

CITIZENSHIP, REFUGEES, AND THE STATE:
BOSNIANS, SOUTHERN SUDANESE, AND SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS
IN FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA

by

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This dissertation is a comparative, ethnographic study of Southern Sudanese and Bosnian refugees and social service organizations in Fargo, North Dakota. I examine how refugee resettlement staff, welfare workers, and volunteers attempted to transform refugee clients into “worthy” citizens through neoliberal policies aimed at making them economically self-sufficient and independent from the state. Refugees’ engagement with resettlement and welfare agencies and volunteers depended on their positioning in social hierarchies in their home countries and in the United States. Refugees had widely variable political, educational, cultural, and employment histories, but many had survived war and/or forced migration and had contact with many of the same institutions and employers. Bosnians in Fargo were either white, ethnic Muslims (Bosniaks), or Roma (Gypsies), who had a darker skin color and were stigmatized by Bosniaks. By

interrogating intersections of race, class, gender, and culture, I explain why social service providers and the wider public deemed Bosnian Roma as some of the least “worthy” citizens in Fargo and black, Christian Southern Sudanese as some of the worthiest citizens. In so doing, I highlight the important roles of religion, hard work, education, and civic duty as characteristics of “good” citizens in Fargo. The dissertation is based on a year of ethnographic research in Fargo (2007-08). It also builds on previous research with Roma in Bosnia (1998-2000) and employment with a resettlement agency in South Dakota (2001-2002).

I relate this analysis to anthropological theories of the state with a particular focus on refugee resettlement in the context of the neoliberal welfare state. Following Harrell-Bond’s argument that refugees are often portrayed as mere “recipients of aid,” I argue for a more nuanced understanding of refugees as active citizens in Fargo. I view refugee resettlement organizations, welfare agencies, and volunteers as powerful actors in shaping refugees’ lives, but I also take into account the ways in which refugees in turn shaped these actors. I show how refugee resettlement called into question hegemonic forms of citizenship in the relatively culturally and racially homogenous city of Fargo.

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To the memory of my grandmothers, who instilled in me the Protestant work ethic, but
also empathy, curiosity about the world, and a love of reading and writing

Muriel Hotvet Berkland

1912-1985

and

Inga Swenson Erickson

1913-2001

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION:

CITIZENSHIP, REFUGEES, THE STATE, AND FARGO

This popular image (Figure 1) in Fargo plays with the idea of Fargo as a global city. For anyone who has been to Fargo, or seen Joel and Ethan Cohen's satirical 1996

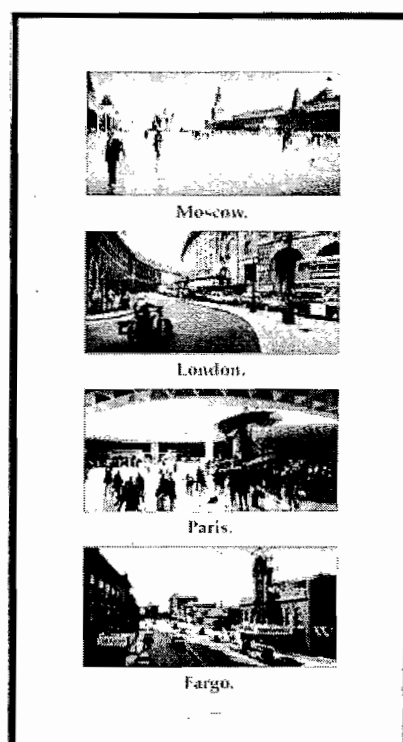


Figure 1: Fargo poster

film named after the city, the notion of Fargo as a global city is ironic, if not absurd. When most people think about globalization, cultural diversity, refugee resettlement, or even anthropology, Fargo probably does not come to mind. Images of North Dakota's frozen winter tundra or miles of prairie farmland are more prevalent in the popular cultural imaginary about Fargo than images of cultural and racial diversity.¹

In terms of its placement in world financial networks, Fargo is not a global city. However, this dissertation seeks to demonstrate that Fargo has much to offer in terms of understanding social citizenship in an international, multicultural context. Just as Fargo served as an important lens for the national abortion debate (Ginsburg 1989), Fargo can help us to understand how relationships between and among refugees and social services providers shape social hierarchies that reward some citizens more than others. In Fargo, these social hierarchies were formed on the basis of race, ethnicity, class, gender, and culture. In a period of ever-intense debates about immigration and the "real America," this dissertation provides a timely and relevant opportunity to better understand citizenship because refugees – despite their status as legal residents – were often treated as "illegal." In formal and informal arenas, refugees were often denied benefits conferred upon "worthy" citizens, such as respect, recognition of their myriad of abilities, and acknowledgment of their rights to state and private recourses.

¹ For example, in 2008, countless letters to the editor in local papers around North Dakota responded to a National Geographic article that featured photos by Eugene Richards of North Dakota's disappearing rural "ghost towns" and "emptied prairies" (Bowden 2008). The narrow perspective and the omission of North Dakota's growing economy, urban centers, or the oil boom in the west outraged readers. The article caused such a controversy that in January 2008, ABC news made "the entire population of the state" of North Dakota its "person of the week" (Gibson 2008).

In this chapter, I explain that Fargo was more than the setting of the research; it was also an actor in the project. First, I provide a theoretical framework for understanding refugee resettlement, the welfare state, and citizenship in a neoliberal era. I argue that the state must be viewed as a product of culture and that cultural narratives about citizenship must be viewed as a product of the state. Culture must also be viewed alongside race, class, and gender when examining the social hierarchies that inform hierarchies of “worthy” citizenship. After presenting an overview of refugee resettlement to the United States, I describe a brief history of resettlement to Fargo focusing on the 1990s. During this time, public tensions surfaced as a human rights perspective conflicted with a racist, xenophobic understanding of refugee resettlement. Refugee resettlement called into question hegemonic forms of citizenship in the relatively culturally and racially homogenous Fargo. The Protestant work ethic, the weather, and differing ideas about friendliness played an important role in these debates. Finally, I offer an outline of the rest of the dissertation.

Citizenship, Refugees, and the State

Citizenship refers to political, economic, civic, and social rights and duties of individuals in a community or nation–state. At its core, citizenship is about belonging. Belonging to a community or nation–state is contingent upon a variety of ideas and categories involving race, ethnicity, class, gender, age, ability, and religion (e.g. Hall and Held 1990; Yuval-Davis 2004, 2006; Ong 1999). Refugees represent some of the most violent consequences of competing ideas about who belongs to a nation–state and who

does not. Malkki (1995:5) asserts that refugees are “matter of out of place” in “a national order of things.”

The role of the state is crucial in defining “a national order of things” and thus in shaping refugee resettlement to the United States. Sharma and Gupta argue, “While theories of nationalism wrestle with questions of cultural difference, theories of the state are largely silent on these questions. States are seen as being devoid of culture” (2006:7). In this dissertation, I provide evidence that the state is not devoid of culture; rather, culture is embodied in state policies and in the practices of its employees.² On an international level, the state decides who is categorized as a refugee, from which countries, and how many are allowed to enter the U.S. during any given year. On a national level, the state allocates funds to refugee resettlement and welfare agencies, both of which have a strong influence on refugees. On a local level, workers carry out the everyday tasks and cultural manifestations of the state. Sharma and Gupta explain that

We can begin to conceptualize ‘the state’ *within* (and not automatically distinct from) other institutional forms through which social relations are lived, such as family, civil society, and the economy... The problem becomes one of figuring out how ‘the state’ *comes to assume* its vertical position as the supreme authority that manages all other institutional forms that social relations take (2006:9).

Following Sharma and Gupta (2006), this dissertation interrogates how refugee resettlement staff, welfare workers, and volunteers embody the state and what this tells us about the relationship between the state, citizenship, and refugees (see also Hansen and Stepputat 2001, 2006). It also examines what these institutional relationships can tell us

² Following Sharma and Gupta (2006:11), I define ‘the state’ as an institution that is “substantiated in people’s lives through the apparently banal practices of bureaucracies... [and] profoundly shaped through the *routine* and *repetitive* procedures of bureaucracies.”

about the intersections of race, class, gender, and culture. This dissertation goes beyond studies of refugees and immigrants that tend to focus on how migrants' lives change as a result of war and displacement, but do not pay enough attention to how dominant groups respond to refugees. I demonstrate some of the ways in which refugees responded to but also transformed Fargo institutions. Many important studies on refugees also tend to describe dominant (white) cultures in monolithic ways (e.g. Flores and Benmayor 1997; Ong 2003; Rosaldo 1994). This dissertation expands important studies on refugees by interrogating nuances in refugee communities and in dominant (white) communities.

Neoliberalism as an economic philosophy became dominant in the 1970s and 1980s. It is anchored in competitive market logic that calls for a downsizing of the state in favor of free market logic and individual initiative, which it is assumed, will create a leaner and more efficient state (Ferguson and Gupta 2002; Harvey 2005). Processes of neoliberalism, or privatization, aim to shrink the role of federal government and shift state services to local governmental and nonstate actors. British sociologist T.H. Marshall (1950) argued that social citizenship necessitated a strong welfare state to act as a safety net in a society that advocated for full equality among its members, but also promoted capitalism, an inherently unequal economic system. Under neoliberalism, social citizenship has come to be thought of as the responsibility of individuals to reduce their burden on society, especially on the state (e.g. Ong 1996, 2003).

In the arena of welfare, neoliberal states alter public-private partnerships by increasing the role of private sector organizations in carrying out, or compensating for, diminished state services (Cohen 2003; Goode and Maskovsky et al 2001; Jessop 1999;

Kingfisher 2002; McClusky 2003; Morgen 2001; Morgen and Gonzales 2008; Morgen and Maskovsky 2003; Piven and Cloward 1993; Shields 2004). Neoliberal policies have affected refugee resettlement by transforming the role of resettlement agencies from private, church-based programs to bureaucratic institutions that are funded by the state and partner with other state and nonprofit organizations.

In this dissertation, I explain the role of public and private human services agencies in promoting and inhibiting hegemonic understandings of social citizenship. I address the ways in which different state and private institutions and Bosnian and Sudanese refugees perpetuate, resist, and accommodate the main goal of making clients economically self-sufficient. I also argue that relationships between and among social services and refugees can serve as a lens to examine how political economy, culture, and identity intersect to influence ideas about who is viewed as a “worthy” citizen, entitled to certain resources and rights (e.g. housing, education, employment, welfare, political clout, and respect).

I chose to work with Sudanese and Bosnians because, in addition to sharing challenges of migration, they survived comparable forms of violence, persecution, and forced migration such as ethnic cleansing, concentration camps, gendered forms of violence (e.g. forced military conscription, rape), and discrimination based on religion, race, political affiliation, and/or gender. In the U.S. they encountered new forms of discrimination and new opportunities. They also differed in key ways: the Bosnians I worked with were Muslim and the Southern Sudanese were Christian. Both groups comprised a variety of racialized ethnicities: “Bosnians” could be Serb, Croat, ethnic Muslim, and/or Roma (Gypsies), who tended to have a darker skin color, and were often

stigmatized and discriminated against by ethnic, white Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks).

Southern Sudanese were black and distinguished among themselves by tribe, region, age, language, and kinship. Though they had widely variable educational and employment histories, both groups had contact with many of the same institutions in Fargo.

History and Cultural Landscape of Refugee Resettlement to Fargo

The UN established the first definition of “refugee” in 1951 to accommodate the needs of displaced European survivors of the Second World War. Before 1951, people fleeing political situations were considered to be in “exile.” In 1967, the definition of a refugee was expanded to include more people fleeing persecution, including those in postcolonial countries, but remains Eurocentric and patriarchal because gender is not listed as a criterion for which an individual could be persecuted. A refugee is defined as

a person who is outside his or her home country, or if he or she has no home country, then outside of the country in which he or she last habitually resided, and who is unable or unwilling to return to his or her country of nationality because of persecution or well-founded fear of persecution based on the person’s race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion (UNHCR 1967:16–18).

Before the Second World War, the U.S. government had no formal domestic policy regarding refugees; refugees and immigrants found assistance through religious and ethnic organizations.³ After the Second World War, following the admission of over

³ For example, in 1870, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid and Sheltering Society of New York assisted Jewish immigrants and, later, Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany. In the 1920s, the American Council for Nationalities Service began assisting refugees and immigrants at Ellis Island and on the U.S./Mexico border. In 1932, the International Rescue Committee began assisting with Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany. In 1934, Protestant churches created the American Committee for Christian German Refugees for Protestants fleeing Nazi Germany. The National Catholic Welfare Conference established the Catholic Committee for Refugee Victims of Nazis in 1936 and later, Polish and Czech organizations were also founded (Wright 1981:158-9).

250,000 displaced Europeans, Congress enacted the Displaced Persons Act of 1948, the first refugee legislation. This legislation provided for the admission of an additional 400,000 displaced Europeans. Demonstrating the role that global social and economic politics played in defining and resettling refugees, U.S. resettlement practices in the 1950s and 1960s admitted persons fleeing Communist regimes (Hungary, Poland, Yugoslavia, Korea, China, and Cuba). Most of these waves of refugees continued to be assisted by private ethnic and religious organizations, which formed the basis for the public/private role of contemporary U.S. refugee resettlement (Wright 1981).⁴

In 1946, churches in North Dakota began to accept mostly Protestant German refugees fleeing the Nazi regime. From 1946 until the 1990s, churches resettled refugees on a case-by-case basis. Table 1 demonstrates that most of these refugees came from Southeast Asia and Eastern Europe with a few families from Africa and the Middle East. In 1980, President Carter passed the Refugee Act of 1980, which incorporated the UN definition of refugee and standardized resettlement services for refugees admitted to the U.S. The Refugee Act of 1980 required annual consultations by the Administration with Congress to determine refugee admission numbers for the fiscal year (October 1 to September 30). Representatives of the Executive branch, state and local officials, and

⁴ In the 1970s, the U.S. resettled hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese, Laotian, and Cambodian refugees, as well as refugees from the former Soviet Union such as Ukrainians and Russians. Most of these Asian refugees comprised upper and middle class families of fallen regimes in Southeast Asia who assisted the U.S. government in Vietnam. These groups became economically self-sufficient rather quickly. After receiving assistance to find homes and jobs, some supportive social services, and English language training, few of these refugees applied for public assistance (Wright 1981). By contrast, due to more pronounced cultural and class differences, lack of formal education in home countries and employable skills in the U.S., later waves of Hmong, Cambodians, and Laotians posed new challenges to resettlement (e.g. Fadiman 1998).

NGOs testify in front of each house of Congress and then the State Department proposes the nationalities and groups to be identified for resettlement. The President determines the admission ceilings for the coming year. In the 1980s and 1990s, the U.S. accepted about 100,000 refugees per year.

Table 1: Refugees Entering North Dakota 1982-1993*

Region of Origin	1982-85	1986-89	1990	1991	1992	1993	Totals
Africa	45	7	29	10	16	38	145
Asia/Pacific Islands	1	6					7
Southeast Asia	353	174	175	142	171	124	1,139
Western Europe	1	11	1				13
Eastern Europe	277	102	6	7	2	40	434
USSR (former)	0	47	9	54	147	41	298
Middle East	12	10	6	58	235	112	519
Latin America/ Caribbean	10				1	10	21
Unknown	10						10
Totals	709	357	226	271	572	365	2,500

*Source: North Dakota Department of Health, Bismarck, ND (cited in Slobin and Klenow 1994)

The Refugee Act of 1980 also served to diminish the role that formal politics played in admitting refugees, especially those politics that discriminated against humanitarian aspects of refugee resettlement in favor of “the ideological and geographical bias which characterized previous American law and conform[ed] closely to international standards” (Loescher and Scanlan 1986:155). Nevertheless, domestic politics, in conjunction with political biases, continued to influence refugee policy. The U.S. continues to admit more refugees from former communist countries and from countries linked to domestic and international priorities, in other words, refugees who

“vote with their feet” against what the U.S. deems repressive regimes (Loescher and Scanlan 1986).

Refugee resettlement comprises multilateral relationships between states, faith-based organizations, and local, national, and international NGOs as well as local and regional actors such as employers. On a global level, refugee resettlement to the U.S. involves close cooperation between the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) under the Office of the Under Secretary for Democracy and Global Affairs in the State Department, UNHCR, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Middle East (UNRWA). Roughly 90 percent of the Bureau of PRM funds go to these organizations, which assist with arranging admission to the U.S. and overseas processing. The Department of Homeland Security and Department of Justice also assist with adjudication and security services. The State Department processes applications for refugee status and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) provides refugees with an interest-free travel loan for the transportation cost to the U.S.⁵ Before traveling to the U.S., refugees must sign a promissory note to repay it. In other words, refugees arrive in the U.S. already in debt. After about three months arrival, they begin to receive monthly IOM bills, which they must begin to repay immediately. If they are unable to begin the payment schedule, they

⁵ Refugees come to the U.S. through a variety of methods. These “priority categories” include the following: 1) referral by UNHCR, an NGO, or by a U.S. embassy (Priority-1 or P-1), 2) being eligible under a U.S. group definition (P-2 category), or 3) family reunion (P-3 category). A relative in the U.S. must initiate a family reunification case by filing an Affidavit of Relationship with a resettlement agency. Procedures for applying as a member of a P-2 category vary according to the particular group being defined (e.g. Russian Jews or Lost Boys from Sudan).

are responsible for contacting IOM. Failure to comply with the established payment schedule can result in legal action.

The Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) works in partnership with the above organizations, but its core mandate is to serve refugees once they arrive in the U.S. Under the Department of Health and Human Services and the Administration for Children and Families and based on employment opportunities and community involvement and support, ORR determines where in the U.S. refugees will be placed. On a national level, ORR partners with state refugee coordinators, state refugee offices, and with the nongovernmental agencies involved in the U.S. refugee resettlement program, known as Voluntary Agencies, or VOLAGS. About half of these VOLAGS are religious or community-based organizations that include resettling refugees as part of their core mandate. Others are state-based (Iowa) or related to ethnicity (Hebrew Aid Society, Ethiopian Community Development Center).⁶ The Department of State and the Department of Health and Human Services fund VOLAGS through federal programs like the Reception and Placement Grant. The distribution of funds is contingent upon the number of refugees supported by the VOLAGS during a given time period.

In 2007, New American Services, the refugee resettlement program in Fargo, was one of dozens of programs under the umbrella of Lutheran Social Services (LSS) of North Dakota. Centering on its mission of “healing, help, and hope,” LSS had other

⁶ The most active VOLAGs include: the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), International Rescue Committee (IRC), World Relief Corporation, Immigrant and Refugee Services of America (IRSA), Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), Church World Service (CWS), Episcopal Migration Ministry (EMM), Ethiopian Community Development Center (ECDC), and the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), and the State of Iowa, Bureau of Refugees Services (ORR 2006).

programs that included services for adoption, youth, disaster relief, poverty, rural communities, and addiction problems. North Dakota's Department of Health and Human Services funds New American Services, but LSS also receives funds from local and national grants and in-kind donations. The two VOLAGS that monitored LSS New American Services in Fargo were Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services and Episcopal Migration Ministries. Along with the state refugee coordinator, who is employed by the state of North Dakota, VOLAGS are responsible for resettlement in the U.S. I use "New American Services" and LSS interchangeably because, despite its other programs, in Fargo "LSS" was synonymous with its refugee program.

The Perfect Storm: Resettlement to Fargo from the 1990s until September 11, 2001

From 1983 to 2004, ORR resettled a majority (72 percent) of refugees to about 30 urban, metropolitan areas with large foreign-born populations.⁷ While the overall number of refugees resettled were smaller, those refugees in smaller cities – like Fargo, North Dakota, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and Des Moines, Iowa – had a larger impact on the more homogenous local populations (Singer and Wilson 2006). In June 2008, I asked Bob Sanderson, President of LSS since 2006, whether he thought attitudes towards resettlement to Fargo had changed since the 1990s and early 2000s. He said,

There were about 750-800 refugees a year coming to Fargo. And the majority of them... were staying in Fargo. So you take that for a number of years, in a community this size, you are going to see it, I mean you are going to feel it, you are going to understand it's happening. And some tensions and stresses had built around it... I am sure it had something to do with culture... but also I don't think the schools had been ready to get up to speed as fast as they would have liked... Then there has always been this kind of myth that New Americans come in here

⁷ Major cities included Los Angeles, San Jose, Sacramento, New York, Chicago, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Seattle, Atlanta, and Washington, D.C.

and just live off our government and it's not true. And you can educate and educate and educate until you turn blue in the face and still there are still certain people that are going to believe it.

According to the U.S. 2000 Census, the foreign-born population of Fargo was four percent of the total population, and of this, refugees comprised 76 percent. During the same time period, Fargo was ranked fourth in the nation for total number of refugees resettled per capita (around six percent of the total population) and it was during this period when resettlement began to noticeably change Fargo. Table 2 demonstrates the diversity and numbers to Fargo from 1997-2005.

Unlike previous waves of refugee resettlement, several key changes in resettlement on the national and local level in the 1990s noticeably affected Fargo. Several factors came into play that made a “perfect storm” of refugee resettlement to Fargo all the more contentious and challenging for all actors involved.⁸ First, in the 1990s, nationwide refugee resettlement shifted from the earlier model of church-based volunteer sponsorship to an agency-sponsored institution that employed case managers and employment staff (chapter 4), yet remained partially dependent on volunteers (chapter 5). Second, LSS resettled more refugees to Fargo than ever before: it was the fourth largest resettlement site in the nation for refugees per capita in 2000. Third, refugees began settling in the Fargo region rather than migrating out as previous waves of refugees had done. Fourth, in 1996, Congress passed welfare reform, which significantly impacted refugee resettlement (chapter 5).

⁸ I borrow the term “perfect storm” from the novel by Sebastian Junger (1997).

Table 2: Number of Refugees Resettled to Fargo 1997-2005*

Country of Origin	1994-96	1997-2000	2001-04	2005-09	Total
Afghanistan		14	7	3	24
Albania		110	1		111
Ameriasian		3			3
Armenia	53	9			62
Bosnia-Herzegovina	348	1191	293		1832
Burma				27	27
Burundi		11		155	166
Bhutan				321	321
Cambodia	2				2
Columbia			7	4	11
Congo			5	33	38
Cuba	94	58	7		159
Djibouti		17			17
Ethiopia	1	14	5	4	24
Haiti	94	9			103
Iran	8	22	5	4	39
Iraq	67	32		261	360
Kurdistan	25	208			233
Liberia	4	7	112	121	244
Nigeria, Zaire, Uganda, Togo, Rwanda, Angola. Central African Republic	10	23	8	19	60
Russia	27	10			37
Serbia		26	20		46
Sierra Leone		5	19	4	28
Somalia	132	196	86	417	831
Soviet Union		7			7
Sri Lanka		3			3
Sudan	100	240	155	71	566
Turkey		14		6	20
Ukraine	4	4	10		18
United Kingdom		13			13
Vietnam	158	33	2		193
Yugoslavia & Croatia	5		10		15
TOTAL	1,132	2,279	752	1,450	5,613

*Figures are courtesy of LSS. The 1994-96 figures are for refugees arriving to the state of North Dakota but fewer than 30 refugees were resettled outside of the city of Fargo. Figures from 1997-2009 are only the number of refugees resettled to Fargo.

Resettlement increased throughout the 1990s, peaking in 2000 with 650 new refugee arrivals.⁹ LSS struggled with institutional changes and local governmental agencies and the wider public responded slowly and often times with hostility. The general attitude was: “refugees weren’t being served, they were being dumped.” LSS argued that resettlement was beneficial for the region in terms of the added supplement to the labor force. LSS also argued that refugees provided knowledge about other cultures in an increasingly interconnected, globalized world. However, LSS did not have the structure, capacity, or institutional confidence to foster the relationships necessary to make resettlement work well. Along with state agencies that were required by law to serve refugee clients, new organizations emerged to address the long list of refugees’ needs. The City of Fargo and Cass County Social Services (CCSS), the welfare agency, supported these organizations in a variety of ways. For example, the City of Fargo funded several of the new organizations and the director of CCSS helped to write the grants and offered her public support of them. These forms of support demonstrated the varied ways in which the neoliberal state provided for refugee resettlement and welfare, while also supporting a critical infrastructure for outsourcing some of its responsibilities.

In 1993, city and county government officials created the Cultural Diversity Resource Center (CDR) to “embrace its increasing ethnic diversity and assist diverse populations in overcoming barriers to community participation.”¹⁰ By 1998, CDR was a city-, grant-, and corporate-funded 501(c)3 organization with three full-time staff, nine

⁹ These numbers are misleadingly small as they do not include secondary migrants, or refugees who were resettled to one city but move to another, usually to join family or in search of employment.

¹⁰ <http://www.culturaldiversityresources.org/history.html>

Board members, and an on-the-job training reception with a mission “to increase the understanding and value of diversity in our communities and to create opportunities by eliminating barriers to community participation” (see footnote 11). The city concurrently developed the Metro Interpreter Resource Center (MIRC) to provide coordinated training and administrative support for the decentralized network of interpreters that operated in the Fargo-Moorhead area. It was a City of Fargo project but housed in the CDR offices.

In March 1994, the Family HealthCare Center opened and became the primary medical facility for newly arrived refugees and other low-income families. In the same year, Charism was founded to address the city’s low-income and poor population, but blossomed to include several programs for underserved youth, including refugee children. In 2000, a working group that would become the People’s Diversity Forum formed “to educate New Americans on the legal system and to provide support on legal issues and concerns.”¹¹ The People’s Diversity Forum and CDR are both operated by New Americans who work closely with city and county government officials, CCSS, the police department, and the judicial system. Founded in 2001, the Giving+Learning Program became another example of a civic organization that emerged to address the needs of what it viewed as an overwhelmed refugee population. The Giving+Learning Program paired refugees mostly with retired volunteers and college students who taught English language skills, which the organization saw as the biggest barrier to full membership in society (see chapter 5).

¹¹ <http://www.peoplesdiversity.org/>

The nonprofit sector proved to be a market for social and real capital. New Americans seeking a profession outside the temporary, entry-level, low-paying, and/or physical labor jobs, who faced discrimination in other business sectors, and/or who had a difficult time accessing higher education degrees, found the nonprofit sector to be more lucrative, generous, and welcoming than other sectors. However, lack of accountability in these programs and blind trust, at least at first, in organizations that claimed to support refugees caused new problems, tensions, and political strife between the public and private sectors. Local nonprofit organizations tended to be competitive, hotly contested organizations that fought over access to local funding sources. When it came to refugees, both public and private organizations juxtaposed their services with those of LSS and in many cases, staff at various organizations attempted to sabotage programs created for refugees by other organizations and agencies.

In the 1990s, the Refugee Impact Committee was loosely formed, led by LSS, and included most of the above actors. Despite regular meetings that attempted to provide information and increase collaboration, tensions between the organizations remained high and their battles frequently spilled out into the local newspaper and into the public (Slobin and Klenow 1994). For example, in 2001, the region's newspaper, the *Forum of Fargo-Moorhead* (hereafter the *Forum*) published a three-day series on refugee resettlement to Fargo that highlighted the tensions between CCSS and LSS as well as public reactions to refugees and immigrants.

Two nationally publicized events in Fargo demonstrated some of the wider public's xenophobic attitudes towards refugees. According to the *Forum* (1995:A1), three

teen-age boys accosted Stephanie Sarabakhsh outside of the Iranian restaurant she owned and managed with her husband and sister-in-law. Stephanie's husband, Mort, and his sister Zhaleh were Iranian-U.S. citizens who had lived in the U.S. for more than 20 years. The boys circled Stephanie's car on bikes and shouted, it was "'her and her kind ruining America'" (*Forum* 1995).

Over the next days and weeks, several incidents followed: a swastika was carved in the restaurant's back door with threats against the family, fake body parts with additional threats were sent to the family, and the restaurant was set on fire. As the restaurant burned around her, police found Zhaleh bound with tape at her ankles and hands with a crude cross resembling a swastika carved in her stomach. After the incident, one thousand people attended a march against racism and xenophobia at North Dakota State University, where Mort Sarabakhsh, Stephanie's husband and Zhaleh's brother, was a professor. On October 25, 1995, Peter Jennings reported the alleged hate crime and subsequent rally on the nationally televised ABC Evening News. Two hundred people attended a follow-up rally. Local banks, churches, and families donated thousands of dollars to rebuild the restaurant. Then, the 38-year-old Zhaleh Sarabakhsh was found guilty of committing the crimes against herself, and was arrested for arson, arson-for-insurance, endangering, and making a false report (e.g. *New York Times* 1995). On June 7, 1996, after several psychiatric evaluations, Sarabakhsh was found to be suffering from psychotic depression and not criminally responsible for these crimes. The Circuit Judge ruled that Sarabakhsh presented a risk of harm to others and ordered that she be

committed to the North Dakota State Hospital for a period not to exceed two years (Arson Case Briefs 1996).

Incidents like these reinforced xenophobic attitudes and mistrust of foreigners but also resulted in increased public support of cultural and racial diversity to the region. For example, on May 19, 2001, a local man and his 20-year-old son severely beat a 21-year-old Sudanese man with a wooden baton. Permanently damaging the victim's vision, the perpetrators were convicted of a hate crime and sentenced to prison (*Forum* 2001).

During this time period, a revolving door of staff at LSS struggled to keep up with the demands of their clients and relied heavily on volunteers to assist them in day-to-day responsibilities. Sometimes with less than 24 hours notice of an impending arrival, in wintertime sub-zero temperatures and bitterly cold winds, staff and volunteers rushed to set up apartments for new arrivals, buy food and toiletries, and pick up the new clients from the airport, in between a daily schedule of shuttling refugee clients to and from appointments, interviews, and meetings. Unlike previous church sponsors, staff was required to document case management and employment services. Often files were not completed. Sometimes staff failed to meet new arrivals at the airport (*Forum* 2001). LSS struggled to find enough donated furniture and clothing for new families, not to mention finding the time to orient refugees. Alma, a ten-year resettlement worker veteran, who had been a caseworker at the time, recalled this chaotic period:

Because we had more than double [the] clients each year than what we are receiving right now, I think that at that time we [we]re only providing for their basic needs... as long as we know they have apartments set up, that's great. And we just didn't have time, that we do have now, or services, to be able to spend more time in one-on-one on clients... And over the last ten years...I had over 12 different supervisors so (laughs)... turnover is always [high]... It's always been a

problem... Everybody has a different style, everybody kind of interprets things differently. So that's been kind of rough...how you have to kinda adjust to the new person... how they interpret policies and procedures.

There were three or four staff members who had worked at LSS for more than five years, but for the most part, case managers and employment specialists lasted no more than one or two years. In ten years, there were more than ten different directors of New American Services. As resettlement to Fargo increased, animosity between LSS and CCSS grew.

Increased resettlement resulted in, among other things, new discussions about what Fraser (1987) calls “‘the politics of needs interpretation’ which involves a series of struggles over the legitimation of ‘competing needs discourses’” (Lister 1998:11). On one side of the debate were zealous, paternalistic advocates for resettlement who believed that refugees needed more mentorship and services; in the middle of the spectrum were those like Kathy, director of CCSS, whose concern was that:

the whole community needs to be involved in the decision-making process regarding how many (new refugee arrivals) to take – if we are all mutually responsible. So I don't like the idea that we have the responsibility with no voice. And you know, after 9/11, when there was a significant decrease in (arrivals), this community can manage that. And the systems are placed to manage that resettlement population. But when we were at 600, we did not have the capacity and... my concern was that we were seeing so many unmet refugee needs during those few years, that it was... wrong.

Kathy's concerns about refugee resettlement had, in part, to do with federal neoliberal policies that aimed to significantly reduce the size and scope of the welfare state.

However, Kathy and other staff at CCSS failed to see that both CCSS and LSS were funded by the same national agency but had very different budgets and access to resources to carry out their mandates. Sharma and Gupta argue that “The boundary between state and non-state realms is thus drawn through the contested cultural practices

of bureaucracies, and people's encounters with, and negotiations of, these practices" (2006:17). Disputes over the responsibilities of LSS and CCSS, thus, had everything to do with the maintenance of state power.

As Figure 2 demonstrates, the Department of Health and Human Services funds both refugee resettlement (LSS) and welfare programs (CCSS) in North Dakota. In short, while neoliberalism may have resulted in a blurred division between public and private on funding and managerial levels, on the everyday level, differences between CCSS and LSS remained in terms of benefits, services, resources, salaries, and funding strategies.

The purpose of refugee resettlement is "to provide for the effective resettlement of refugees and to assist them to achieve economic self-sufficiency as quickly as possible" (Refugee Act of 1980). Self-sufficiency "means earning a total family income unit to support itself without receipt of a cash assistance grant" (ORR 2009). The federal Self-Sufficiency Standard determines the amount of monthly cash assistance by calculating how much income families need to meet their basic costs without public or private assistance. It is a basic budget that includes costs faced by working families such as food, shelter and utilities, childcare, healthcare, transportation, taxes, clothing, personal needs (combs, toothbrushes, razor blades, sanitary supplies), and household supplies (utensils, laundry, bedding, towels). The national welfare cash assistance program of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) has comparable self-sufficiency standards.

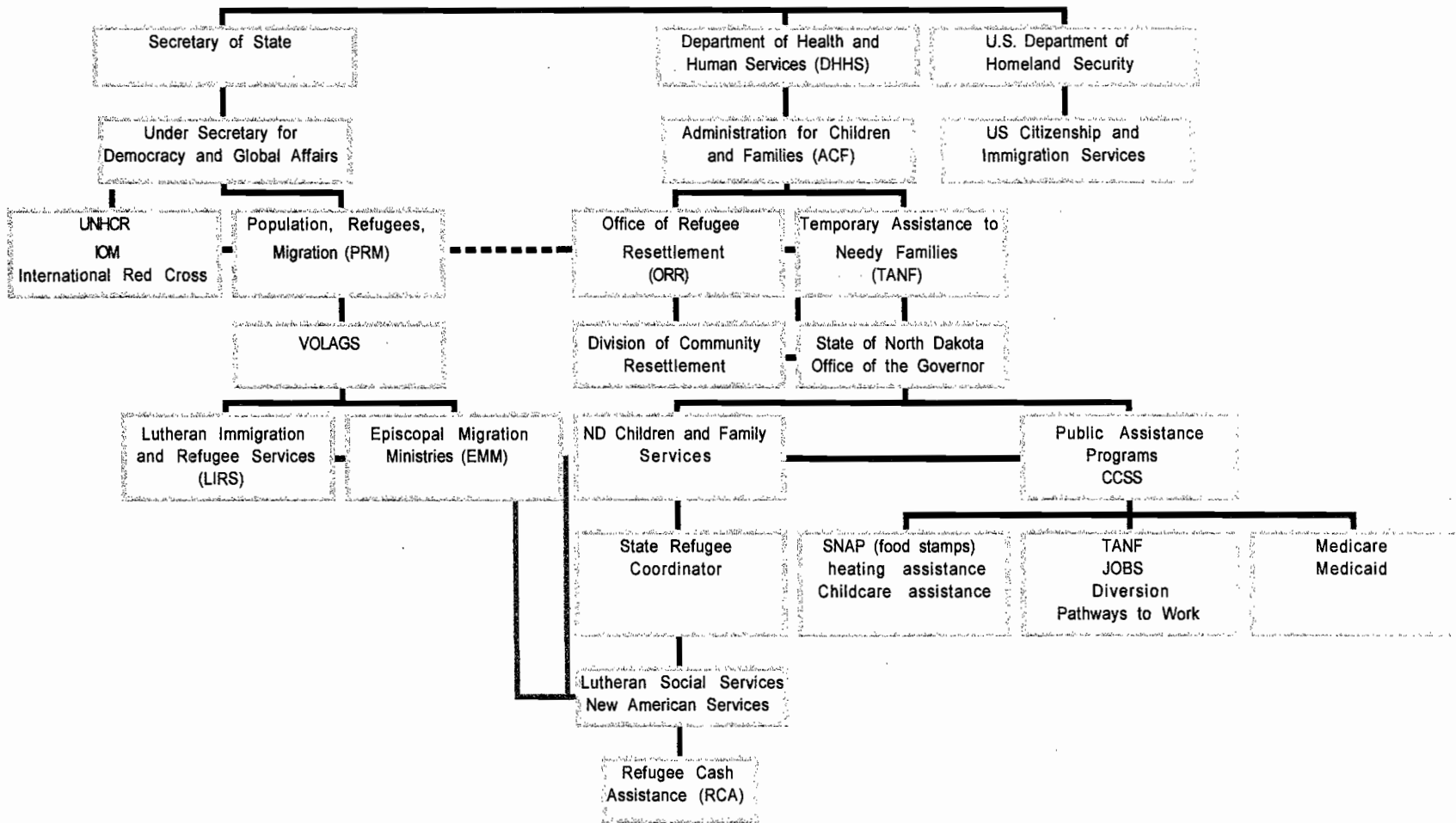


Figure 2: Organizational Chart for Refugee Resettlement and Welfare to North Dakota

Both LSS and CCSS sought to assist clients in becoming economically self-sufficient but the means of achieving this differed widely between and among the staff of the two agencies, and was influenced by the race, class, gender, and culture of both clients and staff, (see chapters 3 and 4). Even after the refugee resettlement boom of the 1990s, tensions between these two organizations remained, but the sudden drop in refugee admissions to the U.S. in 2001 helped to ease some of the tension.

After September 11, 2001, the largest drop, proportionally, in any category of admission to the U.S. was in refugee resettlement (see Table 3). In 2001, the U.S. resettled almost 90,000 refugees. In 2002, it resettled half that number. The significant drop in admission numbers outraged advocates of resettlement. However, the dramatic decrease in new arrivals allowed LSS to recoup and reevaluate its program and began to address its hostile relationships with other agencies and organizations in the region. The drop in refugee resettlement as a result of 9/11 demonstrated some of the most extreme ways in which state power was exerted. While the state's role in refugee resettlement is

Table 3: Total Refugees admitted to the United States 2000-2008*

Fiscal Year	Number of Refugees Admitted
2000	94,222
2001	87,104
2002	45,793
2003	39,201
2004	73,851
2005	53,738
2006	41,053
2007	48,281
2008	60,193

*Table courtesy of ORR (2008).

key to this project, cultural practices outside of the state were also crucial in affecting resettlement practices on an everyday level. In the next section, I outline some of these cultural characteristics through a discussion of Fargo as an actor in the research rather than simply the setting.

Fargo: Both a Setting and an Actor in the Research

Fargo is located on a vast prairie and at the intersection of Interstates 90 and 29 (see Figure 3). According to its Chamber of Commerce, Fargo and its sister city, Moorhead, Minnesota, was one of the least expensive, cleanest, and safest places to live in the U.S. The March 2008 unemployment rate of Fargo-Moorhead was 3.3 percent, compared to the national rate of 5.2 percent. During the economic recession of 2009-2010, North Dakota had the lowest unemployment rate in the country. According to the U.S. Census Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, in 2008, North Dakota's poverty rate was 11.5 percent compared to the national average of 13.2 percent.¹² Most refugees, social services providers, volunteers, and friends, whom I met in Fargo, mentioned safety, low crime, and job availability as the most important and valued aspects of Fargo.

The 2006 U.S. Census Bureau estimated Fargo's population to be about 90,600 residents. Compared with the national percentage (75 percent), 94 percent of Fargo's residents identified as white. Nearly 80 percent identified their ethnicity as German and/or Scandinavian. Fargo had about 90 churches, half of which were Lutheran. According to the U.S. 2000 Census, the foreign-born population of Fargo was 3,572, or

¹² See <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/poverty.html>. These figures are misleading because, due to the small population base of North Dakota, a small sample size was used to calculate these figures, which increases the margin of error. Also, a disproportionate number of Native Americans, especially those living in Sioux, Benson, and Rolette counties reported up to 25 percent of families living in poverty.

four percent of the total population, and of these, refugees comprised 76 percent of the foreign-born population. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Fargo was ranked fourth in the nation for total number of refugees resettled per capita, and comprised about six percent of the population.

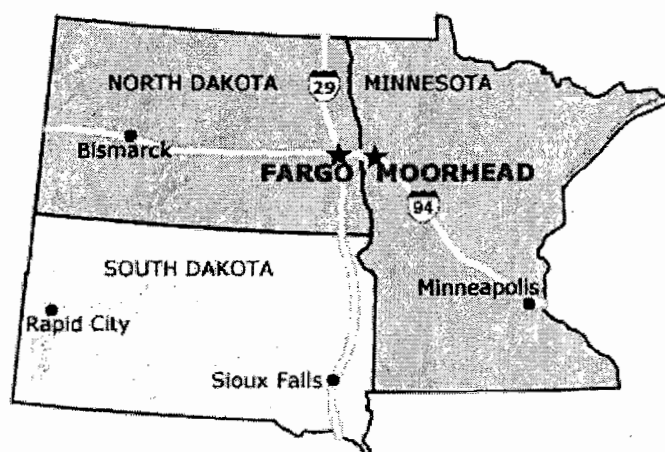


Figure 3: Research area*

*http://www.bigironfarmshow.com/images/map_of_tristate_area.jpg

Fargo was more than the “setting” of the research. Fargo was an actor in the research: its culture, demographics, and personality shaped the experiences of social service providers and of refugees, and in turn, refugees shaped the characteristics of social service providers and of the city. In addition to the racial, religious, and socioeconomic demographics of Fargo, several key features shaped the culture of Fargo: weather, friendliness, and the Protestant work ethic. In addition to safety and jobs, these three characteristics were often linked as key features of Fargo culture. For example,

when I asked Susan, a white woman in her mid-fifties, who was a caseworker for the state of North Dakota Job Services, about her favorite aspects of the region, she said,

I just think the Midwest is so friendly... And they have a good work ethic. I like the four seasons. I think I'd miss that even though I hate winters, I still would miss the four seasons, but I think it's to our benefit. This is gonna sound terrible but I think it keeps a lot of the riffraff out, when we have the winters and the four seasons.

Especially during the winter, but all year round, weather emerged as a daily topic of discussion. Store clerks, caseworkers, neighbors, teachers, family members, refugees, and random strangers commented about the weather. It was by far the most ubiquitous topic of conversation.¹³

The weather in North Dakota was so extreme that cultural orientations for new refugees (see chapter 3) featured a local meteorologist. He talked about blizzards, tornados, and thunderstorms, and actually demonstrated how to dress properly in winter months. The ability to weather a storm in Fargo was an important to citizenship because it contributed to the maintenance of a community spirit against the harsh elements of nature. Contrasting the questionable and negative 2005 media coverage of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, Fargo made national headlines in 2009 and 2010 for its ability to work together to fight impending spring floods (e.g. Scott 2010). This community spirit expressed ideas surrounding friendliness, helping one's neighbor, the Protestant work ethic, and race. Hard-working, friendly, civically engaged, economically self-sufficient, Christian white people were the prototype for "good" citizens in Fargo.

¹³ In an average year, Fargo receives 42 inches of snow and temperatures range from the mean of six degrees in January to 71 degrees in July.

Janteloven: The Role of Friendliness in Fargo

In 1933, Aksel Sandemose, a Danish/Norwegian writer, coined the term *Janteloven* (the laws of Jante) in his novel *En flyktning krysser sitt spor* (A Refugee Crosses His Tracks). The laws are part of a wider critique of Scandinavian society, or more specifically of the fictional Danish town of Jante. The laws are:

1. You shall not think that you are something.
2. You shall not think that you are as much as us.
3. You shall not think that you are wiser than us.
4. You shall not imagine that you are better than us.
5. You shall not think that you know more than us.
6. You shall not think that you are better than us.
7. You shall not think that you are good at anything.
8. You shall not laugh at us.
9. You shall not think that anyone cares about you.
10. You shall not think that you can teach us anything.

The laws allude to a Scandinavian attitude that emphasizes modesty, not drawing attention to oneself, and not rocking the proverbial boat. The rules aim to hold everyone to a modest average. The logic behind the rules results in individuals who are rewarded for thinking: “It’s no big deal, anyone can do it, probably better than me.” It also diminishes social hierarchies and encourages individuals in various social circles to interact with one another freely and openly because no one is considered better than anyone else. The laws, then, are mechanisms for fostering and maintaining social equity.

I argue that *Janteloven* was a concept that can apply to North Dakota. They constitute what has come to be understood in U.S. popular culture as “Minnesota nice,” or alternatively “Midwest nice.” The tension between “fake” and “real” forms of niceness stem from a Scandinavian cultural influence that has to do with modesty, friendliness, hospitality, and hard work. When asked why she liked the region, one elderly white

female volunteer, told me, “Well, *I* would say... the people are friendly here. They’re hardworking. I think they really have a work ethic... For the most part North Dakota is kind of a safe place and we don’t have perfect weather but we don’t have hurricanes.” In short, safety, friendliness, the ability to proudly withstand the weather, and above all, hard work describes the culture of Fargo. In this dissertation, I demonstrate how social service institutions and volunteers promote these cultural values and those refugees who do not demonstrate a willingness to follow those values are deemed less worthy citizens.

Some refugees found Fargo to be as “friendly” and welcoming as Fargoans did, but others found their reception as refugees to be cold. Many Bosnians told me that they found Fargoans to be “fake nice.” Aida, a Bosnian woman in her forties with two teenage children, was pleased with many aspects of her life in Fargo. She had a relatively successful business and she had even taken an American friend to visit Bosnia. In general, though, Aida found people in Fargo to be mean. I told her that people in the upper Midwest had a reputation for being nice when compared to other American regions. Aida was surprised because she found Fargoans to be “close-minded.” She said they knew little about the rest of the world, hardly traveled outside the region, and they did not like strangers, not even other Americans who moved to North Dakota from other parts of the United States.

Many Bosnians told me they did not particularly like Fargo, but they did not know where else to go. Dženana, a married Bosnian woman in her forties and mother of two teenage sons, and Dara, a Kurdish man from Iraq, both told me that it was difficult for refugees in Fargo because there was no center of town to meet people, walk, talk, and

just relax. Most refugees came from cultures in which there was a city center that served as a gathering spot. Dara said the lack of communal space in Fargo contributed to refugees' feelings of unwelcome. In contrast, Roy, a white man from North Dakota, said,

I'm convinced it doesn't really matter where you come from, anywhere in the world. People are basically the same. And [if] you start from there, it's easy [to communicate with people from other cultures]. I think it's easy if you're friendly, and open, and honest with people, establish a relationship with them, [you can relate to] just about anybody from anywhere if you're willing to do that.

Roy told me often how much he enjoyed learning about other cultures and his job working with refugees at LSS, but he took friendliness to be a cultural universal. Many refugees had to remain "open" to strangers in order to survive, but, by virtue of being refugees and having survived various forms of violence, they also had good reason to be suspicious of outsiders. The xenophobia I encountered among many people in Fargo was not based on negative experiences with outsiders, but on a relatively baseless, or in some cases racist, forms of xenophobia.

Some people in Fargo acknowledged a "stand-offish" kind of attitude, until you got to know them. Dot, a caseworker at CCSS, explained this when I asked her to define German/Scandinavian immigrant culture in Fargo:

Well I think for the most part, probably hard working. And they're [a] very, take-care-of-yourself kind of culture. Not very... open at first, you know probably reserved and kind of stand-offish. And you might think people are kind of snobbish, but I tell you what, if you're in trouble, they're the first ones to give you the shirt off their back. I mean I see that time and time again here. That people are very, very generous. So I think that you know we might get a bad rap too... but I think that... folks... [are] maybe a little more reserved until you get to know them, and then you're their friend for life...

Dot also mentions a "take-care-of-yourself kind of culture," which I interpret as being economically self-sufficient from the state as well as hard working. For years, Dot and

her husband struggled financially, but she proudly explained that she never turned to the state for assistance; instead, they worked hard and lived simply

The Protestant Work Ethic

[The work ethic is] a strong part of our culture... We do compare favorably nationally with our work ethic here... We don't have a magic formula for it, but...people here grow up knowing how to work, wanting to work, willing to work. Maybe not true in other parts of the country... We're pretty darn lucky that it is true here. And I think it's a good match between our dominant original culture and our enhanced culture through diversity (e.g. refugees).

David Martin,
President of the Fargo-Moorhead Chamber of Commerce

Crucial to understanding Fargo culture is understanding social theorist Max Weber's Protestant work ethic. He shows how capitalism and some sects of Protestantism (Lutheran, Calvin, Pietist, Baptist, and Methodist) merged to create the attitude that, "God helps those who help themselves... Not leisure and enjoyment, but only activity serves to increase the glory of God... Waste of time is thus the first and in principle the deadliest of sins" (Weber 1958:115, 157). People in Fargo strongly believed in value of hard work. I met many people who had a very difficult time participating in leisure activities without feeling guilty (see chapters 4 and 5). While they usually did not link the value of hard work to Christianity, or even capitalism, people in Fargo provided ample evidence to support Weber's claim that, under advanced capitalism, labor became more than an economic means; it became a spiritual and moral end.

In Fargo, the Protestant work ethic was an economic philosophy and a moral imperative. Courtney, a white woman in her early twenties who worked at LSS, provided a good example of how resettlement and state employees conceived of the Protestant

work ethic, but also how clients might experience bureaucratic practices that aimed to make them economically self-sufficient but also “hard working.” Courtney told me that her parents moved back to Fargo from Colorado because the work ethic was stronger in North Dakota. She also said,

I worked when I was 12 and had my first real job when I was 13 and I've always worked and when I see [refugee] clients who are like 19, and... [they ask], 'How can I work?' and I'm like, 'Well, I worked at 13!' I had four jobs in college. I worked 60 plus hours... but somebody who's never had to work... who's never had the importance of *why* to work... I mean, that's more of my background.

By “work,” Courtney, and most Americans, meant waged-labor in an advanced capitalist society, not countless unpaid skills (see also chapter 5). I met refugee parents who did not want their children to join the workforce too soon. For example, in 2000, I was having dinner at a Bosnian friend's house in Sioux Falls. Duška explained a recent fight she had had with her teenage daughter: Nataša wanted to get a part-time job like her American friends had. Duška did not want Nataša to work because Nataša would have her entire life to work, to be stressed out, to make money, and she wanted her daughter to enjoy her childhood while she still could.

The Protestant work ethic was a historical evaluation of a cultural response to capitalism and Christianity that refugees had to learn in order to be considered “worthy” citizens. Everyday conversations in Fargo revolved around hard work and faith in God but the two were not usually discussed together because of their long-shared history. Weber explains, “The Puritan wanted to work in a calling; we are forced to do so” (1958:181). The Protestant work ethic began as a religious exercise or calling to renounce

worldly goods in order to achieve a higher spiritual state, but transformed into when mass groups of people joined an increasingly secular paid labor force.

Those refugees who came to the U.S. with prior knowledge of Christianity (e.g. Sudanese) were deemed to be worthier citizens not only because of their spiritual beliefs, but also because they were better equipped to understand the Protestant work ethic. Weber explains, “National or religious minorities which are in a position of subordination to a group of rulers are likely, through their voluntary or involuntary exclusion from positions of political influence, to be driven with peculiar force into economic activity” (1958:39). In this dissertation, I explain how the Protestant work ethic, in addition to policies aimed at making refugees economically self-sufficient, shaped interactions between refugees and social service providers. Those refugees who were not perceived as hardworking, Christian, civically engaged, grateful, and friendly, had fewer chances of gaining “worthy” citizens status in Fargo.

A Note on Terminology and Pronunciation

In the 1990s, advocates for refugees and immigrants in Fargo (but especially for refugees) began referring to refugees as “New Americans,” a more inclusive and politically correct term, because many refugees and immigrants became legal citizens. Most refugees preferred the term “New American” to “refugee” because it made them feel more welcome, less victimized, and more powerful. I use the terms interchangeably, but I use “refugee” more frequently because it is an important legal distinction from undocumented migrants, who had less access to legal forms of citizenship, and from U.S.-born citizens, who had more access to legal forms of citizenship. I also believe that

the term “New American” glosses over important differences in access to resources and positions of power in the community. I tend to use New American to include those refugees who have become legal citizens of the U.S. I use “U.S.” as an adjective in place of “American” because “American” denotes North America and South America, not only the United States.

“Bosniak” refers to ethnic, white Muslims from Bosnia-Herzegovina. During the 1992-95 war, Bosniak replaced the term “Bosnian Muslims.” It is an ethnic and cultural term, not a religious one, as not all Bosniaks are practicing Muslims. Roma refers to Gypsies, Rom as a Gypsy, and Romani is an adjective (e.g. Romani language). Bosnian Roma are also Muslim but most do not practice Islam. I use the term “Bosnians” when referring to both Bosniaks and Roma. I write Bosnian names using the Bosnian alphabet. The following pronunciation key will assist those more familiar with the English language: C ‘ts’ as in bats, Ć ‘ch’ as in change (tongue behind top front teeth), which is softer than, Č ‘ch’ as in church (tongue towards roof of mouth), Š ‘sh’ as in shop, Ž ‘s’ as in treasure, Đ ‘j’ as in judge (tongue behind top front teeth), which is softer than Dž ‘j’ as in Jennifer (tongue towards roof of mouth).

I use “...” in quotes in which I removed only a few words or a phrase and “[...]” when I removed at least one full sentence from the original words of the speaker or writer. I use “()” to clarify something within the quote. Some names in this dissertation are pseudonyms and others are not. I asked participants if they wanted a pseudonym and if they said yes, then I gave them the option of choosing their own pseudonym.

Organization of the Chapters

In chapter II, I provide information about the origins of the project, my personal and professional background, and an overview of the methods I used at various phases of the project. In chapter III, I expand on the partial and uneasy transformation of LSS from a church-based organization to a professional refugee resettlement agency. I compare the development of refugee resettlement to that of social work in the first half of the 20th century. I also call attention to the race, class, gender, and cultural backgrounds of LSS staff and how these backgrounds shaped how they did their jobs. In chapter IV, I focus on the influence of neoliberalism on welfare agencies in the larger frame of refugee resettlement. I explain how federal regulations, especially 1996 welfare reform, merged with a relatively homogenous local culture as represented by CCSS employees and which differed from LSS employees. I argue that differences between the staff at LSS and CCSS contributed to animosity about refugee resettlement in Fargo and the role of the state. In chapter V, I address the role of volunteering in a neoliberal era and juxtapose it with the strong historic and religious role that voluntarism played in the region. I argue that volunteers played an important role in refugee resettlement, but unlike LSS staff, their roles were not questioned; instead, they were often praised as the foot soldiers to hegemonic forms of social citizenship in Fargo.

In chapter VI, I explain the political, cultural, and economic influences of the former Yugoslavia on Bosnians in Fargo that shaped how they interacted with each other, the state, and wider society. I provide an overview of socialism in Yugoslavia and the 1992-95 war in Bosnia-Herzegovina (BH). I discuss regional, ethnic, gender, cultural,

and socioeconomic distinctions in the former Yugoslavia and how these categories transformed when Bosnians came to the U.S. I compare and contrast Bosniaks and Bosnian Roma in terms of their relationships to one another and the wider society. I explain why Bosniaks, social service providers, and the wider public deemed Bosnian Roma as some of the least “worthy” citizens in Fargo.

