Independent refugee youth in waiting

Social navigations while in transit in Indonesia

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Publication date
2021

CHAPTER SEVEN

Keep Moving Forward

Navigating Global Youth Culture

In this chapter, I aim to demonstrate independent young refugees' multidirectional movements when navigating their social position in the context of "global youth culture," focusing on the activities they engage in to actualize their potential. This chapter will discuss three main aspects of young people's navigations: 1) engaging in individual self-empowerment; 2) challenging gendered norms to participate in agentive self-actualization; and 3) using virtual media to accelerate self-representation. I aim to connect the study of children and youth in migration with the study of cultural globalization. By locating youth as "both being and becoming" (Uprichard 2008), this chapter will show that independent refugee youth in Indonesia, as "complete beings," experience their lives in transit to the full, and are actively engaged in co-constructing their condition. On the other hand, they are also "becoming," as they are constantly preparing for their future. And as I will illustrate, this future – youths' "becoming" – is not merely directed towards adulthood, but also concerns other forms of desired youthfulness that they have not yet had or been.

In May 2016, I conducted a photography workshop with some independent refugee youth who were self-settled in Cisarua, West Java, assisted by Henri Ismail, my photographer husband. In every session, the youths were assigned to take pictures according to a weekly theme and to bring their photographs to be discussed in the next meeting. One of the assignments was to bring a photo that represented themselves and their current condition in Indonesia. Somaya, a 17-year-old independent girl from Afghanistan, brought a picture of herself smiling widely while standing in the middle of a green pasture with blooming red flowers and water fountains in

Figure 1. Somaya in Bogor Botanical Garden
(Photo credit: Somaya's friend 2016).

the background (see Figure 1). It was a very sunny day, she was wearing tight jeans, a long-sleeved shirt, a sleeveless vest, a red sun hat, and a pair of sunglasses. She looked very fashionable and happy in the picture. When describing the picture to the other workshop participants, Somaya said:

> This is three weeks ago when I went for a picnic in Bogor Botanical Garden. I went there with a group of friends. My friend took the picture, but I told him to shoot from that specific angle so that all the beautiful background would be captured. I really like it [the picture] and want people to see me this way. Look at the green grass… we don't have it much in Afghanistan. I love it here, so many green areas and a lot of green trees. When I just arrived in Indonesia, I took a lot of pictures with trees. Indonesians just do not get it why I did that… [laughing]. Cisarua has a beautiful scenery, many gardens, so many colorful flowers… I look pretty in the picture. I wear sunglasses… [laughing]. In the first

> months I was here, I thought that Hazara girls were crazy for no longer wearing long blouses to the knees. But now, here I am, wearing shorter and shorter shirts. I am more open minded now (workshop discussion, May 22, 2016).

Somaya's story highlights some key aspects of what she was able to enjoy while in transit in Indonesia. The green grass, flowers, blue sky, big red hat, and fashionable outfit might all seem "unfitting" to the common image of a "protracted refugee situation" or "being in limbo." From interacting regularly with Somaya, I know that she was in a precarious condition, as she was not receiving any financial assistance from any organization, and was only able to generate a small income from volunteering. She could not continue her education and did not know when or if she would be resettled in the future. On top of that, one thing that Somaya did know was that she would not be reunited with her mother, who was already in Australia, because Somaya had arrived in Indonesia after June 2014.[1]

Despite all of this precarity and uncertainty, Somaya chose a happy narration with which to represent herself. She also emphasized the transformation of her sense of fashion, style, thoughts, and freedom that she had gained while in transit in Indonesia. Somaya's case is not unique. More than half of the workshop participants shared similar stories and all of them represented themselves accordingly to their friends on social media and other platforms. I noted that many young refugees tended to choose self-representations that reflected them as happy, optimistic, and successful, and which did not deal with the issues of eligibility criteria for refugee status or humanitarian assistance. These happy stories were not a pretence; rather, they were part of the young people's "youthful narrations," which were often overpowered by their "refugee narrations" when they had to navigate other arenas (see chapter 3).

In the following section, I will elaborate on the social navigations of young refugees as they participate in global youth culture while waiting in transit in Indonesia. Such navigations include Hazara

[1] See "Asylum seekers registered with UNHCR in Indonesia after June no longer eligible for resettlement in Australia, Scott Morrison says," ABC News, updated on 18 November 2014, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-11-18/resettlement-path-for-asylum-seekers-in-indonesia-cut-off/5900962.

youth displaying their sporting talent through futsal, and young Oromo refugees demonstrating their musical skills through rap and hip-hop. Afterward, I will discuss different forms of youth self-actualization performed by girls and young refugee women in transit, who encounter more challenges in terms of expressing their ideas and participating in global youth culture. In the third part of this chapter, I will unfold young people's use of the internet and virtual media, which facilitates their navigations to engage in self-education, widen their international connections, and actualize their ability to reach a global audience.

FROM FUTSAL[2] TO HIP-HOP: CLEARING MINDS AND BECOMING IDOLS

This section aims to show the agentive social navigations exercised by independent youth as they make decisions on which skills and self-images they wish to develop and represent in order to be part of a global youth culture. Although their choices are limited, I argue that they nevertheless exercise a significant level of agentic waiting as they freely choose for certain activities, without the intervention of any organizations. In this sub-section, futsal and hip-hop will be discussed to illustrate individual preferences when choosing for a particular hobby or skill.

Futsal: A Platform to Reach the "Global"

To keep their bodies and minds active, refugee children and youth engage in various activities, such as doing sport, playing music, creating art, writing articles, learning new things, and exploring fun sites. During my fieldwork in Cisarua, Jakarta, Medan, and Pekanbaru, the most common activity that was done on a daily basis to fight the boredom and "keep a positive mind" was sport, especially futsal. Youth people outlined several of futsal's benefits that explained its popularity: keeping healthy, broadening their social network, and providing a platform to actualize their

[2] Futsal is FIFA's official indoor football, with five players per team playing in a basketball-court-sized field and with a smaller ball (three-quarters the size of a soccer ball). The term "futsal" is taken from the Spanish "*futbol sala*," meaning indoor soccer (see https://www.aranaunitedfutsal.com/what-is-futsal.html).

potential. Farid, a 24-year-old man whom I often met at the futsal ground in Cisarua, explained:

> I love sport since I was in Afghanistan. Here I play futsal regularly. Sometimes I play volleyball… but I do not like to go to [the] gym. I like futsal because it is fun and I get to exercise my body. My mind becomes fresh… And I meet many people in the futsal [ground]. I came here [to Cisarua] alone… I met my current housemates in the futsal ground. We decided how many people will stay in one house, then we rented the accommodation. From futsal I know some people and hear a lot of information from refugee communities (interview, April 1, 2016).

