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Unsettling Age: Constructions of Later Life and Support in US Resettlement Bureaucracy

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Abstract

Refugees gain access to benefits and services in the United States through the bureaucratic birthdates recorded in the documents they carry when they first enter the country. Examining how and why chronometric age based on these documents was essential to resettlement was the starting point for my dissertation, which explores and unsettles the connection between concepts of age and aging, bureaucratic parameters, and resources in US resettlement and related social service bureaucracy.

To examine the unexpected consequences of the enrollment of age in the resettlement process, I conducted almost two years of participant-observation at a program for refugee "seniors" (60+) in Chicago, Illinois and interviewed refugee participants and relevant staff. The findings of my study underline the value of anthropological research in making visible the processes of inequality that are connected to age and yet taken for granted in human services bureaucracies. By tracing how the age documents refugees receive from overseas bureaucratic contexts gain new meanings within the US welfare system, I highlight the arbitrariness and inequality of chronometric age as a basis of deservingness for social assistance.

In this thesis, I use an interdisciplinary approach synthesizing critical gerontology and anthropology scholarship to bring attention to political-economic as well as reflexive and intersubjective aspects of what I refer to as *aged citizenship*. I use this term to highlight the importance of the role that constructions of age play in the organization of human services bureaucracies and to bring attention to age and aging as a significant aspect of the governmentality of citizenship. This focus builds on previous scholarship examining refugee resettlement as a means of understanding the hierarchies of US citizenship. I argue that the "welfare or work" (Mirza 2012) approach as well as the narrow "self-sufficiency" focus of US

refugee resettlement policies understood in terms of productive citizenship (Shrestha 2011; Ong 2003; Erickson 2010) has, in fact, relied upon the use of age to categorize some refugees as "non-employable."

Chronometric age and bureaucratic constructions of later life guide access to mainstream resources enabling what I refer to as the patchworked[1] structure of US resettlement programs. Through age, resettlement caseworkers repurpose programs for refugee newcomers and, in this way, create the appearance of resettlement as a "system." Their efforts make visible the contingencies and contradictions of making refugees "self-sufficient" through a shifting cast of mainstream programs vulnerable to funding changes. Bureaucratic processes rely on an implicit construction of the bureaucratically aged, independent or autonomous individual. In fact, refugees become capable of navigating their bureaucratic lives by relying upon others to help them. Thus, the enrollment of age reinforces the authority and particular organization of resettlement that equates integration with bureaucratic integration and removes from view the resultant insufficiencies and interdependencies. To address such issues, I suggest an attention to how age is embedded in the interaction between family and state resources and relationships.

My findings point to the value of anthropology in advancing understandings of age and aging situated in multiple moving parts and dimensions, including how states use life course institutions to manage relationships of citizens to the market. Stripped of contextual and relational aspects, chronometric age enables new meanings enrolled in political-economic processes to be attributed to refugees. Seen as neither "employable" nor sufficiently "aged," refugees under 65 fell into a gap created by the norms of "work society" (Kohli 1991:277) and

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[1] I borrowed the term "patchworking" from Kibria (1994:87), but I introduce a much more expanded meaning of it here as the activity of constructing a resettlement structure through mainstream welfare and aging services via refugees' chronometric ages (see Chapter 3).

the use of age as a means of regulating labor (Quadagno 1988:6; Walker 2006:65). Chronometric age is a useful form of knowledge for bureaucracies. It creates a sense of objectivity and similarity between people of the same chronometric age while obscuring key structural inequalities that contribute to different experiences and conditions of aging. Therefore, the concepts and rationalities by which refugees become legible in bureaucratic contexts make them subject to the governing and political-economic processes of aged citizenship. Rather than applying preconceived identities and norms to refugees, resettlement programs should apply a relational and contextual approach to age and aging that takes into account the practical and political aspects that affect processes of rebuilding a life with dignity.

Acknowledgments

A PhD might be awarded to a single person but, like navigating Kafkaesque bureaucratic systems, is far from an individual endeavor. Behind the scenes, a variety of actors worked with me on this long journey and, thus, deserve recognition for their sustained efforts and support.

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List of Abbreviations

AABD	Aid to the Aged, Blind, and Disabled
ABE	Application for Benefits Eligibility
ADEA	Age Discrimination in Employment Act
AI	Appreciative Inquiry
ARCC	Alliance for Research in Chicagoland Communities
BAP	Benefits Access Program
CLESE	Coalition of Limited English Speaking Elderly
CQC	Community Quality Council
CTA	Chicago Transit Authority
CSA	Community Supported Agriculture
DHS/USCIS	Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
DOA	Department on Aging
FHRAC	Farm Health Research Advisory Committee
ELT	English Language Training
HIAS	Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society
IDHS	Illinois Department of Human Services
IDOA	Illinois Department on Aging
IFRP	Immigrant Family Resource Program
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LIHEAP	Low Income Heating and Energy Assistance Program
MMS	Midwest Migration Services
OAA	Older Americans Act
ORR	Office of Refugee Resettlement
PRM	The Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
R&P	Reception and Placement
RAPP	Refugee Agricultural Partnership Program
RCA	Refugee Cash Assistance
RTA	Regional Transportation Authority
SIV	Special Immigrant Visa
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ("Food stamps")
SRC	State Refugee Coordinator
SSA	Social Security Administration
SSI	Supplemental Security Income
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
Volag	Voluntary agency
WEP	Women's Empowerment Program

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Introduction - Unsettling Age: Translating Refugees into US Bureaucracies

Defining age as a number is encoded into a variety of formal and informal contexts in the United States, from birthday cards and senior discounts to airport security screening procedures. The variety of markers is puzzling--65 for Supplemental Security Income; 55 to join AARP[2]—as is what they define, whether "retirement age," or "senior citizenship," and its relationship to the idea of being "old" understood as a distinct life stage. These markers demonstrate chronometric time or "clock time" (Baars 2012:7) as a major source of age categorization that governs citizens as well as refugees in the US.

All refugees must have a birthdate in order to undergo resettlement even if they do not know theirs precisely. Through a sort of bureaucratic magic trick, refugees, immediately upon arrival become understood as "seniors" by dint of having 60 as the chronometric age calculated from their documents. In this practice, the bureaucratic logic, or illogic, of affixing and managing age through its legibility suddenly becomes visible. It shows that chronometric age prescribes rather than describes a group, assigning and assuming a set of common features for people who happen to hold documents with the same chronometric ages (Baars 2012:4).

Based on these and other observations, I suggest that the term "chronometric age" instead of "chronological age" depicts the situation in the US where standards of age eligibility for resources are applied so strictly that with "a single tick of the clock, one finds oneself in another category" (Baars 2012:32). In Chapter 4, I provide an example from my research of a Congolese man whose birthday was wrongly recorded as January 1 before he was resettled to the US. He could not apply for Supplemental Security Income until he became 65 according to this date.

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[2] Once known as the American Association of Retired Persons, AARP is now known only by its acronym.

That means that only after precisely meeting chronometric age and income criteria, either at arrival or upon reaching the proper birthday in their documents, can caseworkers connect refugees to certain resources and services.

Reducing age to a particular, limited perspective is one way that it becomes governable, and seemingly artificial, arbitrary, "neutral," or "objective" rationalities are also embedded in cultural narratives and political-economic processes (Baars 2012:7; Phillipson 2013:57). For example, the concept of retirement as a fixed life stage originated in 20th century policies aimed at reducing elderly poverty, such as the Social Security Act in the US (Gilleard and Higgs 2005:44). By employing chronometric age distinctions based on an institutionalized life course, these policies left their imprint on meanings of age and aging (Phillipson 2013; Polivka 2011). Recognizing that refugees gain access to benefits and services in the US through the bureaucratic birthdates recorded in the documents they carry into the United States contributed to my interest in how old age defined in chronometric terms informed citizenship and forms of support.

Focusing on newly arrived "older" refugees resettled in the US, my research aimed to address two primary research questions: 1) How were understandings of later life, employability, and self-sufficiency used and negotiated by refugees and resettlement case managers in the resettlement process? 2) What role did age play in constructing a patchworked resettlement "system"? To address these questions, I conducted anthropological research[3] at a program for refugee "seniors" (60+ years) at Midwest Migration Services (MMS)[4] in Chicago, Illinois from 2013 to 2015. Through participant-observation and interviews with refugees and resettlement

[3] Northwestern University IRB Study #STU00092039 approved 4/10/2014.
[4] Following standard ethnographic practices, I have given a pseudonym to the research organization and all research participants.

and social services staff, I sought to problematize the apparent orderliness of using chronometric age in the organization of US resettlement programs.

The purpose of this dissertation is to use observations of refugee resettlement to advance understandings of the political-economic as well as reflexive and intersubjective aspects of aged citizenship in the US. Such issues are not immediately apparent, but studying refugees can serve to make them visible. In this thesis, I use an interdisciplinary approach synthesizing critical gerontology and anthropology scholarship. Constructions of age in the organization of human services bureaucracy are an important aspect of what I refer to as *aged citizenship*, a term that I use to bring attention to age and aging as a significant aspect of the governmentality of citizenship.

I argue that chronometric age lends itself to the "social production of difference" (Fassin 2005) at the intersection of how bureaucracies—especially the state—manage the relationship of citizens to markets. This focus builds on previous scholarship examining refugee resettlement as a means of understanding the hierarchies of US citizenship. I argue that the "welfare or work" (Mirza 2012) approach as well as the narrow "self-sufficiency" focus of US refugee resettlement policies understood in terms of productive citizenship (Shrestha 2011; Ong 2003; Erickson 2010) has, in fact, relied upon the use of age. Chronometric age legitimizes the "systematic production of arbitrariness" (Gupta 2012:6) and reinforces a particular organization of US resettlement based on labeling some refugees as "older" and "non-productive." Studying refugee resettlement, thus, serves to reveal some of the hidden "contours" (Ong 2003:16) of aged citizenship and the implications of using chronometric age as the basis of deservingness for social assistance.

Contributions to Anthropology

Given ethnographers' long standing attention to age grades or sets and age ritual transitions (van Gennep 1960; Turner 1970; Meade 1993; Fry 2010; Myerhoff 1984; Fortes 1984; Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1940), it is surprising that more consistent attention has not been given to age and aging as an aspect of citizenship (Fortes 1984; Sanjek 2009; Greenberg and Muehlebach 2007; Silver 2015; Lynch 2012). Age is an essential aspect of lived experiences, a means of understanding lives situated within interconnected circumstances and relationships. This is true for people generally even though chronometric age parameters depict age as individualistic and determined instead by a relationship to time.

Age is part of the active and reflexive negotiation of processes of migration and globalization and circumstances shaped by personal, social, economic, and institutional understandings of what age or aging *should* be (Lamb 2000; Ruddick 2003; Greenberg and Muehlebach 2007; Torres 2006; Alexy 2011). The social construction of "old age" includes first, second, and third-person perspectives (Grøn 2016), such as being seen by others as old (Vesperi 1985:22). Age and life courses lie right at the intersection of the personal and the social, of agency and social determinism (Flaherty 2013). The relationship between the structural and intersubjective aspects require explicit analytical attention.

I argue that anthropologists must shift age and aging from ancillary to primary concern—on the level of gender, race/ethnicity, and class—as they are always implicated in political economy and processes of governing. One important issue for such considerations is the tendency to fix and abstract age and strip it of contextual and intersectional aspects in institutional contexts. The consequences of such processes, in turn, affect the conditions in which living and aging happen. Studying refugees serves as a way to examine the limits and hidden inequalities of how states manage and organize services and forms of support aimed at buffering the negative consequences of capitalism.

How states provide social services and resources to citizens is determined by age and linked to understandings of time and life course norms. Parameters of deservingness and employability contain implicit understandings of age and aging that influence the government support people receive as well as gender and family relationships and interdependencies. Aging paradigms continue to exert influence even when they do not reflect lived experiences and changing circumstances. Anthropology provides an alternative perspective to these normative and institutional paradigms by fleshing out the previously erased contexts of understandings of age and aging and drawing attention to the conditions and relationships of age and aging as it is lived—inherently situated.

I chose to focus on the political aspects of aging and later life as important among other topics because of the ways that single narratives of aging are enrolled in forms of governing and citizenship. Researching aging in the United States confronts the ambivalences and contradictions of attitudes towards work and old age (Cole 1997) and the moral economy of the nation-state at a time of high economic risk and labor market uncertainty (Ruddick 2003). As Cohen argues, aging might be seen as threatening to constructions of power "as a challenge to the seamless constitution of the hegemonic" (1994:147). Therefore, it behooves anthropology to pay greater attention to this topic and consider how a neglect of aging is itself political.

My approach to aged citizenship incorporates a concern for practical experiences of citizenship (Ong 2003:276) with a consideration of the unique circumstances and challenges of older migrants (Cook 2010:259). Ideologies of deservingness and employability embedded in US paradigms of aging are a part of resettlement processes and its use of age categories. These categories and attendant ideologies also shape refugees' practical encounters with US social service bureaucracies.

Resettlement of "older" refugees depends on caseworkers' negotiations and patching together a diverse and contingent array of resources into a resettlement "system." As a sort of caseworker-in-training, I learned the tactics of casework, including delegating bureaucratic tasks or "doing for" (Longhofer and Kubek 2010) refugees in order to fit them into complicated, inaccessible systems with programs that were not designed with them in mind. These experiences spoke to the essential need for informal casework tactics. These became an indicator of the gaps and messy processes of applying US aging paradigms to refugees' documented ages.

To understand how resettlement shaped constructions and conditions of later life, I conducted life history interviews with Senior Program participants. I focused on the changing work and social support settings of their home countries to the new forms of interdependency on family and government benefits in the US. My research participants' experiences of displacement and resettlement bring attention to the situational aspects of concepts of later life, such as retirement.

In the remaining sections of this chapter, I provide an example from one of my refugee research participants that demonstrates the encounters with new meanings of age in resettlement processes by which they become subject to cultural translations through chronometric age paradigms. Next, I compare anthropological to bureaucratic approaches to understanding age and suggest briefly how such perspectives are relevant to refugees and forced migration studies. I discuss the US resettlement system and its focus on self-sufficiency before finally providing an overview of the dissertation.

"Here, everything has a date"

It can seem natural to associate knowing one's chronometric age with a personal understanding of age and aging. That this was actually cultural and artificial became apparent in the ways that refugees had to learn the importance of their chronometric ages based on sometimes generic birthdates provided to them before resettlement. Saw Tee Wah, a Karen refugee from Burma/Myanmar, was one of several of my research participants who was assigned a chronometric age. He never knew his birthdate until he was given one: January 1st, the generic birthdate adopted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for when refugees did not know theirs. This bureaucratic act told him something about the country where he would soon live.

Sitting around a small wooden table with Saw Tee Wah, his daughter, and my Karen interpreter, Michelle, I asked him about how he got his age.

> Kimberly: Did you know that knowing your birthdate would be important when you come to live here?
>
> Saw Tee Wah: Yes, I know it. Here everything has a date.
>
> Kimberly: Yes, you are right. When you were in the camp, did you know that birthdate would be important here?
>
> Saw Tee Wah: Yes, I was given a birthdate so I knew that it was important.
>
> Kimberly: You know that birthdate is important even when you were in the camp. Do you think that it would be important here?
>
> Saw Tee Wah: Without the birthdate we could not apply for UN papers so I know then that this is important.
>
> Kimberly: So you know that the UN given birthdate is important. Do you also know that it would be very important once you come to live here?
>
> Saw Tee Wah: Yes, I knew that it would be important here and my first and last name as well.

Bureaucratic processes gave Saw Tee Wah a hint about his new context--that knowing dates and how to bifurcate his name "properly" would be important in the US. Beyond that, what his "new" age meant was unknown to him.

Chronometric age can appear objective despite subjecting refugees to processes of translation into the US context. Saw Tee Wah was considered "working age" according to resettlement parameters but had multiple health problems that made it difficult to find work that would be flexible enough for him. Back home, his work as a farmer was seasonal, and family members could cover for him if he needed it, enabling him to continue working perhaps to the very end of his life. Assistance in his new context, however, was much more inflexible as being employable was based on chronometric age or disability definitions.

Such categorization processes in resettlement rely upon fixing and documenting refugees' ages that affect how they are treated. Chronometric age eligibility standards support an individualized understanding of age that distorts it by dropping important contextual and relational aspects from view. For example, that Saw Tee Wah could not find appropriate work was not sufficient to make him eligible for long-term assistance. This approach to producing knowledge of refugees' ages stands in sharp contrast to anthropological approaches based on getting to know research participants and situating understandings in their relationships, contexts, and life courses and cycles.

Comparing Anthropological and Bureaucratic Perspectives on Age

Anthropologists have often understood age as relational, as in kin terms, birth order and notions of seniority, or generational relations. These understandings depend on cultural contexts, which are also subject to change, especially through migration. Zhou addressed this issue suggesting that aging is a "chorological" idea, and "its social, cultural, and economic meanings vary greatly according to place, space, time and individual or familial context" (2012:241). Aging is linked to cultural notions of time (Östör 1984; Baars 2012) and the production of life story narratives that respond to changing conditions of later life (Gardner 2002; Coles 2001). From an anthropological perspective, refugees' concepts of age and aging must clearly be linked to changing orientations to cultural contexts, broadly understood.

Bureaucracy and anthropology are both participants in the politics of knowledge production, especially the interconnection between ways of knowing, labeling, managing, and identifying people with their ages. Anthropology has much to contribute, then, especially in the field of migration and refugee studies, by making visible the relational and contextual aspects of age that become hidden from view and examining the politics of individualized, decontextualized framings of age enabling or limiting access to rights and resources.

The organization of age, as number, stage, or category, is important to bureaucracies but varies according to context, and this variation becomes clear in the life stories of the "older" refugees I studied. In the US, they were seen as near or at the end of their working lives, regardless of the different organization of work and its clearly gendered dimensions in their home countries. At the same time, numerical age, of course, carries with it a range of meanings that vary between government and other institutional contexts. My research helps to clarify important issues of what I call aged citizenship, including the personal, structural, meaningful, artificial, and messy aspects of age, nevertheless, used by bureaucratic institutions as a basis of organization, clear distinctions, and hierarchies. My research shows that these are also important considerations for forced migration and refugee studies.

Age and Aging in Forced Migration and Resettlement

The unbelievable number of displaced persons in the world currently exceeding those of the post-Second World War era speaks to the importance of refugees and forced migration as a contemporary issue. By current estimates, there are 65.3 million displaced individuals of which 21.3 million are refugees, (UNHCR 2016b). Resettlement, one of three “durable solutions” put forth by UNHCR (UNHCR 2014), is, by numbers alone, exceptional in terms of what most of these populations will experience. Less than one percent of the world’s refugees are selected by UNHCR and referred for third country resettlement (UNHCR 2016a). Nonetheless, it is important to understand the experiences of these refugees and to analyze how they fare in their new countries.

Studying refugees and migrants can be useful to gaining more nuanced understandings of aging, and, at the same time, the bureaucratic, social, and political-economic dimensions of age and aging are also important for contemporary studies of migration. My focus has been on the intersections of aging and refugee studies, a topic that is important because of a need for critical attention to age and aging in such contexts (Clark-Kazak 2009; Becker and Beyene 1999).

Concepts of age and vulnerability play a role in defining humanitarian actions and approaches. Generic chronometric age standards are often used to discuss the makeup of migration flows, and they affect how migrants are treated in policy contexts. For example, adult children can become separated from their elders because of household and family definitions based on particular understandings of age in the US. Age categories can also obscure the economic and political actions of refugees (Clark-Kazak 2011).

Portraying refugees as uniform, inevitable, and passive or lacking any kind of agency, part of a prescribed refugee role (Khosravi 2010:73) is also problematic. This issue is evident in the language of refugee "waves" and "flows" that media use to describe the Syrian refugee crisis (Albahari 2016). Nonetheless, refugees can make active choices in their resettlement despite being in camps or other restricted situations that can reflect individual or social motivations. My refugee participants often noted that resettlement was a choice made not for themselves but the good of family and especially younger members. When I asked Bashar Hassan from Iraq why he wanted to resettle in the US, he answered:

> Well first, the most important thing is kids. In this country, they can study and work. We are old now in comparison to them. So it is for them. We know that here in America they help those who love to study. So because of our kids' future.

Often downplaying or denying their future, my research participants often emphasized instead their children and grandchildren. Resettlement was a means of gaining security as well as helping family members reach better opportunities and conditions.

The country of resettlement is an important context framing the forms of support my refugee participants experienced. In the US, systems were mediated by constructions of later life with a complex history including some emerging challenges. Population aging, or the demographic shifts occurring as the number of non-working elderly exceed the amount that can be supported by the working population, is a serious concern among the US and many high-income countries (Bonoli and Shinkawa 2005). Thinking of aging in this manner casts it as a fiscal rather than a social concern (Phillipson 1998:138). The US government considers its "dependency ratio" a problem, despite being somewhat lower than other wealthy countries due to immigration (Vincent and Velkoff 2010). Concerns about how to care for the growing older (65+ years) population can easily distract from the dynamics happening at the sub-demographic level: an increasingly diverse foreign-born portion (Leach 2008) and growing inequality leading to widening gaps in life expectancy (Chetty et al. 2016). Thinking about older Americans as a taken-for-granted, preexisting group masks such within population issues linked to aged citizenship.

Age categories are linked to life course norms and the social organization of labor. According to an idealized, institutional life course, future workers received education when they are "school age" to participate in the labor force until a time at which they can retire. Putting aside the question of how training applies from one context to another, refugees are likely to be considered "off course" in the US because of their displacement. At the same time, norms of age in citizenship and modes of governing came together to equate "older" with not working in the US. Such a situation raises an important question: How do such citizenship and life course norms figure into the integration of refugee newcomers?

Self-sufficiency in US Resettlement

Answering the above question requires first understanding a contradiction between how the US identifies refugees for resettlement and the resources and parameters of its program. Firstly, the US has the largest resettlement program in the world by far. For example, in 2013, 67% of refugees slated for resettlement came to the US (ORR 2014:3). From 2013-2015, just under 70,000 refugees arrived every year (69,933 in Fiscal Year (FY) 2015, 69,986 in FY 2014, 69,926 in FY 2013)(WRAPS 2016a). For FY 2016, President Barack Obama increased the admissions ceiling to 85,000 to target more Syrian refugees, and 84,995 actually arrived (WRAPS 2016b). However, the future of the program is uncertain after the election of Donald Trump (Westcott 2016). Although my research speaks to the uncertainties of identifying refugees' ages from their documents, it is important to understand that refugees already undergo intensive vetting processes (Pope 2015).

Secondly, the US does not restrict refugees because of health[5], education, or other conditions that might affect their integration or employment. During my research, I wanted to know if age played a role in targeting refugees for resettlement, a question that I posed to a Program Officer at PRM working in overseas processing[6]. "No," she answered and then explained that the US accepts who is referred according to the group priorities laid out in the Presidents' *Annual Report to Congress*. She did, however, suggest that age sorting might occur because younger people seem to come forward earlier to apply for resettlement while older people hold out hope to go back to their country before they die. I also learned that age does not factor into the "pipeline," which refers to the process by which voluntary agencies meet to determine which "cases" they take and refer to which locations. She explained that there was "no conscious decision" about age unless an affiliate felt like they were getting too many "elderly" cases. Understanding the factors affecting the demographic makeup in "upstream" referral processes is a topic that I hope to research in the future.

The third point is that despite its apparently accommodating policy, the US uses a distinctly narrow definition of integration, focusing solely on economic self-sufficiency at the household level (Haines 2010). The Executive Director of Midwest Migration Services (MMS), my primary field site, expressed these conflicting priorities of the US resettlement system at a meeting I attended with an advocacy group from Northwestern University's Center for Forced Migration Studies:

We've been saying this for some time to PRM, etc. More and more the emphasis is put on

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[5] Refugees with some communicable diseases (i.e. tuberculosis) might have to be treated before proceeding in the resettlement process.

[6] The Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) is a primary organization in charge of processing and overseeing refugees from overseas through the first 90 days after arrival.

> self-sufficiency as quick as possible, but the priority is on the most vulnerability, which doesn't result in fast self-sufficiency.

Given these constraints, she recommended helping more refugees gain English and literacy skills before resettlement and expanding definitions of family so refugees could arrive along with needed skills and social networks.

The assumption that refugees' ages are legible through bureaucratically constructed birthdates made them subject to arbitrarily precise assessments and criteria of eligibility in resettlement and social service bureaucracies. Employability is formally linked to age in US resettlement policy, with refugees under 18 considered youth while refugees 18-64 are considered "employable" or "working age." Refugees 65 and older are "retirement age" and "non-employable," and, thus, deserving of assistance in the form of Supplemental Security Income. US resettlement programs offered little answer to the problem of how to find a place for refugees that met neither the US definitions of "aged" nor the conditions of employability in entry-level jobs, which were often physically demanding factory or service jobs.

Critical attention to age in refugee resettlement is important because assessing who is employable affects whether households can afford to pay rent and other essential living expenses. Refugees that are not "employable" and meet chronometric age requirements can receive Supplemental Security Income, among other benefits. These programs are often conceived in the US in terms of a state-individual form of reciprocity (Lamb 2009:266); in practice, however, they were often redistributed to the larger household and served as a buffer during resource constraints. As noted above, household composition is subject to the formal definitions of family relations in resettlement policy. Processing can result in families arriving at different times or spread across the US or other countries. The Executive Director of MMS recounted an experience of elderly refugees from Burundi resettled without household members for support:

> We experienced the saddest situation with the Burundians. They grabbed all the elders and left the adult children behind. Some came with one or two kids, or none. They almost died of a broken heart. They knew they wouldn't be reunited. They had been in the camps since 1972. We had to bury him [one of the Burundians] a few months later. We're still serving them seven or eight years later, as if they came yesterday.

My research also confirmed the need for social networks, and I learned that MMS was unique for accepting cases of single "older" refugees where other agencies would not. An ideal multigenerational household arose from the resource constraints of resettlement, but refugee households did not always meet this norm, even when they appeared to based on chronometric age standards.

Another way that resettlement crafted new forms of interdependency arose from the demands of bureaucratic forms of assistance. Refugees are supposed to take on responsibility for their new bureaucratic lives, and being a "senior" relying on benefits can multiply the work needed to maintain them. At the same time, refugees are supposed to become capable of managing such work on their own as they become citizens.

Resettlement is subject to the policies affecting local, state, and federal funding, including neoliberal ideologies reinforcing the rollback of social assistance programs. The US welfare state is also not a fixed entity but a changing cast of government institutions and federally-funded private, non-profit and faith-based organizations (Morgan and Campbell 2011). These issues are especially important for refugees who rely largely on government benefits.

The age parameters of resettlement policy are an obvious imposition on newly arrived refugees with important consequences for their citizenship and broader integration. Age guidelines ignore the desires or expectations of some refugees to work or contribute to their families for their whole lives while also forcing others into the difficult circumstances of being neither disabled nor capable of handling the conditions of entry-level, low-wage jobs. The ideologies of chronometric ages and life course categories represent a fitting of refugees to US systems, including the structural inequalities of aged citizenship.

Ethnography of Age and Bureaucracy

Ethnographic research provides more nuanced perspectives into the relationship between age and bureaucracy in practice. Examining the logic of bureaucracies themselves is an important element of research on age because of the implicit ways that chronometric ages carry with them institutional associations and enable bureaucratic management. The idea that ages "lend themselves" to such management is itself indicative of the politics of knowledge production—that age becomes governable by the way that it is framed.

Based on ethnographic research of refugees' encounters with age and aging in bureaucratic and institutional contexts of US resettlement, I examine the power dynamics of having and being governed by age. Age provides a means of organizing and portraying a sense of organization in resettlement and social services bureaucracies. Chronometric ages and institutional life course categories enable a process of "patchworking" (Kibria 1994) a variety of services and resources together to meet "self-sufficiency" criteria. My research shows that caseworkers' tactics of delegating paperwork to interns and family members and speaking for clients blurred the boundaries of the bureaucratically constructed and aged "individual" gradually becoming capable and self-reliant.

Organization of the Dissertation

The dissertation moves from a discussion of aging and the politics of paradigms in anthropology and critical gerontology to ethnographic chapters that each elaborate on aged citizenship and its relationship to the different layers of resettlement bureaucracy, from policy and casework practices to refugees' experiences. In Chapter 1, I combine insights from anthropology of aging literature and critical gerontology in order to contextualize the theoretical frames and contributions of my research. I suggest how anthropology can bring attention to the always situated and negotiated aspects of age and aging along with considerations of power and political economy. In Chapter 2, I discuss my research context and methods, including the benefits and challenges of my active role as a "caseworker-in-training" at Midwest Migration Services. The caseworker-client relationship informed the context of the interviews I conducted with my refugee participants and invited me to reflect and revisit institutional life course biases from an entangled approach. In Chapter 3, I consider how age facilitates the structure of resettlement, a product of the active formal and informal processes of fitting refugees into a "patchworked" assortment of social services and resources subject to trends, budget cuts and politics. To demonstrate the relative autonomy and precariousness of such a resettlement approach, I offer two cases of age-targeted programs in this chapter: a multigenerational refugee farm project and a public transportation program for seniors in Illinois. In Chapter 4, I examine the use of chronometric age on refugees' documents by tracing how they are established and recorded in overseas bureaucratic contexts and then incorporated into the US resettlement program and Social Security system. I analyze the politics of the legibility of age and aging and the use of chronometric age as the basis of deservingness for later life support. Chapter 5 is based on life history interviews with my refugee participants that provide a view into their past lives as well as their varying relationships to formal life course institutions, such as education. Importantly, my interviews suggest that family intergenerational relations are entangled with institutional paradigms of age; therefore, it is important to understand how families mediate the organization of state resources and life course institutions. In Chapter 6, I discuss caseworkers' tactics for navigating the complicated bureaucratic processes of social service agencies that need clients to appear to act autonomously. With caseworkers "doing for" (Longhofer, Kubek, and Floersch 2010) "seniors" and delegating to others, autonomy and self-sufficiency in inaccessible systems creates new forms of interdependency. In the conclusion, I reiterate the interconnection between the bureaucratic framings of age and aging with the structure of refugee resettlement and its insufficiencies. I suggest that my ethnography of refugee resettlement illustrates the value of focusing explicit analytical attention on age and aging for critically examining bureaucracies in general and especially those of the welfare state. I also provide practical suggestions for refugee research and resettlement policies to take into account age relations and contexts and warn of the power dynamics of applying notions of age that ignore these dimensions. In order to make the dynamics described here visible, I begin by discussing the political dimensions of age and aging, the welfare state, and citizenship in the following chapter.

Chapter 1 - Governed by Age: Anthropology of Aging and the Politics of Paradigms

This research project shows that displacement affects conditions of later life, showing the limits of paradigms of aging and deservingness in the US Social Security system. Family members become separated; private wealth might be lost or used up; livelihoods are difficult to reproduce; and pensions in home countries often require being a citizen and some access to territory. Many of the refugees that I interviewed had lost not just livelihoods but also land, houses, and pensions. Meanwhile, working or relying on family members in a new environment was a very great challenge.

Still my refugee research participants were somewhat lucky to be among a select group that underwent third-country resettlement. In the US, they gained access to benefits, albeit through US paradigms of aging. Being in a situation where they could call upon a government to help them was a positive change after experiences of exclusion, marginalization, and waiting in tenuous situations where access to work or education was limited. Still, how effectively can US paradigms of aging serve to counter the losses associated with such conditions of displacement especially for later life? And how might assumptions about "later life" as equated to retirement make refugees more vulnerable in the US? These are questions that I address in the subsequent chapters of this dissertation, but they first require some theoretical grounding. The purpose of this chapter is to bring together different frameworks that make visible some of the hidden inequalities and politics of seemingly apolitical processes of age categorization.

Without qualms, the people that I spoke with told me that the US government should help people in need that had missed opportunities or could not support themselves. In Bhutan, Puna Katwal had never gone to school, and she had spent 18 years in a refugee camp in Nepal. Upon arriving in Chicago, she was robbed and attacked in her neighborhood. Now she receives SSI based on disability and seldom leaves the house. She told me in an interview, "As long as we are able to work, we will work. But, if there is no way at all to save for our old age, what can we do? The government must provide benefits for our survival." Another participant, Ishtar Odisho from Iraq, also thought that the government should provide for necessities. She said, "The most important thing is rent. As for food and drink, they give the Link[7] card." Many of my participants thought that the government should help them, but they also recognized that what they received was not really sufficient. Shivaraj Pandey from Bhutan explained her need for public assistance: "If I would not get SSI and other public benefits, life would be miserable. We would have to rely completely on children. It would be hard for them to pay rent and bills and also to take care of us." My participants recognized the financial pressures of resettlement, that their children could not necessarily support them under these new conditions. One of my participants who had been in the country for almost seven years, Hpo Hkwe, understood that his situation was different than for many people in the US, who would receive or had saved some financial support for retirement. He said, "Here in this country, most people who work will receive a pension when they grow old. However, we don't have pensions. So, they have to support us. They should support us because, to be honest . . . my children cannot support us. So we rely on the government." He recognized that as a refugee, he had to rely on the government and that was different than US citizens, who paid into Social Security or private retirement plans.

It was remarkable that they made claims for government support despite having experienced many years without citizenship or its benefits. Still, they were glad to get government assistance, which was more predictable and reliable than relying on family

[7] In Illinois, people receive food stamps (SNAP) and cash assistance on the Link card; it works like a debit card.

members. Bashar Hassan said, “One has to say ‘Thank God that we can get them.’ We are people who are considered foreigners yet we are receiving benefits from them so we are thankful.” That my participants were receiving some of the benefits of citizenship was indeed remarkable given the hardships many had endured, but their access to social citizenship, including basic economic security (Katz 2002:344 citing Marshall 1950), was contingent on US categories of deservingness. Helping refugees through such categories and mainstreaming approaches limited the assistance given, created bureaucratic problems to manage, and obscured the differences between refugees and the significance of past experiences of marginalization on their circumstances in the US.

Research on the resettlement of “older” refugees provides insight into the governmentality of aged citizenship in the US, including how inequalities and forms of social control become institutionalized in categories and claims for support. These include issues that I discuss in this chapter: how retirement policies reinforce “work society” (Kohli 1991:277) and contribute to devaluing workers seen as “older” (Quadagno 1988:6; Walker 2006:65) as well as inequalities in later life based on gender, race, and class (Cruikshank 2003). Because refugees become subject to the parameters of Social Security and other Older Americans Act policies, research on resettlement provides an opportunity to engage a set of theoretically rich issues of citizenship and inequality in the US welfare state. By using the term “aged,” I bring attention to the inequalities of being labeled and governed by age and aging paradigms in the welfare state to understand their insufficiency as a basis for assisting refugees.

This chapter aims to craft an interdisciplinary approach that integrates critical gerontology and anthropology to advance understandings of age and aging. First I trace developments in the anthropology of age and aging that, over time, have moved towards more critical understandings that confront cultural underpinnings that initially seemed universal. I consider the value of the anthropology of aging and migration as a means of further unsettling paradigms and their configurations in political economy. Next, I shift to a consideration of the political economy of aged citizenship and the governmentality of age and aging based on studies in the field of critical gerontology and related scholarship of retirement and welfare policies. Finally, I suggest a synthesis of frameworks based on reflexive modernity to situate aged citizenship in political economy, including the relationship between processes of individualization and neoliberal transformations, while bringing attention to the always situated and negotiated aspects of aged identities. Overall, this chapter outlines the frameworks needed to make visible the politics of being aged in processes of resettlement, from the use of chronometric ages as a basis for mainstreaming refugees to the tactics and patchworking of the ad hoc resettlement structure.

Anthropology: From Age Sets to Global Dimensions of Aging

Age has always been a concern for anthropologists, but they have not always engaged explicitly with aging and age paradigms in citizenship and institutional contexts. To some extent, this lack of attention has to do with how the discipline defined its subject matter as well as early assumptions of the universal, biological basis of age, which anthropologists eventually challenged. Early theoretical approaches might have caused some anthropologists to ignore the ages of their informants or their own ages relative to them. The lack of attention to the age positionality of their interlocutors as well as themselves (Cohen 1994) created a gap in anthropological understandings of age and aging and a blind spot in the general advancement of the discipline.

When anthropologists finally turned their attention to the elderly, their approaches exhibited some problems. For example, scholars conducting research in the US exhibited a lack of critical attention to the political and cultural construction of the elderly as a segregated group and aging as inevitable decline. Cohen criticized this "geroanthropology" for numerous generalizations and called it a sub-discipline "articulated to demonstrate the normality of old age by segregating its study and treatment from that of young and middle adulthood" (Cohen 1994:142). His criticisms are just as relevant to research conducted today in terms of the importance of examining critically the basis of such age segregations, and some of the recent critical gerontology and anthropology of age scholarship that I describe below has done just that by placing age at the center of analysis. Below I discuss some developments in the anthropology of age as its scholars challenged the assumed roles of biology and chronology in aging.

Chronological Age and Aging in Anthropology

A previous neglect of chronological age, citizenship, and institutions in anthropology might have arisen from the disciplinary division of labor, with only sociologists studying societies with formal or bureaucratic institutions in Western contexts (Bateson 2013). On the other hand, focusing their attention to "remote" societies was useful for anthropologists challenging the aspects of life courses or stages that seemed universal or biologically based. Margaret Mead's study of adolescence, Coming of Age in Samoa (2001 originally published in 1928) is an example of such an ethnography.

The holistic approach to culture in ethnographic monographs obscured or failed to attend to the embeddedness of seemingly secluded and "remote" cultures in larger structures, such as colonialism. However, by considering chronometric or chronological ages as belonging to the West, anthropologists might have missed the ways these rationalities shaped the lives of their interlocutors. Such an exclusion is strange given that a preoccupation with numbers was central to colonialism and its bureaucratic apparatuses (Appadurai 1993). Fortes, in contrasting Western norms and generational understandings of age, unwittingly gave an example that suggests age was enrolled in colonial encounters. He wrote about the Tallensi (in a footnote):

> I learned that it had become customary in some quarters for newly nubile girls to be recorded as being 16 years of age though their dates of birth were unknown (1984:110).

His hypothesis was that this practice related to the head tax in the colonial administration, but I find the anecdote raises so many questions of the intersecting meanings. Whatever their influence in the past, today it is hard to imagine a field context where bureaucratic and institutional contexts would not influence concepts of age and aging.

The introduction to the book where Fortes' contribution is found, <u>Age and Anthropological Theory</u> (Kertzer and Keith 1984), provides some sense of disciplinary tendencies of the time: a focus on nature/culture distinctions with almost no mention of the political dimensions. Perhaps this is what pushed Cohen to call for "a political phenomenology of age" (Cohen 1994:152) that takes "a critical focus on the rationalities and hegemonies through which aging is experienced and represented" (1994:151). However, in Fortes' chapter in this book, he made some interesting and relevant observations. He wrote that "the politico-jural regulation of our lives in terms of chronological age constrains us from birth to death and in all our activities," whether personal, economic, civic, moral, or educational (Fortes 1984:108). Criticizing anthropologists for reverting to the "habit" of using chronological ages to describe their informants, he wrote of a cultural apparatus that establishes age as chronological, "independent of and neutral in regard to both the biological substructure and the social incorporation of maturational stages" (Fortes 1984:101). This attention to time was taken up in another chapter in the book by Östör (1984), who suggested an attention to the historical and social development of chronological time in the US. Moving from an understanding of age based on chronological, universal, biological "stages" to view a widening role of socialization at all ages was an important development in anthropology.

Challenging Biological "Stages"

Despite the contributions of Mead, anthropology of age suffered early on from a kind of biological determinism, as Fortes suggests in the quotation cited above. The idea was that cultures simply differed in terms of their segregation of a life course with universal aspects; biology served as a sort of substrate for cultural notions of age. Keith and Kertzer wrote, "Since all of human culture rests on a biological foundation, each community's definition of the nature/culture boundary is part of a cultural map, and a promising topic for anthropological investigation" (1984:21). Nature/culture distinctions in age and aging are themselves cultural and, thus, an interesting point of study, as Keith and Kertzer suggest despite their problematic treatment of biology as foundation. A focus on the role of culture and socialization has opened up new insights in anthropology of age.

Learning how to act one's age clearly applies throughout life, from beginning to end (Dannefer and Daub 2009)[8]. Berman recently challenged the concept of immaturity of childhood with her findings that children are socialized to speak like children (Berman 2014). Rather than a "natural" aspect of childhood, immaturity was actually part of their learned and ascribed role. Vesperi was also interested in how her aging research participants in St. Petersburg understood and responded to understandings of old age and aging conveyed through everyday interactions and the spaces of aging social services and the city (1986:24). As the elderly are subject to the

[8] Dannefer and Daub prefer the term "social constitution" provided by Baars (1991).

governing of ascribed aged roles, children are not the only group being shaped by institutional settings. Dannefer and Daub wrote:

> The effects of such social forces on individual development are not limited to the early years, but extend over the life course and even into advanced old age. This can be clearly seen in ethnographic research on nursing homes, where both temporal rules and behavior expectations override the personal rhythms and responsibilities of residents, while giving scant acknowledgment to the latter. (2009:24)

Control of elderly in institutions such as nursing homes is a reason to consider the influence of such contexts on experiences of aging. This scholarship helps turn some assumptions about age, socialization, and development on their heads: youth can play their roles with awareness, and people in later life can be impressionable.