In chapter VII, I provide a historical overview of wars in Sudan as they relate to social citizenship among Southern Sudanese refugees in Fargo. I describe how relationships between Sudanese men and women transformed and shaped Sudanese notions of citizenship in the U.S. I explain the importance of community meetings in establishing and maintaining social hierarchies within the Sudanese community. I argue that Southern Sudanese forms of cultural citizenship that included Christianity positively shaped relationships between Sudanese and the wider community and resulted in a worthier status than other groups of refugees, for example, Bosnian Roma.

Finally, in chapter VIII, I revisit the categories of race, class, gender, and culture from the perspectives of the key actors in this project. I argue that race, gender, and class remain critical determinants of equal access to social citizenship, but culture must also be considered as an important aspect of intersectionality. Cultural practices and values served to mitigate or impair racism, classism, sexism, and xenophobia, which influenced access to social citizenship. I explain that those refugees who believed in, conformed to, or strategized as “worthy” citizens and/or docile “recipients of aid” were rewarded more than other refugees. I conclude the chapter by providing a list of recommendations and explain my future directions for research.

CHAPTER II

METHODS AND POSITIONALITY OF THE ETHNOGRAPHER

Such ‘classically anthropological’ dispositions, then, seem doomed to yield only so many more exercises of anthropology merely *in* the United States. An anthropology *of* the United States, however, remains exasperatingly elusive.

Nicholas DeGenova (2007:233)

Origins of the Project and Background of the Researcher

I arrived in Fargo to conduct my dissertation research through a myriad of geographical, intellectual, activist, and atavistic avenues. The daughter of a public school teacher turned middle-school counselor and a social worker turned secretary, I grew up in a small town in southern Minnesota. I am the sixth generation of Norwegian Lutheran immigrant farmers in the Midwest United States. My immediate, nuclear family was comfortably situated in the middle class. My parents were the first in their family to obtain a college education and I am the first to earn a Ph.D. I chose to work in Fargo because of my personal and professional ties to the Midwest, but more importantly, I chose to work in Fargo to challenge the notion that anthropologists should work outside of the United States with an exotic “other” (Asad 1973). I also wanted to broaden the growing field of anthropology in and *of* the United States (see also Peirano 1998).

At first, working in my own backyard sounded, for lack of a better word, boring. When I was applying to graduate schools, I planned to conduct a comparative study of Bosnians and Southern Sudanese *in* Bosnia-Herzegovina (BH) and South Sudan. After working as a volunteer for a local women's NGO in BH (1998-2000) and as a case manager with refugees in Sioux Falls, South Dakota (2001-2002), I arrived at the University of Oregon in the fall of 2002. I was excited about the prospect of taking classes, writing papers, teaching, and discussing what I was sure would be interesting, important topics. My first core class was social theory. Because I had not studied anthropology as an undergraduate student, I was confronted with anthropology's colonial past for the first time. This occurred through the lens of a professor who openly questioned her up-and-coming place in the academy and three Native American students who were understandably uncomfortable with and angry at the discipline. One day, I remember asking incredulously, "Why can't we just like school?" The professor repeated the question, as though to herself, but no one answered.

One class period in particular shaped the direction that my dissertation research would take. Using the work of Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999), a Maori woman from New Zealand, we were discussing what a decolonized version of anthropology would look like. A Native American student suggested working in the U.S. on issues related to power. Her argument was similar to Priyadarshini's: "The more closely we engage with power, the closer we come to examining our own reflections in the powerful and even our own complicities as we go about producing knowledge" (2003:434). Still naïve and unclear about the role of disciplinary boundaries, or even anthropology, I asked, "If

anthropologists began to work in the U.S., then what would be the difference between sociology and anthropology?" Several students said something to the effect of "Who cares?" I began to think about working in my own backyard as a way of decolonizing anthropology. My doctoral committee members worked on issues of representation, migration, and welfare in the U.S. and they bravely paved the way and then encouraged me on the path towards an anthropology in and of the United States. However, before I chose that path, I returned to BH to conduct additional research for my Master's paper based on my previous research with Romani women.

My work in BH made my project in the U.S. more significant because it helped me to better understand some of the challenges that refugees and migrants faced in the U.S. For example, before I went to BH, I did not speak the Bosnian language (also known as Serbo-Croatian). I now speak it fluently, but my first few months in BH was a strange, overwhelming, exciting, and challenging time. While being a young American volunteer in post-war BH is hardly the same as being a Bosnian refugee in the U.S., there are comparisons in terms of feeling like a stranger in a strange land and learning a new culture, language, and political economy. My time in Bosnia was also the foundation to my development as an activist, feminist researcher.

From 1998-2000, I worked for Medica Infoteka, a local women's NGO founded as a response to rape against women during the 1992-95 war. I mostly worked for Infoteka, the team that established and maintained networks with other NGOs and governmental institutions. Because of my background in psychology, Infoteka asked me to design and coordinate a research project. I proposed to do a project with Roma after

visiting with an African-American man, who introduced me to the situation of Roma in BH and believed that their situation was worse than that of African-Americans in the U.S. Also, in Medica's research on the prevalence of domestic violence in the Zenica municipality, they had recommended that similar research be conducted with Romani women (Medica Infoteka 1999:92). Their sample population of approximately 500 women did not include even one woman who identified herself as Rom.

Three colleagues and I completed 112 quantitative interviews and 24 oral history interviews with Romani women. Using the data from Medica Infoteka's previous study on domestic violence with non-Romani women (1999), I compared the socioeconomic status and prevalence of domestic violence between Romani and non-Romani women. I found that due to racism, classism, sexism, and political indifference towards Roma, Romani women appeared to face greater degrees of domestic and structural forms of violence than non-Romani women. We published our project in the Bosnian, English, and Romani languages (Erickson 2003; Medica Infoteka 2001). In the summer of 2003, I returned to BH to complete research for my Master's paper in which I further explored the prevalence of multiple forms of violence, from individual to state-sponsored, throughout Romani women's lives. I addressed the role of the state, local and international NGOs in regards to their (lack of) programs with Roma (Erickson 2004, 2006). My dissertation research built on that work by comparing the experiences of Bosnian Roma and Bosnian ethnic Muslims (Bosniaks) in Fargo.

After I returned to the U.S. from Bosnia, from 2000-2002, I worked as a case manager for Lutheran Social Services Refugee and Immigration Program (LSS) in Sioux

Falls, South Dakota. I worked with single mothers, families or individuals who experienced marked difficulties achieving self-sufficiency in the allotted eight month period or longer, and secondary migrants, refugees who were resettled to another city in the U.S. but migrated to Sioux Falls. Most of my clientele were Bosnians and Southern Sudanese and many of my Bosnian clients were Roma who had originally been resettled to Fargo, but migrated to Sioux Falls in search of employment, social services, and other resources. My job consisted of helping refugees navigate the educational and welfare systems, finding housing, childcare, healthcare, assisting with family disputes, and interpreting for Bosnians. Some of the biggest challenges for my clients were inability to find a job that matched their skills, transportation, difficulty in learning English, psychological and physical health problems, family disputes, and/or childcare challenges.

My employment with LSS heavily influenced my dissertation research because I understood the complex, daily responsibilities of a case manager. As I conceptualized my dissertation project, I insisted on including many key actors because I believed it was important to show the variety and complexity of these quotidian overlapping relationships between service providers and refugees. I do not believe that the breadth of my dissertation suffers from a lack of depth. Rather, my time as a volunteer researcher in Bosnia and as case manager in Sioux Falls made this project stronger.

In the summer of 2005, I conducted a pilot project in Sioux Falls for my dissertation research. I found that many individuals with whom I had worked closely as a case manager and friend did not feel comfortable speaking to me as a researcher. As in Fargo, refugee resettlement in Sioux Falls was contentious. Many people affiliated me

with LSS and were reticent to speak with me for fear I would relay information to my former employer LSS. LSS staff was reticent to speak with me on the record about their opinions of the agency for fear that the information would become public and cause animosity within the agency. Additionally, I did not receive immediate support from many of the stakeholders in refugee resettlement in Sioux Falls, including the local welfare agency and LSS itself. By the end of the summer, I received permission to do the project and conducted interviews with Sudanese, Bosnians, LSS staff, employers, volunteers, teachers, and representatives of elected officials. However, I decided to conduct my dissertation research in Fargo because of the above challenges in Sioux Falls, and because I had more initial institutional support in Fargo. There were also significantly more Roma in Fargo than in Sioux Falls. In this dissertation, I draw upon information I gathered in Sioux Falls as well as in Fargo. In so doing, I challenge the idea that there is one bounded, finite “field site”; rather I “view a research area less as a ‘field’ for the collection of data than as a site for strategic intervention” (Gupta and Ferguson 1997:39; see also Clifford 1997; Stephen 2002).

I first went to Fargo to discuss my future research plans in April 2006. LSS invited me to speak at their annual Building Bridges conference, which was designed to provide resources and recommendations about resettlement to educators and service providers in North Dakota. Many service providers in Fargo faced difficulties in working with Roma, who engaged with service providers but did not behave in ways deemed “worthy” of citizenship benefits; for example, many Bosnian Roma refused to send their children to school and married their children at young ages, which was against the law.

LSS attempted to find a Bosnian Rom to speak on behalf of his or her culture but when they could not find anyone, they invited me to speak about Bosnian Roma culture. Due to my presentation and my previous work in BH and Sioux Falls, I received the support and encouragement of LSS in Fargo to conduct my research there.

Finally, from May 2006 until October 2007, I served on the Board of Directors for the South Sudan Women's Empowerment Network, Inc. (SSWEN). SSWEN began in 2005 as an online forum. It then transformed to a registered nonprofit organization in the U.S. and in Sudan. It seeks to empower women from marginalized regions in Sudan (the South, Nuba Mountains, and Darfur) and in the diaspora by advocating for equality between men and women, empowerment through education and training programs, and networking with private and public institutions. None of the Sudanese women in Fargo were members of SSWEN. It is difficult to say exactly why no Sudanese women in Fargo wanted to organize a SSWEN chapter, but probably more recruitment was necessary. Nevertheless, my experiences with this organization helped me to better understand the varied ways in which Southern Sudanese women accommodated, perpetuated, and resisted U.S. ideas about citizenship. I attended SSWEN conferences in Phoenix, Arizona, in 2005 and 2006, as a board member, I participated in a four-day nonprofit training session and in the summer of 2007 in Maryland. In August 2008, I went to Sudan with other SSWEN members from the diaspora to help organize a women's empowerment conference (see Erickson and Faria in press).

Methodologies and Approaches: Multi-sited, Feminist Ethnography

I used comparative, qualitative methods with two groups of refugees (Southern Sudanese and Bosnians) and three types of institutions (state, private, and voluntary) to analyze how refugees gained access to social citizenship benefits (e.g. respect, political clout) and resources (e.g. education, employment, housing, health and welfare benefits). I employed what Marcus calls “the strategically situated (single-site) ethnography,” which “attempts to understand something broadly about the system in ethnographic terms as much as it does its local subjects” (1995:110-111; see also Smith 2002, 2005). I sought to better understand social citizenship, and the hierarchies it produces, through the lens of refugee resettlement. By studying different organizations, ultimately, I also aimed to better understand how inter- and intra-institutional conflicts and inconsistencies were central to refugee resettlement and to the reproduction of the state (Sharma and Gupta 2006:16). Institutional ethnographies of state bureaucracies can also help us to “understand their relation to the public and the (elite or subaltern) that they serve” (2006:27; see also Smith 2005). I wanted to understand how state bureaucracies differently served groups of refugees and U.S.-born citizens (see also Gold 1992).

As a feminist researcher, gender was a crucial point of my analyses and research practices. I define feminist ethnography as a set of tools for use during all stages of the research process (from conception to write-up), which address relations between sexes and social relations at large. As such, I took into account global pluralities in women’s and men’s roles in regards to socioeconomic class, race, ethnicity, history, culture, and/or sexualities (Naples 1998, 2003). I followed Visweswaran (1997) in arguing that, “women

should not be seen as sole subjects, authors, or audiences of feminist ethnography” (593-4). I used gender as one of many entry points into complex systems of meaning and power (Visweswaran 1997:616). For example, I looked at how intersections of gender, race, class, nationality, and culture informed individual and group access to state and civic power. In so doing, I allowed for multiple forms of knowledge production to shape my data (e.g. historical data, policy manuals, life histories, media, brochures, films, fiction, and participant observation) (see also Bookman and Morgen 1988; Harrison 2002; Mohanty 2003; Moraga and Anzaldúa 2002 [1983]; Mullings 2005; Smith 1999).

As a female researcher, my identity as a single, white woman impacted my position as an anthropologist. Throughout the research process, Bosnian, Sudanese, and Euro-American white men of all ages – many of them married – made passes at me. My perceived availability lent itself to a variety of interesting and uncomfortable interactions and conversations, many of which I recorded in my field notes, but few of which I mention in my dissertation. Additionally, women from a variety of racial, cultural, class, and religious backgrounds had a difficult time understanding why I was single. I believe that my marital status shaped my research project in multiple ways; for example, sometimes I aroused suspicion and sometimes I was protected. As a case in point, I share the interaction between Ayen and me in January 2008 at the Sudanese New Year’s celebration in Fargo. There were hundreds of Sudanese at the event, and about a dozen or so white Americans. At one point in the evening, a dance was dedicated to the “women,” meaning married women and/or mothers. As she headed out to dance floor, Ayen stopped, turned around, and looked at me. She hesitated as though not sure whether I was

“a woman,” or not, and then said, “You’re a woman. You can come too.” Ayen informed me that she acted as my gatekeeper when Sudanese men called me to ask for my phone number. She also offered advice on how I should dress in order to attract a man.

Using a comparative or multi-sited analysis and activist principles meant collaborating with research interlocutors on the goals and methods of my research projects, giving back, and reporting back to the communities in which I work. For example, I volunteered in research communities in a variety of ways. At LSS, I helped set up apartments for new refugee arrivals, assisted with public event planning, coordinated college student volunteers, and did a small amount of administrative assistant work. For the Giving+ Learning Program, I tutored English to Bosnians and Southern Sudanese. I served on the Board of directors for the New Sudanese Community Association, which involved participating in grant writing workshops, reading and commenting on grant proposals, taking meeting notes, and generally supporting the organization. I offered to volunteer for a Bosnian association that focused on folkdance but the organization met rarely, evinced in-fighting, and did not seem to want my assistance. On an individual level, I assisted Bosnian and Sudanese women in filling out job and welfare applications and drove them to appointments, meetings, or stores.

At times, using a multi-sited, comparative, feminist approach was challenging. The populations and institutions I worked with had widely variable histories and sometimes competing agendas, even within the same organization or community. Like in Haney’s feminist ethnographies of the state, at times, I put my feminist reflexivity aside and focused my analysis on “the structural context within which... institutional battles

occurred” (2002:291). Within the various battles, many perceived me as an objective researcher, objective especially in comparison to the other stakeholders in refugee resettlement. Many times throughout the course of my research, people at various institutions would tell me unsolicited information about other institutions knowing full well that the information could end up in my dissertation. At other times, without prompting, someone would anticipate a question from me that was related to these institutional – or interpersonal – battles. For example, I might organize a meeting with a director or staff member of an organization and he or she might begin by saying, “You might have heard _____ about me (or this organization)...” As such, I began to view myself as a mediator between organizational disputes.

Research Design and Methods

I conducted hundreds of hours of participant observation primarily with CCSS, LSS, and the Giving+ Learning Program. However, I also visited employers, medical institutions, schools, and other nonprofit organizations that were stakeholders in refugee resettlement. I attended three meetings for the Interagency Network for New Americans that consisted of representatives from the above organizations as well as other stakeholders in refugee resettlement such as nonprofits, schools, the police department, churches, and city officials. At CCSS, I attended three TANF cluster meetings, two General Economic Assistance meetings, and two all staff meetings. At LSS, in addition to volunteering, I attended about 20 staff meetings.

When I first arrived in Fargo, I took notes at these meetings. At both LSS and CCSS, people asked me what I was writing down and each time I showed them,

demonstrating, for example, that I was writing down what people said. They asked me how I planned to use the information and I told them that I did not know whether or how I would use it, but it would inform my later analysis. Marcus summarizes well the conundrum I stumbled upon. He states that in a contemporary multi-sited ethnography,

In any contemporary field of work, there are always others within who know (or want to know) what the ethnographer knows, albeit from a different subject position, or who want to know what the ethnographer wants to know. Such ambivalent identifications, or perceived identification, immediately locate the ethnographer within the terrain being mapped and reconfigure any kind of methodological discussion that presumes a perspective from above or 'nowhere' (1995:112).

While all of the institutions permitted me to conduct the research, I did not want them to feel uncomfortable each time I wrote something down. I stopped taking notes during meetings and instead tried to memorize key points. After the meeting, I wrote down as much as I could remember and later expanded the "memos" to full field notes.¹

As with the organizations, refugee participants had different, sometimes competing goals for working with me as a researcher. Bosnians (Roma and Bosniaks) were the most hesitant to work with me. As I explain in chapter VI, Bosnians had no well-established, formal, unified cultural association in Fargo and preferred, generally speaking, to spend time with their families and maybe a small group of friends. Despite my fluency in the Bosnian language, and the usually pleasant discovery that I had lived in BH, finding families willing to share information with me was at first difficult and frustrating. One Bosniak woman, who I met about seven months after I arrived in Fargo,

¹ For a list of explanations of anthropological methods that I used, see Bernard 2002; Bernard and Ryan 1998; Dewalt, Dewalt, and Wayland 1998; Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995; Farnell and Graham 1998; Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte 1999

told me that some Bosnians were acting as gatekeepers “because they didn’t want to share me.” Additionally, due to prejudices against Roma, some Bosniaks did not want to work with me because they heard that I was also working with Roma. Others told me blatantly that there Bosnians did not like researchers while others asked what was in it for them if they participated. For understandable reasons that I outline in chapter VI, Roma were wary of outsiders. They were reluctant to do any formal interviews with me, but would at times tell me to “write that down in my research.”

In contrast to Bosnians, as a group, Sudanese were generally more open to discussing their lives with me, sometimes in hopes of garnering social and real capital for themselves, their families, and/or their local and transnational social, religious, and political organizations (see chapter VII). This sometimes resulted in feelings of competition, like asking me to help them start their own NGO, or with various other causes. For many Sudanese, the goal of speaking with non-Sudanese was to raise awareness about atrocities in Sudan, and sometimes for their own personal circumstances, for example, to help with children, find jobs, or fill out paperwork.

I met Sudanese and Bosnians in random ways. At the beginning, I met refugee participants with the help of institutions, through friends of friends, via my connections in Sioux Falls, by tutoring for the Giving+Learning program, volunteering at LSS and for a Sudanese organization, in stairwells of apartment buildings, at holiday gatherings, and/or at the Balkan or African grocery stores. After a few months, I met more Sudanese and Bosnians. Then it became a snowball effect where someone would give me the number of a Bosnian or Sudanese, or vice versa. Participant observation among refugees included

attending multicultural events, funerals and wakes, weddings, birthday parties, restaurants, stores, homes, church services, holiday celebrations, and political meetings. My interactions with Bosnians and Sudanese in these different spaces allowed a nuanced picture of what being a citizen and community member meant to various people. Interviews allowed me to question the patterns I was observing through participant observation and expand on certain themes, for example, “self-sufficiency,” “good citizen,” and more specific concepts like the “Bosnian mentality” (see chapter VI) and “the Lost Boys of Sudan” (chapter VII).

After I had been in Fargo for several months, I began to recruit staff and volunteers at the various organizations to speak with me in formal interviews. At CCSS, I interviewed 11 workers, including three workers from the North Dakota JOBS program who co-located with the TANF/Diversion programs. I was not able to attend any Children and Family staff meetings but I interviewed three of their staff. I interviewed a total of 15 Cass County Social Service workers, including 12 women and three men. At LSS, I interviewed all but one staff member at New American Services, including case managers, administrative assistants, the director of New American Services in 2007-08 as well as a previous director, the CEO of Lutheran Social Services, and the state refugee coordinator for the state of North Dakota. I conducted a total of 13 formal interviews at LSS (six men and seven women). Most of the volunteers I interviewed tutored for the Giving+Learning Program (one man and six women) but I interviewed one male LSS volunteer and two men who volunteered with refugees but were not affiliated with any organization. In order to get a more nuanced picture of resettlement, I also interviewed stakeholders in

refugee resettlement outside the confines of the above three organizations: three employers, the president of the Chamber of Commerce, the director of the public health program, the director of the English Language Learning program, and staff at other nonprofit organizations. Most of the information I gathered from refugees came from participant observation and informal interviews that were not recorded. However, I recorded interviews with three Sudanese men and three Bosniak women.

Refugees faced a long list of psychosocial and medical problems due to wartime violence, peacetime interpersonal violence, forced migration, insecurity, and so much more. Each person's trauma was different than the next person's trauma; individuals' experiences with war were related to a long list of factors that included personality, culture, patterns of migration, and access to socioeconomic resources during and after the conflicts (see, e.g. Cockburn 1998; Giles and Hyndman et al 2004; Malkki 1995; Nordstrom 2005; Vickers 2002). In my experiences working as a case manager, advocate, friend, and researcher, I found that trauma was always deeply infused with other daily joys and challenges such as love, divorce, jobs, friendship, parenting, health, faith, and social and political commitments. I do not mean to overlook or discount the exceptional or "out-of-the-ordinary periods of shared history [that] can produce... communities of memory" (Malkki 1997:90), but my dissertation does not focus on trauma or mental or physical health.

During my time in post-war BH, "the war" emerged as topic of conversation almost every single day. In 2007-2008, in Fargo, war also emerged in conversations with Bosnian and Sudanese refugees, but in different ways than in BH or Sudan. This is not to

say that the wars were not affecting refugees in the U.S., but I did not find the acts of war to be part of everyday conversation. Rather, the long-lasting effects of war, such as migration and how to become a citizen of the U.S., were everyday topics of conversation. In my opinion, focusing too much on refugees' trauma perpetuates the notion of refugees as "recipients of aid" (Harrell-Bond 1998), as helpless victims. Fewer people see refugees as competent survivors with agency and survival skills. One of my loftiest research goals is to challenge structures of inequality that produce categories of oppressed and oppressor and that result in war. In this dissertation, instead of trauma, I focus on the everyday production and negotiation of social hierarchies that began in refugees' home countries and continued, although in different ways, in the United States.

Analysis and Reporting Back

Marcus argues that throughout the research process, the ethnographer's identity must be renegotiated: "Only in the writing of ethnography... is the privilege and authority of the anthropologist unambiguously reassumed, even when the publication gives an account of the changing identities of the fieldworker in the multi-sited field" (1995:112). In order to call attention to my own identity and especially my power in mapping the terrain of refugee resettlement and social citizenship in Fargo, I returned to Fargo in April 2010 to present my findings at the LSS-sponsored Building Bridges conference. I gave two presentations at the Building Bridges conference. Approximately 150 people attended the morning session; about 40 people attended the afternoon session. I also gave a separate presentation to six of the CCSS cluster supervisors. I centered my talks on explaining the intersections of race, ethnicity, class, gender, and culture in

determining who is a “worthy” citizen in Fargo. I called upon social service institutions to better interrogate the roles of volunteers in refugee resettlement. I suggested developing a training manual for volunteers and LSS caseworkers and training sessions on race and ethnicity for CCSS workers. I also devoted time to discussing the social hierarchies within refugee communities highlighting the history of discrimination and marginalization of Roma in the former Yugoslavia and in Fargo.

Receptions to my presentation ranged from enthusiasm to confusion, acceptance, and for some a “polite refusal” of the information (Bhabha 1986:112). Although I asked for constructive criticism of my interpretations, I received none. In reporting back, I learned that many people in Fargo wanted Fargo to be more multicultural but they were not sure how to go about it. Thus, I take seriously Linda Smith’s assertion that “sharing knowledge is also a long-term commitment” (1999:16). I will return to Fargo to present my research as needed and provide copies of my dissertation to several organizations. I will also provide copies of relevant chapters to other interested parties, for example, Sudanese organizations and Bosnian families.

CHAPTER III

LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES NEW AMERICAN SERVICES: A GATEWAY ORGANIZATION TO SOCIAL CITIZENSHIP

This chapter explains the partial and uneasy transformation of LSS from a church-based organization to a professional resettlement agency. I explain that in order to prepare clients for the low-wage employment sector and economic self-sufficiency, resettlement caseworkers and employment specialists have become increasingly professionalized along the same vein as social work in the first half of the 20th century. Like welfare in the U.S. in the 1920s and 1930s, refugee resettlement in the late 20th century shifted from local level church sponsorship that sought to provide humanitarian assistance to poor refugee families to a more bureaucratized, state-level management that entailed becoming more scientific and quotidian (Abramovitz 1998:519). This shift was demonstrated by the increase of paid staff and the need to document individual case files in addition to more stringent reporting requirements than in previous decades.

Origins of New American Services

From the 1980s to early 2000s, nation-wide, refugee resettlement transformed from a church-based program heavily influenced by religious values to a state-funded, privately run program emphasizing economic self-sufficiency. In the 1980s, Larry was

the director of what would become New American Services in Fargo. He oversaw the transformation of resettlement from a church-sponsored program in the 1980s and 1990s to a more bureaucratic agency. Speaking emotionally at times, in June 2008, Larry explained that, when churches and individuals formed the basis of resettlement support, there was no on-the-ground sponsor training, no orientation or explicit guidelines. Larry recalled a feeling of burnout among the sponsors as they figured out how to conduct resettlement as they went along, what Ong has called “compassion fatigue” (2003:82).

The resettlement office consisted of one staff person, who completed paperwork and acted as a liaison in the community. Larry alluded to a spectrum of motivations between the sponsors for serving the needs of refugees, from “Christian passion” to support and help the less fortunate, to “sponsors that may have been motivated by evangelizing,” and who thought, “this is our chance to save not only their bodies but their souls.” He recounted examples of (mostly Vietnamese and Cambodian) families who complained about sponsors pressuring them to baptize their children, forcing them to go to church, or failing to provide information or support for getting a divorce.

Although some individuals in public institutions supported resettlement, according to Larry, there was no institutional, systemic support. In fact many agencies, such as schools and medical clinics, refused to serve the specific needs of refugees. Larry reported that in the 1980s, when LSS began to resettle Cambodians, the school district refused to teach Cambodian children. They said they had made accommodations for the Vietnamese students, but they did not have the resources to serve a new group of non-English speaking students. One teacher called LSS to complain about the number of

refugees coming to Fargo. She told Larry incredulously, “Because of the refugees you’re bringing, do you realize fourth graders are not getting new geography books this year?” Larry remembers his horror at the clear distinctions between “our kids” and “those refugee kids.”

These schools and other public institutions also tacitly threatened to defy Section 601 of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which required all programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance to provide language interpreters.¹ The law stated that providers had to make reasonable, documented efforts to provide information and services in a language or medium that the person served can understand, free of charge to the client. In order to ensure that the individual does not feel threatened or misguided, if possible, the provider should avoid using family members as the interpreter. With few qualified interpreters, lack of political will to find funding for interpretation, and small numbers of refugees compared to other states and cities, too often family members, especially children, were inappropriately asked to act as interpreters.

In the early 1990s, more refugees from more countries began arriving and staying in Fargo. As director of the newly formed New American Services, Larry, along with Norman, then President of LSS, organized a meeting with the superintendent of schools.

¹ Section 601 of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states, “No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” Executive Order 13166 (August 11, 2000) states that the above law also applies to persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) (or sensory / speaking impairments). In 1974, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of Chinese students who filed a class action, civil rights suit in which they argued they were not receiving necessary special help in school due to their inability to speak English, help which they believed they were entitled to under Title VI because of its ban on educational discrimination on the basis of national origin. The case expanded the rights of limited English proficient students around the nation. Among other things, Lau reflects the now-widely accepted view that one's language is so closely intertwined with one's national origin that language-based discrimination is effectively a proxy for national origin discrimination.

What they thought would be a small, intimate meeting to ease interagency tension turned out to be a “tense and intense” meeting of about 15 people, including school principals, who wanted to know exact numbers of arrivals. In short, schools seemed to view resettlement as a local issue that required advanced planning, and they believed that LSS was withholding information that could ultimately benefit schools and students. In line with its local and national mission, LSS saw resettlement as a global, local, and moral issue. Larry said they tried to explain to the school officials that “this is not LSS... withholding [numbers] from you. This is the situation in the world.” Larry continued,

At one point the President of LSS said, ‘You have to realize, we’re responding to the people in camps and if they don’t get out, they could die in the camps.’ And the vice superintendent, I just remember, he *slammed* his notebook down on the table and he said, ‘Well, then let them die!’... I was in total shock, it’s like, I can’t believe I just heard this.

Shocked by the silence of the superintendent during the heated meeting, Larry and the President of LSS left and, “that was the end of that conversation.” In addition to drawing a line between local and global, pragmatic and moral, these disagreements set the stage for future (lack of) collaboration between public and private sectors when it came to resettlement. In the meantime, church sponsorship waned as compassion fatigue grew and fewer congregations were willing to sponsor refugees. With no sponsors, LSS could not secure or maintain high numbers of new refugee arrivals. Over-involvement and then waning support by churches and under-involvement by state agencies (in addition to the weather) resulted in, according to Larry,

refugee families... getting out of here as fast as they could... They were hearing, in California, you can go to a doctor that speaks their own language!... They’ll help you... and you don’t have to be tightly controlled by other groups

(churches). And so there got to be kind of a real swinging door here of refugees were coming in and moving out within three to four months... And everyone could say, 'oh yah, it's the weather, it's this and this and this and this.'... [But] the systems as whole were resistant.

After continued resistance by public institutions, Larry and his fellow advocates, "started circling the wagons... We felt under attack, and then we just decided, damn it, you know, if nobody else is gonna do it, we'll do it... We started developing... this complexity of services." But, according to Larry, "a change was not gonna come voluntarily... Systems do not change of their own accord. They change when they absolutely have to." The system did change, but not without increasingly heated, public discussions and disagreements about the roles and responsibilities of public and private institutions in refugee resettlement. One state worker told me in 2008:

They (LSS) applied to be that resettlement agency; they didn't have to be. Lots of different agencies can be the settlement agencies but LSS has taken that as one of their missions. So I think their view is that while they primarily do the resettling it takes a whole community to take a piece of that in it, and I don't disagree with that,

but, she continued, they needed a better plan (see Genizi 1993 for a comprehensive perspective on the role of Christianity in refugee resettlement). The situation in Fargo was symptomatic of larger neoliberal policy changes in resettlement that had to do with streamlining the process and fostering greater accountability in workers and clients. The professionalization of refugee resettlement is following a similar path of the professionalization of social work in the U.S. in the 1920s and 1930s.

Gordon (1994) explains that the shift in discourse from single mothers as objects of charity in the 1920s to symptoms of a threatening social breakdown by the 1930s was nurtured by several concerns: changes in immigration and industrialization, ambivalent

attitudes about women's increasing rights, and the growth of public welfare advocacy. For example, an emerging belief that the government was responsible for the poor proved key to the development of the social work profession. In the 1920s, many wrongly believed that most single mothers were immigrants because the immigrant population was growing rapidly in cities; immigrants came from new and different places and religions (mostly Catholics, Jews, and Eastern Orthodox from southern and eastern Europe); and immigrants were more visible than in previous decades (Gordon 1994:29). In the 1920s, most welfare recipients were white and single motherhood was seen as a temporary, unusual misfortune that could be reduced by economic security (Gordon 1994:35). During this time, welfare dispersal shifted from the responsibility of municipalities or counties to state-level control (Gordon 1994:98), social workers gained more support, and the social work profession became more "scientific" and "quotidian" (Gordon 1994:97-100; see also Lister 1998). The shift in welfare discourse from gender in the 1920s to race and class in the 1930s was mirrored in refugee resettlement in Fargo in the 1990s: immigration, race, and refugees were virtually synonymous classifications. Like anti-welfare activists in the 1920s and 1930s, 2007-08 residents in Fargo believed that refugees relied heavily on welfare and that they did not have to pay taxes, neither of which was true.

Professionalizing Refugee Resettlement

One facet of neoliberalism has been the increased bureaucratization of the private sector, which neoliberals claim would increase accountability in those sectors and decrease a reliance on the state. Another facet of neoliberalism is the reliance on

public/private partnerships. In resettlement, increased professionalization resulted in greater accountability than in the previous church-sponsored era, but its primary goal of making refugees into productive, economically self-sufficient citizens within eight months was fraught with challenges, the brunt of which were felt by refugees, but also by staff in various agencies and institutions in Fargo.

Scholars have also argued that neoliberalism blurs the distinction between public and private (e.g. Ferguson and Gupta 2002; Harvey 2005). In terms of funding levels, this held true for refugee resettlement in North Dakota. However, in everyday life, producers and consumers of state and private services were crossed and constrained by powerful borders not only between states and cultures, but also between public and private sectors. In discussing migrants, Stephen (2007) employs the term “transborder” rather than “transnational” because in addition to nation-state borders, migrants also cross ethnic, cultural, and regional borders. Such borders also manifest themselves in the work of employees in social services. While neoliberal policies may have softened the borders between public and private sectors, differences remained in levels of accountability, flexibility of program management, salaries and benefits, and building structures. The nebulous positioning of LSS on the spectrum of public/private called into question the complex and contested borderlands of state and civil society sectors. Before becoming the director of LSS in Fargo, Bob Sanderson served as the director of the Human Service Center in Grand Forks for almost 20 years. He explained some of the differences between working for the state and private sectors,

The analogy that I always used was government was sort of this big cargo ship in the middle of the ocean that would take you about two weeks to turn the thing

around to go in the other direction. The private sector was a little speedboat that could just do what they wanted. And I really have found out that that's not so true. We operate under a lot of the same government rules, employment issues, and many of the same kinds of restrictions that government does. So it isn't anywhere near the speed that I thought it was. I think the one thing that is really much nicer about the private sector, is that you really can go out and start new things without having to ask a bunch of people for permission. You know, in government you are going to go through layers of bureaucracy and politics... to get something done... So in that way, it is much easier and much better and much more creative.

Sanderson summarized well the position that LSS played in a neoliberal era. While he saw the role of the nonprofit sector as “creative,” others, like state and voluntary agencies, saw a lack of accountability. LSS's position as a federally-funded, privately-run institution called into question its organizational identity. As such, LSS was caught between a rock and a hard place, between the seemingly inflexible CCSS on the one side, and a highly respected, amorphous group of civil society organizations and volunteers on the other (chapter V). Differing articulations of culture, resettlement, welfare, and work were waged not only between directors and supervisors, but also between staff, clients, and volunteers at different agencies on an everyday level.

In return for federal funds, LSS was expected to provide the following services to aid with the achievement of economic self-sufficiency: sponsorship, pre-arrival resettlement planning including placement, reception upon arrival, basic needs support for at least 30 days (housing, furnishings, food, and clothing), community orientation, referral to other providers (healthcare, employment, educational services), and case management and tracking for at least 90-180 days.² Sometimes LSS received only 24

² Some agencies will serve refugee clients free of charge for up to seven years after their date of arrival. Evidence that services have been provided must be recorded in case files for at least 90 days and employment status are recorded for at least 180 days.

hours advanced notice of a new refugee client's arrival. By the time the client arrived, staff or volunteers had to secure and set up the apartment, buy appropriate food (taking culture into account), and find weather-appropriate clothes for the family. LSS was responsible for ensuring that someone was at the airport when the client arrived. The following day, staff checked in on the family and began the arduous stack of paperwork from social security card applications to enrolling children in schools and making necessary medical and dental appointments. In the first few weeks after arrival, case management usually involved driving clients to and from appointments, answering a barrage of questions from bewildered and tired clients, and ensuring that clients attend the cultural orientation that agencies are mandated to provide.

In addition to case management and employment services, the Reception and Placement Grant provided cash and medical assistance. LSS distributed Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA), a small stipend to individuals and families until they receive jobs which they must report or face penalty, or the eight-month adjustment period ends, whichever comes first. Cass County Social Services distributed Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA), a form of Medicaid, the national health plan for low-income families.

In 2007-2008, New American Services was located in the LSS building next to a large Lutheran Church on a main intersection (see Figure 4). Until 2008, all New American Service staff was housed in the basement of the building. Juvenile services, chemical dependency counselors and administrative staff were situated on the main and second floors. New American Services staff felt their placement in the basement was deeply symbolic of their place in LSS's hierarchy, indicative of the importance of refugee

resettlement compared to other programs under the LSS umbrella. “The basement” was a popular topic of conversation among NAS staff. Due to staff complaints and structural problems in the basement (for example, the lack of an elevator, mold, and temperature problems), in the spring of 2008, LSS rearranged staff offices and most resettlement workers were relocated to the main floor.



Figure 4: Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota

In 2007-2008, New American Services consisted of a Director, Community Liaison, three case managers, three employment specialists, a supervisor who helped with case management, two program assistants who helped with reporting and sat at the front desk of LSS, and the Unaccompanied Refugee Minor (URM) which employs an additional three full-time caseworkers. The URM program finds foster care solutions for refugee youth who arrive in the United States without a parent or adult relative who is

able and willing to care for them.³ LSS also employed an immigration lawyer, who brought in modest revenue to the resettlement program.

The Director's job was to manage staff; act as a connection to between the larger umbrella organization of LSS and New American Services; report to the national VOLAGS and the state refugee coordinator; handle monitoring visits; write grants; serve on community boards, and network in the wider community. Siniša, Director of New American Services since 2006, was a model Fargo citizen. In 1991, he fled Osijek, Croatia, to escape escalating violence in the former Yugoslavia. After living in Germany and Switzerland for seven years, he and his wife, both devout Christians, arrived in Fargo in 1998, and both spoke English. He began working for LSS almost immediately as an employment specialist and education coordinator. From 2000-2004, he served as the Director of the Senior Companion Program, also part of LSS, which involved extensive travel around the state of North Dakota. He also acted as Executive Director of First Link, a nonprofit in Fargo that coordinates volunteers. Siniša also earned a Master's in Public and Human Service Administration at Minnesota State University in Moorhead.

Siniša described his job as difficult because he had to balance various scales and scopes of resettlement. For example, he had to demonstrate his program's success on the state and federal level by proving that refugees in Fargo can become economically self-sufficient within the mandated 180 days. He educated people about refugees in a xenophobic area of the country while also addressing supporters of resettlement who

³ Due to the more complicated nature of conducting research with youth under the age of 18 and the significantly different set of issues raised by this program, I did not include it in my research.

argued for better long-term, close mentorship of refugees but who did not understand the mandates of the program (economic self-sufficiency) or budgetary constraints. He met with business leaders throughout the state (especially in Bismarck, the state capital) who wanted a statewide resettlement program in order to provide them with a steady stream of workers but did not consider the social service, medical, and educational needs of the potential refugee workers.⁴ Finally, he had to address the needs of an ever-changing multicultural staff with a high rate of turnover. Before he became director, there had been more than ten different directors of New American Services in less than ten years. But in 2007-08, after more than two years in the position, Siniša had no plans of leaving.

In addition to full-time staff, LSS hired case aides. Case aides were supposed to be interpreters but they did much more than interpret. All case aides in Fargo (and Sioux Falls) were refugees themselves. Case aids were in high demand from multiple sources for their language skills; they were busiest with new arrivals, high needs clients, and large families. In addition to interpreting, LSS asked case aides to transport clients to and from appointments, and make phone calls and home visits. Such responsibilities made the differences between “case aide” and “case manager” at times almost indistinguishable. Many started working as interpreters, became case aids, and were eventually hired as caseworkers. Both were paid by the hour; both worked closely with clients getting needs met; and, sometimes, both interpreted. However, case aides had less job security and

⁴ In 2009, LSS opened a resettlement office in Bismarck that employed one full-time staff member, and began to resettle about 30 refugees per year. There is also a LSS resettlement agency in Grand Forks which has one full-time and intermittent part-time staff who serve about 30-40 new refugee arrivals per year.

fewer responsibilities than the average caseworker. In 2007-2008, there were Afghan, Burundian, and Bhutanese case aids.

Many caseworkers and employment specialists at LSS were New Americans. In 2007-08, in Fargo, they were about half of the New American Services staff. However, this percentage changed frequently: some years former refugees made up almost all of the New American staff while other years, white U.S. non-refugee workers made up most of the New American staff. Those staff who were refugees usually began as part-time interpreters, case aides, or volunteers and later applied for full-time positions. In evaluating the success of a local resettlement program, ORR asks for the language capacity of staff and prefers that staff speak as many of the languages of the communities being served as possible. Thus, the staff at resettlement agencies often reflects the racial, ethnic, cultural, and/or religious diversity of wider refugee communities. In 2007-2008, New American Services staff represented six different countries (Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Somalia, Iraq, Vietnam, and the United States) and approximately the same number of men and women worked for New American Services.

Caseworkers stressed that their motivations to work in resettlement stemmed from wanting to improve the refugee community and because they understood the process and emotional and physical strains of being a refugee. Dženana, a caseworker from Bosnia-Herzegovina said, "I feel for those people. I don't say that people who are... born here – I know they love their job too. But I understand it in the soul, when they come to me and they're having a hard time." Alma, a former refugee from Bosnia-Herzegovina who became a legal U.S. citizen, expressed similar feelings: "Well, I'm former a refugee

myself so I know what our clients go through... I can relate to them and I know... the expectations... They might not be the same but they could be similar. So, that kind of prepared me to work with the clients that we serve, having to go through that myself.”

Figure 5 shows some of the LSS staff in 2007-08.



Figure 5: Some of the LSS staff

Although LSS preferred New American workers, the agency provided little to no formal training for new caseworkers. Some staff, like the director and U.S.-born staff, held college degrees in the social sciences, but a college education (in home countries or the U.S.) was preferred, but not required, of caseworkers. One case manager obtained her MBA while working for LSS. Staff told me they learned their job as they went along by asking questions. Courtney, a recent college graduate in psychology, who was raised in North Dakota, worked at LSS for less than a year said,

I was told that I wouldn't get training. [...] I didn't follow anybody around for any cases or anything. There was a first case – you're gonna go to the airport. Here's what you do, here's the person you need to contact. [...] So more like a little

pushing in the right direction. [...] I'm usually not a person to ask a lot of questions 'cause I think I can handle a lot, but I did have questions. I asked, but honestly there wasn't adequate training and it's terrible because I think there should be at least... a two-month training process. Because... I made mistakes and I had to fix them.

Supervisors told me that they trained staff but I never witnessed any trainings. All of the caseworkers and employment specialists I interviewed told me that training was nonexistent.

Workers at other agencies often complained about the lack of qualifications, training, and accountability of LSS workers. One County employee said, "Just because you speak another language doesn't mean you're a good case worker." Even some U.S.-born LSS workers disagreed with the emphasis on refugee status and language ability as qualifications for resettlement work. Courtney said that Cass County would never hire workers with "no education and no background... just because they had been on food stamps." Courtney believed that "the expectation levels need to be higher."

New American Services considered itself, above all, a referral agency. However, in the many times that I casually and formally asked case managers who they partnered with, most answered Cass County, the Family Healthcare Center, schools, and/or entry-level employers. Few gave me any indication that they were aware of the long list of other nonprofits. Only once did a caseworker mention Women, Infants, Children (WIC) or the Rape and Abuse Crisis Center. Most staff at LSS viewed their role as caseworkers as getting refugees out of their office to become economically self-sufficient as soon as possible. Using a wider social safety net did not appear to be part of their job consciousness or else they disagreed with other agencies' missions.

LSS workers wanted more accountability for clients but had a difficult time enforcing rules like sanctioning clients from Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) if clients did not attend English classes. Because many caseworkers personally understood the difficulties of moving to a new country, the challenges of transportation in Fargo, and the very temporary four to eight months that refugees were eligible for cash assistance, it was hardly worth their time to sanction clients. Alma explained:

I think that if we sanction one, they will listen. And I don't think we have done that... I always used to tell my clients: [...] We're here to teach you to help yourself. We're not here to do things for you because that is not going to help you in the long run, that's not going to do anything for you, that's just gonna enable you to be more co-dependent. [...] We're here to teach you to become independent... self sufficient, that's our goal. So I think it's important to emphasize that. But when you're under a lot of stress and you have so many clients, you don't have that much time to spend one-on-one on clients... as much as you would like to, to be able to get that message across.

In my experiences as a caseworker in Sioux Falls and a researcher in Fargo, I noticed differences in philosophies about self-sufficiency between New American and U.S.-born caseworkers. Even though New American caseworkers voiced empathy for their refugee clients, they were, in general, stricter with their clients than U.S.-born workers. The attitude of many New American workers was "if I could succeed and become self-sufficient, so you can you." However, they often failed to recognize the differences in training or educational levels between themselves and their clients.

Cultural Orientation: Gateway to Social Citizenship

Preparation for formal, legal and social citizenship in the U.S. began before refugees arrived in the U.S., when they received a cultural orientation in refugee camps, or country of stay, and where they signed papers agreeing to repay the travel loan they

were provided by IOM. Funded by the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Population and Migration and conducted by IOM and VOLAGS abroad, orientations provided information about pre-departure processing, travel, the role of the resettlement agency, housing, health, employment, transportation, education, money management, cultural adjustment, and rights and responsibilities (e.g. U.S. laws relating to driving, rape, and domestic violence). All refugees are encouraged to attend the orientation but due to childcare needs, medical problems, and a host of other factors in the camp or country of stay, attendance was not enforced.

In addition to basic needs, reception and placement, and employment services, within 30 days of arrival, resettlement agencies in the U.S. were responsible for providing refugees with a thorough orientation to the community. Orientation was one of refugees' first encounters with the contentious politics of citizenship and belonging in the United States. Citizenship meant different things to different people and, perhaps unbeknownst to presenters, orientation for new arrivals outlined hegemonic notions of citizenship in Fargo. Responsibilities of citizenship that were privileged and encouraged, for example, included learning English, finding a job, mastering the transportation system, working hard, and acting as good tenants. However, education and welfare were also addressed which alluded to the rights of social citizenship.

More specifically, orientations covered the role of the resettlement agency, public services and facilities, housing and personal safety, standards of personal and public hygiene, employment, the area's health care system and other publicly supported refugee services, information on legal status and family reunion procedures, the legal requirement

to repay IOM loans, the obligation to notify the U.S. Department of Justice of each change of address and new address within the first ten days, and Selective Service requirements. Most stakeholders in refugee resettlement agreed that it was necessary to provide the information to newly arrived refugees as soon as possible. However, despite the acknowledgement that the information would need to be repeated, disagreements ensued over whose responsibility it would be to provide the information. LSS usually argued that it was the entire community's responsibility while others, like volunteers or Cass County staff, often argued that it was LSS's responsibility to provide the ongoing information. At most orientation sessions, at least one person (usually more) fell asleep at the table. Depending on the countries of origin, questions – and lack thereof – demonstrated deep confusion over the subjects and the variety of topics.

In Fargo, the first week of the two-week orientation focused on U.S. laws, education, medical institutions, transportation, and social services. On day one, the Refugee Liaison Officer presented for the entire four hours. In 1997, prompted by the Kebab House Incident (see chapter II), the Fargo Police Department created the position of Refugee Liaison Officer. In the 1990s, when more refugees were arriving to Fargo, police officers noticed that many refugees feared, misunderstood, underestimated, and/or chose not to follow U.S. laws. Some of the new cultural practices that refugees brought to Fargo were in direct conflict with national laws (e.g. underage marriages). Other refugee practices were common among U.S.-born citizens, but had damaging legal and economic effects on refugee populations, such as driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol, domestic violence, rape, and other violent crimes for which refugees could be deported.

In response, the Chief of Police created a special officer position to liaison refugee communities and to prevent and address crimes committed by refugees.

Amy Swenson, a middle-aged, married white woman, served as the first Refugee Liaison Officer from 1997-2007. Amy took a proactive stance to her position by learning about various cultural practices, asking elders or leaders in New American communities for advice and cooperation about specific cases, and mapping the names and relationships of families who she saw as real or potential criminals. She worked to prevent refugees from committing violations because they did not understand the laws. Once they were in the system, it was very difficult to get out, which could eventually impact access to legal citizenship. Many refugees did not realize that, for example, violating a restraining order or driving drunk could impact their job status, housing, and long-term legal status. According to Amy, the program “created a different trust level between refugees and law enforcement and that [wa]s the biggest difference.” I heard positive feedback about Swenson from state and private agencies and refugees.

In 2007, Alice replaced Amy as the new Refugee Liaison Officer. Alice was a no nonsense kind of (white) woman, who had served in the military, and was also married to a police officer. She was also a strong Baptist Christian whose faith was central to her life. Alice and I became friends in part because we were both relatively new in the area (she grew up in New York), worked in refugee resettlement, were about the same age, and had both lived in the former Yugoslavia. I had been a volunteer in Bosnia and she had served in the military in Kosovo. Alice did her research on cultural diversity, asked me for book recommendations, found the information useful and interesting, but told me

that she was drawn to the Refugee Liaison position because of its nine-to-five hours. Other stakeholders in refugee resettlement told me that Alice's approach was noticeably more hands-off than Amy's approach had been. Alice was a very warm and welcoming friend to me, one of the first people to reach out to me as a friend in Fargo and I appreciated her kindness. However, Alice told me that she felt uneasy about demonstrating too much emotion in refugee communities, especially as a female police officer and mother of a young daughter. Alice tried to make friends in the New American community, but because of the nature of her job (she carried a gun), she also told me that she struggled about whether to bring her young daughter to community events and celebrations. She was afraid that showing too much warmth might compromise her position as unemotional, objective, and a strict enforcer of the law.

Featuring a police officer on the first day of cultural orientation served to assist refugee and prevent misunderstandings with the law, but also served to introduce them to the duties of citizenship in terms of following the laws. Amy focused her presentation on driving laws, alcohol and drugs, rape, early marriage, domestic violence, child abuse, and policies and procedures for police officers, including Miranda rights and the right to an attorney. Using scenarios, she slowly explained each topic and the short and long-term consequences for not obeying the law (problems with housing, employment, cash assistance, and applications to become a legal citizen). She offered advice and allowed time for questions. Questions from the audience usually displayed confusion about domestic violence, marriage, and driving laws. After inciting a degree of fear into the

newcomers, she concluded by saying, “Police officers in the U.S. don’t want you to be afraid of us, but there are laws we enforce, and we follow the same laws you do.”

On day two of orientation, a representative from public health spoke on the importance of getting tested for tuberculosis and other chronic diseases and, if positive, the need to take the medication. The Refugee Health Nurse from the Family Healthcare Clinic introduced health prevention and a program that paired new arrivals with more established New Americans. The next presenter was a caseworker from Cass County Social Services. Until her retirement in 2009, for years, Karen worked with all new arrivals for the first eight months in the country or during the time they received RCA from LSS. At orientation, Karen, who was notoriously perceived as cantankerous, explained Food Stamps and Medicaid, including appropriate times to use emergency rooms, when to dial 911, and who was eligible for cash assistance once RCA ends.

Day three addressed various forms of education with a focus on English language learning (ELL) programs for adults and an introduction to the school system for parents with school-age children. The presenter was the head ELL teacher for the Fargo school system. She explained to me in an interview the challenges involved in having two or three refugee children in her school grow to more than three hundred refugee children in just a few short years.⁵ During her orientation presentation, Cheryl explained the

⁵ In line with other neoliberal reforms, on January 8, 2002, President George W. Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 into law (Pub.L. 107-110, 115 Stat. 1425). This federal legislation was rooted in racialized, neoliberal belief that setting high standards and establishing measurable goals can improve individual outcomes in education. In order to receive federal funding, the Act required states to develop assessments in basic skills to be given to all students, regardless of first language. The NCLB Act resulted in teachers viewing their students in terms of test scores; refugee students, due to language barriers as well as lack of any prior formal education among some groups, significantly impact these scores. Eighty

educational system including grades, testing, privacy and permission acts, importance of attendance and consequences of truancy, expected behavior of children on buses, in the classroom, and general philosophy of teaching in the U.S., for example, the desire to teach skills for life, cooperation and team work and for parental involvement in children's education. She also explained different forms of English (conversational versus academic) and the need for parents to learn English as well as kids.

Cultural orientation also featured a representative from the Department of Motor Vehicles, the LSS immigration lawyer, and a local meteorologist who explained Fargo's weather and demonstrated how to dress appropriately in winter. Two women from the low-income housing sector explained housing rights and responsibilities with a heavy emphasis on responsibilities. For example, they explained tenants' responsibilities for signing and following a lease, rental upkeep including apartment hallways, parking lots, and playground areas, how to install and change fire alarm batteries, and the importance of maintaining a reasonable noise level and having respect for neighbors. Housing officials told me that they had problems with "Africans," who assumed that unsupervised children would be safe and taken care of while playing outside because they had been accustomed to villages and refugee camps where children roamed freely. This was probably true for many Africans, but I also knew many refugees, including "Africans," who were very wary of allowing their children to stray from the apartment and did not blindly trust Americans.

percent of the non-native English-speaking population in Fargo schools is composed of refugees compared to twenty percent of immigrants (for example, Spanish and Chinese speakers).

The first week of orientation focused on social citizenship by emphasizing the rights and duties of social citizenship, including, but not limited to, the U.S. legal, health, educational, residential, and welfare systems. LSS workers explained how RCA operated including how and when to fill out monthly report forms on employment status; they also gave pep talks to the new arrivals. Alma, a Bosniak LSS staff person, concluded her talk by saying, “Be patient, work hard and the freedom is here: it’s up to you how far you want to take it, but it’s hard. You’ve already proven that you are a big survivor – by moving all the way across the world. Most of us have been there and we know how hard it is but you can do it!” Siniša provided welcoming and concluding remarks by listing reasons to love Fargo (low crime rates and low unemployment) and explained the importance of learning English and obeying the laws in gaining acceptance in the U.S. He added that gainful employment was the best way to become like other Americans, and “Americans work hard and when they see that refugees are working hard, they are more likely to accept you.”

The second week of orientation was devoted entirely to employment and training services. LSS employment specialists facilitated this week and the agenda focused on the financial and social capital that employment was purported to bring. The staff explained different kinds of employment focusing on entry-level positions. They also explained part-time versus full-time work, shift work, how benefits were determined, how to punch a time card, and how to save on expensive childcare costs by having two-parent households work different shifts. The discussion also demonstrated how and why taxes are configured; the difference between needs and wants; and options for transportation to

and from work. To boost confidence in refugees who had never participated in wage labor, staff explained that they already had some of the skills they would need to work in entry-level positions, for example, how managing one's family could translate to a job skill. The importance of time was stressed as well as when and how to take vacation, sick time, and give resignations. Staff told refugees that they had the same rights as workers as U.S. citizens, but that they must also follow the same set of laws, such as those regarding sexual harassment. A young female LSS intern and middle-aged male caseworker demonstrated examples of scenarios that could be considered sexual harassment, which usually resulted in some uncomfortable laughter and/or questions about other potential scenarios.

