselves into a deserving position with respect to the international regime of humanitarian aid in Indonesia. Furthermore, given that the continuity of CWS assistance is re-evaluated every three months, the young women should continue

their production of vulnerability, complemented by a "proper" display of emotion and a good narrative strategy, in order to maintain access to humanitarian aid. This maneuvering has been proven as significantly effective in securing assistance from CWS. Unless new evidence appears that disproves their story or their performed vulnerability, CWS will continue to support the young women until they are resettled.

In regard to independent young men's navigations, building a family is considered to be an effective strategy. When I cross-checked this with UNHCR and CWS staff, they confirmed that married couples will be prioritized for resettlement over "single men."

> It is sadly true that if you are a healthy single man, you will not be prioritized. Knowing this, many single men will get married so they will be in the fast track. Afterwards, their wives will try to get pregnant, because pregnant women will definitely get attention from the UNHCR. It is a lifesaving case to get better assistance. Afterwards, all members of the family will be listed as vulnerable and therefore they may get [resettlement] acceleration (interview, October 22, 2016).

Given that these navigations are effective in facilitating survival while in transit in Indonesia, independent youth keep performing certain forms of self-representation and producing (and even embodying) certain forms of vulnerability and victimcy.

An individual's success story, which has been supported by officers' compassion, humanitarian values, or simply by an "implementation deficiency," can be analyzed as a success from the young people's point of view, in terms of how their social navigations influenced how the policy is formed and implemented within the refugee management system. Given that the arena is flexible and fluid, young people's actions shape the social terrain as they keep on performing, producing, and reproducing. The young people are not merely victims, they are also "spectators" who observe the structures and "resist, negotiate and enact a number of discourses and counter-discourses" (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Qasmiyeh 2010, 295 in Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2016, 460; see also Boal 1992).

EPILOG: FRUSTRATION OVER THE CHANCE TO RESETTLE

The prioritization of resettlement for vulnerable people is not solely in the hands of the UNHCR, but is also a dynamic of global politics and global migration. With the number of refugees rising due to the prevalence of war and conflict globally, several countries have developed policies to prioritize resettlement for vulnerable groups. In response to this condition, Jeffrey Savage, UNHCR senior protection officer from the Jakarta headquarters, made a statement about people's chances to get resettled. According to Endah Yuliarso, a then UNHCR representative in Pekanbaru, Savage had gone to Pekanbaru for a regular visit in October 2016 and had "dropped the bomb." Savage and Yuliarso went to the IDC, some community housings, and interception houses to deliver the news on this sensitive topic.

> Jeff said more or less: "I am person number 2 in UNHCR Indonesia. Now, the UNHCR has a new policy to prioritize vulnerable persons. So, if you are a single man and healthy, some or most of you will never be resettled." If you see the trend in the world, there are 65 million refugees and the resettlement number is only 100,000 refugees per year. If you are not vulnerable, you might have to stay in Indonesia forever (interview, December 10, 2016).

According to Rizal, an IOM officer in Pekanbaru, the statement turned a feared rumor into reality (interview, November 30, 2016). The news shook independent young men and made them psychologically vulnerable. Rizal said that since this announcement, many shown the symptoms of severe depression and some local newspapers even reported suicides.

On the other hand, the shared frustration has motivated independent young men to collectively raise their demands, in particular their case for being resettled, through demonstrations, both inside IDCs as well as outside the UNHCR's offices. Through young people's Facebook pages, many pictures and videos of demonstrations have been wildly shared. On February 6–8, 2017, demonstrations were held by independent young men in front of

the UNHCR office in Jakarta; on May 15, 2017, refugees from Afghanistan and Sri Lanka who were staying inside the Tanjung Pinang Detention Center held protests demanding a transfer to community accommodation; in July and August 2017, Rohingya and Iranian refugees held demonstrations in Makassar; from January to April 2018, all "single men," including "unaccompanied minors," inside the Balikpapan IDC demanded to be released to community housing; in March and November 2018, refugees in Medan asked for resettlement; and on November 29, 2018, refugees in Bintan demanded improvements in facilities and negotiated a curfew.