Due to its popularity, the futsal ground does not only serve as a playground for the players, but also as a space for spectators who want to watch the game, to cheer on their favorite team, and to enjoy the entertainment. Martin, a 19-year-old independent boy, said:

> I am not a good player. Sometimes I play, but I do not have much money to spend regularly for futsal, so I do not join in a team. But I like to watch futsal matches. If I come here, I will meet my friends, meet new people… I will not be alone (interview, May 6, 2016).

Martin explained that futsal brings together refugees from different locations in Cisarua, who come from diverse backgrounds and social groups. In the case of independent youth, their activities are generally pretty isolated, unless they participate as teachers or volunteers. Moreover, many are too old to register as students at the learning centers. Futsal has thus become a space of activity where they can socialize and meet other youth who live in other locations. Futsal does not only unify the youth within refugee communities, but also provides a platform for refugee youth to interact with local futsal players as well. After becoming a regular at a futsal ground, young people develop connections with local groups, which sometimes leads to organizing more serious tournaments together.

Given that futsal brings many people together, it also creates spectatorship. This spectator space is wider for futsal games than other sports such as volleyball or gym, mainly because futsal has become an emerging popular indoor sport in Indonesia. For independent youth, the presence of numerous spectators motivates them to actualize their potential and the hope that they will gain social recognition. When they win a game or show a great play, they feel that they have proven their talent and hope to gain reputations and acknowledgment from a wider audience.

There have been several futsal tournaments between refugee futsal groups, mostly Hazara. For example, at the end of 2016, there was a tournament joined by 20 local teams, all male and mostly made of independent youths who live in Cisarua, Bogor, and even Jakarta. Each team had to pay 200,000 Indonesian rupiah (12.5 euro) for the registration and depending on their performance, they also paid 100,000 rupiah (6.25 euro) per game. According to the organizers, the collected money was put towards the rental of the futsal pitches, employing two local Indonesian referees and for the prize money (Ismail 2017).[3] I attended some of the matches and all players looked very motivated. Each group usually has a coach and a manager who help them build up strategies to win games. At the final stage, there was a prizes that they could win, although the prize was not their sole goal. From all the enthusiasm, their deepest desire, they told me, was to show their talent and self-worth and hopefully also to gain social recognition. According to the head of the tournament organizing committee, one factor that motivates them to form futsal clubs is the participation of Team Refugees in the 2016 Olympic Games. In the tournament, FC Shahin, one of the participant teams, wore T-shirts they customized specifically for the tournament with the slogan "Stand With Refugees," inspired on the Refugee Olympic Team's slogan (Ismail 2017). The youth are happy to see their futsal skills and their pictures reported on in the media (see Figure 2).

Gyms and sport clubs often provide spaces for identity formation and negotiation, which allow their members to imagine themselves as future athletes. Engaging in such futsal tournaments

[3] After the research, Henri Ismail published a photo-story article about self-organized futsal tournaments within the Hazara refugee community.

Figure 2. Portraits of the FC Shahin team. They made their t-shirts, inspired by the Refugee Olympic Team at the 2016 Olympic Games (photo credit: Henri Ismail 2017/ News Deeply).

also represents globalization, which the independent youth can be part of (Kirmse 2010, 394). Playing futsal, engaging in competitive tournaments, and showing their talent to spectators are a way for independent youth to form a sense of identity beyond just being a refugee. In a way, they negotiate the perceptions of other people in the community, and hopefully also Indonesian locals and even international people, showing that they are not trouble-makers or lazy. By participating in the global discourse of the Olympic Games and by practicing futsal, independent youth also consume the image of "global" culture. Global consumer culture, whether in the form of music, sports, or media, can provide a way of "expressing a sense of sameness and connection with other young people, both in their local and transnational fields of relations" (Laoire et al. 2012, 132). For independent youth, the desire to tap into the festivities of the Olympic Games does not only express a sameness, but is also meant to celebrate the representation of refugees in the global arena. These motivations make them not only consumers, but also continuous producers of their own agency.

The desire to negotiate their identity as capable young people through futsal even motivated some Hazara boys who were staying in CWS shelters for underaged refugees in Jakarta to spend their weekly allowance to hire a futsal coach (see Figure 3). On one of

my visits to a CWS shelter, I was told by 16-year-old Mehdi that around 12 Hazara boys had been inviting a Hazara coach from Bogor to train them every Saturday from 3-4 PM, because they were preparing for a futsal match in Setia Budi, southern Jakarta (interview, August 4, 2016). The boys from the CWS shelters were going to play against a group of older boys who were also supported by the CWS but who stay in boarding rooms around Setia Budi. They had lost in the previous match and now they plan to turn the tide. Mehdi explains to me that they pay Rp 200,000 (12.5 euro) every month to the coach, besides the futsal ground rent.

> You know, sometimes we are 7 persons, sometimes 12 persons. It means we pay Rp 20,000 (1,25 euro) per person for the coach besides the futsal rent. We have to calculate and make a choice. We only get Rp 200,000 (12.5 euro) from the CWS per month. If we invite a coach, we cannot buy internet data, let alone use public transportation. Sometimes I have to cut down on other expenses because this competition is very important to me (interview, August 23, 2016).

After several months, I heard that the boys successfully defeated the older boys' group. They are very satisfied for the achievement because despite all the precarity they face every day, they had a reason to be proud of themselves and their abilities.

From the point of view of independent youths, futsal does not only nurture their physical and mental health while they transit in Indonesia, it also serves as a crucial active survival strategy to connect with other people, to show their competence to others, and most importantly, to self-actualize their identity as talented youth. Furthermore, futsal helps them to connect with the global world and create a sense of sameness and connection with other youths globally. The independent refugee youth I met were very excited when, in August 2016, the first ever Refugee Olympic Team participated in the 2016 Summer Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. They felt represented, as it brought a sense of participation in the global sports celebration, and a sense of achievement, as refugees took part as world-class athletes.