Employment staff also offered tips for success that included: 1) be on time for work, 2) be friendly with supervisor and co-workers, 3) be productive at work, 4) ask questions if you don't understand, 5) take initiatives to learn new tasks and responsibilities, and 6) switch jobs or companies, but always give current employer two weeks notice. On the last two days of orientation, refugees practice work place English and using interpreters, they have a mock job interview and fill out their job applications, a significant feat for those who do not read and/or write in their first language. Assisting clients in filling out job applications was one of the key responsibilities of LSS employment caseworkers. The goal of orientation and employment, according to one New American employment specialist,

is to help you to do many things for yourself... You don't want to sit at home all day long! Work will make you less tired and sleepy. Overall you will be happy while working. You will pay taxes to the state, which will use that money to *help people!*... In the first stage, you could buy a little TV but after two years, you can

buy a big screen TV, or a car to get you to work or shopping. In two to four years, you can buy a car to take you to other states (to visit family and friends). Life is like a ladder to the roof. You can't just get to the roof; you need to go step-by-step.

The subject of employment and “hard-working” Americans came up again and again in orientation, but also in everyday conversations with staff about the most important aspects of citizenship and success in the United States. This demonstrates Shklar's (1992) assertion that employment is constitutive of core American beliefs. Shklar asserts that the ballot and jobs are how equality is expressed in the U.S. An orientation class for new refugee arrivals also demonstrated an emphasis on participation in the free market as a means to becoming a full citizen. Historian Lizabeth Cohen (2003) outlines the post-World War II message that mass consumption was not a personal indulgence but rather a responsibility designed to improve the living standards of all Americans; this message increased in fervor through 9/11 when President George W. Bush encouraged Americans to respond to the terrorist attacks by shopping. Cohen points out that the success in marketing consumerism and home ownership has resulted in Americans asking the public domain, “Am I getting my money's worth?” rather than “What's best for America?” (Cohen 2003:239). Different stakeholders in refugee resettlement asked similarly different questions about refugee resettlement to Fargo, from how refugees could best help Fargo to how Fargo could best help refugees. Unlike some other agencies and volunteers (see also chapters IV and V), LSS asked both questions. LSS did not view refugee clients as passive victims but rather as actors and agents of their own lives, as people who could at once contribute to and benefit from the Fargo

community. Thus, at orientation, LSS began to paint the picture of citizenship as participation:

Citizenship as rights enables people to act as agents. Such a conceptualization of citizenship is particularly important in challenging the construction of marginalized groups as passive victims while keeping sight of the discriminatory and oppressive political, economic and social institutions that still deny them full citizenship. It draws on a dual understanding of power that social work also draws upon: people can be, at the same time, relatively powerless in relation to wider economic and political power structures, yet also capable of exercising power in the 'generative' sense of self-actualisation (Giddens 1991) (cited in Lister 1998:6).

While LSS workers sought to change the behaviors of their clients towards self-sufficiency, they also understood the transformative powers that refugee cultures could have on Fargo. Perhaps this was because so many LSS staff were New Americans. Like other new refugee arrivals, LSS New American staff told me and their clients that they too had a difficult time in the beginning but eventually adjusted to life in the U.S. Thus, LSS staff wanted newly arrived refugees to understand the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead without belittling or underestimating them. For example, one employment specialist explained that the biggest challenges for refugees were the new culture and the dominant religion. The challenge then was how to address the tension between helping clients maintain some sense of their own cultural beliefs while also fostering some degree of cultural assimilation. The fastest way to cultural assimilation was through employment, or economic citizenship.

Refugee Resettlement as the Gateway to Economic Citizenship

Economic citizenship is a broader understanding of the civil, social, and political rights of social citizenship that T.H. Marshall (1950) described (Collins 2008; Kessler-

Harris 2003). In Fargo, a deeply inherent Protestant work ethic manifested itself in the touted value of “self-sufficiency.” Those refugees who demonstrated a desire for economic self-sufficiency, who were not “takers” from the state, and who had a desire for a certain quality of life, which included faith and consumerism, were most welcomed.

At the heart of the debates on refugee resettlement and the social safety net was the entry-level employment sector, one of the most supportive sectors for refugees in Fargo because refugee workers helped staff businesses in a region of the country that continues to lose workers. Out migration, especially of young people, combined with one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country since the 1990s, contributed to the business community’s support of refugee workers and employers, especially for entry-level businesses. In 2001, the *Fargo-Moorhead Forum* asked Ted Hardmeyer, then supervisor for Dakota Molding (which manufactures rotationally molded plastic products) where his business would be without New American workers. He replied, “Honest to God, I have no idea. I don't know if we would have succeeded. I doubt we would have” (*Forum* 2001). When Dakota Molding opened six years ago (1995), refugees comprised nearly two-thirds of the work force. Today (2001) that force measures 70 employees, and 20 of them are recent immigrants.” However, Hardmeyer admitted that turnover rates were “fairly high”,

both because of the monotonous entry-level work and the demand for workers. He asked himself out loud if he exploited new Americans with low wages. ‘I would like to think not, but with the demand the way it was they were willing to take some of the lower-end jobs,’ Hardmeyer said. ‘That's just an economic fact. I would like to think we didn't exploit them but instead we gave them an opportunity and then a chance to move up.’ Hardmeyer said five new Americans are currently supervisors ‘and making nice wages.’ He said two Sudanese men ‘literally run the weekend shift and are in charge of the plant’ (*Forum* 2001).

By 2007, there were several businesses, like Dakota Molding, that appreciated refugee resettlement for its steady stream of new employees. In 2007-08, Cardinal Insulated Glass (CIG) served as a model for businesses seeking to diversify their workforce.⁶ In ten years, CIG increased its workforce from forty employees to almost four hundred (*Forum* 2001). In a 2007 interview with General Manager Dave, he explained to me his culturally diverse workforce:

I just want the best people, the best people that want to work hard and want to own the business. That's who I have working. So it's not something that I deliberately go after or look at; it's nice and I wouldn't want it any other way... I've not had to put an ad in the newspaper for any of them; it's through word of mouth. I'll say, 'Hey we're going to start up a new shift, a new line, I need some people,' and boom, woosh, I have a constant flood of people coming in to apply here... It's all sustaining.

The business sector – arguably the most important sector in refugee resettlement in terms of providing refugees with opportunities to become wage-earning citizens – was conspicuously absent from interagency networks regarding resettlement and social citizenship. I asked employees of CCSS and LSS about the business community's lack of participation in organizational networks and they told me the business sector was not involved because they did not need to be: thanks to resettlement and out migration of young workers from North Dakota, low-wage, entry-level businesses had a steady stream of refugee workers, which meant businesses did not need to recruit.

To get a better understanding about the diversity of the business sector and its stance on resettlement and relationship to organization social citizenship organizations, I interviewed David, the President of the Fargo-Moorhead Chamber of Commerce and

⁶ Other businesses that employed refugees included: Fargo Assembly, Swanson Health Products, Phoenix International, Techton, Smucker's, and several hotels and restaurants.

former employee of LSS. I asked David about the Chamber's relationship with LSS and the County. He explained the relationship between the business, public, and private sectors in terms hard work and collaboration with the whole community's best interests in mind, something he learned growing up in Pelican Rapids, Minnesota, a small town 45 minutes across the North Dakota border (see Figure 6).⁷ David explained,

Both my parents were educators. They were also community leaders, and in my hometown I saw people go to work in the morning and work hard all day long, come home at night, take care of their families, go to church on Sunday morning, and find other ways to spend time helping the community as well... Two primary ways that happened in my hometown of Pelican Rapids were the local Rotary club... and the local, all volunteer Chamber of Commerce... These were business owners that said, "You know what? In order to have a better community we're going to have to help." [...] And so the three entities worked together to help Pelican have a good community and a good quality of life. All volunteers. The Rotary members got paid by the private sector where they went to work. The Chamber was a private sector but these were all volunteers so the private sector was an important component; if it wasn't there providing jobs and pay, the rest of it wouldn't have happened, including taxes for government.

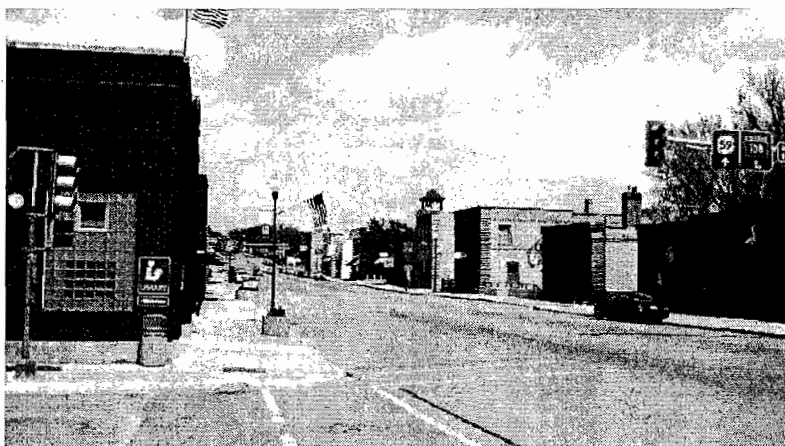


Figure 6: Pelican Rapids, Minnesota

⁷ Pelican Rapids had its own resettlement agency. In the 1990s, it saw a large influx of refugees, most of who worked in the turkey plant. Pelican Rapids had a population of about 2,000; about 700 of these were Latinos and 200 were Somalis. In the early 2000s, New Americans made up about 30 percent of high school graduates, but by 2007, 50 percent of elementary school students were New Americans.

The collaboration Marten described between the three sectors in Pelican Rapids – and which he extended to his Chamber duties in Fargo – was not based on trickled-down neoliberal ideas of self-sufficiency and privatization policies, but a moral relationship stemming from a romanticized notion of the Protestant work ethic and neighborly values in a small town, where until the 1990s, diversity was measured in terms of Swedes, Germans, and Norwegians, and maybe Catholics and Protestants.

Staff at LSS complained about the negligence of the Chamber of Commerce and business community in taking more proactive measures to create, support, and retain positions for refugee employees. At one LSS staff meeting, employment specialists complained that it was challenging to address blatant civil rights violations of employers and employers' complete lack of understanding and information about refugee workers. One LSS worker explained that even though refugees are in the U.S. legally, they “are treated like an illegal” when it comes to employment. LSS employment specialists were careful in criticizing the business community for fear of upsetting the employment sectors for their clients. However, Roy, a white employment specialist in his sixties, who was from North Dakota, told me that he saw blatant discrimination and racism when taking some clients to potential jobs sites. He said that while most employment sites were friendly to refugees because they had been employing refugees for years and already had diverse work forces, other employers required documentation from refugees that they would not have required from someone who appeared to be a U.S. citizen (white, without an accent), which was against the law.

David's stance on refugees as employees and sources of racial diversity were different than Roy and other LSS workers believed. David said,

Now we can embrace diversity and say this is the way the world works; ultimately, this is a good thing...or we can say, eww, not like us, don't want 'em, not in my backyard. [...] Now we've begun to notice with ethnic restaurants and other things that, wow, some of this is pretty cool. Some of this is kind of neat and...if we need employees because we've got three thousand job openings, they're willing to come here and work...taking jobs that other people didn't want... [New Americans] want to be economically self-sufficient; they want to be... reliable, valued employees; they want to enjoy the quality of life; they want to contribute to the quality of life. They don't want to be takers... On the other hand, unfortunately, I understand that there are still times when people go into local businesses and may feel that they're treated differently than you or me. And again it's not even because of their skin color, 'cause again not every ethnic group in our community and region anymore is Sudanese (laughs).

Although David acknowledged that some refugees arrived in Fargo with Ph.D.s and an impressive set of employable skills, most refugees – men and women – began working in entry-level jobs in factories or hotels. Some of these jobs offered advancement; most did not. He also alluded to the fact that, from the business community's perspective, race was not necessarily the *raison d'être* for potential discrimination in the predominately white region; rather, culture or moral understandings about work and self-sufficiency kept some refugees outside of the welcoming circle of economic citizenship.

Siniša strongly believed that work, not school, should be prioritized at the beginning of resettlement; education could come later once a family had achieved self-sufficiency and ceased relying on the state. Others in Fargo strongly disagreed. In response to the increase of refugees in Fargo and the success of businesses like CIG, the Skills and Technology Training Center (a division of the North Dakota State College of

Science), created the Skills Development Project. The project sought to place graduates in jobs with higher pay and benefits than they might have received without the training. Julie, director of the Skills and Technology Center, strongly disagreed with resettlement policies that forced refugees to take low-skill jobs in order to meet the federal refugee resettlement economic self-sufficiency standards. However, newly arrived refugees who attended job trainings were not counted as economically self-sufficient in reporting standards. Staff at LSS argued that recruiting new arrivals to such programs by promising better wages and advancement opportunities upset the reporting standards and threatened the entire resettlement program. Staff at LSS preferred that Julie wait to recruit refugees for her program until after they had been in the U.S. for eight months (when LSS's reporting requirements ended), or to focus her recruitment efforts on secondary migrants. Nevertheless, Julie was invited to present her program to newly arrived refugees during cultural orientation.

Sassen (2003:69) argues that in addition to the social rights of citizenship that correspond to the welfare state, there should be a kind of citizenship that addresses the rights to a job that provides a living wage, the right to economic survival. Instead, the U.S. resettlement program focuses on economic self-sufficiency by promoting work first philosophies that mirror the post-1996 welfare reform tactics that aimed to shrink the welfare state by forcing low-income people into the low-wage employment market. These draconian policies have not proven to keep families out of poverty or economically self-sufficient (Morgen, Acker, and Weigt 2010); they succeeded only in having fewer people relying on the welfare state for survival. Resettlement agencies and welfare

agencies have much in common, but my research indicates that few workers, or even supervisors, recognized the similarities in their work. Instead, CCSS workers tended to view themselves as accountable whereas LSS viewed them as “cold” and LSS workers viewed themselves as accommodating whereas CCSS viewed them as irresponsible.

LSS Workers as Cultural Interpreters

LSS staff facilitated relationships between clients and welfare agencies, schools, healthcare clinics, employers, daycare providers, housing officials, and other nonprofit agencies. In order to best serve their clients, LSS workers had to understand the language of CCSS paperwork, job applications, healthcare and educational forms, and even the language of gratitude and acknowledgement that volunteers often expected (see chapter V). LSS workers needed two types of language and cultural skills: one set of skills was necessary to traverse and interpret the challenging cultural, linguistic, and psychological terrain of social and economic citizenship in the U.S.; another set of skills was necessary to traverse and interpret the cultural, linguistic, and psychological terrain from which refugees came. The purpose of hiring New Americans to work in resettlement was because, ideally, they would have both of these skills sets. In reality, some workers were adept at both of these languages, and others were adept at neither. I did not find country of origin to be a factor in determining who would make a good LSS employee.

The main role of an interpreter is to facilitate understanding in communication between people who speak different languages (which is different than written translation or sign language). A well-trained interpreter will not intervene in the conversation and will interpret everything that is said, in the manner in which it was stated, including tone

of voice, gestures, and profanity. A professional interpreter should not state anything that is not said (including, for example, a suspicion of lying) nor will s/he express opinions. S/he is first and foremost a conduit between people who speak different languages but when appropriate may also act as cultural broker, clarifier, and/or advocate.⁸ Interpreters do not simply translate word for word because languages, individuals, cultures, and worldviews are too eclectic and many words and concepts do not translate so easily. In other words, a good interpreter translates cultural ideas, not just spoken language. Ideally, a good interpreter either interprets *or* advocates; s/he does not attempt to conduct both simultaneously. In the interpreter world, translation and advocacy have different immediate goals; the former is a conduit for understanding and clarification, the latter is a means to influence the outcome of an interaction for a larger cause or idea. According to this logic, advocating and interpreting simultaneously can decrease the impacts of one or more of these goals.

Certified trained interpreters have a code of ethics that includes confidentiality, completeness and accuracy, being unbiased/impartial, and nondiscriminatory. Family members, and even community members who are not trained, do not necessarily know or follow these codes and, thus, professional interpreting ethics can be violated. For example, one of many unintended, potentially harmful consequences of using family members, friends, and other nonprofessional interpreters has to do with the blurring of interpreter and advocate relations to individuals needing services. Without proper training, a person might answer a question, rather than interpret a question, which could

⁸ See, for example, *Bridging the Gap: a Basic Training for Medical Interpreters. Interpreter's Handbook Third Edition* (1999). Seattle, WA: Cross Cultural Health Care Program.

lead to misleading or even (intentionally) false information (e.g. if a husband interprets for a wife accusing him of domestic abuse, or a child interprets for his or her parents at a parent-teacher conference).

Refugee resettlement work was a job of interpretation. With little to no training, LSS staff acted as cultural brokers, advocates, and/or interpreters but not as caseworkers. Two former colleagues of mine at LSS in Sioux Falls were some of the best resettlement workers I have met in terms of case management skills. They employed professional accountability, empathy, some cultural relativism, and a deep knowledge of the public and private sectors in Sioux Falls. The first, Gabriel, was a refugee from South Sudan who came to the U.S. in 1992, and earned his Master's of Social Work in 2009. He married a white woman from North Dakota and in 2010 they had three children. The other was Cindy, a 24-year-old white woman when we met in 2001, who was originally from Canada and earned her Bachelor's in social work. In 2010, Cindy was engaged to a Sudanese man. In the summer of 2005, Cindy explained to me the difference between herself and her New American colleagues in terms of both education and philosophies about the job. She said that most of the New American caseworkers

are not doing social work. They don't know what it is, they don't care. [...] I have been challenged in the last year to recognize that a lot of my misplaced anger and frustration at my co-workers is due to a huge barrier of what are we doing. We are doing different things. [Lila] is not doing social work. She is teaching people how to do things and then they are supposed to go and do it. And I needed to adopt some of that because I have clients who are perfectly able to do that... There are other... clients who are so overwhelmed by... stressors, they cannot do it!

Although LSS preferred that their staff had college degrees in social work or a psychology-related field, such education was not required. The unease between these two

positions in terms of life experience and educational experience contributed to tensions between New American and U.S.-born staff as well as between LSS and other social service agencies. However, a lack of educational qualifications does not directly translate to a lack of professionalism or a lack of empathy.

Abramovitz (1998) calls for the profession of social work to return to some of its earlier more progressive, radical and activist roots. She argues that,

The process of professionalizing caused social work to shift from 'cause' to function,' that is, to move from advocating reform to rendering a technical service efficiently (Lee, 1930). The change won social work greater professional status. But it devalued the profession's historic concern with the community and led it to conclude that social work and social reform did not mix (519).

Like the transformation of the social work profession in the first half of the 20th century, since the 1980s, the publicization of refugee resettlement from the church-sponsored era to current resettlement agencies, resulted in an increased professionalization of refugee resettlement. This transformation along with neoliberal policies emphasizing economic self-sufficiency have, for better or worse, resulted in significantly more accountability from workers and clients (see also chapter I).

However, modeling resettlement after the social work profession runs the risk of depoliticizing resettlement in ways that could lead to more scientific and psychological treatment, catering to the state and other funders and preserving the status quo (Abramovitz 1998:519-520). Ilcan and Basok (2004) argue that "the greater demand for voluntary agencies to be accountable to the state for publicly funded activities... have forced voluntary agencies to move even more in the direction of service delivery and away from social justice-oriented advocacy work" (136). Cultural orientation for new

refugees institutionalized the status quo of social citizenship in Fargo by focusing on police, state welfare programs, education, employment, economic self-sufficiency and increased opportunities for consumerism. It also pointed to the need for refugees to learn how to navigate between public and private institutions, a challenging task when so many public and private institutions argued over the management of the resettlement program.

By 2007, the formal rhetoric of all human service organizations was one of partnerships, networks, and collaboration, with the ultimate goal of self-sufficiency. But different agencies had different ideas about its definition, how to achieve it and what these collaborative networks should look like. Despite the increased professionalization of refugee resettlement, different accountability standards and diverse ideologies about the role of the government, nonprofit organizations, and refugee resettlement contributed to a general dissatisfaction across the arbitrary public/private divide.

Conclusion: Building the Gateway to Social and Economic Citizenship

There were countless individuals in Fargo who embraced cultural diversity and who worked hard to ensure that refugee resettlement to North Dakota would continue. Some of these individuals worked in influential public and private agencies and for businesses that employed refugees; others volunteered. But culture is messy and cultural differences can make people uncomfortable, even angry. As a gateway organization to social citizenship, LSS was at once credited and criticized for bringing refugees, and hence racial and cultural diversity, to Fargo. Importantly, Fargo was home to Native Americans and seasonal and increasingly settled Latino migrants, many of whom began

coming in the 1970s to work in North Dakota's beet fields. These minority groups did not arrive as part of a formal institutionalized process.

As an institution, refugee resettlement was one of the only institutions in Fargo that begged citizens to notice and, sometimes consciously, reflect on their white, northern European, Protestant work ethic of which they were fiercely proud. The story that Fargo residents, including those who worked in the public, private, and business sectors, told themselves about themselves was that hard-work, modesty, and community spirit could solve most problems and provide a good life. These cultural narratives were easier to enact when the community looked the same and shared these ideals. Many refugees did not. Even those proponents of resettlement could forget the quotidian messiness of culture; rather than blame refugees, or culture, or name race, LSS became an easy, palpable target, capable of reforming its workers' practices and its clients.

In the following chapter, I focus on Cass County Social Services. I discuss welfare in North Dakota in the framework of refugee resettlement. I also expand on the relationships between staff at CCSS and LSS and how these relationships can help us to better understand the relationship between the public-private sectors and social citizenship more broadly.

CHAPTER IV
CASS COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES:
RACE, CLASS, GENDER, CULTURE, AND THE STATE

This chapter focuses on the influence of neoliberalism on welfare agencies in the larger frame of refugee resettlement. I explain the relationship between federal regulations, especially 1996 welfare reform and its 2006 renewal, and a relatively homogenous, Christian, white local culture as represented by state employees. I argue that the national project of neoliberalism that stressed economic self-sufficiency and a decreased reliance on the welfare state met a local cultural and moral philosophy of self-reliance, hard work, and modesty, along with new patterns of refugee resettlement, resulting in significant changes to the political economic landscape. Following Sharma and Gupta (2006:13), I show how it was through these political, economic, and cultural policies and philosophies as they played out in everyday mundane activities that the state was reproduced. Through bureaucratic and less formal means, at Cass County Social Services, social inequalities, like those based on class, gender, race, and culture were produced and maintained.

Neoliberalism and the Welfare State

Processes of neoliberalism have aimed to shrink the role of federal government

and shift state services to local governmental and nonstate actors. Anthropological work on neoliberalism in the arena of welfare shows how neoliberalism has altered public-private partnerships by increasing the role of private sector organizations in carrying out state services (Clarke 2004a, 2004b; Ilcan and Basok 2004; Morgen and Maskovsky 2003). Scholars have also demonstrated that neoliberalism most negatively affects women, the poor, and people of color through an increased focus on economic self-sufficiency among groups of people who are overrepresented as welfare recipients and as state employees in the welfare sector (e.g. Goode and Maskovsky et al 2001; Hyatt 2001; Kingfisher 2001, 2002; Mink 1999; Mohanty 2003; Morgen, Acker, and Weigt 2010; Piven 1990; Piven and Cloward 1993; Susser 1998). Therefore, a shrinking, changing state sector disproportionately impacts these groups (Cruikshank 1999; Fraser and Gordon 1994; McCluskey 2003; Morgen 2001). As neoliberalism grew as a focus of exploration in anthropology, more nuanced understandings of how it operates in particular local contexts emerged. Kingfisher and Maskovsky (2008:115) argue for

the need to move beyond abstract and totalizing approaches that treat neoliberalism as a thing that acts in the world. We argue instead for approaches that stress its instabilities, partialities, and articulations with other cultural and political-economic formations, and that direct attention to the ways that culture, power and governing practices coalesce into concrete governmental regimes with their attendant patterns of inequality.

This chapter is an attempt to answer the call for nuanced, particular forms of analysis of neoliberalism by showing how federal neoliberal policies that were initiated in refugee resettlement and in welfare reform in the 1980s and 1990s trickled down to North Dakota resulting in new political, economic, and cultural understandings and practices. For example, the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act

(PRWORA), a hallmark of neoliberal welfare reform, shrunk the number of caseloads on North Dakota's doles and altered the lives of welfare workers and recipients; nevertheless, the state remains the only major player in cash assistance in North Dakota.

While much of the literature on neoliberalism and the welfare state has addressed the roles that race, class, and gender play on uneven, unequal distribution of welfare subsidies (e.g. Fujiwara 2008; Jones-DeWeever, Thorton Dill, Schram 2008; Goode and Maskovsky et al 2002), few have addressed how the everyday aspects of culture – worldviews and understandings about welfare and government more broadly – collide with global cultures in how welfare is distributed.

Cass County Social Services: Infrastructure and Background

Located in a large, four-story brick building in downtown Fargo (see Figure 7), Cass County Social Services (CCSS) was a state-supervised, county-administered public agency. In North Dakota, counties had a great deal of authority. CCSS was divided into programs or units according to the kinds of assistance they provided. The Economic Assistance program employed about 50 staff and included the following:



Figure 7: Cass County Social Services

- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- Adults, Aging, and Disabled Services, which distributes Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- General Economic Assistance, which includes Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (or SNAP, previously known as Food Stamps), childcare, Medicaid, and heating assistance.

TANF was available to families with children who did not have parental support or care due to parents' death, continued absence from the home, incapacity or disability, and who met certain criteria, including citizenship and immigration status and income level. Calculated in the same way as Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA), the amount of the benefit was based on the number of eligible household members, income available to the household members, allowable work expenses and childcare expenses, and the current level of payment. North Dakota had some of the highest rates of two-parent working families in the country, but it was one of 17 states that did not have a poor two-parent family TANF program – only single parents were eligible. According to the Department of Health and Human Services website, the four purposes of TANF were:

1. assisting needy families so that children can be cared for in their own homes;
2. reducing the dependency of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work and marriage;
3. preventing out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and
4. encouraging the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.¹

Most clients who qualified for TANF also qualified for other Economic Assistance programs, like food stamps, childcare assistance, and heating assistance. Within the Economic Assistance program, there were five program supervisors who were each assigned eight to ten eligibility workers who carried a specialized caseload and determined which clients were eligible for which programs. For example, three clusters

¹ http://www.acf.hhs.gov/opa/fact_sheets/tanf_factsheet.html

administered Food Stamps, family Medicaid, Child Care Assistance, and Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Another cluster carried Food Stamps and aged/disabled Medicaid; another Food Stamps, TANF, family Medicaid, and LIHEAP; and the last included Foster Care. One eligibility worker processed all Food Stamp and/or Medicaid applications for new refugee arrivals. She retained the cases through the first eight months and then transferred the cases to another worker with the corresponding programs. The refugee caseload consistently made up about ten percent of the total caseload for CCSS and refugee households were divided among 44 eligibility workers (the direct service staff). Staff attended regular meetings where policy, procedure, and other items of interest were covered

Closely affiliated with the above economic assistance programs were:

- Family and children services was part of CCSS and included adoption, foster families, and child protection services.
- Southeast Human Services was located in a separate building in south Fargo and offered mental health services, substance abuse, disability, aging, and vocational rehabilitation services.
- North Dakota Job Services was a state, not county, run program located in its own building in south Fargo.²

Because the latter two agencies were not located in the CCSS building, representatives from Southeast Human Services and North Dakota Job Services co-located weekly at Cass County in order to work with CCSS clients needing services, especially TANF clients who were required to work with Job Services.³ I was not able to attend any

² For a list of other public assistance programs in North Dakota, see <http://www.nd.gov/dhs/services/financialhelp/index.html>

³ I did not include Southeast Human Services in the study because the mental health and, more broadly, the healthcare sector are outside of the scope of this project.

Children and Family staff meetings but I interviewed three workers. To stress the fact that workers were employees of the state, and to protect anonymity, I refer to CCSS and North Dakota Job Service workers as “County workers” or “state workers” without differentiating between the agencies or between the units or clusters within the agencies.

State workers received more than a year of training, including weeks of in-depth computer training in Bismarck. For the first two to three years, workers were considered “new”. One of the biggest differences among staff at CCSS was the level of education required to work in different positions. All Family and Child Services workers were required to have degrees in social work; most of the TANF and Aged and Disabled Services program workers had college degrees, but not necessarily in social work, and many of the eligibility workers in the Economic Assistance program did not have college degrees although some had higher education training. Examining welfare offices in Oregon, Morgen, Acker, and Weigt (2010) argue that, “Training was an important vehicle for promoting organizational change, including ‘nuts and bolts’ workshops and other workshops designed to address the values, beliefs, and expectations of welfare-to-work programs” (53). In other words, training was about learning how to implement (problematic) neoliberal philosophies, not only the ‘nuts and bolts’ of the job.

In contrast to LSS, County staff were almost all white, female, monolingual English-speakers who identified as Christian. Many identified having German and/or Scandinavian heritage. Out of a total staff of about 135 employees, which served 12,000-14,000 clients every month, fewer than ten CCSS staff were male and fewer than five were people of color. Most grew up in small towns or on farms and told me that outside

of their job, and sometimes their church, they had had little contact with people from other races or cultures. Some had previously moved to another part of the country, or to Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota, but had moved back to be closer to family, because they missed the Midwest, and/or they preferred living in smaller, less crowded areas with a slower pace of living.

Welfare Reform and Refugee Resettlement

In 1996, Congress passed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity and Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), or simply welfare reform. PRWORA replaced the previous low-income family cash assistance program of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) with Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). It ended the individual entitlement to public assistance and gave states unprecedented flexibility in program design. It also coincided with the “perfect storm” of refugee resettlement to Fargo in the 1990s (chapters I and III). Unlike previous welfare programs that supported poor families in caring for their families at home and which promoted education and job training skills, TANF put a 60-month lifetime limit on welfare cash assistance and enforced a work-first attitude by encouraging economic self-sufficiency. It severely cut the educational and work training components of welfare and imposed mandatory labor in exchange for limited public assistance, also known as “workfare”. In short, work became a social duty (Collins 2008; Peck 2001).

The old welfare program, AFDC, gave states money based on its number of clients. But under TANF, a state received a block grant based on a mid-1990s calculus and states were required to meet an overall work participation requirement or face a

potential financial penalty. Since 2002, the statutory requirements for fiscal year (FY) are 50 percent for “all families” (most of which are classified as single-parent) and, in eligible states, 90 percent for two-parent families. In other words, since 2005, states have had to engage half of their TANF cases of work eligible individuals in productive work activities leading to self-sufficiency.⁴ If a state fails to meet the requirements, it risks a federal penalty. In the past, states could receive federal funding by using a broader definition of “work” that could accommodate harder-to-serve populations, like some refugees who came with few employable skills or English. The renewal of TANF in 2006 changed policy to enforce an even stricter “work first” approach.

TANF recipients were referred to the Job Opportunities and Basic Training (JOBS) through North Dakota Job Services and were required to be involved in work activities. Unless exempt, they had to complete a minimum number of hours each week in one or more of the following approved work activities: job readiness, job search, paid employment, high school/GED or education directly related to employment, job skills directly related to employment, on-the-job training, vocational training, unpaid work experience, community service, or child care for another participant involved in community service. Involvement in education and training was limited to no more than 12 months in a lifetime. Unless they were responsible for the care of a child younger than six years of age, participants had to complete a minimum average of 30 hours per week in one or more of these above work activities. If caring for a child under age six, a single

⁴ A work eligible individual is defined as an adult (or minor child head-of-household) receiving assistance.

parent had to complete a minimum average of 20 hours per week.⁵ Due to challenges with English language skills, fewer opportunities to participate in waged labor in home countries, and differing views about the government and welfare when compared to most other clients, new refugees posed challenges for CCSS workers, who found it especially difficult to engage these clients in meeting work participation hours. The differences between JOBS work requirements and a job was that the income earned from JOBS was part of a temporary agreement between the client and the state. As such, clients enrolled in TANF and JOBS did not earn retirement, or any other benefits that come with some jobs. The work requirement was meant to be temporary, and did not guarantee a position after the work requirement ended.

Carey, the supervisor of JOBS in Fargo, told me one of the biggest challenges to implementing the renewal of PRWORA in 2006 were the 12-month limits on educational and training hours for approved work activities. According to Carey, many refugees in Fargo valued education and job training, and they needed English classes to succeed in the job market. The 2006 TANF requirements, in addition to refugee resettlement policies that aimed at economic self-sufficiency as soon as possible, forced refugees into the lowest paid employment sector rather than fostering long-term, more secure, better-paid jobs. This meant that most clients, including refugees (and usually mothers) worked in consignment stores, nursing homes, or daycare centers, which relied on JOBS workers to stay in business. Carey said there were about 25 such work sites around Fargo. Though JOBS staff wanted to diversify the work experience sites, JOBS clients were not always

⁵ <http://www.nd.gov/dhs/services/financialhelp/tanfjobsfaq.html#quest8>

“the most reliable” and so JOBS worked with sites that understood the challenges of their clients. Loren, the TANF supervisor, similarly believed:

I'd like to see TANF have a work program and a training program that allows people to be trained. And not expect that every second person be fully engaged for 31 days every month, that they need not always be active by 4.33 – to account for the odd number of days in the month - and if you miss that, you're SOL (shit out of luck)... We have four months for a refugee. What refugee is going to learn the English language in four months?!... I'd like to see the feds change the TANF rule with New Americans to say that you're like anybody else; you have a lifetime limit of 60 months. Right now their eligibility ends 60 months from *the date of their arrival*... Oh, god, talk about being on the fast track!

Many workers agreed with Carey (Figure 8) and Loren that four to eight months was not enough time for many refugee clients to become economically self-sufficient, but the regulations made it difficult for workers to assist clients through educational and vocational training programs. JOBS and TANF workers understood that “low-wage jobs do not lead to self-sufficiency, nor do they allow most single mothers to ‘make ends meet’ in a sustainable manner” (Edin and Lein 1997 in Morgen, Acker, and Weigt 2010:147-8).

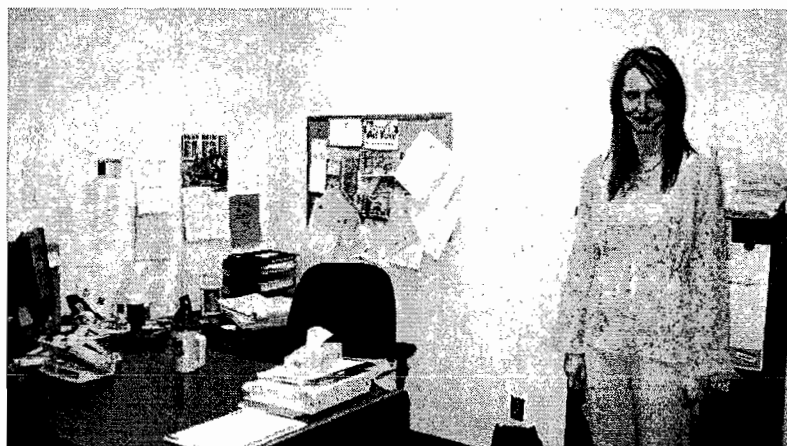


Figure 8: Carey, JOBS supervisor

However, unlike some case managers at CCSS and LSS who tangentially worked to assist clients with reporting requirements and transportation, there was no cooperation between LSS employment specialists and North Dakota Job Services. Unlike LSS, Job Services did not work directly with clients or provide transportation or interpretation; clients had to provide their own interpreter and much of the job search was computer based; clients also had to fill out their own applications and look for their own jobs, both challenging tasks for many refugees. LSS only serves clients within five years of their date of arrival, but they provided free transportation, interpreters, and assistance with applications. According to LSS workers, the postings on the Job Services website were not current. When I asked him who LSS partnered with, Roy, an LSS employment specialist, said:

I know who we don't partner with, who could be a resource for us, and that's Job Services... I've had absolutely no exposure to Job Services and [the] role they play in placing people... They deal with everybody. And I'm dealing with a select population but [refugees] need to find work almost immediately and they're challenged by English, transportation; they can't drive to work... I can't judge Job Services and how patient they are with people who don't have English and have no transportation. I mean, how hard are they gonna work (for their clients)? So we just find it easier to do it ourselves.

According Mersiha, a former Job Services worker, who was from Bosnia-Herzegovina, most Job Services staff sent people of color or those with foreign language accents to her. Mersiha said that a lot of her Job Services colleagues said they appreciated diversity but they "were just being politically correct." Mersiha felt her colleagues' political correctness masked their true feelings about cultural and racial diversity which were feelings ranging from discomfort to dislike.

Due to these language, education, and training barriers, welfare reform was not only about reducing individuals' reliance on the state, it was about reducing certain groups' reliance on the state, especially poor women of color (see also Acker 2000; Davis 2006, 2008; Goode 2002; Gordon 1994; Mullings 2001; Peck 2001; Piven 2001; Roberts 1997; Susser 1998). Welfare reform impacted women more than men, because women generally bear more responsibility for children and as such, they work more part-time or temporary jobs and have a greater need for welfare to supply or supplement other economic means (e.g. Abramovitz 1996; Brodtkin 1988; Collins 2008; Fraser and Gordon 1994; Mink 1990; Piven 1990).

Fujiwara (2008) explains that anti-welfare and anti-immigrant reform measures in the 1990s were inextricably tied to race, class, and gender. TANF barred noncitizens (but not refugees) from receiving welfare. But, Fujiwara argues, this decision was not predicated on differentiating between 'citizen' and 'alien' but rather these policies were about race: "In the case of welfare reform, where the two largest immigrant groups were Asian and Latino/a, *citizenship* was defined by 'race'; citizenship thus became the innocuous demarcating line in lieu of the odious race" (Fujiwara 2008:40; see also Hattam 2007).

Fujiwara (2008) and others point out that welfare reform has several problems: it assumes that adequate jobs exist; that single parents can manage work and family; that those without necessary human capital or structural support can obtain the skills necessary to get a decent job; and that parents who rely on welfare do not face significant barriers to employment; rather, they have become "dependent" upon the system (Fraser

1989; Kretsedemas and Aparicio et al 2004; McCluskey 2003; Morgen and Maskovsky 2003; Piven and Cloward 1993; Susser 1986). In addition to increasing levels of poverty (e.g. Finn and Underwood 2000; Goode and Maskovsky et al 2001; Morgen, Acker, and Weigt 2010), welfare reform has wreaked havoc on welfare workers and the ways in which they viewed and carry out their jobs and their relationships with their clients (Morgen 2001; Kingfisher 2002).

Loren, a veteran caseworker and supervisor believed that AFDC badly needed to be reformed and limitations on lifetime state assistance needed to be implemented, but felt that “PRWORA is a joke.” He recalled explaining the new program to clients:

We brought seventeen families together... just before Christmas, and said effective January 1, you can't go to school... under TANF 'cause you're gonna have to do all job responsibilities. And I think it was seventeen folks in the office... I remember sitting in the room; it was kind of a surreal experience. It's kind of like you were on a drug or something and you remember the room, you remember the people, and I remember my voice, sort of like an out of body – you know when you hear your voice talking? And I just couldn't believe what I was saying to these people. [...] Our jobs, welfare reform, lifetime limits, that would all work really well and it would complete the circle nicely if there were the opportunity to educate people. But there isn't an opportunity to educate people. It's a maximum twelve months... Work opportunity?! Well, I can't say it out loud anymore and feel good about it because there is no opportunities... Personal responsibility? The person who's responsible is the worker making sure that they get the checks to the right person who's owed... The federal reporting requirements are neanderthal. They do nothing more than prove that lawmakers don't have clue one about what goes on in families' lives.

Staff meetings and interviews with County and State workers further supported Loren's message. County staff lamented spending more time on “paperwork” than with clients.

When describing their job, words that County workers used included: “meeting, evaluating, recommending, complying, following up, screening, testifying, verifying, contacting, training, pushing, making ends meet, reviewing, redating, resigning, and

dealing” (with federal guidelines). The primary responsibility for many caseworkers revolved, in large part, around quantifying and verifying need and “punishing individuals who entered the territory of the welfare state... separating the normal from the abnormal, the good from the bad refugees, the responsible from the ‘welfare cheat’” (Ong 2003:126). Loren explained that welfare reform shifted their job from trying to help clients get off welfare to “maneuvering” the system for 60 months, until clients’ lifetime limit was reached. Staff found themselves pushing clients to make extremely difficult decisions, especially because many clients did not understand the complexity of the system, “a system that is,” according to Loren, “a supernova; I mean the damn thing has just exploded and there’s shit everywhere. And the technical challenge that people don’t understand is *absolutely mind-boggling*.”

Many scholars of welfare and the state consider the “technical challenge” to which Loren refers as governmentality. In Foucault’s (1991) terms, “governmentality,” or “the conduct of conduct” are “forms of action and relations of power that aim to guide and shape (rather than force, control, or dominate) the actions of others. In this broad sense, governance includes any program, discourse, or strategy that attempts to alter or shape the actions of others or oneself” (in Cruikshank 1999:4). Governmentality combines techniques of domination and discipline with technologies of self-government towards a specific goal, for example “empowerment” or “self-sufficiency” (Foucault, Burchell, Gordon, and Miller 1991; Cruikshank 1999; Dean 1999).

Governmentality offers a broad understanding of the state, which is viewed as more than an apparatus of governance and more about rule and power through everyday

interactions via social relations, institutions, and bodies that do not automatically fit under the rubric of “the state.” This could include, for example, NGOs, schools, churches, and refugee resettlement agencies (e.g. Gupta and Sharma 2006:277). In this way, neoliberalism “works by multiplying sites for regulation and domination through the creation of autonomous entities of government that are not part of the formal state apparatus and are guided by enterprise logic” (Gupta and Sharma 2006:277; see also Ferguson and Gupta 2002; Hindess 2004; Ilcan and Basok 2004; Isin 2000; Isin and Wood 1999; Lemke 2002; Rose 1996, 1999). Morgen, Acker, and Weigt (2010) outline such logic through a series of competing categories that welfare workers create and enforce in everyday interactions with clients: self-sufficiency versus low-wage work, choice versus coercion, helping versus enabling, paid work versus family and unpaid care work, diversity/equity versus racial inequity/racism, and empowerment versus regulation.

Lipsky (1980:3) calls state employees who deliver the everyday services of the government “street-level bureaucrats.” Others call this level of governmentality among professionals and state workers, ‘experts of subjectivity’ (Rose 1996) or ‘middling modernizers’ (Rabinow 1989; cited in Ong 2003:16). The job of government employees is “to teach clients to be subjective beings who develop new ways of thinking about the self, acting upon the self, and making choices that help them to strive for personal fulfillment in this life” (Ong 2003:16; see also Cruikshank 1999; Fraser 1987, 1989).

Following the Rules: The Culture of Welfare

I argue that street-level bureaucrats’ understanding of the self stems not only from federal welfare policies that trickle down to, for example, North Dakota, but also from

cultural webs that they helped to spin. Workers carried out state policies but they were shaped by relations outside of state duties and arguably even outside of the state. In other words, culture shaped the state just as the state shaped culture. Barnett (2005) argues that neo-Marxist and Foucauldian explanations of governmentality do not pay enough attention “to the pro-active role of socio-cultural processes in provoking changes in modes of governance, policy, and regulation” (Barnett 2005:10). Finn and Underwood (2000:126) explain, the welfare worker, “does not unilaterally impose new rules of order on a passive recipient; rather, the two are bound together in a complex interplay of impression management, where application of impersonal, bureaucratic rules is mediated through a personal relationship” (Finn and Underwood 2000:126). In the following section, I examine how race, class, gender, and culture shape these state-sanctioned, socio-cultural relationships and also how culture shaped the ways in which state policies were carried out.

“It’s just those are the rules” or “the rules are the rules,” were common phrases among County workers, sometimes used while explaining that all clients were “treated the same.” Rather than the arbitrary, flexible interpretations, used by LSS caseworkers, (see chapter III), CCSS rules were viewed as objective and straightforward, if not also complicated. Karen, the new refugee caseworker who presented about CCSS at the cultural orientation for new arrivals at LSS, explained the rules to a new group of arrivals, some of whom were not literate and most of who did not understand English and thus listened to a translator. Slowly and clearly she explained the importance of correctly reporting household changes:

If there is a pregnancy, a baby, you move, get work, everything must be proved on paper, not just verbally. For example, you must show pay stubs, lease, pregnancy letter from the doctor, a birth certificate. In other words, you have to prove everything you tell me. (Laughing) It's not that I don't believe you, it's just those are the rules.

And yet, CCSS workers acknowledged that there was room for interpretation. Loren explained, "They're diverse rules. They're contradictory rules. They're competing rules. They're nebulous regulations."

Workers in Fargo expressed the most frustration with implementing inflexible, ever-changing rules while also maintaining large caseloads. At one TANF cluster meeting, workers discussed their fear of taking vacation and returning to piles of work. Staff complained that high caseloads and overwhelming amounts of paperwork made it nearly impossible to accomplish their jobs within the constraints of a state-mandated 40-hour workweek. Loren told me, "I've worked for 29 years and... I can't do it. I can't do it. I can't keep up... This morning I was in at six o'clock. Last month I worked 48 hours of overtime. I'll work another 25-30 hours of overtime this month." I asked about how much time the average worker spent on paperwork and he said,

Well, one of the problems with the staff is that they lie. They lie...I'm all over them because they're working more than 40 hours and not claiming them. And that's the death...of any organization. So, if we start doing that, we're in deep – [...] That happened once before at Cass County and it cost them almost \$100,000 ... because people were working off the clocks and administration knew it.⁶

⁶ During 2007-2008, significant everyday discussion surrounded CCSS's proposed opt-out of North Dakota's state merit system in favor of their own Merit System consistent with the Federal Merit Principles. The proposal was intended "to make housekeeping changes, to clarify language in rules as it pertains to reductions-in-force and time frames for waivers in grievances and appeals, to promote recruitment through reinstatement of leave tenure, to promote retention through service awards, to provide uniformity and consistency in the Merit System and Classified service regarding assumption of leave and leave schedules, and to provide rules regarding Training and Tuition Reimbursement. However, debates raged between the County and the State for four years and two legislative sessions over just Cause, right to

Rather than holding clients accountable, CCSS reported feeling that the state held them accountable, rather than the clients, for making clients self-sufficient. Establishing an arbitrary division of labor between their responsibilities and the responsibilities of LSS caseworkers was one way that state workers attempted to manage their work hours. For example, during an LSS new refugee orientation, Karen explained when to call her at CCSS and when to call LSS: “You have two very different caseworkers: LSS and me. Don’t call me if your [RCA] check isn’t big enough. Call me about food and medical, only food and medical.” Drawing an arbitrary line between state and private sector responsibilities was very important in the day-to-day tasks of both CCSS and LSS workers. Sharma and Gupta (2006) argue that “The boundary between state and non-state realms is thus drawn through the contested cultural practices of bureaucracies, and people’s encounters with, and negotiations of, these practices” (17). Thus, “ethnographies of the state also involve analyzing how messages about the state are interpreted and mobilized by people according to their particular contexts and social locations” (19). The responsibilities between LSS and CCSS were admittedly blurred and changed based on the individual caseworker, but workers nevertheless constantly attempted to define them, usually by complaining that they were doing the other sector’s job. As such, workers had different ideas about the role of the state. For example, both CCSS and LSS caseworkers

work, service credit restoration, and much more, which is beyond the scope of my dissertation. One worker described the ordeal as “political posturing,” not based in economics “because the money is there.” Essentially, the question came down to, “What does it mean to retain employees based on performance?” According to then-Director Kathy, “It’s a fair treatment issue that is very, very unfair.” In regards to the pay scale, an employee doing the exact same thing for the state as the county may get paid up to \$6,000 less. Furthermore, according to Kathy, “for cause” did not mean that Cass County would not fire people; rather, employees who left their government job would not be punished when they came back.

felt it was the other sector's job to ensure that refugee clients correctly filled out their CCSS report forms. If the client failed to do so on time, or correctly, the LSS workers usually blamed CCSS workers for being lax, cold, or discriminating, whereas CCSS workers blamed the client for not fulfilling her or his responsibilities, which implied responsibility on LSS's part.

While "following the rules" might stem from rules of governmentality - or in Marxist terms, hegemonic understandings of government and work - "the rules" went beyond the confines of CCSS. They extended to how to be a proper citizen, and involved moral sentiments about work, the state, the church, and family. As I explained in chapter I, in various strains of Norwegian culture, there was a moral imperative to work hard and to contribute to the greater good while not calling attention to oneself. At the same time, there were strong beliefs in the American spirit of individualism and freedom. Loren demonstrated some of the benefits and drawbacks to this cultural logic. After explaining the stress that he felt as a result of working in social services for 30 years and the esteem and respect he had for his colleagues, he mentioned that he has been eligible for retirement for some time. I asked him why he stayed and he said,

Because I'm friends with the people who I work with and I respect the work that they do. It's not the clients. It's not the families. It is the coworkers. And if I left, it would be very, very, very, very much harder. So, it would, so you get, in a way you're blackmailed into this damn thing. And I can *do* it (the job) and I can do it well and I can get a lot done. And I'm in great demand (laughing) by... the people around me, asking me questions, and helping... I don't know how I could live with myself (laughing). I do not know. I couldn't... I mean ... if I saw them on the street. Oh my goodness. I couldn't do it. I'd be embarrassed. I'd be ashamed if I left. That's the way I feel.

For Loren, at least in that stage of his life, work meant being responsible to coworkers;

for others, like those working for LSS, work meant a larger sense of responsibility to the community. County workers said they enjoyed their jobs, especially “helping people” and “fixing” problems, but also felt overworked, underappreciated, and always behind. Nevertheless, when I asked about positive or favorite aspects of the Fargo-Moorhead region, County and state staff unanimously responded, “hard working.”

Kahl (2006) argues that while organized religion may not have the same impact on the state as in early centuries, religious values – for example regarding treatment of the poor and afflicted – continue to affect what they once helped create, namely the welfare state. Kahl demonstrates historical and contemporary correlations between religious values and welfare states in Western Europe and the United States and finds that “Societies with Lutheran heritages have the biggest issues with those who do not work because they have the strongest orientation of work as an end in itself. In addition, the welfare state is generous because poverty and social risks are a societal responsibility” (2006:131). Countless people I met in Fargo described themselves as Lutheran, politically progressive, socially responsible, and hard working.

Some Lutheran churches, like those who provided sponsorship to refugees in earlier years, and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, had missions to “welcome the stranger.” But in most ways, the church can choose its patrons and beneficiaries. New American Services tirelessly advocated on behalf of refugees in Fargo, sometimes to the point of agreeing to resettle more refugees than the wider community could arguably accommodate. Cass County Social Services, seeks to “provide quality, efficient, and effective human services.” The state is mandated to serve everyone who is eligible for its

services. Transitioning from a monocultural society with class differences and some increasingly minor Christian denominational differences to a multicultural society with cultural, racial, gendered, and classed differences meant more and a different kind of work for the average employee at CCSS.

By the end of the 1990s, refugees made up six percent of Fargo's total population, but according to Kathy, they consistently made up about ten percent of Cass County welfare rolls. During my first meeting with her in her office in the fall of 2007, Kathy told me she *loved* New Americans, but in 2000-01 Cass County staff and administration were frustrated because they were unprepared for the large numbers and new needs of refugee clients, many of who lacked English or job skills and had very different views of government than U.S.-born citizens. For example, Kathy explained that refugees from the former Communist bloc countries believed that welfare was a right, an unpopular perspective in neoliberal America, where the welfare state was shrinking. Ruth, a white supervisor in her fifties, summarized resettlement from the County's perspective:

Clients weren't being served, they were being dumped... by LSS. And it was real hard for us to manage, but we're such a tiny piece of it. They come in, they apply, they go. You know we're not on the front lines with case management and finding housing and jobs and teaching skills and orienting and networking and all of that. Clients were falling through.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, due to the strain that refugee clients placed on "the system," state institutions challenged refugee resettlement. After more than ten years of fighting resettlement, the state – as represented by CCSS and the schools, which had robust ELL programs in 2007-2008 – seemed to accept that refugees positively contributed to society and were for the most part a deserving group of clients and

citizens. However, overworked state employees also viewed refugees as a particular kind of clientele that required additional work. Many workers at CCSS expressed a belief that refugee resettlement should continue, but at a slower rate, and with more services offered to refugee families from the private sector, including LSS, churches, and volunteers.

Workers also unanimously expressed a need for more cultural awareness for workers and the wider public of Fargo. The difficult transformation for individuals in a homogenous community to a multicultural society must be acknowledged. However, xenophobia and racism continued to play a significant role in ongoing critiques of resettlement.

CCSS and LSS: (Re)drawing the Line Between the Public and Private Sectors

Publicly and privately, in formal interagency discussions and behind closed doors, workers at CCSS and LSS complained about one another in addition to actors in the broader web of refugee resettlement. CCSS workers felt that LSS did not hold its refugee resettlement workers or clients accountable and that speaking another language, or simply being a (former) refugee did not qualify a person to be a good caseworker. Other conversations alluded to heated competition among actors in the private sector over who should deliver nonstate services to refugees and who could do the best job.

Although both agencies' priority was to assist clients in obtaining economic self-sufficiency, the programs and staff at the two agencies had different needs, priorities, and resources. One child protection officer worked with a family who had several cans of food but did not know how to use a can opener. She explained,

I quite honestly don't know how the LSS worker was communicating with these people. They didn't speak *any* English, none what so ever... They are trying to show me that they don't have enough food and they're in this house with all these kids and that they had all these canned goods when they didn't know how to open

them (laughs)... What sticks out in my mind in that case is that my idea of what priorities and needs are for families is so different from the volunteers from the church and LSS. Cause here I am talking about the food for the family [and] there's volunteers coming in putting up curtains (laughing).

Not only were the needs and resources of staff at LSS and CCSS different, but staff at the two different organizations also had different ideas about how to assist refugee clients in obtaining self-sufficiency.

County workers were angry at LSS caseworkers for a variety of things, including how they instructed their clients about ways to get more from state programs. For example, LSS workers allegedly told refugee clients who applied for food stamps and who lived in the same household and shared groceries and cooking to say they were individuals, not a household, in order to get more assistance. Kathy was incensed about this when we spoke in 2007. She explained, "We want to protect the integrity of the system." By "the system," Kathy (who was an outspoken, active Democrat who retired in 2008 and became a North Dakota state representative in 2009) meant, a more clearly defined public sector, or "the state."

Kathy was well aware that the Department of State ultimately resettled refugees but she also understood the resettlement business well enough to know that LSS had a strong voice in deciding how many refugees would be sent to Fargo each year, and it was this that angered her. As the director of CCSS and a notoriously outspoken advocate of the social safety net, she was acting pragmatically in the interests of her staff and programs. While Kathy remained critical of LSS until her retirement, over the years, her opinion about refugees' contributions to the Fargo community and to CCSS seemed to soften. At her last CCSS all staff meeting before she retired in the spring of 2008, Kathy

gave a “Top Ten” list of things she would miss most in retirement. Learning about new groups of refugees coming to the region was first on her list.

When I asked employees of LSS about the differences between their program and the County’s in terms of attitudes and policies towards refugee clients, they described County workers as busy, cold, and “fake nice.” They claimed County workers preferred to hide behind their desks rather than spend time getting to know their clients and they sanctioned clients too often, especially clients who did not speak English. LSS threatened to sanction refugee clients for not filling out their monthly report forms and/or for not attending ELL classes (which they are required to attend in order to receive RCA), but caseworkers never actually followed through with their threats. LSS never sanctioned a client. Ana, an LSS worker from Somalia who came to the U.S. as a child with her family, explained:

They (Cass County workers) don’t care about clients. I interpreted for people there and they don’t explain. I saw them kick people out of their apartment and they don’t think about where the money is going to come from. We think a little more about our clients – we think about where the money is going to come from. We try to find interpreters and communicate with our clients. They tell their clients to call their case manager (at LSS) every time they call Cass County because they say they can’t understand them. Well we don’t understand them either and then we have to call an interpreter to do their work – the same with filling out their paperwork. Why should I have to fill out paperwork for their services? If I can teach a client how to fill out those forms, then why can’t they?