Chronology seems to have a played a role in the segregation of elderly and negative characteristics ascribed to them. Indeed, understandings of childhood might have affected understandings of elderly. Povlsen et al. argued that the expertise of child growth and norms of development in the beginning of the 20th century reinforced a sense of biological time that contributed to a negative views of life's later stages (1999:23). Other cultures recognize decline, but it is actually "one of many other things that happen to elders" (Östör 1984:284). Östör argues that the cultural and historical development of notions of time, such as "clock time," is key to understanding notions of age and aging in the US (Östör 1984:294). The desire to define biologically-based age stages seems to reflect another aspect of the governmentality of age and aging. It reflects a desire to create knowledge of otherwise variable and uncertain processes, to use biomedical markers and health conditions to uphold the cultural understandings of decline connected to the passage of regular intervals of time.

Through ethnographic research of aging, Margaret Lock reexamined such assumptions of aging, time, and biomedical knowledge. She researched the seemingly stable biomedical markers of menopause as a life stage (1993) and the search for new indicators of dementia and causes of "normal" aging (2013). Her research showed that menopause did not hold up to cross-cultural scrutiny as a universally experienced and understood "stage." Studying middle aged women in Japan, Lock showed that symptoms of hot flashes were infrequently experienced and had no clear term in Japanese. These symptoms and the end of menstruation did not define a life stage as it did in the West (Lock 1993).

There are a number of ways that conceptions of time continue to influence US understandings of aging. Anti-aging and successful aging discourses suggest that time can be controlled through individual behaviors and understandings of the biomedical basis of aging (Katz 2001; Lamb 2014). Margaret Lock's recent work on Alzheimer's and dementia highlights the powerful momentum behind the biomedicalization of "normal" aging and desires to eradicate it (Lock 2013). Defining aging as "a disease for which their product is the appropriate remedy" (Cruikshank 2003:66) gives pharmaceutical industries enormous power. Such topics can serve to bring attention to the structural aspects of aging and how biomedical approaches depoliticize aging—an important set of reflections for the discipline of gerontology.

Of course, stage-based thinking was not confined to biological dimensions of age and aging. The works of Erik Erikson (Cf. Erikson 1980) and Peter Laslett (1991) incorporated an attention to the social and psychological dimensions and shifted away from time as a primary determinant of development. For example, Erikson's life stages were based on a central psychological crisis that individuals had to overcome. A major contribution of Erikson and Laslett was a broader conceptualization of later life in Western society. Concepts such as "Third age" for Laslett, and "Adulthood II" for Erikson pushed back on decline-based definitions to recognize the active roles of the people undergoing development. Similarly, Myerhoff thought of aging as a cultural project (1978). Because Erikson's stages were based on Freudian concepts raised the issue of universality, but scholars still find them analytically useful and relevant (Bateson 2013). Laslett's "third age" has since migrated from social scientific term to institutional contexts and government policy (Greenberg and Muehlebach 2007).

Feminist scholars also played a role in highlighting the social dimensions of aging in the US and bringing these into considerations of gender inequality. As Barbara MacDonald explained,

> "Has it never occurred to those of you in Women's Studies, as you ignore the meaning and the politics of lives of women beyond our reproductive years, that this is male thinking? Has it never occurred to you as you build feminist theory that ageism is a central feminist issue? (1986:21 quoted on Lamb 2000:9)

Patriarchal norms were also ageist and affected women throughout their lives. The emphasis on culture and socialization is apparent in the titles of such works as <u>Aged by Culture</u> (Gullette 2004) and <u>Learning to Be Old</u> (Cruikshank 2003). Gullette emphasized that US concepts of aging, often associated with negative characteristics, were simply one set of many possibilities. To see that clearly meant to "drag aging . . . away from nature and toward culture" (Gullette 2004:102) and exploring the cultural diversity of perspectives and experiences of human aging.

Cruikshank (2003) also draws attention to the universal and normative castings of aging despite its significant intersections with gender, race/ethnicity, and class. Retirement, in particular, contributes to and compounds inequalities between men and women in the social construction of gender relations in the family and household. For example, the subordination of women to the earning power of male breadwinners and the lifelong disadvantages of the gender pay gap in the US contribute to gendered later life inequalities (Cruikshank 2003:130). These are issues that I explore later in this chapter in my discussion of Social Security and its parameters.

"Learning to Be Old" could have been a suitable alternative title for the ethnography, City of Green Benches (1985). It was only one of only a handful of works that Cohen portrayed positively as a model for the discipline (1994). As mentioned above, Vesperi set out to examine how elderly residents of St. Petersburg actively engaged with social ideas of "old" and aging. That means understanding how they are partly socialized and governed by societal views. Vesperi's participants were clearly aware of this influence. At the same time, the distinction between youth and elderly was also caught up in political-economic processes. The local government sought to rebrand St. Petersburg to attract younger people and investors by removing the green benches, a public space where the elderly were visible. This ethnography demonstrates the significance of such attention to the intersubjective aspects of aging and how the categories of young and old are intertwined with political economy.

Ethnography of the gendered dimensions of aging challenged the validity of genderless, universal concepts or categories, and cross-cultural research has destabilized the hegemony of chronology as defining feature of aging. Caroline Bledsoe's study of reproductive planning in West Africa (2002) showed that men's life courses and aging tended to be chronological. For women, aging was not linear but "time-neutral": contingent on being worn out by life conditions and childbearing. Women could even grow "younger" after retiring from childbearing (Bledsoe 2002:226). In yet another ethnography of the intersections of aging and gender, Lamb (2000) focused not on men's or women's aging as such, but rather examined a variety of different social positions. She described her approach as "'focusing on divergent perspectives of age' as a way to examine and address the multivocality of culture (2000). Widowhood, for example, is a very special position that can occur at any time in a woman's life. Because of hierarchical gender relations, widowed women occupy a position between death and life. These ethnographies show how research can bring new insights that expand and advance anthropological approaches to age and challenge seemingly "neutral" or universalist paradigms.

Situating Age in Migration Policy and Social Change

Studying migration processes can serve to further build on such attention to cultural contexts with an attention to changing cultural traditions, social roles, and orientations to them. Researchers have examined the challenges of aging and elderly migrants and refugees (Vullnetari and King 2008; Detzner 2004; European Council on Refugees and Exiles 2002; Lagacé, Charmarkeh, and Grandena 2012; Loizos 2007; Torres 2006; Yee 1992; Dubus 2010). Elderly refugees often experience a loss of status or role reversals (Dubus 2010). Gender relations can shift through access to social services that come with their own hierarchies and power dynamics (Ong 2003:158). Migration changes family dynamics, which can contribute to the vulnerability of the elderly among migrants (Krzyżowski 2011). Attending to contexts and change is important for avoiding essentializing cultural norms of reciprocity in the family that can shift or be undermined through migration (Iris 2012).

Family relationships and interdependencies are important formative aspects of age but are subject to chronometric age and other rationalities in migration processes and trajectories. As part of a chronometric *regime*, or mode of governing through aged positionalities and relationships to time, chronometric age is linked to "cultural macro-narratives" that obscure narrative and other constitutive aspects of age and aging (Baars 2012). Researchers should avoid collapsing age into chronometric definitions and yet still take into account the influence of chronometric age regimes (Baars 2012) and "chronologization" (Kohli 2007:255) in different migration, institutional, and other contexts.

State forms of assistance influence and reconfigure family generational relationship as part of their disciplinary effects. Refugees experience social control through the institutions of the social safety net, among other contexts (Ong 1999; Nawyn 2010). Aihwa Ong analyzed refugees' encounters with these systems as part of their subordination to race and gender hierarchies. Referencing Carol Stack's work on the complex kin networks of low-income African Americans (1975), Ong observed that Cambodian refugee women "were at the center of a wider family network" so that "more people depended on welfare benefits intended for the use of a single nuclear family than met the professional eye" (Ong 2003:136). Gender, race, and class are prominent in Ong's analysis of the disciplinary effects in resettlement. Although she provides examples of older refugees as a problem for these systems and a potential resource for multigenerational households, she does not explicitly analyze age. Encounters with new institutional contexts of age and aging and shifting family generational relationships create new opportunities and tensions. Still, welfare contexts and their parameters of deservingness on an individual basis do not *determine* how families understand intergenerational reciprocity (Lamb 2009:266).

Because categorization and labeling is a part of governmentality, anthropologists cannot ignore the processes of segregating people into taken-for-granted categories of age. Cole and Durham argued, "studies of age must move beyond focusing on particular age groups (the recent trend), and take age itself as an analytic. To do so is to understand age as essentially relational, and fundamentally tied to processes of social reproduction" (Cole and Durham 2007a:14–15). One solutions is to take a life course approach to bring attention to the formation of age relations

(Cole and Durham 2007a:14–15). Another is to attend to family generational relations. I suggest examining the influence of chronometric age regimes in tandem with generational relations as an important dimension to the role reversals and loss of traditional roles researchers have noted. To address this issue, I turn to a broader discussion of the governmentality of aged citizenship relevant to the political dimensions of refugee resettlement and welfare contexts.

Governmentality and Inequality of Aged Citizenship

Powerful Categories

Understanding the political dimensions of age and aging means first acknowledging undemocratic processes of governing built into the very framework of citizenship. Categories are often a necessary instrument of bureaucratic government systems, but they have practical consequences. That is because welfare programs do not just grant benefits but also contribute to ways of imagining and constructing citizens. Even in democracy, "citizens are not born; they are made" (Cruikshank 1999:3). Even the concept of citizens as autonomous is "not the antithesis of political power, but a key term in its exercise" (Rose and Miller 2010:272). Such reflections on the construction of citizens as individualized, self-governing subjects are also relevant to understanding changing constructions of age and aging.

Constructing citizens is part of how programs and policies are imagined in the first place and subsequently leave their imprint on forms of identity. For example, during 1990s welfare reform in the US, "welfare" came to mean a certain set of programs that became associated with African Americans (despite the fact that they were not the majority of its users). The result was that "'welfare' became a code for race" (Katz 2002:322). Government assistance can serve a social justice purpose, or it can reinforce existing social hierarchies. The latter can occur even through the use of categories that appear to be neutral or universal.

In helping qualify refugees for Old Americans Act programs, a process that I explain in subsequent chapters, the use of chronometric age appears "fair," "neutral," or "objective." The problem is that social inequalities affect relationships to the labor market as well as resources for later life. The use of chronometric age as a basis of Supplemental Security Income is not inherently "fair." Schram argued, "Any social policy has standards to measure whether one is deserving, be it welfare, unemployment compensation, retirement insurance, or disability." He added, "Ironically, therefore, the more universal the standard the more discriminatory it is" (Schram 2000:151). Seemingly "neutral" terms, such as chronometric age, can reflect, contribute to, and obscure inequalities.

Age as an Example of Governmentality

Governmentality provides a way of understanding a relationship between the categories and norms of age and the life course in formal government institutions and their influence in a variety of formal and informal contexts. Age lies at the intersection of personal, family, societal, and political framings of identity as well as formal and informal processes of governing. The blurring of formal and informal government was implicit to modern techniques. According to Foucault, governing was "disposing things to arrange things in such a way that, through a certain number of means, such and such ends may be achieved" (Foucault 1991:95). These tactics and ways of knowing populations were part of his concept of "governmentality." Rationalities impose a sense of order through implicit principles (1991:97). They are at once internal and external to the state "since it is the tactics of government which make possible the continual definition and redefinition of what is within the competence of the state and what is not, the public versus the private, and so on" (1991:103). In other words, how rationalities construct the objects of governing in particular ways, as political, societal, or personal, is an exercise of power.

Rose explained, “Political rationalities have an *epistemological* character, in that they embody particular conceptions of the objects to be governed -- nation, population, economy, society, community -- and the subjects to be governed -- citizens, subjects, individuals (Rose 1996:42). The concept of “governmentality” incorporates the forms of self-regulation and self-knowledge--government in the very production of selves. Rationalities make governing possible “‘at arms length’ through the production of a social norm” (Rose 1996:42). Forms of governmentality do not have to be found in institutional contexts but are enrolled in everyday life; however, to understand the governmentality of age, it is also important to understand the political-economic processes shaping formal life course institutions, such as retirement.

Political Economy of Elderly Policy and “Universal” Age

The use of concepts of age and aging in the US welfare state requires an attention to political economy. My purpose in highlighting some of the moral and political-economic dimensions of the rise of retirement and “work society” is to “unsettle” the assumed fairness or neutrality of applying chronometric age and institutional life course norms in resettlement and related welfare and social services contexts. It also helps explain the inequality of the two-tiered US Social Security system (Quadagno 1995). Refugees access the second-tier program for later life, Supplemental Security Income, but are blocked from Social Security because they lack recognized work histories.

The Social Security system was established by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1935 to collect employer and employee contributions in order to provide a retirement income. At the time, the Townsendite movement supported a rival proposal to fund a universal program for all Americans over 60 through taxes (C. J. Gilleard and Higgs 2005:44). This movement grew from the recognition that in the new economy of the 20th century, poverty and the vulnerability of the elderly was systemic not individual. President Roosevelt, however, set up Social Security in such a way as to distinguish it from welfare and to regulate the economy.

That Social Security was not a universal, poverty-targeting benefit underlines the regulatory aims of retirement in perpetuating the supply of labor. Gilleard and Higgs noted, “The legislation was aimed at enabling older workers to retire, creating opportunities for work for younger men with families” (C. J. Gilleard and Higgs 2005:44). Based on life history interviews in Boston, Gratton also argued that The Social Security Act contributed to the removal of older workers from the labor market (Gratton 1986). He found that prior to Roosevelt’s New Deal, which included the Social Security Act of 1935, many older people in urban areas had worked, and afterwards, their labor participation declined. According to Gratton, the elderly were crafted as a social problem, and “the possibility of a penurious old age” was seen as a necessary spur to youthful initiative” (1986:100). The idea was to open up more jobs for youth by giving elderly income. Ageism, he argued, was not a product of “modernization” but a necessary ingredient for creating such policies. By removing elderly workers to provide opportunities for youth, Social Security demonstrates the use of age in the regulation of labor. It also created and mediated a set of policy-based generational relations (Quadagno 1995).

These scholars’ observations of Social Security in the US support the argument of welfare policies not as a means of providing social goods but rather to mediate enough risks as to support the in-roads of industrial capitalism and the market economy. According to Max Weber, the role of the state was to assure the survival of the economic system (cited in Minkler and Estes 1991:22). Wage labor was not always desirable, but welfare policies helped shape “work society” (Kohli 1991:277) where work became the norm and the basis of citizenship. The practical consequences of Social Security also supported capitalist economic systems. Quadagno noted that Social Security stabilized wages for the working and middle classes to provide a sense of security in return for work in the form of an entitlement that cannot be reduced (1995). Wage labor participation, of course, is clearly shaped by structural inequalities. That is why "work society" (Kohli 1991) or economic citizenship (Breitkreuz 2005) can support inequalities in US society, and these issues are relevant to the focus on economic self-sufficiency through early employment in US refugee resettlement.

Thus far, my analysis has focused on political economy, but "work society" (Kohli 1991) includes moral and prescriptive aspects. Studying the institution of retirement policies in Germany, Kohli explained that norms of reciprocity associated with moral economy were not discarded but rather interwoven with those of the market economy in order to institutionalize and proliferate such "work societies" (1991). He argued,

> It would appear that the welfare state in general, and retirement in particular, have been a success: they have embedded the emerging capitalist market economy within the new moral economy of the work society, and thus made it socially viable. (1991:289)

The idea is that the moral and political economy of the welfare state are interconnected, with norms and notions of deservingness upholding the values of labor market participation and ensuring consumption as an activity of later life. Kohli provides a link between the influence of work as a social norm and the process of instituting capitalism in society.

As old age became an object of government management during the development of the welfare state in the 20th century, policies and institutions had a major impact on the way that the elderly were viewed and cared (Fry 2010; Phillipson 1998; Cole 1997), but these institutional developments, however, were not limited to the elderly. Norms about age were converging into a normative and seemingly uniform institutionalized life course.

The institutionalized life course is a product of modern society and government that enrolls age as a part of citizenship. Baars explained, "The bureaucratic regulation of the modern life course begins with the protection of children from work, combined with the introduction of compulsory education, and moves on to regulate retirement age" (Baars 2012:15). Birthday culture and new personal and social meanings of chronometric age arose at the turn of the 20th century in US (Chudacoff 1989). Age grades and the uniformity of the life course in the U.S. in the post-World War II era were the result of the transfer of social welfare from the family to public institutions, such as Social Security, (Hareven 1994) and institutional contexts related to a growing middle class (Ruddick 2003:335). More people enjoyed retirement in the 1960s, and middle class prosperity contributed to the mass consumer youth culture of the Baby Boom generation that has subsequently enabled the rise of third age identities (C. J. Gilleard and Higgs 2005:76). Still, alongside an increasing uniformity of life course, others also developed (Baars 2012:25–26). The problem relevant to my research of refugee newcomers is that norms about age have a regulatory effect that persists despite the uneven benefits of wage labor and welfare and retirement policies in US society.

Unequal Benefits of Old Age Assistance

Norms and inequalities, such as those based on race, gender, and class, informed the social control and labor regulation in the welfare state and constructions of citizenship including policies targeting elderly. The form that retirement policies in the US took meant that they could not adequately answer the issues of the elderly poor, who were unevenly distributed in the population due to discrimination in labor markets and welfare policies (Quadagno 1995). Social Security institutionalized a class-based segmentation, a bifurcated welfare state separated by deservingness or entitlement (Quadagno 1988). This division contributed to emerging ideas about the people who used them and the nature and legitimacy of their claims.

Retirement must be understood as both a product and producer of social inequalities. Although welfare states and their retirement policies are not uniform, attempting to manage the economic processes of industrialization is a characteristic that, according to Kohli (1991), they all have in common. Quadagno argued, “Thus history demonstrates that welfare programs have shifted in response to changes in the social organization of production. They are not unique features of advanced capitalist nations but **have always served to regulate the labor supply**” (Quadagno 1988:6, my emphasis). This issue is apparent in the formulation of Social Security, which provides income based on contributions earned through work, which can be seen as a useful incentive for older workers leave the job market in order to open up opportunities for younger workers.

Ageism and associated moral discourses of deservingness, good and bad old age, preceded retirement policies (Cole 1997). These policies, however, became the markers of old age itself (Vincent, Phillipson, and Downs 2006) and contributed to negative characterizations of the elderly (Quadagno 1988; Cole 1997). The establishment of a fixed age of retirement “encouraged the view that, past a certain age, an individual’s economic and social worth is diminished” (Walker 2006:62). Retirement policies link old age to employability, which creates the basis for age discrimination, or using age to dispose of surplus labor (Phillipson 2013:63). Quadagno argued that ageism grew from “decisions to limit economic access--formally and informally--on the basis of age” (1995:175). That means that a cultural legacy of these 20th century policies is to transform the social meaning of aging to labor market criteria such as employability, opening the doors to the devaluation of older people in the labor market

(Quadagno 1988:6; Walker 2006:65). Such associations of the use of age in fiscal management and constructions of age support a shift from bureaucratic to market individualism under neoliberal policies. Such neoliberal transformations as the rollback of the welfare state and its fragmentation and privatization can erode the various programs on which US refugee resettlement, especially for "older" refugees, depends (see Chapter 3).

Another negative aspect of retirement policy is an underlying assumption about later life as disability. Kohli noted of retirement policy in Germany, "The period of old age was chronologically defined by the introduction of an age threshold was indeed seen in terms of (partial) disability; but disability was operationally **assumed to be the defining characteristic of a whole life stage**" (1991:282 my emphasis). This assumption of old age as disability contributes to ageist stereotyping and the devaluation of "older" workers.

Retirement also reproduces inequalities along gender, race, and class. These can be explained by how "the social organization of production determines the nature and form of relief programs" (Quadagno 1988:6). Gender prescribes roles, such as caregiving, that impact relationships to wage labor and, ultimately, retirement (Cruikshank 2003:128). Such issues have implications for the unequal benefits for later life. Social Security codified a symbiosis of public and private pensions at minimal cost to employers, and women and minorities had less power to negotiate private second pensions because they were disproportionately employed in the service sector (Quadagno 1995). Family formations are also prescribed by retirement. The Social Security Act of 1935 was based on the "mythical foundation" of the traditional family (Schram 2000:150) that reinforced the dependency of women on male breadwinners and a lack of recognition of the unpaid care work of women (Breitkreuz 2005). Today, retirement is about accumulating resources over a lifetime through Social Security, pensions, and savings or investments, and women's disadvantage means that they also must rely on husbands when they have them (Cruikshank 2003:130). The concept of "retirement" is not universal when considering "the many Americans who have to keep on working, mainly people of color and low-income workers" (Cruikshank 2003:130). Thinking of retirement as a normative life stage masks such inequalities.

Old age assistance in the US is tiered into Social Security and Supplemental Security Income. As mentioned above, this hierarchy is reflective of an overall bifurcation of the welfare state in the US that also creates an interconnection between the basis of claims for assistance and the identities of those it serves. The bifurcation supports categorical distinctions between those who earned benefits through wage labor and those who did not that subsequently become the basis of moral and psychological assessments of welfare "dependency" (Fraser and Gordon 1994). The first-tier program users are seen as entitled, while second-tier program users are subject to assessments of deservingness. Recipients are usually considered less deserving or their needs less important (Schram 2000:169). Funding Social Security through payroll taxes reinforced the idea that it was for those who "earned" it (Quadagno 1995:399). It supports the idea of a contractual relationship between state and citizen: that by paying into these programs, workers are guaranteed of receiving their benefits when they need them.

Welfare, based on social assistance, is notably absent from this contract. Schram (2000) argued that social assistance approaches for the poor were supported by the availability of first-tier entitlement policies, such as Social Security and Medicare (that have remained hardly unchallenged) acquired and deserved through wage labor. Welfare recipients were seen as "failing" to meet the standards of first-tier programs, which undermines their claims in a system based on assessing deservingness. Schram wrote, "The paternalism in the Contract with

America[9] reinforced the tie between public assistance's weak contractual status and the alleged failure of welfare recipients to fulfill contractual society's standard of personal responsibility" (2000:24). Such discursive and categorical distinctions have consequences today for how welfare and entitlements—both politically charged terms--continue to be funded and claimed and who is seen as legitimate in claiming them.

Given the tiered arrangement of welfare and retirement policies, it is clear that age and life course norms are an axis of inequality. The institutionalized life course exerted prescribed social norms, from wage labor and family formations to gender roles. Treated as genderless and stripped of class and ethnicity, constructions of old age can mask inequality, rendering forms of privilege, such as retirement, invisible (Cruikshank 2003:2). The contractual discourse reinforces the bifurcated welfare state "by stealth as it silently privileges male whiteness while masquerading as liberal, neutral standards that androgynously treat everyone alike" (Schram 2000:26). It also obscures the heterogeneity between and within apparent age stages or age groups, as well as the desirability of adhering to and fulfilling life course norms.

Thus far my analysis of retirement and welfare has been informed by the attention to political economy critical gerontology and related scholarship of the US welfare state. What critical gerontology lacks is ethnographic observations of intersubjective aspects of aging in everyday processes. As I suggest below, anthropologists have noted the active renegotiation of contractual terms and claims of deservingness for later life support (Lamb 2007; Greenberg and Muehlebach 2007). There is nothing natural about thinking of aging as genderless, universal, apolitical, passive, or biologically- or chronologically-determined, and ethnography can bring attention to how people actively negotiate and respond to normative constructions of age and

[9] This was a Republican Party platform that originated in a speech by President Ronald Reagan.

aging in citizenship. In the next section, I present reflexive modernity as an approach that synthesizes the political-economic dimensions of institutional paradigms of later life in critical gerontology with considerations of neoliberal governmentality and intersubjective aging in anthropology.

Awareness and Ad Hoc-ness in Reflexive Modernity

Ethnography of institutional settings has been important to countering the assumed all-pervasiveness of neoliberal rationalities. Neoliberal governmentality always requires ethnographic attention because it is based on individual self-governing that can shape its outcomes. Rose and Miller emphasized resistance when they wrote:

> Each actor, each locale, is the point of intersection between forces, and hence a point of potential resistance to any one way of thinking and acting, or a point of organization and promulgation of a different or oppositional programme. (2010:288)

Whether something plays into the individualism of restrictive welfare policies, for example, depends on whether actors have the awareness to potentially shape outcomes. Carr suggests that neoliberal subject positions can also become opportunities through “anticipatory interpellation” and “flipping the script” (2009). Kravel-Tovi has also noted how people might exercise agency through “passing” or performing a subjectivity for state bureaucrats (2012:Note 2). These tactics are based in the prior knowledge of the subjectivity to be performed, anticipated, or manipulated. In my research, it was the caseworkers that knew the rules; they could help refugees make use the concept of elderly individuals or couples as “separate households” to find more resources to pool and repurpose as contributions to their families.

The flip side of this attention to awareness is the fact that understanding identities and positionalities can be occupied strategically does not necessarily undermine their enrollment in governing processes. For example, the caseworkers’ tactics of doing and speaking for seniors and patchworking by age is what enabled an ad hoc and insufficient resettlement "system" to persist, as I argue in Chapter 3. They recognized that refugees probably deserved assistance over having to work, especially those just under 65, but their efforts propped up a strained and ad hoc collection of programs threatened by budget cuts (see Chapter 6).

Beck et al. wrote that when categories were recognized as artificial but nonetheless used as an ad hoc solution, such a situation was indicative of "reflexive modernity" (2003). The difference between reflexive modernity and postmodernity is "the existence of boundaries whose artificial character is freely recognized." These "**fictive as-if boundaries are institutionalized into systematic procedures that affect everyday life** (Beck, Bonss, and Lau 2003:20, my emphasis**).** Beck et al.'s concept contributes to scholarship linking governmentality and self-government to the privatization and marketization of "advanced liberalism" (Rose 1996; Cruikshank 1999).

The background for this progression is that modern institutions, in which modern, institutional age and life course norms are based, became the basis for flexibility of the labor market and globalization that undermined the nation-state and contributed to processes of increasing marketization and individualization. Bureaucratic individualism of 20th century life course institutions opened the door for the market rationality of neoliberalism, including post-modern, consumerist "third age" identities. Meanwhile, declining institutional structures exposed individuals to decreased economic and retirement security, eroding the basis of "third age" and further distancing others from the possibility of retirement. Viewing aging as an individual process enabled the erosion of collective retirement institutions, such as public pensions, contributing to the "individualization of risk" (Walker 2006:66). According to Walker (2006), postmodern aging discourses can reinforce such transformations while depoliticizing and distracting from the structural causes of inequality in aging. Gilleard and Higgs (2005) suggested that postmodern aging based in deinstitutionalization was a source of freedom. Polivka criticized this idea of "freedom" in which dismantling the welfare state is seen as a positive change because it gets rid of the "constraining the space where individual liberty can be expressed" (2011:175). Such understandings ignore the disappearing basis upon which a meaningful idea of freedom based on economic security relies for those "who cannot pretend to be self-sufficient" (Polivka 2011:177). Beck et al. (2003) noted that under reflexive modernity, institutions answer not problems but perceived problems and side effects, such as "risks," drawing largely on ad hoc solutions. Identities that originated in modern institutions, such as retirement, are understood as artificial, with declining roles under increasing privatization.

Responding to these developments, Polivka recommended a sort of synthesis—a "progressive postmodern approach to public policy"—recommending that public policies provide more support for postmodern aging (Polivka 2011:180). "Postmodern aging" includes ways of aging outside of the institutional parameters and contexts of growing old in modern society. However, this is where I see a significant disciplinary difference. Where critical gerontologists paint broad strokes of processes, and made recommendations accordingly, anthropologists can bring nuance through ethnographic observation. The link between the institutionalization of modernity and deinstitutionalization of postmodernity is the individual, but age and aging includes active negotiations of individuality and interdependency or collectivity. Such negotiations can become especially visible in migration. By taking up this understanding of reflexivity in navigating different rationalities, anthropologists can observe ad hoc structures and responses in practice rather than taking neoliberal frames of aging as universal or inevitable.

Anthropology of Reflexive Aging

A critical approach to age and aging should recognize participants' reflexive and active negotiation of norms and constructions. Micropolitics *is* politics; as Cruikshank wrote, "the political itself is continually transformed and reconstituted at the micro-levels of everyday life where citizens are constituted" (Cruikshank 1999:5). Neoliberalism is never the only ideology at work, and individualization can occur simultaneously with appeals to non-neoliberal collective or relational forms of subjectivity (Bondi 2005). Gershon argued that researchers should examine processes of translation, "in which people continually struggle to make neoliberal principles livable given their other understandings of how one is social" (2011:544). Of course, just because other rationalities are present does not erase neoliberal influences. As Bondi wrote, "In so far as this vision of the human subject is recognised and assimilated, people are recruited into neoliberal forms of governmentality, even if they also, simultaneously, seek to resist some of its effects" (Bondi 2005:499). An interesting topic for ethnography of bureaucracy is to examine and observe relational or collective aspects of age and aging. Even in the bureaucratic contexts of resettlement, where age is treated as atomized and individualistic, casework practices relied upon and shaped new interdependencies behind the scenes (See Chapter 6).

Understanding processes of globalization and changes to work and state welfare systems should include a consideration of the relational dimensions of age, including the interactions between family and the state. Negotiating aging is part of how families manage emerging forms of risk and (inter)dependency linked to globalization (Alexy 2011; Zhou 2013) or how older people counter and manage their prescribed societal roles (Lynch 2012). There is no reason to consider the elderly as somehow exhibiting less resistance to processes that undermine their security. Certain generational or age frames can make it appear that an age group or generation has more agency than others. Writing of Millennials, Flaherty (2013) critiqued the idea that a cohort would be more self-determining in crafting life courses. Agency is "part and parcel of the causal chain that brings about sociological determinism" (2013:243), and that means that despite their ages, people have the capability to intentionally self-determine their experience of time, a practice that Flaherty calls "time work" (2013:240).

Negotiating aging identities is political; its actors deserve visibility. Recent works have brought attention to ways that migrants and citizens actively reinterpret the terms by which they claim later life support. Greenberg and Muehlebach (2007) explored the pushback to mandatory retirement with people calling "flexible retirement" a human right. They suggested that intergenerational solidarity could be rewritten in the knowledge economy by acknowledging and harnessing the differentiated skills of workers of all ages. What this research suggests is that, once a consumerist identity, "third age" can be taken up to reconsider a productive role. In Lamb's research (2007), transnational Indian families reframed the contractual, moral-economic basis of Social Security. The taxes that younger working family members paid legitimated their elders' uses of SSI (Lamb 2007). Lamb found that "third age" was not a fixed concept but take up and reinterpreted by aging migrant newcomers in Indian transnational families (Lamb 2009). Indian elders actively negotiated individualism and collectivity, modernity and tradition, in their constructions of aging and age relations. These are just a few examples of how anthropology of aging can highlight reflexive engagements with aging identities, citizenship, and interactions between the state, markets, and families.

Conclusion

My goal has been to bring attention to aged citizenship in the interplay between later life identities and the institutionalized life course in the US welfare state. Age and the life course arose in a context of inequality that continues to shape the ideas of age and aging even as their institutional supports are being eroded and called into question. Perceived demographic pressures of population aging, the "unsuitability" of the welfare state, or "generational conflict" (Quadagno 1995) are parts of the political economy of aging in the US and internationally. The organization of later life benefits and citizenship affect refugees resettled into new countries and welfare systems.

As I have discussed, normative ideas of age and aging are linked to the institutional contexts of the state, but these rationalities can take on a life of their own governing people as norms despite changing conditions. They can project a sense of universality or commonality to people in the same age category, often through these categories, despite inequalities institutionalized in the welfare state and wider society. Life course norms and chronometric age can contribute to further individualization as the institutions on which they were based undergo neoliberal transformations and increasing insecurity.

Obviously, the enrollment of age in governmentality makes its related categories and configurations problematic as a social scientific lens. Resettlement and related bureaucracies try to "know" refugees through chronometric age and related categories such as "senior" despite inherent links of these concepts to US contexts. Even in the US, such categories mask privilege and become enrolled in processes of inequality. As I explore in greater detail in Chapter 4, the act of making refugees legible by their chronometric age subjects them to hierarchies of retirement policies in the US based on concepts of deservingness and employability. Research on bureaucracy means looking critically at formulations of age and aging in power dynamics and modes of governing. Categories based on chronometric ages enable welfare bureaucracies to represent themselves as an "objectivity machine" (Hoag 2011:84). In other words, policies can use chronometric age to uphold their "neutrality," "objectivity," or "indifference" and still contribute to the production of difference (Fassin 2005).

Categories of later life, such as "senior," are important to understanding and evaluating the social control or social justice aspects of aged citizenship and governmentality in the US welfare state and refugee resettlement policy. I explored this topic through a review of relevant welfare, anthropology, and critical gerontology scholarship. I considered the hidden inequalities of "universal" categories of old age in the US, including the fact that "old" ways of thinking about retirement, old age, or "third age" (Laslett 1991) continue to govern even as their support institutions change. Old age and retirement are also as a basis of control, devaluing and regulating labor and upholding "work society." At the same time, OAA programs created a basis for social citizenship, and support for public programs like Social Security that have been relatively resistant to attempts at privatization. For example, programs like Medicaid have expanded in recent years through the Affordable Care Act to the benefit of poor non-elderly including refugees.

As I suggested at the opening of this chapter, the story of integrating refugees through age categories should not be a source of only critique. The "senior" category is also the key to relatively more robust welfare programs[10]. In the case of the refugees that I interviewed, the ones who met criteria were provided some degree of social citizenship that they would not have otherwise received in their home countries (often due to exclusionary policies). My refugee participants also became eligible for income, housing, health, and other benefits, that belong exclusively to seniors. Thus, it is important to notice that the "aged" category is a key to social

[10] SSI, for example, provides a much more generous amount than TANF and without the time limitations.

citizenship in the US and, thus, age cannot be left out of examinations of the "contours" of US citizenship (Ong 2003:16).

The framing of age and aging as a societal "problem" is one aspect of institutional and bureaucratic power. Age should not be collapsed into an institutional designation, but its role in reinforcing political-economic and socio-moral relations within the context of the state deserves attention. Like gender, race, and class, age and aging are political and require an explicit attention (Cole and Durham 2007a:15) to underlying constructs: whether biomedical, moral deservingness, or a component of contractual relations in the welfare state and "work society." The social constructions of age and aging are linked to political economy, from class relations in the development and side effects of retirement policies and understandings of "employability" in the regulation and construction of the labor market. These macro-level political-economic changes connect to the discourses, rationalities, and everyday processes of governmentality. Being "aged" in society is a form of control, but it should not be taken as omnipresent or totalizing.

Ethnography of bureaucracy can serve to examine neoliberalism as pervasive but not necessarily all-encompassing. Multiple rationalities of age can and do co-exist; what might have been conceived of as a shift from bureaucratic to market individualism might be a much more dynamic relationship. Agency or resistance is a part of the constitution of power, and that should be reflected in a reflexive approach to aging as "**a constant tension between systemic worlds and life worlds**" (Baars 2012:15 my emphasis).

In the following chapters, I provide examples of the mistranslations and bureaucratic problems arising from the use of age in resettlement and negotiated by refugees and caseworkers. These issues were created by the bureaucratic logic of equating age with chronometric age, opportunities for examining the tensions and contours (Ong 2003:16) of aged citizenship. Understanding the structural aspects of aged citizenship enables an understanding of the need for reflexive navigation of age and aging paradigms in an ad hoc resettlement "system." These are some of the issues that I illustrate in subsequent chapters. Taking an active role as participant-observer was important for conducting an ethnography of bureaucracy, and I discuss the benefits and challenges of taking such an approach in the next chapter.

Chapter 2 - Caseworker-in-Training: Research Context and Methods

Entry to the Project

One sunny day in the summer of 2012, I was sitting on a tarp under the shade of a makeshift hangar listening as Gwen explained about weeding. She was proceeding with a remarkable deftness for cultural differences. Pigweed—she pointed out—was generally viewed by Americans as a nuisance, but it was actually edible, even nutritious. A group of women from Burma/Myanmar were seated on a tarp around her. "What do you think?" she asked as they passed the pigweed around to touch and discuss through their interpreter. These trainings were part of the Global Gardens Refugee Training Farm's English learning activities and also a way for Gwen to make sure the produce met safety certification requirements.

Figure 1-Women gardeners from Burma/Myanmar (DNAinfo/Patty Wetli)[11]

Sitting alongside these women, I felt completely transported. Homemade trellises of salvaged old baby cribs and bed frames laden with green abundance buffered the relaxing space from the usual cues of an urban environment. The Global Gardens Refugee Training Farm was a peaceful haven in Chicago, located next to a neighborhood park. The Farm was supported by a

[11] I chose not to photograph my participants to protect their anonymity and have selected photographs, none of which include my interview participants, from other sources instead.

three-year, $80,000 grant from the Office of Refugee Resettlement's Refugee Agricultural Partnership Program (RAPP). Beginning in 2004 as the Rural Refugee Initiative, RAPP recognized and sought to address the unique challenges of becoming a farmer as a refugee in the US (Halpern 2008). Here I was introduced to the makeshift US resettlement "system" through a program that targeted the "self-sufficiency" of elderly refugees from farming backgrounds.

Refugees from many countries participated, but the majority were from Bhutan and Burma/Myanmar. Gardeners grew foods that were native to them, including a lemony leaf from Burma/Myanmar called roselle, daikon, bitter gourd, mustard greens, lambs quarters, and yard long beans, along with many other crops. Some of these would have been expensive to buy in specialty stores. Gardeners could grow their own instead to use, share, or sell at a weekly farmer's market.

I began to garden through a community organization that had been given a portion of the same vacant lot (one acre was for the Farm, and ¼ acre was for this community garden whose participants paid $75/season). I tried to build rapport with my neighbors on the other side of the line of stones marking the border between community garden and Refugee Farm. Dhanraj Thapa, one of many men from Bhutan in their Nepalese-style caps, did not speak much English but was often there watering. I would later know Mr. Thapa as a client of the Senior Program at MMS and even helped him apply for a free cell phone. He later told me in an interview that he went to the garden three or four times a week. Mr. Thapa and the older-looking men would often hang out and chat by the back entrance of the Farm near the market space. Some of them had managed their own large farms back home. They seemed relaxed in this environment where they were able to recreate some feeling of growing their own food, although only a sliver of what they had done before.

Figure 2-Men gardeners from Bhutan (Nancy Stone/Chicago Tribune)

One day, I was talking with Manoj, an energetic community member who worked with the Farm. Later he would also become one of my interpreters, fitting our interviews into mornings after work at a third-shift job. He was very active in the community and seemed already to know everyone we interviewed. We were trying to determine how to define "elderly" for a project that we were working on together: a year of preliminary research and capacity-building activities to develop a Community-Based Participatory Research Project on the health outcomes of urban gardening on elderly participants[12]. He explained that men as young as in their 40s felt old because they could not find jobs. This comment was the first time I had considered how not being capable of working for a number of reasons was somehow grafted onto an emerging understanding of "old" and aging for refugee newcomers, especially men who would have previously expected to farm alongside family members their whole lives.

The entanglement of age and aging, welfare and social service bureaucracy, and the political economy of work and later life was what I would choose to explore over the next few

[12] The project was funded by a grant from Northwestern University's Alliance for Research in Chicagoland Communities (ARCC).

years. At the Farm, I had glimpsed hints of policies interpreted and translated into practices that were governed through negotiated hierarchies of different cultural sensibilities (i.e. weeding). I chose, however, to leave the Farm as my formal, primary research setting and go "upstream" to the offices of Midwest Migration Services (MMS)[13], a local resettlement agency, and their Senior Program. Still I stayed engaged with the Farm for most of my research period, especially in my role with the Farm research project, from which I recruited three of my interpreters: Manoj, Michelle, and Paw Htoo.

In this chapter, I describe my research questions, methods, participants, and challenges in this project examining aged citizenship embedded in US resettlement and its bureaucratic organization. The research took place in Chicago, Illinois, a city that is home to migrants from many parts of the world, and the state is ranked ninth in the country for the number of refugees resettled: 2,658 refugees in FY 2015 (ORR 2016) or 4% of the total (Zong and Batalova 2015). The primary approach was to conduct participant-observation as an intern or "casework-in-training" within a program that targeted refugee "seniors" by their chronometric ages (60 years and up). I learned the ropes of refugee case management--its formal processes and informal tactics for fitting refugees into US systems and identified refugee research participants with whom I conducted interviews with a partial life history focus. In these interviews, I learned how "seniors" reinterpreted resources meant to serve them as individuals or married couples to suit their own purposes and new circumstances in the US.