Figure 3. Independent refugee youth staying in a CWS shelter in Jakarta train together in a futsal field (photo credit: Henri Ismail 2016).

Hip-Hop: Engaging in a Cool "Black Culture"

The desire to be part of global youth culture that motivates independent youth to step out of their comfort zone can also be observed in the case of Oromo independent youths from Ethiopia, who gain popularity within the refugee community in Indonesia through hip-hop music. I discuss this case for two reasons: first, this is a story of Oromo youth from Ethiopia, a group which is largely overlooked by researchers working on refugee issues in Indonesia given their small number (approximately 200 people). Therefore, I believe that this particular case will add an interesting nuance to the stories that are dominated by Hazara youth. Second, I was involved in and able to observe the process of music production and join the group of Oromo youths from the beginning.

This sub-section is about the story of 17-year-old Alex and 23-year-old Hamza, who initially aspired simply to upload their hip-hop music recordings to YouTube, but their journey brought them many more opportunities, and they even became youth idols in the Oromo refugee community in Indonesia. I met Alex in mid-2016 at a CWS shelter and we have shared a lot of stories about his

journey from Dire Dawa to Jakarta and his feeling staying in the shelter. There were only three Ethiopian boys in the shelter and Alex was the one who most willing to talk with me. Sometimes, when I came to the shelter he invited me to have spaghetti that he cooked for lunch, but sometimes he just wanted to share his story without anyone in the shelter hearing it, then allowing me to record it. Alex thought that Oromo youth stories must be spread wider including to the UNHCR given that he thinks that the "high rate of rejected cases from the Oromo community is caused by the UNHCR's lack of sufficient information about what is happening in Ethiopia" (interview, August 5, 2016).

One day, I heard that Alex was no longer staying at the CWS' shelter, so I contacted him through WhatsApp. We then agreed to meet at a coffee shop nearby his new accommodation in central Jakarta. During our conversation and laughter, he told me that he and his two friends from Oromo were planning to make video clips for their newly established hip-hop group. Apparently, they have downloaded some music from internet, recorded their voice singing and self-composed lyrics in a local music studio, and then asked the sound engineer to mix the recording with the music. Seeing their passion, me and Henri decided to introduce them to Dave Lumenta, a lecturer in Department of Anthropology at the University of Indonesia who happens also to be a talented musician. We secretly hoped that the connection would open up campus life for them and connect to university students of their age.

The encounter turned out to be fruitful and Dave wrote in his article that the collaboration had been a "mutual transformation" for both the academics and the young men (see Lumenta, Ariefiansyah, and Nurhadist 2017, 59). Dave had asked several university lecturers, students, and professional musicians to collaborate with the three Oromo boys. To date, they have recorded four songs, have been invited to various refugee events such as World Refugee Day 2017 hosted by SUAKA, and have also played in some campus events. Every time they played, their young friends from the Oromo community, both male and female, joined them as loyal supporters. In one interview from a documentary film about them made by some local anthropology students, Alex and Hamza said "The last time Hamza went to UNHCR, the security also said to him 'Pondok Cina... Pondok Cina…' [clapping] He

becomes famous in Indonesia, you know…" (short documentary film, "Performing Out of Limbo," 2018).

Gaining recognition from a broad range of people really boosted these young men's confidence. Singing, rapping, and dancing on stage delivering self-written songs brought them a great sense of self-confidence and helped in their identity formation as global youth. The negotiation of their identity strengthened their youthful identity and reduced their self-image as a refugee. I had assumed that the lyrics of their songs would be about the struggle in Oromia or the difficult situation they had to endure in transit in Indonesia. It turned out, however, that most of the lyrics were about their youthfulness, particularly about love and adventure. For example, their famous song "Pondok Cina Xarafarra" is about Hamza's experience of making the acquaintance of an Indonesian girl at the Pondok Cina commuter line station and his hope to meet her again one day. The song "Obse Obse" (Patience, Patience) is also a love story, while "Takkiti" (You're Mine) is a love song about an Oromo girl but could be interpreted as a symbolization of Oromia (the Oromo homeland). Surely, the image of youth as fun and adventurous is part of the construction of "global models of youth" (Ansell 2005, 14). This model was adopted – and reinterpreted – by these young Oromo men to easily connect themselves to, and emphasize their sense of sameness with, a wider audience.

More importantly, their choice of themes in the songs demonstrates that when young people are not compelled to represent themselves as weak or vulnerable in order to access rights and protection, they might prefer to associate themselves with something they love and are passionate about. In an arena where they do not have to prove that they are "deserving" and "legitimate" refugees, they might choose to be regular young people with hopes and dreams.

Another important note in Alex, Hamza, and Abdii's engagement with global youth culture is their fashion choice, which impersonates African-American rap and hip-hop artists (see Figure 4). They do not only take hip-hop as their choice of music, but they also embrace its fashion style, which represents "Black youth culture." Almost every time I saw Alex, he was wearing black sunglasses, an oversized T-shirt, skinny jeans, a rapper-style

Figure 4. Alex, Hamza, and Abdii posing before recording a song (photo credit: Henri Ismail 2016).

hat, sneakers, and sometimes a chain necklace or bracelet. When asked about his fashion choice, Alex told me that it was the suitable style for him. "You know, I am Black and I like Black singers… their style and songs are so cool" (interview, August 24, 2016). I often heard him call his friends "Nigga,"[4] a common way in which African-American rappers address each other.