Most LSS workers believed that County workers had more power than County workers felt they had. Like Morgen, Acker, and Weigt (2010), LSS workers understood that, “Since case managers had considerable discretion in deciding what levels of noncompliance to tolerate before initiating a sanction, they wielded a great deal of power over clients” (127). Dženana, a caseworker from Bosnia-Herzegovina complained that

every time she called CCSS to ask about a policy, she received a different answer. LSS workers did not understand the complexity of services, enormous caseloads, and diverse needs of clients within the welfare state, or “the rules.” Sharma and Gupta demonstrate that “following the rules”

inevitably brings forth accusations of corruption. Since charges of corruption are closely tied to questions of legitimacy (a corrupt government is widely seen as an illegitimate one), and since state legitimacy itself depends on what states mean to their citizens, the routine practices of bureaucracies become intimately linked to cultural contestation and construction (12-13).

Thus, when LSS critiqued CCSS for not clearly explaining the rules, they were in effect also critiquing the state itself. The critique of CCSS by LSS workers also provides an important entrance into how County workers conceived of race, class, gender, and culture and how these views influenced how they interpret and carry out welfare policies.

Race, Class, Gender, Culture, and the State

Questions to County workers about family background, positive and negative aspects of the Fargo-Moorhead region, and definitions of a “good life” produced interesting correlations, or rather connotations, between the concepts of “refugee”, “race,” “ethnicity”, and “culture.” Although I never explicitly asked, or even mentioned “race,” workers often brought up race while discussing refugees. In many cases, these terms were evoked to describe refugees, but not (presumably white) people from upper Midwest. In other words, for many, “white” was a noncategory of race. Frankenberg (1994) shows that many discussions of whiteness and Americanness have tended to be “unmarked markers,” an “absence of color” (69). By valorizing difference in terms of diversity, white actors, like some at CCSS, “evade the power differentials among different people

and leaves the idea that people of color or all marginalized people are not necessary for the nation, they are optional and including them might even be seen as an act of compassion” (Frankenberg 1994:69). In other words, the categories of nonwhiteness/non-Americanness and whiteness/Americanness are seen as mutually constitutive categories (Frankenberg 1994:70; see also Fujiwara 2008).

Kristi was a white woman in her forties who described herself as a “tomboy” who rode a motorcycle and like to spend her free time outdoors, especially at “the lakes.” She was married with two daughters and lived in a small town outside of Fargo. She also grew up in a small town in Minnesota and was the daughter of “blue collar workers.” Kristi earned her degree in social work but began her career in law enforcement. Later she decided that she wanted to work with children. When I spoke with her in 2008, she had been working for CCSS for about a decade after transferring from a state welfare agency in a near-by small town. After discussing changes to her job at CCSS over the years (increased accountability) and her feelings about refugee cases (complex and challenging), I asked her to describe her own ethnicity. After a long pause, whispering to herself, and stumbling over her words, she said,

I think I was raised – my... parents weren’t prejudiced, really. You know my dad was in the service; he had black friends and you know, I just, it was, just really never a big deal. It wasn’t really an issue... Actually both sides of the family, there have been times...when they’ve married, to the inter-race, you know black, Native American, we have Hispanic. I don’t know... it was never really an issue (laughs). Never really been, yeah, never really been an issue.

Kristie interpreted my question of her ethnic background as “an issue” and a broader question about *others’* race and ethnicity. In Fargo, discussions about ethnicity and race carried with it elements of “otherness.” So ingrained is the idea that citizens of

Fargo are white Christians, like Kristie, that most discussions about race, ethnicity, or culture meant discussions about others. When I asked questions about ethnicity or race, many people assumed I was talking about refugees and immigrants. Conversely, when I asked about refugees or immigrants, people assumed I was talking about race and ethnicity. The two were often interchangeable.

The percentage of New Americans in caseloads was loosely determined by hand by a supervisor who looked at “foreign” names:

I go through it by hand and I highlight people I think might be refugees and then I check them in the system and look how many people are in that household that month. [I] verify that they arrived as refugees, even if they have become citizens... I am pretty liberal in how I count those, even if they've become citizens, or they've had babies since they've been here that are U.S. citizens right away, I still count that family because they still... have special needs... Part of the reason I do it is so I can keep my case loads even. So that one individual doesn't get a whole bunch of people who don't speak English as well as U.S. born.

For most caseworkers at CCSS, working with refugee clients required a different set of skills than with American-born clients. To ignore this fact, or to fall into a culture blind trap that does not acknowledge cultural differences is to misunderstand the challenging nature of social service work.

Nevertheless, some complaints were based on negative or uncomfortable experiences with people from other cultures and races. For example, caseworkers expressed frustration with the time and patience required for working with interpreters, but they also mentioned inability to read facial expressions of some foreign-born clients and found new smells, like incense or spices, distracting. Interpretation and getting to know about new cultures takes time, and with high caseloads and ever-changing federal

and state guidelines, caseworkers had little spare time. While CCSS workers did receive ongoing trainings in computer-based case management, they did not receive formal training in intercultural communication even though they found themselves unwittingly having to explain cultural differences to, for example, angry American clients who believed that refugee clients were receiving preferential treatment.

Dot, an eligibility worker, said that she heard complaints from some U.S.-born clients about refugee clients. Her white, U.S. clients believed that they had to “jump through more hoops and give more information and get slower service than refugees.” She tried to set them straight, told them that “no one has preferential treatment,” but these clients were nevertheless “very, very angry.” Dot said she almost called security on one man because “he really felt that he was being exploited.” According to such clients, jobs and wages in Fargo suffer because refugees are willing “to work for nothing.” She also heard U.S.-born clients categorize all “Bosnians” as bad because of a few incidents that made the papers (see chapter VI), but “you never ever hear all the whites, all the Norwegians, all the Germans are awful.” Dot believed that some Americans were jealous because refugees were working hard and starting their own businesses, which made some Americans angry. Unfortunately, Dot said she heard more negative things about refugees (and immigrants) in Fargo than positive things. I asked her what was needed to make Fargo more welcoming and she said they needed a two-way street for understanding each other, “We have to understand what you are and where you come from and you also have to understand us. You have to understand that we’re Norwegian and German immigrants.

This is our lifestyle. This is what we're accustomed to." Dot was a married white woman, in her thirties, who had two daughters and lived in small town outside of Fargo.

Like Kristi and Dot, Lisa was a white woman in her 30s, who was married with two daughters, and lived in a small town outside of Fargo (a different town than either Dot or Kristi). Lisa discussed the wider public's anxiety surrounding foreigners. Lisa grew up in a small "conservative, racially homogenous" town in the upper Midwest where, she said, most people, including her grandparents, were prejudiced against Native Americans. She learned about other cultures when she traveled to Spain and Mexico in high school. Her teachers and the experience of traveling abroad opened her eyes to how other people viewed the U.S. For the first time in her life, she questioned U.S. attitudes of "wanting everything right now, materialism, stuff." She appreciated the opportunities to learn about other cultures (see also Hill 2009; Phillips 2004). Lisa believed that many people in the Midwest were closed-minded towards foreigners. For example, she heard critiques of Habitat for Humanity for building a home for a large Iraqi family whose husband was killed while serving with the U.S. military in Iraq. Lisa's husband was critical of refugees and immigrants because he believed they were getting benefits that should go to U.S. citizens. To rationalize her husband's stance on refugees and immigrants, she stressed his civil engagements and desire to give back to his community. After all, she said, "he joined the *National* Guard, not the *International* Guard."

Lisa thought it was important to educate people to understand that many refugees work very hard: "not all refugees are bad, they're not all sitting around." As our conversation went on, she provided more examples of racism and xenophobia, but then

justified them by explaining how little education and experience most people had with other cultures and races. She also told me she believed it was best to have a daycare provider that “looks like your kids.” Then she passionately described her outrage when a young girl in her daughter’s elementary school expressed “anger” towards white people for injustices against Native Americans. Since Lisa did not want me to record our interview, the following is paraphrased from my notes:

Lisa began the story with, “Since we’re talking about race...” Lisa came home from work the other day and her daughter told her that “Katy” said white people enslaved Native Americans. Lisa said repeatedly how upset her daughter had been. I said her daughter had asked a good question. Lisa agreed but felt Katy’s statement has been an “accusation, not a fact.” She was confused because Katy’s father is white; only her mother is Native American. Lisa wondered where this conversation happened: was it in the classroom or just on the playground? She hoped that if such conversations happened in front of a teacher, that teacher would dispel some of that anger. Lisa wondered what Katy’s family talked about at home, where she got that idea. Lisa didn’t know what to say to her daughter as she explained that she didn’t know if their ancestors had participated in those kinds of things, but that things are so much better now; people are not enslaved anymore, but they were. And maybe some of the people who did that in the past, like the people who participated in the Holocaust, were good people. Maybe they were working families and some of them might have thought it was necessary for survival. Lisa said she tries not to talk about opinions about other people around her children (e.g. about refugees or Native Americans, race), because she wants her kids to form their own opinions.

This story shows the ways in which some whites in Fargo acknowledged prejudice against racial and cultural minorities in the region, but often ignored what it meant in the everyday lives of people who faced it (Jensen 2005; McIntosh 1988; Moraga and Anzaldúa 2002 [1983]; Rothenberg 2005). By placing historical acts of violence squarely in the past and ignoring contemporary structural inequalities, which are infused in institutions and taught by parents to children, racism, classism, and sexism are perpetuated.

When I asked Nate how his background shaped his views about his job, welfare, and refugees, he explained, “I like to think I’m not a prejudiced individual. I grew up in an atmosphere, you know, it was white America and... some Native Americans, but generally speaking it was a white population, and I really got to know what it was like to be a minority when I played college basketball.” Nate said he was one of the few white players on the team and felt discriminated against on the basis of race. He “was pissed” that he “wasn’t playing” but comforted himself with the knowledge that he went to college to get an education, and most of those players “weren’t there getting an education, it was to play ball and have fun. [...] I think that from the team, I was the only individual... that graduated from that class.” A key word here is “individual.” Morgen, Acker, and Weigt (2010) argue that,

Many workers valorized self-sufficiency and linked it to ideals associated with individualism in U.S. mainstream culture: self-respect, choice, accountability, and responsibility. An unspoken neoliberal assumption underlies these values: that the individual is solely responsible for her- or himself in a world of self-interested choice-making others (86).

Nate saw himself as an individual, not connected to larger structures and to privilege.

Nate did not mention feeling racially discriminated against off the court, for example, in the classroom or in the employment sector.

Nate also said his parents had been “racist” but “part of it is I think my folks instilled some good values and... you take that a step further when you go to school. You really get to experience some things and I’m pretty tolerant and... I will accept a lot of things.” Nate acknowledged white privilege but choose to ignore it. He later said in partial contrast to his own education, “I know that you’re going to find prejudice

wherever you go... you can do all the education that you want, [but] if you've got somebody that was raised prejudice, unless they take a conscious effort to change that, you're going to be stuck with this type of a person to deal with."

CCSS workers like Nate demonstrated "muted racism." Davis (2007) argues, "the reproduction of white privilege is generated in the absence of blatant racism" (354). "Muted racism" or "muted racializing," is what Davis (2007) calls discussions "that imply race without direct reference to it, [...] instances when race is actually mentioned... but devoid of a critical race analysis" (349). Some workers, like Kristie, when asked about their own ethnicity, answered by addressing their views on refugees and race demonstrating that they do not see whiteness as a race. Others, like Lisa, acknowledged discrimination against minorities but then justified it on the basis of citizens' lack of education and civic commitment to other causes. Nate felt like he had experienced race-based discrimination, but he clearly did not understand structural forms of inequality or racism.

None of my questions explicitly addressed race or racism. Perhaps because other researchers had asked about race or because of their jobs, many County workers I interviewed brought up race and culture on their own terms by explaining how they were more educated and experienced about racial issues than the average (white) citizen. Lisa, Kristie, and Nate all anticipated being called prejudiced (by me, for example) by invoking those who were *more* prejudiced than them. Many spoke to me of their "prejudiced," "close-minded," "conservative," and/or "ignorant" families but seemed anxious and grateful for the opportunity to explain to me that they were none of these

things. Reducing or eliminating racism takes time, perhaps even generations, but scapegoating previous generations' racism should not excuse contemporary forms of it.

Many caseworkers also expressed a desire for more education about the cultures of their clients. Requests to know more details about life in refugee camps, relationships between men and women in refugees' home countries, and cross-cultural ideas about work and government were sincere and important. As Nate explained above, education and desire to understand are important steps in decreasing discrimination and prejudice. While calls for learning more about minority cultures are important, they should not be seen as the only method of decreasing discrimination. In an increasingly diverse, multicultural city, the time commitment required to learn about all of the individual cultures is too great and, frankly, recommending that CCSS workers do this would be unrealistic for already busy workers. However, learning how *structures of inequality* operate, including intersections of race, class, gender, and culture is crucial in bettering case management practices. Learning about structures of inequality, not learning about specific cultural practices would go further to decrease discrimination, prejudice, and intercultural misunderstandings. Many workers understood structural inequality in class terms, and alluded to sexism (especially in other cultures) but few seemed to link those structural inequalities with racial and cultural prejudice and hierarchies; few could differentiate between race and culture because, until they started working with refugees, many of them had not had to. Nevertheless, some were more willing to learn than others.

Gender is also important in these discussions because gender often came up in conversations about race, ethnicity, and culture. For example, there was a strong desire

by some female caseworkers to better understand how women were (mis)treated in other countries; this further strengthened hegemonic ideas about gender relations in Fargo and worked to establish hierarchies based on race, class, and gender (Abu-Lughod 2002; Mullings 2005; Ong 2003; Stoler 2002). Prefacing a desire to know more about gender, something that could potentially unite women, was arguably another way to avoid discussing race (Ong 2003). Ong shows that “feminist” caseworkers in particular had a tendency to view Asian cultures as “patriarchal” without understanding the ways in which patriarchy also operates in U.S. cultures and hence sought to empower Cambodian women more than men: “feminist agents identify ‘culture’ as the basis of problems in Asian families, and thus tend to ignore the way that Asian women exercise power, and the effects of wider institutional forces on families trying to cope in a violence-ridden environment” (144-145). But Cambodian men faced racism and class-based discrimination in wider society, which led to disempowerment of men and contributed to problems between the sexes. In Fargo, I found similar attitudes towards gender and culture, especially among female caseworkers.

Kristie demonstrated a conflation between race, ethnicity, gender, and culture, but expressed a desire to learn more about gender and culture:

I think we’ve come a long ways in this agency to *really* educate ourselves about the culture, not to necessarily excuse behaviors because things are things and rules are rules. But just to really help *us* understand the complexity of things... I’m very interested in how women are treated in the different cultures. [Because I’m] a woman probably (laughs). I’m always very interested in refugee camp experiences... I don’t think we have as an agency a good understanding about the refugee children that are coming here. And parents, the impact of post-traumatic stress disorder that they’re bringing with them because of the things that they’ve experienced.

Kristie wanted to know more information about disadvantaged clients, but within the confines of “the rules.” In so doing, she not only reflected state policies, but she actually constituted its very core and called attention to her power (Sharma and Gupta 2006:13).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to explain the complexities of the welfare state by highlighting the role that welfare reform and refugee resettlement played in the daily lives of welfare workers in Fargo. More specifically, I explained how refugee clients have forced state workers to think about race, class, gender, and culture in new and different ways. I addressed the ways in which these concepts are problematically conflated which arguably results in fear of and prejudice against refugee clients. However, it is important to mention here the lack of vocabulary to discuss race, ethnicity, gender, and class. When talking about their own cultural practices, many people in Fargo referred to their “traditions” or “heritage,” not their race or their ethnicity. This is not to excuse prejudice or justify fear but rather to introduce the ways in which race, class, ethnicity, gender, and culture are socially constructed in Fargo.

Consciously or not, caseworkers participated in racializing refugee (and nonrefugee) clients. Because Fargo and CCSS were comprised of mostly white people, refugees forced workers to (re)think about their own “race,” which resulted in racializing. Omi and Winant (1994 [1986]) describe racialization as

the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice or group. Racialization is an ideological process, an historically specific one. Racial ideology is constructed from pre-existing conceptual... elements and emerges from the struggles of competing political projects and ideas seeking to articulate similar elements differently.

The racialization process implies negative treatment of racial minorities, and there is much evidence of this in Fargo. However, many caseworkers were not only open to, but excited about opportunities that they had to meet and work with people from other cultures. And refugees did not sit idly by as white workers racialized them; in fact, many refugees overtly challenged such treatment (see chapters VI and VII).

In the next chapter, I emphasize the crucial role of volunteers and other private organizations in the refugee resettlement process. In North Dakota, the state has not retreated or diminished; in fact, it remains the only player, some said the “bully on the block” when it comes to providing cash assistance and employment services to citizens; however, the significant increase of refugees to the region has resulted in a greater need for private sector organizations to address the new needs of diverse citizens that a neoliberal state cannot provide.

CHAPTER V
VOLUNTARISM, NEOLIBERALISM, CHRISTIANITY, AND THE STATE

It's a combination of God whispering in their ears and a mothering instinct that
can't be contained.

Denise,
Professor, Volunteer, and Foster Parent

This chapter addresses the role of volunteering in a neoliberal era and juxtaposes it with the strong historic and religious role that voluntarism played in the region. Lutheran Social Services relied on volunteers to carry out their mandates. Volunteers played an important role in the initial few months of resettlement process, but they also played an ongoing role in refugees' lives years long after their arrival.

In Fargo, rates of voluntarism were high before the downsizing of the state under neoliberalism. I argue that voluntarism did not increase as a result of neoliberalism, but that how the community viewed voluntarism changed. I describe the crucial role that volunteers played in helping refugees adjust to life in Fargo but also the unquestioned, even celebrated, power they had in shaping refugees' access to social citizenship. I provide examples of heterogeneities among volunteers and argue that calls for increased voluntarism are not only part of the "withering away" of the state under neoliberalism, but also part of core cultural beliefs in the upper Midwest. I argue that volunteers served

as foot soldiers for certain forms of citizenship, both positive and negative, progressive and conservative, rooted in Christianity and the Protestant work ethic.

Voluntarism in a Neoliberal, Christian State

Voluntarism has deep roots in U.S. national culture. Historian Michael B. Katz (2008:165) notes, “Although the independent sector has never met all the needs of poor or otherwise dependent Americans, its essential components – charity, voluntarism, and philanthropy- can claim a long history and an essential role in American social welfare” (13). In other words, voluntarism is not new, but the ways in which it has been deployed by the state since neoliberalism emerged in the 1970s has altered the relationship between citizens and the state (e.g. Allahyari 2000; Cruikshank 1999; Susser 1986). Hyatt (2001) claims that

In contrast to that image of the citizen, whose social contract with the state once included the expectation that the state would take a major role in providing, among other services and amenities, a ‘safety net’ for the poor, the ‘volunteer’ is a new kind of political subject, one who is deemed better adapted to the particular requirements of the present form of neoliberal governance” (205).

Responding to critiques that neoliberalism was resulting in government becoming less relevant, President Clinton, in 1997, just after passing welfare reform, argued that voluntarism and government should be seen as partners, not substitutes (Katz 2008:164). During a national community service summit in Philadelphia, attended by Clinton and other former Presidents, two uneasy but celebratory variations on that theme emerged: on the one side, political conservatives seeking to privatize government argued that voluntarism could help replace an oversized, incompetent state. On the other side, progressives saw voluntarism as “a strengthening of democracy, a devolution of power

not to individuals and private corporations but to local democratic institutions and self-governing communities” (Barber 1997 cited in Katz 2008:164).

Katz argues that in light of Clinton’s slashing of funds for public benefits and tearing away the social safety net through welfare reform, skeptics and critics viewed his calls for voluntarism as more in line with conservatives. Since the 1990s, problems with relying on voluntarism rather than the state emerged: these included lack of training and accountability and logistical problems. Loren, a County worker in Fargo, praised the efforts of volunteers, but highlighted the challenges of relying on volunteer labor to carry out what he viewed as the state’s responsibility:

I think volunteerism... is a valuable part of the fabric but I don’t want to rely on it because in my experience... there’s volunteers who provide transportation, volunteers who provide interpreter services, volunteers who teach people how to drive, [but] when supper’s on or when the kids need to be picked up, they’re out of there! And I can understand that. They’ve dedicated their free time to doing this. But there is *no way*, I mean, when it really gets tough, volunteers typically tend to really drop off... You pick and chose your clients. We don’t pick and chose our clients (laughing). We serve everybody.

Loren’s point supports Katz’s critique of the unquestionably celebratory nature of voluntarism. With good reason, Americans take great pride in giving back to their communities. However, in reality, Katz argues, Americans are reluctant to spend their volunteer time or money “on people unlike themselves, on institutions to which they do not belong, or on causes outside their neighborhoods” (2008:165). Most volunteers prefer to devote their time and money to causes close to home, which challenges democratic processes of voluntarism in a civil society that would ideally go beyond one’s own backyard to “invigorate government through the creation of dense networks of individual

relationships which in turn create the bonds essential for civic engagement and effective democratic governance” (Katz 2008:163).

The state only sanctions certain forms of volunteering. The Corporation for National and Community Service, under the Office of Inspector General, defines volunteers as

individuals who performed unpaid volunteer activities through or for an organization at any point during the 12-month period... The count of volunteers includes only persons who volunteered through or for an organization - the figures do not include persons who volunteered in a more informal manner.¹

This definition includes individuals who donate time to organizations from their paid work schedules, well-earned retirement time, or educational pursuits. The state and society tend to deem such volunteers as worthy citizens. Good citizens are economically self-sufficient from the state; great citizens also give back to their communities through culturally-sanctioned civil engagement. “Volunteering” has come to be understood as a break from wage-earning economic activities in the public sphere rather than unpaid labor. The state determines “the nature and degree of the participation of the poor in (and their exclusion from) community-based organizations and local-level politics” (Hyatt 2001:223). Ethnographic evidence has shown that “a culture of volunteerism, self-help, mutual assistance, and reciprocity has long been well established in poor communities” (Hyatt 2001:222; see also Abramovitz 2001; Bookman and Morgen 1988; Naples 1998; Stack 1974; Susser 1982, 1986, 1996).

Those individuals who rely on the state for services and/or who provide unpaid labor to families, friends, and other informal “survival networks” (not through formal

¹ <http://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/about/technical.cfm>

organizations) are not constituted as good citizens in a neoliberal state because, “While the middle classes are to be redeemed through their willing participation in unpaid labor, all of the poor, even the ‘deserving’ poor, must be transformed through their forced participation in paid labor, however low their wages may be” (Hyatt 2001:213; see also Michaud 2004). Ross (1983) describes “survival networks” as responses to “various forms of state action (or inaction) ranging from the complete neglect of the poor to the particular forms of community intervention” (e.g. the War on Poverty) (cited in Hyatt 2001:207-208). A higher proportion of people of color, especially African-Americans, Native Americans, and Latinos live in poverty. Thus, the neglect of survival networks in the defining and praise of voluntarism is also racialized.

The Corporation for National and Community Service conducts surveys in order to obtain information on rates of volunteering, characteristics of volunteers, and to analyze civic life markers in the U.S. Since 1989, the Midwest region of the United States has had the highest volunteer rate among U.S. regions for adults, with a rate of 23.9 percent in 1989, and 30.2 in 2008. In 2008, North Dakota ranked 10th in the nation for volunteering with 34.6 percent of residents, compared to the national average of 26.4 percent. Volunteering North Dakota residents contributed 17 million hours of service and ranked in the top ten for all age categories and in the top five for older adults.² Of all volunteers, the survey reports that 36.2 percent of whites and 19 percent of Native Americans volunteered for organizations in North Dakota; but no Blacks, Asians, Latinos, Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, or people identifying as mixed race volunteered.

² <http://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/ND>

North Dakota is an overwhelmingly white state, but these figures may also point to problems with the definition of volunteering.

In addition to class and race, gender also impacts definitions of volunteering. Women work more hours than men and in more temporary and part-time jobs with fewer benefits. Women earn less; own less property; have fewer rights and less political clout; and live in greater poverty than men (e.g. Vickers 2002). As a result of their relegation to reproductive labor (child rearing, household duties), and exclusion from paid labor (e.g. Acker 2000; Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992; Lamphere 1987; Sacks 1989), women have long demonstrated a culture of voluntarism, self-help, mutual assistance, and reciprocity in poor communities and tend to rely more heavily on informal survival networks (Bookman and Morgen 1988; Davis 2007; di Leonardo 1986; Hyatt 2001:222-223; Naples 1998; Stack 1974; Susser 1996).

In order to better understand the links between class and gender, feminist scholars have analyzed the diverse ways that women participate in unwaged labor (e.g. Lamphere 1987; Sacks 1989). Di Leonardo (1991) defines 'kin work' as the "conception, maintenance, and ritual celebration of cross-household kin ties" (in Brettell and Sargent 2005:381). She shows that more women participate in kin work than men and argues that this is universal and cross-cultural; however, women's perception of cooperation involved in such work varies across race, class, region, and generation in regards to housework, childcare, care of the elderly, et cetera. Di Leonardo argues that problems with undertaking kin work – and I would add participating in survival networks – have to do

with falsely dichotomous cultural constructions between altruism and self-interest that are not necessarily mutually exclusive (1991:387).

Similarly, understandings of voluntarism and unpaid labor should be reexamined in light of neoliberalism. For some women who volunteered with refugees in Fargo, voluntarism could be seen as a “natural” extension of their private sphere kin work writ large in the community. Such women felt a need to participate in care work among needy groups. For other women, volunteering was a way to participate in the public sphere, make friends, and network. Most of the male volunteers I met were in retirement, or semi-retired and volunteering was a way to give back to the community but also of utilizing time once spent in the paid labor force. Volunteering was also an important and demonstrative aspect of Christian faith in Fargo.

Hondagneu-Sotelo (2008) paints a more positive picture of volunteering in communities of faith. Highlighting how religion (including Christianity, Judaism, and Islam) promotes social justice and inclusion, she demonstrates that many religious activists are not in line with the inherently conservative groups that garner national media attention. Rather, she argues that faith-based activism has an important place in the field of immigrant rights and should be “understood in the context of the hostile reception that greets new immigrants, the deeply religious nature of both immigrants and the United States, and the changing role of religion in American public life” (7). Religion, she argues, can be a vehicle to move away from racism, xenophobia, and anti-immigrant nationalism towards “a more welcoming democratic, inclusive society” (8).

My work in Fargo strengthens the point that, “religion can provide social movement actors with moral justification and motivation for action” and vital resources (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2008:19). For example, Denise began volunteering when she began working with Sudanese for a series of articles she was writing about refugees in Fargo. Denise spent countless hours with Sudanese unaccompanied minors (see Chapter VII) and adopted two of them. When I asked her why so many women volunteered with refugees, especially children, she said, “It’s a combination of God whispering in their ears and a mothering instinct that can’t be contained.” “A mothering instinct” denotes a gendered component to volunteer work that was informed by a religious, and a moral obligation to take care of the community’s children, in this case refugee children.

Critiques of voluntarism as an extension of neoliberal practices or as compensation for a weak state overlook the religious meanings and motivations for volunteers in Fargo. While it would be difficult to separate the political and economic relationship between voluntarism and the state, it is important to mention the cultural and religious nature as well. Hondagneu-Sotelo’s celebration of religious voluntarism highlights the religious nature of the state (see also Daly 2006). She argues,

Certainly religion is part of society, but religion is recognized as separate from secular institutions. This means that challenges to both state and market forces may be launched and nurtured through religious institutions. In this regard, religious authority, faith-based morality, and the ‘higher law’ of god and the scriptures may be used to persuade others of the need to remedy injustices in secular institutions (21).

Quadagno and Rohlinger (2009) provide historical evidence from Puritan settlers to President George W. Bush’s public support for faith-based services for the deep influence of Christianity on the U.S. state. They argue,

The United States was founded on the principle of the separation of church and state. The lack of a religious cleavage formalized in frozen party systems, coupled with an antipathy to a strong state, has allowed religious pluralism to flourish. As a result, the welfare state does not reflect a single religious tradition, but rather included elements of both the Catholic concern with social justice and the Calvinist doctrine that the slothful poor should be forced to work... Welfare states have enduring characteristics, rooted in deeper values, which are not readily changed by short-lived movements of either the Right or the Left (262; see also Daly 2006).

Many state workers in Fargo expressed unsolicited religious viewpoints to me and some lamented the formal separation of church and state because they felt that welfare combined with religion could help their clients. Ann, a middle-aged white woman, became a social worker because she had been a single mother who benefited tremendously from AFDC. She wanted to assist women like herself, but felt constrained by federal policies who forbid her to offer Christianity as a means of alleviating some forms of stress in clients' lives. She explained,

When you're a single parent, I think you do it [because you] have to do it. I had many of my friends [ask], 'How did you do it?' [...] I have a lot of Christian background and faith. And I think that's something that a lot of our clientele is missing today. I think that's why maybe there's a lot of depression and anxiety. 'Cause we've put too much stock in human beings instead of... our ultimate being and we can't talk about that because of ... Church and State, we can't bring up God. You'd like to sometimes, but you just don't dare. But I think a lot of them (clients) are lacking that Christian background, that church family that supports you. I mean I had a lot of [clients] that do go to church and it's amazing what that church family does for them. It's kind of like their own community, their own little city within the city.

Like Denise, Ann showed that mothering, gender, and religion were intimately related to one another. Ruth, a supervisor at CCSS, told me she was not religious, but added,

You know it's kind of funny, I'm not attached to a religious organization and I don't consider myself religious at all. But a lot of my attitudes were formed as a kid from church. I was raised Baptist and they've always had kind of a social college kinda element to it. So that's kind of ironic I guess. And you know when I

was in high school, we did some stuff in Chicago, at settlement houses and at a church there, went there a couple of summers and did stuff. And I'm a product of the 60s, the *late* 60s. So I suppose... that helped shape who I am today.

Ruth acknowledged the cultural influence of religion in encouraging citizens to give back to their community and/or to give to impoverished communities.

Like Hondagneu-Sotelo, I met countless progressive Christian activists and volunteers in Fargo who were tireless in their fights against xenophobia, racism, and other forms of discrimination and prejudice. Some of them worked for state institutions, some of them did not. Because of their efforts, there is less discrimination against newcomers to Fargo. I also met Christians who demonstrated palpable fear, racism, and prejudice against New Americans and others perceived as outsiders. Again, some of them worked for state institutions and others did not. There was a broad spectrum of Christians in Fargo. Just as refugee and immigrant groups should not be homogenized (see, for example, Flores and Benmayor 1997; Ong 2003), neither should Christian volunteers.

Volunteering with New Americans: Challenging and Perpetuating Neoliberal Citizenship

There were several venues for volunteering with New Americans in Fargo: churches, schools, and organizations like LSS, and the Giving+Learning Program (see below). These small, flexible programs provided services that government-funded agencies could or did not. However, smaller nonprofit organizations that were part of the neoliberal social safety net posed a new and different set of problems than the more bureaucratic state agencies, especially in regards to accountability. Stalwart volunteers devoted countless hours and car mileage to driving refugees to work, appointments,

school, grocery stores and specialty markets, and churches. Without them, many families would not have learned how to use electric appliances, dress appropriately for the harsh climate, or navigate an overwhelming U.S. grocery store, much less the social safety net, or countless other daily tasks that are often taken for granted (see also Pipher 2002).

However, as with caseworkers, refugee/volunteer relationships were built on differential access to local forms of power and knowledge they played an important role in shaping how citizenship was viewed and enacted in Fargo.

In addition to being economically self-sufficient, good citizens were expected to look and act a certain way. In addition to race and gender, the way a person smelled, dressed, sounded, and acted had an impact on his or her citizenship standing. In Fargo, some of these qualities included shaking hands when you met someone new, smiling (even to strangers on the street), and making eye contact. Several people told me they had a difficult time reading blank or angry facial expressions of some refugees; conversely, some refugees told me they could not understand why Americans smiled so much. In 2001, I was driving a young Southern Sudanese woman to an appointment and there were photo albums in the backseat. She asked if she could look at them and I said yes. She remarked that I was smiling in all of the pictures so “I must be a very happy person.” Taken aback, I tried to explain the importance of smiling in America, but she did not understand why people would smile unless they felt happy.

Volunteers expressed a variety of motivations for working with refugees: religious and/or educational reasons, a desire to teach, to learn, to make friends, as something to do in retirement, for curiosity about newcomers to Fargo, and/or they had

been recruited. Of the 13 volunteers I interviewed, 12 were retired or semi-retired; five were men and eight women. Of the 12, seven volunteered through the Giving+ Learning Program, which I discuss below, two volunteered through LSS, and two were independent of organizations. One was referred to me and another I found because he commented about refugees in Fargo on my blog.³

Gordon was one of the most active volunteers I met in Fargo. He became involved with refugees in 2000 through his Presbyterian church. He started by driving one refugee family to church, but learned more about refugees from another congregante, a Sudanese man who had been working for LSS as a caseworker. Gordon retired when he was 65 after working for a Canadian Steel Firm for 32 years. After retirement, he was looking for something to do. He found working with refugees through his church and with LSS to be very rewarding. After driving a Liberian family to church for a few weeks, he found that they needed more support. He and his wife began driving their kids to school and various appointments. Then they started helping several other families too. Gordon's deep level of commitment points to the necessary and powerful role of volunteers in refugees' lives.

The amount of unpaid labor and financial resources that Gordon devoted to refugees (mostly to single mothers and large families from Liberia and Burundians from Tanzania) was remarkable. In driving refugee families to various appointments, schools, jobs, and church, in just one year, Gordon drove more than three thousand miles within Fargo. In 2007-2008, gas cost more than four dollars a gallon, thus he spent a great deal

³ <http://girlinthenorthcountry.wordpress.com/2008/03/21/integration/>

of money. For years, he and his wife purchased many things (clothes, appliances, toys, food) for refugee families, but by 2007, as a result of the recession, they had to curtail their spending habits.

In addition to driving, Gordon taught refugees how to dress “properly” in the U.S. Gordon said it was particularly difficult to explain the need for undergarments, how to try on clothes in a dressing room and use supplies for women’s monthly cycles. He and his wife explained proper hygiene habits (one refugee attempted to put deodorant on over her clothing, another on her face), how to safely and effectively wash clothes and dishes in a machine, which cleaning products should be used for what surfaces, and how to use a breaker switch. They taught refugees how to change light bulbs, shop in big stores, use EBT cards (food stamps), fill out job and welfare applications, cash checks and use the banking system, buy and take medication, time (and consequences for being late), and how to get around town by bus, car, and foot. While most caseworkers at LSS tried to help their clients with these tasks, caseworkers had many more clients than the average volunteer and thus volunteer labor was indispensable, especially for those refugees who came from refugee camps or countries where they had little, if any, experience with modern appliances, processed food, and urban living. Volunteers tended to have more time and more flexible hours than caseworkers, especially those who were retired.

Like case managers, volunteers wanted refugees to become economically self-sufficient, but they differed from case managers in how long this process should take, and the means by which it should be accomplished. I asked Gordon what self-sufficiency meant to him and found that his definition was broader than independence from the state.

Gordon described self-sufficiency as the need for everyday knowledge to help make ends meet, especially for refugees when they first arrive, and for those relying on the welfare state (see Scott 1998). He lamented how difficult this process of learning a new culture could be and the trust necessary to make it happen:

Well, self-sufficiency means to function on your self. Know... how to catch a bus... where to buy your groceries, know how to do your laundry, the ironing, just know how to function in everyday life. Know a little bit about electricity... And though we do have seminars to try to teach 'em, I am sure they are overwhelmed and they find this very frustrating...

In addition to helping refugee families learn about necessary day-day-day activities, Gordon also helped them manage the welfare system, which he described as especially challenging because some families were always in need, very impatient, and not very understanding of bureaucratic government programs; this frustrated *him*.

Volunteers like Gordon enjoyed helping refugees, and their work improved the lives of countless refugees, but they upheld a moral and cultural hierarchy, which placed Americans at the top and refugees at the bottom. Throughout my interview with Gordon, he described his relationships with refugees in a paternalistic manner. Lange, Kamalkhani, and Baldassar (2007) argue that mostly elderly, white volunteers with Afghan refugees in Australia had “a propensity to infantilise them, which could be interpreted as the tutors seeking to maintain a position of superiority” (39). For example, one day Gordon stopped at LSS during a busy day of driving Burundian refugees around town. He expressed annoyance and suspicion about a Burundian man having “too much cash.” A caseworker explained that his company paid well and gave employees bonuses and overtime pay. Gordon nodded but did not seem convinced. Gordon seemed

exasperated or fatigued as he continued to list other things that bothered him about this family, like the way the wife sat on floor when she peeled and mashed potatoes, “She doesn’t need to sit on the floor,” he said emphatically, “this isn’t the African desert!” Later, he said that LSS needed to tell people at “those classes” (cultural orientation) not to sit on the floor. Gordon displayed ample evidence of infantilizing refugees and feeling morally superior to the people he worked with. However, without such volunteers, refugees in Fargo would be helpless. Some refugees pushed back, calling attention to, and possibly upsetting, the power relationship (see chapters 6 and 7). Gordon described a scenario in which he was trying to help a mother at the bank:

I was helping them with the bank account one day... and the mother took the bank book away and said, “No, no.” And finally I just said, “Ok, that’s it. Then you do it yourself.” And then Lutheran Social Services phoned and talked to the parent. I guess he complained and [LSS told him,] “Hey, trust the people that are helping you. You’ve got to be careful, but trust them...” We find that hard to understand, why they want to do it their way, and we try to help them, and... we take them to the bank and teach them and teach and teach. So that’s hard, but I guess it will take time.

Building upon Marcel Mauss’s (1970) notion of the gift, Harrell-Bond (1998) asserts that aid debases the one who receives, especially when there is no intention (or ability) to reciprocate; “the act of giving is not simply mechanical; the gift defines the status and power relationships which exist between the giver and the one who receives it” (149); gifts do not come without self-interest whether given by the state or by individuals.

As an upper-class, well-intentioned Christian white woman, who was not formally employed, Bea was a good example of the kind of volunteer in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, who saw refugees as “recipients of aid.” Through her church, she had volunteered with refugees for more than 20 years and spent endless time, energy, and

love, not to mention a great deal of money in helping Cambodians, Ethiopians, Afghans, Bosnians, and Somalis. She explained to me that she believed that all refugees should have a commitment of about a 12-member team for the duration of at least a year, and “preferably for a lifetime.” She said,

Honestly, preferably for a lifetime for me, to be a mentor and friends... I just think that with that support there's nothing those families can't accomplish... I mean we have such wonderful people in the Midwest, [and] I really think that other communities in [the state] should have the opportunity to help these people... you know just like a sprinkle of them, a few families here and there and shore them up and love them and welcome them and help them for the rest of their lives.

During the course of our interview, Bea cried several times when recounting a particularly positive story of a refugee who managed to pull him or herself up by the boot straps. She told “her” refugees that their kids should be at the top of their classes so they could go on to live the American dream and their kids could have everything, just like American kids had. In other words, Bea's ideas of a good citizen had to do with being economically independent and providing not only love, but also material culture to one's children. She said, “I do think that if some of these people weren't struggling so much I believe they would make better personal choices and we wouldn't see so many refugee names on the crime lists, the court lists.” Rather than attributing the struggles of refugees as a result of social inequalities, Bea attributed them to a lack of “better personal choices” and a need for more emphasis on hard work and self-sufficiency.

Such paternalistic attitudes toward refugees were problematic because most refugees did not have the same access to resources as U.S.-born citizens and because the idea that refugees needed “a 12-member” team denied them any of their own agency.

However, some critics of self-sufficiency (e.g. Cruikshank 1999) overlook the important and necessary empowering aspects that self-reliance brings. It is important to recognize that processes of social citizenship that aim to make citizens self-sufficient can be oppressive but they can also be liberating. For example, refugees who have come from more oppressive states and who have survived various forms of state-sponsored persecution and violence have opportunities in the U.S. that they did not have in their home countries. In this way, empowerment should also be seen as a strong form of hope and resistance to multiple forms of oppression, providing refugees with a crucial sense of personal power and self-worth.

Volunteers assisted refugees in becoming upstanding members of the community and thus many of them tended to not only pass along tips about dressing and being on time, but also cultural beliefs. For example, being friendly is not integral to survival, but it is integral to establishing a reputation as an upstanding citizen in Fargo.

The Giving+Learning Program

Founded in 2001, at the end of the refugee boom to Fargo, the Giving+Learning Program (hereafter the Program) was an example of a civic organization that emerged organically to address the needs of what it viewed as an overwhelmed refugee population. It paired refugees mostly with retired volunteers and college students who provided English language skills, which the organization saw as the biggest barrier to full membership in society. English Language Learning (ELL) classes were available to adult learners at local schools, but families faced enormous challenges with transportation, childcare, and employment schedules. Aware of the barriers to English language

acquisition, the Program provided funds for childcare (including to family members and neighbors) and transportation to tutoring sessions. In 2007, the program boasted more than five hundred volunteers who had assisted hundreds of refugees, usually tutoring one to two hours per week.

As a strictly nonprofit, church-sponsored organization with a staff of two and a half, the Program had a great deal of flexibility (Figure 9). Volunteers for the Program face no reporting activities and no training or background checks. This was a point of contention with LSS, which conducts background checks on all of its volunteers. Like at CCSS, most volunteers at the Program were white, Christian women, although there were a few men. Since its founding in 2001, the program expanded; while it still relied heavily on retirees, it also recruited college students and other community volunteers for tutoring. It sponsored summer camps for New American mothers and children, and hired a part-time employee who helped refugees with their permit tests and driving lessons.



Figure 9: The Giving+Learning Program staff in their office

Muriel's name often surfaced in conversations about refugees in Fargo. Muriel was a retired professor of French, an active member of the Catholic Church, and one of the founders of the Program. Countless people told me to talk to her because they lauded her and the Program as an example of excellent organizational leadership for refugees.

Muriel believed that one-on-one mentoring was the best possible scenario for assisting refugees with English language learning and for building bridges across cultures. She also saw the kind of relationships that developed between mentors and tutees as a way to decrease xenophobia and racism:

There is... hidden racial prejudice. It's been focused before on American Indians because that's the only minority we've had. And it's pretty deep. So that you may not even be aware that you're doin' it and I hear it over and over again, such as..." I can't tell you where they're from but they're dark." Because everybody here *isn't* dark. And I notice it myself. I mean anytime I'm in a group anywhere, everybody's white, so I think to pretend it isn't here is pretty unrealistic. I *think* what I see with the Giving+Learning is that if you were sitting here with me, and you had a conversation for every week for an hour, you become very real, and I become very real and I would probably be sharing life stories and family stories. It's all we do. So that particular barrier-breaker may be more valuable than picking up how to say "chair" and "table" and "silverware." But I think... this is a very isolated part of the country.

Unlike many County employees, and more in line with views of LSS staff, Muriel was not afraid to discuss race and racism. She acknowledged the power of mentors in shaping their own and others' views about race.

Shirley, who had recently finished her Ph.D. in Education and was in her early sixties, was a volunteer with the Program. She explained to me her realization of what structural inequalities were and how "appalled" she was to learn and realize what this meant. For this transformation in thinking, she thanked her graduate level classes in multiculturalism that focused on the history of Native and African-Americans in the U.S.

The classes made her angry and motivated to do something about prejudice and discrimination. She started “awakening to prejudices,” and decided to write her dissertation on literacy acquisition and maintenance of culture among refugee learners. She volunteered with the Program to give back to the community and in hopes of finding New Americans to participate in her dissertation research. At first she tried working with Bosnian Roma (see chapter 6). For five months, with the help of Bosnian interpreters, she tried to gain access to the Romani community, but did not succeed in finding anyone to interview for her project or who could explain Romani culture to her. In describing those months, Shirley said that she was trying to “access” Romani culture, and she felt “scared,” “frustrated,” “constrained,” “hesitant,” and “pressured” (for example, to buy rugs that Roma offered to sell her). After she was not able to find any Roma to interview, she decided to work with Southern Sudanese language learners instead.

Shirley provided vivid examples of the moments when she forced herself to confront her fear of people of color, especially black men. In telling me how she found interviewees for her dissertation research, she explained a first meeting with one of her male Sudanese interviewees:

I approached every person, every male on campus, you know, of a different culture and ethnicity than my own [and] I was surprised at the great number of individuals who possibly could fit that description [e.g. who were black]. So I decided to sit down and calm down and try to wait it out. As I was waiting, there was an open area...where... a very tall gentleman was leaning on the trash containers smoking a cigarette. And I thought, “Hmm.”... I went [over] and I asked if he was the individual, and he looked down from his big height and said, “You have found me.” So here was another individual that I would be fearful of in another situation.

Like CCSS workers (chapter 4), Shirley often used the word “ethnicity” in place of race.

For another interview, Shirley hesitantly went alone to meet an older Sudanese man, who was also working on his Ph.D. in Education. Taking charge of her fear, she forced herself to go into the school and meet with him. Recounting this scene, she said,

I was not ready to make the emotional connection. I did not expect to have that happen. Everything dropped away, it was one human being interviewing another and sharing the sadness, what had happened to that individual and the trauma experienced by that family. What also came forth was the love and the family commitment that was different from my background. In the area in which I grew up [Chicago], many women were raising their children without a father image or role model in the home... But perhaps – I hesitate to bring the word “race” in, but that may be what some people perceive if individuals don’t look like the person doing the looking – there appears to be a bias... And there are instances that reinforce that kind of thinking. But what I was faced with was nothing that would indicate that at all. Love, honor, fidelity, going through extreme conditions to hold the family together, to help them make a new life in a country other than their country of origin. And I did not expect the connection that this is the home now, this is their home, and this is where they’re choosing to stay. Citizenship was sought and gained, and the individuals I interviewed were interested in supporting their homeland, but they saw themselves and their family as Americans, as being active participants in the community, the American community of which they were a part.

The Sudanese man that Shirley interviewed challenged her deeply entrenched beliefs that citizenship meant a relationship between an individual and one nation-state. Shirley came to see that citizenship had as much to do with contestation and belonging, sometimes involving several cultures and nation-states at once, as it did with formal legal status with clearly defined rights and responsibilities (see also Yuval-Davis and Werbner 1999; Yuval-Davis 2004). In talking about her experiences in the Sudanese community, Shirley’s descriptive words changed from feeling scared, pressured, and hesitant as she did among Roma to “connecting,” “listening,” and feeling pity. By taking what she called “a leap of faith,” Shirley began to *unmute* and give voice to the racism she admittedly carried before she took graduate courses for her Ph.D. and began working with refugees.

Shirley's attempts to consciously combat her own lack of knowledge and fear of people from other cultures were remarkable. However, it was not all encompassing. Shirley taught English to one Southern Sudanese woman with the hopes that she would agree to an interview with Shirley. Shirley tried several times to schedule the interview but the woman always had an excuse for not being able to make it. Finally, Shirley found an interpreter, a man who was related to the woman, and the woman tentatively agreed to an interview. Shirley told me that, during the interview, the woman continuously rocked back and forth. I asked Shirley why she thought the woman was rocking, and Shirley responded,

I believe, from what I could see and determine, the participants of male ethnicity spoke for themselves; they were assured. It was the participants of female ethnicity, they seemed to want and need the approval or acknowledgement or permission from their husbands or a male in their family.

Instead of questioning the woman's desire to be interviewed, Shirley believed that Sudanese sexism caused the women's discomfort. Whatever her reasons for rocking back and forth, the woman had clearly been uncomfortable. Shirley should have ended the interview. However, she interpreted the woman's discomfort through her own biased lens of understandings of sexism in Sudanese culture, about which she knew very little.

Like Shirley, Glen learned about structural inequality, especially racism, through his volunteer work with refugees that started after retirement. Glen was excited and felt incredibly privileged to have New American friends. Ten years ago, Glen said, he did not know anyone from another country. Then he started volunteering for the Cultural Diversity Resource Center (CDR). Glen was half Norwegian and half Swedish and referred to his ethnic roots several times. When I asked him to explain Norwegian/

Swedish Fargo culture, Glen said, “80 percent of the people around here say one thing to your face, something politically correct, and then turn around and believe something else.” According to Glen, the city-supported CDR so that they could say they did something about diversity, but they did not deal with diversity in a systemic way. Glen explained to me how powerful he felt racism in Fargo to be by telling me that for the decades, he was “a closeted Democrat” at his job as an actuary. He was afraid that, as a Democrat, he would not be accepted by his co-workers, or might even be fired. He saw well-qualified men, mostly from Asia, interviewed for open positions, but were always turned down for the job. Glen “didn’t have proof,” but he suspected that race had something to do with it.

After he started volunteering at CDR and later at the Program, Glen began to notice structural inequalities. He explained that a friend of his, a black woman, had been pulled over by police for speeding. She had been driving her boyfriend’s car and her boyfriend had a criminal record. Glen went with her to court to fight the ticket and could not believe the differential treatment he witnessed between black and white defendants. He saw “a white kid with three prior convictions of drunk driving get off.” Glen’s friend had to pay a 700 dollar fine for speeding. The difference, he said, was “skin color and having a lawyer.” Glen went on to describe how “bitter” and “outraged” he was at the system. He “used to be more optimistic about the way people treat each other.” Ten years ago, he said, he thought differently. “But now,” he said, “I think people always have and always will treat each other with prejudice and discrimination.”

At one Program appreciation coffee, where volunteers came together a couple

times per year to share stories and offer mentoring tips, I met Ilene. Ilene told me she had been volunteering with New Americans for almost 15 years. She and her husband had been farmers. After he died in the late 1980s, Ilene did not know what to do with her time. In 1993, she started volunteering at LSS. Her first family was a single Armenian mother and her children. Ilene noticed that the family did not have any curtains and they lived on the first floor, “where people could see right in.” Ilene made the family some curtains, and over the course of the next 15 years, she made about 600 more curtains for New American families. Ilene took great pride in making apartments feel more welcoming by hanging curtains and photographing the families and then framing their pictures to hang on the walls. In the 1990s, Ilene often helped with apartment set-ups. She said, “I don’t like to brag, but I have helped hundreds of New Americans.”

Like Gordon, Ilene had driven refugees to job interviews and other appointments, but by 2000, because of poor health and the challenges of getting around, she cut back on her volunteer hours. Since the early 2000s, she had been working with young men from Sudan. She pulled out several pictures of a man who went back to Sudan for seven months. Delighted to show these photos, Ilene said that he was so grateful to her for all of her help that one day this six-foot-six inch-tall man “just reached down and hugged me.” Ilene’s life had been enriched by her experiences with New Americans, and vice versa. In some ways, retired women and men like Ilene and Glen needed New Americans as much as New Americans needed them. Several volunteers told me they needed to feel needed; other mentioned the desire to meet new friends and they wanted to feel as though they were still full citizens. Unlike when they were younger, raising families, participating in

the labor market, and/or traveling, some women and men felt that the refugees and tutoring (or civic engagement in general) brought the world to them and made them feel like “worthier” citizens.

One of the part-time staff members at the Program referred me to Doug, a man in his sixties, who learned about refugees through his job as a Handiwheels driver. Leah told me that I should talk to Doug because of his good heart, his desire to get to know refugees, and his remarkable life after having survived Hodgkin’s disease in his twenties. Doug, a tall, wiry white man, and his wife owned a frame shop for about 20 years until lack of business forced them to close it. Doug was an amateur nature photographer in his free time and after each of our meetings, he sent me thank you notes on cards with a photograph that he took. At our first meeting, Doug spoke of his deep appreciation for the prairie and nature. Slowly he began to tell me about his friendship with Simon, a Sudanese man he met while working as a driver.

Doug looked forward to his conversations with Simon about topics as wide ranging as food, transportation, jobs, and dating. He found it strange that Simon wanted to get married but refused to marry his current girlfriend because he wanted to go back to Sudan to find a wife who would be more subservient than the Sudanese women who were “spoiled” in America (see chapter 7 and also Shandy 2007). One Thanksgiving, Doug brought Simon and his extended family a deer that he had hunted, and the men became fast friends. Doug also started speaking with other refugee passengers and became friends with men from Somalia. Unlike some volunteers, who appeared to be drawn to refugees because of their suffering, Doug stressed that he would prefer to know more about

refugees' culture, not about war. Doug was not interested in making refugees into proper citizens per se, he wanted a mutually respectful relationship. Doug demonstrated the dangers of homogenizing the dominant white culture. Through Doug's experiences with refugees, friendships emerged, not out of feelings of civic responsibility, but because he connected with refugees as people and friends.

I interviewed women in their eighties who saw tutoring refugees as an extension of previous work, for example, as activists on behalf of women, people of color, and the Democratic party. These women did not like the stereotype of older women as idle; they understood how racism, classism, and sexism operated and sought to combat it from an early age. For example, Joan grew up in a "very Republican family" in New Jersey. She attended New York University and later Columbia, became a registered nurse, and married a strong southern Democrat, who became a professor. From the East Coast, they first moved to Denver, Colorado, and then to Minot, North Dakota, where they raised three daughters. Joan moved to Fargo after her husband died. I asked her why she volunteered and she said, "You take me off guard because there are so many things that you volunteer for. I mean even with your children, you just are volunteering all the time. Either you're a 4-H leader or whether you're a Brownie leader, I worked... at Minot State University as a volunteer..." As Joan and many feminist authors pointed out (e.g. di Leonardo 1991; Hyatt 2001), distinguishing between care giving, unpaid women's labor, and volunteering was a challenge. Joan saw her role as a volunteer as an extension of her previous and work experience with her family.

Joan also openly discussed racism as a problem in Minot, especially the refusal to discuss race and discrimination and prejudice against Native Americans. However, she believed that Fargo was a better place for refugees than larger metropolitan areas like New York because

in New York you would be up against... so many different ethnic groups that they [would] have not been exposed to, even in Somalia or Liberia. I mean this would be just so daunting to them. Here they're just dealing with white people, probably German, Norwegian, Scandinavian... On the most part, it's friendly and it's easy to assimilate.

When I asked Joan if it was difficult to move from a dense, culturally diverse part of the county to a more rural, homogenous place like Minot, she said that it was a great place to raise a family and they traveled a lot, which made things easier.

Because of the Second World War, Mary Jean (Figure 10) proudly finished college at Iowa State University at a time when significantly fewer women than men attended college. She married her high school sweetheart and converted from the Presbyterian to the Catholic Church for her husband (which was rebellious in the 1950s Midwest). She spent years challenging the Catholic Church, especially on abortion rights. She angrily left services that preached against abortion. In order to stop her from embarrassing him, her husband brought her the Sunday paper, made her breakfast in bed, and they agreed that she did not have to go to church any more. Much to the chagrin of her mother and some neighbors and friends, in the 1960s, Mary Jean and her husband took in several male graduate students of color as boarders. Again to the outrage of community members, when she was in her thirties, Mary Jean took a college level Home Economics class that went to Europe for five weeks. She cooked enough food for her

husband and their five children and went on the trip. When she turned 40, Mary Jean got unexpectedly pregnant and threatened to abort the child if it were not a girl. To her husband's great relief, it was a girl, and they kept the child. Soon after, in order to prevent herself from getting pregnant again, Mary Jean got a hysterectomy. Having a hysterectomy was illegal at the time unless the woman's life was in danger and she had her husband's and a church's consent.