In these interviews, I was interested in the relationship between forms of support and concepts of later life. Through this experience, I learned that reflexivity is essential in studies of age and aging because of the ways that deep-seated notions of time based in personal

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[13] I chose to disguise the name of the agency to protect the identities of my research participants.

experiences can contribute to the reproduction of taken-for-granted cultural perspectives. I became aware of my hidden biases during interviews with my refugee participants, which brought attention to the contextual and relational framings of age and aging that emerged from their life experiences and backgrounds.

Ethnography further provides an opportunity to challenge how organizations represent themselves as organized, rational, and indifferent. ORR uses charts (see Figure 3 below) to explain its resettlement processes as a chronological advancement through bureaucratic processes managed by a variety of organizations. This representation of the resettlement process seems organized and yet leaves out the insufficiencies of this approach especially for "older" refugees. This chart also does not make obvious the vulnerabilities and politics of a "delegated" welfare system (Morgan and Campbell 2011) that requires the efforts of patching together different programs (Kibria 1994)(see also Chapter 3). Together these observations underline the value of an anthropology of bureaucracies, especially those meant to be part of a larger refugee humanitarian system. Ethnography serves to look beyond such representations to understand their consequences on the lives of people negotiating these settings and their underlying rationalities.

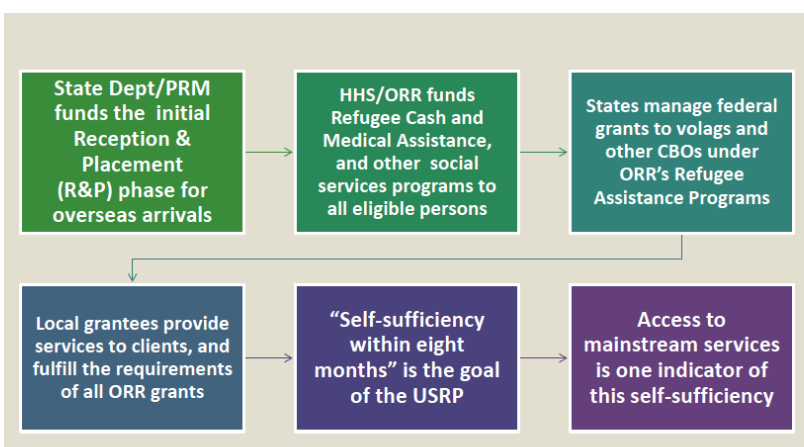

Figure 3-An ORR chart depicting US Refugee Resettlement (ORR 2013)

Entering the Research Context

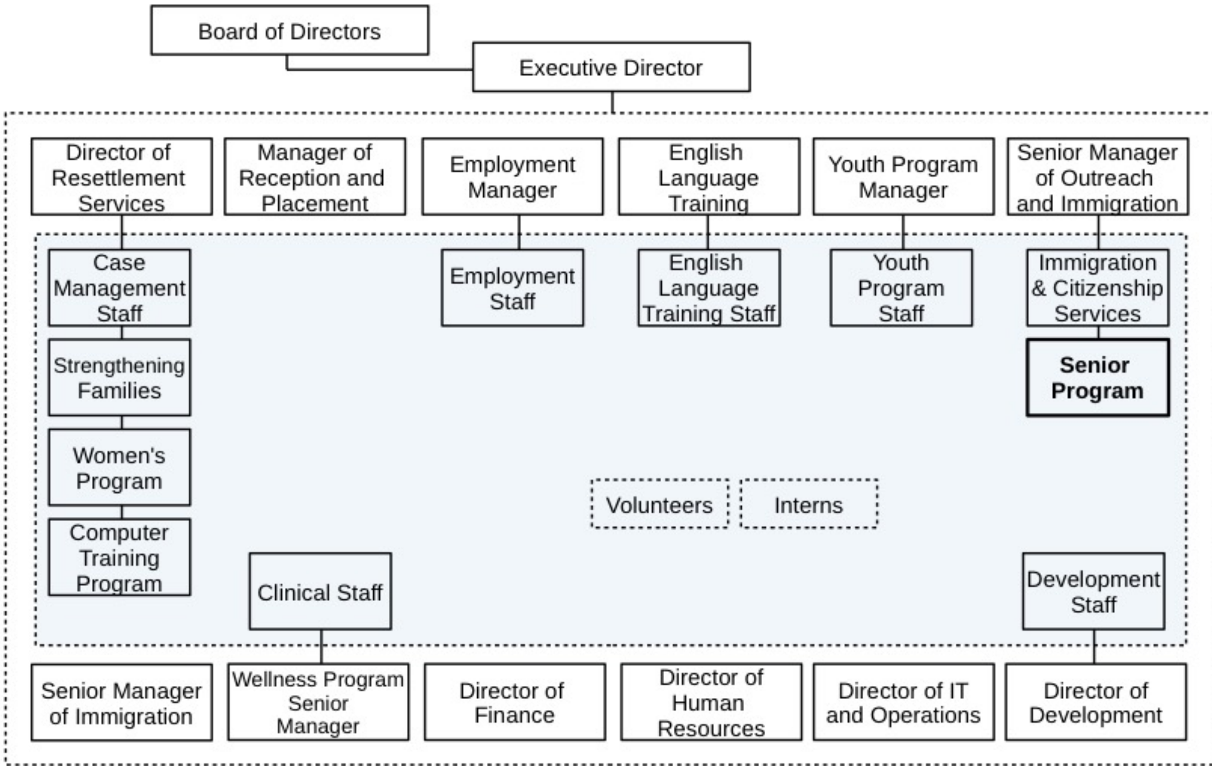

Figure 4-Organizational Chart of Midwest Migration Services. The number of staff changed according to funding, but in 2015 was composed of 33 full-time employees (including 12 mid-level managers), 11 part-time employees, and a shifting cast of volunteers and interns.

To start volunteering at MMS in June 2013, I followed what for me was a familiar chronology of bureaucratic practices: sending an email of interest to a contact that I knew, filling out an application, signing forms, and attending an interview. Natalie, the Director of Resettlement Services or "Adjustment," was in charge of overseeing interns and volunteers. I had actually first met her back in 2011 at a conference on refugee resettlement, when she was an attendee. We settled on a start date, and I began interning two days a week, later increased to three days a week.

I replaced another senior intern before me, and it was nice to fill a slot rather than crafting my own awkward positionality; however, it made it even more important to communicate clearly to my participants at MMS my purpose to conduct research there. I talked openly about my intentions, including during an introduction at my first staff meeting. I also made a formal, written agreement with MMS to gain IRB approval[14]. In preliminary interviews with staff, including Leah, Rachel, and Natalie, I explained consent and spelled out what participation meant and that I would take notes of our interactions as part of my participant-observation. Leah was hesitant about the blurriness of my roles and initially would tell me not to include her comments in my research. I explained that I would always keep her anonymous, and I reminded her regularly about my research role.

From 2012-2015, MMS was one of two refugee agencies in Illinois with a Senior Program. This was good fortune for me because it consolidated programs at six resettlement agencies into one, but it probably was not for refugees, who had to travel to yet another agency to get these services. The goal was to provide refugees[15] with case management services to facilitate their access to a shifting cast of targeted and mainstream resources and social services. The Senior Program had two employees. Leah was the Senior Program Case Manager and worked full-time, and Rachel, the Outreach Worker, worked part-time until she was laid off towards the end of my research period. That means that I researched a program that consisted of two staff members and one intern, me.

Leah was my immediate supervisor and delegated tasks to me, such as making referrals to outside organizations, doing follow-ups with clients, troubleshooting problems with benefits applications, contacting caseworkers at the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS),

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[14] Northwestern University IRB Study #STU00092039 approved 4/10/2014.

[15] Although I used the term "refugee" here, MMS served migrants of many statuses, including asylees, Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) holders, and Cuban/Haitian entrants. My interview participants were all refugees resettled to the US, except for one that was an SIV holder from Iraq.

Social Security, and other agencies, filing printed monthly reports in case files, organizing case files for monitoring, conducting new client intakes, and researching benefits and services. I also accompanied clients to appointments at local Social Security and IDHS offices, assisted with monthly senior workshops and field trips, and attended caseworker and staff meetings at MMS, including a staff retreat in the summer of 2014.

I also helped out other departments, with Leah's permission, when they needed it in order to get an idea of their work and also to contribute to the organization that made my research possible. During the research period, Leah also took on responsibilities for the Immigrant Family Reunification Program (IFRP), which provided refugees and immigrants of all ages with a limited set of services, such as applying for naturalization. That meant that I also worked with clients under 60 years old, usually in applying for SSI based on disability. I discuss further my positionality and its ramifications for the research methods below after first explaining the aims of my research.

Research Questions

I became aware of the conflation of aging and employability in resettlement during preliminary research, which informed the development of my research questions. Before arriving at MMS, I conducted preliminary interviews with caseworkers at two other local resettlement agencies, and a retired caseworker that had organized an informal "seniors" group for some people from Iraq. In these early interviews, I learned about the demographic "black hole" of resettlement—the difficult-to-employ 50-64-year-olds. Resettlement included categorization processes that used chronometric age as a means of determining employability; however, in practice, caseworkers were noticing that being determined to be employable by age did not make it so for their clients. Resources for helping refugees enter the labor force as "older" workers were limited, which made other routes, such as SSI based on disability or jobs as caregivers for even older family members, more desirable.

Based on these observations, I chose to focus my research on constructions of age and aging in the bureaucratic practices and structure of US resettlement programs. In other words, I needed to problematize the taken-for-granted and interrelated concepts of "age," "resettlement," and "system." How did refugees and resettlement case managers negotiate constructions of later life, employability, and "dependency" in resettlement and related bureaucracies? Secondly, I had also observed from the Refugee Farm that resettlement was not so much a "system" but a makeshift assortment of programs. Chronometric age was the means by which refugees became eligible, but criteria and definitions among programs varied. The farming project required no documentation—refugees literally just showed up and Gwen would take them—and targeted elderly through a "multigenerational" approach, which included even the 40-year-olds that felt "old." The inconsistency and ambiguity of defining "seniors" or being sufficiently old or "aged" (the word used for SSI eligibility) was a component of the resettlement "system." If age played a role in connecting refugees to and patching together different programs into a resettlement "system," how did that affect its outcomes and power dynamics?

Previous research has suggested significant "paradoxes" and "disjunctures" between theory and praxis in refugee management (Shrestha 2011:3), which is unsurprising given the nature of human services bureaucracies to fall short of their goals (Lipsky 1980). My study needed to go beyond providing yet another evaluation of the shortcomings of refugee resettlement for older refugees in the US (Gozdziak 1988). The problem is that comparing practice to policy reproduces an idealized image of bureaucracies (Hoag 2011). I took a street-level approach (Lipsky 1980) that focused on caseworkers' practices of managing refugees and their ages in situ and how that related to the image of resettlement as an organized "system."

I also examined the identification documents that created the basis of age categorization processes. Refugees sometimes had generic birthdates, which might reflect being from a rural area, a bureaucratic error, chronometric age or birthdays not being culturally important, or purposeful evasion of bureaucracies in countries of origin. Chronometric ages and related categories reinforced an individualized and decontextualized understanding of age. Nonetheless, it enabled caseworkers to connect refugees from different backgrounds to resettlement and related programs with age parameters. The process removed contextual factors and applied new ones from the new social services contexts in which these ages were "read." Refugees' chronometric ages and documents can contain resonances of their previous contexts that, like pentimento, bleed through into new ones despite new forms of organization and categorization. Looking at documents and trajectories of processing and related practices of managing refugees brought attention to the politics of legibility (Ferme 2004; Scott 1998) and transforming age and aging into a familiar category.

I understood aged citizenship as emerging from the active negotiation of constructions of age and aging in relation to the structural aspects of resettlement and the US welfare state. In this approach, I was influenced by Aihwa Ong's concept of "practical citizenship" as "a set of self-constituting practices in different settings of power" (Ong 2003:276). My attention to age in the actions of casework and patchworking in the resettlement "system" was also influenced by Cook's research on the "welfare citizenship" of older women migrants. Cook emphasized the "formal and informal experiences of welfare rights and services" (2010:259) and the variety of mediating actors guiding citizens' access (Cook 2010:270). An attention to practice and mediators alike was significant in shaping refugees' encounters with US systems and the structural inequalities of aged citizenship in general. That is why I focused much of my ethnography on the bureaucratic structure, age rationalities, and processes of resettlement, including the documents and case files, the tactics, relationships, tools, and skills that enabled caseworkers to fit refugees into programs.

Research Methods

My research examined the practical role of aging paradigms in formal program guidelines, caseworkers' practices, and the mediating role of different actors, bureaucratic processes, and documents especially in connecting refugees and communicating information about them between bureaucracies. I looked at how paradigms shaped refugees' resources, relationships, and the activities of accessing and maintaining their benefits. My methods included interviews with staff at resettlement and related organizations, participant-observation of casework in the Senior Program, analysis of refugees' documents and case files, and life history interviews with participants of the Senior Program.

I conducted semi-structured interviews based on two schedules: one for my refugee research participants and one for staff at MMS and other resettlement agencies. Although I brought these schedules with me to my interviews, I used them more as guides and adapted questions or prompts as I gained a greater understanding of my interview participants. The interview schedule for staff covered topics such as the resettlement process in general, challenges of working with "older" refugees and people who do not speak English, experiences with social services and government staff, and the impact of policy changes on their work. My interviews with other staff government and social services staff members were usually aimed at getting answers to specific questions about resettlement or social services processes, such as the two programs discussed in Chapter 3. In these interviews, I also wrote down my questions in advance, and these usually arose from experiences in participant observation at MMS.

For my refugee participants, I conducted interviews with married couples together and often with other family members present. Children and grandchildren came in and out of the living rooms, sometimes doubling as bedrooms, where we usually sat. In some cases, the women spoke as much as the men, but in a couple cases, the women said very little. Fortunately, I did interview a couple of married women whose husbands happened not to be home. Family members sometimes interjected, interrupted, spoke over their parents, or encouraged them to speak. These dynamics were interesting to observe, and, in the future, I would like to direct more of my research into these household and family contexts.

My interview schedule for the refugee participants included many questions under several main topics: daily life and routines, life histories (including education, marriage, work, and migration), resettlement, English language, feelings about the US, social support, economic conditions, income and resources (including experiences applying for and managing benefits), and support in later life. After explaining and receiving consent, I always began by asking the participant(s) about their weekend and what they did in order to put them at ease and get an idea of daily life in an urban setting. Popular activities included attending religious services and visiting Lake Michigan.

My interpreters played a role in the way interviews were conducted, and, along with family members, they usually helped put my participants at ease about the interview. For example, I asked Hewi Solaka if she was born in Baghdad. The exchange that followed provides an example of one possible dynamic between the people present in the interviews, including me.

Interpreter: Were you born in Baghdad?

> Hewi Solaka: No, in Basra.
>
> Daughter: Tell her where Basra is? Tell her.
>
> Interpreter: Tell her a little bit about Basra and what it is.
>
> Hewi Solaka: What can I say? You want me to tell her in English?
>
> Daughter: Tell her in Assyrian. It is OK.
>
> Interpreter: Auntie, feel comfortable. Think of her as your daughter. There is nothing, you know. She just wants to know. She is doing a research.
>
> Hewi Solaka: We like her. She always calls and she checks if we are missing anything. We do not know her personally, but we have heard her voice. We appreciate her calls. We are strangers but she still checks on us
>
> Daughter: She always asks, if we need anything…
>
> Interpreter: Do you know why she is interviewing you? You told her already?
>
> Daughter: Yes.
>
> Interpreter: Because she has a research.
>
> Daughter: Tell her about the place a little bit...about Basra.
>
> Hewi Solaka: We were in Basra. Basra was very nice. People there helped one another, and they are very good people, but after I got married I moved to Baghdad. I stayed in Baghdad for a few years until my son started working [as a translator] and then it became bad. They put a bomb in a car in front of our house.

With the coaxing of her daughter and my interpreter, Mrs. Solaka spoke not just about Basra but also took me through time and place to the moment when her family faced the threat of violence. I admit that I had intended not to direct my refugee interview participants to such troubling events; however, as Michael Agar has noted, "In ethnography you only learn what you've asked after you get an answer" (Agar 1987:215). Violence was a common topic in my conversations with people from Iraq, especially Assyrians, who at the time were very troubled by the images and stories in social media of attacks by Daesh (Islamic Static of Iraq and Syria) in their country. I was more uncomfortable than them talking about these topics because I was worried that it would traumatize them; however, in these cases, they were directing me to what was important at this point in time, which was what was happening in Iraq. It is interesting to observe that a question about birthplace could elicit a response that carried us so quickly into the present. My intention in offering this snippet is to provide an example of the dynamics of the interview context, such as how my interpreters and my participants' children sometimes interjected, coaxed, and even answered for their parents.

In my interviews with the refugee participants, I only had one or two hours to get through many questions because I did have a goal to collect particular information about people's lives. To this end, I would ask direct questions, such as, "Tell me about the place where you were born," or "What did your parents do?" I would shorten interviews as needed because sometimes people had poor health or got tired. When I asked Kusum Timsina (a woman from Bhutan, 77 years old according to her documents) if she had any questions for me at the end of our interview as I always did, she responded, "I am tired, and cannot speak more. I have nothing to ask." Her son jumped in to explain her health conditions and how it was affecting his mother's mobility. It was helpful to get these details and observations from my participants' children, who could also step in if they noticed their parent(s) getting too tired from an interview.

I have described life history as the type of interview that I conducted, but it would be more precise to say that they were semi-structured interviews with a partial life history focus. I wanted to capture the depth of my participants' life experiences, to bring some visibility to past experiences that are often left out of resettlement approaches. I also wanted to gather certain information about their histories, such as education and work background, that would undoubtedly be relevant to their lives in the US, as Cook suggested in her research (2010). My experience underlines the value of doing so because it contributed to my findings that institutional age standards shaped refugees' lives before coming to the US.

Although I conducted interviews with a life history focus, I was largely in control of the creating a chronology of events that I wanted to cover, such as leaving their country and arriving to the US. I was not just falling back onto chronology (Agar 1987:212) as a sort of crutch. Rather, I was purposefully pursuing a project of piecing together a timeline of their movements and experiences according to my own understanding of what evidence was important to gather. That means that my participants had less authority in crafting stories and sharing their own sense of the passage of time, which is unfortunate because narratives are a part of how migrants make sense of aging and migration (Gardner 2002). Nonetheless, timelines are useful for illustrating to audiences interested in refugee issues the protracted situations that my participants experienced.

Finding ways to examine how social support linked to age for my participants prior to and upon arrival in the US was a challenge of the research. As James Spradley has written, the point of ethnographic fieldwork should be "not to discover answers but to find which questions to ask" (1970:32). My participant observation experiences privileged my knowledge of local systems but left me unfamiliar with my participants' home countries. Discovering how to phrase questions was, thus, a process of trial and error. I could pose the hypothetical situation: If you were in your country now, how would you support yourself? Some respondents understood that I was trying to get at what their "normal" situation would have been, but some participants balked at the idea, reminding me that their country unlivable. To Hewi Solaka, the threat of violence against her son meant that Iraq was no longer her country. They also let me know that they, with the exception of some participants from Iraq, had not experienced changing social roles that come with aging in their home country. Another approach was to draw comparisons between their home countries and the US, a question that was still predicated on knowing what the previous circumstances were like. Of course, the answer to my attempts to pose such questions still contributed interesting answers. The difficulties of asking refugees such questions actually reinforces the idea that age is linked to changing life circumstances and contexts that affect processes of social reproduction (Cole and Durham 2007a:14–15).

Research Participants

At MMS, I interviewed Leah, Rachel, and Natalie at the beginning and end of the research period. Altogether, I interviewed 11 staff members and three volunteers at MMS as well as four caseworkers at four other local resettlement agencies, one staff member at a local Assyrian community-based organization, one staff member at a Regional Senior Center, two staff members at the Coalition of Limited English Speaking Elderly (CLESE), five staff members at relevant government agencies (Chicago Regional Transportation Authority, Illinois Department on Aging Benefit Access Program, ORR), and the State Refugee Coordinator. My interviews with resettlement staff centered on learning about how they viewed their roles in their agency and the larger resettlement structure and the challenges that they encountered serving refugees in general and “older” refugees in particular.

I sought to situate age in relation to forms of support in later life, including problematizing the normativity of institutionalized life courses and an “end of working life” (or retirement). Therefore, I conducted life history interviews of Senior Program clients and reviewed their case files and identification documents. Those participants were 30 refugees from

23 households: 10 (five men, five women from eight households) from Iraq[16], 11 (four men, seven women from eight households) from Bhutan[17], and nine (seven men, two women from seven households) from Burma/Myanmar[18]. These three "groups" represented the largest nationalities in the Senior Program and also accounted for more than half of refugee admissions in recent years[19].

I focused on "new" arrivals that had been in the country for seven or fewer years. Some had arrived only a few months earlier. The chronometric and documented ages of my refugee participants ranged from 55 up to 81 years. More than one-third had generic birthdates. Most were married, but some were widowed and one man was divorced. The majority (25 out of 30) received SSI, but two people worked: one as a pastor, the other in a factory. People from Bhutan and most of those from Burma/Myanmar spent time in refugee camps, while people from Iraq had applied usually from neighboring countries. They had spent protracted periods of their lives in displacement. My participants in Bhutan had spent up to 17 years in refugee camps in Nepal, and I had one Rohingya man who had spent 37 years moving back and forth between Thailand or Malaysia and Burma/Myanmar. Because he was unable to stay, I consider this a period of displacement. Their families were scattered between different countries and states in the US. These experiences in of displacement in camps or urban settings most likely affected how they

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[16] This group included Arabic and Assyrian speakers, Christian and Muslim participants. Two participants were originally born in Syria but lived in Iraq with Iraqi-born spouses.

[17] Most of these participants were Lhotshampa from Bhutan, but one woman was originally born in India and spoke a different language.

[18] This group was composed of people from Pow Karen (6), Rohingya (2), and Mon (1) ethnic groups. There were fewer clients from Burma/Myanmar at the Senior Program during the research period, which made it harder to recruit participants with a more balanced gender composition.

[19] Bhutanese, Burmese, and Iraqi refugees accounted for 64% of refugee admissions in 2013 and 71% in 2012. (Martin and Yankay 2014; Martin and Yankay 2013).

viewed their circumstances in the US, such as feeling grateful when they were joined by family members and appreciating access to health care and other basic necessities.

Figure 5-Overview of Refugee Interview Participants

General	
Chronometric/documented age range	55 to 81 years
Number with generic birthdates	11 (4 of which were 7/1 birthdates)
Time since arrival	From a few months to 7 years
Years spent displaced (camps or other countries)	0-37 years
Number of participants that stayed in a refugee camp	17
Religious affiliations represented	Muslim (Sunni, Shi'a, secular), Hindu, Christian, Buddhist
Form of Income	
SSI Age	15
SSI Disability	10
Working	2
None of the above	3
Relationship status	
Married	24
Divorced	1
Widowed	5

Refugee "Groups"

My purpose in limiting my interviews to refugees from Burma/Myanmar, Bhutan, and Iraq was not for the purposes of comparing three "groups." I chose my participants in order to make translation and interpretation feasible while covering a majority of "new" arrivals. Resettlement staff and even I easily slipped into thinking of refugees as grouped by nationality. In Excel spreadsheets used to keep track of their clients, nationality appeared alongside age, gender, location, and Alien Number, and it became quite normal for me to refer to people as "Bhutanese," "Iraqi," or "Burmese."

US forms of classification tend to reflect a tendency to transform nationality, sub-national group, or religion into ethnic or racial identities (Haines 2007). The evidence countering such generalizations is hard to ignore. Two of my "Iraqi refugee" participants, I was surprised to learn, were actually born in Syria but moved to Iraq after marrying men from there.

The designation of ethnicity in home countries is also fraught with politics and exclusionary citizenship laws and practices. Responding to the simplistic adoption of ethnic titles in US resettlement, Haines underlined the complicated issues behind ethnic labels: "ethnicity is thus variable in its definitions and its settings; those settings reflect different vectors and levels of power relations" (Haines 2007:287). In Bhutan, the Lhotshampa became designated "Nepalese," distinct because of their language and Hindu religion. They became displaced through reformed citizenship laws often considered part of an ethnic cleansing campaign (Hutt 2005). In Burma/Myanmar, Rohingya are not recognized as one of the 135 official "national races," and they have often been designated as "Bengali" and denied the documents and benefits of citizenship (Westcott 2015; Ross 2016). Such designations and orientations to the nation-state are clearly politically charged.

I had assumed that the refugees from Bhutan, at least, were a bit more uniform…until I met Kusum Timsina. She was born in India to a different sub-national group (with a different language) that straddled the border with Bhutan. She married someone from the Bhutanese side and moved to join him there. Unable to speak her native language must have contributed to feeling isolated, not just within Chicago but also its small Bhutanese community. She also lived in an apartment building whose outer door was so difficult for me to open that I wondered whether she would ever be able to go out on her own. When I interviewed her, I decided to intervene and told her about MMS' mentorship program. She was on the waiting list for a long time because, Natalie explained to me, it was hard to find volunteers to work with elderly.

Most but not all of my refugee participants from Burma/Myanmar were Karen refugees. The Karen had formed an armed opposition to the Burmese government, and Saw Law La, a Karen pastor even lived for some time in territory controlled by Karen National Union (KNU). Many of those Karen with such an affiliation have chosen not to resettle (Kenny and Lockwood-Kenny 2011:224).

My interpreters for Burmese and Karen, Paw Htoo and Michelle, were two Karen sisters. They spoke of the wide differences in refugee experiences for those who spent time in the refugee camps on the border with Thailand, as my Karen participants had, and those who went to cities, like my two Rohingya participants that had migrated back and forth for years between Thailand or Malaysia and Burma/Myanmar. Their encounters with refugee and humanitarian regimes were very different than for those in the camps, and they were sometimes deported or robbed by Thai authorities. Spending time in cities might have better prepared them for life in a city like Chicago and gave them a little exposure to English.

I had participants from Iraq that reflected some of its sectarian divisions. Mr. Yasser Ahmed, who was a practicing Muslim, explained that in Chicago he tended to avoid interacting with other Iraqi Muslims because he was so wary and anxious of getting involved in political conversation. Meanwhile, Mr. Jassem Taha had been forced to leave his country because of public anti-government remarks and concerns for his mentally disabled son, who had a distinctly Sunni name, that “is really hated by the Shia.” Refugees from Iraq sometimes had more established networks in Chicago or the US. My Assyrian participants could choose from several local Assyrian churches.

The ethnic identities of my research participants in the context of Chicago, US, or the larger diaspora could have been a research project of its own. It is also complicated by generational differences in orientation to identities. The question of "groupness" is still important to view from many perspectives, including in how resettlement caseworkers decipher their clients' aging (see Chapter 5). These intersections of ethnic identities, generation, and aging would be interesting to explore in a future project, but it would require more focused participant observation in a single community.

Refugee Interviews: Challenges

My original plan had been to conduct interviews at the opening and closing of the research period, but this tactic had to be pared down with financial and time constraints of interpretation and translation. That means that a major limitation was conducting a single interview with many topics to cover in a short time (1-2 hours). I did not always get to a place of participation (Spradley 1979:83) where interviewees could feel comfortable directing the conversation towards issues of their choosing. When they did ask questions, they were often about practical issues surrounding their benefits or naturalization.

I worked with refugee participants speaking five different languages, and because of budget limitations, I worked with interpreters and translators with varying degrees of experience. Working with an interpreter was a normal part of caseworkers' visits and interactions with clients, but as an anthropologist it felt very limiting and constraining to have answers mediated by interpretation. The largest issue was with Manoj, my interpreter and translator from Bhutan. Perhaps because he was a schoolteacher before coming to the US, he always gave me the impression that he was trying to get answers rather than patiently allowing people to answer however they wanted. He also tended to leave out "extraneous" commentary in the transcripts that he translated, which included interactions between participants and family members that would have been valuable and revealing of their relationships and authority in the family.

I had all of my foreign language interviews translated and transcribed usually by the interpreters or someone I located through my social network. Some of them had worked as professional interpreters, but they were not professional translators or transcriptionists. I also did not have the resources to pay them for training in ethnographic interviewing, although I offered tips and suggestions as much as I could. For the transcriptions, I provided lengthy written instructions with a list of conventions.

Michelle and Paw Htoo were the most comfortable with a more conversational approach to interviewing. Both would sometimes ask their own questions or use an echo probe (Bernard 1994:216) to get more information (see, for example, the interview snippet on p. 17). Interviewing people with the same background also yielded more "insider" questions that I could not have asked in the same way:

> Michelle: Even though you are *Asian, do you still think that you could not depend on your children?*[20]
>
> Hpo Hkwe: No, I did not mean like that. It is because their incomes are very little to support us. They do help us. They support us, but not sufficient.

The question Michelle posed came from an insider view because she is Karen. Michelle and Paw Htoo both displayed an understanding of their roles as cultural brokers and would break from the interview to fill me in on something that I might not have understood. At the same time, Michelle would sometimes hear something an interviewee had said and respond, "I'm learning, too!" My interpreters used terms like "auntie," "uncle" or "teacher" to address the research participants and convey respect. Even though their "insider-ness" is limited, showing respect and being curious to learn what people were sharing seemed to create good contexts, in terms of having more participation (Spradley 1979:83). I was fortunate to have the participation of these

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[20] The portion in italics was spoken in English (not translated).

interpreters, who seemed genuinely interested in the interviewees and displayed skills for anthropological interviewing without having had formal training.

Working with a diverse set of refugee participants without the accompanying language skills limited my ability to delve into deeper cultural foundations of understandings of time, age, and aging as they were reconfigured through migration. I did speak with some “younger” members (arriving at a conventional school or working age in the US) because they spoke English, including Leah, an Assyrian immigrant raised in Iraq, and another Assyrian MMS staff member born in the US, my interpreters from Burma/Myanmar (Burmese and Karen[21] languages), a typical college-age MMS staff member from Burma/Myanmar, my Kurdish interpreter from Iraq (Arabic, Assyrian languages), and a community member and health worker from Bhutan. These interviews were valuable in highlighting and problematizing “self-sufficiency” and “dependency” in performing bureaucratic capability, as I explore in Chapter 6. The college-age woman, an MMS interpreter that was also Karen, warned me against this approach saying that questions would be answered differently by someone like her (who arrived in the US at a younger age than my refugee research participants). This tactic would not have necessarily helped me understand the attitudes of my participants because understandings of cultural norms are always affected by migration experiences as well as age, cohort, and generational differences.

My selection of interview participants is obviously linked to the participant observation context, which was where some of them knew me. That my research participants would have been difficult to locate outside of the Senior Program speaks also to the research context. It was probably one of the only places, other than the offices of resettlement agencies, Social Security,

[21] Karen is the language of an ethnic group from Burma/Myanmar.

or IDHS, where I might have been certain to find and recruit a diverse group of "older" refugees. MMS also struggled with this issue as it was difficult for the program to "make numbers" and attract refugees not resettled by their agency. Rachel found some people to enroll at local English Language Training (ELT) classes, and Leah did outreach at Assyrian churches. Rachel and I also organized a meeting with resettlement caseworkers to encourage them to refer their "seniors" to us. It is unclear whether refugees not included in the program would have been different than those in my study. Those left out could have been either in greater or lesser need of these services.

Caseworker-in-Training: Opportunities and Limitations

An active role is extremely beneficial to studying organizations as they are constituted through everyday activities (Schwartzman 1993); thus, it is essential for anthropological research on bureaucracies. Being an intern gave me a position within MMS that was immediately understandable to staff, and many of the interns were white, middle class female undergraduate or graduate students like me. Case managers and other staff were used to training interns. I took on a learner's role (Bernard 1994:150) that required a minimal level of competency upon stepping into the role. Staff still needed to teach and explain the approaches they took to their work. Leah taught me to present myself as a caseworker on the phone or in the offices of Social Security or IDHS; therefore, being an intern meant sometimes pretending to be more than that.

Being an active participant also means being a part of the research context and, to some extent, studying one's own actions and work. When I interviewed Leah about her job, she would ask me to help her recall the different aspects of the program with her. I actually created a new version of the registration form for the Senior Program. Such an integrated experience means that it can be difficult to maintain naiveté (Bernard 1994:149), that there were certainly some aspects that would not have struck me as strange or unusual. It was important to take notes on my experiences, impressions, and what I was trained to do and wait a few months to create distance between myself and the research context before beginning to conduct analysis.

As an intern, I had no permanent location in the office and instead was regularly shuffled around to whatever open desks I could find at the office. It was unsurprising, however, considering that the regular flow of interns was a normal part of MMS, which relied on their unpaid labor. Moving around was a strength in terms of getting to know the staff and overhearing different interactions with clients, but it also meant that I was not always present in Leah's office, located at the opposite side of the office from Rachel's desk. I tried my best to help out when needed, including covering the receptionist's desk, a task that took me away from working directly with the Senior Program. At some point, however, I had to push back on the reliance on my unpaid labor and get back to Leah's office and the Senior Program.

Figure 6-Taking an active role: a photo of the researcher used in a Twitter campaign

Leah and Rachel delegated tasks to me, and my responsibilities grew over the research period increasing the level of activity of my participation. They expected me to do my tasks properly and let me know when I made mistakes. Initially, the work seemed really boring. One of my first tasks was to update an enormous list of the low-income and senior housing and, in the all-too-seldom case when they did have an open waiting list, secure a copy of the application. As much as I enjoyed the thrill of the "hunt" of researching resources, it was a struggle to persist in the endless telephone calls to update a document that seemed only to confirm the dim prospects of securing affordable housing in Chicago. Fortunately, I stayed at MMS long enough to make use of my list to refer clients that did seek out housing. I saw exactly one out of many clients that applied actually move into such housing. Being in one place long enough changed my perspective to see the value of what I previously thought was just a way to keep me busy.

During the research period, I developed relationships and was given close access to a small group of staff members at one agency. I helped Leah apply for scholarships and revise her résumé. I was privy to formal meetings and the informal conversations about clients and criticisms of MMS and managing agencies in offices, hallways, and the lunchroom. I did not discuss such comments or identifiable information with anyone during the research period and have included only those informal comments relevant to my research.

In my last months of at MMS, Rachel was no longer there, and Leah had shifted to doing the Senior Program part-time and IFRP part-time, which included helping disabled clients. That meant that I worked directly with refugees who did not meet the chronometric age parameters of the Senior Program. I had taken on many of the responsibilities of the job on my own, including making appointments with clients, who came in to apply for SSI or to get help with Medicaid.

Trying to juggle more than one client in Leah's office one day when she was out, I worked right through lunch. I went home that afternoon exhausted. I realized later that I had probably violated the norms of casework by having two clients in the room at once, privy to each other's problems. It is embarrassing to make such mistakes (especially as a researcher!) and to realize that I am should include myself in critiques of the program and how delegating casework to interns affected how well work was done.

Bureaucratic Fluency and Privilege

Reflecting on my comfort and privilege in bureaucratic settings is important for understanding its potential disadvantages. I felt very comfortable in the bureaucratic setting, which had all the tools that I needed to apply for and manage benefits. This was not the case for most if not all of the refugees that I interviewed, and this reflection forms an important part of my analysis of interdependent capability in Chapter 6.

Producing bureaucratic forms of knowledge was very natural to me, not just as an intern but also as a researcher. I created Excel spreadsheets of my research participants that reproduced some of the forms of knowledge MMS used. Still, I had the benefit of balancing such information with interviews that took me beyond the limited information in their case files and MMS' spreadsheets.

Caseworker Positionality in Shaping Refugee Interview Contexts

The caseworker-client relationship informed the construction of the interview "context" with my refugee participants. That includes the implicit understandings of the interview. Briggs wrote, "Contexts are not given, a priori, before the event begins. Contexts are interpretive frames that are *constructed* by the participants in the course of the discourse" (Briggs 1986:12). My refugee participants knew me through phone calls, office visits, and senior workshops. I heard often that this was one of the reasons that they were often willing to be interviewed. I was very careful to explain that they were not in any way required to participate in my research and that it would have no effect on my dealings with them in the future. Some did refuse to participate; however, it is still possible that some felt that participating would somehow help them in the long run. If any of them came to me today with their paperwork, I would definitely try to help.

The consequences of this positionality, however, was that, despite explaining that I was a volunteer, they may have thought of me as a “real” caseworker. That means that a caseworker-client relationship was part of the context. Caseworkers often visited clients as part of the regular parameters of resettlement programs, both as a way of checking on them and as method of surveillance. Such a context, in addition to cultural norms, might have shaped my participants’ answers to my questions and made them unwilling to criticize MMS or aspects of the resettlement “system.”

The issue of the time limits on SSI and citizenship came up repeatedly, and I, or my interpreters from Burma/Myanmar (Michelle and Paw Htoo), would often step in to suggest an action. I sometimes told my refugee participants (the few who were citizens) to vote (but not how to vote). In the back of my mind was the political contingency of the benefits that they relied on, such as the expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act that was available in 32 states and made a considerable difference in their lives, as their interviews revealed. Participants asked me questions about their paperwork. It was particularly uncanny when they handed me applications that I had mailed to them to fill out (per Leah’s instructions). I became closer with Naw Sih Sih trying to work out her problems with Medicaid’s spenddown program.

Michelle and I spent considerable time in our interview trying to suggest ways to manage or get around the bureaucratic challenges of maintaining her health insurance.

Another way that the caseworker positionality was reproduced was the fact that my interpreters often worked formally or informally as interpreters or community outreach workers. Paw Htoo was a community health worker. During interviews, she would find out a participants' family member had had a baby and would offer to get them some diapers. She would also check in during or at the end of our interviews with clients whom she knew were taking medication and needed help refilling it.

Changing Directions

I had intended to piece together timelines of assistance for my primary refugee informants and to use their knowledge to map the lesser known branches of the resettlement social service landscape. My interviews, however, yielded much less information on bureaucratic processes. Manoj also suggested that the people we spoke to from Bhutan were afraid of causing jealousy through the circulation of stories of getting help. However, I think it was mostly because family members and others tended to do bureaucratic work for my participants. At MMS, we often called family members, not the clients themselves, to follow up on bureaucratic processes because they spoke English. Fortunately, I had firsthand experience working directly with clients at MMS to understand what was involved. Making my own "objective" data could have been an interesting strategy for holding local government offices accountable[22]; however, over time I became more interested in the many mediating actors and their skills crafting encounters with social services.

[22] Asking mainstream agencies about their processing times was one of the advocacy approaches of the Illinois Hunger Coalition and their CQC meetings at local IDHS offices

Conclusion: From Local Observations to Analyzing a Makeshift "System"

Focusing on one program in one agency is a limitation of the study. I interviewed other former staff members of the Senior Programs at other agencies but never observed them at work. I tried many times to visit and interview staff at the other Senior Program in the suburbs but after numerous communications was never granted the opportunity. However, at the same time, I have some ideas about what distinguishes MMS from other resettlement agencies—namely its private fundraising.

Generalizing is difficult and yet indicative of resettlement as a makeshift "system." Darrow (2015) conducted comparative research of Chicago resettlement agencies, and her findings point to inconsistency across agencies according to their funding structures, which I discuss in Chapter 3. Still, I do consider this research as a project on US refugee resettlement because the age/employability definitions and the makeshift "structure" that makes use of mainstream aging and social services originates in federal policy. Refugees are affected by the variation in different contexts as the welfare offerings, labor and housing markets differ from state to state, city to city, and refugees, aware of these differences, often move strategically. It makes sense, then, to look at what resettlement leaves to local contexts, especially the aging and social services offered.

Conducting anthropological research with an attention to bureaucratic processes provides a way of understanding just how easily chronometric ages and related categories take the place of a more thoughtful analysis of age. At the same time, understanding what information was left out in formal processes for "knowing" refugees meant an attention to the hidden politics of age rationalities. Such age rationalities played a role in refugees' circumstances as they fell into gaps created by chronometric age standards and a resettlement "system" constructed through them. In the next chapter, I take up this issue by providing background information on the resettlement structure and the contingency of a "system" made possible by caseworkers actively patching together different mainstream and targeted programs.

Chapter 3 - The Significance of Being Aged in US Refugee Resettlement: Patchworking a "System"

In this chapter, I consider aged citizenship set within the makeshift structure of US refugee resettlement. Chronometric ages provide a means of resettling "non-employable" refugee "seniors" by connecting them to mainstream welfare and aging services. Services and resources that were not necessarily intended to meet the needs of refugees provided the basis of a patchworking (Kibria 1994) approach in the case management of the Senior Program. This approach subjects "seniors" to complicated and shifting application procedures and periods of waiting to get access to needed resources from service providers that are themselves vulnerable to fickle funding streams. An understanding of resettlement and the practical construction of aged citizenship that becomes apparent through it means examining resettling countries' welfare systems and programs targeting refugees. In the US, the welfare state is often "delegated" to a variety of government, for-profit, and non-profit actors (Morgan and Campbell 2011). This structure affects how refugee newcomers access resources and services and makes it difficult to assess to what extent the sum of these different programs can serve as a safety net.