Oromo youth have clearly not been part of the history of race discrimination in the US, so it was interesting to see how Alex and his friends also used certain words and adopted the self-expression of African-American rappers as a "lifestyle." By using the N-word, they were clearly implying "close friendship" or even "brotherhood," but it is also a crucial to understand how they used language to develop a sense of connection with the rest of the world. Their fashion choice and use of language were heavily influenced by the US hip-hop and rap music videos they watched on YouTube and the Hollywood movies they watched online. In urban Indonesia, such fashions and lifestyles are freely available and can be taken from the global "marketplace for styles and identities" (Kirmse 2010, 390), which contains of

[4] The word "Nigger" and its derivatives (ni**a, ni**as, ni**az) is "one of the most taboo and controversial words in the English language" (King et al. 2018). According to Neal A. Lester, in the 17th century, the "N-word" was a sign of disrespect towards African-Americans and it has been used ever since to address them in a derogatory way (Price, 2011, 3 in King et al. 2018, 48). However, nowadays the N-word and its derivatives can also be used to mean "friend" (King et al. 2018, 48) – though this is highly contextual, and depends on who is saying it to whom.

"more than fifty different styletribes" (Polhemus 1997 in Kirmse 2010). By wearing and consuming the rapper and hip-hop style, they connected "materially, symbolically, and imaginatively to a global consumerist community" (Paek and Pan 2004). But more importantly, they wanted to gain certain status symbols that they imagined to be associated with and to embody the identity they desired and thought fit for them (Kirmse 2010, 391).

Here I would like to emphasize the importance of fantasy and imagination, beyond the discussion of consumerist behavior. Given the economic, legal, institutional, and social constraints that limited their choices in Indonesia, the ability to imagine that they had become part of a "global tribe" of youth brought with it a sense of hope, and this "hope is a way to cope with the unpredictability of the future" (Brun 2015, 31). Given that "fantasy is now a social practice" (Appadurai 1991, 198 in Kirmse 2010), these independent Oromo youth tried to cope with their difficult situation by engaging in a global culture with the fantasy of becoming popular musicians, and were already taking some steps to actualize the fantasy.

Youths' multidirectional movements when navigating their difficult situation in transit are tangled up with hope in a way that reflects their position as both "being and becoming" (Uprichard 2008). Their engagement with youthful activities in transit is their "being." But this experience is also cultivated as a portfolio to equip themselves for a hopeful future, which means they are also in a stage of "becoming." Becoming here, furthermore, does not simply refer to a transition from childhood to adulthood, associated with job opportunities and gaining responsibilities, as is generally implied in the study of the liminality of young people; it is also about a specific image of adulthood that they want to achieve. Oftentimes, whether they want to be a singer, a musician, an artist, or a celebrity, it is not merely adulthood that they desire, but rather a different kind of youth.

GENDERED DIMENSIONS OF SELF-ACTUALIZATION

Different from independent young men, independent girls or single women who are transiting in Indonesia face more challenges when

they try to actualize their potential or youthful identity. Hazara independent girls and young women are the most concerned about community surveillance and judgment towards them. Other independent young women, for instance from Somalia or Ethiopia, did not share this concern with me as much. Although Somali girls do face other kinds of challenges in representing their empowered selves due to their reliance on humanitarian organizations, Hazara independent girls and women face more judgments from their community as "bad girls," "promiscuous," or "rebels" for their choice to leave home unaccompanied. Culturally and religiously, Hazara girls are not supposed to be in public, let alone travel alone to distant places, without a guardian or companion chosen by their father or male relatives.

Of the 15 Hazara independent girls that I interviewed, most did not only leave their country due to persecution from terrorist groups, but also because they wanted to escape an arranged marriage. When they arrived in Indonesia, however, they met others from the Hazara community there who wanted to impose the same social and cultural values that had led to their decision to migrate in the first place. For this reason, many Hazara independent women prefer to stay away from areas with a big refugee community and live with other independent girls or women in an urban setting in order to remain invisible and avoid intense interactions. Those who stay in IOM community housing and other boarding rooms will try to go out together during certain times when they will not encounter other Hazara people.

Despite all of the cultural and social hurdles, many Hazara independent girls do still manage to also actualize their potential. Several girls said that they really like Indonesia for giving them much more freedom and the opportunity to experience many things. Somaya, the Hazara girl I introduced in the introduction, told me when I visited her house:

> In Afghanistan, girls cannot go outside. If they go to school, they have to wear a big burqa. If they do not wear a long hijab and dress, men will feel invited to grab the girls. We cannot protest because people will say it is our fault not to cover our body properly. In Indonesia, I like it so much. I can do anything I want. I can have my own phone, can access

> Facebook, make selfies of myself… wear a short shirt and a hijab like Indonesian girls… I can wear make-up, paint my nails, talk to men, and be in the same room with them… I can walk anywhere or summon an *ojek* [motorbike taxi] without worrying that the driver would think I like him. Hazara youth here are now more open minded after a couple of years living in Indonesia. For older generations, many are still very conservative. A couple of months ago, I went to a beach in Pulau Seribu with my Hazara friends to swim and ride a boat. Some of us were girls and no one used a hijab when we swam… The boys were not judgmental. We just had fun […] My mom is in Australia and she does not wear a hijab now. She told me, "I am sorry I forbade you to do many things, I did not know how to tell our relatives. But now you are in Indonesia, you have to expand yourself" (interview, February 3, 2016).

Somaya's statement clearly illustrates that transiting in Indonesia should not only be understood as being "stuck in limbo," since Indonesia has become a space for young refugees to metamorphose. Somaya could exercise freedom of expression, particularly in terms of fashion, and she also enjoyed freedom of movement. She understood that her fashion choices made other Hazara refugees from the older generation raise their eyebrows, but she did not care. She called the short ready-to-wear hijab style "Indonesian style" and she justified her choice by saying that it was appropriate to wear something according to the place where she was living. Although the marketplace of styles and identities is regulated by some constraints, such as "socio-economic, linguistic, ethnic, religious and gender backgrounds and by various rules at the local, regional and national levels" (Kirmse 2010, 390), young people still negotiate their way around and craft them. Somaya still stuck to some clothing rules according to Islamic values, but she played with the style of hijab that fit her current taste: the "Indonesian style." The transformation of dress can be analyzed as "adjusting by learning and changing strategies" (Ni Raghallaigh and Gilligan 2010, 226) or as an "integration acculturation strategy" (Berry 1997). In this particular case, Somaya and many other Hazara girls engage in a broader youth identity by detaching themselves from

ethnic and national boundaries (Laoire et al. 2012, 132).