Figure 10: Mary Jean in her apartment

In 1980, Mary Jean ran for office as a Democrat but did not win, perhaps because of the Republican landslide victories that year. She told me she felt discriminated against as a woman during her campaign and while volunteering for the Red Cross:

I went door-to-door and campaigned. I was told by – I would not say intelligent people – but college educated people that you should be home baking cookies for your grandchildren. At the time I didn't have any grandchildren, all my children were in school, but I didn't have any grandchildren... Another woman asked me,

'Who's going to take of your husband if you win?' I... was married to an attorney who was gone three, four days a week... nobody ever asked him, who's going to take care of me when he's gone... but those were comments that I received when I ran. [...] I was a stay-at-home mom so to speak but I was always involved in community activities, I did not have to be a wage earner... [but] when I filled out the little blank of occupation, I did not put housewife. I was not married to a house, and I was not solely a homemaker. I was a community volunteer and I had my thirty-five year pin from the Red Cross... It was extremely rewarding time of my life because I could get out into the world, work with people and broaden my horizons. I guess I've always been one to really want to broaden my horizons because I'm involved in the Giving+Learning [Program] and the university classes that are taught here...by professors from Concordia, NDSU, UND. I'm just not wanting to sit in a wheelchair; in fact I don't even own one (laughs).

Mary Jean did not have to participate in the paid labor force because her husband was a well-paid attorney, but she did not want to be sequestered in her home. For Mary Jean, volunteering was a way to better herself and the community. It was not an extension of her motherly or private sphere duties, rather it was a way to participate in the public sphere assisting the community.

Volunteers related to refugees through their own life experiences. Despite generational differences, Mary Jean felt connected to refugee women she tutored because, like her, they were mothers and women. Like several tutors, Mary Jean was outraged at the racism and xenophobia against refugees in the upper Midwest. She worked with a number of Somali women (who are Muslim and usually cover their heads) and strongly believed that the U.S. citizenship test was biased against Somalis because the examiners, who could chose from a long list of questions, would ask Somalis more difficult questions than other groups of refugees. When I asked her why she chose to work with the Program, she said she "needed to be needed." She also strongly believed that refugees should learn the English language, like her ancestors from Europe did.

Lie et al (2009) demonstrate that, for older people, volunteering is an expression of citizenship. They argue that voluntary organizations depend on the unpaid services of older volunteers, a majority of whom are women; thus, shifts in welfare policy tend to emphasize self-sufficiency, often to the detriment of vulnerable members of society, like the elderly and refugees. Older people turn to voluntarism for two main reasons, for leisure and work, and for care and civic consciousness. In their study, older volunteers demonstrated a strong commitment to society that counterbalanced individualistic and instrumental reasons for volunteering promoted by the state and the market. Government views of volunteering tend to be seen as a route to paid work, where citizens are viewed as workers and consumers (see also Cohen 2003); on the other hand, older volunteers saw voluntarism in line with the 'common good' and feminist perspectives of 'caring citizenship'.

Helen became involved in the Program because she wanted to be useful; she was in her eighties and, despite ongoing health concerns, she "did not want to do nothing" and she enjoyed "helping people." Like Mary Jean, Helen saw herself as a trailblazer for women. The child of poor immigrant farmers who had a "pioneering spirit," Helen grew up in a small town in northern Minnesota and identified herself as Czech and Norwegian. She married and had three children and worked at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, for years, where she met Muriel, who recruited her for the Program. Throughout her life, Helen was involved in the League of Women Voters and the American Association of University Women. In 1965, she attended a women's conference in Houston, Texas, where she saw Gloria Steinem speak. After she retired,

she moved to Slovakia and taught English for four years through a missionary organization. She also traveled with friends to Malaysia, Thailand, and China and all over the United States.

Unlike many volunteers, Helen acknowledged the power differential between mentors and refugees. The first person she tutored was a Kurdish woman from Iraq who survived Saddam's 1979 attack on a village in Kurdistan. Regarding their relationship, Helen said,

She was a very, very pessimistic person and after a while I just could not stand working with her anymore. She never saw the bright side of anything. She had no children to occupy her time, she had no personal resources... she wouldn't learn what I was trying to teach her, so I basically gave up on her... but I really pitied her and that's not a good feeling to have towards someone you're working with.

Helen understood that pity had to do with power. Some volunteers portrayed refugees via positive or negative stereotypes: either as poor people to be pitied or uncivilized Africans who needed uplifting. Helen saw refugees as part of the community but understood that many people did not feel the same way that she did. Joan, Mary Jean, and Helen were exemplary volunteers in terms of open attitudes towards refugees. Generally speaking they displayed little prejudice and some awareness of discrimination against refugees; they also challenged the social hierarchies that so many average citizens and some volunteers displayed. Part of this had to do with their class; all three women were college-educated, well traveled, and politically progressive. Other volunteers had very different lives.

In 2008, Vonnie was an 86-year-old volunteer with the Program. As a poor white woman and with the help of the state, civil society, and her own initiative, Vonnie

overcame poverty and abuse to become a celebrated volunteer praised in neoliberal terms. Her difficult childhood and marriage as well as her experiences with the state and private sector as a former client strongly influenced her role as a volunteer and the way she viewed poverty, race, and culture.

Vonnie told me that the first refugee with whom she was paired was a Somali woman whom she did not like because the woman was too quiet and cold, not friendly or talkative. Sometimes the woman was not at home when they were supposed to meet and when Vonnie asked her sister where she was, the sister was also “rude”, so Vonnie ended the relationship. Her next assignment was a young African man (she did not know from which country). Vonnie did not like him because when she called him, she had to “listen to *awful* African music for five minutes.” Vonnie compared refugees with American Indians. She said, “they have no sense for time; they don’t like to work.”

Shortly into my interview with her, after discussing her mentoring of refugees only briefly, Vonnie began an unsolicited testimonial. She was born into a Norwegian-American family of 15 children in western North Dakota. Her parents were strict, religious Missouri Synod Lutherans. Her father was a severe alcoholic, who regularly beat his wife and kids, and by the eighth grade, Vonnie was forced to quit school so that her father could send her to neighboring farms to work; she “had to work like a dog at home too.” Vonnie said that the values she learned growing up were religion, how to work, and respect – “but not respect for one self – you don’t take care of yourself at all, just respect for others,” which she values today. Vonnie also said that she and her sister were “abused” by their brother. Vonnie married a man who continued to abuse her body

and her labor and who eventually left her destitute, depressed, and alone with his equally abusive family and three small children, including twins. With help from the state welfare program, she eventually pulled her life together and moved to Fargo where she found work, began acting in a local community group, and participating in various programs like the Program. Vonnie told me she felt like she was “coming of age,” learning new things and enjoying life in ways that she could not do when she was younger, poorer, and in abusive relationships.

Vonnie’s story highlights the extent of the Protestant work ethic in the upper Midwest. Vonnie’s racialized perspective on refugees, American Indians, and other people of color had as much to do with culture as with race and class. By culture, I mean a worldview that takes into account ideas about work, money, time, family, gendered division of labor, spirituality. The emphasis on self-reliance, hard work, modesty, friendliness, and respect for others (but not oneself) was not unique to Vonnie. It manifested itself throughout human service agencies and nonprofit organizations, became strongly in the neoliberal era, and informed how refugees experienced social services.

I met Chris as a result of a post that I made about refugees and integration on my blog. The day after Chris first commented on my blog, Siniša (the Director of New American services) approached me to talk about Chris’s comments. Siniša had been warning refugees about Chris for sometime and kept a file on Chris because he believed that Chris was dangerous to refugees and LSS. Before coming to Fargo, Chris had established a record of critiquing resettlement agencies in his native Chicago and in Minneapolis. He contributed to a blog about refugee resettlement that had a strong

nationalist, racist, anti-refugee resettlement and anti-government attitudes.⁴ Although Chris himself was an avowed “refugee advocate,” cognizant of structural forms of inequality, which he felt resettlement agencies perpetuated, he contributed to the blog because it was a good way to vent his frustrations with resettlement agencies. Chris wrote on my blog that he felt drawn to refugees⁵

initially by my knowledge and concern about what brutal dictatorships around the world have done to people. Much of it we supported in our cold war struggle with totalitarian communists... I also know what it is to be brutalized. I got an early education when I was bullied as a child. I suppose most of [us] have. When I became an adult I became fascinated with how power is used and often abused.

In my three-hour interview with him, he spoke about his political views (radical democrat to more libertarian) and his shock at the neglect and “abuse” of refugees by resettlement agencies. He claimed that LSS (and other agencies in other cities) did not help refugees find jobs. They purchased cheap, shoddy goods for refugees’ apartments; he felt refugees deserved better. Chris went to garage sales and looked through garbage containers to find refugees better quality furniture and goods than the standard Walmart goods that LSS purchased. He argued that LSS could do the same.

Chris attempted to attend meetings between refugees and caseworkers at both LSS and CCSS and threatened to call the police if he was not allowed in. Representatives from the agencies described Chris as belligerent. Chris rationalized his behavior as challenging both a bully system that did not have refugees’ best interests in mind and a “public” agency (LSS) that needed to be held accountable by citizens. In some ways,

⁴ <http://refugeeresettlementwatch.wordpress.com>

⁵ <http://girlinthenorthcountry.wordpress.com/2008/03/21/integration/>

Chris provided an apt critique of resettlement in terms of a lack of accountability and the relationship between refugee resettlement and the job sector in North Dakota. He believed that the resettlement program was little more than an economic boon to the state of North Dakota, which was losing its population and needed more workers. He did not believe that LSS was doing its job training workers or helping them apply for jobs. He thought there should be more assistance for refugees in general, and LSS should be held responsible for this. He also believed that Fargo had a “small town” mentality; everyone knew everyone else and like him, refugees were not “in the know.” To paraphrase Chris, refugees suffered from lack of information about the strategies towards social citizenship and thus they would not be able to achieve the status as “worthy” citizens. However, the means with which Chris interacted with the system on behalf of refugees discredited the power of his critique. His belligerence masked an irrational, perhaps misplaced, anger. Chris was not the only volunteer whose life was fixated on bettering the lives of refugees, but he was the only volunteer that caused LSS to question the safety of their program. For example, Siniša told me that he believed Chris capable of entering LSS with the intention of committing violence.

Other than Chris, the average volunteer I met was not familiar with LSS mandates and did not have a strong opinion about the resettlement program, other than it was a good thing for the Fargo community. The directors and supervisors of other nonprofits, however, continued to critique LSS. Muriel, the director of the Program, regularly called LSS to complain about their lack of collaboration, but according to LSS, she refused to meet to discuss collaborative projects. Muriel told me,

I think they have forgotten how to collaborate. They can't do it all by themselves. *Nobody* can. *However*, are they asking others to interact? Uh uh. I don't think it seriously cuz I talked to the director of Cass County Social Services and she said she was ready to bring criminal charges against LSS for the way they were misusing their funds. She *didn't*, but I mean there's been a long history of *not* liking each other and not sharing. I don't think you can survive without collaborating. I don't think there's anything you can do all by yourself.

Representatives of LSS repeatedly told me that they attempted to create an active partnership between LSS and the Program on several occasions. As the gateway organization, LSS staff tended to see their role as fostering these collaborations between refugees and other community members. The more relationships that developed independent of LSS, the more successful the resettlement program would be. It was unclear to LSS exactly what governmental and other nonprofit agencies wanted from them; from some, they were not doing enough to help refugees integrate into the larger Fargo-Moorhead community, and for others, LSS was over involved (see chapter 3).

Whether upper level organizational actors got along or not, all of the public and private programs were clearly necessary to ease refugee's adjustment to life in the United States. As one LSS worker told me, LSS did not get along well with Muriel, but one afternoon she overheard three or four Program volunteers, discussing how enriched their lives were because of the Program and the refugees they met. Cindy said, unfortunately, they do not hear positive comments like that nearly often enough. It made her proud of the resettlement program for the kinds of relationships it fostered, but it also made her proud of the Program for what they did for refugees on a day-to-day basis that LSS could or did not.

In 2009, Muriel won a national prize from a large-scale investment firm focused on elderly “social innovators,” which included a check for \$100,000 to be used for future work. According to local sources, Muriel did not give the money to the Program; rather, she kept it for herself. After increasingly strange and inappropriate actions, Muriel’s boss and co-workers met with her to express concern about her mental and physical health. She reacted with anger, and before quitting, she told local donors that the Program would end when she left. After scrambling for months to secure donors, in 2010, the Program was surviving with one and a half full-time staff. Muriel’s former colleagues attempted to meet with her several times, but she refused. In April 2010, they had still not discussed the conflicts, or strange behavior, and none of the staff believed that Muriel would give any money to the Program.

Regardless of class or organizational affiliation and job, the people with whom I spoke and who had spent their lives in North Dakota, unanimously praised hard work and civic engagement as crucial factors towards good citizenship in Fargo. Like Cass County workers (chapter 4), volunteers praised the benefits of working hard, saving, buying only what you need until you know you have enough, and earning one’s way as a citizen. Although there were significant variations in how they viewed the role of the welfare state, they all emphasized hard work. Many also mentioned the need for churches to get more involved in refugee resettlement again. I think this can be explained by strong Christian values that are imbued in organizations’ and in individuals’ lives. For example, Mary Jean who was a strong supporter of social welfare, and a strong critic of the Catholic Church said,

You've got to have somebody when you come here and I think you have to go through a church... The government isn't going to take you by the hand, you have to go to the government to say, I want a job, the government isn't going to go to you and say we need you... But a church group may. [...] I would [also] encourage new Americans to be joiners in Y activities, in city functions even such as attending school board meetings, get involved in your children's schools and learn with them and get involved in going to city council meetings, learning how we operate in the United States and what our government, how it evolves and what it does.

Mary Jean did not see herself as a "housewife," but as an educated woman, mother, and community volunteer. Because of her race and her upper class status, Mary Jean was the kind of volunteer who was lauded as an exemplary citizen in Fargo. Because of her gender and her age, and the fact that she did not participate in waged labor or politics (she ran for election but lost), volunteering made her feel like a more worthy citizen. As such, Mary Jean advised refugees to follow this path.

Likewise, caseworkers at LSS who were white, Christians and raised in North Dakota believed that the churches could play a larger role in resettlement. Roy, an LSS employment specialist who had lived in North Dakota for most of his life, said,

Even though the federal government supports the refugee program, I think – and this is not meant as a criticism against churches because they do *a lot* – but I think they could do *more*. I remember a time when someone needed help or was hurting, they *always* turned to the church. They always turned to the church. And the churches were there.

Social and religious citizenship in Fargo were intimately tied. Churches and church volunteers used to play the key role in refugee resettlement. The publicization of resettlement and the burnout of the churches resulted in an increased role of the state but religion remained a driving force in how citizens interacted with refugees and how refugees interacted with state agencies and civil society institutions (chapters 6 and 7).

Conclusion

Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff (1997) show how the complexities of South African colonialism were shaped by the ordinary through missionaries' influence on Tswana domesticity, fashion, architecture, work ethic and practices, agriculture, relationship to European objects, medicine, markets, laws, ideas about ethnicity, class, and gender, notions about the individual and family, and more. Moral degeneracy was defined in the colonial context as a combination of the above-mentioned constructs, which were continuously shifting; this is *culture*.

Like missionaries in colonial South Africa, volunteers served as foot soldiers for certain forms of citizenship, both positive and negative, progressive and conservative, mostly rooted in Christianity and the Protestant work ethic (see chapter 1). For some refugees, like Southern Sudanese (discussed in chapter 7) this worked out well; for others, like Bosnian Roma (discussed in chapter 6), it did not. Many volunteers were aligned with powerful organizations, like CCSS and LSS, that served the interests of social citizenship, while other volunteers challenged such agencies. Some volunteers had progressive ideas about race, class, and gender while others were, in fact, racist. Whatever their connection to structures of power, volunteers influenced quotidian aspects of citizenship. In other words, the power that volunteers had in shaping how refugees became citizens should be interrogated. Some volunteers spent dozens of hours a month with refugees in their homes while others never entered a refugee's home. Some invited refugees to their own home while others preferred to teach refugees at the library or at the Program's office.

The power of refugees in conversely shaping how volunteers, as well as caseworkers, teachers, and other Fargo residents, viewed citizenship should not be overlooked. Refugees perpetuated, resisted, and accommodated everyday practices that aimed to make them into good citizens. These responses and acts were shaped by their political, economic, and cultural backgrounds. In the next two chapters, I focus on refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina (chapter 6) and South Sudan (chapter 7).

CHAPTER VI

REFUGEES FROM BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA: BOSNIAKS, ROMA, AND THE BOSNIAN MENTALITY

On a cold, grey January day, I met Hajro, a Bosnian Muslim (Bosniak), for coffee in his apartment in downtown Fargo. In his mid-fifties, Hajro was a soft-spoken man from north central Bosnia, the youngest of five brothers and four sisters. Hajro grew up poor, “knew how to go to bed hungry,” and was beaten for complaining about it. But he worked hard and achieved a comfortable lifestyle: he had a family, a steady income, and yearly paid vacations. Hajro worked as a carpenter in his younger years, but eventually became the manager of an oil refinery. Then the war started. Chain-smoking and crying intermittently as he sat across from me at the small kitchen table, Hajro told me that he saw a soldier shoot his disabled oldest brother in the head twice before his brother even saw the soldier. Hajro watched helplessly from his standpoint in the hills. The war in Bosnia, he said, was a *prljav rat* (dirty war): “How can you even call it a war when you rape women and children?” he asked rhetorically. “That’s not war, when you don’t fight other soldiers, that’s not war.” Through more tears he told me about his fears as a soldier, when he first starting raiding Serb bunkers, and how “he got used to killing people.” Years later, Hajro survived a gunshot wound and fled to Germany to be with his family

only to find his wife with another man. In 1998, he left his wife and adult children and came to the United States as a refugee. Within two months of his arrival, he started working in a chicken plant in Pelican Rapids, Minnesota. Hajro worked at the plant for more than ten years, until he was laid off because he refused to take on more responsibility without more pay.

Hajro met Tracy, an American woman about his age, at a casino. Before Hajro met Tracy, he “didn’t have a life.” He “worked, went home, worked, went home, worked, went home.” Hajro and Tracy were friends for two years before they started dating. Tracy worked at a state agency and helped Hajro apply for unemployment. Hajro became a U.S. citizen in 2007 and was hoping to find another part-time job until he was eligible for social security. In the meantime, he cleaned the house, cooked, and waited for Tracy to get home from work. He told me he would never do that in Bosnia, “but they have a different mentality over there.” For Hajro’s generation and social class, there had been a clear gender division of labor: only women cooked and cleaned. Hajro asked me if I had ever heard a Bosnian woman tell a man he was crazy, because Tracy did that all the time and he thought it was funny. When I left the apartment that afternoon, Hajro gave me a gift of three little coffee spoons and said I should come over again when Tracy was home. About a week later I saw Tracy at her office. She told me that Hajro had found out I had been tutoring a Bosnian Rom (Gypsy) for the citizenship test and because of my association with Roma, and that family in particular, Hajro did not want to see me again.

I open this chapter with Hajro’s story because it included many of the elements of good citizenship for the average Bosniak in Fargo: appreciating a good life in the former

communist Yugoslavia, surviving war in Bosnia, working hard, relying on the social safety net (but only when absolutely necessary), changing gender relations from Bosnia-Herzegovina to the United States, the triumphs and travails of love and community, and finally, a dislike (if not overt) hatred for Roma. In this chapter, I argue that the combination of social status and cultural practices among ethnic groups in the former Yugoslavia played a key role in shaping the ways in which Bosnians in Fargo conceived of citizenship, race, ethnicity, class, and gender.

This chapter explains some of the political, cultural, and economic influences of the former Yugoslavia on Bosnians in Fargo that shaped how they interacted with each other, the state, and wider society. I provide an overview of socialism in Yugoslavia and the 1992-95 war in Bosnia-Herzegovina (hereafter BH). I discuss regional, ethnic, gender, cultural, and socioeconomic distinctions in the former Yugoslavia and how these categories transformed when Bosnians came to the U.S.

I compare and contrast two ethnic groups from BH, two of the most represented in Fargo: Bosniaks, who were mostly secular or ethnic Muslims and did not practice Islam, and Bosnian Roma (Gypsies) who were also secular Muslims, but had a different ethnic and cultural history than Bosniaks.¹ I explain why Bosnians had a poor reputation in Fargo, especially among social service providers and state institutions, and highlight some of the ways in which Bosnians accommodated, resisted, and perpetuated hegemonic ideas of citizenship in the United States.

¹ The two other nationalities in BH are Bosnian Croats who are Catholic and Bosnian Serbs who are Orthodox Christian. There are very few Croats or Serbs in Fargo and thus I address these groups only in the brief historical overview of the former Yugoslavia.

According to LSS and local Bosnian community leaders, by 2007, there were about 3,000 Bosnians in Fargo; of these, one third to one half were Bosniaks and the rest were Roma. Roma made up about ten percent of the population in BH, but about 60 percent of Bosnians in Fargo. Most Bosnians in Fargo fled to Germany during the 1992-95 war. Beginning in 1997, the German government, with the encouragement of the newly formed BH government, forced some of the 320,000 Bosnian refugees living in Germany to return to BH (Halilović 2005; ERRRC 1997; Franz 2005). The U.S. government began to resettle refugees from the former Yugoslavia in 1994 and accepted a large number of those living in Germany. From 1993 until 2004, when resettlement ceased, the U.S. government accepted more than 140,000 refugees from BH, the second largest group to be resettled after those from the former Soviet Union (DHS 2004).²

A Brief History of Bosnia-Herzegovina

Formed in the wake of the First World War, Yugoslavia consisted of six republics: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia (including Kosovo and Vojvodina) (see Figure 11). Questions of ethnic origins played a major role in Yugoslavia due to its national, linguistic, and cultural heterogeneities. National groups included Slovenes, Croats, Serbs, Montenegrins, Macedonians, and Bosnians (each with its own republic), but other ethnicities and minorities like Roma, Hungarians, Albanians, and Jews were also recognized to varying degrees in each of the republics. In order to maintain peace and downplay historical and contemporary forms of animosity between ethnic groups, citizenship in Yugoslavia relied heavily on creating and

² For an explanation of the “priority categories” assigned to groups of refugees from the former Yugoslavia and the dates of eligibility for these categories, see Coughlan and Owens-Manley 2006 and Franz 2005.

maintaining a “Yugoslav” identity. Those men and women who had a good relationship with the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY, or simply, “the Party”), especially good social network *veze* (connections), and who had education and family were considered some of the worthiest citizens. Everyone did not have equal access to these social connections or to the Party.

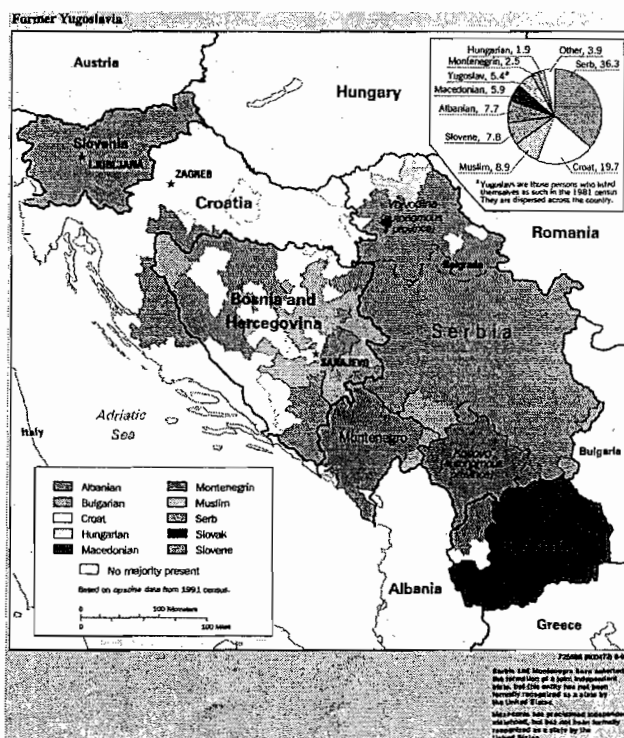


Figure 11: The Former Yugoslavia according to ethnicity/nationality³

The socialist state did not ban the practice of religion, which was nearly synonymous with ethnic identification, but religion and religious institutions were not allowed to influence state policy. There were officially sanctioned churches and the head

³ <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/europe/yugoslav.jpg>

of the *Islamska Zajednica* (Islamic Association) was approved by the Party, but one could not be openly religious and have a career in state institutions, state-owned firms, or in other publicly prominent places (e.g. Andjelić 2003; Bax 2000a; Bringa 2002; Shatzmiller 2002; Sorabji 2008). Roma identified with the religion of the majority ethnicities surrounding them. For example, Roma living in Serbia identify as Orthodox Christians and Roma in Croatia and Slovenia as Catholic. Most Roma in BH, Kosovo/a, Montenegro, and Macedonia identify as Muslim.⁴

In 1974, Bosnian Muslims were given the official status of *narod* (ethno-nation or people). For the purposes of this dissertation, when discussing Bosnians in the United States, I gloss over differences between “narod” and “narodnost” and refer to different ethnicities from Bosnia-Herzegovina, or ethno-nations, simply as “ethnicity.” In the former Yugoslavia, the intimate relationships between a “people,” ethnicity, nation, and land is important, especially in light of the ethno-national forms of violence that arose (again) during the 1991-99 wars. Until 1974, Bosnian Muslims had to identify their narod as either “Serb” or “Croat.” It was very important for them to be able to identify as Muslim/Bosniak (see Friedman 1996).⁵

Roma have historically been considered unequal citizens in every region and nation-state in which they have resided. They originated in northwestern India. Based on linguistic evidence, scholars believe that they left sometime during the 12th century A.D., probably as a result of repeated attacks by Muslim warriors (Hancock 2005). They

⁴ For more on the specific groups of Roma in the former Yugoslavia, see, for example, Fraser 1995. For more on Roma in Bosnia-Herzegovina, see, for example, Lockwood 1975; Erickson 2004, 2006.

⁵ For a larger history of the national question in Yugoslavia, see, for example, Banac 1992 [1984], 1995.

traveled through Persia, Armenia, and the Byzantium empire, and finally into the Balkans during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (Crowe 1995). Historical documents illustrate anti-Gypsy attitudes and subjugation, including slavery, since their arrival in Europe. Attitudes toward Roma in Europe have changed little in the last seven centuries.

There are significant cultural and historical differences among Roma throughout the world, but they are all subject to discrimination, prejudice, and often times, violence inflicted by the *gadje* (non-Roma) who surround them. The enslavement of Roma (and some non-Roma) lasted in southern Romania until 1865. In the twentieth century, the Gypsy Holocaust and Nazi concentration camps were some of the most extreme forms of anti-Roma violence. Since 1989 and the fall of communism, Romani settlements have been targeted for violence all over Europe. As late as the 1990s, doctors in the Czech Republic practiced forced sterilizations on Romani women. Throughout the world, structural forms of inequality and marginalization continue to deny Roma human rights and citizenship rights (Barany 2002; Crowe 1995, 2008; Fonseca 1995; Fraser 1995; Guy 2001; Hancock 1988, 1999a, 1999b; Lemon 2000; Stewart 1997; Van de Port 1998).

Roma in the former Yugoslavia arguably enjoyed more rights as Roma than in other communist countries. In the 1974 Constitution, all ethno-nations were deemed equal. For example, in the constitutions of Montenegro and BH, Roma were granted the privileges of *narodnost* (ethnicity), which is a lower status than *narod*, but was an important acknowledgement of their ethnicity (Barany 2002:116).

In order to establish everyday forms of Yugoslav citizenship, the state forbade the acknowledgement of social factors like gender, ethnicity, level of wealth, or age in

political identity and participation (e.g. Watson 1997:24).⁶ From 1945 until his death in 1980, President of Yugoslavia Josip Broz Tito established and, if necessary, enforced ethnic harmony in the multinational state. The Communist Party of Yugoslavia was determined to create a society of people independent of race, ethnicity, or gender, unified by class and Yugoslav nationality. An example of this top-down form of citizenship operated was evident in the educational system. From elementary through high school, the state attempted to develop solidarity through lessons emphasizing self-managed socialism and *bratstvo i jedinstvo* (brotherhood and unity) (Höpken 1997:81-82). The Yugoslav educational system glossed over potential divisionary historical events between the ethno-nations as well as universal civic values based on individual rights. There was no prescription for how to get along in a multiethnic society but rather a focus on how to be Yugoslav. Educational goals sought to develop an ideological identity favoring a collective identity and not a civic society identity, which arguably produced a set of codes for simply conforming to Tito's political system (Höpken 1997).

It is notoriously difficult to compare socialist economic relations to capitalist class relations. Under socialism, "class" was not supposed to exist. Yugoslav scholars referred to socioeconomic categories as *slojevi* (layers) (Jansen 2008:184). Following Jansen (2008), I refer to the different socioeconomic statuses in the former Yugoslavia as "layers." The middle layer, for example, included "professionals as diverse as skilled technicians, teachers, nurses, sales reps, journalists and engineers" (see Popović 1987 cited in Jansen 2008:184). Many of these professionals were employed in the Yugoslav

⁶ It is beyond the scope of this chapter to address gender and communism, but see Bringa 1995; Corrin 1999; Denich 1974; Gal and Kligman 2000; Pine 2002.

socially-owned sector and worked for the Party. Although private businesses were not allowed to compete with the state, smaller family-owned businesses were allowed. Some families made a significant amount of capital in the private business sector. While citizens were not allowed to openly distinguish between the social 'layers,' one could recognize socioeconomic differences in everyday life, for example, by clothing, speech, and behavior.

Until the 1970s, Yugoslavia did not use the term "poverty" (Ruzica 1992). However, members of different ethnic groups rarely found themselves in a position to compete for the same monetary rewards (Flere 1992:256) and some professions, like doctors and engineers, had more real and social capital than other socioeconomic layers. In 1963 Yugoslavia opened its borders and people of all ethnicities took advantage of the opportunity to travel abroad, especially to work. These workers played an important role in building up the country's foreign currency supply in the 1960s and 1970s (Udovički 1995:292). Many of the guest workers were from the poorer parts of Yugoslavia such as BH, Kosovo, and Sanjak (a poor region in southern Serbia comprised of Muslims) and included Roma (Barany 2002:143; West 1994).

Roma rarely vied with other ethnic groups for employment; they always occupied the lowest socioeconomic strata (Emigh, Fodor, and Szelényi 2001). Under the leadership of Tito, Roma arguably enjoyed more rights in Yugoslavia than Roma in other communist countries. However, the integration of Roma into Yugoslav society lagged far behind the regime's expectations, particularly in terms of their educational attainments and living standards (Crowe 1995:227; Medica Infoteka 2001). Romani families were

beyond a doubt the poorest and usually lived on the edges of cities and towns within their own settlements. Ruzica estimates that there were 300,000 to 400,000 Roma in Yugoslavia, especially in the southeast corner but “even in the large cities about 25% of all social welfare recipients belong to this ethnic group” (1992:227). When Roma were visibly well-off, it was assumed that they made their money illegally.

Whatever their socioeconomic status in the former Yugoslavia, most Bosnians I met spoke fondly about the pre-war period (e.g. Čolić-Peisker and Waxman 2005; Jansen 2008; Korać 2005). Some criticized the socialist state for its restrictions on private business and free market consumer choices and the need to have *veze* (connections) in order to move up in society (e.g. Drakulić 1991). Many missed the security of universal healthcare coverage, ample maternity and sick leave, free education, and vacations to the Adriatic coast. In her apartment in Fargo, Kokan, a Bosniak mother of three adult daughters, explained to me:

That was a country called Bosnia and Herzegovina from Triglava to Đevđelije... And everyone had just about the right amount... And all of the republics worked for Yugoslavia. You didn't need a passport to go to Slovenia, you didn't need a passport to go to Macedonia, or Serbia. People became godparents [for other ethnicities], hung out together, went to the coast. The coast was mine (a Bosniak) and Serbia's. It worked.

In the hegemonic version of prewar life in Yugoslavia, differences among ethnicities were glossed over and neighborly camaraderie was stressed in the name of brotherhood and unity. In city centers and work places, where people of all ethnicities mingled, differences were played down, even ignored. Outside of public places, however, ethnic differences were maintained, observed, and reproduced on an everyday level (see e.g. Bringa 1995; Friedman 1996; Lockwood 1975). Bringa (1995:56) points out that most

people greeted each other using “dobar dan” (good day) in the city center, but Bosniaks greeted each other privately using “merhaba” (a Turkish/Muslim phrase meaning hello) and Catholics greeted one other with “bog” (God’s greeting). Even Communist leaders and intellectual elites reverted to national divisions and regional economic differences (Denich 2000:43). Nevertheless, when speaking to me about communism, Bosnians of all ethnicities spoke unanimously of safety, economic security, and drinking coffee with neighbors. A common phrase was “you could sleep on the street and not be afraid.” They especially stressed economic security. Kokan said,

I finished school in economics, my husband worked, he was hired at a firm, we had a completely normal life before the war. [...] I had a flat, the children went to school, [we had a] car, everything normal. Like the most normal a person could live. [...] In the former Yugoslavia, no one went hungry. In the old Yugoslavia, we had such a beautiful country that had everything, some more, some less, but there was no poverty.

A “normal life” meant a beautiful life, a good life (Jansen 2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2008; Coughlan and Owens-Manley 2005, 2006). In her article on everyday life in Sarajevo at the end of the war, Maček (2007:39) explains that the concept of a “normal life” was

charged with a sense of morality, of what was good, right or desirable. A ‘normal life’ was a description of how people wanted to live, and a ‘normal person’ was a person who thought and did things people found acceptable. Thus, ‘normality’... communicated social norms according to the person using it, and as such also often indicated her ideological position.

Bosniaks in Fargo tended to describe a “normal life” in Yugoslavia as one with a steady job that provided material comfort, time to relax with family and visit with friends and neighbors, a lack of thinking about ethnicity or nationalism, and freedom to travel to other republics (see also Čolić-Peisker and Tilbury 2006; Čolić-Peisker and Waxman 2005; Korać 2005).

Despite the rhetoric of equal citizenship, many citizens did not benefit from that system, especially Roma and peasants (Barany 2002; Cahn 2002; Denich 1974; Lockwood 1975; Ringold 2000; Turgeon 1990; Verdery 1996). According to Bosnians I spoke with, even in the paternalistic socialist state, social welfare in the form of cash assistance – like in the United States in a neoliberal era – carried with it a social stigma. Roma received a disproportionate amount of welfare, which points to racialized/ethnicized forms of discrimination even in the so-called classless society. As one Bosnian woman in Fargo put it, going to the *Centar za socijalnu pomoć* (Center for Social Aid) was like begging, and only Roma were considered beggars.

Before Tito died in 1980, the country had begun to splinter and experience economic downturns (e.g. Denich 1994, 2000; Halpern and Kideckel 2000; Hayden 2000). His death marked the beginning of a long slow end of the socialist state and a decade of brutal wars in the former Yugoslavia. After Tito died, former Yugoslavs began to feel the economic implications of his death even more (Bringa 1995). The media played a strong role in elevating the role of ethnicity (Žarkov 2007). Some noticed an increase in nationalist rhetoric. The average citizen did not foresee war. For most, there was peace one day and war the next.

The 1992-95 War in Bosnia-Herzegovina

Powerful local and global forces contributed to the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia: the grossly underestimated festering of nationalisms during the relatively peaceful socialist period, the pressure to remain communist from the former Soviet Union, and the pressure to develop a free market economy imposed by the United States.

The rise in power of Slobodan Milosević, President of Serbia, and Serb nationalist leaders in BH like Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić led to the rapid dissolution of the former Yugoslavia. Milosević harnessed ideas of nationalism in order to gain and maintain power by any means necessary. War tactics included mass rape, ethnic cleansing, and genocidal acts of violence, but it was the everyday acts of war by neighbors and former friends that helped to destroy the formerly multiethnic country (Halpern and Kideckel et al 2000).

In the summer of 1991, Slovenia, the most prosperous and westernized republic, declared independence. Under the leadership of Croatian nationalist leader Franjo Tuđman, Croatia followed suit on the same day. Ninety percent of Slovenia's citizens were ethnic Slovenes and war in Slovenia lasted only ten days with few casualties. In Croatia, where there was a sizeable Serb population, the war lasted much longer. By 1992, however, much of the violence between Serbs and Croats spilled into BH. Following international recognition of sovereign Croatia and Slovenia in January 1992, Macedonia and BH tried to reach a new agreement that would allow them to remain part of Yugoslavia but the negotiations fell apart. Bosnian Serbs boycotted a March 1992 referendum calling for independence from Yugoslavia after which Bosnian President Alija Izetbegović declared Bosnia-Herzegovina an independent state. On April 7, 1992, the United States and most European countries officially recognized it as such and war broke out in Bosnia. Unlike the other former Yugoslav states, which were generally composed of a dominant ethnic group, Bosnia was an ethnic mixture of Bosniaks (44

percent), Serbs (31 percent), and Croats (17 percent), and this mix contributed to the violent fight for independence.

The war in Bosnia-Herzegovina displayed the worst violence in Europe since the Second World War. Of a total pre-war population of 4.4 million, the war resulted in at least 100,000 civilian and soldier deaths and about 800,000 displaced persons and refugees. Bosniaks suffered a disproportionate amount of ethnic violence during the war because they were specifically targeted for violence by both Bosnian Serbs and Croats. The violence included torture, imprisonment, and death; this was most obvious during the ethnic cleansing of eastern Bosnia by Serb forces at the beginning of the war and the massacre of more than eight thousand Bosniak men at the hands of Serb soldiers in Srebrenica in 1995.⁷ Bosnian Roma, a majority of who lived in Eastern Bosnian before the war, shared the same fate as Bosniaks; in other words, they were ethnically cleansed from their homes in Eastern Bosnia, imprisoned in camps, and killed, although they are rarely mentioned in official accounts of war atrocities (but see ERRC 2004; Latham 2000; Memišević 1999).

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, women and girls were raped as a policy of war. Tens of thousands of Muslim and Croat women were systematically subjected to sexual violence by Bosnian Serb forces during the genocidal campaign of ethnic cleansing (e.g. Allen 1996; Benderly 1997; Gutman 1994; Hunt 1999; Korać 1996; Vranić 1996). Following the atrocities in Bosnia and Rwanda, and with tremendous international pressure, the

⁷ There is a large journalistic literature on the events and specific causes for the atrocities committed by and against Croats, Serbs, and Bosniaks (e.g. Cohen 1998; Glenny 1993; Kaplan 1996; Maass 1996; Malcolm 1996; Rieff 1995; Silber and Little 1995; Sudetic 1999).

United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) were created and rape became classified as a crime against humanity.⁸ Serb military and paramilitary troops raped and impregnated Bosniak women, and then forced the women to keep the babies. According to the logic of these Serb soldiers, the children who were products of the rapes would be Serb, not Muslim. By killing non-Serb men and raping non-Serb women, Serb war policy sought to build a greater Serb nation (e.g. Allen 1996).

Kokan survived wartime sexual abuse in Herzegovina. At the beginning of my interview with her, she began telling me an account of her trauma. After barely surviving the abuse, she was flown by helicopter to the nearest large hospital where she remained for three months. About that time in her life, she said,

Psychologically I was totally gone, so I let go of the country I was born in, my nerves were so gone that twice I tried to kill myself. I was so far gone that I couldn't walk on the street with people in uniforms but now I walk normally. But I know what they were doing, what they did.

Kokan was extremely grateful for her new lease on life in the U.S., from supportive doctors who helped her physical and psychological health to apartment managers who made her feel welcome and for feelings of relative economic and physical security. In 2008, after working in nursing homes and hotels for more than a decade, Kokan was bedridden with emphysema, caused in large part by her lifetime of smoking.

⁸ There is a scholarly and journalistic literature that discusses genocidal rape and other forms of violence against women during the war, the remarkable responses to the war by women and for women, as well as other roles that women played such as soldiers and mothers (see Allen 1996; Andrić-Ružičić 2003; Benderly 1997; Enloe 1994; Gutman 1994; Helms 2003a, 2003b, 2006, 2007, 2008; Hunt 1999; Kaufman and Williams 2004; Knežević 1997; Korać 1996; Lilly and Irvine 2002; Mertus 2000; Nikolić-Ristanović 1998; Papić 2002; Slapsak 1997; Vranić 1996).

Sanja was born in 1972 into a relatively prosperous family in the former communist Yugoslavia. Her father was Bosniak and her mother was Bosnian Croat. She carried her father's name, but like most children in Sarajevo, Sanja did not think about religion while she was growing up. Sanja had overwhelmingly positive memories of her childhood but then, in 1991, when she was 19 years old, war broke out in Croatia. It was the same year her older brother was supposed to begin his mandatory year in the Yugoslav national army (JNA), but rather than serving, he was held prisoner in a building in Croatia without water, food, or electricity, and had no contact with his family. In protest of the war and not knowing her son's whereabouts, Sanja's mother went to Belgrade (the capital city of the former Yugoslavia and in Serbia) with dozens of other mothers to protest but came back more fearful and uncertain about the future than ever before (see also Lilly and Irvine 2002). Sanja's brother escaped from Croatia, but because of his parents' mixed marriage,⁹ he would be captured eight more times in the next three years by soldiers on all three sides of the war: Serbs, Croats, and Muslims.

In 1992, when the war spread to BH and Sanja saw refugees fleeing from Eastern Bosnia to Sarajevo, she decided to join a battalion of Bosnian Muslim and Croat soldiers. Sanja eventually became a commander, which earned her unprecedented respect from her male soldiers. In 1993, she met and married her husband and they spent the rest of the war together. Sanja (Figure 12) gave birth to their only child in 1995 and they came to the U.S. in 2000.

⁹ Mixed marriages served to blur ethno-national differences and enforce a Yugoslav national identity but challenged everyday, local ethnic differences (Bax 1997, 2000b, 2000c; Bringa 1995; Hodson, Sekulić, and Massey 1994; Keel and Drew 2004).



Figure 12: Sanja

During the war, when ethnicity, nationalism, and rights to citizenship dominated official war discourse, Roma were not included in that discussion. Many Bosniaks felt that Roma lacked Bosnian loyalty. Unlike some ethno-nations, like Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks, Roma did not want their own land. While many Roma did fight in the war (ERRC 2004; Latham 2000; Medica Infoteka 2001; Memišević 1999), Roma in Fargo told me they wanted nothing to do with war and refused to fight. Like Bosniaks in Eastern Bosnia, Roma were forced to leave, killed, imprisoned, and/or faced multiple forms of racialized and gendered violence, including rape. Between six and seven thousand Roma lived in the eastern Bosnian city of Bijeljina before the war. Many were wealthy and owned their own homes. Until the early 2000s when some of the occupancy laws were repealed and fought, Bosnian Serbs occupied the homes formerly owned by Roma (as well as those owned by Bosniaks) and Roma found themselves living in the

streets next to their former homes. Almost all of the Roma living in Fargo were from Bijeljina.

The war officially ended in December 1995 with the signing of the Dayton Peace Accord. At Dayton, two political entities were created in BH: the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska (RS). Bosnian Croats and Bosniaks mostly live in the Federation, in central and western Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Bosnian Serbs live in the RS, eastern Bosnia (see Figure 13). Although some Roma and Bosniaks have returned to their pre-war homes in Eastern Bosnia, most have not.



Figure 13: Bosnia-Herzegovina as per the Dayton Peace Agreement, 1995¹⁰

¹⁰ Source: http://anamnesis.info/resources/bosnia_herzegovina_pol97.jpg

The state of BH continues to face difficulties in returning people to their pre-war homes, desegregating schools along ethnic lines, establishing a stronger free-market economy, decreasing poverty and unemployment rates, and negotiating the difficult terrain of an international experiment in neoliberal peacekeeping operations (Pugh 2005). The Dayton Peace Agreement established a rotating presidency among the majority ethnicities of Bosnian Serbs, Bosnian Croats, and Bosniaks; the presidents do not agree on the most banal matters and ethnic minorities such as Roma are rarely considered in decision-making processes. As in other postsocialist Eastern European countries, in BH, the civil society sector with assistance from the international community, compensate for a weak central government; NGOs tend to fill in the gap to provide many kinds of welfare provisions that the former communist and postwar state has abandoned (Bokovoy, Irvine, and Lilly 1997; Coles 2007; Demichelis 1998; Gagnon 2002; Helms 2003a; Klein 2004; Watson 1997).

Refugee Resettlement and the State: Bosnians in Fargo

From the mid- to late-1990s, when Bosnians were being resettled, LSS was at the height of its struggles with the wider community and there was a considerable amount of hostility about refugee resettlement in Fargo (see chapter I). Alma, a charismatic Bosniak in her thirties, who had been working for LSS for more than ten years, told me that she arrived with her husband and two children during the infamous winter of 1996-97, which included a rare three day blizzard followed by record spring flooding. They were placed in a basement apartment that flooded. They wanted to move but did not have the money and could not find the financial support even to move to an upper-story apartment. With

almost no contact with their LSS caseworker, they had to be creative. They bought other people food with food stamps, in return for cash, so they could afford to buy personal items. Alma said,

It was it was very difficult, but we made it... I cried everyday. I was so depressed. But then I finally said okay, I can sit here and cry or I can do something about it so I decided to learn the language and go out there, get a job, and we went and bought a car, our interest rate was like 21 percent (laughs) but we needed a car.

When they first arrived in Fargo, due to their status as newly arrived refugees and because of the weak support of LSS and other local organizations at that time (see chapters I and III), many Bosnians turned to the state for support. Kathy Hogan, then director of Cass County Social Services explained that Bosnians struggled with the different and much more circumscribed role of the state in the U.S than in Yugoslavia. They thought, “‘You’re government, you’re supposed to help me.’ The expectation [was] that we would... not just fund their safety net, but that we would do all the work to get them that.” To make matters worse, the harsh winter of 1996-97, including the notorious blizzard on April 5-6, 1997, caused the worst flooding in the Red River of the North and Missouri River Basins in more than 100 years (until 2008). Many recent Bosnian arrivals were relocated from cheap apartment complexes into temporary housing units away from the river (Spencer 1997). Hogan recalled,

I remember when the Bosnians came during the flood of '97... I think we placed 40 new Bosnians that month of the flood... It was just... horrible, horrible. And of course the whole community was in chaos. And then at one, at some point, I get lines of 250 to 300 people outside my doors getting food stamps from all over. People who had lost their homes and then we had these Bosnians (laughs) and they were *so* terrified. It was the most, it was one of the most fearful – the time right after 9/11 and this time during the flood – is they came and they thought, ‘What have we gotten ourselves into?’ They were *so* afraid... It was kinda like a

war zone. And many of them ended up in the shelter over in, at Moorhead State [University] and... the longest group to come out of the shelter was the Bosnians. Even though it was shameful to receive welfare in the former Yugoslavia, especially for people in middle to upper socioeconomic layers, in the U.S., Bosnians stigmatized welfare less. It was more acceptable because of the war and their arrival in a wealthy, stable country. Nevertheless, welfare was still something to be avoided by those who could manage to get a job quickly.

A relatively uniform Bosniak cultural narrative about resettlement to the U.S. emerged; it expressed feelings of loneliness, isolation, and humiliation during the process of learning new cultural norms as well as overlapping feelings of inadequacy and superiority. Yugoslavia was a semi-industrialized country with a relatively high standard of living compared to that of other groups of refugees (and varied according to one's status in the Party, socioeconomic standing, and proximity to cosmopolitan centers in BH). Thus, many Bosnians were appalled at being told how to flush a toilet, turn on lights, or the difference between the refrigerator and freezer. At cultural orientation classes, Bosnians often joked (in Bosnian) about other refugees and snickered at what they believed were banal instructions about how to ride a bus, shop for groceries, or the appropriate times to call an ambulance.

As a caseworker in 2001-02 and leader of some of the orientation sessions (in Sioux Falls, South Dakota), I witnessed Bosnians making fun of other refugee groups and/or leaving to smoke cigarettes, a national pastime in BH. One family in Fargo jokingly told me they were not only upset about the kinds of information being presented during the class, but their inability to tell the presenters "to fuck off" in proper English.

Middle and upper-layer Bosnians especially told me they did not want to attend English classes because they did not want to be affiliated with refugees from “primitive” countries or with teachers who only spoke one language. Many Bosnians spoke their native Bosno-Serbo-Croatian as well as German and/or Russian and some younger Bosnians also spoke English (most Roma in Fargo also spoke Romani). Older Bosnians especially complained about the inadequate educational system in the U.S. and bragged about teachers in the former Yugoslavia, who made them memorize endless facts that they would never need to know but made them smarter than the average American. To take classes from a teacher in the U.S. who only knew one language, with “primitive” students seemed absurd.

In Europe, the Balkans are viewed as less civilized than their Northern and Western European neighbors (Ballinger 2003; Bakić-White and Hayden 1992; Helms 2008; Todorova 2004). Within the former Yugoslavia, Bosnians were viewed as less Western and civilized than their Slovenian and Croatian countrymen and hence as lesser people (Bakić-White 1995). When Bosnians came to Fargo, they had hoped to shed this lesser status. They did not expect to be grouped with refugees who had never experienced electricity or running water, or with people of color, especially black Africans from places that, to many Bosniaks, appeared to have nothing culturally in common with Yugoslavia. Nusret told me that he did not like the stigma of being a refugee because too many people thought of refugees as “black, cow-herders from the bush.” Especially for Bosnians from middle and upper socioeconomic layers, this association added insult to a long list of injuries (see also Franz 2003a, 2003b, 2005).

Class and ethnicity overlapped in new ways in the U.S. and resulted in new hierarchies of citizenship. In 2000, Sanja, her husband, and their young son were resettled to Pelican Rapids, Minnesota, about 50 miles east of Fargo. In the 1990s, Pelican Rapids (population 1800) saw an influx of over 700 refugees (mostly Bosnian but also Somali) most of whom worked in the turkey plant. According to Sanja, not only did they arrive in the middle of a cold, grey, dismal winter, but the resettlement office did not provide them the mandated furniture. An American man drove them to an empty apartment that looked like “barracks” in the middle of nowhere. Soon after, a Bosnian family from a neighboring apartment came to greet them, made them coffee, and they relaxed a bit. Then they met a Bosnian caseworker, who was clearly from a lower socioeconomic layer or rural/peasant background in BH, who began explaining to them how to use toilet paper. Sanja was instantly frustrated and angry and she said to him, “Listen... I’m gonna tell you something. I don’t know where you’re from, but I come from the capital city of our beautiful Bosnia-Herzegovina! [...] Now you might have come a few years before me and you think you’re a big man: well, you’re not. And you never will be.”

Like Sanja, Rahima, a Bosniak woman in her fifties, was frustrated by the lack of understanding in the U.S. about socioeconomic and regional differences in BH. She said, “In Bosnia, you could tell just by looking at someone if they were from the village, but here every looks the same and you really can’t tell where they’re from. So if someone says they’re from Mostar, you ask, ‘Are you from Mostar or the *area* of Mostar?’” Nusret did not want to be associated with people from his own country, especially those whom he jokingly referred to as “hillbillies” in English (*seljaci*), or Roma. Many Bosnians, “say

they're from Sarajevo, but really they're from mountain villages around Sarajevo, where they spent their lives chopping wood to keep warm and came to the city during the war" (see Stefansson 2007 for an analysis of these urban/rural differences in Sarajevo). Nusret wanted to be seen in U.S. society the way he had been seen in the former Yugoslavia, before the war: an educated, professional, urban, hardworking, family man. Bosnians who claimed to be from a city when they were not impacted how Bosnian culture was viewed in the wider Fargo-Moorhead society.

Aida, a Bosniak business woman and mother of two in her forties, was appalled when a volunteer from the church, a woman she considered a "friend but not really," showed them their apartment in 1997, turned on the faucet and said, "water," and then brought them to the bathroom and said, "toilet." Shouting and gesturing wildly as she recalled these experiences, Aida said the woman made them feel like they

had come from Kunta Kinte land or some jungle like Tarzan. People here have *no idea* what it's like to go from here (demonstrating high) to here (demonstrating low) and how hard it is to get to that high place again. Because when you go from high to low, it's the absolutely the worst thing in the world. And it's hard to go from low to high.

Aida proudly told me that against all odds and much to the chagrin of her Bosnian LSS caseworker who advised them to be patient and realistic, she and her husband bought a house within two years of moving to Fargo. Even though she did not like Fargo or the wider upper Midwest culture, she did not want to move again; she wanted to establish a home for her family.¹¹

¹¹ Kelly (2004) asserts that one of the reasons Bosniaks in the United Kingdom did not move to other communities as secondary migrants was because there was no organized formal community anywhere in the UK. Part of the reason for weak ethnic communities among Bosnians in both the US and the UK can be attributed to the lack of support for a strong civil society in communist Yugoslavia.

For a majority of Bosnians, economic security and home ownership were important aspects to establishing a “good life” in the U.S. rather than fostering an ethnic community (Čolić-Peisker and Waxman 2005; Matsuo 2005). Alma said, “Bosnians view success based on material things, based on what kind of car you drive, how much money you have in the bank, what kind of furniture you have and so even though they might be struggling,” out of pride, “they don’t want to show that to others.” For Bosnians, like Aida and Sanja and Nusret, who had a middle- or upper-layer lifestyles in BH, a loss of status in the U.S. was particularly devastating. Moreover, without an organized ethnic community, like, for example, Vietnamese, Somalis, or Sudanese (see chapter VII), Bosniaks tended to stay in the communities in which they were resettled and focused on their nuclear family. I heard little about Bosniak families moving to other regions of the U.S., which differed from Sudanese and Somalis and other refugee groups who had high rates of secondary migration.

Gender, State, and Society Relations in the Former Yugoslavia and in the United States

In the 1960s and 1970s, in the former Yugoslavia, Bosniak families began to shift from large patrilineal, communal households (*zajednica*) – usually a group of brothers, their parents, wives and children – to individual family homes (*porodice*) (Bringa 1995:42-47). Most Bosniak families I met while living in BH had lived in nuclear family homes but near extended family. Extended kin helped out with household chores, especially childcare. Socialist rhetoric and policies made women and men equal in the eyes of official state policy, but in reality, men dominated the public sphere and women

were responsible for the private sphere, including and especially care giving (Corrin 1999; Denich 1995, 1974; Funk and Mueller 1993; Gal 1997; Gal and Kligman 2000; Hadžiomerović 1959; Jancar-Webster 1990; Mostov 1995; Simić 1983).