Examining two case studies of programs based on different aging paradigms, I bring attention to the some of the vulnerabilities and opportunities of this patchworked approach. Previous scholars, such as Carol Stack (Stack 1975) have noted strategies of pooling scarce resources among actively constructed kin networks. Kibria (1994) studying how refugees strategized scarce resources by drawing from a variety used the term "patchworking" because it "conjures up an image of jagged pieces of assorted material stitched together in sometimes haphazard fashion" (Kibria 1994:87). I argue that the term should also be applied to the resettlement "system" and how caseworkers fit clients into whatever social services programs are available. I consider the opportunities and structural constraints of such strategies are like two sides of the same coin (Rose and Miller 2010:288; Flaherty 2013:250). Therefore, patchworking is part of the politics of aged citizenship in the delegated US welfare state.

I examine two case studies of programs with different ways of defining elderly or "seniors." The first case is Senior Ride Free, a free transportation pass program for seniors (65+) implemented through the Illinois Department on Aging's Benefit Access Program (IDOA, BAP) and Chicago's Regional Transportation Authority (RTA). The second case is the Global Gardens Refugee Training Farm, funded by ORR and managed by the Coalition of Limited English Speaking Elderly (CLESE) as a "multigenerational" project targeting refugees. Both programs also addressed the "self-sufficiency" goal of resettlement in different ways: one through a mainstream resource for low-income seniors, and the other by providing some English Language Training (ELT) and a way for elders to contribute to family or community members through urban gardening. The different programs speak to the contingency and autonomy of the components of the makeshift resettlement "system." Before turning to local programs, I first situate the US in the larger global refugee resettlement structure.

Refugee Resettlement: From UNHCR to the US

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the official overseeing organization for the world's refugees arose after World War II in response to millions of refugees from Europe. Based on Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1947, the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees laid out the legal framework for protection. It endorses a single definition of "refugee," upholds non-discrimination, and provides safeguards against the expulsion of refugees or the fundamental principle of "non-refoulement" (UNHCR 2010b; UNHCR 2011b). The 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of

Refugees amended the convention and removed geographic and temporal limits of refugee policy to apply to refugees all over the world (UNHCR 2011b). As of April 2015, 148 states are signatories to one or both of these instruments (UNHCR 2015).

In 2016, the numbers of refugees exceeded those in the original post-World War II era (UNHCR 2016b). Additionally, UNHCR has broadened its efforts to include statelessness and internal displacement to its program aims in the past few decades. The total number of displaced persons that fall under UNHCR's mandates is now 65.3 million of whom 21.3 million are refugees,[23] 40.8 internally displaced, and 3.2 million are asylum-seekers (UNHCR 2016).

Bureaucratic Organization of Resettlement

UNHCR uses three "durable solutions" to address refugee crises: voluntary repatriation, local integration, and resettlement. Resettlement has been one of those solutions from the 1920s and was a key tool at the time UNHCR was formed (UNHCR 2011a). Today, the resettlement program is the smallest of the three durable solutions with less than 1% of refugees admitted for third-country resettlement (UNHCR 2014). UNHCR estimates that some 800,000 spaces are needed for resettlement but only 80,000 a year are provided by 28 resettling countries. Three countries—US, Canada, and Australia—provide 90% of the places for resettlement, and the US is by far the largest of these three resettlement programs being responsible for 2/3 of the overall resettled refugees in 2014 (ORR 2014:3).

UNHCR, in conjunction with its partner NGOs, performs refugee status determination in war-torn countries, host countries, and refugee camps, and refers refugees to resettling countries. Bureaucratic procedures figure into which refugees get referred (Sandvik 2011), but countries ultimately decide who among referred refugees they admit according to their own criteria. For

[23] Includes 5.2 million Palestinian refugees under UNRWA.

example, even though refugees are largely considered to be outside of their country, the US President can specify individuals or countries where in-country processing is permitted. This was the case for one of my interview participants from Iraq who arrived through the Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program[24] for people from Iraq and Afghanistan, especially those who had worked with the US government as translators and contractors.

Because refugees can spend years in limbo waiting for durable solutions, scholars and advocates note the other "solutions" that emerge in practice: regularizing migrant status in countries of asylum (Moretti 2015), limiting access to the refugee "label" and creating new non-refugee statuses (Zetter 2007), and protracted stays in refugee camps or asylum-processing centers. These supposedly humanitarian "solutions" have all come under critique, such as the suggestion that they are indicative of "human warehousing" (Smith 2004; Albahari 2016).

From within UNHCR, an approach aimed at increasing protection space and international responsibility sharing is the "strategic use of resettlement" (UNHCR 2011a:40). Recognizing that resettlement is a "scarce resource" (UNHCR 2011a:39) available to few refugees, UNHCR aims to negotiate agreements with countries that bring about positive outcomes for refugees beyond resettlement itself (UNHCR 2011a:39).

UNHCR can influence resettlement by asking individual countries to sign the Convention or Protocol and to adopt and implement policies and approaches. In addition to publishing reports and the Resettlement Handbook, the agency holds an annual cycle of meetings: the Executive Committee (ExCom), the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement, and the Annual Consultations with NGOs (Pittaway and Thomson 2008). I learned a bit about how

[24] This was a program for contractors and interpreters that worked with the US government in Iraq and Afghanistan.

different actors come together to discuss and influence refugee policy while attending the 2014 Annual Consultations as an assistant rapporteur. As part of a team of mostly university students[25], we took notes on policy recommendations for UNHCR and its partners and also tried to ask questions to direct participants to give concrete policy recommendations in the numerous regional and topical sessions. We submitted the notes to a member of the NGO community—the NGO rapporteur—to aggregate and publish the topics of concern and recommendations in an annual report. Advocating for changes to UN policy is part of a long process, but getting an issue heard at the Annual Consultations and into its report is one step.

UNHCR acknowledges that integration is multi-dimensional and integration contexts "vary widely among resettlement countries, as do systems of governance, and divisions of responsibility between national, State, provincial, territorial, district, regional, and municipal authorities in established and prospective resettlement states" (2013:8). Despite there being "no global standard" (2013:8) of integration, resettling states must still meet the "legal and socio-economic needs of resettled refugees … in a manner that ensures a durable solution has been achieved" (2013:8). That includes a pathway to citizenship. Through meetings with resettling countries, UNHCR establishes good practices, such as those laid out and endorsed in its Resettlement Handbook (UNHCR 2011a:52).

Conditions in individual countries still vary according to their job markets, welfare systems, and particular refugee-targeting policies, which means resettlement varies in terms of how it reproduces, addresses, or exacerbates poverty or marginalization. Neoliberal reforms or austerity measures are aspects of the resettlement contexts and their potential to address refugees' disadvantages from previous experiences in home countries or displacement as well as

[25] I am indebted to Professor Galya B. Ruffer for this opportunity.

in their new countries. Another issue is the use of problematic categories to organize resettlement (Haines 2010:19). Before turning to an examination of the role of age in the US resettlement program, I explain its origin, formalization, and neoliberal aspects.

Formalizing US Resettlement

The US refugee resettlement "system" arose from a need to formalize and systematize previously inconsistent and ad hoc forms of humanitarian social assistance offered by a variety of usually religious organizations to different groups of refugees in the post-World War II period. The Refugee Act of 1980 established regular procedures and provisioning so that all incoming refugee groups were treated equally. Previously, the US' approach had been "very much a parochial one of different kinds of commitments toward different refugees based on their circumstances and identity: their class, their religion, their ethnicity, their race, their gender and age (thus the frequent emphasis on women and children), and the existence of any previous connection to the United States" (Haines 2010:3). The act addressed this problem by creating common practices, standards of evaluation, and a means of federal reimbursement to states and localities for their costs (Haines 2010).

Unfortunately, these attempts to establish a formal and more equitable system were accompanied by similar neoliberal discourses (Haines 2010:13) that had targeted welfare recipients (Fraser and Gordon 1994) and immigrants (Gerken 2008) in the 1980s and 1990s . The resulting policies towards refugees focused less on long-term integration and more on self-sufficiency based on early employment and reducing their welfare "burden," a sentiment that continues to grow today (Nezer 2013:10). Only one year after the Refugee Act, policymakers targeted "welfare dependency" as a concern and limited the time period of cash assistance (Haines 2010:13). Past refugee groups had received varied forms of assistance, including education, training, and re-credentialing, but in 1981, these programs were greatly reduced (Haines 2010:13). The act of formalizing resettlement also institutionalized its delegated structure by incorporating a variety of organizations, including faith-based agencies that had been active since the 1940s (Eby et al. 2011), to be funded through $200 million in discretionary grants. The standards evaluating integration were limited to those that conformed to "self-sufficiency" ideologies and could be most easily measured and quantified: employment, gains in English language training programs, and removal from welfare registers (Haines 2010:153). These changes contribute to a rigidity of resettlement, whose categories and rationalities reduced the capacity of programs to recognize and address the unique challenges within and between incoming refugee groups.

Neoliberal policies continued into the 1990s as refugees became the only immigrant group with access to welfare under the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). Scholars of welfare reform often note the underlying race, gender, and class dimensions of its neoliberal discourses (Fraser and Gordon 1994; Schram 2000:27; Morgen and Maskovsky 2003), but it also included concerns about elderly immigrants (Gerken 2008). UNHCR has also expressed concerns about the "chronic dependency" of elderly refugees but called for a "holistic" approach to meet their needs where "they are met normally and most effectively within the context of family and community of which they are a part" (UNHCR 2000). Standards for evaluating the adequacy of provisioning of elderly refugees, however, are still left up to resettling countries, and in the US, mainstream programs are supposed to play a major role.

Limiting welfare "burden" or its visibility has been and is still important in the US political climate with important ramifications for refugee resettlement. Resettlement politics continue to exhibit this neoliberal framing of arguments for or against refugees based on their economic "burden" or contributions (Nezer 2013). As a 2013 Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) Report noted, "Financially strapped states and localities have become resentful about using scarce resources to supplement federal funding to meet the medical, education, housing, and transportation needs of refugees" (Nezer 2013:8). The economic effects of refugee resettlement on federal, state, and local services could be hidden by fitting them into mainstream systems, where they were not tracked as refugees. I address these issues more explicitly with the example of the Benefit Access Program in Illinois, but first, I explain the US resettlement policy and bureaucratic organization today.

US Resettlement Policy

The US government is clear that refugee resettlement and asylum is aimed at advancing its foreign policy, national security, and humanitarian interests (ORR 2015b:1). These interests become apparent in the selection of Priority 2 (P-2) countries, a designation for specific groups prioritized for resettlement. In addition, US refugee policy also supports repatriation and local integration efforts and has more power to regulate access to asylum compared to European countries because of its geographic distance from current conflicts (Berman 2011).

UNHCR strongly advises against the use of "integration potential" (other than issues related to "security") by resettlement countries in order to preserve resettlement as a protection tool and "durable solution." While some countries do apply such criteria to refugee admissions, the US does not discriminate and offers the possibility to resettle refugees "regardless of their location, national origin, health status, occupational skills, or level of educational attainment" (ORR 2015b:ii).

The President, in the Annual Consultation with Congress, sets the refugee admissions ceiling reported annually. These numbers do not include asylees, who US policy distinguishes from refugees because they apply for status once within the US. In 2015, President Obama raised the ceiling to 85,000 for FY2016 including 10,000 refugees from Syria (2015b). The number of refugees actually resettled in a given year depends on the pace of security and bureaucratic procedures, which are extensive. After 9/11, the actual number of refugees admitted was well below the ceiling (Darrow 2015:90–91).

The ceiling for admissions is set for specific world regions, and the President's report identifies the countries that are eligible under the P-2 program. For example, the report for FY 2016 announced that the P-2 program for refugees from Bhutan (opened in 2008) and Burma/Myanmar (opened in 2005) would be brought to a close; Iraq is still open (ORR 2015b). Priority 1 (P-1) are individual cases usually referred for resettlement by UNHCR under its criteria. Priority 2 defines specific groups "within certain nationalities, clans or ethnic groups, sometimes in specified locations" that are "identified by the Department of State in consultation with DHS/USCIS[26], NGOs, UNHCR, and other experts" (ORR 2015b:6). Groups can also be added in the course of the year. Priority-3 is composed of designated nationalities referred for reunification with specific family members already in the US.

As discussed above, US resettlement is a public-private system. The public portion includes the Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) as well as the Department of Homeland Security and the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) housed under the Department of Health and Human Services. PRM funds the Reception and

[26] "DHS/USCIS" is the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)'s U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

Placement program (R&P) that provides for the initial aspects of resettlement, including a per capita resettlement grant ($2200) distributed to resettlement organizations (ORR 2015b:19). Accomplished in a bureaucratic mode, "Reception and Placement" means something quite narrower than the name might imply.

Resettlement Support Centers, usually managed by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) contracted by PRM, work with DHS/USCIS to prepare and process refugee applications for resettlement to the US. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) oversees the travel for refugees to the US, and the cost is given as a loan that refugees must eventually pay back to IOM starting six months after their arrival (ORR 2015b:19).

Among ORR's major contractors are nine private voluntary agencies ("volags"). Most of them are faith-based and three of the organizations have been active in US resettlement since before the UN Convention. Up until 1980, voluntary agencies resettled refugees on an ad hoc basis with resettlement agencies bearing most of the costs (Eby et al. 2011). Today, volags receive most of their funding from the federal government. They work to divide up the incoming refugees and distribute them to the over 350 affiliate organizations (resettlement organizations or "agencies"). MMS is one of these affiliates.

R&P only covers the very initial aspects of resettlement, and what is thought of more practically as "resettlement" occurs after the initial 90 days. Then the forms of assistance and help refugees receive depend on the type of program the state has determined to administer. Funded and administered by ORR, programs vary by state and include three types: the state administered program, the Wilson-Fish program, and the Matching Grant program. Under the federally-funded, state administered (thus the name) program, refugees can receive Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) for up to eight months if they do not already qualify for TANF or SSI.

Illinois has such a program. Agencies could also choose to participate in the Matching Grant program, which I describe below; MMS no longer did.

ORR has established procedures to administer refugee resettlement in states without a state administered program. One option is the Public-Private Partnership, in which ORR partners directly with local resettlement agencies to provide a more "seamless" connection of refugees to RCA. Another option, the Voluntary Matching Grant program, is the only refugee program that preceded the Refugee Act of 1980 (Darrow 2015:69) and provides funding matched by a volag. The focus of the Matching Grant program is rapid employment, and refugees referred to this program are expected to attain self-sufficiency within four to six months from arrival. The program is discretionary in that resettlement agencies can use the money for intensive services aimed at employment and determine which refugees or households use this program.

ORR funds states with state administered or Wilson-Fish programs through formula and discretionary grants to states. It reimburses states completely for their Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA), Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA), and Refugee Social Services. Services include:

> employability services, employment assessment services, on-the-job training, English language instruction, vocational training, case management, translation/interpreter services, social adjustment services, health-related services, home management, and if necessary to support employment, childcare and transportation. (ORR 2015b:21)

A major problem with state administered programs is that allocations are based on the number of refugee arrivals in the previous two years, reduced from three years in 2010. The uncertainty creates problems for resettlement agencies by affecting their ability to plan and anticipate funding (Darrow 2015). While R&P funding is focused primarily on the first 90 days of resettlement, ORR can provide support for up to five years, at which time refugees can apply for citizenship. In addition, ORR's Refugee Social Services program includes services to specific groups, such as "Older Refugees" (age 60 and above). They can actually receive assistance for up to seven years and sometimes beyond (see Chapter 6). I explain how this funding works in a section below.

The organization of the US resettlement "system" at the federal level contributes to its state and local level variability. Haines (2010) suggested that the lack of a meaningful definition of integration is a major issue in the variety of experiences with refugee resettlement in the US. As noted above, guidelines for programs favor measurable indicators. To understand the actual outcomes of resettlement means looking directly at the types of variability its structure creates. Darrow took a street-level approach (Lipsky 1980) to investigate such features, and she found that:

> Refugee resettlement policy is different for different refugees, and that what policy looks like depends on a combination of factors, including which agency the refugee is allocated to, how many other refugees (and associated funds) arrive at the same time, how sympathetic agency workers are, and the extent to which workers at the agency have successfully prioritized establishing extra-organizational relationships (2015:175).

Part of what made MMS unique is that 25% of its budget came from donations and fundraising [the majority (70%) came from government (federal, state, and city) and the rest (5%) from charging clients for immigration services]. My research findings support and elaborate on Darrow's observation of the extra-organizational relationships. In Chapter 6, I consider the variability created through such relationships as well as tactics used by caseworkers. These variables are also important because of the structure of the welfare state that creates a need for the work of such mediators.

Patching Refugees into the Delegated Welfare State

Refugee resettlement programs link refugees to mainstream welfare programs. These programs are meant to provide for refugees arriving with limited resources, to buffer their entrance into school, work, or "retirement." Refugees identified as "retirement age" secure self-sufficiency through access to existing welfare and aging services, but it is important to understand to what extent do these programs form a social safety "net" for refugees in the US. I consider in the following section why the structure of the US welfare state makes it difficult to examine this issue.

Neoliberal influences in the US welfare state include such changes as privatization and a general "withdrawal of the state from many areas of social provision" (Harvey 2005:3 quoted in Gershon 2011:538). I have already discussed how such ideologies affected access of immigrants to welfare according to concerns about "burden" and "welfare dependency." Another feature of neoliberalism has to do with the government structure, especially the fragmentation of the state. For example, Ong wrote:

> Studying state power in the United States, perhaps more than in other societies, requires that we think not in terms of overarching state apparatus, but in terms of a multiplicity of networks through which various authorities, nonprofit agencies, programs, and experts translate democratic goals in relation to target populations. (Ong 2003:80)

Neoliberal policy has contributed to a diffuse landscape of government, "producing new forms of competition, fragmentation, and policy confusion at the community level" (Rai, Kretsedemas, and Aparicio 2004:286). Such fragmentation is relevant to the organization of refugee resettlement and the need for refugees and caseworkers to patch together different programs.

I argue, however, that "withdrawal" is too general a term for the US that has never provided the level social services provisioning comparable to European welfare states

(Quadagno 1988). As discussed in Chapter 1, the US welfare state never really offered a consistent, “universal,” or “neutral” buffering of the negative effects of the market on citizens. Programs aimed at “elderly” varied in their effects along gender, race, and class lines, and the prominent role of private health insurance providers and retirement funds was built into its uneven structure and benefits. Such features point to the initial and lasting effects of labor-capital conflicts in shaping welfare policies, that point to the need for taking a longer view in terms of contextualizing neoliberalism in US history (Cf. MacLean 2008).

This background is important to understanding that the US welfare state is rather characteristically ad hoc. Katz described it as “a massive watch that fails to keep very accurate time” (2002:10). It fundamentally lacked coherence:

> Neither a coherent whole nor the result of a master plan, the public and private programs of America's welfare state originated at different times and from different sources; they remain loosely coupled at best. (2002:10)

Morgan and Campbell use similar language, describing the US as a “Rube Golberg welfare state” (2011:4), a term coined by Elisabeth Clemens (2006). These scholars suggest that the United States government functions less as a Weberian ideal type and more like a Rube Golberg machine, performing simple tasks in complex and indirect ways.

Morgan and Campbell (2011) call the US a “delegated welfare state,” arguing that the US welfare state has always included public-private partnerships. They argued:

> Although today many think of the contracting out of social provision as a product of neo-liberal influences, public administration scholars attentive to the actual administration of government programs have identified this as a phenomenon that predated the free market movement. (2011:56)

Recent policies, such as the Affordable Care Act (ACA) of 2010, “followed a well-established template in American social policy-making of delegating responsibility for publicly funded social welfare programs to private entities and state governments" (2011:3). Like Katz, they draw attention to the disorganized aspects of the US welfare state, described as: a "complex hybrid of public and private actors engaged in social welfare provision, convoluted lines of authority and accountability, and a blurring of boundaries between public and private" (2011:4). Still, Morgan and Campbell noted that the delegated welfare state has changed over time. For example, for-profits began to replace of non-profits in the 1980s, as seen in the shift towards private managed care groups as Medicaid providers, and a movement towards privatization is more characteristically neoliberal.

The delegated form of welfare state is useful in that it makes the government appear not to grow while deflecting potential conflicts from the public arena (2011:3). In this way, the bureaucratic structure of the delegated state supports depoliticization of social programs targeting poverty (Goode and Maskovksy 2001). It also creates an indirect relationship between state and citizen mediated by a private partner. Shifting the onus onto the poor to help themselves contributes to social inequalities in the "do-it-yourself postwelfare state" (Hyatt 2001:228; See also Mbembe and Roitman 1995).

Patchworking is the technique and action by which caseworkers construct a resettlement system for refugee "seniors" by integrating them into mainstream services and benefits. Refugees arriving with limited resources are supposed to rely on these services, which are constantly subject to changing politics, budget shortfalls, mistakes, and stopgap measures. By maintaining narrow program aims, the Senior Program could avoid addressing those problems that fell outside of its parameters. I consider this approach an example of what Gupta called the "rationalization of power in a disciplinary society" . . . "shot through with contingency" (Gupta 2012:14). By erasing the question of what was actually needed, the program accepted responsibility only for what was able to be accomplished bureaucratically through patchworking "seniors" into existing programs.

Resettlement Contingencies: Budget Cuts and "Crisis" in Chicago, Illinois

Refugee resettlement depends on the current offerings of federal, state, and local programs and varies from state to-state. I conducted my research Chicago, Illinois, which means that it cannot capture the full range of services available to refugees and its impact on their resettlement experiences. As noted earlier, this is not a "local" issue because variability is built into the US resettlement system because it relies on fitting refugees into existing services. My purpose is to consider critically how bureaucratic processes display a semblance of order that mask over inherent contingencies in the social service landscape.

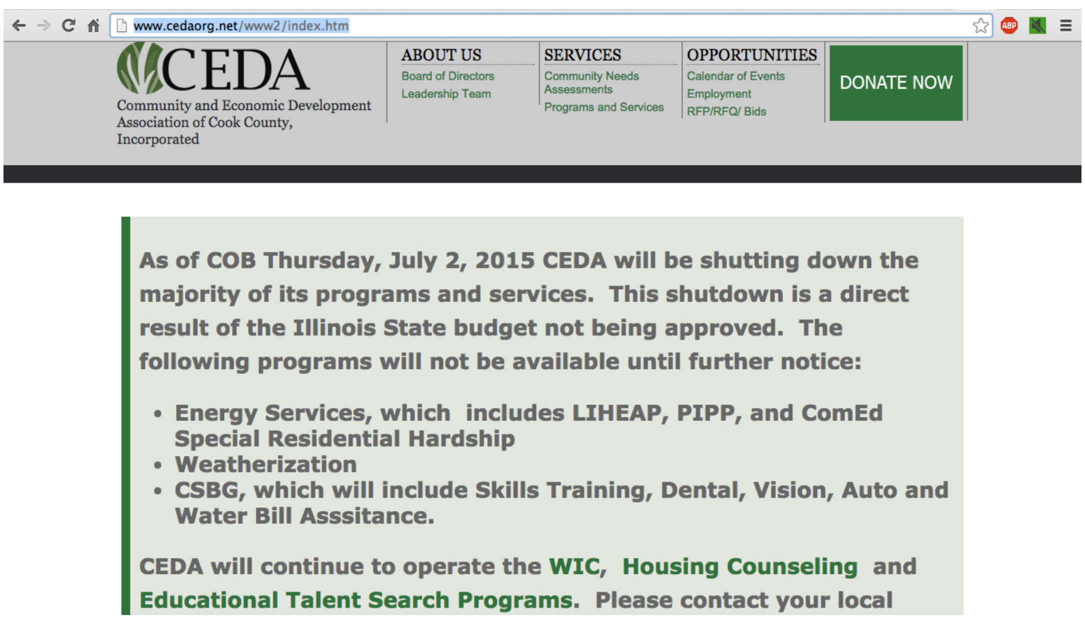

Figure 7-A website depicts cuts to services during during an episode in Illinois' budget crisis in 2015.

The significance of the political context was especially obvious during the research period because of the protracted Illinois budget crisis. A stalemate between a newly elected, pro-business Republican governor and Democratic lawmakers resulted in funding freezes to a myriad of social service agencies, affecting low-income childcare and elderly caregiver services. The concept of "Fiscal responsibility" can justify budget cuts to programs without regard to their original purpose. Refugees are only a small often invisible portion of service users but are pinned to the larger political context at a time when program funding is volatile.

Figure 8-A sign outside of a local community-based organization serving immigrants during an episode in Illinois' budget crisis in 2015.

One of the defining characteristics of the Illinois state government is the enormous shortfall of funding for public pensions, often described in such hyperbolic language as "the most threatening pension time bomb in America" (Von Drehle 2013). In fact, many major cities are facing similar shortfalls, with Illinois among the six worst in terms of contributing well-below recommended levels to its pensions (Pew Charitable Trusts 2013). The budget "crisis" is a frequent object of finger pointing and blame in Illinois and Chicago politics; it is far from a neutral descriptor. Illinois' governor since 2014, the ultra-wealthy[27] Bruce Rauner, has used the budget crisis and subsequent political stalemate to further his policy

[27] Governor Rauner earned $108 million between 2010 and 2012 according to his tax returns (Chicago Tribune Editorial Board 2014).

agenda. A Chicago Tribune article reported him giving the following description of his tax-lowering scheme to make Illinois more "competitive" as a state:

> 'Believe me, I am going to rip — try to rip the economic guts out of Indiana,' Rauner said. 'I am one of the baddest, you know, enemies anybody can have. And when I set a goal, we do it. I don't care what the headline is. I want the results. And we're coming after Indiana big time. But you know what, we're going to do it on our terms, the right way.' (Geiger 2015)

This turn of events is part of a much larger trend to manufacture or exploit appeals to budget shortfalls or manufactured crises to erode public institutions, such as pensions (Phillipson 1998:138).

These issues of governing through budget crisis continue to affect refugee resettlement. I had the opportunity to examine how a response to a budget shortfall played out bureaucratically through an interview with staff of the Benefit Access Program (BAP) at the Springfield office of the Illinois Department on Aging.

In 2008, Rod Blagojevich expanded a program to enable all seniors to a free pass for public transportation. According to a report of a town hall meeting at that time, the audience asked the governor why he did not extend this benefit to all low-income people instead of seniors of all incomes. The article reported, "Blagojevich said he would like to offer reduced or free rides to the poor, **but figuring out who qualifies would be bureaucratically complicated**" (Mendell 2008, my emphasis). The article further reported:

> 'I hear you, but it's not so bad,' Blagojevich told one senior who persistently asked about why the poor are not included. 'Just hold your nose and take a bus for free.' (Mendell 2008)

Only four years later, Governor Pat Quinn would try to meet budget shortfalls by ending an entire package of senior benefits and limiting the free pass to low-income seniors, mistakenly cutting off funding for BAP, the eligibility determination program. David Vinkler of AARP explained, “Lawmakers were so focused on cutting that they forgot the reason many of the programs existed in the first place” (Garcia 2012). Little did I know that this was the origin story of the BAP online application that I used to help refugees get their Ride Free passes.

The Ad Hoc Benefit Access Program

As noted earlier, BAP was once a part of a larger benefits program, that included a cash benefit, prescription benefit, transportation pass, and property tax benefit. The purpose of the program, called “Circuit Breaker,” was suggested by its name:

> When the costs of property taxes and prescription medicines begin to ‘overload’ our seniors and persons with disabilities, this program steps in to help, just as a circuit breaker prevents overloads in an electrical system. (Illinois Department on Aging 2012)

The concept is actually a nice one but, unfortunately, it did not last, and by the time that I was conducting my research, I was unaware of the full scope of the original program and the budget cut error. Rather, I was concerned about the waiting time for senior and disabled refugees who really needed their transportation passes right away but still had to wait weeks or months to get them.

The waiting time was on my mind when I spoke to two BAP representatives. Sharon had just finished explaining that applicants had to wait one year to apply for the benefit after they were found to be disabled because BAP “worked in arrears, just like income tax,” when she stopped and asked, “Can I back up? I think it’s important for you to know the history of the program?”

She explained that when Circuit Breaker was suddenly cut in 2012, lawmakers had unknowingly cut funding for the BAP. This was a problem because BAP was the institution granting the eligibility of applicants to the Disabled and Senior Ride Free programs, now available to low-income applicants. She explained:

> We had to roll out this benefit application within three months. We were given no money, and this was from a budget that was 30 million dollars . . . So we went from 30 million dollars to zero. . . And we had 3 months to figure out how we were going to roll out these benefits.

A 2012 article in Crain's also suggested that it was an error: "Now, even destitute seniors may be cut off for admission to that program, thanks to **a bureaucratic and legislative glitch** (Crain's 2012, my emphasis) As the BAP representatives explained, the agency responded by creating an online-only application with in-person support for applicants provided at local Department on Aging offices.

This "glitch" had affected a benefit that helped supplement the meager incomes of "senior" and disabled refugees and enabled them get around the city, including to appointments at MMS, with doctors and other social service agencies. Refugees enrolled in the regular ELT classes housed at MMS were eligible for transportation reimbursement via IDHS, but seniors could use the Ride Free pass to go anywhere--if they were able to use public transportation on their own.

The RTA clearly strives to make public transportation as accessible as possible for people of varying levels and types of disability, and those with considerable disabilities were eligible to apply for special types of transportation. However, being "elderly" (rather than disabled) not knowing English or understanding public transportation—hurdles cited frequently in my interviews with caseworkers and refugees—were not recognized as disabilities or problems to be solved by the RTA. I spoke with the Director of Mobility Services at the RTA, and he conceded, "There's always going to be some barriers." The RTA did give presentations to help people learn how to use public transportation, but besides the problem of interpretation, these would likely have not replaced the need for caseworkers, interns, and family members to show refugees and Ride Free pass-users how to get around.

Before they could use the pass, refugees needed to wait for their applications to be processed, which could take several weeks to months. When I asked the RTA about this issue, the director said, it "depends on the ID." The general outline was that it would take three to four weeks for approval through the state of Illinois' BAP application. If eligible, then it would take five to seven business days. Then the client has to go get their photo taken and submit it, which created some uncertainty to be managed by caseworkers (see Chapter 6). If it was a new card, it would take seven to 10 days until it was mailed to them. The employees at the Illinois Department on Aging (IDOA), which implements the BAP, explained that it takes two weeks for renewals and the RTA was taking two to four weeks for their end of things. The representatives at BAP emphasized that the RTA was a separate entity whose processing was outside of their control.

> Nancy: You know. Uh. I don't work for the RTA. That's, that's something that's outside of my control, but I do communicate to them that—
>
> Me: Mmhm.
>
> Nancy: You know, we've done—we've done a lot of work to try to, um, lessen our processing time but still be credible?
>
> Me: Right.
>
> Nancy: Um, and so we would challenge them to do the same.

Organizations did not have control over each other's processes, and four organizations were included in the process of applying for a bus pass: MMS[28], IDOA, the local Department on

[28] Working for another community organization, Manoj, my interpreter, bragged that he could get them faster than MMS because he asked RTA employees to keep the ones for Bhutanese clients aside until he came to pick them up. It was an example of competition for clients and replicated services in the fragmented social services

Aging (DOA) office, and RTA. Processing was also affected by what the BAP representatives called a "balance" between credibility or accountability and speed. Sharon explained:

> So we have--we have a hard balance here. Because we also have our opponents or people who are looking at us for fraud, for, you know, you know. The administers of the benefit, you know, want to make sure that we're proving those individuals that… are meeting the criteria.

The Ride Free program did come under scrutiny for charges of fraud; however, an investigation suggested the rate was very low and represented only $50,000 in lost revenue (Wronski 2010).

The BAP representatives were not aware of refugees using their systems. Sharon explained that they were not recognized as refugees but rather people that met program criteria. Sharon explained, "Um, so Benefit Access--we don't require citizenship and—because of the benefits that they're getting. And, um, you know, anyone is allowed to apply that has a Social Security number." Income, Social Security numbers, and chronometric ages or SSI disability benefits were the keys to connecting refugees to this program. The BAP representatives did not realize that this process actually required caseworker tactics.

To get refugees approved for BAP, Leah invented a letter to get them around the need for income documentation. The program needed to know the applicant and their spouse's income for the prior year to determine eligibility. Leah added this letter as an attachment of "Proof of No Income":

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landscape.

To whom it may concern

RE: [redacted]

This letter is to confirm that Mr. [redacted] arrived to the United States as refugee on 08/07/2013 under section of the Refugee Act of 1980, Public Law No. 96-212.
He did not have any income for the year of 2012.
Any assistance that may be given to Mr. [redacted] would be greatly appreciated.
Please do not hesitate to call me at [redacted] if you have any questions regarding this matter.

BAP would approve applications with this letter; however, in our interview, the BAP representatives told me that this letter was not sufficient. "How do they provide for basic necessities? Where do they get their food?" Sharon asked. "Because we need to know that, you know, that they came as a refugee but how are you living?" After the interview, I shared this response with Leah, suggesting that she add more detail to the letter. At the same time, I imagined how absurd a letter that met such precise requirements would read: "Mr. _____ lived on rations and in temporary housing provided by UNHCR in a camp in Nepal and worked outside the camp sporadically" or "Mrs. _____ lived on the earnings of her children while living in Syria without the recognized right to work." I imagined trying to add up the income of the clients and converting the meager amounts into US dollars. The need for income documentation created a wrinkle in the process of connecting refugees to benefits, an issue that was invisible to BAP employees. When the letters caused snags in processing, I would call and speak to BAP customer representatives, who usually approved the applicants. Leah continued using the same No Income letter, and, fortunately, it kept working.

Leah also found her way around another problem with BAP. As far as we knew at the time, clients who got approved for SSI based on disability had to wait until the following year to get the Disabled Ride Free CTA pass. The program worked in arrears, as Sharon explained. Mr.

Yasser Ahmed was really upset to learn that he would have to wait to get this benefit. However, when I returned to the office a few days later, I learned that Leah had found a way around this limit by submitting additional documentation. Mr. Ahmed got his transit pass, and Leah and the staff gained a new tactic to use in the future to overcome the gap between refugees' and BAP's needs. These were the kinds of snags in the system that required the insider knowledge and skilled improvisation of casework that smoothed the edges but perpetuated the patchworked "system."

The Politics of Visibility in Resettlement Patchworking

Given the reliance of resettlement on local, state, and federally-funded programs and their bureaucratic processes, advocacy would appear essential to expanding or at least preserving the social service offerings for refugees. Because refugees have limited visibility as users of mainstream services, staff at their offices might be unfamiliar with them and how requirements for documentation might disadvantage them Unfortunately, when non-profit organizations fill the role of state institutions, they have fewer resources for advocacy efforts (Ilcan and Basok 2004). At MMS, the Housing Manager was also responsible for policy advocacy, as she reported on her efforts at staff meetings and mobilized employees to call lawmakers at key moments.

The invisibility of refugees as clients of mainstream welfare programs, however, could also serve to conceal the costs of refugee resettlement. Refugees that use SNAP, TANF, or SSI are not tracked by these federal programs but rather by ORR for those under Employment Services or refugee-only benefits (RCA and RMA), for which states are reimbursed. As Carl Rubenstein, Division of Refugee Assistance Director at ORR, confirmed to me in an email exchange, "The U.S. government does not track these services according to refugee status upon arrival to the U.S." The hidden costs are a concern for those critical of the resettlement program.

For example, Barnett lamented, “the bulk of the expense is borne outside refugee programs in the untrackable wilderness of state and federal social services” (Barnett 2003). That means that the US government cannot provide numbers on the overall costs of refugees. Refugees enrolled in employment programs are subject to surveillance as refugees, but “seniors” or refugees that caseworkers do not enroll in this program are subsequently absent from such tracking. The resettlement structure is clearly implicated in mainstream politics via not only its own budget but also its reliance on external programs. Delegating refugees deflected political attention about the size and cost of the program by blurring it into mainstream programs.

Still, funding changes affected refugee resettlement agencies and their in-house programs. The amount of funding Illinois received for Refugee Senior Services was reduced in 2012 because of a drop in the number of arrivals[29]. Instead of having six separate in-house senior programs, resettlement agencies were supposed to refer “seniors” to MMS’ program. Consolidating did not seem to work as the majority of the Senior Program clients during the research period were originally resettled by MMS, and the new iteration of the Senior Program under MMS lacked the regular transportation for seniors twice per week to ELT classes. One case manager formerly in charge of a Senior Program at another resettlement agency explained that the classes were mostly for socializing and combatting isolation. She said, “They truly did not learn anything there. Very, very little. But they loved getting out of the house.” During the research period, budget cuts also affected MMS’ Mental Health services and even its in-house ELT program.

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[29] *Services to Older Refugees* falls under 45 C.F.R. Part 400 Subpart I Refugee Social Services, §400.154 Employability Services and §400.155 Other Services. The past two grant awards to Illinois were significantly lower than during the period of 2017-2011. In FY2015, Illinois was among 28 states to receive $97,200, while the four largest 60 and over population states, based on arrival data from FY 2007-2011, were granted between $121,500 to $170,100 (Rubenstein 2015). With 347 age 60+ refugee arrivals during FY2013-2014[29], Illinois was 6th just below the top five states and received $97,200.

Based on these observations, assortment programs used to craft "self-sufficiency" for refugee "seniors" seems more like a mishmash than a "safety net." The resettlement "system" is not stable but contingent, with the resources and staff available depending on when a refugee arrived. Sometimes, however, the autonomy of the delegated structure created opportunities for specialized programs for the "self-sufficiency" of refugee "elderly," as I explain next section.

The Global Gardens Refugee Training Farm

The Global Gardens Refugee Training Farm was an interesting example of a program that targeted refugees "delegated" to a non-profit organization. Through a three-year grant from ORR's Refugee Agricultural Partnership Program (RAPP), the Coalition for Limited English Speaking Elderly (CLESE), an agency with a great deal of experience working with "older" migrants, managed the program. Local resettlement agencies referred refugees to the project, which provided them a small plot of land and seeds to grow organic vegetables on a one-acre converted lot. Refugees from many countries, mostly Bhutan and Burma/Myanmar, grew vegetables familiar to them to eat, share with others, and even sell at a weekly farmer's market. They could also work in a communal plot to earn money through produce sold to a local catering company or through a share in a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. CLESE had never done any kind of farming project before but happened to have a staff member, Gwen, a former Peace Corps volunteer with had a master's degree in agriculture.

The project was at once about economic self-sufficiency, nutrition, and family well-being. Framing the project as "multigenerational" in their grant, CLESE discussed the project as a way of responding to some problems of elderly refugees, including isolation, loss of social status, and role reversals. According to their grant application, gardening would "allow older generations to demonstrate their expertise and knowledge, contribute to family well-being, and pass traditional skills and knowledge to younger family members." The staff's understanding of these issues came from years of experience working with and on elderly issues, including its "Bright Ideas" ELT classes for older learners.

The project also had a "self-sufficiency through entrepreneurship" aspect. Participants would learn "urban farming practices and financial literacy skills in order to improve access to fresh foods and to create improved employment and entrepreneurial options for newly arrived refugee families." The project aimed to train refugees in how to farm in the climate and urban environment of Chicago and develop skills to manage their own "incubator" farms in the future. The financial literacy component would include "basic computer literacy for record keeping, business planning, farm business management, and marketing." Becoming an entrepreneur was a major aim of the project. To realize its project aims, CLESE would actually bring together many community partners.

I had a chance to learn what farm participants thought about the project while conducting preliminary research activities on the health outcomes of Global Gardens for its elderly participants. The Farm Health Research Advisory Committee (FHRAC) was founded through a grant funding a year of meetings and preliminary research activities, including three focus groups (in Nepalese, Burmese, and Karen languages), and one day of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) (Cooperrider 2009) with participants of chronometric ages 25-68[30]. Although the focus groups concentrated on health issues, we also learned a great deal about what participants and people from these communities liked about the garden. It was a place to socialize and interact with people of different cultures, for families to spend time together, for people to reconnect with

[30] As I mentioned in an anecdote in Chapter 2, we kept the target age group purposefully broad.

their farming backgrounds, and to preserve and pass on cultural traditions and knowledge. One man from Bhutan said[31]:

> When I first came here, I thought there wouldn't be any farming, that I would have to buy everything from the store. But when I started working [at] the garden, the memories came back from Bhutan. The feeling of planting your own food and eating it makes me and my family very joyful and happy. In Bhutan, we used to farm a lot. That is how [we] ate. But when we left, we didn't know if we could ever do that forever. When I started attending this garden, it really struck me because I can do what I love again.

The participants also noted how the garden helped distract them from their worries and invited sharing between them and middle-class community gardeners like me.

> One day, I was sick at home. So I wanted to go to the garden. I feel good when I pick out the tomatoes, and it makes me feel warm inside. Someone asked, 'What kind of garden is this?' 'This is Global Garden.' And she picked out her tomatoes from her garden for me. And that's when I realized how much I love this garden.