I joined the February 6, 2017 demonstration in front of the UNHCR office in Jakarta that was self-organized by independent young men. The youth had brought signs that read: "How long should we stay only refugee?" "Give attention to singles," "Why always to families… care about us," "Resettlement is our absolute right," "We deserve to be resettled to third country as soon as possible," "Please don't play with our lives, we are also human" (see Figure 7). The belief that "resettlement is our absolute right" can be perceived as young men's desperate move to try to challenge the hegemony of the refugee regime that prioritizes only so-called vulnerable populations for resettlement. During my 14 months of fieldwork, I witnessed various movements by young people aimed at navigating the system, but it was very exceptional for youths to collectively raise their demands and openly challenge the decisions of the UNHCR. The demonstration I attended marked a very crucial point at the end of my fieldwork, as I witnessed young people exercising their agency in a very direct manner. But how effective are such actions?

According to the officers I spoke with, the UNHCR implements "a zero-tolerance policy in regard to improper behavior," which includes demonstrations, hunger strikes, and sleeping in front of the UNHCR office (interview, May 13, 2016). UNHCR policy notes that asylum seekers will not get their way if they attempt "blackmail," though as I observed, officers' responses when dealing with different types of so-called "blackmail" varied. Some actions – such as sleeping in front of the UNHCR office – did successfully facilitate young people to access aid, while other actions – such as demonstrations – did not have enough force to speed up or alter

Figure 7. A Hazara independent youth holding a sign during a demonstration in front of the UNHCR office, Jakarta (photo credit: Henri Ismail 2017).

the resettlement process. Granting humanitarian aid is arguably more feasible than guaranteeing resettlement to a third country. Furthermore, in regard to navigating resettlement, the agentive movement of demanding rights is in fact less effective than tactics that conform to the UNHCR's own criteria. As my empirical data shows, for independent young men, marrying a refugee woman and making a refugee family is a much more effective strategy to expedite resettlement than participating in a demonstration. This chapter supports the notion that in the humanitarian arena, centralizing one's minority status and victimcy is much more effective than raising a voice and assertively demanding one's rights (Ticktin 2006).

CONCLUSION

This chapter has elaborated on young people's navigations of the refugee determination process, their access to humanitarian assistance, and their relative chances for resettlement. Independent youth perform representational strategies, including engaging in

narrative strategies, in order to produce vulnerability (particularly based on age, gender, and sexuality) (Ticktin 2005; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2015; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2016, 461) and enact victimcy (Utas 2005). It has been demonstrated that various strategies and tactics are relatively effective in negotiating the implementation of regulations by the refugee management system in Indonesia. This arena, which is assumed to be the most "strict" and regulated arena that independent youth must deal with, is evidently flexible. This condition supports the notion that Indonesia as a transit country is a fluid and flexible social terrain, which enables youth to perform their agency-in-waiting.

Successful navigation is the result of officers' flexibility in implementing the operational procedures. Although their negotiable attitude may be seen as an "implementation deficiency" as a result of "an inability to put their policies into practice" (Kalir, Sur, and van Schendel 2012), I rather see it as the officers proving the fact that they consider humanitarian values to be the most important. It also highlights the simple fact that in the migration management system, the role of meso-level bureaucrats is truly important in affecting the wellbeing of migrants and refugees.

Finally, this chapter has highlighted the fact that the vulnerability discourse does not always contradict or run counter to the agency discourse. Having or taking on a position of vulnerability does not necessarily weaken one's agency. One can make a vulnerable condition into an opportunity to survive and get the best out of a difficult situation. The youth I met demonstrated that they are able to "observe, resist, negotiate and enact a number of discourses and counter-discourses" (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Qasmiyeh 2010, 295 in Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2016, 460; see also Boal 1992), and this tactical agency has successfully influenced the shape of the social terrain that they must navigate. The form of their navigations is not only directed by the system, but in fact the system also evolves as a result of their navigations.