Most Bosniaks in the U.S. also lived in nuclear families (Al-Ali 2002a, 2002b; Croegaert 2007; Eastmond 1998, 2006; Franz 2005; Jansen 2008; Kelly 2004; Korać 2003; Marković and Manderson 2000a, 2000b; Povrzanović-Frykman 2002; Waxman 2001; Waxman and Čolić-Peisker 2005). To create and maintain the standard of living they desired in the U.S., both parents had to work. When children were young, this meant strategizing childcare by working different shifts and spending less time together as a family, which significantly changed the ways in which Bosnians conceived of “family” (Al-Ali 2003). Like many recently arrived refugees and immigrants, Bosnians who came to the U.S. as adults had a very difficult time learning English because they were busy working and trying to improve their class status (Al-Ali 2003:94; Čolić-Peisker and Waxman 2005:61).

Like Bosniak wives in the U.S., Bosniak wives in the United Kingdom felt more isolated than their husbands according to Al-Ali (2003). They attempted to deal with the loneliness by maintaining contact with family and friends worldwide. Friere (1995) argues that women “tend to reconstruct their core sense of identity more successfully than men” because their “traditional roles and responsibilities seems to be linked with the development of successful survival strategies in women” (cited in Korać 2005:99). A loss of status was especially difficult for men from middle to upper layer socioeconomic

statuses (Franz 2005; Jansen 2008; Korać 2005).¹²

According to Franz, Bosnian women reveled in being mothers and housekeepers and did not complain about husbands who did not help with private sphere activities, which Franz calls “self-sacrificing motherhood” (2005:110). She also argues that Bosnian women refugees rejected Western feminist values and actively chose to continue traditional patriarchal models, which favored traditional families with a gendered division of labor. In my work, I found this pattern among some but not most women. For example, I knew women who acquiesced to more traditional gendered divisions of labor but they were not happy about it. One Bosniak friend, who lived in Sioux Falls, was often tired because she worked a boring night shift in a factory, slept for a few hours, and then took care of the children all day. Her husband worked a difficult day shift in construction, came home to a homemade meal, drank more than a few beers every night and then slept. Both told me they felt enormous pressures to make money. My friend loved her children and believed that her job was important in maintaining their middle-class standard of living, but she did not revel in being a self-sacrificing mother.

Some of the Bosnian women who worked for LSS, in both Sioux Falls and Fargo, networked with women from other refugee communities, outside of the Bosnian community. As Franz (2005) discusses, Bosnian women did compare themselves to American women and women from other countries, but I rarely heard discussions about

¹² Bosnian women tend to fare better than men in western countries like the U.S., Italy, Austria, and Australia because they joined the work force, became involved in education, health, and legal issues, and participated in more social networks and civil society than men; this resulted in women learning the English language more rapidly than men (Korać 2005).

women's rights; most often women discussed their desire for material goods. However, there was one noteworthy exception.

Alma's job and relationship with other refugee women made Alma reevaluate her position as a citizen in the largely Christian Fargo region. After her parents were killed and she and her younger sister survived various forms of violence, Alma made it to a refugee camp in Turkey where she married an older man. They came to the United States in 1996 with two children. Alma learned English and started working for LSS a few years later. Several years later, a young Somali woman, Anna, started working for LSS too, and she and Alma became fast friends. Alma told me that Anna was her hero in life because she was a young, beautiful, well-educated married woman, with children, and had a strong sense of herself as a practicing Muslim woman. One day, Anna asked Alma how Alma's children knew they were Muslim. Anna did not know how to answer and she started thinking about the question more frequently. Alma decided it was time to learn more about Islam. She found comfort in it and began practicing Islam, including covering her head with a scarf. At the end of my interview with her, she added that she was a feminist, a Muslim feminist. Since she came in 1996, Alma's relationship to the state changed. She learned English so she had better access to services; she found a job that she liked allowing her economic security; she met Muslims from other countries, like Anna from Somalia, and began practicing Islam.

I also found Bosnian women (and men) in Fargo who displayed strong independent attitudes that did not cater to the larger Bosnian community. Hajro, the man mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, cooked and cleaned for his American

girlfriend, something he admittedly would never do for a Bosnian woman. Kokan, the Bosniak mother of three in her fifties, bragged to me how much housework and shopping her husband did, especially after she became ill with emphysema. When I asked Kokan what kind of life advice she would give to young women, she said that young women should not be virgins when they get married: that would be unfortunate because they should have some fun before they settle down. She did not like the part of the Bosnian culture that thought women should be virgins at marriage.

Several women complained to me about the Bosnian gossip network, especially in regards to women's sex lives. Alma said, "Gossip is food in [the] Bosnian community; it's what feeds everybody's soul." Gender relations were shaped, in large part, by a focus on owning a nice home, buying nice things, spending time with small groups of friends and avoiding the politics of Bosnian gossip circles. In some cases, this focus on achieving a hegemonic nuclear family lifestyle resulted in divisions and sometimes violence.

Two divorced Bosnian women told me that they avoided the Bosnian community as much as possible because of gossip, especially gossip that harshly judged women who did not get married, have babies, and stay married. Mersiha hated unannounced visitors who expected her to make them coffee and food, and interfered with her personal life, especially her dating life. Ironically, Mersiha attempted to introduce (and hopefully engage) me to her brother who was twice divorced and lived in another state with their parents and who was a "mama's boy." Mersiha and I met several times and when I finally told her that I would not be able to travel to Georgia to meet her brother, she promptly stopped returning my phone calls. All of the women who complained about Bosnian

gossip also said it was a shame that I was single and more than a few asked if they could set me up with someone. One Romani woman called me to her house around 9:00 PM one night and told me to come over. I told her it was late, and she yelled at me, asked what I could possibly be doing at home by myself when I did not have a job and was not married. When I reluctantly went to her house, she excitedly introduced me to three visiting cousins from Sweden, and told me to pick which one I wanted.

Rahima was happily married for 20 years and had two sons ages 16 and 20. Unlike most Bosnians, her husband accepted her as a strong woman, did not tell her what to do and even expected her to talk back. Rahima said her husband was a little jealous but did not try to control her and she had “economic freedom.” Rahima’s husband had a good job at a local factory that paid well and for years she worked at the Smucker’s plant, a job she liked. Then she hurt her back and had to have surgery. Due to work restrictions, she turned to interpreting as a part-time job but said she did not get very many hours and had too much free time, which could be boring. Another Bosnian woman in her early thirties bragged about her progressive husband and felt lucky because he had a job at an upscale firm; the family enjoyed a comfortable standard of living, and he treated his wife and child well.

Fahira told me she was in a long, difficult marriage with an angry, mean, alcoholic: he stayed home to drink, got mean, and then passed out. He changed jobs several times and was currently a truck driver, thankfully out of town for weeks or months at a time. In the late 1990s, the family was resettled to Washington, D.C., where a church sponsored them. The couple had three children, one of who had a congenital heart

problem. In D.C., they lived in a three-story house, had three cars, and found a lot of support and help from their church sponsors. According to Fahira, her husband ruined it all by drinking. After D.C., The family moved to Kentucky where Fahira found a good job that paid \$14/hour and went to school for ten months attending English classes. Fahira said she spoke better English than her husband who used to call her stupid for not speaking it. Fahira talked a lot about her husband, but also her ever-changing social status. She took pride in her abilities to get any job she applied for and worked hard. She missed her job at a factory in Kentucky because of the nice lifestyle it afforded them; they moved to Fargo because her oldest daughter got pregnant and the father of the child moved to Fargo.

By 2008, with the exception of some elderly Bosnians and Roma (see below), most Bosniaks were economically self-sufficient and, as a whole, few were regularly using the services of public or private institutions. Some Bosniaks, like Alma, were employed as caseworkers or interpreters in these sectors. Bosniaks bragged about their strong work ethic and had a reputation for being hard workers in Fargo and in other parts of the United States as well as in Canada and Australia (e.g. Coughlan and Owens-Manley 2005, 2006; Matsuo 2005; Waxman and Čolić-Peisker 2005).

Much of my time with Nusret and his family was spent talking about the high status he enjoyed in the former Yugoslavia due to his hard work ethic. Nusret worked as a professional for the Socialist Party, but he also had his own business on the side, which allowed his wife to stay home. According to Nusret, everyone in town knew him and he got along with everyone. The war destroyed that way of life and resulted in a significant

loss of status in Germany and eventually in the U.S. In contrast, Malik, a local Bosniak business owner in Fargo, told me he grew up under modest circumstances in the former Yugoslavia. He remembered how much time it required to organize a trip to the coast and what a big deal that was for his family. He had not traveled much in the former Yugoslavia or Europe, but in the United States, he drives to Chicago “like it’s nothing.” Malik’s social status appreciated in the U.S. and for that he was very grateful.

In the former Yugoslavia social networks determined an individual’s potential in the labor market, whereas in most western countries, “social connections overshadowed the relevance of selection based on more objective criteria of merit” (Čolić -Peisker and Waxman 2005:52). Alma, the LSS employee in her thirties, explained,

I love the fact that you can be independent... In Bosnian communities it’s like you are either with us or against us (laughs). I mean here you don’t have to do that... I hate that fact about the Bosnians... Your capabilities, your commitment, how far you want to reach... I love the fact that, you know in most part people are seen as equal and [are] equal, at least by law, you know, everybody should be treated equal, I love that part. I love the part that I can...say what I think and share my opinions and not be judged, well maybe but... (laughs).

When Alma discussed American culture and refugee resettlement at cultural orientation sessions for new refugees at LSS, she told newly arrived refugees that she understood what it was like to feel vulnerable and afraid but reassured them that the United States was, in fact, a land of opportunity:

It takes a lot of work, just like any other Americans who are born here. You know, many, many people work and go to school at the same time and take care of their family and kids, but opportunity is there. There’s a freedom to choose to do whatever you want. [...] You don’t have to know somebody, for example, at school in order to get in[to] that school, bribes, you don’t need to worry about that... and you don’t have to have good relationships in order to get something in your life. So it’s basically up to you, how far you want to go.

Bosnian women were not the only ones to appreciate merit-based aspects of the U.S. Several men also told me how much they appreciated the concept of “equal pay for equal work.” During a conversation with a man at the Balkan Foods grocery store, he told me he liked the fact that in America, employee salaries were democratic. If a person worked, that person got paid. If a person did not like his or her position, she could ask for another, or could even look for a new job. In any case, she would be paid for the time worked. In the former Yugoslavia, he said, a person could work three weeks but only get paid for two: social connections were the only means of getting anywhere.

While an overwhelming majority of Bosnian men and women in Fargo worked hard in search of a comfortable middle-class lifestyle, they did not passively accept the Protestant work ethic and displayed a number of cultural techniques to address it. Some Bosniaks asserted that their work ethic made their American and other Bosnian co-workers jealous. Mersiha worked for two and a half years at a low-skilled job with no benefits with an American woman from California who drove Mersiha crazy because she did not work as hard as Mersiha. Mersiha finally “came to her senses” and quit when the co-worker complained that she was paying for all of “those people’s taxes.” Mersiha showed her paycheck to the woman to prove that she did in fact pay taxes and then quit.

Like most able-bodied refugees who were resettled to Pelican Rapids, Sanja started working at the turkey plant soon after she arrived. Sanja was from an upper middle layer socioeconomic class in Sarajevo, had traveled around the former Yugoslavia and parts of Europe, and fought in the war. She was not accustomed to working in factories or with people of lower layer statuses and got fed up with factory life rather

quickly. Soon after she started, Sanja said one of her supervisors called her over by using her index finger, which greatly upset Sanja. She said to her supervisor, “You just called me over here with your fingers; the next time you do that, I’m gonna take the knife and aim it right at those fingers. I have [a] name! If you don’t know how to read – find somebody to read it for you!” The supervisor apologized but Sanja continued:

In my country, where I come from, you only call dogs like that... I was in war for four years... and I survived. I survived with no money, no electricity, no water in the house, no gas, nothing. And I survived... If you think that you can step on me because I need money... you are making a big, big mistake!... I'm a human being and by god's law and by human law, I know my rights here... So, you're gonna look at me and come to me with respect and dignity... And another thing: when you guys hear that I'm singing loud that means I'm in a bad mood. So, don't talk to me!... So, stay away from me when I'm singing at work.
(laughing)

Sanja was unhappy in the small town of Pelican Rapids and at the turkey plant. She was accustomed to being around people with cosmopolitan backgrounds and she was still recovering from the war and missing her home. She told her husband that she did not come to the U.S. to “wear rubber boots,” so either she would quit her job, or had to move to the bigger city of Fargo-Moorhead. She did quit her job and did not work for about a year. In addition to losing her country, Sanja was also grappling with her loss in status. She had been a commander during the war and received an unconventional form of respect as a woman in a country that became notorious for its wartime female (sexual) victims. As an outspoken, charismatic person, Sanja was not suited to a living as a faceless worker in any country. Sanja’s rant above also points to the kind of agency and coping mechanisms that Bosnians displayed as workers in the United States.

The “Bosnian Mentality”: *Sevdah* and the Protestant Work Ethic

This following section expands on the tension between Bosnian and American attitudes about work and relaxation. I address how most Bosnians accepted the pressure to become economically self-sufficient, but they challenged the pressure to adopt a Protestant work ethic.

Differences among Bosnians and between Americans and Bosnians were often described in terms of *kultura* (*culture/d*) which “refers to a whole set of ideas associated with other sociological oppositions, such as town versus village, educated versus uneducated, poor versus rich, modern and Western versus backward and Balkan” (Bringa 1995:58; see also Stefansson 2007:60-63). In Fargo, *kultura* was often evoked to designate whether a person was acting respectable, proper, and *pošteno* (*honorable*). Alternatively, Bosnians also used the concept of *mentalitet* (*mentality*) to describe the way Bosnians felt or acted. *Mentalitet* can be compared to the anthropological definition of culture, or everyday worldviews about time, space, place, politics, economics, identity, and spirituality that can be reflected through a variety of lenses. Because of my experiences in the former Yugoslavia and my knowledge of the language, Bosnians would sometimes stop explaining something to me and say matter-of-factly, “Pa, ti znaš Bosanski mentalitet!” [You know the Bosnian mentality]. I asked them what that meant and received more clarification on BH culture, differences between people from Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as between men and women. For example, when I asked Kokan what the Bosnian mentality was, she said:

Kokan: The Bosnian mentality? I wouldn't know how to answer what the Bosnian mentality is because I'm not Bosnian. They have, let's say, a different cuisine (taste) than we do.

Jen: A Herzegovinan mentality maybe?

Kokan: I can tell you about the Herzegovinan mentality. We are cheerful southerners. We're very laid back! But we're especially loyal to our family, work hard, and we don't like when someone messes around with us... We're famous for our jokes (laughs)... We are especially vulnerable. A Bosnian is stubborn... He doesn't compromise. And a Bosnian, if he gets drunk and you provoke him, right in the nose. We're not like that, it's not like that with us (Herzegovinians).

Kokan brings up several key aspects of BH culture here. First, she firmly situates herself as a Herzegovinian. Many Herzegovinians in Fargo distanced themselves from “Bosnians” because they felt that Herzegovina had a more honorable, educated, and civilized culture. They also considered it a more beautiful region than Bosnia because it was closer to the Adriatic Sea. Moreover, most Bosnian Roma were from Bosnia, not Herzegovina, and most non-Roma did not want to be associated with Roma at all.

Kokan also mentions the positions of being “laid back” and “vulnerable”, both of which tie to the concept of *sevdah*. Regardless of ethnicity, socioeconomic layer, or region, people from BH complained to me about a lack of *sevdah* or *čejf* in the U.S., a concept that cannot be adequately translated into English but speaks to enjoying the moment, relaxing, and not stressing out. *Sevdah* has more to do with the person-to-person connection in a community while *čejf* (*ecstasy, letting go*) has more to do with enjoying the moment. *Sevdah* is an Arabic word incorporated into the Bosnian language during the Ottoman Empire that means love, desire, or ecstasy (and it is also a form of music). *Sevdah* signifies deep existential longing and enjoyment. It is also a form of resistance against domination, an attitude that says: we will survive, we will find humor in the

situation while doing it, and there is more to life than work. Vulnerability is a key aspect in a country that, in the twentieth century alone, experienced three major wars (both World Wars and the 1992-95 war) as well as more localized wars and two major empires (the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian). Part of this vulnerability also translated into cultural narratives of suffering and complaining. By complaining, I mean expressing everyday dissatisfaction with life that speaks to more existential vulnerability and insecurity than the details of the complaints.

Osman described *sevdah* as living in poverty but sharing a cigarette with friends and not worrying about tomorrow. For many people, this was not a choice: it was not that Bosnians were lazy; *sevdah* was a necessary attitude of survival. The meaning cannot be adequately translated into English because the concept does not fit the historical or cultural foundations of the U.S., which center on the Protestant work ethic, the American dream, advanced capitalism, neoliberalism, and individualism. Osman, a Rom from Kosovo/a, told me that when people called him from abroad and asked what life in the U.S. was like, he would say in a melancholy voice, "It's alright. There are jobs, nice houses, cars, good schools, ways to make money... but there's no *sevdah*."

The American mentalitet, as many Bosnians noted, is anti-*čejf*. I asked all of my interviewees what they liked best and least about life in the U.S. and Alma said,

Everything is so hectic, you know... It's like run run because you have to go to work because you have to pay the bills, and if you don't pay the bills... then that makes us sick and we end up paying even more... I think that people are overworked, overwhelmed, stressed, there are so many diseases that people are being affected by... because of that stress and because of the overwhelmness.

Like Alma, Rahima stressed the connection between working, paying the bills, and feeling stressed out but Rahima also contrasts this to the Bosnian mentality about work:

Everything here is about money. You work and work and work for money and you may not even have time to enjoy it. It's like the rabbit and the hare – America is the hare – you run, run, run but don't enjoy life. In Bosnia, you have time to enjoy things, go out for coffee or ice cream and see people. Here people sometimes have coffee together but everyone has such different work schedules that it can be hard to find the time. Everyone's busy.

Even younger people, like Renata, who was in her mid-twenties and came to the U.S. in 2005, missed the slower pace of life in BH and the connection between people. A slower pace of life changes the nature of social, work, family and other relationships. At one point or another, most Bosnians I met in the U.S. mentioned the lack of free time to enjoy the fruits of their hard work. Dženana appreciated that I had seen life in BH and I understood that life could be slower and more relaxing; there could be time to enjoy a long, slow cup of coffee, to take a walk in the center of town, to window shop (but not buy anything) and to hang out with friends.

In reality, it was not easy for me, an American with an especially strong Midwest Protestant work ethic, to go to a *sevdah*-infused nation. In a small way, I understand the difficulties Bosnians faced in coming to the U.S. When I lived in BH, there was forced relaxation time in my office. Often I would be the only one working at my computer on the Roma project while others played computer games for hours. At four o'clock, everyday almost without fail, my colleagues would yell at me and say, "Jenny, leave that computer right now and come drink coffee with us!" If I protested, they repeated, "Come over here right now! Light a cigarette and relax!" I appreciate that now, but at the time, I asked them in my head, "Don't you have work to do?" Reluctantly I admit that I found it

difficult to rid myself of this line of thinking. But, again, *sevdah* is not about ‘work’ per se; it’s about community. Drinking coffee alone in the former Yugoslavia is a painstakingly lonely practice (see Drakulić 1991). Many Bosnians drank espresso or coffee made with finely ground beans that settle to the bottom of the *fldžan*, a tiny cup without a handle, that they could spend hours drinking. We often joked that huge travel coffee mugs and drive-thru restaurants in the U.S. were epitomes of anti-*čejfnost*.

Part of the BH mentalitet was openness, boldness even, to critique the American mentality, knowing that this process made many Midwesterners uncomfortable. Pro-diversity, human rights activists, some professors, and community activists appreciated hearing different perspectives and critiques about the U.S. However, generally speaking, North Dakotans preferred refugees and immigrants who expressed deference to and appreciation for American culture, who told stories that highlighted the problems in other countries, not the U.S. (see also chapter VII).¹³

Jokes: Mujo, Suljo, and Fata meet Ole, Sven, and Lena

In addition to *sevdah*, another way that Bosnians and Herzegovinians have dealt with suffering and trauma is through humor, an integral aspect of BH mentalitet (Debeljak 2004; Van de Port 1998; Vucetic 2004). Joking is ubiquitous in the former Yugoslavia and in the diaspora. To cheer himself up when he felt down or nostalgic for the former Yugoslavia or just to entertain himself and others, Nusret told me he spent

¹³ Dissent is an essential part of keeping democratic societies healthy and it was important under socialism. In the 1960s-1970s, Marxist criticism and dissent were allowed by the Yugoslav state (Sher 1977), but took a drastically different form after Tito died and often operated through various lenses of ethno-nationalism. Voicing an opinion, including dissent, in a democratic society is not only a privilege, but arguably a responsibility of citizens; the ability to dissent and express free speech is a pillar of democracy (e.g. Glaser and Ilić 2006).

hours at his computer looking for new BH jokes online. In February 2010, when I checked the most popular website for jokes from the former Yugoslavia (www.vicevi.net), there were more than 12,000 jokes; one day later, there were 500 more. When telling jokes, no topic is off limits and political correctness does not exist. When I lived in Zenica, my colleagues told jokes that made me alternately blush and shudder because of the raw sexuality, blatant racism, self-deprecation, and black humor. While I was coordinating a research project about Romani women, they reveled in telling me racist and racialized jokes about Gypsies.

Jokes fell into a variety of categories: blond jokes, black humor, political, sexual, animals, sports, war, and ethnic (which could be broken down into Montenegrins, Serbs, Bosnians, Gypsies, Croats, etc, but also Americans, Russians, and Germans). Some of the most popular jokes involved the Bosnian characters of Mujo, Suljo, Huso, and Fata.¹⁴ All of the names are unambiguously Bosniak names. These Bosnian characters are portrayed as simple, happy-go-lucky, alarmingly direct, self-deprecating, and sexually promiscuous, especially Fata, the woman (e.g. Vucetic 2004).

Jokes are narratives that provide a way of locating the narrator within his or her group and that group's relationship to other groups; in other words, jokes situate an individual within a particular social and political world (Apte 1985; Davies 1990, 2002; Dundes 1987; Vucetic 2004:9). Take the following joke: Mujo came back from America and Haso asked him, "Well, how was it?" "They're 20 years behind us!" answered Mujo. "How's that?" "They've still got it good." The joke alludes to a self-deprecating, "stupid"

¹⁴ The names are shortened versions of Mustafa or Muhamed; Sulejman; Husein, Husref, Hasan or Hasib; and Fatima.

Bosnian who could compare a “backward” war-torn country like BH to the world’s superpower of America, but was in reality alluding to the dissolution of the once-strong nation of Yugoslavia. Self-deprecation, naiveté, and a false sense of bravado are key components of Mujo/Suljo/Fata jokes. When Bosnians tell them, they are meant to be funny, but if, for example, a Serb or Croat were to tell such jokes, the response might be different. According to Vucetic, Bosnian jokes in particular

can be seen as stories the Bosnians tell about themselves but perhaps also to themselves. Their self-mocking style emerges perhaps from a preoccupation with physical and social security, which is discussed in a non-threatening, humorous vein. Defining and recounting these insecurities demonstrates specialized knowledge and reinforces traditions (2004:19).

The self-mocking aspects of so many Bosnian jokes have to do with socioeconomic status and regional differences more than ethnic or national ones (Vucetic 2004:20).

When Bosnians tell Mujo/Suljo/Fata jokes, they often change their intonation and vocabulary to mimic those of traditional peasants (see also Davies 1990, 2002 cited in Vucetic 2004:20). The same happens when telling jokes about Gypsies and women (Vucetic 2004:21). In general, jokes mock all but the hegemonic male ideal: a man who is macho, straight, intelligent, *cultured*, and has a wife who is always dependent on him.

While jokes were not as ubiquitous among Scandinavian-Americans as among Bosnians, humor was nevertheless an important aspect of their folklore and culture. Like the different ethnicities in the former Yugoslavia, Midwest humor included comparisons between, for example, Norwegians, Germans, Swedes, Finns, and Poles. The Norwegian characters were named Ole and his wife Lena and their Swedish friends Sven and Lars. They had strikingly similar characteristics as Mujo, Suljo, Huso, and Fata: fun-loving,

self-deprecating, simple, and sexually promiscuous, (especially Lena and Fata, the women). They were portrayed as backwards hicks, usually farmers, loggers, or fisherman, traditional occupations in Norway and Sweden. In relation to the wider U.S., especially to big cities on the East and West coasts, some Fargoans indicated that they were represented as backwards. While they appreciated some of the positive attention paid to Fargo because of the film of the same name (written and directed by Ethan Cohen and Joel Cohen), many did not appreciate how Fargoans in the film were portrayed. The film emerged often in conversations about the negative stereotypes of North Dakotans. The following joke, like the Bosnian one above, alludes to the stereotype that people from the Midwest are not as intelligent as those from more cosmopolitan centers in New York and California:

After having dug to a depth of ten feet last year, New York scientists found traces of copper wire dating back 100 years and came to the conclusion that their ancestors already had a telephone network more than 100 years ago. Not to be outdone by the New Yorkers, in the weeks that followed, a California archaeologist dug to a depth of 20 feet, and shortly after, a story in the LA Times read: 'California archaeologists, finding traces of a 200 year old copper wire, have concluded that their ancestors already had an advanced high-tech communications network a 100 years earlier than the New Yorkers.' One week later, The Courier Hub, a local newspaper in Wisconsin, reported the following: "After digging as deep as 30 feet in his pasture near Wheeler, Wisconsin, Ole Olson, a self-taught archaeologist, reported that he found absolutely nothing. Ole has therefore concluded that 300 years ago, Wisconsin had already gone wireless."¹⁵

Scandinavian humor thus also had to do with class and region. In this joke, the New Yorker and Californian were portrayed as “real” scientists whereas Ole from small town Wisconsin was a “self-taught” archaeologist. That Ole could compete with such

¹⁵ From <http://www.uffdahhh.com/>

distinguished scientists is comparable to Mujo saying America is 20 years behind Bosnia. In both cultural contexts, “the butt of the joke is...habitually perceived as provincial, rural, backward, pre-modern, that is in contrast to the narrator who is central, urban, progressive and modern (Davies 1990:82-3 cited in Vucetic 2004:16).¹⁶ Incidentally, I told this to a friend who works with Bosnians and she heard the same joke told in the context of Bosnia, using the Bosnian character names.

Unlike Yugoslav jokes, Midwest jokes were more politically correct when dealing with taboo topics such as race. Most Fargoans would not laugh at jokes dealing with racism and black humor, although few had problems with sexism, homophobia, or self-deprecating humor. Thus, when Bosnians told most of their jokes to Americans, they found them funny, but those jokes that went beyond the bounds of political correctness made some Americans uncomfortable and even angry.

Two Bosnians, a man and a woman, told me Americans made them feel bad about telling a certain joke. The joke was that Mujo went to Africa to go hunting. When he came back, Huso asked him if he had caught anything and Mujo said, “Nothing big, just a bunch of little black things that jumped up and down and said, ‘Please no shoot! Please no shoot!’” Both narrators laughed hard while telling me the joke. Much to the disappointment of both tellers, I did not laugh at the joke. Both told me the joke to explain cultural differences between Bosnians and Americans and to indicate how serious and pretentious Americans could be. Rahima blushed as she recounted telling the joke at

¹⁶ Garrison Keillor has made such humor famous with his National Public Radio show *A Prairie Home Companion* about a small town in Minnesota filled with Lutheran Norwegian immigrants.

her job at a state agency. Her colleague berated her and told her not to tell jokes like that at work again.

Unlike Bosnian jokes, Ole and Lena jokes did not arise often in everyday conversations with Midwesterners, but when they did, they alluded to important aspects of Midwest culture, like modesty, self-deprecation, *Janteloven* (see chapter I), and a belief in a simple life where you know most of your neighbors. In both of these cultural contexts, cultural histories and contemporary hegemonic ideas about relationships between ethnicities, races, cultures, classes, genders, and religions emerged.¹⁷ Once Bosniaks learned that I worked with Roma, they began to tell me countless “Gypsy jokes.” When I did not laugh, they categorized me as too serious. I believed the jokes to be indicative of the poor relationships between Bosniaks and Roma, the topic of the following section.

Relationships between Roma and Bosniaks

Like Bosniaks, many Romani men and women worked in factories and/or found part-time, low-wage work in hotels, restaurants, or at Walmart. Ideally, Romani men and women preferred that women stay home to focus on raising children, but this was not possible for many families, especially for the first number of years in the U.S. Many Roma who were resettled to Fargo in 1999 and 2000 migrated to other states in search of better jobs and better welfare systems. For example, in 2001, dozens of Roma arrived in South Dakota where I served them as a caseworker for LSS in Sioux Falls. They also

¹⁷ Relationships between men and women were especially telling through jokes. For example, both Lena and Fata are regularly portrayed as sexually promiscuous, domestic, and economically dependent on men. A gendered analysis of jokes is beyond the scope of my dissertation, but see Helms (2003:260-266) for a list of jokes highlighting the relationship between men and women in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

traveled to Florida, Arizona, and St. Louis, Missouri, which has the largest Bosnian population outside of BH (more than 60,000). However, many of them returned to Fargo because they said they liked the safety of North Dakota and the cheaper standard of living. Many Roma in the region also developed lucrative, family-run interstate scrap metal businesses, a traditional form of income in the Balkans.¹⁸

In Fargo, many non-Bosnians attributed negative stereotypes about Roma to Bosnians as a whole. “Bosnians” had a bad reputation for fighting, lying, conducting allegedly illegal scrap-metal businesses, and belligerence. Some Roma did participate in these activities, but so did Bosniaks and American citizens. There was no evidence to suggest that Bosnians or Roma participated in these negative activities more than other groups, but nevertheless, “Bosnians” – and often Roma in particular – were considered by Fargoans as “unworthy” citizens.

Many accused Roma specifically of stealing scrap metal, especially copper, not reporting income earned from scrap metal on tax and welfare forms, and exploiting the welfare system by claiming to be single parents when they were actually married couples who earned a good income. Nusret told me Roma in Fargo were bad people from Bijeljina and warned me to be careful when dealing with them: “they didn’t like to work in the former Yugoslavia and they didn’t like working in America.” By work, Nusret meant paid, formal jobs, the kind of jobs that required good social connections in the former Yugoslavia. Due to multiple forms of discrimination and neglect, such jobs were

¹⁸ For a larger literature on traditional and contemporary means of income for Roma see Barany 2002; Crowe 1995; Emigh et al 2001; Fonseca 1995; Fraser 1995; Lemon 2000; Okely 1975, 1996; Silverman 1988, 2000, 2003.

unavailable to most Roma in any formerly communist countries (Barany 2002; Erickson 2004; Silverman 1996). I asked Nusret what was wrong with informal jobs, the kind of jobs that Roma often had. For example, Roma traditionally worked as musicians, blacksmiths, artisans, in scrap metal, and in sales in the formal and informal market sectors (Lockwood 1975). Nusret said Romani forms of income were threatening to people who followed the rules; when people overtly challenge the established order then there were consequences. "Wouldn't everyone like to do what they wanted?" Nusret asked, "That's how Roma are perceived even if that's not the full truth."

Few non-Bosnians in Fargo knew the difference between Roma and Bosniaks. As resettlement of Bosnians progressed, social service providers, schools, and the police in Fargo came to know some of the differences. Generally speaking, although there are some phenotypic differences between some Roma and non-Roma (some Roma have a darker skin color like their Indian ancestors), but family name, region of origin in the former Yugoslavia, and cultural attributes (including knowledge of the Romani language) are most indicative of whether a person is Rom or not. In some cases, Roma can pass for non-Roma and many attempt to do so in order to avoid the negative status of "Gypsies" as dirty, lazy, dangerous thieves. On the other hand, positive stereotypes portray them as exotic, romantic, colorful, carefree travelers. For the most part, non-Roma consider Gypsies to be primitive and backwards and consider them pariahs (Hancock 1988; Okely 1996). A recent survey conducted in Bosnia shows that Bosnians of all ethnicities agree that Roma are the least desirable neighbor, marriage partner, or extended family member (Puhalo 2003 cited in Vucetic 2004:31).

Even well-educated Bosnians, who stressed that they had been brought up to respect people regardless of class, ethnicity, nationality, or religion, displayed deep-seated prejudices against Roma. Roma were a noncategory of persons when it came to categories of potential discrimination; the negative stereotypes of Roma were so common that to challenge Bosnians on this subject was to appear naïve, foolish, or ignorant (Erickson 2003).

In order to avoid the negative association with “Bosnians” in Fargo, Nusreta said that she identified herself as “European” when introducing herself to Americans. Nusreta came from a wealthy upper class family in BH and had lived comfortably in Austria for years. When complaining about Roma, she stressed repeatedly that she was raised to respect upstanding people (*poštovani ljudi*), but not people like Gypsies. Nusreta affiliated Roma with Americans in lower socioeconomic classes, including the Americans she worked with at a hotel in Fargo. Nusreta said that she did not like associating with people, like Roma, who lie, cheat, steal, and/or refuse to work. Nusreta had a college degree from BH in finances and she and her family had not needed to rely on social services in any country in which they had lived. Nusreta was angry with single mothers in the U.S. who received child support but bought themselves a new car and/or slept around (*kurva se*). In line with neoliberal critiques of the U.S. welfare state and clearly unaware of how inadequate state cash assistance checks were or that a car was necessary in Fargo, Nusreta felt the money should be saved and given to the child when he turned eighteen.¹⁹ As a woman from a relatively higher socioeconomic layer in pre-

¹⁹ See also Matsuo 2005 for more on Bosnians relationship to other minorities in Saint Louis.

war Yugoslavia, Nusreta's critique of Roma and others who are on welfare fell directly in line with the neoliberal mentality towards welfare (see chapter IV).

Another Bosniak woman, Aida, lectured me for about 30 minutes on why Roma were terrible people who could never be trusted. According to her, there were four kinds of Roma: those from Bijeljina, who work but also lie, cheat, and have enviable and suspiciously nice houses; those who beg; Roma from other parts of Yugoslavia, except Kosovo; and Roma from Kosovo, the most conservative kind of Roma, who are culturally Albanian, and hence not "Yugoslav." Aida perceived all Rom businesses as bogus but relatively successful. Shouting and gesturing wildly as we talked, Aida asked me rhetorically,

Who's smarter? Them or me!? Them or me!? Them, who make \$150,000 and have a comfortable life where the woman stays home, gets on welfare, the man works, and they have very nice things? – You should see some of their houses! – Or *me*, whose combined income with my husband's last year was \$38,000? And I work one and a half jobs and raise two kids! Who is smarter?! I'm not sure if I should hate them or respect them.

She continued by reiterating how much she disliked it when Roma told her how much money they made because she felt she was paying for their welfare checks.

Economic security and home ownership were the most important aspects of life for most Bosnians, including Roma. Bosniaks' elevated social status over Roma in the former Yugoslavia and in post-war BH did not continue in the U.S. Thus, when Roma obtained what other Bosnians wanted, Bosnians became angry. Other Bosniaks simply shrugged their shoulders and told me that Roma had figured out how to achieve the American dream. Some Bosniaks even socialized, albeit superficially, with Roma, while others, like Hajro, the man described at the beginning of this chapter, refused to speak

with people who showed Roma any positive attention or respect. Aida and Nusret felt that Roma were being rewarded for not playing by the rules, for challenging what they saw as proper, hegemonic ideas of work and family. They were not viewed as proper citizens who paid taxes.

When they moved to the U.S., middle and upper-layer Bosnia-Herzegovinians in Fargo lost their previous social status, something they viewed as hard-earned and deserved. In BH, Roma occupied the lowest strata in all areas of life from education to employment, politics to basic human respect. In the U.S., they were racialized and classed in new and different terms that benefited some Roma, to an extent. This upset those Bosniaks who had it better in BH than in the U.S. Thus Roma were viewed with contempt built upon a foundation of age-old stereotypes, unequal social status opportunities in the former Yugoslavia, and new forms of discrimination that questioned citizenship in a democratic, free market society.

To further marginalize Roma from mainstream society, Bosniaks perpetuated negative ideas about Roma to non-Bosnians in Fargo. For example, I told a Sudanese woman that I worked with Bosnians as well as Sudanese. Jacqueline asked me, "Do you know that there are good Bosnians and bad Bosnians?" Jacqueline used to work at a factory and a Bosnian told her about the differences. I asked her if she knew who was "good" and who was "bad" and she said Gypsies were bad. Then Jacqueline told me that her neighbor was Bosnian, but she was probably one of the "good" ones. Jacqueline's neighbor was Rom, but I did not tell her this. Jacqueline's understanding of Bosnians

points to ways in which relations with new cultures and social groups contributed to the reproduction and transformation of social hierarchies in the U.S.

Roma, the State, and Civil Society: Foundations of “Unworthy” Citizenship

There are many hypothesized core values of Romani cultures (Okely 1996), but common themes include “self-employment; the centrality of family and extended family; early adoption of ‘adult’ roles; nomadism or its possibility; specific hygiene rules; attitudes to use of space within and outside the home; language and the oral tradition” (Cemlyn and Briskman 2002:57, see also Acton and Mundy 1997; Barany 2002; Guy 2001; Hancock, Dowd, and Djurić 1998; International Romani Studies Conference, Marsh, and Strand 2006; Lemon 2000; Levinson and Sparkes 2004; Okely 1996; Silverman in press). Many of these values and customs diverge considerably from those of the surrounding sedentary, white, dominant society, whose perceived superiority affects the perceptions and judgements of welfare agencies.

Roma had very different relationships with social services, schools, and the police than other Bosnians. Similar to the treatment and portrayal of Gypsies by Bosniaks, U.S. institutions treated Bosnian Roma with contempt and annoyance. Roma’s reputation in these organizations was fraught with problems that were tied to the politics of belonging. In my interviews with social service providers, teachers, police, and others who worked with refugees, most people said that “Bosnians,” – or sometimes “Roma” – had the worst reputation among refugees in Fargo. Roma were considered some of the least worthy citizens in every country in which they live. In this section, I focus on forms of exclusion of in Fargo and how Roma responded to their reputation as “unworthy” citizens.

In 2006, LSS called me because they heard that I had conducted research about Roma in BH and invited me to speak about Romani culture at their annual Building Bridges conference. The conference was for social services providers, teachers, volunteers, law enforcement officers, and members of other nonprofit organizations that worked with refugees. Each year they invite refugees to speak about their home country and to tell their personal stories. Because Roma are one of the largest groups of refugees in the region, and had so many problems with institutions, people requested to know more about the culture, but LSS could not find any Roma willing to lecture. They asked me instead. At this conference, I learned that most service providers and educators knew almost nothing about Romani culture or history. They were frustrated because Roma seemed unwilling to change their cultural practices, such as marrying young, or allowing their children to quit school before the age of sixteen. However, Roma continued to engage with state institutions. Participants appreciated the cultural information I provided, including a long history of discrimination and persecution against Roma, anti-Roma violence, and prejudice, but I had a difficult time addressing their questions about what they could do to prevent discrimination against Roma.

Like many other disenfranchised groups, especially American Indians and African-Americans, historically, Roma have been wary of non-Roma and lack trust in formal institutions like schools and other governmental agencies. Yet they have also come to rely on social welfare institutions in societies where they face discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, culture, socioeconomic class, and gender. This almost always results in less access for Roma to the rights of full membership of a society in terms of

employment, education, housing, healthcare and other social citizenship rights and benefits (Cemlyn 2000a, 2000b, 2008; Cemlyn and Briskman 2002; Fraser 1995; Kornblum and Lichter 1972; Revenga, Ringold, and Tracy 2002; Ringold 2000; Silverman 1996; Stewart 1997; Todorova 1990; Turgeon 1990). Despite state laws, and much to the chagrin of police and Child Protection Services, few Roma in Fargo finished high school and many continued to practice early marriage. As in previous times and countries, Bosnian Roma in Fargo tended to view marriage and family as essential to their cultural and literal survival; formal education was rarely valued; it was a domain where Roma were often discriminated against and where Romani culture and history were never discussed. Advocates of Roma have emphasized the pathologizing and assimilative impact of welfare provision (Cemlyn 1995; Clark 1997, 1999) and explained that the response by many Roma to potential welfare intervention is fear and suspicion:

Generally social services have made minimal progress, and offer little in the way of family and individual support to assist [Roma] in coping with the impact of negative experiences. Instead, in a manifestation of victim blaming, the effects of traumas may be seen as cultural traits, rather than problems arising from racism for which remedies should be provided. Overall, rights to welfare remain significantly under-resourced and poorly understood (Cemlyn and Briskman 2002:58).

All of the Roma I met in Fargo preferred life in Germany where they received relatively more assistance from the state in terms of cash and healthcare. Ramiza and Nerudin had lived in Germany for eight years before coming to the U.S. in 1998. They loved Germany because of its social services: the government paid for everything (food, rent, and medical). Salko said, "The laws in America are so strong. You are not supposed to beat your kids but you're supposed to control them!" A few years ago, he gave his 14-

year-old daughter in marriage to a young Romani man and the couple had a child. When the daughter left her husband, the state attempted to take custody of her and her child. Salko went to court and the state eventually awarded him custody of his daughter and her child, but years later he remained upset and wary of state control of his family.

Cemlyn and Briskman (2002) evaluate the struggle for control of children in terms of British Gypsies and Travellers' fear and mistrust of the welfare system, the system's disregard of Romani cultural values and traditions, and the impact of oppressive practices in child rearing. They employ the term 'dyswelfare' to describe the relationship of Roma with the welfare state. They argue,

Monitoring by social workers... rejects and reinforces a broader experience of surveillance and hostility... Endemic to these problematic relationships for both groups is an inadequate grasp by welfare authorities of cultural factors and difficulty of accommodating different values and lifestyles... The lack of understanding, based on ethnocentrism, has been particularly evident in relation to 'difference' in child-rearing practices including the importance of the extended family system (56).

Many Roma in Fargo practiced arranged marriages, usually between teenagers. Those who could afford it paid a bride price, money given by the groom's family to the bride's family in exchange for their daughter. I heard most bride prices ranged between \$10,000-\$20,000. Ramiza told me that in Yugoslavia, all marriages were arranged and the couple-to-be had little say in the matter. In the early 21st century, children had more influence over the final decision and some parents, like Ramiza and Nerudin, allowed their children to choose whom they married, so long as the choice was from a respectable Romani family. Their oldest son told them he wanted to get married at 16. They accepted and eight years later the couple was reportedly happily married with three children.

In the former Yugoslavia, for those who could afford it, Romani weddings lasted two to three days and were infamous for their intensity, duration, size, music, and displays of culture and wealth. Ramiza said Romani weddings in the U.S. were similar. I told several Roma I met that I wanted to attend a Bosnian Rom wedding, but probably due to poor relationships with the state surrounding the practice of early marriages, by 2007-08, they were reluctant to invite outsiders. I attended a wedding between a Kosovar Rom and an American woman (see Figure 14). They had two ceremonies, one with her family and one with his. Only a handful of Americans attended the Romani celebration.



Figure 14: Bosnian Romani girls at a wedding

According to Ramiza, an important part of the wedding ceremony was a demonstration of the young bride's virginity by displaying the marriage sheet with her blood: if there was blood on the sheet, then the party really got started. If not, Ramiza said, "it's terrible." Even though the marriage would be called off and the bride price returned, the girl would be considered a married woman, limiting her chances of finding an unwed marriage partner in the future. In my time as a case manager, I served dozens

of Bosnian Roma but, unlike Sudanese, Bosniaks, Somalis, Iraqis, and others, I did not have any single Romani mothers. Although many Romani women applied for welfare as a “single mother,” most of them appeared to have husbands. I heard about teenage brides running away from their husbands and going back to their families, but to my knowledge, there were few single Romani women.

Since Roma started arriving in Fargo, they made headlines with early marriage practices, a small number of which involved alleged kidnapping. Roma were not the only ones to marry their children young, or who had traditions involving bride ‘kidnapping,’ but they did appear to be some of the few who make waves in social service agencies and in the news. These endogamous marriage practices contributed significantly to the drawing of boundaries around the Romani community, which served to protect their culture but also decrease their status as worthy citizens in the wider community.

The most recently reported case happened in September of 2009 when two Romani men from Fargo were accused of trying to kidnap a 14-year-old bride-to-be in Kentucky. One of the men said that his son met the girl on the Internet and wanted to marry her. Such cases represent the kind of press coverage that Roma have received in Fargo, usually involving a link between “culture” and “crime” which pointed to the uneasy position that Roma played in the realm of social citizenship. Nerudin complained about people from LSS and state agencies who lectured them about marriage customs. Nerudin felt this was hypocritical in the U.S., where people hardly took marriage seriously. In America, he said, people get married, make a baby, and then the man leaves. He and Ramiza would stay married forever, until one buried the other. Marriages among Roma,

he said, were strong and serious. He thought people in the U.S. needed to leave him and his family alone and stop telling him how to live his life and when to get married, when the U.S. system was clearly not working. In 2007, police and teachers told me that Roma were continuing to marry young but they were more careful about it than they were when they first came and tried to keep it from authorities who might report them. Keeping cultural practices away from the surveillance of authorities is key to many Romani cultural practices. Most authorities fail to see the strengths in minority lifestyles and the necessary accommodation techniques used in the face of hundreds of years of oppression. Often minority cultures are seen as deficient or lacking. For Roma especially, “there has been very little engagement with Gypsy issues within social work, and their status as minority ethnic groups is frequently unrecognised” (Cemlyn and Briskman 2002:57).

Early marriage was linked to discussions about Roma and education.²⁰ Marshall (1950) argues that education was not only a right of citizens, but a duty. Unlike most Bosniaks or other refugee children, few Bosnian Roma finished school and many dropped out before the legal age of 16. Without an education, especially for women with young children, there were fewer job opportunities, which arguably linked to a dependence on welfare and men. In an article concerning dropout rates among Romani girls, one teacher in West Fargo, said

two of her female Romani students quit school over Christmas break, now that they're married and 16. LaLonde suspected both were 14 when they married boys around the age of 18. One of the girls even showed LaLonde photos of her lavish wedding last year. ‘We had two really bright girls,’ LaLonde said. ‘It's really sad.’ Now the girls are working entry-level jobs, one with a motel, the other with a fast-

²⁰ For a literature on Roma and education in other countries, including in BH, see for example, Raykova 2002; Save the Children 2002a, 2002b.

food restaurant, LaLonde said. 'When you come here and you have a world of opportunity, it just seems you would want to take that,' she said (Bismarck Tribune 2005).

On the other hand, some Roma, like Senad, a Rom from Kosovo, in the article quoted above, valued education and fought hard for it. Many Roma from Bijeljina in Fargo did not. Nerudin said he was glad that he went to school in the former Yugoslavia; school educates a man, gives him a certain kind of knowledge, which is good. His kids hated school, which he did not like, but he did not force them to go. For him, it was much more important that his sons followed in his footsteps and worked in the family business of scrap metal, as he had done with his own father. In BH, both under socialism and after the war, fewer Roma attended school than any other ethnic group. In general, fewer Romani girls attend school than boys (Erickson 2004; Medica Infoteka 2001). Most of the Bosnian Romani married women I met in Fargo were illiterate. However, most Romani boys and girls attended U.S. schools long enough to learn how to read and write on an elementary level.

I met Kanita, Nerudin's daughter, at a middle school where I was observing English Language Learning (ELL) classes. Kanita was in the seventh grade for a second time. She had already missed more than half of the year's 100 school days. When I came into the room she was telling her teacher that she would not be in school next week because her family was going to a wedding in Florida. I tried to help Kanita with her math, but she refused to work and we chatted instead. Twice that afternoon I found Kanita in the bathroom playing loudly with a friend and avoiding the classroom. She told me her mom would love to meet me so I gave Kanita my phone number and minutes after

school ended, Ramiza called me. She first asked me how old I was (33), if I was married (no) and whether I have any children (no). Greatly confused by my answers, she nevertheless invited me for coffee on the following Saturday. Ramiza never came to understand how I could not be married or have children at my age. I explained that I had been in school, traveling, learning about the world, and she told me that was “fucked up;” I worked too much; and then laughing advised me that I needed to get married so that I could work with my husband, in the bedroom. Ramiza asked me to teach her how to read and write in English so that she could pass the citizenship test. I agreed even though she had never learned to read or write in Bosnian (or Romani).

I was never able to convince Ramiza to learn English. Every time I pulled out the books or a pencil she went to make me lunch, or coffee, or she turned on the television (we watched stations from the former Yugoslavia on the satellite dish) or she simply told me she was not in the mood. In the process of trying to teach Ramiza English, I spent countless hours with her and her family, usually in their beautiful three-bedroom apartment, just down the street from where I lived. Ramiza worked for years in one of Fargo’s factories, but stopped working once Nerudin made enough money to support the family from his scrap metal business. Ramiza wanted to learn English so she could pass the citizenship test, but she also thought it would be nice to work outside the home for a few hours per day because she got bored at home all day. Nerudin said he preferred her at home and the TV could keep her company. On another occasion when Ramiza and Nerudin were flirting, Ramiza said how great it was that her man did all of the work and she just had to stay home and relax all day. I chimed in that housework was work too. But

she said with a wink that it was pretty easy; it didn't take much time: a little cleaning, a little cooking, but really she just sat around and did nothing all day, except maybe shopping. Winking again, Ramiza said if her husband wanted a wife and kids and nice things, then he had better go out and work for it! The Romani ideal of women staying home to tend to the house and the man working in the public realm was possible in Fargo, but I found that many women were bored, listless, and felt isolated.

Nerudin told me it was not good to work for another man. He knew men who were 50 or 60 years old and they were still working for someone else and that was a shame. He liked America because it was a good place for a man with business sense. I said scrap metal seemed like a pretty good business. Nerudin chuckled said it was a good business when he first came to Fargo in the late 1990s, but the media started printing the cost of metal ("a lot") and competition increased. Nerudin started in the scrap metal business with his father when he was just 18 years old, in Bijeljina, and now he works with his sons. I told him I would like to learn more about the scrap metal business. Demonstrating the gendered division of labor among Bosnian Roma in Fargo, Nerudin laughed and told me maybe Ramiza and I could start our own business.

One day an upset Ramiza called me and told me to come over. She wanted to go see Shelly, a police officer, so she could ask how an illiterate refugee like herself, who survived war and has been living in the U.S. as a model citizen for ten years, could get legal citizenship. Ramiza wanted to become a legal citizen so she could fight on behalf of her son, who was in trouble after a fight. A week earlier, her son was at a McDonald's when another Romani man jumped out from behind a car and, using a leverage pipe, hit

Ramiza's son several times in the head. He went to the hospital and had to have dozens of stitches. From what little I gleaned from the conversations at Ramiza and Nerudin's house, the fight had something to do with the business. When I visited with Roma in Fargo, we always spoke in Bosnian but when they did not want me to understand something, they spoke in Romani, which they all spoke.

Ramiza asked me to interpret for a meeting between her and Alice, the Refugee Liaison Police Officer, in hopes of influencing the police case. Ramiza told Alice that the perpetrator's family was terrible; his uncle killed someone in the same way in BH; the whole family was full of criminals; the perpetrator in particular was a troublemaker because he did not have any family of his own, "no wife, no kids, *no one*". He went from bar to bar and slept around. He did not even have a passport or green card tying him to a country and therefore, he was suspect and must be a criminal. Ramiza argued that the police should deport the man in order to punish men but also to send a message to other Bosnians that that such behavior would not be tolerated in the U.S. In order to get what she wanted, Ramiza utilized non-Romani definitions of "bad" citizenship: lack property, or family, or ties to a nation-state. Citizenship, ultimately, was about belonging to a nation-state. Roma understood this but did not necessarily believe in that principle. However, this example demonstrates the hegemonic understanding that "good" citizen means someone who belongs to a nation-state. Hoping the man would be appropriately punished, Ramiza also used stereotypes of Gypsies.

Alice explained that they had to wait for a trial. Ramiza threatened that if the man were set free, she would leave the country out of fear for her life. She yelled that she

thought America was safe; she had survived so much and she had ten good years in the U.S., with no problems from anyone in her family, but this was too much! She was scared of this man and his family, which was much bigger than her family. They would surely continue to threaten or hurt her family and she could not be responsible for her own actions; she was so angry that she might attack them. She repeatedly yelled:

How is it that someone like me, who has been in the U.S. for ten years and has never made any problems, never got pulled over by the police, has no record, and no problems with the law except one \$25 parking ticket, is in this situation where I am afraid for my life and this guy walks around like a big shot?!

Alice told Ramiza to be careful, not make idle threats, and she explained again and again why a trial was necessary. Ramiza continued to vent her frustrations, and then we left. I attempted to point out the challenges of knowing who was guilty and innocent based on hearsay but she did not seem to understand. She told me she was confused because when they were growing up in the former Yugoslavia, they were told about “dangerous” American laws, like the electric chair, but then learned that America was supposed to be good, safe. Now, she said, “everything is fucked up. I can’t eat, sleep, I have knots in my stomach. I worry all the time when I think of all of the possibilities of what bad things could happen!” Alice told me that when they first came, Roma asked for the cards of police officers so that they could show their rivals that they had the Fargo police “in their pocket.” Police officers were instructed not to hand out cards to “Bosnians” anymore.

Mevludin Hidanović was a Romani man from BH who was falsely accused and wrongly tried for a crime he did not commit. In the summer of 2006, during the Red River Valley Fair, a fight broke out between a group of men that was reported to include Romani and Latino men (e.g. Cole 2007, Springer 2008). According to Chanda,

Mevludin's Native American wife, she and their children (from previous marriages) had been at the fairgrounds but nowhere near the fight. Later that evening, as they watched accounts of the fight dominating local news broadcasts, a police officer came to the door to arrest Mevludin. Based on an anonymous tip, he was tried and found guilty for engaging in a riot while armed. Later, a juror from that trial admitted to swaying the other jury members away from the lack of evidence and against the defendant because he was Romani. This juror felt it was important to send a message to the wider Romani community that there was no tolerance for Bosnian "Gypsy" antics in Fargo. The allegedly real perpetrator who severely beat a man with a baseball bat was free. After two years of appeals (during which he spent in a North Dakota prison), in spring 2009, Mevludin was deported back to BH. Mevludin's parents, children, ex-wife, and most of his extended kin live in the Fargo region. In 2009, his wife joined him in BH.

By the time Chanda left the U.S. to join Mevludin, she was on good terms with his family. I was not able to meet Mevludin because he was in jail during my time in Fargo and then deported, but I spoke with Chanda several times. She told me that for years she faced harassment and filed a restraining order against Mevludin's parents who did not want their son to leave his Romani wife. His first wife, a Romani woman, had cheated on him with another man. Because he chose to date Chanda, his family disowned him and began to harass Mevludin and Chanda. Chanda and Mevludin's relationship broke a long history of endogamous marriages and paved the road for more exogamous marriages. Romani families were upset by this because endogamy has been one of several ways in which Roma have resisted corruptive outside influence on Romani culture and traditions.

Chanda wrote letters to the editor, started a website, and spoke out against the mistreatment of her husband by the state and called into question Roma's poor image in the wider public (see, e.g. Hidanović 2008). She portrayed Mevludin as a quiet, hard-working nuclear family man, a misunderstood man who (in comparison with other Roma) fulfilled his duties as a worthy citizen, which sought to display mainstream myths about all Roma (or all "Bosnians"); all this did not stop Mevludin from getting deported. The case also permanently shattered Chanda's beliefs in the U.S. judicial and public safety system, which she thought were fair until Mevludin's case.