Another testimonial provided in Global Gardens' literature described using gardening to forget about worries resulting from unemployment.

> I got laid off from my job and feel kind of depressed sometimes, but just going around the garden makes me feel relaxed. When I have free time, I work on my plot or fix up other farmers' plots. That is when I am really happy. I sometimes worry about next year. What will I do if we don't have the farm?

As I have noted, some of the participants in this dissertation research also gardened, which enabled them to help contribute to their families.

In terms of entrepreneurship and self-sufficiency, however, the garden fell short of its goals. The garden helped refugees supplement their food stamps but not get off of them—unsurprising given the small size of the plots and the relatively short growing season in Chicago. The garden did help refugees have more access to vegetables familiar to them, which was nice because they described how unfamiliar they were with the contents of US grocery stores. It was

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[31] The follow quotations were translated by community volunteer/AI-day participants.

also good because many suffered from diet-related chronic illnesses; high blood pressure, stomach ailments, and diabetes were among the most common. Gardening also helped stave off boredom and worries. Spending a great deal of time indoors was a big shift for people from agricultural backgrounds, where lives are overwhelmingly spent out of doors.

In the findings of AI-day and my subsequent dissertation research, I came to understand just how important farming was to refugees from those backgrounds. It was a basis of family relations and something that my participants had hoped to do their whole lives in some capacity, sometimes until the day that they died. One of my participants from Bhutan, Chandra Katwal, lamented:

> Earlier life in Bhutan was good. We had our own land, house and animal[s]. We enjoyed working in the farmland and making our living. Now in the US, I cannot do anything. I depend on Public Aid; otherwise life is good here, too.

Coming to Chicago meant having access to health care, income and food from Public Aid. One livelihood was exchanged for another, each with its benefits and contingencies.

After three years of the project, CLESE wanted to move away from farming. It had already been a bit of a stretch for the organization, and the lease had been taken over by another non-profit. The Farm had been successful in attracting refugees who were enthusiastic about gardening, cultivating produce for them and their families, and even generating a bit of income for those who wanted it. For example, Gwen organized a weekly CSA that brought in $10,000 in one year and the communal plot sold $100 worth of produce a week. Gwen continued working for the Farm, which had even expanded to include 30 more plots at a community college. However, she was no longer getting income, and it was beginning to become a problem for her. To keep the Farm going, she had instituted fees that still did not cover the cost of seeds and equipment. She was also applying for different forms of funding, including a USDA grant called

"Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP)" that aimed to get people into farming because of the ""rising average age of US farmers." Gwen was also trying to put together Bhutanese and Burmese councils to manage the farm more democratically.

Gwen admitted that the project had not necessarily met the goals of producing economic self-sufficiency and incubator farms. "The RAPP program recognizes that," she said. "Three years is not enough time even when you have a real incubator farm and you're giving people more and more land each year. It takes many, many, many more years." A significant challenge, of course, is connecting refugees in Chicago to farmland outside of it.

Despite the focus on entrepreneurship, Gwen noted that 80% of participants just wanted to grow for home consumption, for sharing among family and friends. One of my interview participants, Hpo Hkwe, said that he did not sell. "No, only for eating because I have my children and grandchildren," he explained. The ELT tutoring had also fallen flat in its efforts. Gwen had relied on local college students but found that "they're really not going to produce anything that's got a long-term effect for you."

In terms of lasting impacts, Gwen felt that the biggest change was convincing the refugees from farming backgrounds that they could still garden in this new environment. She said, "They know a lot. It took the first three years to demonstrate the potential to them. You can grow vegetables in Chicago and you can eat them. You can bring your family here." The future of the Farm, however, is contingent on turning it into a stable organization with resources and access to land. The Farm had helped transform an unused lot into a beautiful, green space, and attracting neighborhood turnover makes their future access to the land more uncertain.

Conclusion

As a discourse, self-sufficiency legitimizes the authority and organization of resettlement, including the use of mainstream welfare and aging services for refugees deemed non-employable by age. The process of making refugee seniors "self-sufficient" through welfare benefits is anything but simple because of the hidden barriers that emerge in a delegated welfare state. Refugees with limited resources must wait during processing times and rely on the interventions of caseworkers to bridge barriers to patching refugees into mainstream resources. As Leah's "No Income Letter" demonstrated, part of this issue arises from the documentation benefits programs require and the lack of visibility of refugees in their systems.

Cobbling together and repurposing programs not intended for refugees conceals and normalizes the vulnerability of resettlement services and resources to politics and funding shifts at multiple levels of government. The politics of refugee (in)visibility is that it can protect resettlement from criticism but create vulnerabilities when the specialized problems of refugees go unrecognized. The programs that they rely on can become subject to sudden budget cuts. In the case of BAP, funding for the program was linked to a political context in which expanding funding for social services is considered untenable. Cuts for Illinois' aging and other social services were also cuts for its refugee newcomers.

Designating this shifting cast of programs as a resettlement "system" ignores that patchworking is an action contingent on the tools and know-how of casework (See Chapter 6). The services upon which refugee "seniors" are made to depend are not fixed but constantly changing. Being invisible to those systems ensured the "costs" of refugees were hidden, but it also means that a group with few resources to buffer hardships relies on programs that can suddenly disappear.

Bureaucratic procedures reinforce the portrayal of resettlement as a "system" rather than an ad hoc assortment of programs implemented by a variety of state and non-state actors, which "despite federal and state regulations and the strings attached to grants, retain a great deal of autonomy" (Katz 2002:14). Sometimes that autonomy can lead to specialized programs, like the Farm, which took a multigenerational approach that viewed the farming backgrounds and the skills of "older" people as an asset. Because contracted organizations have some degree of autonomy, they are also potential sites for refugees to contest "their downward mobility" (Nawyn 2010:153). Nawyn is correct in highlighting such institutional opportunities because even programs with the language of entrepreneurship and self-sufficiency can occur simultaneously with appeals to non-neoliberal collective or relational forms of subjectivity (Bondi 2005). My refugee participants who gardened talked about spending time with friends and contributing the produce to their families. Funded through federal grants, the Refugee Farm could portray itself as promoting self-sufficiency and entrepreneurship, but in practice, it provided benefits outside of its stated aims.

In a "delegated" system, ethnography is useful for evaluating the components of resettlement and their effects in practice. In its written objectives, the Farm seemed like another example of neoliberal ideologies informing notions of self-sufficiency through entrepreneurship. In practice, however, it offered something much more robust, including a way for refugees from agricultural backgrounds to engage in activities that provided opportunities for socializing, stress relief, and growing their own food. Instead of chronometric age definitions, the Farm project used a multigenerational focus that acknowledged elderly as embedded in family relations, which it aimed to strengthen. This seemed more in line with the holistic approach to serving elderly that UNHCR had recommended (2000).

Advocating for the adoption of better policies and approaches for assisting “older” refugees is always dependent on the nature of UNHCR policymaking structures and the welfare states of resettling countries. The formalized ad hoc-ness of US resettlement and its narrow definition of integration, and the delegated structure of US welfare state, make it unsurprising to find a shifting cast of programs that, in practice, use such different understandings of “older” refugees and their “self-sufficiency.” In the next chapter, I consider how the process of categorizing refugees and determining their forms of self-sufficiency is based on chronometric ages in documents brought to the US.

Chapter 4 - Bureaucratic Birthdates: Migrations and Mistranslations of Refugees' Chronometric Ages

"Do you know how old you are?" I asked at the very opening of an interview with a couple from Burma/Myanmar. I sat with Saw Ker Por at a small table in their living room next to my Karen interpreter, Michelle, and the pair of bunk beds where he and his daughter slept. Their teenaged son was in his bedroom, the only one in the apartment. Saw Ker Por received Supplemental Security Income (SSI) because his documents established his age as 72. Naw Nee Ah, who took care of their disabled daughter, was sitting near her small makeshift bed on the ground. She was 59 according to her documents and, therefore, not eligible. Looking at them both, I found it hard to believe that she was not the same age as her husband, but neither seemed to care as much as me about their numerical ages.

"My age is sixty," he said initially, laughing before calling to his wife, "Where has she gone to?"

"I don't know how old you are," she answered.

"Sixty," he said, "It is in the papers."

In interviews with refugees like Saw Ker Por, I learned that the date in one's documents created a potential gap between refugees' and the U.S. resettlement program's understandings of age.

Carried through airports often in plastic IOM[32] bags, the documents of newly arrived refugees sometimes contain generic birthdates—January 1st for many, July 1st for some Iraqis. Whatever their significance in home countries or displacement contexts, these birthdates take on new meanings in the US. In this chapter, I examine the migration of refugees and their ages as they acquire and become categorized by birthdates found in their documents. Frequently used as

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[32] The International Organization of Migration (IOM) is responsible for coordinating all travel for resettled refugees.

an “objective” metric, chronometric ages take on new meanings in migration and may determine access to work, rights, and resources. The use of refugees’ chronometric ages as indicators of employability reinforces the narrow aims of resettlement while creating further gaps to be managed.

Chronometric age enables US resettlement bureaucracies to process refugees from diverse backgrounds and displacement experiences primarily through programs for mainstream citizens. The primary goal of refugee resettlement is self-sufficiency achieved through employment as soon as possible. Because federal policies define refugees’ employability based on their chronometric ages, age figures into this “welfare or work” (Mirza 2012) approach.

Documents with a single chronometric age enable a newly arrived refugee to apply for mainstream programs like SSI, but this approach creates some problems. Refugees under 65 who did not fit disability standards were expected to work or rely on family members. Employment program staff were wary of taking on refugees that seemed “older” because of the challenges that they posed to getting employed. They also had little incentive to help refugees eligible for SSI but who still wanted to work. Refugees who received SSI needed to pass the citizenship exam within seven years in order to retain this benefit, but ELT programs geared towards “seniors” were given less consistent financial support. This problem gave rise to a tactic with varying degrees of success: seeking medical exemptions to get around the need to know English in order to pass the citizenship exam. Such approaches reinforced the tendency to limit efforts aimed at the meaningful integration of refugees deemed non-employable by age. Programs skirted rather than addressed underlying challenges, such as a lack of English language, literacy, or unrecognized education credentials or work histories. These are increasingly issues for current incoming groups (Capps et al. 2015) that seem to disproportionately affect “older” refugees and yet pose a problem to address under current ways of organizing US resettlement.

Exploring how bureaucracies provide and process refugees according to birthdates in their documents brings attention to how US constructions of age become transposed onto refugees. Divorced from political, economic, and social contexts, chronometric age distinctions in refugee resettlement raise a number of issues about the basis upon which the US government and associated agencies grant assistance to refugees and US citizens. Preconceived categories create problems when used to understand and assist refugees (Haines 2010:19). For example, labelling refugees as “youth,” often according to Western criteria and norms, can obscure their engagement in political and economic activities (Clark-Kazak 2011). One person can occupy multiple ages from different social contexts and perspectives (Clark-Kazak 2009). Narrowing a person to a single identity is an example of state control (Ferme 2004) and an aspect of making populations legible (Scott 1998). The supposed precision of chronometric age “obstructs the acknowledgment of constitutive narratives about aging and reproduces them without any critical reflection” (Baars 2012:7). Refugee resettlement programs “read” refugees’ documents according to cultural ideologies and inequalities linked to the moral and political economy of chronometric ages in the US.

Birthdates provide a means of calculating chronometric age or “calendar age,” valued for its apparent precision and “objectivity” (Baars 2012:8). In the US, age is used to assign people status, presenting similarities or differences where there often are none (Phillipson 2013:57; Baars 2012:53). Bureaucratic processes enable certain characteristics of old age in the US context to be ascribed to refugees. I view this approach as a sort of mistranslation or even assimilation that brings attention to the authority and control enabled by casting chronometric age as objective and a fair basis of evaluating refugees' deservingness.

Anthropology can provide cross-cultural and critical perspectives to make visible the influence of age ideologies in refugee and migration policies. Life courses and aging vary according to cultural contexts (Sokolovsky 2009) and according to intersections of gender, race, and class (Cruikshank 2003). Aging can vary by gender in terms of whether it is considered a process that unfolds chronologically or rather contingent on other circumstances (Bledsoe 2002). Collapsing age into chronometric age is a problem because ultimately "chronometric time is just one, quite limited, way to conceive time" that is "important because of its instrumental and calculative qualities"(Baars 2012:7). Categories of "youth," adulthood, or "elderly" are not stable, neutral, or objective but linked to political-economic changes and interactions with the state and processes of globalization (Ruddick 2003; Hess and Shandy 2008; Hansen 2005). Aging challenges constructions of power (Cohen 1994) such as the capitalist drive for lifelong accumulation (Cole 1997). These interconnections make age and aging an important lens for examining power dynamics in the state, migration, and globalization processes (Cole and Durham 2007b).

Research on the categorization of refugees is important because "these attempts to figure out who refugees are reveal a great deal about the categories that Americans use to assign people to their proper place" (Haines 2010:14). Gender, race/ethnicity, and class have been considered "categories and mechanisms that daily produce the norms of differential belonging for refugee clients" (Ong 2003:145); however, "contours" or "latitudes of citizenship" (Ong 2003:281–282) are also linked to the ways that citizenship is aged. My approach is to trace the actual processes of ascribing later life identities to refugees and the ideas, rights, resources, and inherent inequalities attached to them.

Chronometric Ages and "Aging Paradigms" in the US

Critical gerontology scholarship has contributed to advancing understandings of how aged identities take on meaning in relation to the historical and institutional contexts of working and retirement life in the US and other (usually) Western contexts. Understanding such perspectives is important because "the institutionalization of the life course has turned age and generation themselves into a major dimension of social inequality" (Kohli 2007:261). As discussed in Chapter 1, age and aging also factor into the role of the welfare state in upholding economic systems and organizing social production. I consider the historical processes of institutionalizing and deinstitutionalizing the life course in the US and the broader shift from modern individualism to market individualism.

Chronometric age and life course concepts enable this trend towards neoliberal modes of governing by upholding an individualizing view of age, defined "atomistically" (Fortes 1984:109), that legitimizes aspects of bureaucratic power and market relations. The concepts of age formed by 20th century institutions govern through a "lag," a gap between the concept and the underlying reality or conditions. According to the structural lag hypothesis, social institutional structures lagged behind the improved conditions and increased life expectancies from 20th century policies and developments in health (Riley and Riley 1986; cited in Phillipson 2013). However, there is another lag at play in the gap between reality and conditions in concepts of later life in the US. The "aging paradigms" of the 21st century contain "old" ideas of being old or retired, based in a time of more robust, and yet, still unequally distributed in US society, forms of later life support from employers, public pensions, and other collective institutions. However, the lag is an important feature of age governmentality: that institutional age concepts seen as "universal" or normative persist in constructing and governing people as aged individuals even after institutional foundations change.

Through the development of the welfare state, age became a basis upon which governments managed the productivity of a population as well as identified and addressed social problems arising from the risks of industrial capitalism (Baars 2012; Phillipson 2013). Bismarck first instituted retirement age—70 years—in Germany in 1889 (Herbay 2014). Later than European countries, the US established Social Security in 1935 followed by the Older Americans Act (OAA) in 1965, and these policies greatly reduced the poverty of older Americans (Campbell 2003:18–21). A cultural legacy of these policies was to transform the social meaning of aging to labor market criteria such as employability (Quadagno 1988:6). Linking old age to employability can reinforce government practices that use retirement age as a means of managing surplus labor (Phillipson 2013:63). The United States is unique, however, because it has no mandatory retirement age. The government legislated against age discrimination beginning with the 1967 Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) and banned mandatory retirement at any age altogether in 1986 (Neumark 2003); however, age discrimination still affects hiring practices. "Older" workers in the US have lower rates of unemployment but struggle to get a job for longer periods when they do become unemployed (US Special Committee on Aging 2012).

Chronometric age is an aspect of governmentality implicating self-knowledge and personal conduct (Burchell, Gordon, and Miller 1991) in its new social and personal meanings (Chudacoff 1989). Expressions such as "look good for your age" or "age badly" express disjuncture between aging and chronometric age but still reinforce the use of age as a guidepost in US (Chudacoff 1989). Chronometric age continues to be used as an indicator of health, productivity, vulnerability, and, of course, aging, despite the fact that it is not a determinant of any of these (Kirkwood 1999; cited in Baars 2012:15).

Chronometric definitions implicate social inequalities even as they treat old age as genderless and stripped of class and ethnicity, rendering forms of privilege, such as retirement, invisible (Cruikshank 2003). Race and class inequalities in the labor market can contribute to "unretired" African Americans using disability to manage later life unemployment (Gibson 1995). Gender-based discrimination, including lifelong income inequality and retirement policies based on the male breadwinner, disadvantage older women (Minkler and Estes 1991:23–24; Cruikshank 2003).

Figure 9-"Un-retire": an example of a third age consumerist identity on a billboard in Northern Chicago.

Concepts of old age continue to reflect shifting relationships between individuals and the market. They can enforce normative ideas of aging despite the fact that the prosperity and consumer lifestyles associated with retirement are limited to a privileged segment of the population. This occurs through a simultaneous shift in the individualism of age from a basis in formal collective institutions, such as public pensions or Social Security, to market institutions, such as private retirement funds. The history of retirement provides some perspective into this shift. Middle class prosperity and the mass consumer youth culture of the Baby Boomer generation contributed to “third age,” meaning “life after the responsibilities of paid employment and child rearing are over” x defined in contrast to “fourth age” or “dependence, decrepitude and death” (Gilleard and Higgs 2000:39; Laslett 1991). In the 1990s and 2000s, neoliberal policies and changes in the labor market eroded the income pillars of retirement security—formal collective institutions, employment, and personal savings (Polivka 2011; Polivka 2012; Wilson 2002). Lifelong employment became more rare, and employers began taking less responsibility for the old age of their employees (Phillipson 2013:101; Fry 1997). The switch from direct benefit to direct contribution retirement plans shifted risk and responsibility onto individuals (Bonoli and Shinkawa 2005; Phillipson 2013).

Such changes in employment and retirement are linked to insecurities in the labor market due to globalization and how employers and governments manage such changes and risks, which become implicated in constructions of “youth” and “aging” changes (Ruddick 2003). Departures from the labor market are increasingly ambiguous, whether thought of as “early exits” (Phillipson 2013:78), “flexi-retired” (Katz 2001 referencing Kastenbaum 1993) or “unretired retired” (Gibson 1995). Recent “anti-aging” and “successful aging” discourses reinforce aging as a personal responsibility whose risks are to be managed individually rather than collectively (Cole 1997; Polivka 2011). Avoiding or delaying “fourth age” is seen as within one’s power (Gilleard and Higgs 2010; Lamb 2014), and marketing and third age consumerist identities construct an idea of “growing older unburdened by the signs of aging” (Katz 2001:27) (see Figure 9).

Conducting life history interviews with refugees serves as a reminder that retirement—and attendant third age identities—is not a universal life stage but depends on resources and the social organization of production (see Chapter 5). Labeling refugees dependent upon SSI and family members as "retirement age" masks such stark differences in concepts, circumstances, and experiences of aging. In the following section, I trace refugees' ages from bureaucracies in their countries of origin to a local Social Security office in Chicago, Illinois.

Pre-Arrival: Establishing Age in Refugee Settings

Retirement evokes a fixed age or life stage, but Mr. Karim Hussain had moved in and out of retirement in his lifetime. A divorced musician from Iraq, he was unique among my research participants in having had one lifelong career. When this livelihood put him at risk of violence in Iraq, he moved to Syria, where he spent eight years living on retirement money from Iraq while still practicing his profession. After being resettled to the US, he supported himself with SSI based on chronometric age (70), and he referred to it as his "retirement money."

Sitting in the living room with Mr. Hussain and his son, I talked to the elder about age and retirement in the US and Iraq with the help of my interpreter. When I asked Mr. Hussain what age he thought people should retire at, he said 50 or 55. When I said that in the US, 65 was the norm for retirement age, he responded, "Well, I come from Iraq. So I feel that I am retired." I asked him about his birthdate, and he said that he knew his birth year but not the day. He explained that many Iraqis have July 1st birthdates. He was not sure why but he knew that it happened a long time ago for some people in his generation[33]. The date of one's birth was not important for Iraqis, he explained. "They forget about it actually."

Using chronometric age in refugee resettlement presumes that everyone knows his or her birthdate. Given that refugees are by definition people who have fled their countries under fear of

[33] I also tried to find out why July 1st was the generic birthdate for so many people from Iraq. I found different explanations (see footnote 37) but not a definitive one.

persecution[34], the dates in their documents can reflect complicated, exclusionary, or absent relationships to bureaucracies.

When refugees do not have these documents, UNHCR and its affiliate NGOs must provide them with one before they can refer "cases" for resettlement to the US. Some refugees never knew their birthdates, and they can only provide a year or best guess often based on memories of historical events. A staff member or translator might make an error during processing, or a refugee might purposefully disguise their birthdate during different points in their displacement trajectories. January 1st is the de facto generic birthdate provided by UNHCR or affiliates. But as in the example of Mr. Hussain, even generic birthdates vary culturally, and registration processes before and during displacement can impact subsequent processes.

As universal as it might seem at times, documenting age varies with culture as well as a country's resources, politics, and bureaucratic organization. The UN statistics department in its annual Demographic Yearbook raises some of the difficulties involved in documenting age and forming comparisons between countries. These include "differences in the method of reckoning age" such as in the Chinese system in which "a child is considered one year old at birth and advances an additional year at each Chinese New Year" (UN 2013:14, footnote 7), and "a general tendency to state age in figures ending in certain digits (such as zero, two, five and

[34] According to UNHCR, "a refugee is someone 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 to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country..." (UNHCR 2008:4) To be admitted to the US, refugees must meet the definition in section 101(a)(42) of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

eight)" (UN 2013:5). Different traditional calendars[35] and conversions between them can also potentially create problems.

Having statistics on age, birth, and death in a country requires a functioning government with a particular capacity and motivation for documenting its people. These are bound to be complicated issues in countries that have marginalized and violently excluded portions of their populations. As in Bhutan and Burma/Myanmar, governments can exclude by denying or revoking documentation of citizenship (Maung 2015; Hutt 2005). People might also wish to avoid the surveillance or control of being documented for a number of reasons. In Iraq, conflicts from the 1990s onward have limited civil registration activities and shaped the birthdates encoded through them. A report by the UN in 2007 noted incompetency as well as deliberate actions by the population:

> The system is unreliable – sometimes people intentionally give out inaccurate information to avoid compulsory military services or for certain financial benefits. Administratively, there are not enough registration offices around the country. There is one headquarter office located in Baghdad and 11 suboffices in the city. For the rest of the country, only 1 office exists in each province to cover the registration. The registrars are lack of (sic) qualifications and experiences and most of them are just barely literate. The registration of vital events is not complete, nor does it cover all areas in the country. From the most recent studies on fertility and mortality, the coverage of birth and registration in Iraq is 68% and 34%, respectively. (United Nations Statistics Division 2007:18)

Whether one is from a rural or urban area, born in a hospital or at home can impact birth registration. UNICEF has expressed concern at the lack of birth documentation. A report noted that currently "only half of the children under five years old in the developing world have their births registered" (Smith and Brownlees 2011:1). Some Iraqis were never given nor sought out

[35] For example, I learned during my interview with Naw Sih Sih and Saw Law La that Karen people use a different calendar than the majority Burman group of Burma/Myanmar. To get the Karen year from the Western one, you add 739 because 739 B.C. is when the Karen people are supposed to have migrated into Burma/Myanmar.

documentation of their births. Choosing a certain birthdate can even be a purposeful tactic. Even the former dictator of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, did not know his birthdate, which is listed in one official biography as July 1, 1939. He later established it officially as April 28, 1937 to appear more authentic and to make himself appear older [36]. The connection between birth and date is not always so clear-cut, and a lack of registration can be a tool or a source of vulnerability depending on what happens next.

"Biological" ages cannot be objectively assessed (Smith and Brownlees 2011), but claims to scientific precision become even less credible beyond childhood ages. That means that refugee and other registration processes create certainty out of imprecision, a form of deception employed by the state (Ferme 2004). Because refugees often move through different contexts, a birthdate given in one setting for skirting labor laws or conscription into military service could become a problem for accessing government benefits immediately or decades later. Inaccuracies can be reproduced and even compounded over time[37]. As the Iraq context suggests, chronometric age regimes also vary across countries and contexts in bureaucratic capacities, meanings, and reckoning of ages. Nonetheless, chronometric ages seem to appear comparable between contexts.

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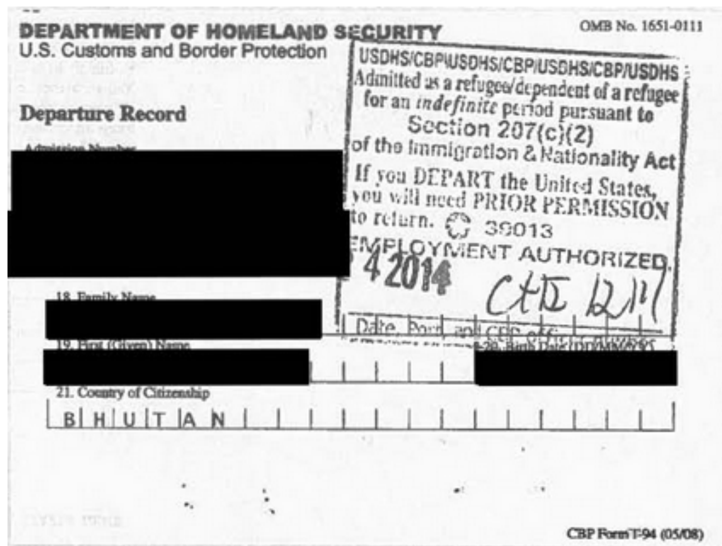
[36] The author explained, "At this time it was the custom for authorities to give all "peasant" children the nominal birth date of July 1; it was only the year that they attempted to get right. This would explain why a certificate presented in one of Saddam's official biographies gives July 1, 1939, as the date of his birth." According a private source, "Saddam was always jealous of Karim for knowing his own birthday. So Saddam simply copied it for himself" (Coughlin 2002:2–3).

[37] Ferme gives an example of one of her informants, a migrant, who gave her a different birthdate than the one in his documents. She described the compounding process by which "each document legitimized the issuing of successor documents, so erroneous initial information (the date of birth) or changed information (the name) was reproduced or magnified" (2004:103). She continued, "In the process his (changed) name was also inextricably linked to his (wrong) birth date in a falsified document of birth and origins. *L'etat falsificateur*, the state as agent of deception, indeed!" (2004:104).

Many refugee, asylum, and other migration processes hinge on determining age and categorizing people based on chronometric ages, creating opportunities or disadvantage but reinforcing the power of states to fix identities.

Entry to the US: Age Categorization in Refugee Resettlement

Figure 10- Copy of a paper I-94 document (with identifiers removed)



DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
OMB No. 1651-0111

Departure Record

[redacted]

USDHS/CBP/USDHS/CBP/USDHS/CBP/USDHS
Admitted as a refugee/dependent of a refugee for an indefinite period pursuant to Section 207(c)(2) of the Immigration & Nationality Act
If you DEPART the United States, you will need PRIOR PERMISSION to return. 39013
EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZED
4 2014

18. Family Name [redacted]

19. First (Given) Name [redacted]

[redacted]

21. Country of Citizenship
BHUTAN

CBP Form I-94 (05/08)

Refugees carry their ages in physical documents into the US system, usually in the form of a passport or travel document and an I-94[38]. The latter is a small white card that documents the entry of non-citizens by the Department of Homeland Security and includes birthdate, first and last name, country of origin, date of arrival, and an A or "alien" number on the back. This number serves as an important identifier in resettlement processes until refugees can apply for and receive a Social Security number. The I-94 also contains a stamp indicating that the person is a refugee and authorized to work (see Figure 10). Such documents prove that a refugee is an "eligible non-citizen" and can receive public benefits.

Chronometric age is important because of US resettlement policies and the larger structure of the welfare state. As discussed in the previous chapter, ORR targets "older refugees" (60+) through discretionary grants for individual states aimed at helping refugees access mainstream OAA and other local aging and social services. The result is that age becomes a

[38] As of September 2015, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol has transitioned to an automated I-94.

means by which refugees and their families gain income and other resources that can serve as an important element of "self-sufficiency" plans.

Once in the US, refugees and their family members face short timelines for becoming self-sufficient, as evidenced in employment programs that require "employable" or "working age" refugees to accept low-wage, entry-level jobs. Those who turn them down are seen as non-compliant and potentially less deserving of rent and other forms of assistance. Every refugee has a primary case manager who works with families to establish a self-sufficiency plan, apply for Social Security cards and basic benefits (see Chapter 6). At Midwest Migration Services, primary case managers referred clients to two in-house age-based programs: the Senior Program (refugees 60 and older) to apply for OAA and other benefits, and the Youth Program (refugees under 18) to enroll in school, day care, or other activities. Case managers refer "employable" or "working age" (18-64) refugees to the Employment Program, and if enrolled, the staff and the refugee client are held to assessments based on finding and keeping employment.

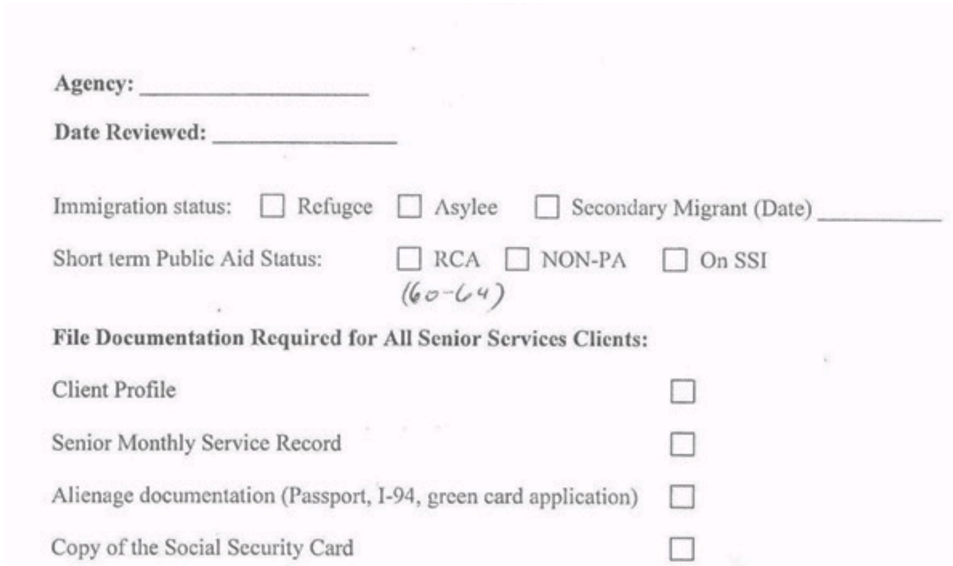
The goal of the Senior Program was to provide refugees with case management services to facilitate their access to a shifting cast of targeted and mainstream resources and social services. Leah, the Senior Program Case Manager, helped refugees aged 65 and older or whose permanent disability prevented them from working apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Applying for SSI based on age is considerably easier. It requires less documentation and takes only a few months compared to the six months to several years to apply for SSI based on disability, sometimes with the help of an attorney. Additional OAA benefits and other social services used different chronometric parameters to define "seniors" and their eligibility (see Figure 11).

Program	Age eligibility
Community Care Program (paid caregiving)	(60+)
Senior subsidized housing	(62+ or disabled, or 55+ for "Reduced Age" Senior buildings)
"Meals on Wheels"	(60+)
Ride Free transportation pass	(65+ or disabled plus means test)
LIHEAP (heating and energy assistance program)	Priority application period for 60+ or disabled)
Medicaid	Originally 65+; under ACA, expanded to all income-eligible applicants (in 39 states). Note: The income limit is lower for 65+.

Figure 11-A Table Depicting Age Eligibility Requirements for Different Resources. According to a Report to the Governor and the Illinois State Assembly, "The definition of age as a basis for service is related to the funding source of programs, and for that reason, age of eligibility for services varies within and between state departments" (2012:7).

Staff assessed clients for benefits eligibility at intake, noting the benefits to apply for in their paper case files. They referred clients to the available programs, making an electronic referral in the electronic case file that was printed and placed in the paper version, and noted as "SR" in electronic case notes. After filling out applications, they printed or photocopied them to place in the paper case file. Then they had to follow up at 30 and 90 days after the referral, case noted as "S30" and "S90." Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago then assessed the program in part by reviewing the case files and documentation of these bureaucratic processes (see Figure 12). They also counted the number of clients served per year, the number of referrals to services each month, and follow-ups on services made to those clients. These methods of evaluation demonstrate the bureaucratic mode of resettlement processes especially for "older" refugees.

Figure 12-A portion of a form for evaluating case files of the Senior Program



Agency: ___________________

Date Reviewed: _______________

Immigration status: ☐ Refugee ☐ Asylee ☐ Secondary Migrant (Date) __________

Short term Public Aid Status: ☐ RCA (60-64) ☐ NON-PA ☐ On SSI

File Documentation Required for All Senior Services Clients:

Client Profile ☐

Senior Monthly Service Record ☐

Alienage documentation (Passport, I-94, green card application) ☐

Copy of the Social Security Card ☐

Every year, Leah also wrote success stories describing how the Senior Program helped clients through case management and senior workshops, and, as her intern, I helped her. Here is one example quoted (with the name removed):

> _____, is another refugee from Iraq. She is 69 years old, and came to the US with her husband on 9/18/2012. Client was helped through the senior services case management to apply for Supplemental security income, SNAP, Medicaid, Senior free ride pass, senior housing, home care services. Client now receives SSI, SNAP, Medicaid, senior free ride pass and home care services. Client was also referred to sewing classes offered through __________ Association. She enjoys attending Sewing classes twice a week, and she attends our program senior field trips and workshops. She is now getting out of the house more than she ever did, and feels enthusiastic about life for the first time in many years.

These success stories provide an idea of how the Senior Program defines success as successfully connecting refugees to a variety of targeted and mainstream social services and benefits.

Government benefits and OAA services helped caseworkers as they negotiated limited timelines and self-sufficiency standards. Caseworkers must apply for SSI for all refugees who are 65 and older, and they may also apply for difficult-to-employ disabled refugees under 65. In Illinois, the Community Care Program in-home caregiving services, and resettlement programs could help family members (other than spouses) apply to become caregivers for their older relatives, friends, or even someone completely unrelated. Eligibility was based on age (60+) and an in-depth needs assessment, which can be problematic when used with migrants due to cultural and translation issues (Iris 2012:185). Caseworkers at Midwest Migration Services regularly made use of the caregiving program to help seniors and employ family members. It was part of a "patchworking" strategy for households with seniors (Kibria 1994).

English Language Training for "Seniors"

Age and employability standards also played into different English Language Training tracks. The in-house ELT program at MMS was focused on employment and often went too fast for some of my research participants. Instead, those "seniors" considered "not likely to be employed" (as they were referred to in their case notes) were referred to ELT programs at local community organizations, and many of my research participants attended these classes when weather, health, or childcare duties permitted them.

One location that MMS managed had a particularly unstable funding and program history. It began as part of the Women's Empowerment Program (WEP) (that admitted men) until receiving funding to become "Bright Ideas," with a curriculum designed by CLESE specially for "older" learners. After this program was cut in 2012, the class, which had two levels, was cut down to one, and attendees were "scattered everywhere," according to Rachel, the Senior Program Outreach Worker. However, their ELT volunteer continued to teach. When I interviewed her, she remarked that she still had some of the same students from the beginning, and she had been teaching for the last 10 years. Her unpaid work provided consistency in the English learning efforts of these refugees.

Another goal of these classes was for refugees to gain citizenship, a goal that is important for refugees to maintain their benefits. Still, it seemed that few seniors were able to make much progress in language learning through these classes. Rachel taught the program when it was under WEP, and she noted that many refugees arrived with considerable challenges. “Most of them are totally illiterate. They never have been to school in the life. Even holding a pencil was their first experience,” she said. A case manager for a Senior Program (before funding was cut) in another local resettlement agency described her class as “super basic, you can’t get more basic,” which was necessary because of the challenges of her students:

> None of them read or wrote of my students. The Iraqis did. We had one Nepali man, he wasn’t truly illiterate, but he had some religious training, so he could read Sanskrit, so he could sort of could write a little bit.

In recent years, more than half of refugees arriving are not literate in their native language and, thus, face considerable challenges to learning English (Capps et al. 2015). In terms of outcomes, Rachel said that she did not know of anyone who gained citizenship from these classes, and the ELT volunteer that I spoke with had one student that was about to take the exam. Of my research participants, three from Burma/Myanmar had passed exams and gotten their citizenship: Naw Sih Sih and her husband, Saw Law La, and U Nay. All three had received some instruction prior to resettlement. For the rest, it was perhaps too soon to tell, but three people were closing in one their seventh year in the country. Haines conducted a study that found that English language competence at the time of arrival is a better indicator of economic success of resettled refugees, while the impact on economic success of English language training received after arrival is "small at best" (Haines 2010:153). Learning a new language later in life along with being tracked into ELT programs that rely volunteers might further exacerbate the disadvantage of not knowing English prior to arrival. My research findings further suggest that access to education varied by gender as well as household composition and resources, and women were more likely than men to skip ELT classes to stay at home and babysit (see Chapter 5).

Pathways to citizenship and English language are important when refugees depend on government benefits as a means of self-sufficiency. Managing benefits, like SSI, requires responding to correspondence promptly to avoid gaps or cancellation of benefits; however, some of the students have a long way to go before being able to manage these on their own. I asked the ELT volunteer teacher if she ever practiced filling out forms with her students. She said that she did using a form with name and address, and she would read it out loud to them. She explained, "I do not do it often so they are not practicing, but once in a while I ask them. It takes the whole class (laughing) two hours to do the whole thing." Only some of her students knew their addresses. Without such basic skills or knowledge, managing benefits is impossible without help.

Refugees can lose SSI in seven years if they do not receive citizenship, which requires passing a citizenship test. Another option is to get a doctor to fill out a medical waiver describing why the refugee is physically or mentally incapable of learning English. I learned that doctors were sometimes unwilling to fill out this form, which required very thorough diagnoses to receive approval for the exemption. One female client from Burma/Myanmar moved out of state after being unable to secure an exemption, and another woman from Iraq paid her doctor to fill it out. In 2008, Congress approved a temporary extension of the time limit to 9 years (SSA 2013a), a stopgap measure that sidestepped rather than addressed the root problems underlying the challenges to gaining citizenship. The extension expired in 2011 affecting an estimated 11,000 people (Ruffing 2010). In my research, I encountered several refugees beyond the seven-year limit, and the Senior Program helped them apply for Aid to the Aged Blind and Disabled (AABD), a state program that provides an even lower income than SSI. An employee at the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law sent me the numbers on refugee/asylee AABD recipients in Illinois, which reached a high of 164 in 2009 and hovered around just over 100 in 2014.

Compared to US citizens, “older” refugees faced challenges particular to displacement and aging experiences. Many scholars have noted their loss of traditional status or even role reversals (Chenoweth and Burdick 2001; Haines 2010:118; Iris 2012; Dubus 2010). They are often more isolated in the US than they were in their home countries (Haines 2010:118). Refugees arrive in the US with numerous physical and mental health issues linked to displacement, poor nutrition and health care in refugee camps and third countries, and the stress of resettlement. Undergoing aging in the US can even be a source of stress for refugees, who often hold different ideas about what constitutes old age (Dubus 2010:209). Over time, refugee and immigrant groups in Chicago have established senior services and centers. The interviews I conducted suggested that people from Iraq benefited from having more established organizations and networks, and newer groups had less established or stable community-based organizations. Through advocacy and cultural activities, ethnic-based organizations can play a beneficial role in serving migrants and refugees (Nawyn 2010); however, the age parameters of mainstream OAA policies still leave marks in practical constructions of aged citizenship that are worth noticing. These include the vulnerabilities and inequalities created in the gaps between lived realities and chronometric age standards as the markers of employability or aging.

Legibility of Aging and Employability

Officially, primary case managers are required to refer all “employable” refugees—anyone younger than 65 who is not on SSI, pregnant, or a primary caretaker of someone (including a child under one)—to the Employment Program. Refugees over 65 are de facto referred to apply for SSI unless they insist on being referred for work. Still, chronometric age is not a clear-cut determiner of employability, and caseworkers’ subjective assessments of clients’ ages and aging influenced their approaches.

Researchers of US refugee resettlement have noted the strategic use of the “non-employable” category in resettlement agencies as a way of managing limited resources and performance outcomes (Darrow 2015; Mirza 2012). In resettlement, “any 'difficult' new case, whether because of age, health, education, or socioeconomic background, is a potential threat to the success of the resettlement program” (Haines 2010:142). Over 25 years ago, Gozdziak reported on challenges for “older” refugees upon resettlement to the US, including how they are given low priority in services because they are considered non-employable (1988:13). The use of chronometric age to label refugees as “non-employable” reinforces an uncritical treatment of older persons in the US as unproductive. Making use of a non-working, “retirement” role can seem easier than addressing the challenges and personal wishes of refugee newcomers.