Somaya's fashion transformation was not only observable by her close friends, but also by a wide range of other people, as she proudly posted her pictures on Facebook – something that she had never done in Afghanistan. She told me that most Afghan women use an avatar or cartoon image for their profile picture on Facebook, because those who display their own face, which can then be seen by many men, will be accused of engaging in some kind of pornography. Posting pictures is considered as promiscuous, which may result in no family taking them as a bride. But again, Somaya does not care about nasty comments from her relatives back home and continues to post her pictures such as when she got new contact lenses, a new make-up look, and a new hair color. For her, it is satisfying and liberating that she can try many things with her body and express it to the world as a symbolic gesture. She is very happy with the transformation she became.

Somaya's story reflects how young refugee woman transiting in Indonesia can explore their curiosity and experience to their fullest. It also shows Somaya's position as both "being and becoming" (Uprichard 2008). While she exercises her active waiting by trying something new and when she decides to contravene the cultural norms, she reflects the stage of "being." Her explorations and "metamorphose" illustrate "becoming" as she is and still continuously transforming to be a new person with new skills and experiences. Even though her physical body is "in waiting" in the transit country, her ideas, world views, and social positioning are constantly growing. These multidirectional movements to harmonize their representation within Indonesia's to "global" culture provides evidence that the girls are not merely "stuck." These independent young women construct their own "poetics of waiting" which means a capability to show their existence when "being placed in temporal relations, gaps, and intervals where the outcome is uncertain" (Bandak and Janeja 2018, 3). Another example of young women's engagement in the poetics of waiting can be observed when looking at sports.

Although some "sites" such as sports clubs are usually inhabited by boys and young men (Kirmse 2010, 390), the futsal fever also struck independent girls and women. Zahra, 16-year-old girl who

Figure 5. Hazara young women playing futsal in a sports center in Cisarua (photo credit: Henri Ismail 2016).

is Somaya's best friend, said that almost all Hazara girls started to play futsal in Indonesia (see Figure 5). It is fun to play and it is a completely new experience where girls let themselves out at public spaces to be "watched" by everyone. Nevertheless, I had the feeling that the motivation of the girls to do futsal was less ambitious compared to boys. The independent girls I spoke to, usually "just want to learn to express themselves" in the public arena and to confirm that they are not closedminded persons. They want to keep up with "global" youth culture as well. Although Hazara communities in Indonesia start to accept the idea that women participate in futsal, several independent girls still cannot trust their ethnic community and think that they will receive certain level of negative judgement.

I met Setara, a Hazara girl in her early 20s, who came from Iran and was staying in Jakarta. She had cut her hair short and wore jeans, shirts, and hooded jumpers. She intentionally avoided contact with her ethnic community and chose to stay at an apartment where several independent boys were living. She told me that she had joined the futsal competition, though she preferred to play with an Indonesian women's team because, according to her, Indonesian girls are "more open minded" than Hazara girls (interview, July 19, 2016). In calling Hazara girls less open minded, Setara reflected a distrust of the Hazara community. Her choice

to be socially invisible in the refugee community was to avoid intervention, gossip, and surveillance. The gendered dimensions of interaction among independent girls and women in Indonesia shed light on the different dynamics of how refugee youth go in and out of the space of (non)existence (Coutin 2000). Given that the attitudes of Indonesian locals and international "audiences" are relatively more relaxed towards the female population, Setara chose to interact more intensively with Indonesian girls. She understood that by choosing to do so, she had more freedom to continue her explorations and keep up with global youth culture, and to develop her sense of identity while waiting in transit.

For other independent refugee girls and women, however, there are many things they can gain if they stay close to the refugee community. The experience of becoming a translator, a volunteer for a humanitarian organization, or a teacher in the self-organized learning centers can expose independent young women to new links and perspectives. In the global discourse about youth, there is always an effort to cultivate voluntarism (Commonwealth Secretariat 1970 in Ansell 2005, 32), and the context of young refugees in transit countries is no exception. Ameera, a 19-year-old independent girl who was active in a learning center, said that in Indonesia it was the first time that she had sit in the same room with male teachers and management staff. She had been able to give her opinion when they needed to make a decision, and had also made contact with international visitors from Australia, Canada, and Japan. In transit in Indonesia, she could gain unimaginable experiences and find a different version of herself that she called "growing." She recalled her eye opening journey:

> The journey is full of lessons and everything that I need. Like it forces you to keep yourself strong… When I was in Afghanistan, one day was just like another. I never met different people. I never met Pakistani, Syrian, Iraqi, or *Indonesiai*… I have met many different situations in here [Indonesia], and different ways of thinking (interview, May 4, 2016).

Aside from exercising freedom of expression in fashion and make-up, engaging in outdoor activities, learning experiences, and

leadership training, and having access to information and meeting international people, some independent women go further and utilize their transit time in Indonesia to empower other women within the refugee community. Kalsoom Jafari is a renowned "migrant hero" who established the Refugee Women Support Group Indonesia in Cipayung. Kalsoom fled Pakistan because she had been targeted by the Taliban. She is a woman, a Hazara, a Shia, and an NGO worker. Kalsoom said that these four conditions were the perfect recipe to be a Taliban target. She had decided to flee after she was almost kidnapped and killed on the way home from her office; her office driver had narrowly managed to escape.

While waiting for resettlement, Kalsoom had started an English class and a sewing workshop for refugee women in Cipayung, which was joined by Hazara and some Ethiopian women. She taught the women to make handicrafts, trousers, and other clothing and encouraged them to have their own income and be more independent. Along the way, she collaborated with Australian academics and activists to make the clothing label "Beyond the Fabric," through which they could sell clothing made by refugee women in Indonesia and Australia. This activity has been empowering women to be more creative and to contribute more to their families.

> I always encourage all women to come to the workshop by themselves, because they can travel alone. At the beginning, their husbands did protest if their wives spent a long time at my house. Now, usually they cooked and did all the household chores before coming to the workshop so their husbands will let them go. Sometimes they will get Rp 150,000 [almost 9.3 euros] or Rp 200,000 [12.50 euro], and their husbands ask for half. They gave it to them so they will be allowed to come again. With the money they can buy sanitary napkins, scarves, or snacks for their children without asking money from their husband or their parents back home (interview, April 4, 2016).