Challenging Citizenship: Survival Tactics or Counterhegemonic Struggle?

Even with my strong sense of advocacy for Roma and my experiences with Roma in BH, I had a difficult time acting as case manager for my Bosnian Romani clients who had moved to Sioux Falls from Fargo. I regularly hid behind my building in order to escape another encounter with a family who came without an appointment to beg in belligerent, demanding ways for money and services that I could not offer. One family used to sleep in their van outside of our office and when I showed up for work a few minutes late, they would chide me for it. Client/case worker relationships were routinely problematic. I had positive and negative experiences with all of my clients, who came from a variety of cultural, economic and social backgrounds, from Ethiopia to Bosnia, Sudan to Iraq. Despite my activist research advocating for Roma in BH and because of my Midwest upbringing, my female gender, my white race, my Protestant work ethic, and my age (I was in my mid twenties at the time I worked as a case manager), and my propensity to act "nice," I found everyday interactions as a caseworker to be stressful.

However, I learned quickly that Roma respected me for arguing, even yelling. To demonstrate cultural differences in communication styles and in gaining access to resources, I highlight the interaction between Belmin and me. One elderly Romani man in Fargo, Belmin, often came to LSS for help with translating documents. Because he had been in the U.S. for more than ten years, LSS was not mandated to serve him. He usually paid the Bosnian and Croatian LSS workers for their time with interpreting and translating. One day, Belmin and his wife came in and demanded to be seen immediately. The Bosnian-speaking staff was busy and I offered to help but I did not know the history behind the case and could not answer his question. I told him he would have to make an appointment. He screamed at me in the waiting room and told me I was useless. I screamed back, "Well, you can translate your own documents!" His wife came over and patted me on the back and told me I was very helpful and then a Bosnian worker who knew about his case came and answered his question and they left. Another time, Belmin came in and asked me for help in selling his house in Bosnia and got upset when I said I could not help because I knew nothing about the topic. Deana, a long-time LSS worker from the U.S., who enjoyed working with Roma, told me one time a Romani man threw something at her. She was so angry that she threw something back and since that incident, she and the family got along well. Another man said that as soon as his wife learned to acknowledge belligerence with indifference, not fear, she got along better with the Roma in Fargo. Amy, the first Refugee Liaison Officer in Fargo, told me that strength of character helped greatly in working with Roma; trying to be "nice" did not work.

Another survival tactic Roma used rather successfully played upon Americans'

understanding and curiosity about other people's cultures. For example, Romani students who married before the age of 16 brought their teachers pictures of their wedding. I witnessed a student tell her teacher that she would not be in school the following week because she was going to a big family wedding in Florida, but I spent time at this student's house the following week and the family did not go anywhere. The young woman stayed at home and watched TV all day. She told me she was bored but did not like school. "Culture" was used as a tactic to obtain resources and to shirk or challenge hegemonic ideas of good citizenship, like attending school and not getting married too young. Roma negotiated their Gypsiness (Silverman 1988). Importantly, while Roma appeared to overtly challenge the system, many were afraid, anxious, and/or wary about following the dominant prescriptions for good citizenship. In every country in which they live, Roma have been pariahs (Hancock 1988). From their perspective, little positive came from following dominant cultural practices or institutions.

Soon after I arrived in Fargo, I began tutoring English for the Giving+Learning Program (see chapter V) and requested to work with Bosnians or Sudanese. My first student was a 30-year-old Romani man from BH who was married to slightly younger BH Romani woman. They had three children and a fourth on the way. For the first few Saturday or Sunday afternoon lessons, I went to the family's house where one or both of mothers were there helping with the kids. Suad and I sat on the couch and he often instructed me on what and how to teach him. Sometimes the kids would shout the correct answers from the other room and Suad patiently but firmly told them that he understood that they knew how to read, write, and speak English, but they needed to let him learn.

He seemed at least a little bit embarrassed that his young children knew things that he did not. Suad started getting busier with the scrap metal business and we lost touch for a few months. He called me one afternoon and asked me to call him back right away because there was an emergency: he was taking the citizenship test and needed to learn English fast, in a matter of weeks. I told him there was no way I could teach him how to read and write English in a month: he needed to go to school and practice everyday. Suad was clearly anxious about attending school. He asked me to go with him the first time and I agreed but it never happened. Twice he paid the \$1000 to take the test and twice he failed it. On another occasion, when I went to his house, his wife and children were gone and he said we could meet under different circumstances. I ended our tutoring sessions.

Romani men displayed a pattern of intimidation and sexuality to get what they wanted, especially from women in power. People told me that teenage Romani boys tried the same tactic on their female teachers. A Child Protection Officer, told me that Romani male clients were “sexually intimidating,” and I asked her to explain:

Because I (laughing), one of these gentleman, you know, he was very – how do I explain it? You do the eyes up and down thing. Very in your personal space. Um, telling me [he was] really a good husband, those kinds of things. (laughs) ... As far as intimidation I think that they’ll always try to do that with females. For me, I, probably have a strong enough personality (laughing) that I’m not very easily intimidated and... when I’ve worked with them, once they know that they cannot push you around, you know, they really refer to you as a nasty bitch but they also realize that they’re not going to push you.

While there were some violent and criminal Roma, most were not, and there were many non-Roma criminals and violent people. Some of the sexualized interactions between Romani men and non-Romani women probably also stemmed from the expectations of non-Roma; Gypsy men are expected to be over-sexual and dangerous—this is the way

they are depicted in the media; so they often use this as form of power. It may be one of the only means of power available to them because they are denied ordinary forms of respect. In some cases, Roma used the stereotypes of them to gain access to citizenship resources (e.g. Okely 1983; Silverman 1988), but because this often included belligerence in a part of the country that valued niceness and politeness, intimidation made service providers uncomfortable. Rather than giving them more access to resources, this tactic made them seem even less worthy citizens; it backfired by attracting more negative attention by police and other state institutions.

As a result of centuries of persecution, Roma in Fargo had strong ‘survival networks’ (Ross 1983 cited in Hyatt 2001:207) but the networks did not necessarily conform to hegemonic forms of paid labor and civic engagement that neoliberal forms of “worthy” citizenship demanded. Hyatt explains that,

ongoing ethnographic work in marginalized communities continues to demonstrate that ‘social capital’ and civic engagement among the poor remain at an all-time high, if they are measured in terms of community residents’ participation in the open-ended social networks that have long been a critical component of self-help strategies among the poor... developed historically in response to various forms of state action (or inaction) (2001:207).

As a marginalized community, Roma relied heavily on survival networks but they also relied on the state. Because their survival networks did not correspond to state policies (e.g. ideas about marriage, family, education, and economic self-sufficiency), a variety of institutions deemed Roma “unworthy” citizens on the hierarchy of citizenship. In contrast, many of the same institutions praised Sudanese, whose social networks conformed more to the neoliberal economic and cultural project (see chapter VII).

Sophie, an eligibility worker at CCSS, summarized this point well when she explained who the most challenging and interesting clients were:

I think the Bosnians are the ones that have the worst and I don't like dealing with Bosnians. I love the Sudanese and Somalis, I mean they're just so thankful for anything that they're getting. But the Bosnians are really, really needy people, they're really, they just can't seem to fend for themselves...

Sophie's perspective on Bosnians was widely shared. She pointed to one of the most accepted duties of citizenship that Roma/Bosnians did not fulfill: self-sufficiency from the state. Additionally, stereotypes and misinformation about Roma as belligerent, violent, and uneducated transformed into formulaic legends that served to justify discrimination against and ignorance about them.

Most Roma in Fargo also strongly believed in self-sufficiency but their definition of it differed from wider society's and stems from historic and contemporary forms of marginalization that are supported and maintained by state and private institutions. Roma in Fargo defined self-sufficiency as maintaining their culture: relying on welfare, not attending high school, maintaining scrap metal businesses, and marrying at a young age, were attempts to maintain their cultural values as much as possible – and to defend against state intervention. From their perspective, these practices serve to make Roma independent from, and not dependent on, the state. In order to decrease prejudice against Roma, and to foster a more inclusive form of social citizenship in an increasingly multicultural society, citizens in Fargo must understand that Roma have similar concerns about their families, businesses, education, community, and cultural survival as other groups of refugees and white American citizens. How they maintain and balance these spheres may look different from the wider society's, but understanding how and why

Roma mistrust outsiders and governments is a first step in decreasing fear and promoting cross-cultural compromise and understanding.

Conclusion

There were many heterogeneities among Bosnians in Fargo in terms of region, ethnicity, socioeconomic status in the former Yugoslavia and the U.S., and different experiences of migration (some lived in Germany before coming to the U.S. and some did not) and war (some experienced the war in BH; some did not). Under socialism, men and women who had a good relationship with the Party, an education, a family, and social connections were considered ideal citizens. Social connections were based on nationality/ethnicity, gender, level of cosmopolitanism, and socioeconomic 'layer.' The hegemonic *Bosanski mentalitet* centered on patriarchy, hard work, reliance on family, and time to relax and to joke. In the U.S., some of these ideas were challenged, like relaxing or joking too much, while others were praised, like hard work and the expression of nuclear, family-centered values. Ideas about culture, race, ethnicity, and gender were transformed in the U.S. through relationships between younger and older generations, through daily cross-cultural interactions at school and work, during appointments at social service agencies and medical clinics, and through intercultural marriages.

Roma and Bosniaks shared the Bosnian language, a relationship with the former Yugoslav state, and some cultural traditions (e.g. Islamic traditions, state holidays). However, they had different socioeconomic histories in pre-war BH and lacked a cohesive ethnic community in Fargo. They also had different cultural traditions (e.g. Romani holidays and the Romani language). The main reason that Bosnians did not have

a cohesive ethnic community was that Bosniaks did not want to socialize with Roma. Roma and Bosniaks looked down on one another. The difference was that Bosniaks had a better relationship with the state, less contact with welfare and police, better overall relationships in the wider community through employers and American friends, and more in common in terms of the attributes of a “good” citizen. As a community, Roma were more endogamous, usually marrying only other Roma, and were insular as a group when compared to Bosniaks. Their views of self-sufficiency differed greatly from other Bosniaks and U.S. institutions.

Nevertheless, “Bosnian” parties drew members of both groups, which involved shared cultural traditions of dancing and music. The parties were usually organized by the Bosnian and Herzegovinian Community of Fargo-Moorhead and led by Bosniaks. Due to divisions between Bosniaks and Roma that I have described throughout this chapter, the organization was not successful in terms of garnering members from Bosnian or American communities, but they continued to organize parties around Bosnian holidays and sometimes performed Bosnian folkdances at multicultural festivals in the area.

More discussion about how culture shapes worldviews, including interactions with the state and civil society, could potentially alleviate some of the misunderstandings, confusion, prejudices, and uneven access to rights and resources that results from racialized hierarchies. By listening to the demands of Roma, challenging racist structures, and trying to change policy and practice – or challenge it from the grassroots level – social workers, teachers, and healthcare workers, can better serve the needs of Roma and other minority groups (Cemlyn and Briskman 2002). In the following chapter, I explain

that although Sudanese faced multiple and various forms of discrimination on the basis of race, class, gender, and nationality, their culture and networking skills partially mitigated these forms of prejudice.

CHAPTER VII
REFUGEES FROM SOUTH SUDAN:
THE POLITICS OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CITIZENSHIP

Nyariek spent the first nine years of her life in Uganda and her middle and high school years in South Sudan. After high school, she earned a degree in secretarial training and studied to be a Christian missionary. She married a Southerner and worked for a NGO in the southern capital of Juba for a couple of years. When the war broke out in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Nyariek kept her family safe by living in trenches to avoid the bombing. Her NGO was expelled, and in 1995, she fled with her family to Nairobi, Kenya, where they spent the next four and a half years living poorly. Sudanese refugees were not allowed to work in Kenya and faced harassment and discrimination from the police and ordinary citizens. In 2000, an uncle sponsored the family and they came to the U.S. as refugees. Nyariek and her husband had four children, and her husband's niece and nephew also lived with them. When I met her in 2005, Nyariek worked as an assistant for a preschool and was heavily involved in a church. She was frustrated in her marriage; her husband did not help around the house or with parenting. She refused to get divorced because of how the Sudanese community in the U.S. and her family in Sudan would view her. She believed in God, working hard, not gossiping, and being self-reliant. She and her

husband owned their own home and planned to send all of their kids to college. Nyariiek believed that in the U.S. a refugee could become “like any American, or even better.”

Nyaret’s story highlights some of the qualities of good citizenship among Sudanese in the United States: well-educated, Christian, family-focused, self-reliant, civically active, and politically engaged. I begin the following chapter by providing an overview of Southern Sudanese history as it relates to social citizenship among refugees in Fargo. Next, I highlight the role of religion in the wars in the South and in resettlement of Southern Sudanese to Fargo. I describe relationships between Sudanese men and women and how these relationships have been shaped by migration. I explain the importance of “politics” in shaping Sudanese experiences in the U.S. Unlike Bosnians (chapter VI), who had no formal, active cultural or political associations in Fargo, Sudanese had several political, social, and religious organizations. These organizations transformed and cemented social hierarchies within the Sudanese community and significantly shaped their relationships with the wider community. Sudanese organizations helped to establish Sudanese as “worthy” citizens in the eyes of many people and institutions in Fargo. As a result, they garnered social and material capital for projects in war-torn South Sudan.

A Brief History of Sudan

Bordered by nine countries, Sudan is composed of 25 states, 15 in the North and ten in the South (see Figure 15).¹ Sudan has a population of about 40 million people, but

¹ North Darfur, West Darfur, South Darfur, North Kordofan, South Kordofan, Blue Nile, White Nile, Khartoum, Sennar, Gedarif, Gezira, Kassala, Nile River, Northern Sudan, and Red Sea comprise the Northern states. Southern states include Upper Nile, Warap, Lakes, Unity, North Bahr el Ghazal, West Bahr el Ghazal, West Equatoria, Central Equatoria, and East Equatoria, and Jonglei.

its first official census, including Southern states, was underway in 2010. Sudan is comprised of about 50 percent black Africans, 40 percent Arabs, and others. Sudanese distinguish among each other by language, tribe or ethnic group, kinship, and region (rural versus urban, North versus South).² There are approximately two hundred ethnic groups in Northern Sudan, which can be generally categorized as Nubians, Beja, Afro-Arabs, Nubans, and Furs (Pitya 1996:35 cited in Shandy 2007:28). A majority of Northerners are unified by the Arabic language and Muslim faith. People in the Red Sea Hills, Nuba Mountains, and in the western province of Darfur tend to identify as black African Muslims. People in the South tend to identify as black African and increasingly Christian (although many continue to practice indigenous religions as well). The South contains about 50 ethnic groups but they are less unified than the North in terms of language and religion. Southerners can be broadly grouped into three categories: Nilotes, Nilo-Hamites, and Sudanics.³ The two largest groups in the South, which can be further subcategorized by region, dialect, and other characteristics, are the Dinka and Nuer. In short, ethnic and racialized identity in Sudan is highly fluid and depends upon the criteria by which individual groups distinguish themselves from other groups (Jok 2001).

² I use the terms “tribe” and “ethnic group” or “ethnicity” for different groups from Sudan because ethnic group is the more politically correct term, but Sudanese often refer to their “tribe.”

³ According to Pitya (1996, 255) southern groups include, for example, the following (not an exhaustive list): “the Nilotic group (Dinka, Nuer); Luo group (Acholi, Anywak, Boor, Jur, Pa’ri Lokoro, Shatt, Shilluk); Nilo-Hamitic group (Bari, Lotuho, Toposa); southern Sudanic group (Moru, Madi, Avukaya, Mundo, Kaliko, Lugwara, Baka, Bongo); western Sudanic group (Nkogo, Bviri, Bai, Golo, Yulu, Kresh, Feroge, Bandala, and others of western Bah al-Ghazal and southern Darfur); northern Sudanic group (Didinga, Longarim [Buya], Murle, and other small groups of the Nuba Mountains); and the Azande and Makaraka, which are more Bantu than Sudanic” (cited in Shandy 2007:174).

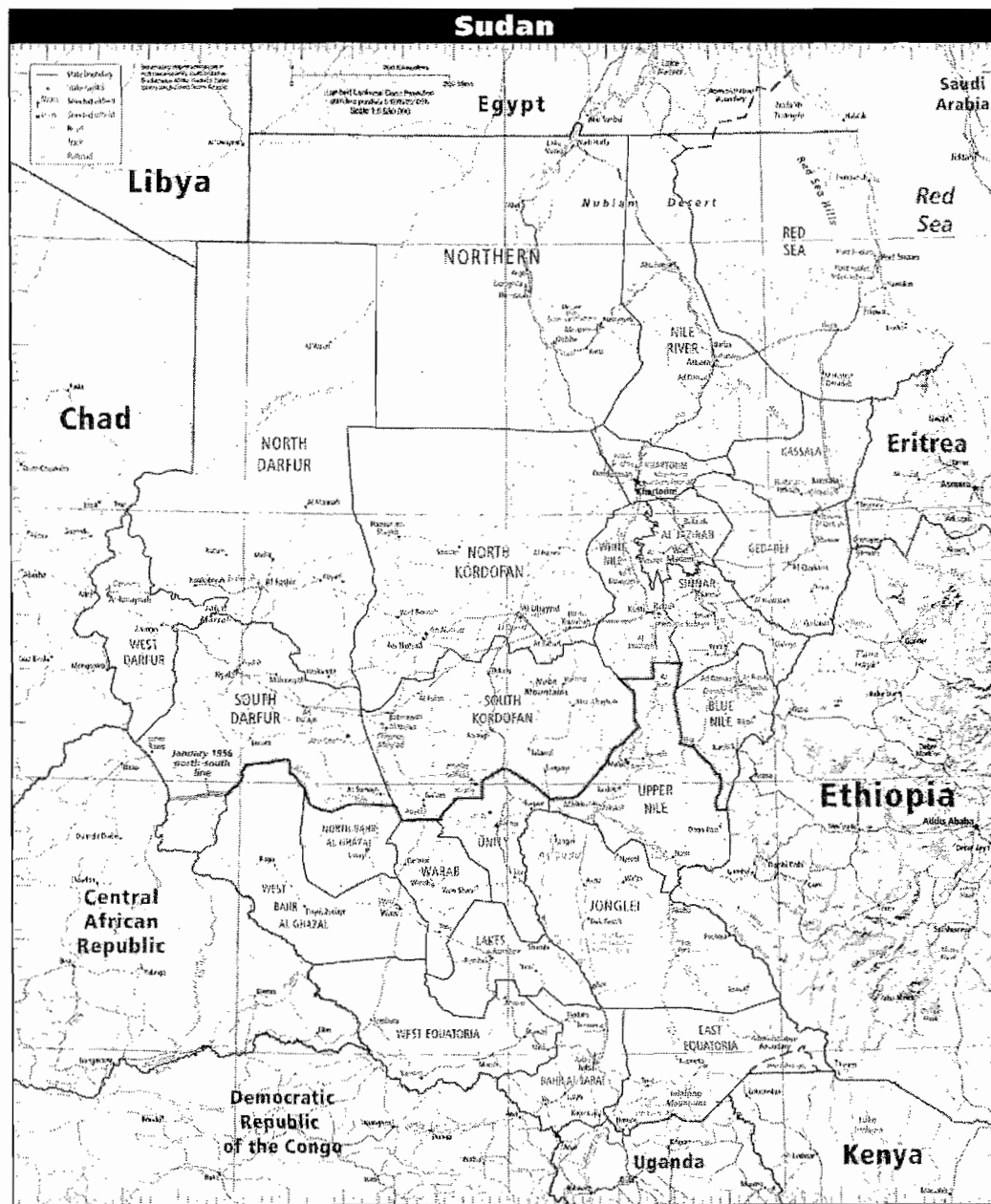


Figure 15: Map of Sudan⁴

⁴ http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/africa/txu-oclc-219400066-sudan_pol_2007.jpg

In addition to hundreds of different languages and dialects, with the influence of British colonialism and Christian missionary education, some Southerners also speak English. Those educated in Sudanese national schools speak Arabic. Some speak Juba Arabic, a Creole form of Arabic that combines Arabic, English, and other southern languages. It is not taught in schools and is generally an oral, not written, language. Most Northerners cannot understand Juba Arabic. English, Arabic, and/or Juba Arabic are the lingua franca among Southern Sudanese in the United States, but many also speak their ethnic languages and dialects, for example, Dinka or Nuer.

British Colonialism and the Civilizing Mission: The Role of Christianity in Sudanese History and Contemporary Citizenship Practices

Although Arabs and black Africans had contact and conflicts well before the modern era, much of the contemporary animosity in Sudan can be traced to the beginning of the 19th century. From 1820-1884, the Turco-Egyptian Period, Egyptian armies under the wider Ottoman Empire invaded Sudan. During this time, South Sudan was the source for slaves, gold, ivory, and timber (Sharkey 2003). Members of the Turco-Egyptian Empire, Europeans, and Northern Sudanese collaborated in their raids against South Sudan; millions of Southerners were forced into slavery in the Arab world and beyond. Slavery of Southern Sudanese by Northerners and others continues today and has its roots in Turco-Egyptian period (Abusharaf 2002; Jok 2001). From 1898-1956, the Anglo-Egyptian “Condominium” rule controlled Sudan (Collins 1983; Collins and Deng 1984; Daly 1991; Deng 1995; Powell 2003). Emphasizing Sudan’s distinction from other Colonial Office territories, the British placed Sudan under the Foreign Office rather than

the Colonial Office and controlled Sudan indirectly by using Egypt as a proxy colonizer (Sharkey 2003). In addition to antagonizing well-established differences between Northern and Southern peoples, the British fostered economic development in the North, but not in the South. Under British colonialism, the overall socioeconomic transformation of Sudanese society, including new forms of waged labor, created a gendered, occupational, and ethnic labor force and reinforced economic hierarchies that situated Southerners at the bottom (Bascom 1998; Sikainga 1996).⁵

In 1930, to minimize the spread of Islam and anti-colonial sentiments by Northerners, the British initiated the “Southern Policy.” This policy sought to administratively and culturally isolate the South from the North, and significantly contributed to ongoing violence in Sudan throughout the 20th and into the 21st century. The British did not allow Southerners to go to school or take government positions. They did encourage Christian missionaries to enter the South and barred Northern Sudanese from entering it (Daly 1991). The British used religion, including religious education, and other mission-based activities to foster the civilizing mission (Shandy 2007; Wheeler 2002). The history of missionary work in South Sudan is significant here because it would, in part, shape not only the conflicts between North and South Sudan, but relationships between Southern Sudanese refugees and Americans in the 21st century.

⁵ For example, in keeping with their attempts to make Sudan economically self-sustaining, the British established a vast irrigation system between the Blue and White Nile. The Gezira scheme was considered the world's largest single-management farming enterprise and consistently produced more than 80 percent of Sudan's cotton. It significantly increased a demand for wage laborers. In addition to West Africans, former Sudanese slaves located in the urban area of Khartoum were recruited as low-wage laborers, and by the 1940s, a Sudanese urban working class began to emerge (Bascom 1998; Sikainga 1996).

Early missionary work in Khartoum centered on redemption and education of slaves, especially children (Wheeler 2002:285). The year 1848 marked the first contact in the modern era between Christian missionaries (Roman Catholics) and Southerners (Wheeler 2002). However, the ongoing Catholic attempts at missionization at the end of the 19th century were largely unsuccessful due to ongoing disturbances from the slave and ivory trades and attempts from the North to Islamize the South. Nevertheless, Catholic missionaries, joined by Presbyterians and Anglicans, continued their evangelizing efforts into the 20th century (Pitya 1996:165 cited in Shandy 2007:41; Wheeler 2002). While colonial governments and missions were often at odds, missionization became increasingly successful during the 20th century because “both government and mission... had an interest in isolating southern Sudan from the disturbing influences – political, religious, educational, and commercial – that came from the North” (Wheeler 2002:286).

By the 1950s and 1960s, the role of missionaries and churches in building a resistance to the Northern Arab Muslim elite began to take root (Wheeler 2002). Many missionaries were forced to abandon church activities and focused instead on education. In 1964, the Northern government expelled at least 272 Catholic and 62 Protestant missionaries (Wheeler 2002:294). Despite the work of missionaries during the 19th and 20th centuries, it was the second bout of wars (1983-2005), including violent attempts to Islamize the South, that aided missionaries the most in converting Southerners to Christianity in the 1990s (Johnson 2003:xvi).

Missionary work operated not only in South Sudan but also in refugee camps and cities in neighboring countries where missionaries served as strong advocates and

supporters of Southern Christians during the wars of the 20th century.⁶ Due to the work of missionaries, as well as other foreigners, the seeds of knowledge necessary to grow into a “worthy” citizen were thus planted before Sudanese refugees arrived in the U.S. One Sudanese man told me that despite the insurmountable challenges that they faced as war orphans on their flight from Sudan to Ethiopia back to Sudan and finally to Kenya, there were “good things too,” like being introduced to Christianity. I asked Santino if he was familiar with Christianity before he arrived in the refugee camps and he said, no, he had only known “traditional gods.” He explained, “We were introduced to Christianity in Ethiopia. So first I was Episcopal. That’s the denomination that first came to Ethiopia, and then after that there was Catholic, so then I convert to Catholic. Then I become Catholic from there until now.”

In addition to the vital spiritual role that it played in the lives of Southerners, is it important to understand the significance of everyday help and guidance that missionaries provided to Sudanese refugees in the form of food, clothing, and education. Interactions with Christian missionaries influenced Southern Sudanese entrance into 21st century citizenship practices in the United States.⁷

⁶ For an account of work with Sudanese in exile in East Africa from a former missionary’s perspective, see Wheeler 2006.

⁷ There are Muslim Southerners but they are overlooked in discussions that focus on cultural, political, and economic binaries between the North and South. I have met Southern Sudanese, who identify as Muslim. One Muslim Southerner in Sioux Falls married a Christian Southerner and they agreed to raise the children Muslim in terms of dietary restrictions but also took the children to Catholic Church services. When I asked Southerners about Southerners who are Muslim, they told me that it occurs but was “not a big deal.” I cannot evaluate whether this was true or not. More academic work should explore this topic.

The 1956-72 and 1983-2005 Wars

Based on their history with Northern Sudanese, and especially the unequal development of the South compared to the North, Southern leaders were not in favor of independence from the British. Southern leaders felt that the better-educated, better-armed, more-developed Muslim Northern elite posed a far greater danger to Southerners than the British (Oduho and Deng 1963; Jok 2001; Nyibil 1990). Nevertheless, in 1956, Sudan gained independence from Great Britain, becoming the first state to gain independence in Africa. Violence between Northern government troops and Southern rebels started in 1955, and by 1962, full war broke out. The violence lasted until March 3, 1972, when the Sudanese government and the Southern leadership of Anya Nya reached a peace agreement in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (Hale 1978). The South technically became a self-governing region, but remained isolated, underdeveloped, and dominated by the North (e.g. Deng 1978, 1995).

Beginning in 1978, however, South Sudan's autonomy began to erode. Chevron discovered oil in the South and the Northern Sudanese government attempted to redraw political boundaries to include more oil-bearing areas in the North. In 1983, President Nimeiri declared Islamic *sharia* law. Southerners, who were not Muslim, and others (e.g. the Sudanese Communist Party and other opponents of the government) opposed the law. Though *sharia* was not applied in the South, it was, and continues to be, imposed on millions of Southerners who were forced to migrate to the North due to violence and lack of economic opportunities (Bascom 1993, 1998; Karadawi 1987, 1999).

In 1983, war broke out again between the government of Sudan (GoS) and the newly formed Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) led by Dr. John Garang Mabior, a Dinka, and graduate from the Iowa State Department of Agricultural Economics. In 1985, a coup against President Nimeiri succeeded and the National Islamic Front (NIF) took control of the government. Since 1993, despite on-going internal disagreements, President Omar el-Bashir has continued to lead Sudan. Islam remains a strong guiding force in the domestic and foreign policies of the GoS (e.g. Hale 1997).⁸

The ongoing wars in Sudan (including in Darfur since 2003) were fought in large measure over oil, gold, water, and religion (Shandy 2007:31, see also Deng 1995; James 2007). Shandy argues, "religion was an ideological force coalescing with economic forces to make the plight of southern Sudanese noticeable to U.S. policy makers" (2007:31). Oil is located in the Upper Nile and Bahr al-Ghazal provinces. There is gold in Equatoria. There is also geostrategic importance in the region of the headwaters of the White Nile (Shandy 2007). Water has long been a source of tension between groups living along what is now the North/South border (Jok 2001; Simonse 1992).

Hutchinson (2001) summarized the wars in the South, and more specifically among Nuer, as part of four main phases, which included: 1) the mobilization of southern rebels (1981-83), 2) the strong emergence of the SPLA/M (1983-91), 3) the fractioning of the SPLA/M (1991-97), and 4) the the unraveling of the 1997 Peace Agreement.

Hutchinson focuses her article on the devastating interethnic conflicts between Dinka and

⁸ For a review of Islamic fundamentalism and hegemony in Northern Sudan, including its relationship to gender, see Abusharaf 2002; An-Na'im and Kok 1991; Bernal 1997; Boddy 1995; Hale 1996, 1997; Hall and Ismail 1981. For a review of wars in Sudan and gender, see Beswick 2001a, 2001b; Duany and Duany 2001; Hutchinson 1996; Jok 1998.

Nuer military elites within the SPLA/M. She argued that from 1991-97, the 'war of the government' (between the SPLA and GoS) was overshadowed by the 'war of the educated' (the Southern military elite), and more specifically between Twic-Dinka John Garang and his Nuer second in command, Riak Machar. As Southern military leaders fought out their political differences and attempted to establish their own economic power along ethnic lines, civilian populations suffered from unchecked killing and raping of unarmed women and children by SPLA soldiers (see also Jok 2001). This violence played well into the hands of the GoS, which portrayed the South as a problem of 'tribalism' rather than of its own discriminatory political and economic policies against the South (Hutchinson 2001:328). The international community failed to broker peace until 2005 and has been accused by journalists, activists, and scholars of literally and figuratively feeding the wars (Beswick 2004; Deng 1995; Harrigan 2004; Hutchinson 1996; Johnson 2003; Jok 2001; Macklin 2004; Rone 1996; Scroggins 2002).

The war between the North and South officially ended on January 9, 2005, when Garang signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) with the GoS. Southern Sudanese around the world celebrated, ecstatic that after a brutal 22-year war, peace in their part of the country was finally in sight. One of the stipulations of the CPA was that Garang would become the First Vice President of the Government of Sudan and the President of South Sudan. On July 14, 2005, in Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, he was sworn in. Just three weeks later, on August 1, Garang's helicopter crashed in the mountains of Uganda and everyone on board died. Days later, Salva Kiir Mayardit, Garang's second in command, took the oath of office and as of April 2010, he remained

the President of South Sudan and the First Vice President of Sudan. Democratic elections took place in Sudan in April 11-15, 2010, but Sudanese citizens, backed by the UN and other governments, called the elections deeply flawed. The landslide victory for the National Congress Party (NCP) and reigning President Omar al-Bashir, who is wanted by International Criminal Court for war crimes and crimes against humanity, point to the likelihood for corruption during the vote for Southern secession in the 2011 referendum (e.g. Al-Karib 2010; Malik 2010). Al-Bashir is the first serving head of state to be indicted for such crimes.

The wars in South Sudan resulted in more than 2 million deaths and 4 million displaced people (not including the violence in Darfur since 2003, which resulted in hundreds of thousands of more deaths and displaced people). Deaths were caused not only by government-sponsored and interethnic killings, but also from drought, disease, forced migration, and lack of adequate basic needs and human security. According to journalist Scott Peterson (2000),

Unlike Somalia and Rwanda, where saturation of media coverage of atrocities sparked attempts to find solutions, war in Sudan is so wide and often so incomprehensible that it almost defies intervention... Aid donors are difficult to motivate and know their work is a drop in an ocean of suffering. Children are saved, it seems only so they can fight in the war (175).

Most displaced people were located within the South or the North, or in other African states such as Egypt, Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia.⁹ Less than one percent of the

⁹ Discussing transformations of Southern Sudanese culture as a result of war and exile is beyond the scope of this dissertation. For a literature on the anthropology of South Sudan, see, for example, Ahmad 2003; Beswick 2001a, 2001b; Deng 1972; Duany 1992; Evans-Pritchard 1940, 1951, 1956, 1971; Hutchinson 1996; James 2007; Johnson 1994, 2003; Jok 1998, 2001; Kenyon 1998. For more on Sudanese in refugee camps, displaced person camps in Sudan, and in other countries of resettlement, see, Akol 1987; Chrostowsky 2010; Fábos 2002; Faria 2009; Rogge 1987.

world's refugees are resettled to western countries and more than 80 percent of them are located in developing countries.

The U.S. government began resettling Southern Sudanese in the early to mid-1990s largely as a result of Christian advocacy (e.g. Shandy 2007). About 60 percent of African refugees resettled to the U.S. were Sudanese, but the total number of Sudanese refugees resettled was less than 25,000 (Abusharaf 2002; USCIS 2004). Shandy notes that this relatively small number is misleading in terms of the influence they have on politics in Sudan, especially through remittances (2007:146-58). Additionally, their influence on ideas about citizenship in racially and culturally homogenous cities like Fargo and Sioux Falls are vital to understanding the different forms citizenship takes as well as how and by whom "worthy" citizens are defined. There are roughly 2,000 Sudanese in Fargo but numbers are difficult to calculate due to high rates of migration among Sudanese. The most represented ethnic groups in Fargo include: Dinka, Madi, Kuku, Bari, and Moros. Almost all of the Sudanese in Fargo practice Christianity, and attend the Catholic, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Seven Day Adventist, and Episcopal Churches.

Refugee Resettlement and the State: Sudanese in Fargo

Coming to the United States from the Third World is like being born again,
as a baby, knowing nothing. You have to start over.
It's like asking you to jump from the top of a tree
without breaking your legs!

Nyakai, a Sudanese woman

Like Bosnians (chapter VI), Sudanese began coming to the United States and to Fargo in the mid-1990s, during the perfect storm of refugee resettlement (chapter I). Like

Southerners in Sudan, Southern Sudanese refugees who came to the U.S. had a long list of cultural, economic, and ethnic differences. For this project, I chose not to focus on a particular ethnic group.¹⁰ I broadly group Southerners together because: 1) this research is about relationships among Southerners but also between Southerners and the wider U.S. community which, for the most part, did not heed differences among Sudanese, 2) Southerners presented themselves as such and strongly believed in the need for unity in order to support the formation of a New Sudan, a separate political and economic entity from Northern Sudan (see also Shandy 2007:26), 3) while Southerners did distinguish among themselves based on tribal affiliation, they nevertheless socialized and organized across ethnic lines, and, finally, 4) my data suggests that despite cultural nuances, Sudanese from different ethnic groups did not have significantly different relationships with the wider community of Fargo. Rather than ethnicity, levels of formal education, socioeconomic status, gender, age, and previous resettlement experiences (see Chrostowsky 2010) shaped Southerners relationships with the state.

I explained in previous chapters that economic self-sufficiency was a measure of successful refugee resettlement and social citizenship in the U.S. Regardless of prior experience or formal education, newly arrived refugees were mandated to find waged labor as soon as possible. For most refugees in Fargo, including Sudanese, this meant working in factories, hotels, retail, and other entry level jobs. In addition to decades of war-related trauma and forced migration, lack of experience in waged labor markets resulted in barriers to Sudanese integration. As a caseworker in Sioux Falls (2001-02)

¹⁰ For a literature specifically on Nuer refugees, see Holtzman 2000a, 2000b; Shandy 2002, 2007.

with dozens of Sudanese clients, I was surprised by the variety of experiences among Sudanese when it came to resettlement, and more specifically by the vast differences in levels of formal education and experience with waged labor. There were men (and some women) who had a college education abroad (in India, Cuba, Egypt, and Kenya) and who spoke fluent English. Others had worked for large, well-paying international organizations. There were many women, and some men, who had almost no formal education and little experience in waged labor. There were men and women who suffered from psychosocial trauma and there were men of all ages who had fought in the war.

Many new Southern Sudanese refugee arrivals struggled with modern appliances, American food, different kinds of medications, and transportation, as well as the more common challenges among most Americans of balancing work and family and social obligations. When they first came, many Sudanese thought, “America is a big liar! We thought, ten dollars an hour! Wow! When I go there, I will work, get a lot of money, go to school, and send money back home to family. But when we come here, everything is different.” For example, time was conceptualized and experienced very differently in the U.S. than in Sudan or in the refugee camps (see Evans-Pritchard 1951; Holtzman 2000b). Time, transportation, and budgeting were some of the most difficult things to explain to Sudanese who had not previously lived or worked in an advanced capitalist framework. Resettlement caseworkers learned to pick clients up well before appointments to ensure their punctuality and to explain the consequences for tardiness.

Budgeting was a problem for many Sudanese because they felt a desire and pressure to send money to family in Africa (see also Shandy 2007). Despite their cultural

orientations abroad (see chapter III), most had not counted on the high cost of rent, utilities, food, car insurance, and so on. Except for those who had lived in urban areas and/or in other countries of stay (like Egypt, Cuba, or India), many had little access to material culture before coming to the U.S. According to Sudanese men, women quickly began to desire more clothing, jewelry, furniture, cars, and homes. As they joined the workforce (some for the first time), they wanted a voice in how to spend their hard-earned money (as well as their husband's). Women's and men's desires for nice things and arguments over remittances to respective families became a new point of contention between men and women (see also Faria 2009; Holtzman 2000a, 2000b).

At the beginning of their time in the U.S., the desire for material culture manifested itself most clearly in the need for cars. Building on Hutchinson (1996), Holtzman makes a connection between the prestige of owning cattle among Nuer in Sudan to owning cars in the U.S. (2000b:64-68). He explains the tremendous amount of time, money, planning, and unexpected problems that came with car (or cattle) ownership. Many Nuer families went into large amounts of debt to buy a car. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, because they worked evening shifts at factories miles from their apartments and needed a car to get to work, many Sudanese (as well as other refugees) drove without licenses or car insurance. This strategy instigated more racial profiling by police. Thus, those few who managed to obtain a license and buy a car were in high demand to drive others.

Increased desire and need for material culture had also to do with categories of "worthy" citizenship. Property and home ownership became a measure among refugees

and the wider community of the success of refugees to Fargo. When I asked John, a relatively young Sudanese community leader in his thirties, about the characteristics of an “integrated” Sudanese, he said,

One is a house. I think that once you buy a house... the Americans start respecting you... maybe also a job – you’re already building American dreams. You’re a person – a hard-working person. You add *value* to the community. They *value* you... Because this is a person who bought a house here, he’s already building here. He loves this area. The community start respecting you... *really* a house is a complement or an indicator of full integration into society *because* the good thing in housing – you are integrated into different neighborhoods. Like, for example, I bought a house in south Fargo. In south Fargo, I think only two of us are black... The rest are all white... Good, well-to-do, wealthy white people, we interact – we are integrated among them. When we come together, we greet each other in the morning. [...] That’s why a *house* is a *big*, big indicator of somebody really fully integrated.

John points to race as well as socioeconomic class as factors in “worthy” citizenship in Fargo. In the 1990s, there were especially few people of color in Fargo and Sudanese stood out. Peter, who was originally resettled to Sioux Falls, but had lived in both South and North Dakota, said that in the mid-1990s, he and other Southerners almost never went out in public because they felt uncomfortable. Because of their accents, people spoke louder rather than slower, and treated them differently: “We looked different. We felt different. The community wasn’t welcoming. Racism was a new thing to us. Back home, people looked at status, at class, not at skin color.” On May 19, 2001, in Fargo, a local man and his 20-year-old son severely beat a 21-year-old Sudanese man with a wooden baton, which resulted in a convicted hate crime, prison sentences for the perpetrators, and permanently damaged vision in one eye for the victim (*The Forum* 2001). The reason for the attack was race-related.

Jok (2001:8) explains how race operates in Sudan in order to justify slavery of Southerners (especially Dinka and Nuer) by Northerners (specifically the Baggara Arab herdsmen) and war: “For a Sudanese, race is as plain as the different shades of blackness,” but he argues, like everywhere else, race and racism are culturally constructed: “race in Sudan is not necessarily based on appearance alone, but also on people’s own racial categorization of themselves.” However, like racism in the U.S., racism in Sudan has to do with evoking “emotions of superiority of one group over the other” (Jok 2001:7).

In general, because race is constructed differently in the U.S. compared to Sudan, I found it very difficult to discuss racism with Sudanese. Many of them alluded to it, but insisted that they preferred the racism of the U.S. to that of Northern Sudan, or even other African countries (see also Faria 2009). Paul, a man in his late twenties who spent time in Cairo, Egypt, before coming to the U.S., said, “White people were the lesser of two evils.” Northern Sudanese Muslims tried to force Southerners to be Muslims, but the white people were “a little more polite about it,” “it” meaning integration and nation-building. In other words, Paul preferred hegemony to brute force. In 2007-2008, the Director of New American Services spoke with a Sudanese leader who told him that education was not the problem with Sudanese; the problem was once they received an education, they wound up working at temporary, low-paid positions at Walmart because, due to their racial identity, no other place would hire them.

Paul told me that he was paid less per hour at his welding job than his white colleagues who had the same or less education and training. He was mad about this but

when I suggested he could fight it, he said he would rather focus on problems in Sudan. He felt the battle for racial equality in the U.S. was someone else's battle. South Sudan was like a shadow; it was always with him, not something he could ignore. I asked him whose responsibility he thought it was to fight racism in the U.S. and he said mine (Jennifer's), and other Americans. I asked him if he felt like an equal citizen in the United States and he said no, but reiterated that was not his battle.

Paul also highlighted a common theme among Sudanese, which was they had more problems with African-Americans than with whites. According to Sudanese, African-Americans did not like Africans because Africans sold them into slavery. Some African-Americans believed that African refugees were doing better in the U.S. than they were, which was unfair. Nevertheless, as a black man, Paul identified with African-Americans because of slavery, which is still practiced against Southerners in Sudan (see Bok 2003; Jok 2001). Southerners were not treated well in their own country just as African-Americans were not treated well in theirs. As such, neither group had equal access to education, housing, and so on. Paul's explanation of race relations between Sudanese and African-Americans points to new social hierarchies that form in the U.S. as a result of refugee resettlement (Ong 1996). While Sudanese refugees were definitely categorized as people of color and hence deemed less "worthy" in hegemonic forms of citizenship, Southern Sudanese (for example, through community organizing), unlike Bosnian Roma (chapter VI) mitigated some of the racialized forms of prejudice in Fargo.

Sudanese downplayed racism in the U.S., but it clearly upset them. David recounted an evening in 2004 when he tried to go to the OB, a nightclub in downtown

Fargo. David did not drink alcohol; he simply wanted to get out of the apartment and celebrate his birthday with friends at a public venue. The bouncer refused to let him in on the grounds that his ID said his birthday was January 1. Because so few Sudanese had birth certificates or knew their exact date of birth, or even year, most of them had birthdates of January 1. When the bouncer would not let him in, David called the police. He told to me, "I didn't do it for myself, just to get in, but for others, because that was wrong. It was against the law." David, a soft-spoken, mild-mannered young man threatened to sue the club all the while arguing that he was "a taxpaying citizen who had rights!" Once the police arrived, the bouncer said there had been a misunderstanding and allowed David and his friends to enter the club. In another instance of blatant racism and xenophobia, a foster parent of two Sudanese young men told me that her neighbor would not allow her daughter to be alone with, or even in the vicinity of, the young men without adult supervision. This made the men feel terrible, but instead of causing discomfort, they left anytime the neighbor girl came over.

When I asked Nyariek and Nyakai about discrimination in the U.S. they said, "We can stand some small problems with discrimination because we've experienced a lot." Like Paul, they argued that the kind of discrimination they faced in the U.S. did not compare to the kinds of persecution they faced in Sudan and in other African countries (Nyariek had lived in Uganda and Kenya and Nyakai in Egypt). Furthermore, they argued, daily life for women was generally easier in the U.S. In Sudan, they had to grind maize by hand, fetch and carry water from far away, and cook everything over the fire. In the U.S. they had appliances, running water in their homes, and all-you-can-eat-buffets at

restaurants. Although Nyakai had grown accustomed to these things in Cairo, where she lived as a student, she and Nyariek remembered well the number laborious chores they had in Sudan. They also asserted that women in Sudan and in the U.S. had more family responsibilities than men. Nyariek and Nyakai's perspectives on racism, household duties, and gendered divisions of labor pointed to transformations of race, class, gender, and culture that shaped conceptions among Sudanese about citizenship in the U.S.

Gender, State, and Society Relations in Sudan and in the United States

Like race, gender is a cultural construction, which is influenced by local and global political and economic structures. As feminist scholars have importantly noted, "the private/public division is fluid, historically and contextually determined, contested and constantly struggled over and redefined" (Yuval-Davis and Werbner 1999:29). In order to understand Sudanese men's and women's access to and influence on social citizenship in Fargo, it is important to understand the variety of relationships between and among them as they transformed in Sudan and the United States.

In Sudan, marriage was more about kinship than a relationship between two individuals. The basis for marriage was to create a social network "for the purpose of distributing rights, privileges, and responsibilities concerning people and livestock" (Holtzman 2000a:396; see also Hutchinson 1996). The well being of the conjugal bond affected the maintenance of wider kin networks. Extended kin assisted in resolving most marital conflicts, but once the dispute reached a certain level (for example, in cases calling for divorce), local (or "tribal") courts and other administrators got involved (Hutchinson 1996). Most ethnic groups in the South were patrilocal, patrilineal, and

patriarchal. As such, women tended to gain status as they age (Hutchinson 1996). The man was the formal head of the household and there were clear divisions of labor; men and women rarely worked as partners (e.g. Hutchinson 1996; Jambo 2001; Jok 1998, 2001). Failure to fulfill responsibilities often resulted in domestic violence of men against women; it was expected, if not desired, by both men and women (Holtzman 2000a). A common (but increasingly challenged) phrase among Sudanese men and women was that a woman only knows a man loves her if he beats her.

Bride wealth remained an important economic factor in marriage practices, including transnational marriages between Sudanese men living in the diaspora and women “back at home” (see also Shandy 2007:112-16). Many groups in the South practiced polygamy, which was against the law in the U.S. Those refugee men who had more than one wife, had to choose which wife to bring to the U.S.¹¹ For every three Southern Sudanese men resettled to the U.S., one woman was resettled. One of several possible reasons for this was that women lacked the necessary cash to travel from Sudan or the refugee camps to processing centers (Shandy 2007:64-65), in addition to the cultural bias among Sudanese that women would be more susceptible to corruption in the West than men.

As a result of the many wars in South Sudan in the last 50 years, monumental changes to the ways in which Sudanese practiced agriculture and cattle occurred, which affected gender relationships (Hutchinson 1996). Nevertheless, outside of the cities,

¹¹ In nine years of working with Sudanese, I have not heard of polygynous marriages happening in the U.S., not even informally. That does not mean it is not happening, but it is not common practice among the Sudanese I worked with.

small-scale agriculture and livestock remained the main sources of subsistence in the South. Even within cities, marital units tended to live in compounds near other Sudanese, not in isolation. The shift from living in village compounds, or even in refugee camps, to the isolation of apartments was a major shift for Sudanese couples. Once in the U.S., most men and women had to work. Like most groups of refugees, husbands and wives worked opposite shifts in order to avoid paying for the costs of daycare. The strict division of labor within the household was diminished as men were forced to learn to prepare meals for themselves and their children.

When I asked a former Sudanese male caseworker at LSS in Sioux Falls about the challenges for men and women in the U.S., he said he believed it was easier for single Sudanese men than for families, because there were usually fewer changes to adjust to. He recounted some of the problems of working as a caseworker with his own people due to the difficulties of navigating the terrain of gender relations. All of the Sudanese male caseworkers faced ongoing rumors about their relationships with their Sudanese clients, for example that the men were “married to” (sleeping with) or “in love with” their clients, which caused problems for the men, women, and LSS. The rumors were particularly harsh against those Sudanese men who did not have children, thus making them more threatening to the already tenuous fabric of Sudanese families in transition. Women began to accuse their male caseworkers of raping them and/or breaking up their families. The men had to devise strategies of working with women to prevent the accusations but still do their jobs. At first, they decided to never visit a Sudanese woman alone; they would only go with another Sudanese male. This strategy also failed (both were accused

of wrong doing) so next, they only spoke with Sudanese women with non-Sudanese female caseworkers (like me), which worked better, but still some women spread rumors about the men, or about the American women, like me.

In addition to new disputes over unequal division of household labor, many disagreements occurred over money, especially in regards to paying remittances to families back in Africa (Faria 2009:138-9; Holtzman 2000b). Some disagreements turned into domestic violence. While there was no clear indication of *increased* domestic violence in the U.S., Holtzman (2000a) explains, “What is clear is that the causes of domestic violence and its implications differ substantially from those found in the Sudanese context” (400). In general, it appeared that “by privileging violence over other negative behaviors, the government provides advocacy for women in the context of disputes within the home rather than seeking a fair resolution to family problems” (Holtzman 2000a:402). In other words, root causes for family violence – such as new ideas about work, family, education, the role of government, lack of affordable, culturally-sanctioned childcare, emotional illness or trauma, or distance from (or proximity to) extended kin networks – were not the focus of state interventions.

Nyakai explained to me the difficulties of being a Sudanese woman. If a woman did something disrespectful in a Sudanese village, then she brought shame on her family and their whole village. If the woman went to another area of the South, she could bring shame to her region; if she went to the North, then she could bring shame to the South; if she went to another country in Africa, she could bring shame to her country, and if she went to another continent, then she could bring shame to all of Africa. In her discussion

of a murder-suicide of a young Sudanese girl by a Sudanese man in Seattle, Washington, Faria (2009) argues that Sudanese were concerned that young women were taking on too many U.S. ideas about freedom and losing their connections to Sudan and Sudanese culture. Thus, “violence perpetrated against them is attributed to their own unruly and troubling behavior” (110).

Divorce was one way to challenge traditional ideas about women, marriage, and domestic violence (see also Shandy 2007), but most women and men I spoke with were firmly against it. They argued keeping families together was one of the biggest problems facing Sudanese. They believed that divorce rates were alarmingly high in the U.S. but rare in Sudan. Hutchinson (1996) writes that despite the difficulties of women especially in gaining a divorce, by the 1980s, it was becoming more common, often for economic reasons. One day, a woman who had explained to me, in front of her friend, about the problematically high rates of divorce in the U.S. confided in me privately that she was unhappy in her marriage and had considered divorce for herself. Her husband rarely helped her around the house or with their five children. He never helped without being asked and they rarely spoke. But she did not think the community would accept a separation or divorce, so she stayed with him.

Other ways to negotiate new gender relations, included overt ways, like dialing 911, and covert ways, through gossip. In the U.S. some Sudanese women provoked or participated in domestic fights, but called 911 to remove their husbands from the household. The joke among Sudanese was that women knew how to dial 911 before they learned to speak English (Holtzman 2000a). Most women in these circumstances were

not aware of the legal implications, including jeopardy of citizenship status, or potential job loss. In the absence or fear of state intervention, women often relied on kinship networks to assert their will in the community. Gossip was a topic of conversation that emerged again and again, especially regarding its use by Sudanese women against men and against each other.

A former LSS Sudanese co-worker in Sioux Falls and I got into a disagreement about the use of gossip in the Sudanese community. He often complained about the negative impacts of gossip not only about him, but about Sudanese in general, and especially men. He saw it as counterproductive to almost everything. I argued that women had less status in the community, and used gossip as a form of social control over more powerful men; it was a necessary if not annoying strategy that might improve if women were given more respect. He disagreed and provided me with examples of things that Southern Sudanese women said about me (for example, that I was “fat”). He was frustrated when the examples did not shock me or change my position. My position in the Sudanese community was not at stake. He stood to lose respect (or more) from (sometimes very malicious) rumors, and I had the ability to avoid such people. Sally Engle Merry (1997:48) argues,

Gossip is often part of larger social processes... that lead to the implementation of powerful social, economic, and political sanctions. Individuals vulnerable to these pressures are vulnerable to gossip, whereas those who are not ignore and defy malicious talk. Gossip controls behavior when the people who gossip exercise other forms of social control over its victims... It is those in the middles of the social spectrum, vying with one another for slight precedence in social affairs, who are most concerned about gossip and most vulnerable to its consequences.

My LSS colleague was vulnerable to gossip because he was not married, had a steady job, came from a wealthy, well-respected family in South Sudan, and was viewed as an up-and-coming leader in the diasporic Sudanese community. Some women interpreted his unwillingness to marry one of them as an insult. Paul was another man vulnerable to gossip. One day, I was interviewing Paul, a Sudanese man in his late twenties, when his phone rang. He ignored it the first few times but eventually answered it. Shaking his head, he held the phone up so that I could hear the woman screaming at him in Dinka from the receiver. He told me that this happened often. This woman called him to tell him he was a terrible husband for not providing for his wife. He assured me that he had provided for his wife. He had even offered to pay for her to go to school, but she wanted his time and his money to buy material things, and when she did not get them, she complained to her female relatives who then called Paul to yell at him. If he did not answer the phone, even while at a meeting or at work, or if he turned his phone off, then the women spread rumors that he was cheating. Paul also spent a night in jail for beating his girlfriend. He laughed as he told the story, admitted to hitting her, and said that he did not care that he went to jail, and that his girlfriend was “stupid.” Such stories were ubiquitous and part of everyday conversations. Like in Bosnian communities (chapter VI), gossip almost always revolved around sexual politics.

In adopting to the new rights and responsibilities of citizenship in the U.S., Sudanese women challenged not only Sudanese men and each other, but American employers as well. I asked a human resource manager in Sioux Falls about some of the biggest challenges of employing refugees, and she said:

We've had a number of Sudanese women who have had babies [and] they have to take off the entire pregnancy. And I doubt seriously when you're in the Sudan you get to sit on your rear end for nine months! But they get very, very demanding and they get doctors to support that. And our medical plan allows you to be out for 25 weeks with a portion of your pay, and this seems to be happening over and over and over again... And now whether they have problem pregnancies- whether that's something common to their group, I know that infant mortality is probably pretty high over in the Sudan but, you know, pregnancy is pregnancy... I mean, our people lift up to 14 pounds – it's not like there's a lot going on out there, but I find that to be kind of odd.

This comment speaks to the stereotype that African women have fewer rights than American women. It also speaks to the Protestant work ethic: taking time off work was considered economically, but also morally, reprehensible. This human resource manager found attempts to resist these ideas as irresponsible and annoying. According to Hutchinson (1996), Nuer believed that childbirth

was followed... by an unenviable and unavoidable state of extreme exhaustion... Ideally, 'a woman who had recently given birth' (*ciék mi pay dap*) was excused from as many household tasks as her circumstances allowed for a period of months after delivery. Others were supposed to cook for her, help care for her older children, gather wood for her, and so forth, until she felt capable of taking on these tasks fully once again. Although this cultural ideal was not always realized, owing to an absence of younger sisters, co-wives, or other women assistants, there was a definite public status accorded to a woman who had recently given birth (192).

Sudanese (or at least Nuer) ideas about childbirth, women's work, community, and social status were at odds with employers whose only goal was productivity for the company.