Refugees that fell into the category of 65 and older were supposed to be clearly “non-employable,” but what about people under 65? Employment staff and primary caseworkers often pointed to the 50-64 age group as the most difficult to help, a problem created by resettlement age-employability parameters. A case manager at another resettlement agency explained to me:

> Honestly, we are very hesitant to accept a case where we think the only employable would be 52 years old. We have had a couple of cases, especially Iraqis because we can often use their community connections a little bit. Maybe they would get a job parking

> cars, in a parking lot or in a paid lot stamping tickets or something like that. We have one guy who drives to the airport, but I mean, if you are above 50, it's really, really, really difficult to place you. I don't think anyone over the age of 55 is even seeking employment services with us currently.

She added that if she had such clients, she would encourage them to move away from Chicago. Employment teams of resettlement organizations had to work under constraints of fitting refugees to available jobs rather than finding jobs that would suit their clients, especially those with considerable challenges besides or in addition to appearing "older" to caseworkers or employers. As mentioned in the meeting above, staff sometimes held "easier" positions, such as cleaning up at a local theater, for people who would otherwise have trouble finding work, but such a physical, overnight position was not suitable for everyone.

The link between clients' aging and employability was subject to subjective assessments by staff. At MMS "Unit Meetings," staff would go down a list of clients deciding which ones deserve to continue receiving rent assistance. The SSI recipients received little attention because they were the responsibility of caseworkers (see Chapter 6). At one meeting, I listened as they reached a client who they considered "older." Someone commented, "He's not old at 50. African 50 is different from other 50." A member of the employment team responded that she could help him apply for the theater cleaning job, which regularly took "older" clients. This was the first time that I had heard race enter this subjective assessment. It was also unusual to hear the staff call someone younger than their age because the trend seemed to be in the opposite direction—seeing people as older than their ages.

During my interview with Tanya, a case manager at MMS, I learned that she encountered clients with incorrect ages in their documents. For example, one woman's documents said that she was much younger than she appeared to staff, and Tanya took her to a dentist to get her age reassessed and her documents corrected to make her over 65. Darrow (2015) also observed an instance when a caseworker thought that a woman deserved more benefits because she was older than the age in her documents. She quoted the caseworker, who said, "She can't get a copy of her birth certificate because she is a refugee, there is a war going on in her country. We can't get records!" (2015:80–81). I found it interesting that in these examples, the refugees were assessed as over 65 and meeting SSI eligibility. The practice seemed to reflect a need for resources more than an attempt to remedy inaccuracies, but, of course, it is difficult to know for sure. Age documents always create certainty out of uncertainty, but in these cases, they were subject to caseworkers' assessments of aging. Refugees could be made to fit metrics of deservingness in Social Security by "fixing" their ages.

Case managers sometimes implied that they thought that refugees aged faster. Tanya thought that refugees' experiences affected their physical processes of aging as well as their self-assessments of employability:

> Probably seems like in 'refugee years,' once you are 50 you are 100. You know so 50 is a totally employable age to us, but I find it really hard for people, feel they are employable or to employ them at that age.

The idea that refugees aged faster could reinforce a tendency to view them as non-employable at "younger" ages; the physical process of aging, affected by the experience of being a refugee, seemed entangled with labor market criteria. A case manager at another resettlement agency also agreed that refugees aged faster. He said, "Because of the stress and staying in the camp without nutritious food and they just look so old. Even at 50 to 55 years old, they look so old." It is interesting to note that subjective assessments are also a part of UNHCR's Heightened Risk Identification Tool, which notes "older people" as a "risk category," but leaves it up to the assessor to decide who is "older" (UNHCR 2010a). Some of my refugee participants would agree with the idea that they aged faster because of stress, war, and poor nutrition in camps. Some felt that being in the US and having access to health care made people age more slowly. For example, Khawa Akho felt that people in Iraq aged faster: “In Iraq, if you are 50, they would say you are old. Here, if you are 90 years old and healthy then you are young.” Caseworkers had some power, and their subjective assessments of refugees’ aging could mean that they helped them getting around age parameters, or it could also confirm that, under 65 or not, they were too old to work.

Caseworkers could influence refugees’ understandings of themselves and their place in the US by reinforcing that work was not for them. They told me that refugees documented as in their 60s seeking assistance in finding employment were rare, but it is hard to ignore that the Employment Team could only be penalized in assessments of their program by accepting clients that they knew would be difficult to employ or would be perceived as such by employers. It is also possible that caseworkers told refugees that they were not employable. For example, Dhanraj Thapa from Bhutan told me, “I was expecting to work, but my caseworker … said to me that I would not be able to work.” He was under 65 when he arrived, and he and his wife both applied for and received SSI based on disability. Perhaps his caseworker was being strategic or just felt that he was deserving of assistance, but disability itself is not a reason to exclude refugees from engaging in work activities (Mirza 2012; Mirza and Heinemann 2012). The interviews that I conducted with my refugee participants confirmed than many wished to find ways of contributing to their families.

The sharp distinction between working and retirement was new for refugees from rural backgrounds that would have transitioned to easier tasks before stopping work if at all. Others found that the standard of 65 years as "retirement age" was higher than they would have expected in their home countries.

Work takes on different meanings at different ages (Lynch 2012), and without jobs refugees might have little means of feeling integrated into their communities (Roberman 2013). The organization of resettlement based on SSI naturalized age as a basis of labor regulation and created a gap for those people understood as "non-employable" but not meeting age or disability standards in Social Security. Those that applied for and received SSI and other benefits were considered successful cases by MMS, sometimes to the neglect of their own wishes and desires, and not having ways to supplement or increase their income meant that their upward mobility relied on family members.

Aged Standards in the Social Security System

> **WHAT DOES "AGED" MEAN?**
>
> "Aged" means age 65 or older.
>
> (Social Security Administration 2015)

Getting a Social Security Card, an important initial step in the case management and bureaucratic integration of newly arrived refugees, is also an entry point into an enormous government program and bureaucracy that currently provides benefits for 59 million Americans (Social Security Administration 2014). Recipients include retired and disabled workers, their dependents and survivors (Social Security Administration 2014). A generic redbrick building with small, square windows and glass front doors was the preferred local Social Security Administration (SSA) office for Midwest Migration Services. It housed two programs: employment-based Social Security and means-tested SSI. Both programs employ chronometric age distinctions, but only people with a recognized employment history have access to the Social Security program.

On an early January morning, I accompanied a Congolese man to apply for SSI. He had just turned 65 according to his documents. He, an interpreter from Midwest Migration Services, and I were seated in gray metal chairs clustered around the desk of a Social Security caseworker. As we passed over the documents for he and his family members, I noticed that his entire family had January 1st birthdays. When I asked him about it with the help of the interpreter, he explained that he had told the interpreter at the refugee camp his birthdate, but the UNHCR representative wrote 1/1 anyway. Despite this discrepancy, his documents had now indicated his status as eligible for SSI, a moment that Midwest Migration Services had been eagerly anticipating. Once a household started receiving SSI, MMS would often stop providing rent assistance, even when it left little income left over for other expenses.

Social Security is a form of social insurance. Workers in the US earn points towards their retirement benefits, and they need at least 10 years of work in the US (or in countries with agreements with the US) to qualify for these benefits. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a means-tested program funded through general government revenue. Established under the Nixon administration, SSI federalized state programs for people who are blind, disabled (to the point of being unable to work), or "aged," and have limited income or assets. Since 1974, SSI has provided income at ¾ of the poverty level: currently $733 for an individual and $1100 for a married couple. Rates of accessing SSI are lower than those for Social Security, as "means-tested programs such as SSI have generally had difficulty in achieving high rates of participation among those eligible" (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities 2011). This observation suggests that access might be an issue for populations other than refugee newcomers. The chronometric ages in refugees' documents enable resettlement agencies to connect clients to SSI, but without recognized work histories, they have no access to Social Security. As a result, their future incomes were pinned to this federal program.

Conclusion

US resettlement programs use chronometric age to integrate and assign status to newly arrived refugees with a self-sufficiency focus that clearly implicates age. The "welfare or work" paradigm in US resettlement supports its narrow scope and obscures a host of challenges to integration, such as English language and literacy. Chronometric age was the basis for securing access to mainstream OAA and other services and categorizing refugees over 65 as non-employable despite their desires and capacities. Relying on SSI was a different situation from what many of my interview participants would have expected in their home countries, where some expected to work their whole lives, gradually transition to lighter work, or stop working when family members could take care over their care. The guidelines also gave rise to a vulnerable under 65 years old group that might be difficult-to-employ but not yet sufficiently "aged" to be deserving of SSI. Official age categories gave rise to caseworkers' subjective assessments of refugees' aging and employability linked to the constraints of their programs and typical entry-level jobs. These assessments might have affected refugees' perceptions of the opportunities and possibilities for them in the US.

Chronometric ages can appear neutral but are inherently linked to the moral and political economy of the welfare state. Governments have used the institutional life course and chronometric age parameters to manage the risks and workers' relationships to the market, and one of the results is that concepts of age, including retirement and related chronometric ages, are laden with normative ideas. By assigning characteristics to individuals, ideas of age can obscure hidden forms of privilege and inequality in later life, such as the resource-basis of retirement. Refugees lack the place-based work histories that form the basis of Social Security claims, but they are still considered "retirement age" if they receive a meager income through SSI. US resettlement and associated programs gloss over differences in later life conditions when they use refugees' bureaucratic birthdates as the basis of categorization and assistance.

Aging processes are multiple and vary, and there is no definitive basis for marking one individual as aged over the other. Age 65 is an arbitrary division between refugees considered worthy of assistance and those who were not. This categorization contributed to a hierarchical division based on understandings of deservingness embedded in the US welfare state. Without recognized work histories to qualify them for Social Security, refugees were only eligible for SSI, a second-tier program that provides a meager income.

In order to govern, rationalities must migrate from their points of origin and translate "thought and action from a 'centre of calculation' into a diversity of locales dispersed across a territory" (Rose 1996:43). That includes not just geographic contexts but between government institutions, contracted private entities, and the labor market. Chronometric age is a rationality that seems particularly mobile, enabling the entrance of refugees to the US, but moving with chronometric ages makes migrants subject to mistranslation according to the underlying cultural norms of each new context.

Refugees' designation as "aged" in US Social Security and other programs was based on bureaucratic birthdates, which made then subject to such arbitrary designations and information lost in translation. Birthdates and chronometric ages make refugees "legible" (Scott 1998) to different bureaucracies. This process, however, assumes that age exists as an individual and independent characteristic that remains true and consistent even as one moves through different contexts. Bureaucratic birthdates reflect mistakes, varying relationships to home countries' bureaucracies, or strategic manipulations in previous bureaucratic contexts for different purposes.

The objectivity of ages and aging is not natural but authored by the state, which creates certainty out of uncertainty. "Illegibility" has been noted as a source of state power (Jeganathan 2004), and studying refugees and migrants help make such issues visible. Refugees are obviously in flux, crafting new identities, and adapting to new social and economic conditions. Becoming legible by being assigned a chronometric age submits individuals to subsequent and often unanticipated processes. Reducing identities to a singular form is a source of state control (Ferme 2004). Chronometric ages can be a source of subordination to the market, including changes to employment and the organization of retirement, and enrollment in processes of age governmentality. However, it also is a means of access to rights and resources. Having no documentation or birthdate could be a resource of the disadvantaged that opens up some opportunity for navigation, but it depends on having knowledge of subsequent processes and systems.

Researchers and policymakers should consider how concepts of age might limit or enable refugees in accessing rights and resources and pursue their own understandings of feeling settled or integrated beyond the rigid and narrow paradigm of "work or welfare." Although this chapter has focused primarily on "older" refugees, its findings highlight the need for critical analysis of the underlying assumptions and ideological framings of age and aging in refugee policies and practices and what these patterns indicate about the role of age in structural inequalities and processes of migration and globalization. Examining the bureaucratic basis of chronometric ages in refugees' documents is the approach I have taken to understanding the problems in defining age in a rigid way. The following chapter contributes to further “unsettling” such constructions of age as a concrete, independent category by looking at experiences of my refugee research participants with different chronometric age regimes in interaction with family generational relations.

Chapter 5 - Moving Parts of Age: Chronometric Age Regimes and Family Generational Relations in Refugee Life Histories

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the entanglement of state and family generational resources and relationships in the life histories of my refugee participants. The connection between later life constructions and forms of support in the different components of the Senior Program was based on meeting chronometric age and other eligibility parameters. However, my participants varied in the lives and relationships that they crafted through these resources. By conducting interviews with a partial life history focus, I learned that chronometric age regimes had affected my refugee participants' lives not just upon resettlement but in relationship to life course institutions throughout their lives. I consider how these shift according to the limitations of contexts that my refugee participants encountered throughout their lives and experiences.

This chapter deals with two major issues essential to bringing a critical attention to aging and the life course in refugee policy and social science research. The first is the significance of chronometric age and institutional life course norms in the experiences of migrants or refugees moving through different state and institutional contexts. The second is the age relations and family interdependencies prescribed by US refugee resettlement. On the one hand, programs employ chronometric age parameters that support bureaucratic or market individualism, and at the same time, they create situations in which households had to support members through sharing resources and the responsibilities of work, paperwork, and care duties. This chapter also contains reflections on my cultural understandings of so-called "later life." I examined critically "retirement age" in resettlement policies, but my participants' responses forced me to see that my own concepts of "old age" and forms of "later life" support were based in the idea of a postworking life stage. My participants' experiences made apparent the gender and class aspects of institutional life course norms and the contingency of retirement or "third age" on resources, livelihoods, and the organization of work.

Citizenship everywhere is aged in different institutional settings, which also affects the practical circumstances, including during displacement. For example, Khawa Akho from Iraq told me that when she was in Syria, she did "nothing" but her children worked.

"We couldn't study there because we were old," her daughter explained.

"You could not finish in Syria?" I asked.

"No, they wouldn't allow us. You had to be around 18 years old."

Mrs. Akho was supported by her children, who worked in part because they needed to and did not meet the norms of school age. Such issues were not originally my intention to study, and yet when I reviewed my interviews, I began to notice this pattern of life course institutional norms interconnected with how family members depended on each other. In the US, my refugee participants could gain Supplemental Security Income to pay their family's rent and enable younger family members to finish school. When children's capacities to support elders according to cultural norms were affected, elders' expectations also changed. As I learned, chronometric age regimes guiding access to work, school, and other resources affected family relations and processes of social reproduction linked to economic conditions.

Placing my refugee participants' more recent experiences in the context of their life courses was useful for noticing and attending to the relational and conditional features of age. Accounting for these age relations in changing contexts is important because "it is in the relationships between age groups that changes take shape, as people negotiate pragmatically and emotionally to manage the present and to reproduce desirable and livable futures" (Cole and

Durham 2007a:3). Household divisions of labor and family relationships can change in dialogue with institutional and labor market contexts. That is why I argue that a consideration of both formal state institutions and family intergenerational relations to for understanding expectations and experiences of age and aging emerge. Each of these considerations actually serve to illuminate aspects of the other. Because chronometric ages contribute to configurations of interdependency prescribed and produced through orientations of state, family, and labor markets, they are relevant to a broader analysis of age and aging.

Examining the influence of life course institutions interacting with family generational relations means also understanding how these pieces come together as refugees moved from their home countries, to refugee camps or other countries, and finally to the United States. Migration affects processes of social reproduction, the contextual and social aspects of livelihoods and interdependency in which meanings of age and aging are situated. These are what I call the "moving parts of age." Whether in the presence or present absence of state resources, such as formal education or retirement, chronometric age and family generational relations were interwoven, enabling and constraining each other. Furthermore, shifting the focus to the relational and contextual aspects of age provides a means of identifying forms of lifelong marginalization compounded in resettlement and obscured by fixed institutional definitions of later life.

Reflecting on "Old" Assumptions

My mistakes and assumptions arose from my view that old age was an abstract stage independent of the political economy of institutional, chronological life courses based on education, work, and retirement. In the bureaucratic side of my fieldwork, I was quicker to notice that chronometric age was a basis for power relations that are not recognized as such because of its supposedly objective status. However, my attempt to remedy that bureaucratic bias through interviews with a partial life history perspective was more complicated that I had expected. Even as I tried to understand my informants' ideas about age I could not avoid a de facto segregation of the life course that took for granted the contextual and relational aspects of age. When I conducted and analyzed life history interviews with my older refugee participants, I sought to relinquish the clarity of arbitrary yet precise and distinct categories of bureaucracy. Proceeding in the suddenly murky waters of knowing only what I should *not* do, I, nonetheless, found myself doing the opposite of what I intended--reproducing comfortable cultural assumptions from my own background.

I now understand that this occurs because life experiences and livelihoods as well as deep-seated notions of time inform understandings of age. I am currently a PhD student completing an extended period of time (20+ years) in educational institutions. I never stopped to think at the beginning of my research that this experience might give me a particularly strong tendency to view age as linear and chronological progress through time, marked by regular intervals and milestones. My interviews pushed me to see this view of age as contingent on certain privileges as well as a sense of entitlement to government assistance and protection[39]. What does that mean for my informants who spent different lengths of time marginalized, displaced, and without access to the privileges and rights of citizenship?

Self-reflexivity is useful for countering persisting assumptions about independently existing chronological life courses or stages and the influences of chronometric age in research where age is the primary analytic. I learned this important lesson when I set out to reexamine my informants' responses, trying to rescue my analysis from its privileged and institutionally

[39] I am influenced here by the insights of Project AGE (Keith et al. 1994).

informed life course bias. I saw these most clearly in my awkward research questions. My original intention was to try to solicit how my participants viewed different arrangements for a time period when they would no longer work, such as the contrast between relying on children versus living "independently." For example, I asked Karim Hussain from Iraq about his opinion of some older Americans wanting to be independent. My interpreter explained, "She said that American people here like to depend on themselves and do not like to depend on their kids or the government. What do you think about this?"

"So how do they live then if they do not depend on the government or their kids unless they are rich?," Mr. Hussain responded. Indeed, retirement is based on a life of accumulated wealth, whether individually or collectively saved, or notions of reciprocity. Individualism can be remarkably dependent, and the substance and privilege on which it depends can seem transparent. Portraying independence in later life often relies on others, such as care providers (Buch 2013). As I explained in Chapter 1, the institutionalized life course in the US has excluded and subordinated women and minorities; yet the invisible privileges in discourses of self-reliance and individualism are rarely attributed to constructions of age and later life.

Intellectually, I understood that there was an "individualist" frame in constructions of age in bureaucracy, but that understanding did not prevent me from reproducing a tendency to segregate life into institutional stages, such as a "later life" period defined by the end of working life. My informants' responses forced me to consider how "independence" in "later life" and a sense of entitlement to private or government resources was not just based in culture but also privilege.

Age and Prescribed Relationships in Migration and Institutional Contexts

The socio-moral dimensions of age might appear more visibly in family than in bureaucratic, institutional contexts, but they are part of both. Family formations and relations express hierarchies linked to the division of labor, obligations, responsibilities, the division of resources, and notions of reciprocity. Government policies have moral and generational dimensions that are less obvious. For example, generational relations in public pensions are cast as contractual and subject to the fiscal management policies of the state (Greenberg and Muehlebach 2007; Schram 2000). Such arrangements provided a way “to organize the necessary education and hence the productivity of the population” and “to mitigate the harshness of industrial capitalism through bureaucratic arrangements that focused on the chronometric age of individuals" (Baars 2012:20). In the lives of the refugees that I interviewed, family was an important site for mediating and organizing labor and livelihoods but still, nevertheless, in relation to institutional contexts.

Attending to the structural basis of family interdependency is also important to countering the construction of refugees as “individuals” in bureaucratic contexts and discourses of deservingness and “dependency.” As I explore further in Chapter 6, bureaucratic individualism configures new forms of interdependency especially because inaccessible systems often require the work of mediating actors. Refugees are restricted by their dependency on the social safety net administered through bureaucracies, which affects their family resources and relationships.

Reviewing transcripts of life history interviews, I learned that relationships to institutional contexts and the labor market were bound up in intergenerational relations, livelihoods, and economic conditions. As noted above, I had previously considered my questions about education and work histories as simply “background information” that I had chosen to gather based on Cook’s (2010) findings of the welfare citizenship of older women migrants. This material, however, formed the basis of an analysis of age governmentality in my refugee participants’ lives.

As discussed previously, an aspect of the governmentality of chronometric age in bureaucracy is that it casts itself as universal, neutral, or “objective.” In fact, class and gender contributed to differences in educational backgrounds and livelihoods of my research participants. Some of the men, especially my participants from Iraq, had received formal education and had even qualified for pensions. With only a few exceptions, such as Khawa Akho, the women were usually housewives and would not have had access to pensions.

The refugee participants from Bhutan and Burma/Myanmar came mostly from farming or unskilled labor contexts that also varied in class and economic conditions. Some worked on rented land or privately-owned family land, or did slash-and-burn farming as a village. They sold food items or other small products, worked as hired labor in households, farms, or shops, or combined wage labor with working small pieces of land. The two Rohingya men that I interviewed migrated back and forth working as wage laborers or selling small items. One of them, Mohammad Ali, was able to access more secure work, education for his family, and eventually, resettlement only after finally becoming formally recognized as a refugee in 1990.

In this section, I examine work and educational backgrounds in the life histories of refugees from Bhutan and Burma/Myanmar. The cases that I present point to the intersecting family and state resources and relationships informing opportunities such as going to school. These couples came from countries that did have schools, and although they experienced different degrees of access, “school age” factored into their circumstances even though they often did not attend school according to prescribed timelines. They received education in formal and informal institutions affected by their resources, work, gender, and household composition and family relations. These refugees' life histories show why retirement or an end of working life is an exceptional and conditional circumstance. They also make visible the variables of advantage and disadvantage within refugees and between them and US citizens of the same chronometric ages. These points of variation are important to notice given the uniformity ascribed through chronometric ages and related categories, such as "senior" and "retirement age."

Family Relations, Resources, and School Age

Before they were forced to flee to Nepal, Chandra and Puna Katwal had a farm in Sarpang, Bhutan. Neither went to school when they were young. I asked, "Why did you not go to school in your time? Was there no school?"

Mr. Katwal answered:

> There was no school before. A school was newly opened in our time, but our father passed away early so I could not go to school. I was the third son of my parents. I was nine years old when my father passed away. We had to take care of the farmland and animals instead of going to school.

Farming as a livelihood required families to work. Losing a father meant that Mr. Katwal had to stay at home and work even though a new school was open in his area.

Dhanraj Thapa did not go to school either, explaining "We were busy taking care of the farm." Being the only son in his family figured into his access to education.

Kimberly: Did anyone else in your village go to school?

Mr. Thapa: Of course, some of my friends used to go to school.

Kimberly: Who used to go to school and who did not?

> Mr. Thapa: The ones that lived close by the school or had other family members that could work in the farm went to school. I was the only son so I could not leave the farm barren and go to school. The school was far away. The way was scary, full of rivers and wild animals.

Mr. Thapa was obligated to work on the farm, especially as the only son. To be able to go to school, people had to have other family members to work the farm and live close enough to the school. People who were wealthy also had more opportunities to go to school. Mr. Hemal Shtrestha, also from Bhutan, explained that where he grew up going to school was the exception, and only “one or two rich or high profile people went to school.”

Being poor and having no school in his village also affected Saw Tee Wah in Burma/Myanmar. Because his family still needed him to go to school to learn to read and write, he waited until he was old enough to go away to school and live on his own. He explained:

> Our parents were poor. They did not have money to send us to school. But they needed someone in the household to read and write. So when I was 17 they sent me to another village to learn, but I got sick and was only able to learn for six months . . . They wanted me to read and write when I am interacting with other people. There was no school in our village. I was not able to look after myself when I was younger. When I was 17, I was able to look after myself.

Not having a school nearby meant needing to wait until he was old enough to care for himself. Another interesting facet of Saw Tee Wah’s explanation is that going to school was not just for his own benefit but also so that his family would have someone who was literate. Even though he only attended a short while, he was able to become literate in Karen, and reading in his language was one of his daily activities in Chicago. He studied English for three months in the refugee camp before coming to the US, where he took classes again for a few months. Being literate in Karen might have also helped Saw Tee Wah learn English. Nonetheless, he said that his poor health and being unable to speak English were his two biggest challenges living in Chicago.

Definitions of "school age" factored more directly into Hemlal Shresta's education. He had learned to read and write from friends, sitting around the fire and writing on a slate with a piece of rock. When Mr. Shresta did go to school, he did well enough to test into Grade 3 but was kicked out when a government minister visited.

> The minister said to me that it was not my time to go to school. Instead I should go home, get married and work in the farm. Everyone over 13 years was sent home. We were around 10 students[40].

When Mr. Shresta was in the refugee camp, he attended Adult Education classes, but he said, "I could not retain what I learned in the class." He suffered from mental health issues that he explained as "related to the loss of our country, property and having to live in the refugee camp with limited resources for a better life." His son, however, was able to go to school and learn English and even worked as a teacher in the refugee camp.

Of the women I interviewed, all from Bhutan, almost all from Burma/Myanmar, and many from Iraq did not go to school. In her time, Mrs. Puna Katwal said that girls and people her age did not go to school. Reflecting back on that time, she suggested, "Maybe we lacked the sense of the importance of education." Juni Thapa and her sisters also did not go to school in Bhutan. She said, "Most women did not go to school in my village as school was far away. None of my sisters went to school. Only my brother did." Mon Maya Neupane explained:

> My parents did not send me to school. They said if girls go to school, they would be spoiled and undisciplined. They cannot be good wives.

Not sending girls was a part of prescribed gender roles for this generation of women in Bhutan. Even though Mr. Shresta learned to read outside of school, his wife did not, but because it was not formal school, this difference between them was not reflected later in their case files. It is

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[40] According to my interpreter, Bhutan is different from the US in that progress in school depends more on passing exams than by becoming a year older.

interesting also to reflect on how family's prepared daughters for futures as wives. They could probably not have anticipated that they would end up in the US where certain forms of education would suddenly become important.

Another aspect of social reproduction, marriage and the process of forming households, also interacted with family dynamics and the availability of resources. In this case, the availability of land, which could come from family or the government, affected the establishment of farms large enough to support families. Some of my participants lived with parents or in-laws that owned land. Mon Maya Neupane and her husband lived with her parents until she had their fourth child and they had made the decision to lease land.

> We did not have our own land. We leased the land. We worked. We had to divide the produce into two halves between the landowner and us. We owned the land for ten years before we moved to the refugee camp.

Having a large family could contribute to problems in finding enough land to farm. Chandra Katwal's family owned farmland, but it was not sufficient to provide for everyone. Fortunately, he got some land from the government. He explained, "We were many brothers in my family. I was happy to move to farm in the land that the government gave and earn my own living." His oldest daughter was born by the time he moved to this new land provided by the government in a neighboring district.

According to health, resources, and other circumstances, family informed interactions with schooling in home countries where educational systems also had prescriptive age (and gender) norms. Transitions between school and work were not linear or chronological because my informants encountered schooling again in camps and in the US. Prior to displacement, my informants' life trajectories clearly did not follow the prescriptive institutional model of the life course from the US. Their life histories highlight the privileges embedded in the ability to go to school at a young age, especially in agricultural contexts. Family composition affected how land was farmed and the process of creating new households when adult children got married. I was surprised to learn one of my participants, Chandra Katwal, had actually benefited from receiving land from the government. Losing a father or having too few sons could mean having to stay and work on the farm, but having too many brothers could mean that there was not enough land to feed new wives and children.

An End to Working Life?

Whether the end of working life comes before the end of one's life also depends on family and state resources and relationships as well as livelihoods. When speaking with my research participants, I kept tripping over my assumption that the definition of old age was linked to the end of working life. To stop working can be a privilege or a necessity, desirable or undesirable. Resettlement bureaucracies' management of refugees obscures these different resonances of the end of life in relationship to attitudes towards and the organization of work. I often asked my interviewees when people stopped working, forgetting that one must have the resources or desire to stop working. For example, I asked Hemlal Shresta from Bhutan when a person from his country stops working. Sitting with his wife on the floor leaning against a couch in their living room, he responded with a story:

> One guy aged 95 used to work. One day he got sick in the forest while he was collecting grass for animals. His children rushed to bring him home. But the man died the following day. There was no equipment for work. Everything was done manually. A few years before I left Bhutan, I saw and owned a rice mill. There was a small source of electricity. The rice mill operated on diesel.

It was unclear in Mr. Shresta's story whether the man died because of work, but what I found interesting was that he follows immediately into a discussion of the demands for manual work in a context where there was limited mechanized equipment. He had witnessed the arrival of tools that could limit these demands for labor and, perhaps, even affect age-based household divisions of labor. In another anecdote about old people dying in the fields, work sounded more like a habit and way of life that people never wanted to put down. Naw Sih Sih told me:

> I know of many old people that died in the field while working. No one asked them to go and work but they were used to working like that since they were young so they would go out and work every day.

Working up until the very end of life was a possibility in an agricultural context, and it was hard to tease out whether it came desire, need, or a sense of obligation.

Some participants expected to keep working by transitioning to easier tasks. Saw Tee Wah came from a village in Karen State, Burma/Myanmar that employed slash-and-burn techniques. He explained that they would farm together as one village. I asked him, "In your culture, when do you stop working and your children start to take care of you?

"We do not stop working. We work until we drop dead," he answered.

"If you could then you would work until the end of your life?"

"Yes, I would."

"Does the type of work change as you get older?"

"Yes, sort of. As we grow older, we work closer to home. We would plant things and look after the animals closer to our house."

"Is it the same for older women?" I asked.

"Yes, they would usually do household chores and look after the chicken and ducks closer to home." Like Saw Tee Wah, Dhanraj Thapa said that at his current age if he were in Bhutan, he would also be transitioning to "lighter" tasks closer to the home, such as "grazing cows and goats." Such tasks sounded hardly "light" to me.

Agricultural work can be more flexible depending on the community and family support around its organization, as in the restrictions of attending school mentioned above. A Chicago-community member from Bhutan who was very young at the time of displacement explained that in her country, communities functioned on reciprocity, for example, by helping out neighbors with their farming when they could not work. However, not all farm work was the same. A Karen couple from Burma/Myanmar, Saw Ker Por and Naw Nee Ah, came from villages that did slash-and-burn farming. Both said that if they were in their home country now, they would get paid work. "I would have to keep working as a day laborer until I get sick or die," said Saw Ker Por. He said that he would work in corn farming, and his wife, Naw Nee Ah, said that she would hire herself out as a maid.

A transition to lighter tasks depended on receiving care from children. Hpo Hkwe, a Karen refugee from Burma/Myanmar, explained the relationship between the end of work and his relationship to his children. In the US, Hpo Hkwe collected SSI because he was documented as over 65 years old, but he received a reduced amount because his wife, 20 years younger than him, worked. He had tried to work several jobs in the US, including cleaning, landscaping, and working in a cold pizza factory. He felt that he was not called back to work because he was old, and he also found the cold environment of the pizza factory unsuitable. He had a young daughter in school and a son and a nephew that worked.

I asked him if his family had decided who would work before they arrived. He replied:

> We did not talk about who was going to work and who would not. I planned to work. I did not think that it would be this cold. As you know December is the coldest month over there. During the cold time I would take it easier, but at other times, I would work. I was doing my own job and could take a break whenever I needed it. Here the cold weather and not being able to take a break when I get too tired to work are the things that keep me from getting a job.

Back in his home country, his family had owned land in Karen state. He and all of his siblings went to school through the equivalent of 10^{th} grade, and afterwards he farmed "because my parents were farming." Eventually the civil war forced him to leave and move to a refugee camp in Thailand. One part of our conversation stuck out to me as explaining the relational aspects of age in the transition of care roles from parents to their children. I asked, "In your culture, how do people respect old people?"

"Here or in Burma?"

"In Burma."

"In Burma, all children take care of their parents. They do not take money for the care, but sometimes they ask a little money for the rent. They do not let their old parents work."

"At what age do children tell their father and mother not to work?"

"Close to sixty . . . mostly people can still work at the age of fifty."

"Is it the same for men and women? Is it both parents who stop working?

"Yes, children usually tell both of their parents. But, this is in my country. Tell her [Kimberly] that."

"Do people know their ages in Burma?" I asked.

"Some people know, but some don't. Especially people who live on the mountains and countryside."

"So how do they know if a person is old?"

"Firstly, we look at ourselves and estimate our age. Secondly, when people grow old, they become sick. People in our culture take care of our parents. We don't have to be old."

In this exchange, Hpo Hkwe and I communicated using chronometric ages, but he was also helping me understand "old" in the context of parent-child care relationships. For example, he said children “do not to let their old parents work” but parents “don’t have to be old” for their children to take care of them. Respect for “old people” was linked to relative age. Stopping work is not based on an idea of “being old” defined independent of such parent-child generational care obligations and relationships. In Hpo Hkwe’s description, the end of work was determined by children taking care of their parents.

Even with resources, however, children can still refuse to support their parents. To do so was seen as disrespectful but also possible. My Burmese language interpreter asked U Nay, “According to our Burmese culture, children are supposed to support their parents when they grow old, right?” He responded:

> There are some children who support their parents. However, not every child supports the parents, or not every parent receives support from children. Only children who respect their parents and [are] financially stable would support their parents. There are many children who do not support their parents. There are many parents who are starving. Also, there are some children who are doing really well financially and refuse to support their parents . . . Let’s say their children are not being reliable, and they do not have anyone to depend on. They must work until they die. As long as they need to survive, they must work. In Burma, there is a situation in which you must work in order to survive.

Work is the norm, and children supporting their parents is not a given. As I mentioned earlier, Saw Ker Por and Naw Nee Ah had told me that they would probably be working if they were in Burma. It is possible that they said this because they did not feel that their son would have taken on the responsibility for their care, and their daughter was disabled. Many of my participants who received SSI described it as a more reliable source of support than family members, but I do not know whether their concerns arose from observations of neglect prior to or after displacement.

An end of working life depends on a number of conditional and relation factors, including the desire to stop working gradually or full stop and the forms of support to do so. One final consideration is the gender and the household division of labor. Women working in the home especially do not fit a concept of "old" linked to the end of working life. I learned that daughters-in-law might take over tasks for mothers-in-law; however, these women might continue to contribute to the household as long as health permits them to, as I learned from my interview with Hemlal Shresta:

> I think age is not only the factor determining one to be old. My mother is 86 now. She was actively engaged in household chores until four years ago. I should say one of the factors making us old is health.

In the US, however, such transfers of responsibility were less likely because often both parents worked while grandparents stayed at home and watched their grandchildren when possible. Other interviewees mentioned the difficulties of paying rent and the overall high cost of living when speaking about the norm that children would provide for them. They knew that circumstances had changed and with them their expectations of being cared for completely by children. On the other hand, they had access to new resources, such as SSI.

Retirement as Exception

Not all of my interviewees expected to work until they died or rely on children. Some participants from Iraq had received pensions. I interviewed a couple from Iraq in which both were both highly educated. The wife, Aya Mahmood, had been a teacher and the husband, Bashar Hassan, a pilot. During our interview, Mrs. Mahmood served my interpreter and I special cookies from Iraq, and Mr. Hassan spoke with me directly in English occasionally. I was impressed by his grasp of the Chicago transportation system, but, as his son arriving at the end of our interview indicated, Chicago was no problem at all for a skilled pilot like his father.

Mr. Hassan explained to me that he worked first in the Air Force, retired after four or five years, and then flew for 19 more years as a civilian. He completed 32 years of work and then retired once and for all. Mr. Hassan said that he stopped working "because I got older and also because I wanted to stay with my kids and also because I completed the legal limit of years for retirement." Like Karim Hussain, he received a pension that he ultimately left behind in Iraq when he no longer had any family members there to claim it for him. Unsurprisingly, Mr. Hassan called his SSI benefits "retirement," which he felt lucky to get as a "foreigner" in the US. Retirement included a changing focus (towards children and grandchildren), the end of an obligation to work, and an understanding of getting "older."

On the other hand, my participants from Burma/Myanmar knew that they could not get retirement there unless they worked in government positions, which for most of them was impossible because of their ethnic identities. My participants from Bhutan were also all farmers and housewives without access to such institutions. In Iraq, pension funds were also only available to people who served in certain types of employment, and they lost access to them when they and their families left the country. The answer to whether, when, or if a person stops working then depends on the answer to important preliminary questions: what kind of work do they or their family members do? What resources do they have? And what kind of relationship do they have to family and the state?

Interdependency in the US

Depending on the Government

In the US, my participants relied on government programs, such as SSI, which my participants agreed they needed even if it was rarely sufficient without pooling resources with others. Applying for and maintaining benefits took some work, often performed by caseworkers, my participants' children or younger family members or friends (See Chapter 6). Parents that did not speak English had to rely on their children for help managing their benefits and paying for things that they could not afford.

SSI, food stamps (SNAP), and Medicaid rarely enabled participants to live “independently”—in a separate household without help from others—in Chicago unless they were lucky enough to get subsidized senior housing. Yasser Ahmed and U Nay were the only two of my participants who used this benefit. Subsidized housing often had long waiting lists, but it was an option for refugees who did not want to live with family members. Most of my participants, however, could not imagine living separate from family members. I asked Nirmala Rana, from Bhutan, what she thought about people in the US who preferred to live separately from their children. She answered, “I prefer my own culture of living with our children. As an old person, we may die anytime. If we die away from our children, we will not go to heaven.” Her last comment refers the protracted rituals to be performed at the time of death, which I learned were not easy to replicate in Chicago.

Sometimes the choice depended on the housing conditions. Shamiram Khoshaba from Iraq clearly wanted some space. She told me that she wanted to move into a senior building with many Assyrians, but she would have stayed with her family if they got a larger house.

Living with family members, most of my participants thought of their SSI as a way to contribute. Adult children might have trouble getting work right away, and SSI could serve as a buffer for those times. Working children helped parents make ends meet on this limited form of income. Still, children that worked had less time to deal with bureaucratic processes involved in maintaining SSI and other benefits.

Depending on Children

Children were often needed to pick up for gaps in government benefits. Mon Maya Neupane relied on her son to manage everything for her, from filling out the paperwork to apply for resettlement to applying for benefits in the US. Because of her son, she was not worried about losing SSI for lack of citizenship. "I am not worried. My son brought us here. If we lose benefits, he will take care of us," she told me. Like many of the participants, she would not have been able to live on the amount she received or navigate benefits without her son. Nirmala Rana also said that she was more comfortable relying on her children than government assistance because "government benefits may stop any time."

My participants' children had to balance the demands of work and caring for their parents and their own children. In my interview with Saw Tee Wah, his daughter was there to respond to questions about their first month in Chicago. Apparently, it was very difficult for both of her parents, who struggled to learn how to take public transportation, and the challenges led to several fights between them. His daughter explained:

> I taught them how to take public transportation and how to use the CTA[41] cards. I could not take them to see their caseworker or where they needed to go all the time because I had a newborn then. My parents were struggling to get used to this place and my mother cried all the time.

A few participants from Burma/Myanmar and Iraq learned to take public transportation and navigate bureaucratic processes without their family members, but many relied on their children, who took charge of their benefits and helped pay for expenses that their benefits did not cover. Doing so was not likely to be easy for them between working low-wage jobs and taking care of their children. Sometimes I wondered whether this power of children over parents could have been abused by irresponsible family members. It would have been difficult to know and a very

[41] Chicago Transportation Authority

difficult situation to address[42].

Contributing to their families

Many of my participants said that they used their SSI to pay rent and bills for their multigenerational households. Mon Maya Neupane explained, "My working family members get tired, so they need help. I feel that I must help them as much as I can. I use my SSI towards paying rent." Her husband, a traditional Hindu priest that was not there for our interview, also used gifts he received from doing rituals to help the family.

SSI was important for the whole household, not just its immediate recipients. Because of their contributions from SSI, some participants could help their younger family members stay in school rather than going straight into work. Mrs. Neupane told me:

> I think if we did not get SSI, it would be difficult for our living. My son could go to school as we could use our SSI to pay the rent. If we did not get SSI, he would end up working instead of going to school.

Refugees were also a "help" to family members who could receive income for taking care of their parents when they qualified for the caregiving program. Getting hourly pay for caregiving work was a major shift from the culture of their home countries.

My participants felt that contributing to their families was important. My oldest (by chronometric age) participant was a widow named Ambika Khatti from Bhutan that I interviewed with her daughter present. Mrs. Khatti explained, "It is not important or expected of elders to contribute to the family, but elders feel proud or honored or morally high if they can make some contribution to the family." Some participants lamented earlier times when they could make their own living. Chandra Katwal said that in Bhutan he was self-reliant. I asked him what that meant. He replied:

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[42] If I had observed any elder abuse, I would have reported it.

> By self-reliant, I mean not depending on government assistance or on our children. Instead we should be able help our children.