As Kalsoom had prior experience of working in an NGO in Pakistan, she was accustomed to developing programs to enhance the capacities of people, especially refugee communities. Once

she became aware of the fact that not many activities were available for refugee women in Indonesia, she established her own initiatives. Kalsoom's story sheds light on the importance of previous migratory or work experience in facilitating social navigations while in transit. If a person has a university degree or has worked professionally in a company or organization, she or he can utilize these skills, knowledge, and experience to maneuver while waiting. If a person does not have this kind of experience, which is mostly case for independent youth in Indonesia, they will try to do something that is accessible to them. By learning and adapting, independent girls and women negotiate their identity beyond what ethnic and national norms will allow. They often try to associate themselves with a certain image of "global youth" in order to get a sense of validation of their experiment and experience their "metamorphosis" into a "freer" individual.

USE OF THE INTERNET AND VIRTUAL MEDIA

Along with the massive upsurge of internet and digitalization, the virtual world is becoming an important part of daily life for most youths on the planet, including independent refugee youth in Indonesia. Mobile phones and computers have become must-have devices, because they can bring many things from the outside world within reach. The internet also connects youths with anyone anywhere in the world, and can convey their message as well as their talent to reach broader audiences, despite their limited freedom of movement while in transit. Scholars have written that the internet has helped refugee youth to connect with their loved ones in their home country and also to learn about conditions in the resettlement country. Beyond this, youth who transit in Indonesia utilize the internet and social media to increase their capacities through self-education, to broaden their international connections, and to achieve self-actualization.

If a young person does not have any skills prior to their arrival in Indonesia, he or she might not be able to show anything on social media. But the young people are active while waiting and use the internet and virtual media to improve their capacities through self-learning via YouTube and other online sources. In Cisarua,

I met Mahboob, a 15 year–old-boy who had come to Indonesia with his 16-year-old girlfriend, who later became his wife. I was particularly impressed by his British English accent, since I noticed that his other Hazara friends did not have such an accent. I asked him about it, and he proudly explained:

> You know, I could not speak English when I arrived in Indonesia. I used to stay in a remote village in Afghanistan and never studied in a formal school. When I arrived in Cisarua, my mother, who was already in Australia, sent a mobile phone to me. In the first months here, I just sat at home and watched internet. So, I decided to learn English from watching English movies. I watched the movies online and I liked the sound when they talked. I used subtitles and I translated the words line by line for the whole movie. I watched all the movies, over and over again. From that, I learned the vocabularies and day by day my English improved. Until now I still learn and get a lot of information from the internet (interview, March 31, 2016).

I met several youths other than Mahboob who were fluent in English. I also met Shakir, a 15-year-old boy from Yemen, at the CWS shelter. Every time I visited the shelter, we frequently exchanged stories or just joked around. In mid-July 2016, he told me that he had learned 3D graphic design from YouTube. Later on, he downloaded the application and was practicing by himself, developing different interior designs, and the results were impressive. To recognize his achievement, in 2016 the CWS and UNHCR asked Shakir to display his work at the Refugee Day Exhibition in Jakarta. I also witnessed refugee youths learning various other skills from the internet, such as drawing, painting, video editing, and playing the dambora or guitar.

Self-learning from the internet is not only accessible for youth who are self-settled or staying in an urban shelter. Those who are staying inside detention centers also can learn from the internet. When I visited the Pekanbaru IDC, I met 24-year-old Fahri when I passed by his cell that he shared with nine other single males. At first, he was shy, but after learning that I was doing my PhD in anthropology, he got excited. He told me that he had graduated

from the Department of Anthropology as well. He said that he was still studying online and had registered at Kiron Campus (an online learning platform designed for refugees), where he was taking a social science major. Interested in his experience of participating in online learning, I invited him to meet me in a café at the Pekanbaru Mall to have more space to talk freely without a watching security officer. As the Pekanbaru IDC has an "open door" policy, Fahri could go outside for a couple of hours every day. Over coffee and a strawberry milkshake, Fahri told me his perspective:

> The online course with Kiron is pretty tough. I got an assignment every day. But here I have plenty of time. So, I just open my laptop and do my work. I am so thankful that there is an online school for refugees like this and that we actually can get a degree. This way we will not waste our time while we are waiting for our refugee status (interview, November 29, 2016).

Although other detention centers are not as flexible as the Pekanbaru IDC, asylum seekers and refugees are usually allowed to keep their mobile phones and sometimes their laptops. During my visit to the Medan IDC, I saw detainees walking around with mobile phones in their hands. In Jakarta IDC, I learned from a youth that he had to pay an "unofficial fee" of Rp 750,000 (around 47 euros) to an officer to access his mobile phone. In any case, the unstandardized regulations in all IDCs in Indonesia actually open up more space for negotiation, where youths can get more access, including to use mobile phones and computers. Sometimes, the detention center officials even provide the service to sell internet data to refugees.

The tactic to educate themselves can be seen as a "positive outlook strategy to create [a] better future for themselves" (Ni Raghallaigh and Gilligan 2010, 230). Since the 1960s, the global discourse has always depicted rising youth unemployment and school-leavers as a major "youth problem" in "Third World" countries (Ansell 2005, 32). Many independent refugee youth obviously do not want to be associated with this "problem." Even though they are not granted the right to access formal education

in Indonesia, they nevertheless try to stay "on track" with the "global" standards for the educational paths for people their age. The desire to self-educate has to be considered as part of existential survival, and building a sense of sameness with other young people in the world. Education is often seen as a mantra or buzzword for achieving a successful future. This section shows, however, that education is only one instrument used by young people to achieve their desired future. Moreover, it demonstrates that young peoples' imagination of "a better future" is not only about good education and employment, but also about other various forms of desired youthfulness.

With regard to independent girls and women using the internet and virtual media, being in transit in Indonesia does not only allow them to represent certain self-images on social media, but also to cultivate and affirm ideas about gender equality from information they access on the internet. Amiraa, an 18-year-old independent girl, told me about her experience in learning about gender equality from the internet:

> It was funny, because when I searched in Google, ahm… there is nothing, in Google there is nothing different between girls and boys. Both can go, both can work together, both can work inside the home, and both can bring money to the home, like ahm… they can like pay half and half for their children. Half mom and half dad, like paying for the health care of the children, paying for the school… (interview, April 22, 2016).

These ideas were then strengthened by experiences Amiraa had in the learning center where she was working as a volunteer teacher. Learning online about "equality" and "human rights norms," which one can argue are more "Western values" rather than "Eastern wisdom," implies a paradigm shift for women and girls, as well as for boys and men, who are exercising the freedom to access information on the internet. Amiraa was exposed to "Western values" and thus decided to engage in the "global" discourse to negotiate some of the values within her own ethnic and national boundaries (Laoire et al. 2012, 132). Here, we can see how the internet and virtual media have come to be "vehicles of

FACEBOOK PAGES		
Account Name	Language	Members/ Followers/ Likes
Indonesia Hazara Refugee	Farsi	21,318
Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Indonesia	English	760
Refugee in Indonesia	English	1,320
Pakistan Afghan Refugee in Indonesia	English and Farsi	495
Refugee Women Support Group Indonesia	English	2,904
Refugee of Indonesia	English	1,686
Refugee Learning Nest	English	2,266
Hazara Indonesia Asylum	Farsi	1,152
Cisarua Refugee Learning Center	English	4,392
Cipayung Refugee Educational Center	English	583
Suaka Indonesia	English	880
Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Indonesia Limbo- ASRIL	English	120
Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Indonesia- ASRI	English	362
Cisarua Refugee Women Handicrafts	English	267
2015 Rohingya Refugee Crisis	English	78
Burmese Rohingya Refugee (Surabaya)	English	9,007
FACEBOOK GROUPS		
Indonesia Refugee Buy and Sell Group	Farsi	84
Zia Sahil's Grand Concert "Smile for Refugee in Indonesia"	Farsi	11
Friends Who Like Hazara Indonesian Refugee	English	7
Refugee in Indonesia (closed group)	-	149
Hazara Boys in Indonesia (closed group)	-	649
Hazara in Tanjung Pinang Indonesia	Farsi and English	768
Hazara in Indonesia	-	12,212
Rohingya Community Indonesia	English	2,074
Myanmar Rohingya in Indonesia	English	1,144
Rohingya in Medan Indonesia	English	296
Somalia Community in Indonesia	English	6

Figure 6. Facebook pages and groups related to refugees in Indonesia, December 2016 (source: compiled by author).

globalization and its ideology" (Yeh 2014, 103), which is cherished to advance mobility.

Independent youth do not only learn from the internet, but also use the internet and social media to connect and gather information in order to help, support, and motivate each other. In December 2016 alone, I tried to trace the Facebook pages and groups associated with refugees and asylum seekers in Indonesia, and found at least 16 pages and 11 groups that my participants were part of.

A few of the Facebook pages and groups in Figure 6 had been made by NGOs or even international societies wanting to connect with refugees in Indonesia, but most of them had been made by refugee communities themselves. Independent children and youth make up the majority of the members of these groups, where they can learn about current issues regarding refugee processing status, read the stories of group demonstrations in different part of Indonesia, or contribute something to help other refugees in need. In one of the Facebook groups that was followed by Dawood, a 19-year-old independent boy, there was a post about Amir, a 16-year-old refugee boy who had a serious illness and had been hospitalized for 2 weeks. As an independent migrant who was self-settled, Amir could not pay the hospital bills. Coming from a modest family, his relatives back home also could not help him. Dawood pointed to the post and explained:

> After this post, many Hazara refugees helped this boy. You know, Hazara people are very connected internationally through internet, so we can help each other. If there are some cases happening to [the] refugee community in Indonesia, Hazara people in Australia will collect money and they will send a representative who already has [a] passport to come to Indonesia and give the money to those in need. [...] Another case was when a refugee died in Ciawi hospital, but IOM refused to send the body to Afghanistan. The refugees in Indonesia could gather Rp 7,000,000 [around 437.5 euros], but it was still not enough, so [the] Hazara community in Australia helped [through a donation] to send the body to Afghanistan (interview, April 27, 2016).

Figure 7. An independent young man posing with his pictures inside his room in IOM accommodation in Pekanbaru. He sometimes posted his drawings on his Facebook page (photo credit: Henri Ismail 2016).

Some youths have created their own Facebook groups, such as "Human of Refuge" and "Refugees of Indonesia," which were made by youths staying in Cisarua and Jakarta. Others have made their own YouTube channels, such as "Refugeephotography," made by independent Hazara youth in Makassar, and "CED: Comedy, Entertainment, and Documentary Studio" made by youth in Pekanbaru. In these virtual platforms, they tell the stories of refugee life in Indonesia from the "refugee perspective," about their daily struggles, activities, and thoughts, and share jokes and laughter.

Aside from sport, music, and video content, many youths show their talent through art, such as painting (see Figure 7). With the exception of the "Art of Refuges" public exhibition at the National Museum Jakarta in 2018, there are not many spaces for refugees to display their artworks. Thus social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram provide space for them to show the world that they are talented young people. Virtual media is a great platform for youth to learn, to connect with people, and to actualize themselves. All of these approaches are ways of exercising active waiting while in transit in Indonesia.

Throughout this chapter, I have demonstrated how independent

youth actualize their potential and represent themselves. When their vulnerability or refugee status are not needed in order to access benefits, I have demonstrated how young people rather choose more agentic, "youthful" narratives to represent their identity. Of course, when navigating global youth culture, some youths do occasionally still use their "refugee narratives" for some purposes, though this kind of narration is usually in the form of an "empowered refugee narrative." Khadim Dai, co-founder and media manager of the Cisarua Refugee Learning Center, told me that he aimed to balance the story about refugees "out there" with the story from "our perspective."

> There has been too many negative news [stories] about refugees out there, like in Australia. In the media, they call us liars, extremists that will endanger their people, or job stealers. We have to show that we are human with potential. We are here... also women and children, and that we are so talented and not dangerous at all. We need the world to get the balance [of] information about us (interview, March 21, 2016).