Of course, my participants did help their families other than contributing to rent and bills. They did household chores, such as cleaning, laundry, and preparing food, and babysat for the children of working family members. Hpo Hkwe would take his young daughter to school every day. Vegetable gardening was a way to help during the growing season. Mr. Thapa said that he did not sell his vegetables at the weekly market because he had children and grandchildren to help feed.

Women helped out their busy working children with household chores. Sometimes continuing to perform these tasks was physically tasking. Mon Maya Neupane injured her hand so that it hurt when she lifted or washed dishes. She said, "My daughter-in-law is busy so I have to do all the household work somehow." In this chase, her labor was needed to keep the household functioning in a new context where both parents worked. However, some tasks were not considered proper for older parents to do. Mrs. Neupane explained that children are supposed to do the shopping and not send their parents to the store. She said that she saw elderly people at the store instead of their children, which means "Americans do not treat seniors kindly and respectfully."

The choice to resettle was often informed by family decision-making. Many of my participants spoke about deciding to resettle because of their children and the education and work opportunities in the US. Jassem Taha from Iraq waited for his elderly mother to pass away before he applied for resettlement to the US. Often my participants spoke about the choice of resettlement in family not individual terms. They said that resettlement was for "our happiness."

An ideal multigenerational household emerged from the constraints and insufficiencies of resettlement services. Tanya, case manager at MMS, told me, "It's awesome if it's multi-generational. Like if you have a grandparent and parents who are working, and the young children, it's like a dream. I feel like clients love that." Unfortunately, not all clients of the Senior Program fit this model. Some did not have children who could help them by working and navigating social services, and work sometimes got in the way of the help with benefits. People who were unable to work or find work sometimes had children that were not yet old enough to work or disabled, and then SSI, meant to provide for individuals, became a problem for them. The assumption that gaps in benefits could be filled by working children created problems for families that did not fit that form of household. Family generational relations were not always able to buffer the constraints of resources, such as SSI, provided through bureaucratic institutions and employing chronometric age and income to determine deservingness of assistance.

Conclusion

Being displaced impacted the moving parts of age, including resources, livelihoods, and family intergenerational relations. People lost homes, wealth, land, pensions, and traditional livelihoods. Years passed in displacement in camps often meant few to no opportunities to accumulate wealth for anything resembling retirement or to pass on to younger generations.

Resettlement challenged social reproduction in different ways that affected age and generational relations. Family members, including my participants' siblings and children, were often spread out in different cities and states across the US or in other countries. Engaging in the labor market also changed the family division of labor by affecting who can work and when. With only a couple of exceptions, the married couples I interviewed would have consisted of a male breadwinner with a female homemaker in their home countries, which of course has implications for life course norms and transitions of responsibilities between parents and children. Women who did not go to school when they were young because they were expected to work in the home faced the challenge of learning English when they were older and sometimes not even literate in their native language.

Livelihoods based around wage labor have different constraints than agricultural work, which affects the means of by which my participants could work and contribute to the family as they aged. For example, the types of work available in Chicago are limited to unskilled factory jobs and entry-level service position. Employment in the US had different requirements, and without education or English, my participants could not qualify for jobs that were less physically taxing or more flexible. Being able to take it easy or transition to lighter work was not an option. In two households, younger wives were able to find jobs that their older husbands could not do. Having to rely on wage labor removed the possibility of sharing the burden of work among villages or family members and transitioning to easier tasks, as some of my participants would have expected.

The distinction between work and care or working inside versus outside of the home is familiar to feminist perspectives. It deserves consideration in the context of resettlement because US life course norms privilege work performed outside of the home, and resettlement might change the opportunities for the types of work and their location. Women who would have once relied on daughters-in-law to take over household work sometimes continued in these roles when daughters-in-law worked for the family to subsist. When they are able to, grandparents, especially women, provide child care to enable both parents to work. Resettlement case managers at MMS recognized grandparents' child care as a resource, especially at a time when the Governor of Illinois was defunding childcare programs for low-income parents. However, resettlement programs did not always recognize or have ways of taking into account their clients' desires to continue contributing and working even if they were past "retirement age." Family and generational relationships were always tangled up in these contextual issues of government assistance and the low-wage labor market, defining characteristics that speak to the hierarchical aspects of refugee resettlement that inflects in constructions of race, gender, class, and also age.

In this chapter, I revisited my assumptions about the life course, especially old age as linked to the end of working life. Initially, I failed to recognize the gender and class dimensions of normative institutional life courses based on education, work, and retirement. Researchers need to be aware that their lengthy educational backgrounds might contribute to tendencies to understand age as linear or predominantly institutionally-defined (Keith et al 192). Understanding the resources and interdependency behind such a life course helps to counter or make visible the inequalities of individualizing, abstract understandings of age.

On the one hand, exploring the educational and working pasts of my participants from a life course perspective helped me to problematize the distinction or segregation between considerations of chronometric age regimes and family generational relations. Even more importantly, considering these aspects as entanged provides some variables of advantage or disadvantage, or sources of variation within refugees and between them and US citizens of the same chronometric ages. Among these are gender, livelihoods, education, and economic backgrounds in relation to family and institutional relations and resources. Losing a father in Bhutan when your family relies on farming can prevent a son from going to school. Gender affects the prescribed social roles, educational backgrounds, and location and forms of work. In the US, these variables once again underwent a change, and that is why treating ages as separate from migration experiences, as in research or polices based on the preconceived category of "elderly migrant," does not make sense. Understanding these sources of variation points to the conditionality of an assumed "stage" like retirement. Not working is never inevitable but depends, rather, on wealth, land, government support, family relationships and resources.

Class issues are clearly implicated in work and the difference between agricultural work and wage labor. I would expect differences between slash-and-burn farmers and those who farmed continuously on privately owned land, implicates issues of inheritance. A community member from Bhutan suggested that reciprocity and cooperation at the community level served as a buffer for families and households. Unfortunately, my interview material did not provide enough information for me to go into depth about the varying forms of organizing agricultural work. My intention, however, was to suggest that the generational and family relations of farming work did intersect with the state, especially apparent in accounts about education and gifts of land.

My participants used chronometric age even as our interviews brought out different relational dimensions of age. These finding support my analytical framework to examine the interconnections and entanglements of resources and relationships of family and life course institutions. A life history approach is useful for exploring the tensions in the ways that family and institutions are intertwined.

Taking into account the complexity of these dimensions of age can be done through observing age relations in very concrete practices, especially the way forms of income affect age-household composition and divisions of labor. Caseworkers already strategize about age-household composition, which is affected by family reunification policies and decisions made further upstream in resettlement processes. A multigenerational ideal might be feasible for buffering the insufficiencies of forms of assistance, but then families can be disadvantaged when they do not fulfill such forms or individual roles. Refugee resettlement agencies already gather some of this information, which could provide a basis for valuable analyses into the variables of well-being for refugee households. Programs could also take seriously a desire to study, work, and contribute even when refugees are considered “old” in the labor market or educational institutions. However, addressing such issues might be difficult because they threaten the very basis by which age categorization processes create a “delegated,” makeshift resettlement structure and reinforce the limited resource-provisioning of resettlement. Within a supposedly uniform age-group, the actual roles of my refugee participants varied according to their family interdependencies. These relationships were present in the bureaucratic contexts of case management as the caseworkers distributed the work of managing “senior” benefits to “seniors” and their family members according to their English language and other skills.

Chapter 6 - Doing for and Speaking for Seniors: Distributed Casework and Interdependent Capability

Mr. Yasser Ahmed was a polite, highly educated man that I "met" first over the phone helping him navigate the nightmarish procedures of a program for free transportation to medical appointments. He struggled initially with my American accent, but because he spoke English fluently, I was able to speak with him regularly and even visit him several times in his subsidized apartment. Having entered the US from Iraq during the research period, I watched him struggle to navigate an array of US bureaucracies. He had serious health problems that required navigating and managing considerable paperwork and bureaucratic processes. Clients like him showed the limits of what the Senior Program and its patchworked resources and casework could do.

Most people that applied for SSI based on disability had thick case files, but I remember his as one of the thickest files in the Senior Program. Leah found him to be a difficult client and even tried to get him switched to another case manager. Mr. Ahmed was often frustrated and angry. One day when he was particularly upset with the problems he was encountering getting the assistance that he felt he needed, I found myself stepping in to defend Leah by letting him know that her job was not policy advocacy. However, I also recognized and identified with his feelings of injustice about the way resettlement was set up and his entitlement to whatever assistance was available; I felt that I would probably have acted similarly if I was in his shoes.

For anyone who has experienced problems with their cable or telephone bill, his tactics of asking to speak to supervisors and being persistent and demanding is perhaps recognizable. It was even a regular strategy of caseworkers for dealing with Public Aid (IDHS), as I describe later in this chapter. Mr. Ahmed's mentor also noticed his struggles: "He is fine. He can get along. **Where he can't get along is in bureaucracy.** Very frustrated with American bureaucracy, which is odd. Yes, it's bad, but it ain't like Middle Eastern." Whatever was the case for Mr. Ahmed in Iraq, he was learning the ways of a bureaucratic culture in a new environment with limited resources. Solving problems through bureaucracy sometimes creates additional bureaucratic problems and work, and it also narrows what issues can be addressed or solved.

Success in the Senior Program was accomplished through bureaucracy. In the US, integration is considered in terms of "self-sufficiency," which refugee "seniors" attain primarily by relying upon a patchwork of welfare and aging services. In this chapter, I consider the distributed casework and interdependent capability of taking responsibility for managing bureaucratic lives as an important aspect of the everyday practices and experiences of aged citizenship in refugee resettlement. Accessing and managing senior and other mainstream benefits requires casework: the knowledge, tools, and relationships caseworkers use to help "fit" refugee "seniors" into existing systems primarily through their chronometric ages. Through skills, knowledge, and tactics, caseworkers were tasked with navigating the bureaucratically aged, independent or autonomous individual implicitly constructed in the bureaucratic processes of resettlement. Their efforts made visible the power dynamics, contingencies, and contradictions of the process of translating refugees into "self-sufficient" "seniors." Ironically, refugees became capable of navigating bureaucratic lives by relying upon others to help them.

Refugee resettlement provides an interesting insider/outsider perspective into mainstream social service bureaucracies. Mainstream agencies need resettlement staff to mediate their encounters with refugees. However, the constantly changing processes of mainstream agencies and their limitations require resettlement workers to use a number of tactics. One example that I have already provided is the No Income Letter that Leah created to respond to the need to document income in the online BAP application guiding access to the Free Ride program. The improvisation and other tactics of casework undermine the logic of resettlement that refugees are a problem with a bureaucratic solution solved by plugging them into mainstream systems. Resettlement is the beginning of responsibilities that caseworkers aim to shift onto refugees, family members, or other agencies, but their privileged tactics undermine the logic of a transition towards a self-reliant, independent capability.

In this chapter I examine the capability and autonomy of refugee "seniors" imagined and constructed in bureaucratic processes and caseworkers' tactics. Paperwork and consent procedures construct refugees as autonomous and adult individuals, but in practice, they require the on-going interventions and translations of casework. Caseworkers perform tasks by "doing for" and even masquerading as clients, and these practices blur the boundaries of the bureaucratically constructed individual.

The bureaucratic tasks of refugee resettlement are considerable, from obtaining identity cards and numbers to signing a lease and paying bills. Caseworkers initiate these processes, but over time refugees are expected to "graduate" into handling their own paperwork, from reading and understanding mail, paying bills, and even applying for and following the various steps leading to naturalization. Resettlement processes proceed in such a way that relies upon refugees transitioning from dependency to independence, like students graduating from school. Such a "graduation" is necessary to freeing up caseworkers to help the next batch of new refugees. The continuous stream of refugees means that they often have to choose between continuing to help clients who are beyond the formal period of assistance or turning them away. From the perspective of the refugee newcomers, the tools needed to be capable in bureaucracy take time to acquire. The short timelines and focus on employability might get clients into low-wage jobs but fail to help them acquire bureaucratic proficiency.

Senior refugees are one official exception[43] to this cycle in that they are allowed to continue receiving assistance through the Senior Program even if they have been in the country for up to five years "with the exception of referral and interpreter services and citizenship and naturalization preparation services for which there is no time limitation" (ORR 2015a). Such parameters were not followed closely by the Senior Program staff, who continued to assist clients after the five-year or seven-year period. While helping a woman from Togo who had lost SSI because she had not become a citizen within seven years apply for AABD, I asked Leah if we could include her as a new client. She answered, "I don't know. Natalie [the Adjustment Director] doesn't even know." Omitting them from formal records, case managers can help people outside of program parameters if they choose to as long as they are able to meet their numbers of official clients.

Resettlement bureaucracy is supposed to produce bureaucratic individuals that are autonomous, rational, and adult (Waites 2005:14). The cycle of resettlement work is similar to that of formal schooling in that programs need clients to "graduate" to being independent in order to open up spaces for newcomers. In this way, taking on paperwork is a sort of coming of age process in the US. Turning 18 years old comes with the privacy of controlling one's own health information under HIPAA[44] or one's grades in college. However, health and welfare systems are so complicated that they often require specialized knowledge and tools to navigate them. The situation turns bureaucratic individualism into a sort of masquerade, with

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[43] The other exception is the Intensive/Medical Case Management program. Clients who are under 65 but "difficult-to-employ" can fall into this category.

[44] Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). Note that caseworkers got around HIPAA by getting consent from clients during intake processes, but some of the clients had to have relatives sign for them.

caseworkers, community members, and family members of refugees doing and speaking for them. Becoming capable and "independent" in managing bureaucratic lives requires familiarity of processes and knowing how and from whom to get help, and caseworkers succeed when they can maintain privileged access to information and workers in certain welfare and social service agencies.

US bureaucratic contexts are new and unfamiliar, and they are part of the cultural transition into US life and citizenship. My experience of growing into a bureaucratic adult in the US speaks to the informal, conditional, and relational aspects of adulthood and citizenship, including its hidden dimensions of advantage and disadvantage. First, I am proficient not only with different types of computers but also office phones, fax machines and photocopiers to which I have enjoyed regular access from very early in my life. I learned years ago what a feat this represents when volunteering to help an older Haitian man living in Chicago with zero experience learn how to use a computer. In his 60s, he was learning how to use a mouse and to type; the latter I had begun learning at age 5. Having access to faxes, photocopiers, and related tools is also a great benefit of working (or interning) in an office and being able to perform personal bureaucratic duties on the sly[45]. Second, I speak English, which is a distinct advantage for calling and following up on benefits, including navigating automatic phone systems that often only have English or sometimes Spanish as language options. The tasks and processes that I implicitly knew how to do or whom to ask for help are what can contribute potentially to disadvantages for refugee newcomers.

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[45] This privilege of office work would be an example of Flaherty's concept of "time work" (2013:240).

Adulthood is a blurry category in the US (Beck 2016), especially when defined by independence. I still call my parents for advice with many aspects of managing my bureaucratic life, from health insurance and student loans to travel and retirement. When clients came in with unpaid medical bills (that should have been covered by Medicaid), I found myself repeating one of my mother's mantras of health insurance: "Never pay the first bill." Then, I would proceed with the usual circular process of calling the health provider, insurer, and third-party billing company until a problem was resolved. In this chapter, I consider such processes of casework in the Senior Program and experiences of some of its capable clients as indicative of resettlement as entry into a particular bureaucratically constructed and aged form of citizenship in the US.

"Doing for" Senior Clients

> **Burmese client: problems with Medicaid and SNAP** [Edited from field notes]
> A client from Burma/Myanmar (60 F) came to the office today accompanied by Naw Sih Sih, who could speak English and interpret for the woman who did not. This client had come to the seniors' workshop on Tuesday and stayed at the office afterwards because of a problem with her Medicaid. I told her to come back today (Thursday). I called the phone number on her white medical card. The representative asked for the client's permission that I speak on her behalf. So I handed the woman the phone and told her to say "Yes" (to give permission), a tactic I had learned from Leah. When I got back on the phone, the representative told me that the woman's case was active, but that she needed to choose a managed care group. I tried to do it online at EnrollHFS, but I was typing in her name wrong (the first name as last instead of the opposite)[46]. I then called the enrollment hotline, and this representative would not let me speak on her behalf. I said that I have an interpreter (Naw Sih Sih) with me, and she said that that is not allowed. She needed the client to confirm her identity by giving her address or RIN (Medical card number) or birthdate or Social Security Number. So this representative got her own Karen interpreter on the line. The interpreter tried to speak with the client, but the woman just giggled. She

[46] Bifurcated first and last/family name was a convention not found in many the refugees' previous contexts, including those from Burma/Myanmar. Sometimes documents contained reversed names, which made it difficult to know which ordering had become the standard. The ordering of names became important as names found in the middle became considered "middle names" (and then omitted from some documents) while the literal last name in the ordering would become the Last Name. For some refugees from Iraq, that meant that their father and grandfather's names were dropped, and their great grandfather's name suddenly became the "last name" taking on the connotation of "family name."

> was not able to "confirm" her information. So I talked to the customer service representative again, and she told me to fax in a form to get authorization to speak on the client's behalf[47].

The scene described above of trying to help a woman use her Medicaid after the switch towards private managed care groups is full of examples of "doing for" (Longhofer and Kubek 2010), a prominent mode of accomplishing bureaucratic tasks for clients in the Senior Program. It was a quick way for caseworkers to reduce uncertainty and ensure that they accomplished certain bureaucratic tasks in a welfare context where one service or resource might be delegated to and managed by multiple entities. What role the seniors themselves played in such approaches varied, such as giving consent or answering during interviews at appointments. "Doing for" also enabled resettlement staff to intervene based on their experience and knowledge of how mainstream agencies work. When interpreters were present, they could make sure clients gave the "right" answers to accomplish bureaucratic tasks. Leah determined which of her senior clients could do things on their own, but most of the time, we did tasks and when needed had family members that spoke English also perform the work of "doing for" their elders. Before providing examples of doing and speaking for refugees, including masquerading, delegating, and other tactics from my fieldwork, I begin with the medium that mediates such approaches—the paper case file—followed by an explanation of transitions to independent bureaucratic "adulthood" in refugee resettlement.

The Case File as Medium of "Doing For" Seniors

The case file mediates the relationship between caseworker and client. In the Senior Program, the case file was a collection of paperwork that documented and represented the

[47] This passage has been modified from my original field notes. As an ethnographer, my field notes were like an elaborated and alternative set of case notes free from the gaze of supervisors and other employees.

processes of bureaucratic integration: applying, waiting for, and finally receiving identity cards, benefits, and services. This case file was particular to the senior program alone, and clients resettled by MMS or other resettlement agencies had a second separate case file with their primary case manager.

There was a paper and electronic version of the case file that contained duplicated and some distinct forms of knowledge. The electronic case file could be continuously updated with case notes that were only printed out and placed in paper files preceding monitoring. In its physical form, the top sheet on the left-hand side held a checklist, “Benefits client eligible for.” At intake, the caseworker would explain the benefits available, determine which benefits clients were eligible for and wanted to apply for, and then check them off. On the right side was a checklist of documents contained within the file, including an intake form, IDs, and leases: information that could permit the caseworker to fill out applications. One of the first sheets contained within the file on this side was a consent form to authorize caseworkers to access private information and act on behalf of a client. When clients could not write or were not present, family members or spouses would sometimes sign for them. In my experience, doing a good job at intake would mean not needing to track down clients later for further information.

The case file should enable the caseworker to do as much for the client without them physically present. In a way, this tactic was a mercy to many of the refugees that used the Senior Program because transportation was a great challenge to navigate on their own. The program staff tended to work around rather than address this problem directly. Leah explained that sometimes she or Rachel would visit clients in their homes to do intakes because they could not travel. However, when it came to certain in-person appointments, “like Public Aid office or Social Security office, we need them. Other things, we can help them,” Leah explained.

By giving their consent, the client handed over the responsibility to the Senior Program and its staff. They retained some responsibility, such as being able to provide further documents as needed, responding to phone calls from the caseworker, as well as other active processes depending on the benefit. They also acquired the new responsibilities of managing their benefits.

On the one hand, bureaucracies require an autonomous person capable of managing his or her paperwork or giving consent to others to manage their affairs and access “private” information. Still, “doing for” was quicker and easier and contributed to finding further ways of masquerading as a senior in order to do things for them. Caseworkers’ tactics succeeded in maintaining these impressions or bumped against their limits, as in the instance that I described above in my field notes. Navigating the requirements for autonomy and dependency played out in some interesting ways that speak to the value of ethnographic approaches in bringing attention to the irrational aspects of bureaucracies.

To understand the capability of bureaucratic integration in refugee resettlement, it is first important to understand the timing and transitions. From the perspective of the Senior Program, this work could be divided up into three stages: (1) initial applications for basic benefits, (2) senior benefits, and (3) maintaining benefits. The work of navigating health systems or housing issues could occur throughout. I should also note that refugees can and do also choose to migrate to other cities at different points in this process. It happened so frequently that during an activity at an MMS staff retreated in which they had to organize resettlement processes into a chronological timeline, migrating out of the state was half-jokingly included as a “normal” step.

Resettlement agencies have only a limited per capita resettlement allowance for each refugee that is divided between administrative (no more than $750) as well as direct costs, food, clothing, rent and bare bones furnishing of an apartment. In a city like Chicago, the amount is unlikely to cover the first few months of rent as intended, which means that resettlement agencies like MMS rely on grants from private foundations and donations from religious organizations, businesses, and individuals. The formal Reception and Placement (R&P) program of PRM is limited to the first three months. In state administered programs like Illinois, R&P entails connecting refugees to other resources, such as ORR-funded Refugee Cash Assistance and Refugee Medical Assistance for the first eight months. From the time of arrival, the clock begins ticking and the race to get refugees onto benefits begins. Within the first few days, case managers submit applications, including Forms 2424[48] and 2422[49], to get an interview to apply for public benefits at IDHS, for example RMA, RCA, and SNAP (food stamps). The applications go to Special Units within IDHS, established by a previous State Refugee Coordinator in Illinois to manage refugee cases. Despite being sent to a special branch, these applications still take varying times to process.

While clients and their case managers waited sometimes for weeks to get an initial appointment at IDHS, MMS supported their clients with rent assistance or emergency funds, acting as a temporary safety net for the unpredictable and often sluggish mainstream systems. At the first appointment at a local IDHS office, clients received their Link card to pay for food, and MMS, knowing the amount of cash assistance, began the process of reducing their rent assistance. For refugees deemed "employable," the clock wa ticking for them to find and accept employment in low-wage jobs.

Employable refugees, youth, and seniors are served through ELT, Employment, and other specialized programs that can vary from year to year in terms of funding. Case managers work

[48] "Verification Of Contribution From Volunteer Sponsoring Agency"
[49] "Referral To Refugee Job Placement Agency"

with families to formulate a "self-sufficiency plan" that will enable them to pay rent through a patched together combination of jobs or benefits. Because new jobs or SSI are sometimes not sufficient to pay rent, caseworkers also help clients find roommates.

In MMS, all incoming refugees 60 and older were referred to the Senior Program. Rachel usually conducted their intakes. When Leah took on part-time responsibility for IFRP, she also started managing "non-employable," non-"school age" refugees that caseworkers referred to her for helping, often in applying for SSI based on disability. Leah and I would work on applying for SSI and other benefits.

Refugees also needed help navigating the health system, using a Link card to access SNAP or RCA, getting free passes for public transportation, problem-solving issues with housing, getting forms of ID, reading and understanding mail from mainstream agencies, or opening bank accounts. Once refugees were into systems, they also needed help maintaining benefits. In the initial period, the responsibility for bureaucratic integration and paperwork falls on the case manager and later starts to shift onto the refugees' themselves. However, through referral to certain programs, such as the Senior Program, refugees could continue to get help.

Getting Off Assistance

Resettlement agencies often pay refugees' rent in the months before they are able to pay for it themselves. At MMS' "Unit Meetings," rent assistance was a regular topic and often took up the most time for discussion. Staff passed around handouts with a roster of clients on rent assistance with the refugees' date of arrival, rent, amount they were paying (from job or benefits), and amount of rent assistance received. At MMS, clients were not expected to begin contributing until they got their Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) of $243/month, but getting completely off of rent assistance required getting a job, SSI, or some household arrangement.

Initially, MMS took responsibility for covering gaps created by waiting, processing times, or other problems by providing emergency cash assistance when needed.

With this responsibility came the ability to determine when and how to remove clients from agency assistance. This is where surveillance of compliance and assessments of deservingness came into play during staff meetings about rent assistance. Caseworkers discussed clients' employability based on age (Chapter 4), but on the whole, SSI recipients received less discussion in rent assistance--Leah did not even attend these meetings--because the agency accepted responsibility for those clients during their processing periods. I discuss below in more detail how that responsibility was distributed in practice and the capability needed to enter and apply for SSI and other senior benefits.

Maintaining Benefits

After the initial period of applying for benefits comes the tasks of maintaining them. Being able to navigate bureaucracies including those guarding access to public benefits is an on-going process for refugees continuing years after their arrival. After the initial period of application, public benefits systems often require on-going paperwork, such as income eligibility redeterminations or other regular submissions of income and other information. Social assistance programs through IDHS and Social Security all come with reporting requirements. Refugees must respond in order to avoid having benefits cut.

Employment receives a great deal of attention in the US refugee resettlement program serving as a metric for self-sufficiency. However, having a job does not guarantee that refugees are able to manage their bureaucratic lives. Tanya, a case manager at MMS, described the discrepancy in understandings of self-sufficiency in an interview:

> I would say--So, personally, I mean as a caseworker and someone who works in resettlement, I see self-sufficiency very differently than the State Department does. But according to government guidelines, you are supposed to be employed within three months and that is self-sufficiency. They do not consider it fluent in English. I think the benchmarks have changed a little bit. They would consider self-sufficiency to be able to do a lot more things than our clients are actually able to do. Like call your doctor and reschedule an appointment, you know. So many clients can't do that when they are paying their own rent. To understand what your mail is. To know, so many things (laugh), and the list goes on. But they still can't do it, but they are paying their own rent.

The example of the denial letter that I provided above suggests that the problem of self-sufficiency entails not just learning English but also being able to understand complicated bureaucratic processes. One day towards the end of my fieldwork a client came to the office with a denial letter after applying for SSI. I did not immediately understand that it meant that his SSI application was still be pending. Leah explained to me that that the denial was for Social Security Disability Insurance, for which he was automatically applied. This example illustrates that self-sufficiency would require not just English language skills but also proficiency in understanding sometimes confusing and complicated bureaucratic processes. After many months spent at MMS, I still relied on the expertise and familiarity of Leah and other staff.

The Mediating Role of Casework

As noted above, the case management work of assisting refugees takes knowledge, skills, relationships, and tools. Part of the work of being a case manager was keeping up on developments in social services bureaucracies and learning or improvising their own tactics in order to get through changing procedures. Caseworkers learned their jobs through the experience of doing them and sharing with other caseworkers and staff. Leah explained that the training she had received addressed things like how to fill out reports to the funder, but in terms of accomplishing getting her clients into benefits, she learned by experience. When I asked her how she learned to do her job, she responded:

> Leah: Experience, from when I started. And every case is different. It's not like, you have a client and you will do 1, 2, 3, 4. Experience having resources at Public Aid, having people to contact at Public Aid or Social Security who can help you to see what is the problem and how to solve it.
>
> Kimberly: Knowing who to call.
>
> Leah: Yes, because if you don't know, you have to go there. Because you have to teach them. You have to go with them and pick them up. And if you go there and you don't have everything with you, you will go there again. So better to contact someone and see what they need. And sometimes, you will see from experience, you will see the problem and why they have that problem. So you will see from the beginning.

Caseworkers were motivated to be efficient and lessen their trips out of the office. Still Leah needed experience, information and sharing among other caseworkers, and contacts with supervisors and staff at local offices to manage clients' problems. What were these problems then?

It is helpful to pause here and examine what Leah means here by "problem." It is not immediately apparent but represents an important finding of my participant-observation of refugees in mainstream systems. I have already provided an example in this chapter. A woman's Medicaid was cut off, and she did not know why. She came to the Senior Program with a friend, Naw Sih Sih, to interpret, and I called Medicaid on her behalf to learn that a process had changed: Medicaid had transitioned to managed care groups, and she needed to choose one to maintain her health insurance benefit. I tried to do this with her and messed up her name online, and when working over the phone, we ran into trouble because she needed to give consent and could not do it even with an interpreter. Eventually, I figured out the problem with her bifurcated name. I chose a managed care group for her by consulting Leah and choosing a group that would allow her to stay with her current primary care physician. The "problems" of the Senior Program are often bureaucratic in nature and require skills, tools, and access to knowledge that refugees did not have even years after being in the country. Later in this chapter, I examine more closely Naw Sih Sih and her role as "free social worker." By bringing Naw Sih Sih with her to the Senior Program, this woman was actually showing one way that what being capable in this setting looks like.

Current or former clients of the Senior Program sometimes came to the office because their benefits suddenly stopped or were reduced. One problem that we were constantly managing arose from the need for clients to communicate between IDHS and Social Security. They needed their IDHS information (that is, the amount of their RCA, TANF, and/or SNAP benefits) at interviews for SSI (although sometimes the Social Security caseworker could look it up). Once they received SSI, they would need to report to IDHS that they were receiving less assistance from family. Frequently, a client's food stamps amount would drop suddenly, and they would call the Senior Program to ask what happened. Leah would arrange for the client to pay a certain share of the family's rent then call IDHS to let them know. Refugees were responsible for communicating between these two bureaucracies, and bringing this task to the Senior Program meant Leah applied her expertise in the process to secure benefits for her clients.

Casework Relationships

Having contacts at Social Security and IDHS was extremely helpful for applying and problem solving. Leah and other case managers knew the supervisors and would call or email them directly about clients' problems. I learned to get the name of the caseworker at the time of application for Social Security and Public Aid. Leah had her own list of phone numbers, addresses, and contact information for many of the agencies where she referred clients that I copied and used regularly. Relationships were so valuable that Leah would even try to call known caseworkers at the wrong office or unit simply because she knew that these were helpful caseworkers. When delegating tasks to me, she would sometimes recite the phone number from memory: "Call Ms. M. Her phone number is XXXX." Then I would start the game of calling and calling until I got through or the caseworker responded. Below is an example from my case notes:

> **Following up another client's SNAP benefits**
> Leah asked me to call Ms. M (at IDHS) to find out about a client's SNAP benefits (not a senior). I called and Ms. M gave me the case ID number, but she didn't tell me the status of the case. "She's lying. Ms. M is lying," said Leah, implying that Ms. M could in fact see the information. She said that Ms. M gets really frustrated when she hears that a case is in the Northern Office (instead of the Uptown office where she works). I asked Leah what I should do, and she said for me to figure it out. Again I asked what to do. She said maybe we should pretend we're the client and call the hotline. I said that I couldn't pretend to be Mohammed. Then I said, What about bringing the client in if he's already coming in? And she said that it's not worth the client coming in just for a phone call and especially if they (employees at a certain office) don't pick up. "I'm really tired of these SNAP cases," Leah said. "How many have stopped or re-de[50] and people are calling?"

As this case shows, Leah cycled through a number of tactics, the first of which was to call a supervisor that she knew and expected to help (indeed, they sometimes did) even when we discovered that a client was moved to another office location (a process that actually happened automatically after refugees had been in the country for more than 8 months). One tactic that she suggested was pretending to be the client, and I have some examples of masquerading below[51]. What was not on the table as an option was bringing the client in because contacting a particularly busy office by phone was such an unreliable process. I can vouch for her motivation

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[50] Every six months, IDHS clients are mailed a "re-de" or redetermination form that they have to fill out to ensure that they are still eligible for their SNAP, cash, or medical benefits.

[51] I went along with these practices because the motivation was helping refugees access benefits, MMS had clients' consent, and sometimes caseworkers at mainstream agencies seemed to understand and go along with them, but I cannot deny that these were ethically murky situations (see Conclusion of this chapter).

based on my experiences[52].

One anecdote that illustrates just how taken-for-granted it was that IDHS workers were difficult to contact is in my field notes under the title "**Leah happy with DHS employee**." "Do you know how many times he has called me?" she said, adding that he must be new. "In three months he will be just like the others," she quipped. Later Leah tried this caseworker again because she had found him to be helpful. We were checking on an application for AABD for a client that was losing SSI because she had not been able to get citizenship within seven years. I had called the caseworker many times and left a voicemail, but he did not call back. So Leah called this "new" caseworker about another problem and then asked him about this AABD case while he was on the phone. He explained that he was in the office that only worked with refugee cases (Special Units). I emailed Ms. C because it has been several months since we had heard anything. She responded right away with the cryptic but somewhat informative message, "Her request was approved on January 8, 2015 and the benefits," and nothing else. As these examples show, contacting IDHS and getting information on refugees' benefits was a moving target and required knowing who were "good" caseworkers and supervisors but also never being certain if they could help or even be reached.

Caseworkers from different resettlement agencies shared information. At regular meetings, they discussed and strategized about tactics for accessing or improving systems. They also expressed anguish and powerlessness, especially with respect to IDHS. Tactics for dealing with IDHS were a regular topic of discussion, such as relationships with the supervisor, Ms. C,

[52] Anyone can choose which office serves them, and based on my experience with different offices, I wrote in my choice when I enrolled in Medicaid last year. I was tickled to meet one of the IDHS caseworkers that I had called frequently in person and have her tell me, "I'm mad at you," when I applied public benefits.

and they sometimes worked together to strategize on contacting her or advocating for improvements. They complained that things happened so illogically, wondered aloud about alternatives, or considered tactics for coming together as a group to demand progress. Responding to a comment about clients left waiting without appointments, one caseworker said, “This makes us look like we’re not doing our jobs.” Sometimes, however, they were defeatist about things ever improving, saying things like, “Give up on progress with [I]DHS.”

Case managers also discussed which offices of social service agencies knew about refugees. At one meeting, they debated over which office was better for clients applying for Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Matthew, an MMS case manager, said that some of the staff there needed to be trained because he had three clients whose benefits were cancelled because they were Legal Permanent Residences (or “green card holder,” an intermediary status on the way to citizenship) but came as refugees. MMS staff members often expressed that a nearby local Social Security office knew about refugees but other offices did not. Carolina, a caseworker at MMS, spoke about staff in the suburban office that were hostile to her clients. A case manager that I interviewed at another resettlement agency explained about SSI, “Even though it’s a federal thing, most offices have no idea, and they just prolong the process.” Problems arose for the Senior Program, which had several clients, usually from Iraq, that lived in the suburbs. During the research period, a man that Leah helped got denied because he was not a citizen when he applied for SSI in a suburban office. By submitting to the nearby Chicago office where the staff recognized refugees’ eligible non-citizen status, resettlement staff avoided these problems. Knowledge of refugees, including their eligibility and the circumstances under which they came to the US, was not evenly held by staff among and within offices in the social service landscape.

Bureaucratic processes could change suddenly, and caseworkers had to keep up with such changes, which sometimes affected their tactics. One example was the procedure for applying for Medicaid recently expanded in Illinois under ACA. Staff members, including me, received training on using the Illinois online system, Application for Benefits Eligibility (ABE). After using ABE a few times, Leah noticed that the forms were being automatically submitted to the wrong program branch of IDHS. She tried unsuccessfully to track down the application through phone calls. The next time I helped someone apply for Medicaid, I learned of the new tactic: printing, filling out, and scanning paper applications that were then emailed to the nearby office of IDHS, often CC'ing the supervisor, Ms. C, to ensure that the application got attention or at least documenting its being sent.

The practice continued until one day Leah and I attended a "CQC"[53] meeting at a local office of IDHS. I had heard from an MMS coworker that Ms. C no longer wanted to accept the emailed Medicaid applications. At the CQC meeting, Ms. C asked us to fax rather than email the applications. I asked Ms. C if the fax machine could handle the 20-25 pages the application sometimes included. She responded by giving me what she called the "good" fax machine's number. She said that she did not know if it would work and that we should send a "test" fax to see if it does. Another staff member explained how to submit Medicaid redetermination forms to Maximus, a third party contractor for income verification. On the walk back to MMS, Leah, clunking in her high-heeled boots and struggling to keep up with me said, "How do these places

[53] The Community Quality Council (CQC) meetings organized by the Illinois Hunger Coalition and according to their handouts they were "instrumental in improving services at local offices and establishing collaborative relationships between local office staff, service providers, and community advocacy groups." One MMS staff member described them to me as a chance to complain. Leah took her cases that needed attention to the meetings to pull aside a supervisor and bring them to her attention.

change their rules without telling people like me and still expect us to keep up?" If she could not keep up, how could refugee newcomers?

Dropping off paperwork or applications was considered by caseworkers to be a bad idea because they would often seem to disappear without a trace. Then it was impossible to prove that it was the social service agency's fault and not the resettlement caseworker's. They preferred sending information and communicating in some way that could be tracked, such as CC'ing Ms. C in emails to IDHS. Email also provided the caseworker with evidence that something was indeed submitted. There were some bureaucratic encounters that were more reliable, and one part of learning the ropes of the benefits system and case management was finding ways to reduce uncertainty and increase accountability of public benefits offices.

Delegating Casework

So far I have focused on the actions of caseworkers themselves, but caseworkers also delegated to clients and their family members. Tanya, a caseworker at MMS, explained the skills of her job:

> I think that the biggest skill is being able to be hyper-organized and being able to delegate tasks. **A lot of my day is usually spent not necessarily doing the things with the clients, but making sure someone else is, or that the client knows.** Trying to be in the office as much as I can for things that come in, so that I can then schedule and delegate those. You know, so thank God for interns and Outreach Workers.

Many caseworkers emphasized that being out of the office would take up more of their time, such as waiting at the Public Aid office, and they often tried to delegate those tasks to Outreach Workers (responsible mostly for interpreting) and interns, like me. Leah would send me to help a client get their state ID at the Secretary of State's office downtown, or to meet a client at the local Social Security office.

Delegating was built into the patchworked structure of resettlement, and that could create uncertainties in bureaucratic processes. I already mentioned a few examples: Maximus, the third-party income verification system and the managed care group Medicaid providers. Two examples of programs that required clients to visit yet another office were the Low Income Heating and Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and the previously discussed Free Ride transportation pass. For LIHEAP, refugees would have to go to one of several community-based organizations or mutual aid associations, who then helped them apply. I referred Mr. Ahmed and gave him the address of the nearby organization and a list of the documents that he needed to bring. When I followed up with him later, I learned that he had not been successful applying for LIHEAP because the worker there had not recognized his eligibility. The best practice that emerged from this delegated system was to have the Housing Manager's intern get together a group of clients and take them over to one of these organizations to ensure that they applied successfully.

The same problem with delegating to clients and family members occurred when they were referred to a local branch of the Chicago Department on Aging. Leah or I completed the online application and then referred clients there to go to get their photos taken for the transportation pass. Leah eventually figured out that people were not going, most likely because of problems with transportation. Her solution was to tell clients and family members to go to a local drug store, get passport photos taken, and bring them back to MMS. Then she would send out the final application with the photo attached. Although costlier to clients, Leah found this to be a more effective approach because it minimized the uncertainty of sending people to another office.

Maintaining benefits usually meant talking family members. When Leah asked me to conduct 30- and 90-day follow-ups on clients, I often called the English-speaking family member listed in their paper case file. One clients' daughter had a smartphone and email that enabled Leah to follow up on her, and she could follow up on Leah:

> **Lifeline[54] phone canceled**
> A senior client had called Leah because her free phone was cancelled. I chatted online with a representative and the representative said that it was canceled. They didn't say why. I think it could be because the client moved. I got the phone number for the client's daughter, and she emailed Leah a photo of a change of address label. I had asked her for a copy of the medical card. Then I emailed back the phone application (filled out) and told them to send me the medical card so that I can send it in. When I asked Leah if she had the email address, she said, "Do you know how often this lady emails me?"

This episode highlights how tasks were distributed to me, an intern, and family members such as the client's daughter. Leah delegated Lifeline applications to me because they were time consuming. I filled out applications using information in their case files before sending it back to the family. Therefore, the task of renewing access to a benefit became distributed and delegated to multiple actors using email, telephones, and smart phones with cameras.

Masquerading as Clients

In some cases, caseworkers or family members took the approach of doing and speak for older refugees to the point of even masquerading as them. The purpose was to overcome language and other barriers that blocked refugees from accessing and maintaining their benefits. Modes of communication that would otherwise represent obstacles, such as phone calls and online chatrooms, made the technique more feasible.

[54] Lifeline is a program that provides government-subsidized cell phones to low-income people through third-party contractors. People who receive certain government benefits automatically qualify, and the companies often send out mailings encouraging them to apply.