In an attempt to balance the image of refugees, Khadim made videos and uploaded them to YouTube to tell the world about the dynamics of being a refugee in Indonesia. In the video "Life as a Hazara Refugee," Khadim introduced his roommates and their daily routines, the entertainments they enjoy such as football, music, and delicious food, and most importantly, the precarity they face in terms of getting official refugee status from the UNHCR while waiting for resettlement. The video won a prize at the PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival on Migration, Diversity, and Social Inclusion in 2014 and became a finalist of the Migrant Heroes Prize at the 5th Olleh International Smartphone Film Festival (OISFF), and has opened up many opportunities for Khadim.

"Strategic self-representation on Facebook" (Bareket-Bojmel, Moran, and Shahar 2015) opens up space both for youths' vulnerable narratives and their agentic narratives. In their stories, they often show the limited access and rights they have in Indonesia. This in turn validates their actions to engage in international crowd-funding campaigns, for instance, to set up projects or to help

refugees in need. On both Facebook and YouTube, I found a lot of messages such as "keep your positive mind," "make your dreams come true," and "nothing is impossible." It is very refreshing to see an initiative such as the "CED Studio" YouTube channel, where a group of independent boys in Pekanbaru make funny videos about themselves with the purpose of making others laugh. In their videos (and in their YouTube channel title), they do not use the word "refugee" and hardly share their problems. A recent video they uploaded was a documentary about 40 refugees in Pekanbaru who did community engagement with locals by cleaning streets and water drains to fight malaria, dengue, and other diseases. Young people in fact do not only utilize the internet as a platform to articulate their stories, but also to create significant triggers to motivate refugee communities to be more productive and innovative. This once again shows that independent youth are not only recipients but also promoters and instigators of global youth culture (Dona and Veale 2014, 13).

Young people's self-actualization while transiting in Indonesia is in fact more than an agentive movement that they would possibly also exercise in a country of resettlement. Khadim Dai often repeated the following statement:

> Why young people are more active here, but they do not do much things when they are resettled in Dandenong [Australia]? You can ask those youth and they will say that all [the] old people are there so they cannot do anything (interview, January 27, 2016).

Khadim highlighted the point that young people's ability to exercise active waiting, particularly in terms of participating in global youth culture, is influenced by the fact that Indonesia is still a "young" transit country. In this relatively new host society, a firm social or cultural structure has not yet developed within and around the refugee community. With the absence of such a structure, there is no hegemonic power to hinder independent youths from experimenting and gaining new experiences in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has demonstrated how independent youth actualize their potential by navigating the arena of global youth culture. Young people conduct multidirectional movements, such as practicing individual self-empowerment, challenging gendered norms to enable self-actualization, and utilizing social and online media to enhance self-representation. This chapter has also contributed to the discussion of refugees as being "stuck in limbo" by demonstrating that transit experiences in Indonesia have created a tremendous enabling space for young people to undergo transformations and exercise agency. Young people utilize sport, music, fashion, lifestyle, and virtual media not only to participate in a global consumerist culture, but more importantly to negotiate their place in the refugee community, in Indonesian society, and even in the international arena. These narratives and practices of self-actualization paint a colorful image of the "poetics of waiting," the "existential affordances of being placed in temporal relations, gaps, and intervals where the outcome is uncertain" (Bandak and Janeja 2018, 3). After capturing in the previous chapters (especially chapters 4 and 5) young people's navigations in other arenas, such as when dealing with structural, institutional, and economic conditions in transit in Indonesia, this chapter has highlighted a more playful side of young people's agentic movements, enabled by the relatively "loose" arena of being young in Indonesia.

Young people's creative navigations show that reproduction of the "limbo" concept when analyzing refugees transiting in Indonesia is not very fruitful. Young asylum seekers in particular are usually represented as being in a state of double limbo – between being an undocumented migrant and having refugee status, and between childhood and adulthood (Galli 2017, 1656) – and thus are typically portrayed as victims. The independent youths I met, however, did not project such an image of being in limbo. In this chapter, I have shown that independent youth can successfully go beyond this state of limbo to successfully navigate the limitations they encounter as part of their legal and institutional status. They also reveal that their young age is not necessarily experienced in terms of limbo, given that they are actively preparing for the future – a future that does not only lead to conventional forms of

adultness, but also to various other forms of youthfulness that they desire in the present.

Young people's navigations while in transit create a great sense of hope (Brun 2015, 31), fantasy (Appadurai 1991), and imagination (Kirmse 2010), which can be a way of coping with their precarious situation. The dynamics of living their current situation to the fullest, yet also dreaming and preparing for their future, demonstrate that locating youth in social discourse as "both being and becoming" (Uprichard 2008) is imperative, given that acknowledging both positions will enhance their agentic capacities. Both movements also reflect the characteristics of social navigations, which are necessary to survive their current insecure conditions, as well as to prepare for future opportunities (Vigh 2010).

It is imperative for independent youth to navigate the arena of global youth culture, because they need to gain a sense of their own youthful identity and not only their refugee identity. Interestingly, in maneuvering this arena, the "production of vulnerability" is almost absent in the youths' navigations, because they are so focused on showing their capabilities. The refugee identity is still occasionally used, but not in a self-victimizing way. Rather, they steer the narration in the direction of "empowered refugees," emphasizing that even though they are physically stuck in transit, their minds, ideas, and aspirations are always active, free, and mobile. Given this, it is evident that when young people are offered more opportunities to construct their own conditions and actualize their potential, they will not engage in the reproduction of vulnerability.

It is important to recognize, however, that the positivity that is spread among young refugee communities, particularly the Hazara and Ethiopian communities, functions both as good energy to motivate the youth to keep going and also as a means of social pressure. I do not intend to suggest that all young people have equal opportunities to engage in active waiting. I acknowledge that the ability to perform social navigations is very much influenced by the youths' social, economic, and geographic conditions, including the ability to make social links with the correct persons. For those who live outside of the humanitarian support system and who depend on remittances sent by their families back home for

their survival, it is more challenging to manage to do "free" things – although some young people did prove that it is still possible. Aside from this, those who live outside the detention centers also have much more freedom of movement and self-expression, and can therefore gain more self-actualization, compared to those who are detained. Some aspects, such as the role of social class in their country of origin, the ethnic community to which they belong in Indonesia, and their previous life and work experiences, are key factors in influencing their ability to perform assorted maneuvers in order to gain self-actualization.