Masquerading on the Phone

One of the most memorable instances of this from my fieldwork was when a client's granddaughter came into the office because her grandmother's Medicaid was not working. I called the busy IDHS branch office. The woman I reached explained that I had actually reached the call center, which took over when the office had a large call volume. I wrote out the address, RIN, and other information on a piece of paper and placed it in front of the English-speaking granddaughter to tell the customer service representative, posing as her grandmother. Once the identity was "confirmed," the representative worked with me directly. At some point she asked what the woman's primary language was, and I said Karen and spelled it for her. "You learn something every day," the representative said. Then she explained that she would leave a note for the head supervisor about the case to make sure it was fixed and the client's medical insurance made active again. She finished her explanation with a wink, adding: "Once I get confirmation from the young lady." Having a younger family member play her elder, it seemed, was an acceptable way to help.

Masquerading Online

Over time I had figured some tactics for navigating Lifeline, the government-subsidized cell phone service, but some clients still waited many months. I was often responsible for applying and following-up and found it incredibly frustrating. Accountability always seemed to rest on the applicant and never on the providers, third-party contracted companies. I would submit support documents and wait weeks only to hear that they were not received. Clients got rejected because someone was already receiving the benefit at their address. My guess was that high turnover at low-rent apartments explained some these rejections. Eventually providers started requiring a worksheet where you could attest that the applicant was one of multiple households at a given location.

Some of the Lifeline companies used online chatrooms that made it very easy to masquerade as clients and identify problems. Lifeline's processes could create ridiculous and seemingly illogical bureaucratic obstacles that were not unfamiliar to resettlement case management: needing a lease agreement or bill in the client's name when it was usually in the names of family members that could probably manage things better (see image below). When the customer representative said that a medical card was not proof of residence, I submitted it anyway. I approached the problem from a standpoint of entitlement and experience; I knew that a medical card **did** verify one's address in other processes (and why should it not?). I suspect that some of the complications came from the fact that customer representatives, like "David" below, were located outside the US and possibly less familiar with US systems. Dealing with customer service representatives at Lifeline companies was Kafkaesque, especially due to the problems of providing documentation for "older" refugees.

Page 1 of 2

Welcome [redacted] Your request has been directed to the Checking Status department. Your request will be answered in the order it is received.

While you wait for an operator, you can view answers to the most common ReachOut Wireless questions by clicking here https://www.reachoutmobile.com/index.php/site/page/C6/.

Want to upgrade your phone? Click https://www.reachoutmobile.com/phone_replacement/phone_replacement.php to learn more!

Call accepted by operator David. Currently in room: David.

David:
Hello,thank you for visiting Reachout Wireless. You are chatting with David Lee. How may I assist you today?

[redacted]
Hello. I lost my phone, and I was wondering how I could replace it.

David:
May I know your 10 digit ReachOut Wireless Phone Number?

[redacted]

David:
Before I proceed, please provide me your complete address including City, Zip Code, State, & Apartment number/Floor you are on and last 4 digits of you SSN for account verification purposes?

[redacted]
[redacted] Chicago, IL [redacted]

[redacted]

David:
[redacted] you can upgrade your phone through our web site that is www.rowretailers.com Please visit the Website in order to purchase a phone.

[redacted]
OK

[redacted]
Thank you

David:
Is there any thing else I can assist you ?
]

[redacted]
Secondly, I have recently moved and I need to update my address.

David:
[redacted] In order to change the address you need to Send the new address proof, lease agreement or the utility bill or the mailing letter with your name on proof@reachoutwireless.com or Fax it at 1-877-870-9333. Please mention your phone number on it.

[redacted]
OK

[redacted]
Can I send my medical card as proof?

David:
[redacted] you need to send only the above mentioned documents.

[redacted]
No, I mean can I use my medical card to prove my new address?

[redacted]
I ask because my bills and lease are in my family members' names.

David:
[redacted] you need to send only the lease agreement or the utility bill or the mailing letter with your name on proof@reachoutwireless.com or Fax it at 1-877-870-9333. Please mention your phone number on it.

[redacted]
What is the mailing letter?

[redacted]
You mean a letter with my name on it?

https://messenger.providesupport.com/view/html-2/root/classic/en/kajfsg/module/room/m... 11/20/2014

Figure 13-Online chatrooms provided a way to masquerade as clients and identify problems with accessing Lifeline. I suspect that workers like David might also have been masquerading as being located in the US.

Towards the end of the research period, Leah said to me about Lifeline, “I’m not doing these applications anymore. The follow-up is too much.” She had been delegating the applications to me to navigate among the changing processes of three different companies contracted by the government. I could see that from Leah’s perspective these applications were a great deal of work for little benefit. She could only see the problems of Lifeline, when it was difficult for her clients to be able to acquire and troubleshoot on their own. Requiring people to call on others for help is part of how inaccessible systems work.

Speaking for Seniors through Interpretation

Caseworkers often intervened because it erased the uncertainty created when clients, unfamiliar with bureaucratic processes, acted on their own behalf. It is certainly ironic when the work of confirming one’s identity and permission to have others act on their behalf takes away the very agency and capacity of the person to do so by dint of the forms this confirmation takes. At the local Social Security office, casework staff had to ensure the honesty of applicants. They used a script at the end of an interview to confirm that everything the applicant had said was true:

> “Do you understand that the information you gave us and examined will be used to process your/or name of claimant's (application/amendment/redetermination/name of form) for (benefits/Medicare)? Do you declare under penalty of perjury that this information is true and correct to the best of your knowledge?” (SSA 2013b)

Leah would simplify this statement when she acted as interpreter for clients. “Even in Arabic, I just tell them, you are responsible for what you will say. You are correct. Anything wrong, problem with government. You don’t need to tell them penalty, perjury, felony or anything,” she explained. Carolina, who specialized in disability applications before Leah took over IFRP, once explained to me that she preferred having clients who did not speak English. Like Leah, she spoke Arabic and Assyrian, and she often served as an interpreter at interviews at Social

Security. She explained to me that it was easier to speak for clients to avoid problems during the interview. Interpreters, or caseworkers serving in that capacity, could use these interactions to act on their own understandings of the cultural aspects of the bureaucratic systems—such as how elderly were defined as living in a separate household from adult children—in ways to secure benefits for clients.

Rather than being impartial, mainstream agencies were uneven and partial. They favored those with relationships and inside knowledge of how they worked. Resettlement caseworkers were not just interpreting for refugees but translating them into systems.

Bureaucratic Proficiency

Case management provides evidence of the work of managing new bureaucratic lives, some work that refugees would be able to take on, and some tactics that would belong exclusively to case managers. Being able to do casework also meant having time and access to certain tools. I met Jassem Taha, one of my research participants, once in the waiting room of MMS. He was trying to find a fax number for Disability Determination Services. Mr. Taha had two adult children with disabilities, and he said that he was spending three or more days a week doing the paperwork. He was saying that if he was working he could not do all the paperwork he must do for applying for benefits. He was not at MMS to see anyone. He just wanted to use the fax machine. Mr. Ahmed also had trouble finding a photocopy machine, and it took him some time to find one at the local library. Clearly, refugees and their family members did not have equal access to these tools, and that made them reliant on caseworkers.

The need for caseworkers to navigate difficult bureaucratic tasks in inaccessible welfare systems was a contradiction of the resettlement program, whose stated goal was self-sufficiency through a combination of work and government benefits. Even if clients had or acquired English, or had access to an interpreter, they would still need caseworkers to help.

Many caseworkers expressed that they did not think their clients could do casework by themselves. When I asked Tanya about her clients, she responded, “I don’t know any one of them that was able to do it on their own.” Still she had more incentive to get clients to become more capable and independent. She estimated that she was officially managing 140 “cases” (or individuals; the number was 200 if children are included) in one month. That did not include the people that she helped unofficially because they were beyond the service term or did not have an “A” (Alien) number. The problem was not just the clients but the systems themselves.

> Kimberly: You know, I’ve been wondering is do you feel that there is any – what aspects of navigating the available services are people able to do on their own?
>
> Tanya: None. Really. OK, I guess it depends. If you are like an English speaking Afghani client or like some of my different clients who are more use to systems, they can do it. If there is language accessibility they can do it. Clients, like, my Congolese clients, some can, but so many just can’t, or won’t or I don’t know are so overwhelmed, especially like [I]DHS and even [local health clinic]. And these places are by nature really inaccessible. And when I started they were really difficult for me to access, to get answers. It was constant frustration and now after 3 years, I figured out the system. **But these people do not know systems.** They don’t know like who their caseworker is over there. Just too much.

I heard the same observation about needing a caseworker from Yasser Ahmed. He spoke very critically of his difficulties navigating social services.

> Yasser Ahmed: They [IDHS] say bring your caseworker for you…No no no. You cannot go alone. **It is not about English language alone**. When they cannot understand, I cannot force them to help me.

Mr. Ahmed’s experience suggested that once agencies started relying on the mediating role of resettlement caseworkers advocating and communicating for clients, they became taken for granted at offices like IDHS. Still, like caseworkers, Mr. Ahmed had learned what to do through his experiences with managing uncertainty in bureaucratic encounters.

> And also [I went to] Social Security with Leah to find out something about SSI. And she told me you provide us a bank letter to confirm that you have an account so we can send your check directly to them. Then I came to the bank and opened a simple account ($25) with a letter and they provided me a letter with everything. And I take it to the Social Security. When I got there I take a number waiting for my turn. I give it to the officer there. She said, OK leave it with me. I will give it to the person in charge, and he will put it in the system. I said, "All set." She said, "All set." I go home and I wait two weeks. And I got a phone call but I could not understand it because they are mumbling. I took the phone to Leah or Matthew, and they said to go see Ms. I can't remember. She said, "Where is your bank letter?" I said that I brought it. They said that they did not receive it. I went back to the bank. I don't know who had received it. I asked her, please give me your name, please give it to Ms. Clablahblah (whatever her name is).
>
> Now every time I go, I ask people their name. That way I know who I met with.

I went into this research project expecting to learn from my interviews how refugees perceived social service bureaucracies and their processes. They did have opinions about the government helping people who could not work, but even the participants with English skills admitted that they did not really understand how these systems worked. Some of my participants did, however, know more than others and seemed to have crafted a way of getting through such processes. Hpo Hkwe, for example, could submit his wife's pay stubs to continue receiving his SSI. Not everyone was completely incapable, and as they learned the system, they often took the time to help others as well.

"Free Social Worker," Pastor's Wife, and Grandma

During a long wait at a suburban IDHS office to attend to an issue with her Medicaid, I sat with Naw Sih Sih, who showed me pictures of her granddaughter and other family members. She told me about her family's initial disapproval of her sister marrying a much older white man. "But she likes old men," I remember Naw Sih Sih explaining. In this case, I was helping Naw Sih Sih, but she was also a person that Leah often told me to call for help. Because she seemed so connected to her community, we would call her to invite other Karen people to the monthly senior workshops as a kind of shortcut.

Naw Sih Sih and her husband, Saw Law La, had been in the US for seven years and were both citizens. She spoke English quite well—although not perfectly, much better than her husband. They shared a three-bedroom apartment with her daughter, son-in-law, and granddaughter in one room, the parents of her son-in-law in another, and she and her husband in the third. As a pastor at a local church, her husband was paid a salary, and she was also very active there as a youth leader. She was a client of the Senior Program, but she often helped others, such as the woman whose Medicaid was cut off. Her assistance to these clients suggests to me the way that clients built capability over time by finding people to ask for help: people like Naw Sih Sih, who spoke English, were familiar with the system, and could locate further help. In her work of helping her community, Naw Sih Sih was acting as a "free social worker" for people in her community and resettlement caseworkers. She saw her work as part of her identity as a pastor's wife and "Pee" or grandma.

During our interview, the couple's granddaughter moved in and out to speak and ask her grandmother questions in English. Despite being a grandmother, Naw Sih Sih told me, "I don't have time to take care of my granddaughter."

"Really?" I asked.

"Usually, I go outside."

"Yes," my interpreter said.

"What do you do? Outside?" I asked.

"People call me."

"Uh-huh."

"*Pee*[55]! Come and help," said my interpreter and Naw Sih Sih together.

"Grandma help," said Naw Sih Sih.

When I interviewed Naw Sih Sih, I had to ask her about how she seemed more familiar or capable compared to other people I had met from Burma/Myanmar. Despite her apparent know-how, Naw Sih Sih had experienced challenges with everything from navigating public transportation to paying off large medical debts incurred through illness before ACA was passed. She also had an on-going struggle with meeting Medicaid Spenddown because her husband earned over the income limit. The spenddown issue had baffled me, Leah, and Michelle, my Karen interpreter. We searched for all kinds of workarounds to avoid gaps in medical coverage, such as getting the church to pay him slightly less or putting money away in a burial plot. We did not know exactly what to do, but we knew we needed to find a solution. Even though spenddown theoretically enabled the couple to have medical coverage, Naw Sih Sih had had trouble getting her regular medications, and her husband had been having trouble getting the regular cancer treatments he needed.

Only at our later interview did I learn to my surprise that MMS was not the only program relying on her to help. Caseworkers from at least three different resettlement agencies would call and ask her to help them take clients around.

> Kimberly: Why do you have to help them? Their caseworker doesn't help?
>
> Naw Sih Sih: No, sometimes the caseworker writes down the paper. 'You did not help them?' No. Give me CTA card, and then I help them. If I did not—
>
> Kimberly: What?

---

[55] "Pee" and "Pu" are terms of respect for someone older (relative to one) in Karen. My interpreter and Naw Sih Sih translated "Pee" as "grandma." Grandfather is "Pu."

Interpreter: They are overwhelmed themselves, you know, and they just leave the clients on their own.

Naw Sih Sih: They do not have the time. Naw Sih Sih, help!

Kimberly: Yeah. They call you?==

Naw Sih Sih: ==And, and, yes. And other times I didn't have the CTA card free[56].

Kimberly: Whoa.

Naw Sih Sih: 'You need to help.' Why? I do not have the time. I have appointment. 'So come…you need to help.' If I have to help, give me—

Kimberly: CTA card.

Naw Sih Sih: CTA card.

As I have explained, caseworkers expect clients to take on more responsibility for their bureaucratic work even when they are not yet able to. One tactic that they used was to write down instructions on paper and tell the clients to go to an office where, presumably, someone will read what the caseworker wrote and help them. Unfortunately, that tactic does not always work often for the same reasons that caseworkers were needed initially.

Naw Sih Sih helped people once or twice a week, sometimes every day, she said, with things like the going to hospital or going to the Public Aid office. People in her community would call at all hours, including early in the morning to come to the hospital and help them.

"Who calls you? Who calls you? From where?" I asked at our interview.

"Like ____'s wife? So when he go to operation, she didn't understand nothing. And then I have to help. And then they have appointment. They write down the directions, and I have to help," Naw Sih Sih explained. She was literally covering the gaps in casework.

[56] She did not have her Senior FreeRide pass yet.

What makes Naw Sih Sih capable and helpful in her community is that she speaks and understands enough English and she knows how to ask for help, like the phone interpreter at the hospital. Such intermediary services are very important to know about and not at all immediately apparent to newcomers. She is also familiar enough to recognize situations and stay calm, which is comforting when people are scared and unfamiliar with US systems. My interpreter, Michelle, who also works as a phone interpreter, chimed in explaining that people at the hospital were often so scared that at first they would say, "I don't understand," not realizing that she was speaking the correct dialect of Karen to them. "I say, I can understand you. You're speaking Karen. Can you hear me?" she said laughing. "If they call me, and they get me, then, because she knows me, she is fine. But if they get another interpreter, she is scared. She doesn't know someone else." Familiarity, and not just language, was important to helping the people on the other end of the line.

Naw Sih Sih understood her casework as part of her role in the community as a pastor's wife. "We are the church leaders. We need to have church members," she explained. I asked Naw Sih Sih if she wanted to get paid, and she said, "No, just CTA card." If she was going to do work for an agency, she wanted to be paid for her transportation (until she got her senior Ride Free pass). I joked with Naw Sih Sih that she was a social worker. "Free social worker," remarked my interpreter.

Naw Sih Sih responded by imitating people asking her, "'Are you caseworker?' No. I'm not social worker. I'm not volunteer."

"'I'm a pastor's wife.' Yes," said my interpreter. Saw Law La and I laughed.

"What is your title, Naw Sih Sih?" I asked.

"Pee," offered my interpreter.

"What's your job title?" I repeated.

"My title is Pee, Pee!" she exclaimed, and we all laughed.

Conclusion

I have already argued so far that aged citizenship becomes apparent in the incorporation of refugees into the US. This chapter adds to this discussion a consideration of age in the positioning of clients of the Senior Program related to processes of case management in inaccessible systems. Not only is resettlement organized around age categories, but it parallels a sort of life transition through the transfers of casework responsibilities. Initially, caseworkers take a paternalistic role, "doing for" clients and buffering them from the austerities of waiting times and processing in mainstream systems. Eventually, refugees are supposed to graduate or "grow up" to become independent "adult" citizens. Whether or not they actually gain such capacities is not documented because employment or receiving SSI is the standard of "self-sufficiency." Casework needed clients to move on to make room for incoming ones. Unfortunately, the scale of the US resettlement might contribute to the fast pace at which such processes are supposed to occur. The result is that extending the amount of time caseworkers administer to clients might reducing the number of refugees resettled using the same amount of resources.

What You Should Know About OAA

The Older Americans Act (OAA) services are available to anyone in need, regardless of their income or assets. OAA services are the way into aging services for everyone. Some services, such as Aging and Disability Resource Network (ADRN), which includes information and

The Older Americans Act (OAA) services are available to anyone in need, regardless of their income or assets.

Assistance are always available. Other services, such as Respite, have limited funding and are triaged, such as targeting those who are low income.

The OAA helps disabled adults, as well as seniors. One of the largest services provided at Catholic Charities through the OAA are the various components of the

Catholic Charities provides Congregate meals for seniors.

Aging and Disability Resource Network services. Professional staff assist older adults and their caregivers, as well as adults ages 18 – 59 with a disability to learn about what services are available for their particular situation. This can include resource information, services through Catholic Charities or other provider agencies, assistance making informed long-term support choices, help applying for pharmaceutical assistance, or navigating Medicare bills. Another important program through the OAA is the Family Caregiver Program. This program provides supportive services to sustain family caregivers of older persons and grandparents/relatives raising children. Services include respite, educational classes, support groups, and one-on-one supportive counseling. In 2014, Catholic Charities assisted over 1300 caregivers.

Services include respite, educational classes, support groups, and one-on-one supportive counseling. In 2014, Catholic Charities assisted over 1300 caregivers.

OAA funding requires local match funding. This makes these services a collaborative effort between federal and local entities. This local match can be from townships, municipalities, United Way, or other sources.

Figure 14- An article from Catholic Charities' Keenager News *on the 50th Anniversary of the Older Americans Act (2015).*

The process for refugees labeled as “seniors” was different in terms of bureaucratic age transitions. “Seniors” could also continue to receive casework officially for five years presumed to be the time at which they would have citizenship; however, I met many that after seven years were still struggling to adjust their status. Like Naw Sih Sih, they continued to need help managing benefits, which were important because they pooled resources with other family members. Allowing senior refugees to continue receiving assistance underlined the idea of their dependency as acceptable to bureaucracies, even as their processes often required autonomy when responding to interviews and giving consent. Compared to “employable” refugees, potential adult workers, they were assigned a sort of “third age” status. Rather than being expected to work, they were expected to apply for and manage OAA benefits; this bureaucratic fluency that is an aspect or expectation one framing of seniorhood in the US (see Figure 13). The case file supports a narrow meaning of integration in resettlement as bureaucratic integration or having one’s papers and benefits in order.

Age was an important part of how case managers mediated refugees' interactions with mainstream systems. Vesperi wrote, "The cultural construction of old age is a process; **it is the concretization of abstract, unexamined assumptions within the context of everyday interactions**" (1986:24, my emphasis). There was nothing natural about the dependency of refugees on case managers. It was an outcome of entering a new unfamiliar context, the need to access public benefits for income and services, and the inaccessibility of such bureaucracies. The tactics of caseworkers point to the inaccessibility of such systems and the limitations of the tools refugees are provided to navigate them on their own. Public Aid, Social Security, and related offices often provide interpretation services, but my observations of English and non-English speaking participants suggest why these would be insufficient for helping refugees.

The problems caseworkers navigated through their tactics suggest a more complex picture of the aged citizenship in resettlement. There is this bureaucratically-crafted perspective of transitioning to adulthood or seniorhood based around the capable, bureaucratic individual. And behind the scenes of the front created through "doing for" seniors, new and convoluted interdependencies emerged to enable such bureaucratic framings. The situation suggests that mediators are an integral aspect of resettlement processes even though they are often invisible to its official parameters or documentation.

In helping clients access benefits, resettlement and Senior Program staff used tactics that indicate the challenges of navigating mainstream systems alone. Enabled by the case file, "doing for" was the primary mode by which the Senior Program helped clients. Tactics like masquerading reduced the uncertainty of accessing social services and enabled caseworkers to apply their insider knowledge. The tactics and experiences that caseworkers shared among colleagues included knowledge of the unevenness of welfare bureaucracy and its recognition of refugees. Delegating casework, to interns, family members, and community members or "free social workers" like Naw Sih Sih helped to manage caseloads but varied in terms of effectiveness. By including family members in the casework of seniors, caseworkers influenced intergenerational relations of parents relying on children or sometimes even grandchildren masquerading as them. However, not all refugees had such idealized multigenerational households, and even the seemingly most capable people struggled in the new cultural bureaucratic settings. The expectation of autonomous bureaucratic adults is built into a mainstream social service and health care system that simultaneously creates dependency on insider knowledge and tactics. At the same time, becoming capable of navigating this system often meant being able to secure help from others. Resettlement requires processes of translation in which caseworkers are important intermediaries.

As newcomers, refugees need time, tools, education, experience, and relationships to become capable of handling the myriad bureaucratic tasks that they need to manage, especially those related to continued access to welfare and aging services. A victory in casework can also be evidence of the challenges clients would have faced doing this work on their own. Noticing that work means shifting attention away from the outcome and onto the process. Hoag suggested, "if analysis is shifted by an instant—from the moments of action to the moments before action—bureaucratic practices appear not as the product of logics (a contextualized rational choice), orders of discourse, or superordinate powers, but as a tangle of desires, habits, hunches, and conditions of possibility (Hoag 2011:86). My approach has been to examine the choreographed encounters and caseworker tactics. Speaking for rather than just interpreting for them at Social Security interviews is a good example of the behind-the-scenes work of processes of accessing benefits.

Masquerading shows the gap between knowledge, skills, and relationships needed by caseworkers and those of the clients they help. Accessing rights and citizenship includes all of these mediating and intervening factors, and resettlement makes stark just how inaccessible and illogical it is to assume that refugees, once entering jobs or accessing SSI, suddenly become capable in navigating complicated, delegated welfare systems.

My observations contribute to previous scholarship of neoliberal transformations of the state. As I described in Chapter 1, the formulation of age in policies contributed to bureaucratic individualism that further enables market individualism. Discourses of individual or personal responsibility reinforce self-governing, marketization, and individualization (Rose 1990; Rose 1999; Rose and Miller 2010; Cruikshank 1999). Scholars have noted the register of improvisation of "do-it-yourself bureaucracy" (Mbembe and Roitman 1995) or the required volunteer work of the "do-it-yourself postwelfare state" (Hyatt 2001:228). In both constructs, the absence or rollback of the state places the onus on the individual. In this chapter, I bring attention to the caseworkers' tactics that enable the patchworking of different programs into a resettlement "system." A consideration of the aged aspects of citizenship and refugee resettlement brings a different perspective to the construction of the individual in a patchworked welfare landscape. Online chatrooms and sometimes the telephone enabled masquerading as "seniors." Using such a tactic might be considered more acceptable when performed on behalf of an older person. Masquerading meant inhabiting the identity of an autonomous bureaucratic individual, which can be seen as an example of strategically inhabiting positionalities in constrained situations (Carr 2009; Kravel-Tovi 2012). Doing for and speak for "seniors" shows that age-constructed individuals can be upheld bureaucratically through required behind-the-scenes actions and interdependencies.

Caseworkers and others performing actions and speech on behalf of the "senior" refugees are ambiguous and ethically murky situations. Expanding or ensuring access to caseworkers reinforces an inaccessible system contingent on the actions of mediators or caseworkers speaking for others. It points to the ambiguous relationship of resettlement acting simultaneously as extensions of mainstream systems and insider advocates. Individual "seniors" can appear as such because their responsibilities are delegated to caseworkers and other community and family members. The process reinforces individualism while in fact relying on relationships. Family members doing casework for elders can be an acceptable form of intergenerational relations, but it also puts the power of control over resources, such as Link cards, into the hands of younger family members.

The insider knowledge and tactics of caseworkers should be considered as a product of constraints of the resettlement "system"; at the same time, these are points of intersection and sites of resistance (Rose and Miller 288). Caseworkers like Leah knew how to ensure that their clients maximized their benefits. However, the need for casework and insider knowledge of constantly changing processes in order to access benefits is a source of potential disadvantage and vulnerabilities of people like refugee "seniors" made to be reliant on those programs. The official program parameters as well as the informal tactics of caseworkers to manage their caseloads by expecting clients to become independent contributed to their tendency to delegate casework to others. That is why caseworkers called Naw Sih Sih and how she began to take on this role of "free social worker" or, as people call her, *Pee.*

In a delegated welfare state, casework is also delegated and dispersed, much like the "system" itself, an important observation for researchers studying the welfare "system." I imagine that I could have broadened my perspective on resettlement processes by shadowing

Naw Sih Sih and other community members such as my interpreters acting as mediators for newcomers in their communities[57].

Naw Sih Sih had to spend less time with her granddaughter in order to help members of her community, which she saw as part of her role as the wife of a pastor and member of a religious community. Still she faced her own complications in a delegated system. “Senior” refugees like her show that they are much more than recipients of aid (Harrell-Bond 1986) but can become capable actors according to the demands of the systems on which they depend.

[57] I actually interacted with my interpreters from Bhutan and Burma/Myanmar and Naw Sih Sih quite a bit but not enough to understand their roles beyond what I have said here.

Conclusion - Bureaucratic Resettlement, Bureaucratic Ages, Bureaucratic Insufficiencies

A major part of the politics of resettlement is found in its bureaucratic structure, rationalities, and processes: the documents and case files, the tactics, relationships, tools, and skills that enable caseworkers to fit refugees into programs. The construction of resettlement as a "system" depends on categorizing refugees by age and the need for casework in manage and mediate connections to mainstream welfare and social services agencies. Official representations of U.S. resettlement bureaucracy rarely recognize age as playing such a constitutive and influential role (see Figure 3).

My approach in this dissertation has been to problematize "resettlement," "age," and "system," together to understand how bureaucratic categories, structures, and practices informed one another. Applying constructions of age from the US to refugee newcomers means that they become subject to ideological aspects and structural inequalities that are part of the US context. Such mistranslations are performed by removing contextual and relational aspects of age while applying new ones. In addition, the tactics and practices of caseworkers show that applying US norms to refugees through bureaucratic ages is not seamless. The need to broker problems created when refugees accessed mainstream social service settings underlines the inherent complications of using chronometric age and mainstreaming approaches to assist refugees.

The significance of age in the interconnection and communication between bureaucracies, in the active construction and negotiation of the resettlement "system," and in reproducing or masking inequalities point to the consequences of being aged as a citizen in the US. Generic ages given to refugees in camps and other countries help produce a sense of order and accuracy, fairness and "indifference" in subsequent processes. Age is always relational, conditional, and contextual, and casting it in abstract or universal terms reinforces the organization and authority of resettlement, welfare, and other human services bureaucracies.

Bureaucratic Ages

With many new refugees struggling to meet welfare and employment criteria, aged citizenship is a restrictive yet often overlooked aspect of refugee resettlement (Ong 2003; Shrestha 2011). The use of chronometric age as a basis of employability shows an interesting way that resettlement connects to, and partly creates, the labor market. Resettlement programs meet "self-sufficiency" goals through helping "employable" refugees (18-64 years) find jobs and "retirement age" or "aged" refugees (65+) access to Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Refugees can be too "old" to be "employable" but not yet matching the official criteria of "aged." Such categorization processes contribute to the vulnerability of refugees falling into such a demographic gap while reinforcing age stereotypes in the US and the narrow parameters of resettlement programs.

Age is a significant aspect of the inequalities and contours of citizenship (Ong 2003:16). Often used in welfare and migration bureaucracy, chronometric age legitimizes the "systematic production of arbitrariness" (Gupta 2012:6), including the "joyless and indifferent regime" by which in "a single tick of the clock, one finds oneself in another category" (Baars 2012:32). Stripped of cultural contexts and intersections with gender, race, and class, bureaucratic markers masquerade as purveyors of "objective" knowledge of age and aging. I argue that chronometric age and seemingly universal age categories enable cultural meanings to be removed and new ones applied as refugees move between bureaucratic contexts. This quality of age categories and rationalities contributes to their enrollment in the "social production of difference" (Fassin 2005).

Anthropology and Aged Citizenship

The purpose of my dissertation has been to show the need for anthropological studies to give attention to the bureaucratic aspects of age and citizenship in tandem. Resettlement provides an opportunity to explore citizenship from the perspective of newcomers; practical citizenship (Ong 2003) or processes of citizen-subject-making are informed by social categories, hierarchies, and other factors, such as the role of mediators in guiding access to welfare citizenship (Cook 2010). Scholars have acknowledged age as one of these categories informing processes of resettlement (Haines 2010:8). My study emphasizes the need for an explicit analytical attention of age and aging in anthropology, on the level of gender, race, and class, in informing social hierarchies of citizenship in the US.

Citizenship is always aged, and knowing citizens through age rationalities is an exercise of power implicit in their construction as such (Cruikshank 1999:3). The state mediates relationships of citizens to the labor market, which is one way that age becomes implicated in political-economic processes. Studying the integration of refugee newcomers provides a means of understanding "the categories that Americans use to assign people to their proper place" (Haines 2010:14) including age. My research revealed some of the aspects of age governmentality, including how chronometric age and life course categories can obscure processes of inequality by drawing similarities between refugees and mainstream citizens employing services for "seniors." Apparently universal, "neutral," and "objective" age rationalities can also reinforce normative understandings, such as chronometric age as a determinant of employability and productivity. Furthermore, labeling and categorizing according to chronometric age reinforces an understanding of citizens and their ages as individual and independent. Aged citizenship also included the practical effects of the makeshift resettlement "system" and the discrepancy between resettlement programs' and refugees' understandings and expectations of later life. Therefore, the ways in which an insufficient and makeshift resettlement "system" governed "older" refugee newcomers provide a lens into the practical consequences of aged citizenship.

Bureaucratic Insufficiencies

Resettlement and welfare bureaucracies are premised on the concept of capable and autonomous bureaucratic individuals, and resettlement processes can resemble a transition into independent adulthood. Unfortunately, the narrow parameters of the US resettlement program and the large number of refugees arriving every year mean that refugees do not have sufficient time or training to meet such criteria, which inaccessible systems make difficult to attain. Instead, becoming capable meant crating relationships to people who did know how to navigate systems. This need for such mediators was a part of the practical, everyday experiences of aged citizenship. Using age as an explicit analytic was important to bringing attention to such seemingly apolitical aspects of aged citizenship, including process of being governed by chronometric age and related categories. Such observations are not obvious and for this reason deserve more consistent attention in anthropological research.

Ethnography of human service bureaucracies provides a way to challenge their self-representations as logical, rational, and organized to look at the power dynamics of the techniques which make them appear so. Age is one of these instruments, making refugees appear to "fit" into the parameters of US aging and social services.

Making refugees reliant upon SSI, a second-tier program, implicated them in the structural inequalities of the US' two-tiered welfare state (Quadagno 1995). Social Security based on employee contributions and place-based work histories reproduces or compounds later life inequalities based on gender, race, and class. Work as a basis of deservingness is clearly a problem for refugees, but using eligibility and age criteria makes such systems indifferent to refugees' particular challenges to accessing work or accumulating resources for later life.

Previous anthropologists and other scholars have noted that discourses that stigmatize "dependency" uphold approaches to welfare that can subjugate the poor (Goode and Maskovsky 2001; Fraser and Gordon 1994; Katz 2002). "Dependency" carries a stigma for welfare recipients but it is, of course, always perspectival. It is hard to find a member of society that is not in some way dependent. My preference is to give attention to forms of interdependency crafted even through policies that are aimed at aged "individuals." Bureaucratic individuals constructed through the paperwork of aging and social services relied upon the efforts of many actors, such as caseworkers, interns/volunteers, family and community members. Such mediating actors are important to the welfare citizenship of migrants (Cook 2010). Naw Sih Sih, one of the "seniors" that I interviewed, took on such an (unpaid) role. The need for people like her points to the inaccessibility of human service bureaucracies and yet also the potential for refugees to take on roles as cultural brokers and mediators in their communities.

Age as Bureaucratic Mediator

Studying refugees is not just about moving between places but also bureaucracies. I argue that chronometric age based on birthdates was a mobile rationality (Rose 1996:43) and mode of communication between different bureaucratic contexts—from home countries, to UNHCR offices, to US bureaucratic contexts, such as Social Security. All refugees had to have a birthdate in order to be referred for resettlement, whether they knew it beforehand or not. Migrants might use their ages to negotiate the constraints of one context, only for it to become a hindrance in the next.

The incorporation of chronometric ages in processes of resettlement points to their portrayal as neutral or objective or a source of fairness. As a means of identification, chronometric ages draw similarities between refugees and US citizens and obscure inequalities. It also reinforces a sense of arbitrariness, in the line drawn between a 64-year-old refugee and a 65-year-old.

Chronometric age points to the underlying notions of time embedded in cultural concepts of age and aging. It sets up a uniformity, regularity, and predictability to the life course that is a product and enabler of processes of governing and managing lives. Chronometric ages reinforced the bureaucratic individualism of modern society and subsequently provided a basis for market individualism under neoliberal transformations.

Taking a life course perspective provides an important counter to such fixed rationalities to understand age rather in its various moving parts. Vincent et. al. wrote, “Migrations and later life need to be understood in their household, family, and temporal contexts" (Vincent, Phillipson, and Downs 2006:217). My primary approach was to focus on the reconfigurations of state and family resources and generational relationships.

The findings of my life history interviews indicate some of the potential problems of applying US life course norms to refugees. Life course norms have gender, class, race, and age dimensions because of the social organization of production and the inequalities of the labor market. Many of the women that I interviewed had not gone to school at all because of prescribed gender roles. The result was that their ages were linked to domestic, household contexts as sites of social reproduction. Few of my respondents had completed high school. Others had higher degrees but still struggled with limited incomes or finding appropriate work in the US. Refugees that had done paid work, mostly men, would not have expected to stop working completely unless family members could take over for them. Many of my participants found ways to contribute to their families often by repurposing benefits intended just for them. Their status in the family was affected by being in a new context where they had less control over resources (Goody 1990). The tensions and seams that form between circumstances and norms, resources and paradigms point to a need to understand age in practice and situated in many moving parts.

Practical Implications of Aged Citizenship for Research, Policy, and Advocacy

Based on my findings, I recommend a relational, contextual approach to age and an attention to the politics of using age categories embedded in particular contexts for research and refugee policy. Age rationalities already serve as a barrier to addressing the societal inequalities of later life in the US before even considering what they mean for incoming refugees.

Resettlement programs should take into account the contingencies of forms of later life support and desires of refugees themselves. For example, resettlement programs should acknowledge the desire to work and contribute at any age, whether in formal work or through babysitting, household chores, gardening, and other activities. Work is also not just about profit and earnings, and its meaning changes with age (Lynch 2012) . The efforts of the refugee gardeners were a benefit to family and community members, whether sharing healthy produce or creating a peaceful, outdoor haven in the city. If work can provide aspects of social integration and language learning as resettlement programs assume, then they should not exclude refugee "seniors" from such opportunities when they want them.

Labeling refugees "non-employable" removes accountability for helping them learn English and other skills that would enable them to work and manage their benefits, to be able to "settle properly" and with dignity, as UNHCR prescribes (UNHCR 2000). The resettlement "system" is taking advantage of the marginalized positionality of a particular understanding of being old in the US and contributing to vulnerabilities in naturalization and integration processes.

A lack of attention to the problems of applying institutional life course norms as a category for defining research participants can contribute to misunderstandings. It takes for granted the privileges of having access to life course institutions that prepare citizens properly for the labor market and daily life. Such norms assume that people had the opportunities to go school and learned how to read, write, and speak in the language that they would need to work, apply for, and manage government benefits, from navigating phone systems to signing documents. For my participants, these conditions varied on gender, urban/rural contexts, and the resources and livelihoods of family members. Institutions and family generational relations were entangled so that when a parent passed away it affected whether or when children went to school; therefore, it is important to understand how families mediate the organization of state resources and access to life course institutions.

Based on my findings, women in general and men that came from families who were poor were less likely to have access to education and be literate in their native languages. My research participants who knew English or had some exposure to it before coming to the US also seemed to be the ones that ultimately learned more English, naturalized, or became more adept at managing bureaucratic processes. Extended periods of time in refugee camps created a problem in terms of accumulating wealth, and even refugees from Iraq who appeared to have some resources watched them get used up while waiting for resettlement.

The composition of households affected my refugee participants' circumstances prior to and upon entering the US, from access to education to being able to pool different resources in resettlement. Placing the burden on families to buffer the negative consequences of insufficient resettlement and welfare programs creates hidden strains and inequalities when they do not match up to idealized multigenerational norms. For example, adult children that were disabled or unable to reunite with their parents under family reunification policy definitions could not be relied upon as a source of assistance. Refugees escape violent situations that often claim the lives of loved ones. It seems that if the family is to be given such an important role in filling gaps in the resettlement "system" than greater care must be placed on ensuring such a capacity is actually there.

Taking a relational, contextual approach to age seems complicated, but it is grounded in very tangible, visible pieces, such as household composition and divisions of labor, work and education histories. It means attending to class and gender in education and work histories and understanding, for example, that education does not always occur at "school age" and that skills, like literacy, can be acquired in religious or informal settings.

At the same time, the limited resources and scope of resettlement and related programs contributed a sort of ideal type of functional, multigenerational household. Families mediated the limited resource provisioning of refugee resettlement by repurposing SSI to support larger households. Age relations in family contexts arose from desires to help as well as constraints placed upon them. By looking at age more critically in context, I learned that some of the "senior" men from Iraq, for example, still held a role as breadwinner for their adult children. They used income meant for an individual or married couple to provide for these children.

Refugees also have little to no control over such household configurations because of limitations in how resettlement processes define and acknowledge relatives and enable refugees to be resettled with a social network. Abdul Amin, a Rohingya man from Burma/Myanmar, lived with adopted "family" because his adult children had to apply separately for resettlement. It is true that my participants mostly favored living with family members, but it is also important to note the vulnerabilities created when families do not fit such ideals arising from the constraints of resettlement. Staff at MMS understood the benefits of resettling refugees with people from their social networks, broadly understood, especially given the short timelines to "self-sufficiency." Although it was not a part of the formal structures of resettlement, caseworkers were already negotiating the practical limitations of aged citizenship. Their input, along with that of "older" refugees and their families, would be useful for resettlement policymakers looking to address some of the challenges that I have described.

Unsettling Aging in Migration and Globalization

The origin and circulation of "older" refugees' according to their chronometric ages points to a vast topic of inquiry significant to the politics of migration and access to rights and resources: the legibility of age and aging, the circulation of identification documents, and the cultural translations of bureaucratic categorization processes. My contribution has been to bring attention to the inequalities and politics of an insufficient resettlement "system" by "unsettling" the connection between its narrow parameters and understandings of age. My findings point to migration as a particularly useful topic for understanding the role of age and aging in the governmentality of citizenship.

Anthropologists have sometimes neglected or taken for granted the governmental and structural sides of age. Incorporating an attention to aged citizenship should not be done at the neglect of narratives and lived experiences, but to ignore the politics of age and aging, including the active and reflexive negotiation of paradigms, is also a disservice. Generational and age relations are encounters with processes of globalization and migration (Cole and Durham 2007a), and a focus on youth and a neglect of aging can be part of the enrollment of age in political economy (Ruddick 2003).

One solution is to examine the politics of "boundary-making" in segregating ages and crafting age relations mediated by policies and institutions. Aging identities are part of the negotiation of political-economic changes. To avoid generalizations and reproducing rationalities means attending to their reflexive negotiation in practice through ethnography.

Bureaucratic ages create certainty out of uncertainty, familiarity out of obscurity. Migration challenges the seemingly "ordered" appearance of age and aging in bureaucracy but also serves as a reminder of the contextual, relational or "chorological" (Zhou 2012:241) aspects of age. Age is a medium of communication between bureaucracies, but the movement between them is fraught with uncertainties, contingencies, mistranslations, and potential inequalities.

Aging is always variable and depends on intersections of identity and life condition, and later life policies rely upon assessments of deservingness. Reaching consensus on such criteria on the global or even national level is difficult. In the US, chronometric age and work history serve as a sort of ad hoc solution that, nonetheless, contributes to problems for refugee newcomers and simultaneously erases the significance of their diverse backgrounds and experiences of displacement. I suggest that a better approach would be more holistic, based not on preconceived identities but on the practical and political aspects of aging that affect processes of rebuilding a life with dignity.

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