Most Sudanese women I met in Fargo worked full-time jobs, at Fargo Assembly, Cardinal IG, in other factories, or in retail (grocery or clothing stores or restaurants).

They could not afford to take long maternity leaves. The point is that they did not simply follow the rules but rather attempted to negotiate them. Some relied on welfare. I found

that while many Sudanese viewed a dependence on welfare negatively and worked hard to avoid it, some came to rely on it when things with men went awry.

Many Sudanese women who came to the U.S. had not been formally educated, had not experienced waged labor, and had been considered second-class citizens as women and as black Africans in all of the countries in which they had lived. While there were important exceptions to this, many women lacked self-confidence. Due to childcare responsibilities, lack of extended kin near by, and a lack of knowledge about education and other forms of empowerment, some felt alone. Many could not drive, which made them feel even more isolated and dependent upon men. One man begged me to help his wife with English so that she could pass the driving test; then he would not have to drive her around anymore. Women's lack of formal education, childcare responsibilities, and mobility were leading factors for dependence on welfare and, importantly, lack of voice in wider political and social circles. Because of these responsibilities, it was more difficult for Sudanese women to become self-sufficient.

I tutored Jacqueline in English. Jacqueline had two children from two different fathers, a twelve-year-old and a toddler. She did not know where the oldest son's father lived and her boyfriend, the father of her second son, was often on the road for his job. She told me how much she loved our lessons because they made her feel smart and useful. She did not interact with very many Americans and was at the mercy of cousins, her boyfriend, and her boyfriend's family to get around. She used to work in a factory but then she had her second son and quit. She received government-subsidized housing benefits but otherwise her boyfriend supported her. She told me she was frequently bored

and wanted to go to school but she did not have her driver's license or money to buy a car. Daycare would be impossible without a car. She said she would like to work in a bank, do something with papers, or maybe become a nurse, but she needed more education for these kinds of jobs. In my experience, women like Jacqueline had remarkable survival skills. However, a lack of confidence severely limited them.

Women's lack of self-confidence was further diminished by the Sudanese community's call for more "self-reliance." Leaders at community meetings often stressed the need for Sudanese to stop relying on outsiders for help and to do more for their own community. Because women were more reliant on men and on the state than Sudanese men were, these discussions served to minimize women's place in the community, but they encouraged women to take more responsibility for their own lives. During a community meeting, Ayen abruptly switched from English into Arabic. She apologized to me in English, but said that she expressed herself better in Arabic. During her speech, she mentioned, in English, "women," "welfare," and "ten years." Later, I asked her why she did not want me to understand that she was talking about women and welfare. After expressing annoyance that I had "understood" her particular Dinka dialect of Arabic, she explained to me that many Sudanese women were particularly vulnerable in the U.S. because of their overall lower levels of formal education, their isolation in homes with children, and their lack of mobility. She lamented women's lack of interest in joining Sudanese organizations and men's lack of willingness to make the necessary accommodations to increase women's voices, for example, by providing childcare at the meetings. I told her this was nothing to be ashamed of, but her desire to hide the

phenomenon from me demonstrated the ways in which some Sudanese internalize feelings of guilt and shame for relying on the state and not being self-reliant.

An important addition to the above Southern Sudanese women was Aja Galuak, who served as a positive role model and “worthy” citizen in the Fargo region. In 2006, in order to get the education benefits, Aja joined the National Guard. According to the front page of *The Forum* (Koumpilova 2007c), she was enrolled at North Dakota State University as a pharmacy major. The article praised Sudanese in Fargo for their high regard for education, and especially praised Aja because, as a Sudanese woman, her decision to join the military broke more than a few barriers. At first, her semi-famous brother, Joseph Makeer, a Lost Boy (see below) was not happy at the thought of his sister, a woman, joining the military but he was even more afraid for her safety. Later, however,

her decision sparked in him something quite different from his initial embarrassment. He was having lunch with several Sudanese friends at a south Fargo restaurant when men and women in Guard uniforms started coming in. One of his friends commented on the exclusively white group. Then Galuak walked in, and pride washed over him.

Siniša, the director of LSS New American Services, also spoke with pride when he told me about Aja. He was impressed with the positive message that a former refugee joining the military sent to the wider community: it was the ultimate sacrifice and commitment for a citizen to her country. According to the article, she inspired two more young Sudanese men to join. I knew four Sudanese men in Sioux Falls who joined the military. I did not hear of any Bosnians joining the U.S. military. Military service was another way that Sudanese earned “worthy” citizenship rights in Fargo. Aja’s military service helped

to boost refugees' status in Fargo, but it also helped to boost Sudanese women's status among Sudanese men, part of a long-term transformation. In the next section, I specifically address some of the challenges and triumphs of Sudanese men in the Fargo community.

Transforming Masculinity: Husbands, Soldiers, and Lost Boys

In the summer of 2005, over the course of several sessions, I interviewed Nyariek and Nyakai, usually at Nyakai's home in the morning. Nyakai worked the evening shift at a local factory and had only slept for two hours before we arrived for our first interview session. She said she usually slept for a few hours in the morning after her shift and a few more in the evening before her shift. Like most Sudanese couples, in order to avoid the costs of daycare and because they distrusted outsider caregivers, she and her husband worked opposite shifts. On the sunny morning we arrived, heavy, dark curtains covered the windows blocking most of the sunlight from entering the house. Crosses and framed photos of family members and Jesus Christ lined the walls. The large split-level house was carpeted with additional plush rugs and large pieces of matching furniture faced an entertainment system. Nyariek was watching an evangelical Christian program on television and braiding her hair with extensions.

Nyariek and Nyakai explained to me laughingly what happens to men in the U.S.: "In Africa, everyone knows his position. But here, men say, 'This country has made everyone like a woman.'" Sudanese men say that social hierarchies were reversed from Africa where men received the most respect: in the U.S., respect was given first to children, then to women, dogs, and finally men. Nyakai said, "I think the man should still

have the manhood, but they should at least see where they need to help. If a man loves a woman, then he needs to show his love and respect her by giving her a hand.” Some men truly agreed with this idea, but had a very difficult time doing it because other men (and some women) made fun of those who tried. One middle-aged man from the state of Equatoria in South Sudan, Daniel, told me, “Men need to learn that life is going to be 50/50. Our mentality [needs] to be different. We came here as grown men; we didn’t grow up here. We came from the mentality that if you love me, then you are going to be under me... That mess us up.”

Like upper class Bosnians (chapter VI), men who enjoyed a high status in Sudan found it particularly difficult to adjust to American culture. One father in his fifties, from Equatoria, who had worked for international organizations in Sudan and held a high social status, told me that he missed the clearly established social and gender hierarchies in Sudan, where everyone knew his or her place and acted accordingly. For example, as the oldest child of his family, his younger siblings had to avert their eyes when speaking to him. Children were not allowed to talk back to their parents and if they did, they would be physically punished. His younger daughter had recently shocked him when he told her that she had to either talk on the phone or vacuum: she hung up the phone and said to him, “There! Are you happy now?” He said that would never happen in Sudan. Likewise, he preferred the custom of women deferring to their husbands.

In the early morning hours, the day after the death of Garang, I was mourning with Southerners at a private home. On January 9, 2005, the Southern rebel leader Dr. John Garang signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement with the Government of Sudan. On

July 14, 2005, I watched the historic inauguration of Garang on satellite television with Sudanese friends from a living room in Sioux Falls. Just three weeks later, on August 1, Garang's helicopter crashed. I spent the next days and weeks mourning with Sudanese. During one of these events, I met James.

I was sitting alone away from the rest of the mourners at around three o'clock in the morning, tired, when he drunkenly approached me. I told him I was an anthropologist and he told me I could make a lot of money if I wrote about his life. Unsolicited, he began to tell me his story: James' father was the oldest of 26 children and had 21 wives. Of his father's 144 sons, only 23 were still alive; most of them died in the struggle. James said he spoke nine languages and was relatively well educated in a Catholic school in South Sudan. Then he joined the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). James spoke to me angrily of the split between SPLA commanders Machar and Garang in the early 1990s (see above, and Jok and Hutchinson 1999). During the split, James was sent by Garang to try to bring Machar back into the main SPLA faction. Machar shot James, twice. Slurring as he spoke, James showed me the scars from the gunshot wounds as he confessed his undying love and admiration for his fallen leader Garang.

James was scheduled to come to the U.S. as a refugee on September 11, 2001. The plane was rerouted to Canada and he was eventually resettled to an East Coast state where he stayed for about six months. During his time there, a pastor befriended James. James told the pastor about his childhood, that he was an altar boy when he was eight or nine, and he recited Biblical passages to the pastor by heart. James impressed the pastor who zealously sought to involve James in the church. But James told him that he could

no longer be involved in the church because he had killed “many, many people,” and because he liked “cigarettes and beer too much.” I asked James how he coped with the memories, and he told me he had nightmares (and obviously drank a lot), but after commenting on my “sad face,” he changed the subject. James’ story demonstrates an extreme example of the challenges of being a man in a war-torn country like Sudan, and the difficulties for former Sudanese soldiers in Sioux Falls and Fargo where there were virtually no counseling services equipped for such clients. At the end of our conversation, James made a pass at me. I pushed him away, and he left after telling me to be careful. I was not entirely sure what he was warning me about, but I think it had something to do with me being a woman.

Social gatherings provided key insights to social hierarchies, including relationships between men and women. When people gathered at someone’s home or apartment, no matter the size of the gathering, the new person who arrived respectfully shook the hand of every other person in the room(s). There were almost always speeches and prayers addressing the responsibilities of maintaining Sudanese culture and ties to Sudan. Eventually women opened up large cooking pots or vats of food that they had been cooking all night and everyone ate. Men usually went downstairs, outside, and/or to the garage “to talk politics,” and women remained near the kitchen and sitting room. There was always a clear separation of men and women at private gatherings although children, and sometimes non-Sudanese guests, went back and forth (see also Shandy 2007). Depending on the event, location, and the individuals, men drank relatively openly, but if women drank, they did so in secret.

In a conversation with Santino, a man in his twenties, about the challenges facing young Sudanese men in the U.S., he said, “There’s a lot of suicide going on. Some people, they feel their life’s not okay.” He recounted several cases of suicide and then added that for some Sudanese, alcohol and drugs became solutions. He provided a romanticized picture of Southern Sudanese (Dinka) culture that forbade young people to drink. He said women especially were not allowed to drink until they were much older and considered elders. Those who abused the rule faced consequences, like diminished chances for a good marriage, or the ability to get married at all. In the U.S., he explained people can drink a lot, but their families back in Africa will not know about it. Unlike in the villages where everyone knew what everyone else was doing, there were few consequences for drinking in the U.S. A man could drink a lot, but still marry a “good” woman back in Africa. Santino disagreed with this,

I still don’t drink and I don’t want to do it. That’s the part of culture that I’m still maintaining. [...] So drinking is a problem now in our community, something that wasn’t a problem at home or when we were at refugee camps. When we are Lost Boy in the camp, we never drank.

Among the Sudanese in Fargo were about 40 “Lost Boys,” a name given by humanitarian aid workers to tens of thousands of boys and young men, orphaned by war, who were forced to flee South Sudan.¹² Beginning in 1987, some ten thousand mostly Dinka (and some Nuer) boys walked to the neighboring country of Ethiopia. During their three-month unfathomable march, they faced starvation, disease, bombings, death by wild animals, and pressure to join the SPLA. Older boys took care of younger boys and they

¹² Most of the men did not like the term “Lost Boys” because, they argued, they had been found by God, by the United States, and in some cases by family members who were still alive. However, many continued to use it because of its common usage among activists in the U.S. and the social capital that can be gained by identifying as a Lost Boy, which is why I continue to use the term here.

formed their own social hierarchies and kinship networks based on age and leadership ability. They remained in Ethiopia for three years until the Mengistu regime was overthrown, after which they were forced back into war-torn, inhospitable Sudan. Again they fled, this time to neighboring Kenya. By the time they reached the Kakuma refugee camp in 1991-92, at least half of the group had died. In 2001, the U.S. agreed to resettle almost four thousand of the remaining boys and less than one hundred Lost Girls.

There were significantly fewer Lost Girls than Lost Boys because when the marauders came to southern Sudanese villages, they usually killed the men and raped and/or kidnapped the women and girls and took them to the North to be used as slaves and/or “wives.” Some girls survived the attacks and fled with the boys and some boys were taken captive (e.g. Bok 2003). However, when they arrived at the Kakuma refugee camp, as per cultural norms, the girls were placed with families and the boys lived separately. When it came time to resettle the group to the U.S. and other western countries, the girls were overlooked (Deluca 2007, 2008).

The resettlement experiences of the Lost Boys and Girls in the U.S. vary widely (see Deluca 2007, 2008; Deng, Deng, and Ajak 2005; Eggers 2006; Faria 2009). The Lost Boys have garnered journalistic attention and have been the focus of several documentary films (Chuor, Dut, and Mylan 2003; Marlowe et al 2009; Pace et al 2007). The story of the Lost Boys demonstrates the strong role of the media in constructing and reinforcing “worthy” refugees.

Like other Sudanese refugees, many of the Lost Boys arrived during the perfect storm of resettlement (chapter I). Many faced ongoing psychosocial trauma from their

years of flight. Some of the younger men came as unaccompanied minors and were placed in foster homes where they struggled with new rules established by their foster parents. Several community volunteers and state workers recalled the challenges faced by Lost Boys when they first came. One state worker recalled:

There's one particular case. It was like three or four of them, living out in an apartment in West Fargo, and I think one adult there; he was kind of the in-charge guy. He was in his *very* early twenties and he'd always had this group of boys that he was in charge [of], even coming from the refugee camp. And, they were all in this apartment and, again, LSS was responsible for them but they (the Lost Boys) just didn't have the life skills to survive... The people that were trying to help them were feeding them probably lots of American greasy, yucky food; one of them had horrible diarrh ea cause the system couldn't handle that. And they (volunteers and LSS) were... focusing on quick easy things...trying to teach them how to cook... macaroni and cheese and Hamburger Helper – all these things that their systems couldn't handle (laughing). [...] They had no concept of what winter was or the fact that you get frostbitten if you walk around with no gloves and... they didn't have coats, so even education about the weather wasn't there.

As this woman points out, the Lost Boys had a long list of challenges related to cultural changes (e.g. diet, weather, modern appliances), severe trauma, and they were fiercely independent but also still very young. Based on my experiences as a caseworker at the time the Lost Boys were resettled, in addition to what volunteers and advocates of the Lost Boys told me, I saw that many of them developed chronic physical problems and psychosomatic illnesses. After a few months or years, most of the Lost Boys I met worked at least one, sometimes two and even three jobs, and/or went to school, and supported family in Africa (see also Faria 2009).

I interviewed six of the Lost Boys in Fargo and spoke informally with several more (Figure 16). During a group interview in their apartment, four of the men explained their horrifying journey to me as well as some of cultural shifts that changed them over the

years, including: new gender roles and the vastly different forms of law and government they encountered (or lack thereof) between Africa and America. As one of the young men served me a can of soda on a tray, they joked to me about their need to perform traditional women's roles, including cooking, cleaning, caring for younger children, and now serving guests. They were divided on whether they would continue these roles once they married women.



Figure 16: Three of Fargo's "Lost Boys" of Sudan

Many men, including some of the Lost Boys, felt that Sudanese women in the U.S. became too spoiled. In Shandy's (2003) work with Nuer men, such women are called "tourist women." To avoid the unconventional Sudanese women, men went back to Sudan, or to Sudanese settlements in Uganda or Kenya, to find more traditional wives (see also Shandy 2007:111-2). I spoke with Santino and Chol, two other Lost Boys, about their wives in East Africa and asked whether they had plans to bring them to the United States. Chol said he had not thought about it before. Santino said that would be ideal because it was expensive to have a wife in Africa and to pay for her expenses and his

own. Some were afraid that if they brought their wives to the U.S., they would become too much like the spoiled women (see also Faria 2009).

Along with other Lost Boys who began making national headlines, Fargo's Joseph Makeer began making local headlines in 2007 (see, for example, Koumpilova 2007a, 2007b).¹³ With the help of a North Dakota State University English professor, Makeer self-published his story, *From Africa to America: the Journal of a Lost Boy from Sudan* (2008). Unlike many young men who came to the U.S. as unaccompanied minors, Makeer came with a family of his own, under sponsorship from an uncle, and as the legal custodian for his younger siblings, whom he found still alive once he reached the Kakuma refugee camp. Because of his family connections, some of the other Lost Boys in Fargo refused to accept his status as a Lost Boy. They argued that even though his parents had died, and he had been with them on the journey, he had family so he should not be entitled to the "lost" status.

A group of about 20 Lost Boys publicly challenged Makeer's documentary film project that sought to raise funds to build a boarding facility for orphans in Duk Payuel, South Sudan, Makeer's home village. The group sent letters to the list of donors calling Makeer's status as a real Lost Boy into question. When this form of discrediting did not work, in December 2007, while Makeer was in South Sudan with filmmakers, the men

¹³ See, for example, Dave Eggers' book *What is the What: the Autobiography of Valentino Achak Deng* (2006; see also <http://www.valentinoachakdeng.org/>). Three award-winning documentary films have been made about the Lost Boys: *The Lost Boys of Sudan* (Chur, Dut, and Myland 2003) (<http://www.lostboysfilm.com>), *God Grew Tired of Us* (Pace et al 2007; <http://www.godgrewtiredofus.com>), and *Rebuilding Hope* (Marlowe et al 2009; <http://www.rebuildinghopesudan.org>). As a result of these films, the Lost Boys and their supporters have been able to create nonprofit organizations, which are funding the building and maintenance of wells, schools, orphanages, libraries, and health clinics all over South Sudan, in the very villages that the young men were forced to flee in the 1980s (see e.g. Springer 2007).

contacted *The Forum* and made Makeer (and themselves) front-page news. In the article, they challenged Makeer's status as a worthy, charitable leader when his wife and three children relied on welfare. They argued that a good leader must first take care of his family and then his community (Koumpilova 2008). The article provided an example of competing definitions of good citizenship and community membership among Sudanese in the U.S.. While the men could have attempted to discredit Makeer in a wide variety of ways, they chose to highlight the fact that his wife and children were on welfare. By drawing attention to his family's lack of economic self-sufficiency from the state – a key aspect of “worthy” citizenship – they hoped to gain favor with Americans.

Most Sudanese I spoke with found the accusations baseless. They explained that accusers were from the same village as Makeer and they were jealous because they were not receiving recognition or helping out their village like Makeer was. I interviewed one of the men who signed the original letter to the donors, but was not part of the newspaper article. He said that ultimately, “it was not [a] Lost Boy issue, sincerely speaking. It was not Lost Boy issue. It was a... personal thing.”

In order to raise money for their trip to Duk Payuel, Makeer and his Fargo filmmakers organized a premiere of the award-winning documentary *God Grew Tired of Us* (2007), the story of three other Lost Boys in different parts of the U.S. Dau, the main character in the film, was a close friend of Makeer's and wanted to vouch for his friend, Makeer's upcoming film project, and the orphanage that Makeer hoped to build. Dau had already used proceeds from his film to build a school in Duk Payuel. After each film showing, there was a question and answer period, which demonstrated how the Lost Boys

presented themselves in the U.S. and how well aligned their representations of good community and citizenship were with people in Fargo. After the initial standing ovation, a group of the men sang a song in the Dinka language entitled, “We believe in God.” After the song, one of the men said, “we have to rely on ourselves and Jesus Christ, whether you are a Lost Boy, American, or Sudanese, you have to rely on Jesus Christ (clapping). God has also taken care of us – I know we have been through a lot but that’s why we survived, because we believed in God.”

The first question to the group from the audience was how the group managed to maintain their faith in the face of so much adversity. Answers from three of the different speakers included:

We were and are strong people, strong culture. We, the Dinka, or Southern Sudanese people, have to take care of each other. Let’s say you have something small to eat – you share it. It was instilled in us, in our culture – don’t need to be weak or stingy – share – it’s the whole community, not his or hers. Ours is a culture that is really very strong.

Our culture has a base which is the family – how you survive – when we didn’t have one [a family], we craved one – we started our own families in Kakuma, or we have a study group or go to church – it helped us.

God is hardening us, disciplining us, we don’t have a mountain of Zion in Sudan, but we do have the church (a women in front of me began to cry).

These answers focused on the Christian faith, the important role of family, and Sudanese culture. Additionally, they highlighted the violence that South Sudan suffered at the hands of Northern Muslim Arabs. By unifying faith, culture, and victimization by Muslims, Southern Sudanese were in a better position to garner support than other groups of refugees in Fargo, such as Muslims from Bosnia-Herzegovina (or Somalia). As a result, they were able to raise money for very important, impressively large projects in

South Sudan. The willingness to speak of their trials and triumphs at a public venue and to ask for funds that would build schools and orphanages not only helped poor people in South Sudan but also resulted in elevating Sudanese citizenship in the U.S., especially Sudanese men's status.

Other questions were posed about adjustment to life in America and the cultural differences they experienced. The young men used humor to discuss culture shock ("We were told that women carry a small bag with a gun in it and when you mess up, she'll shoot you!"), appreciation for new opportunities in the U.S. (education), courage to challenge some things they did not like about life in the U.S. (divorce rates), and empathy to describe ongoing challenges for their people from Sudan. For example, Dau explained the importance of holding on to Sudanese cultural practices like bride wealth (which he refers to as "dowry"). He said,

Our marriages are not cheap like here – we pay dowries... This is a country of immigrants. Your culture gives you an identity. In order to keep it (our identity as Sudanese), our dignity, we have to maintain our traditions. If you just jump into American culture – jeans dropping (referring to the ways in which young men in America dress), then it's not good (laughing from the audience). America has a good culture too – like giving – we want to encourage ourselves to give to strangers, adopt to other cultures, but don't bring the bad things from Sudan here, like more than one wife – bring the good Sudanese culture here and get the good American culture...

As I listened to American audiences walk out of the theater, I overheard several conversations praising the film and the young men's courage, wondering why they had not asked for help sooner because so many people in Fargo wanted to support them. Fargoans left feeling as though they learned something about Sudan and about humanity.

The premiere proved an excellent way to raise awareness about the Lost Boys, about current events in Sudan, and to align Sudanese with Americans.

Lost Boys were the most famous for their advocacy but they were not the only Sudanese making connections in the wider community. At a 2007 New Year's party held at a hotel in Fargo (Figure 17), William, the master of ceremonies, asked guests, including me, to say a few words. Former North Dakota governor Ed Schaefer and his wife stopped by to show their support for the Sudanese community. To loud applause, Governor Schaefer said that it was great that Southerners could live freely here, and they were free to attend any school, and any church. They would not be persecuted for practicing their religion here. The crowd erupted in applause.



Figure 17: Sudanese New Year Celebration 2008

At the beginning of the evening, elder men and women gave speeches on the importance of maintaining culture. One elder woman spent a long time lecturing young people in the crowd that women needed to obey men. After eating and dancing and speeches from guests like Governor Schaefer, and myself, William said they needed to

acknowledge culture and tradition again. To loud groans, he told the DJs to turn off the hip-hop music and then asked some people to lead a traditional dance. Dressed like urban African-American men, about a dozen young men standing in the corner, acted upset. However, after a song or two, they endearingly joined the crowds dancing to the traditional music. People of all ages were there and everyone danced, although different generations had their own circles. People took turns caring for babies and toddlers who fell asleep and woke up throughout the party. However, there were rules. Ayen, a divorced woman, told me she had to be careful about whom she spoke with, and for how long, or else rumors would spread quickly. If a couple was publicly dating or married, then sometimes during a slow song, women gathered around the couple and ululated. Such demonstrations pointed to social hierarchies. At this New Year's celebration, Christianity, age, and marital (or potentially marital) couples emerged as markers of high social status. In addition to social gatherings like this, community meetings helped to shape Sudanese social hierarchies, the topic of the next section.

Cultural Citizenship among Sudanese: Community Meetings as a Way to Solidify and Challenge Social Hierarchies

Community meetings were an important way of understanding cultural modes of citizenship among Sudanese in Fargo. Flores and Benmayor (1997) address modes of "cultural citizenship" explaining that traditional legal forms of citizenship are too narrow for understanding the everyday forms and broad social dramas that citizenship takes (see also Ong 1996). They demonstrate that culture interprets and constructs modes of citizenship; values and rights organize individual and collective identities and practices;

and there are ways of constructing and asserting socio-cultural rights that change citizenship patterns (for example, through social movements and individual decisions). A key aspect of the concept is the struggle for a distinct social space in which members of a marginalized group are free to express themselves and feel at home.

Sudanese differentiated their community meetings into the following categories: spiritual, social, and political. Different categories of meetings served several overlapping purposes: they solidified and challenged more traditional social hierarchies based on age, gender, and social standing in other communities; they strengthened and challenged spiritual relationships with each other and with other Christian believers; they sought to influence American politics and their relationships with the larger American community; and they sought to influence politics in Sudan and among Southerners in the United States. For example, the New Sudanese Community Association was a social organization, the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) chapter of Fargo was a political organization, and the Women's Spiritual Group was a religious association. Sudanese in Fargo usually participated in at least one of these organizations, and some men (and a few women) participated in all of them. In addition to local activities in Fargo, most Sudanese were also affiliated with national-based Sudanese organizations and associations.

Sudanese traveled regularly to attend a wide variety of community meetings and gatherings, but also tended to move frequently. Sudanese were more mobile than other refugee and immigrant groups (Faria 2009; Holtzman 2000a, 2000b; Shandy 2007). Santino, a Lost Boy in Fargo, went to Washington, Kansas, and Iowa to meet with other

Lost Boys from his region in Sudan. John, a Sudanese community leader in Fargo, went to Texas to meet with others from his region in Sudan. Nyakai and Nyariek, two Sudanese women in Sioux Falls, went to a spiritual gathering of Sudanese and other Christian believers in Nashville. Families regularly organized caravans to attend weddings all over the U.S. and Canada. When they were not traveling, they were on the phone and/or Internet.¹⁴ In this section, I highlight strategies utilized during meetings by drawing attention to gender, class and social status, age, and religion. I explain how meeting dynamics served as a public platform to reinforce and to challenge traditional social hierarchies in which older men were situated at the top and younger men, women, and the less formally educated were at the bottom.

Keeping in mind the importance of Christianity in defining the category of “worthy” citizen in Fargo, in this section, I highlight intersections of race, gender, and culture in interactions between Sudanese and American Christians and how these interactions alluded to and shaped larger ideas about citizenship. In Fargo, there were at least five weekly Sudanese services in Episcopal, Catholic, Lutheran, and Presbyterian churches. A former Lost Boy who was getting a Master’s degree in human relations told me that churches were an important “social service” for Sudanese because social service agencies were not providing enough for Sudanese families. Churches, he argued, kept Sudanese from leaving the region. In addition to churches, the relative security and safety of the region, low unemployment rates, high access to education, and Sudanese community organizing played important roles. Sudanese religious leaders, both men and

¹⁴ For an analysis of the role of the Internet in Sudanese transnational political and social organizing, including the role of gender in the discussions, see Faria 2009.

women had tremendous amounts of clout in their communities, especially older male religious leaders.

At the Episcopal Church in Moorhead, Minnesota, there were three services for Sudanese, in Dinka, English, and Arabic. One day of the month, there was one service, a unity service, with American members, conducted in English with Arabic and/or Dinka interpretation. On a chilly March morning, I attended this service with a Sudanese friend and her children. One white American man also arrived early. He seemed keen to speak with me, but not my friend. During the service, when the American pastor asked whether the Gospel reading should be interpreted into Dinka or Arabic, this same man said, "We're in America. We should speak American." He was the only person to remain seated during the part of the service when you stand to greet other members and offer peace to one another. After the service, he greeted me warmly, but no one else, and left. I assumed that my white race had everything to do with this man speaking with me, but not with Sudanese. Eight white people attended the service, including the pastors and me, compared to about 50 Sudanese. After the service, rather than the traditional upper Midwest post-church cuisine of coffee and donuts, Sudanese food was served. A few white people sampled the Sudanese food, but did not interact with Sudanese. According to the American pastor, the American members of the Episcopal Church were mostly elderly and membership was dwindling and Sudanese membership revitalized the church.

On the Sunday preceding Martin Luther King Day, I attended a Catholic service led by a middle-aged white priest who said a few words about King's "I have a Dream" speech and then focused the rest of his sermon on the anniversary of Roe v Wade, the

1973 landmark Supreme Court case that made a woman's right to choose to have an abortion legal. He stressed the need to overturn the decision and to prevent women from having abortions. He mentioned that three babies had been saved that year because they had not been aborted as fetuses. At that same Catholic Church, on another Sunday, an East African priest spoke of the importance of stories and journeys and encouraged members to incorporate Jesus Christ on those journeys. I found the messages from these sermons indicative of the priests' cultural background. The white American priest spoke about abortion, which is part of a larger debate in the U.S. about when life begins and about what should be a right or choice. The black African priest spoke about journeys and community, which was targeted for an audience who had survived decades of brutal war. These sermons demonstrate one of the ways in which varying ideas about rights and duties came together in Fargo. The American priest centered his sermon on individuals making a difference, for example, in the abortion debate, and the African priest centered his sermon on community.

On a Saturday evening in spring 2008, the same Catholic Church sponsored "African night," led mostly by Sudanese. After the five o'clock mass ended, most of the white Americans left, but a few dozen remained to listen to the Sudanese speakers. One man gave a short speech about war in Sudan focusing on divisions between the North and South. He explained that in Sudan, Arab Muslims were first-class citizens, African Muslims were second-class citizens, and African Christians and others in the South were third-class citizens. The first-class citizens had access to the most resources. The third-class citizens were lucky to get anything. He went on to say that he loved Fargo,

especially the people. The speech came from a seasoned ambassador of Sudanese culture: he peppered his speech with a bit of tragedy, a bit of comedy, and a complement to the spirit of Fargo. Then he encouraged everyone to “eat the African food that the ladies prepared” and assured everyone that the food was edible. At this last remark, one (American) man laughed hard for several minutes. After the food was served, Sudanese musicians played and the priest encouraged everyone to dance (Figure 18).



Figure 18: African Night at a local church in Fargo

To mixed responses, Sudanese, unlike Bosnians (chapter VI), made their presence known in churches in Fargo. Some men, like the man who commented, “In America, we should speak American,” clearly did not appreciate the increased diversity at his church. Others, like those who stayed to celebrate African night, appreciated hearing about other cultures. They even tried the “strange” food and participated in Sudanese dances. These everyday interactions shaped the ways in which Sudanese and Americans saw themselves and each other. In my experiences, outright racist remarks and actions, like the man at the Episcopal Church, were rare. Chilly responses or simple lack

of interest in getting to know Sudanese congregants at their church were more common. However, many Fargoans appreciate the opportunity to get to know their fellow Sudanese congregants. Also, by carving out spaces for themselves in various churches in Fargo, they Sudanese created spaces of cultural citizenship, which in turn strengthened their social citizenship standing in Fargo (see also Shandy 2002).

Another way in which Sudanese modes of cultural citizenship were expressed in Fargo was through the New Sudanese Community Association (NSCA). The goals of the NSCA were to provide transportation to work and school, disseminate information about education, social services, and the legal citizenship process, and eventually, to create a separate public space for Southerners to gather for community meetings and events (Figure 19). In 2007-08, they were sharing a space on the second floor of a building in south Fargo. Established in September 2004, the NSCA mostly relied on volunteers but eventually began to acquire local city- and state-funded grants and it hired an Executive Director in 2009. The NSCA faced a number of problems that spoke to divisions within the community. One of the biggest challenges occurred in 2007 when then-secretary, Christopher, embezzled nearly \$12,000 from the organization. In his defense, he argued that the Board told him he would be reimbursed for the driving he did for the organization. Also, his wife had been in an accident and they accumulated large medical bills that his family could not afford to pay and for which the organization had already given him some money. Once leaders discovered the missing money, they called the police, who took Christopher to jail. A community meeting was called to discuss the situation.



Figure 19: Members of the New Sudanese Community Association in their office

The President of the NSCA, Santino, explained the situation in a manner that was firm and apologetic. Apparently there had been internal disagreement over the decision to call the police and press charges against rather than deal with the situation within the Sudanese community. Santino explained the scenario in painstaking detail, providing a list of times and amount of withdrawals made by Christopher from the organization's bank account. It appeared that the NSCA was on trial as much as Christopher. One man stood up and praised the organization for its high level of responsibility and argued that if Christopher were truly sorry he would have attended the meeting. Next, a young Sudanese pastor argued that suing was "the American way," but the Sudanese way was to "to love, forgive, understand." He believed that the community should not be too much like the Americans: "Ten thousand dollars was nothing for the community, but a person is very important." Several people rushed to respond. One man said it was good to try to understand Christopher's perspective, but if they had not called the police, what would they have said to the donors about the missing money, "We forgave him?" The crowd

erupted in laughter, including the pastor. An elder woman in the community seconded the point by saying that forgiveness in such matters

is worse than the Third World; it will make [the organization] zero. Sudanese used to be the best in Fargo-Moorhead. If someone asked you about Sudanese before, they would say they are nice people, good people, but now they say they fight all of the time. This needs to stop. That is bad. The Bosnians and the Somalis have organizations too, and the Sudanese also need to be organized and responsible.

The woman's comments pointed to the formation and negotiation of social hierarchies among refugee groups as well as between refugees and the wider community – on local and global levels. By calling attention to “the Third World,” she sought to push Sudanese beyond Third World stereotypes. She also pointed to the hierarchy within the category of “refugee” in Fargo. She called attention to Bosnians and Somalis as fellow refugees, competing for social capital from the larger community, and for cultural modes of citizenship. Other members of the organization agreed that Sudanese organizations needed to prove they were responsible and trustworthy. In this case, the best way to do that was to involve the state.

I attended Christopher's trial with three other Board members (two Sudanese men and a white American Board member in his sixties, plus his wife). In his speech to the judge, Christopher mentioned he was planning on joining the National Guard in order to protect his country (the United States). He also mentioned a strong desire to go back to school. He said he took the money because he had been “helping the community” and wanted the compensation they had promised him, for both driving and daycare for his kids. He also said he had met with “elders of the community” the night before and they supported him. Later, the Board members at the trial laughed hard when recounting this

part because the men that Christopher referred to were hardly “elders”; they were Lost Boys, who Christopher had hoped would speak on his behalf in court.

Throughout the trial, Christopher and his attorney mentioned that some Sudanese believed the whole case should have been kept within the Sudanese community and handled in “culturally appropriate” ways, resulting in forgiveness and less stringent protocols to pay the money back. Christopher used the military, education, children, and culture to plead his case, highlighting how he viewed the ideals of good citizenship for which he hoped to be rewarded by receiving a lighter sentence. His lawyer pointed out the good fortune that Christopher was already a legal U.S. citizen; otherwise his citizenship would be in jeopardy. The judge gave Christopher a 30-day sentence with a five-year probation during which he had to pay back the amount stolen: \$11,420.

In a post-hearing meeting, the organization’s attorney said, “You probably think he should serve more time, but...” Before he could finish his sentence, the Board members interrupted and said “no!” They did not think he should serve more time because he had a family, his kids were members of the Sudanese community, and the family should not be without their father. Paul, one of the NSCA board members, said that in addition to paying the money back, probation was punishment enough. Christopher would be constrained by the probation officer. Laughing hard, Paul said, “He will be like a little baby!” In other words, state surveillance and reliance were seen as negative but necessary, and both punitive and positive.

The trial demonstrated how the NSCA attempted to construct and assert socio-cultural rights that could change citizenship patterns. This form of cultural citizenship

mediated between U.S. and Sudanese ideas about what it meant to be a good citizen, for example, someone who was held financially accountable to the community and to his family and how to deal with those citizens who did not follow the rules. The dynamics at community meetings provided more information about these negotiations.

Most meetings began one to two hours later than the agreed upon starting time (“African time”) and lasted from two to four hours. From the beginning to the end of a meeting, the number of attendees waxed and waned, sometimes considerably. Unless it was a “women’s meeting,” there were always significantly more men than women (sometimes as many as 20 to one or two). There were usually problems with equal representation among the different regions and ethnicities with some arguing that Dinka controlled too many community organizations in Fargo.

Repetition was a key feature of all Sudanese meetings. Sometimes an agreement was reached, but often a leader summarized that the meeting had only resulted in more confusion and there was a need to establish committees to research the points and come back together. Someone would say, “This is what happens at every meeting. We need to make a decision now...” Most agreed but another meeting would nevertheless be scheduled. Someone would speak repetitively, another man would raise his hand to say, “He already said what I was going to say, but...” and proceed to repeat what the first man had said. This might happen several times. Then someone would point out that everyone was repeating himself and interrupting each other; they were “talking in circles” and “wasting time” and there was “too much talk but no action.” However, everyone who wanted to speak was given the chance.

A great deal happened at meetings that appeared at first glance to be merely “repetitive” or “a waste of time.” On one hand, I was simultaneously impressed and frustrated that each person could speak for as little or long as he or she wished. On the other hand, Sudanese meetings seemed much more democratic than the “American” meetings I attended that stuck to a rather rigid agenda. However, while many voices were heard at Sudanese meetings, so too were many voices absent (see also LiPuma and Koelble 2009; Mamdani 1996; Young 2000). Ultimately one to three outspoken leaders would state emphatically that no consensus had been reached or they disagreed with the direction of the discussion. These leaders usually blamed the reigning organization (in this case, the NSCA) for not taking a stronger leadership role. The organization’s leaders would become defensive, arguments ensued, and social hierarchies took form.

One Sunday afternoon I attended a community meeting that had been called to discuss two topics: 1) an emergency services fund (e.g. for deaths and illnesses in the community), and 2) the role of the church in addressing wayward Sudanese youth. At the beginning of the meeting, there were about ten men and one woman (who was in the kitchen for much of the meeting). After everyone agreed to the need for these two topics of discussion, “John,” an unusually young Sudanese community leader, said he planned to speak with various nonprofit organizations and the city about these problems. John argued that they related to issues facing all New Americans in Fargo. Several men protested saying that the purpose of the meeting was to address problems facing the Sudanese community, not all New Americans. They wanted to know why John wanted to involve other people and organizations. For the next two hours, as more people arrived,

discussion shifted from the original topics and became a debate about who was best qualified to serve the needs of the Sudanese community: Sudanese churches, Sudanese social organizations, nonprofit organizations that addressed the needs of all cultural minorities, and/or the city of Fargo. John spoke often and frequently changed the direction of the meeting back to problems with the NSCA.

After several hours of this, Paul from the NSCA arrived, angry that he had not received a formal invitation to the meeting. He demanded to know why the meeting was held “behind closed doors.” Someone explained the original intentions of the meeting. John took this opportunity to attack the NSCA openly. He claimed uninformed young people led the organization. Another man defended John’s accusation by giving three reasons why Sudanese organizations and committees fail: 1) lack of definition, 2) lack of planning, and 3) the need for more people with connections to the wider community, the City of Fargo, and so on. John was seen as just this kind of liaison: he was earning a Ph.D., worked for a city-sponsored organization, had contacts with state and private organizations, and had recently garnered public attention as an up-and-coming young leader in Fargo.

After more repetitive discussion, everyone agreed that there needed to be a meeting between the NSCA Board and the community. The meeting would provide suggestions to the Board as to how they could better serve the community. Paul encouraged everyone to come and to bring his wife and children. Someone asked if there would be daycare because how could the women pay attention and watch the children at the same time? Paul said a couple of women would have to sacrifice. The decision to

have another meeting, instead of creating a protocol to develop emergency services or how to best support Sudanese youth, reinforced traditional leadership (older men and/or men who were well connected to the wider community) and cemented social hierarchies. While everyone was given the opportunity to speak, ultimately leaders decided the outcome of such discussions based on their own positioning and not on what was best for the largest number of people.

At another meeting, topics for discussion included the need for more participation in the organization by women and non-Dinka members. There was an especially deep animosity between Dinka and Equatorians that I have seen in other parts of the U.S. as well as in Sudan. In Fargo, Equatorian leaders claimed that meetings were held in Dinka rather than English or Arabic, the more common Southern languages. Dinka, who were the largest group of Sudanese in Fargo, argued that Equatorians were attempting to create a separate, competing organization for their own personal power and at the expense of a unified Southern community. In his loud, staccato way, John told me,

The biggest challenges in Fargo for Sudanese is... Sudanese against Sudanese. They are bringing their tribes from their *old* country, from Sudan. They export them here. That's the *biggest* challenge! [...] You become narrow-minded, narrow focused. And once you bring the tribe here, you start bringing *all* those memories. Of hating this tribe. Loving this tribe. [...] They don't come together. These are some of the challenges. But we as community leaders are trying to *challenge* them by saying *think alike!* Think bigger. Come out of your tribal cocoons. [...] You are in America. You are an individual person now; you are beyond that tribe. This is what we are trying to tell them. Think bigger. We are all here as people with shared history.

The irony of this statement is that John upset every meeting he attended and his arguments usually changed several times throughout the course of any one meeting. In one rant, John yelled, "In America you can be dependent? In America?! When are we

going to be *self-reliant*? We are not poor people! Look at our houses, our cars. We have jobs and make good money. We should not have to depend on others!” In short, John sometimes told the community they needed to cooperate with other New American communities; at other times, he told them they needed to work more with the city, while at still other times, he argued they needed to be more self-reliant.

In other words, John asserted the community needed to come together, while tacitly fostering dissention among them. He refused to attend one large conference on New Americans in Fargo, because he had not received a personalized invitation (his organization did). At other meetings, he belittled men who were younger and/or less formally educated than him. He tended to either flirt with women, or to ignore them. John demonstrated that, for Sudanese, connections to the larger community in addition to education played a crucial role in his (or her) position in the Sudanese social hierarchy.

LiPuma and Koelbe (2009:215) (see also Ntsebeza 2005) found in the context of South Africa,

villagers were not treated as equal participants: not only was there a hierarchy of male speakers and a hierarchy among the women but the chiefs openly discriminated against younger participants in the deliberations. In some instances, chiefs would not attempt to build consensus but stimulated conflict in order to then stifle the ‘development’ debate – a debate everyone obviously would have an interest in and could form a consensus on.

Instead, leaders postponed further deliberations or ended debate altogether. Although their arguments are based on a South African context, their points about the purposes of community leadership and meetings also rang true among Sudanese in the U.S. For example, by the end of most meetings, after creating dissention, a leader or leaders called for and then dismissed a need for a new discussion or more committees. As in the case of

the emergency services meeting described above, the matter was postponed. However, in LiPuma and Koelble's work in South African villages, the state was virtually absent. The government of South Africa had very little bearing on the village, which was run mostly by local leaders. These overbearing, discriminatory leaders did not represent the interests of their people well, and thus LiPuma and Koelble concluded,

In such a situation, citizens tend to see the act of participation as pointless and accordingly, to leave the business of representation to those who have the local knowledge, incentive, and the cultural capital to do so, which in turn gives rise to governance organized around purely local concerns in defense of an identity-determined politics (2009:218).

Parts of this scenario rang true for Sudanese in the U.S. For example, few women in Fargo were involved in the Sudanese community's political organizing. At a meeting to discuss the need to involve more women, one elder woman said that women were not well enough informed. Men blamed women for not spreading the word to one another, because it was their responsibility to call and support one another, and not appropriate for men to call women. One female leader, Ayen, took this as a personal attack that she was not doing her job and began to cry, which turned the discussion into her personal role in the organization. She threatened to quit, they begged her to stay, and the conversation was dropped.

During an English language tutoring session with an articulate young Sudanese woman named Rose, I asked her why I had not seen her at community meetings. She had been telling me about Dinka culture (see also Deng 1972), how she met her husband (who went to Sudan to find a wife), her desire to get out of the house more often, to learn to drive, and about politics. She said that she would like to be more involved in the

community, but if she became too active, it would be viewed as a challenge to elder women in the community like Ayen. To avoid gossip, she stayed home. There were a long list of reasons why women like Rose were not more involved in the Fargo Sudanese community decision-making processes: lack of mobility and childcare, lack of formal education any other means of gaining confidence, and the overlap of gender-, age-, and class-based social hierarchies within the Sudanese community.

In addition to church involvement and social meetings, Sudanese in Fargo (and in Sioux Falls), participated in formally political organizations and spaces. Church groups, the NSCA, and other social gatherings were also informally political in that they shaped politics indirectly through the private sphere. However, Sudanese tended to view these various community meetings as social, political, *or* religious, not social, political, *and* religious. Formal, partisan politics played a role to establish and maintain hierarchies in the Sudanese community and garnered support from the wider community. For example, John explained,

Without the involvement in politics, you don't get your land. You don't get your country... For us (Sudanese), politic is the gospel of the day. It's like really studying the Bible... Why [do] they love politics? Because of social justice. The Arabs use politics to destroy Southerners. To oppress them, very hard... And then Southern Sudanese thought, 'Oh! Wow! Politics is very powerful!'

Formal politics were important to Sudanese for all of the reasons John listed above. John was active in local and national Sudanese as well as U.S. politics. I attended the North Dakota Democratic Convention with John and other Sudanese men in April 2008 in Grand Forks, North Dakota. In 2007-08, Sudanese were marginally more attuned to the U.S. 2008 presidential election than the electoral politics in Sudan but only because the

first democratic elections in Sudan did not take place until April 2010. In my experience, Sudanese in Fargo were less politically organized and engaged than Southerners in other parts of the U.S. However, Sudanese were significantly more politically engaged than other groups of refugees and immigrants in Fargo, especially Bosnians (chapter VI).

In Fargo, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) chapter held meetings and stayed up to date with current events in Sudan but was not as strong as SPLM chapters in other parts of the Midwest (for example, in South Dakota and Nebraska). During the war, the SPLM was the social movement wing of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), but it transformed into South Sudan's major political party after the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement. It is important to mention the Fargo SPLM chapter here because it ties many Sudanese in Fargo to Sudanese in other parts of the diaspora and South Sudan. While the chapter in Fargo was weak in 2007-08, there were ample leaders that provided evidence that the chapter would become stronger in the future, and had been more active in the past.

As with the community meetings described above, SPLM meetings provided an important venue for political discourse that reinforced social hierarchies of gender, age, and social status outside of the Sudanese community. At one SPLM meeting, members discussed a controversial move by a youth regarding a May 16 ("National Day") celebration. Gabriel had "improperly" used the SPLA/M flag to advertise his party. May 16, 2007, marked the 24th anniversary of the birth of the SPLA/M, and the President of South Sudan, Salva Kiir Mayardit declared it a "National Day" for the states of South Sudan, the Blue Nile state, Abyei, and the Nuba Mountains. The purpose of the day was

to “keep alive the memory of those great sacrifices by our people and fallen heroes, and to acknowledge the tremendous contribution made by our gallant SPLA forces in the marginalized areas of Sudan” (Mayardit 2007). May 16 quickly came to symbolize South Sudan’s troubled but heroic past and its hopeful, potentially less troubled future. It also served to build solidarity across regional, ethnic, and social cleavages.

The SPLM meeting began with three community leaders reprimanding Gabriel for flippantly using the SPLM flag to advertise his youth party. They argued that Sudanese should only use the flag and the holiday of May 16 to talk about the long history of war and oppression in Sudan, which was why the SPLM was created. A long, repetitive speech by several men made the following points: If the youth wanted to have a party, it should be separate; May 16 celebrations were not to be taken lightly. May 16 parties should include formal invitations, speakers, and representatives of the SPLM. Gabriel argued that he had not used May 16 to promote his party and he was aware of its importance. Someone had a copy of his flyer and proved him wrong. Next the leaders reprimanded him for writing “no kids”: “What kind of May 16 celebration did not include kids?!” they shouted, “What kind of message was that?” Equally important, John said, Sudanese in other states were bound to hear about this (Ayen confirmed the information was already in Sioux Falls), and the SPLM chapter of North Dakota would be shamed. Gabriel apologized and repeatedly stated that he understood the importance of the SPLM, but there had not been a party or celebration in several months and the youth wanted an excuse to get together and celebrate.

Some people defended Gabriel because he was active in the community. The community could learn from his mistake that a youth party should not invoke “national issues.” For such events, the national SPLM chapter would need to be contacted and it is always important when planning an event to keep in mind what is happening in Sudan, like the elections and census (which the SPLM was preparing for in 2009-10). Someone suggested combining the two parties, but, exasperated, everyone agreed that it was too late to get enough resources. At the end of the long meeting, they agreed that Gabriel would have to make a new flyer. Furthermore, he would have to make a speech at the party explaining that it was a youth party, not an SPLM party. This story demonstrates the high regard for the SPLM (see also Faria 2009). It also demonstrates the importance of being active in the community. Even though Gabriel was shamed by his action, everyone agreed that he was a model youth because of his organizing capabilities.

While this meeting highlighted some of the more mundane ways of establishing and maintaining social hierarchies within the Sudanese community in Fargo, Sudanese also displayed more overt ways of political organizing. For example, John, a leader in Fargo, was active in the Obama presidential campaign. However, the Sudanese I met in Sioux Falls were, as a community, much more active and engaged in politics than in Fargo. It is important to mention their activism as another example of the ways that Sudanese in the U.S. conceive of politics, the state, and citizenship.

In 2005, after news of South Sudan President John Garang’s death spread through the Sudanese community, many Southerners in Sioux Falls notified their employers that they would not go to work on Sunday and/or Monday so that they could mourn. The

largest employer of refugees in Sioux Falls, John Morrell's, a meat processing plant, had to shut down an entire line of its processing and the business lost a purported \$100,000. Many Sudanese lost their jobs. When asked how many Sudanese missed work due to Garang's death, Colleen, a human resources manager at a different factory explained,

Garang was assassinated or shot down a week or so ago... someone from the multicultural center came out here and rather demanded that we let everyone off work... I said, 'No, we're not letting all 75 of them walk out the door because that affects our profitability... but if they'd like to pray

then we have a private area where our Muslims pray.' We didn't have anybody that really cared (about Garang's death). Several of our people were caught on the news that night but they did that on their own time. But... when [Sudanese leaders] came here they were very demanding... And it's just like, 'Well okay, there's the door. We're *not* going to do this... We're not going to shut our business down just because someone comes in here and tries to push us around.' [...] You didn't see Americans missing work when the Pope or Ronald Reagan died!

Colleen implied that missing work to mourn the loss of a fallen leader was irresponsible. Missing work and taking to the streets flaunted the values of good citizenship. Comparing Garang, a contemporary political icon who led a 25-year resistance movement in one of the least developed countries in the world, to a religious figure, or to Reagan who had not been in the public eye for more than a decade, portrayed Sudanese as too political, hence dangerous. Adding insult to injury, Colleen offered the Christian Sudanese the "Muslim" prayer space, a gross insult to people who view Muslims, especially Arab Muslims, as their enemy. After so many Sudanese were fired, leaders in the community mobilized and made visits to all of the employers in order to explain the significance of Garang and his death. To my knowledge, all of them got their jobs back.

To raise awareness of the tragedy and to call for an international investigation into the cause of Garang's crash, more than 200 Sudanese men and women also organized a rally. They marched from the center of the city to the office of Senator Tim Johnson. I interviewed Chris, an employee of Senator Johnson's, about the rally and he said:

Sudanese have a pretty strong... voice in a state like [this]. I think there's been a realization that they have incredible access to elected officials... The way which they are doing it has been interesting (laughs) because... you know [there were] 150 outside with signs and chanting... We even got a call from somebody that was driving by the office and saw them out in front and called to make sure everything was okay and if we needed any help... It's a little different type of thing to deal with than we're used to dealing with here but they are organized... I think that's a positive thing. And I don't think there's that organization in some of the other communities.

In the above stories, men like Gabriel challenged traditional relationships between Sudanese and the SPLM. Others challenged capitalism by not going to work in order to mourn the death of a leader. Still others engaged with their elected official by calling attention to atrocities in Sudan. Social hierarchies continued to dictate which voices were most privileged within and outside Sudanese communities. Nevertheless, through political, social, economic, and spiritual networks and face-to-face, everyday forms of meetings, Sudanese were making a name for themselves in Fargo, Sioux Falls, and beyond. They had a demonstrable role in some local level political, economic, and social affairs. Despite challenges like intergenerational differences, alcoholism, divorce, domestic violence, depression, and racism, cultural values of Southern Sudanese that focused on education, employment, and civic activism had at least marginally increased Sudanese refugees' access to social and legal citizenship in Fargo.

Conclusion

Like Bosnian Roma, Southern Sudanese refugees had strong survival networks, but their survival networks were more in line with American ideas of good citizenship. Sudanese networks did not necessarily decrease racism against them, and conflicts about citizenship, race, gender, class, and culture ensued, but their cultural practices and social network did mitigate some forms of discrimination against them in the U.S., racism in particular. However, Southerners tended to downplay racialized forms of discrimination against them in the U.S. by comparing them to what they viewed as more violent forms of discrimination against them in Sudan. Many Southerners argued that, in Sudan, the Northern government privileges Muslim citizens and attempts to kill and isolate those who do not fit that category; in the U.S., Christians (and not Muslim) assume a better place on the social hierarchy. In Sudan, the government privileges Arabs, not blacks. The U.S. privileges whites and discriminates against blacks and other people of color, but, in Fargo, most minorities do not face mortal danger because of their skin color. In Sudan, society treats women as second-class citizens and women have significantly fewer opportunities for education and social advancement than men. In the U.S., although they still experience sexism and second-class citizen status (along with racism and classism), they have more legal rights and better access to education and social advancement than in Sudan. For these reasons, social hierarchies and ideas about citizenship among Sudanese – and people who have interacted with them – have changed dramatically.

Most Sudanese in Fargo embraced neoliberal forms of citizenship focusing on self-reliance and independence from the state. From one perspective, this could be

viewed problematically as internalizing dominant cultural beliefs. It should also be viewed as a form of resistance and accommodation among a group of people who have faced slavery and centuries of domination by various, overlapping colonial powers, and during the most recent wars, a heavy reliance on the international community for survival. Sudanese refugees in Fargo face a long list of challenges due to racism, classism, and xenophobia, but they countered the terms on which they were judged through education, churches, and community organizing. Their relatively overt appreciation and willingness to speak about their culture served them well in Fargo and as such, they have increased their citizenship status.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION:

RACE, CLASS, GENDER, CULTURE

In May 2010, Arizona's Republican Governor Jan Brewer signed one of many anti-immigrant bills into law. HB 2281 banned schools from teaching classes in ethnic studies. One of the arguments against the growing field of ethnic studies in the U.S. contends that ethnic studies programs are biased towards minority groups and foster potentially revolutionary activities against a presumed fair and democratic state. This argument assumes that non-ethnic studies educational programs and other academic departments are unbiased. This bill passed just 20 days after another controversial Arizona bill, which aimed to identify, prosecute, and deport undocumented migrants. The Arizona laws served to ethnically cleanse only certain noncitizens from its borders, namely undocumented Latino migrants. One of countless arguments against undocumented migrants has to do with the lack of enough state support to go around, whether law enforcement, education, healthcare, or social services. Both Arizona bills had to do with citizenship and belonging. They beg the questions, "Who belongs to the nation-state? Who is a 'worthy' citizen? And, who is allowed to define the parameters for inclusion?"

This dissertation begins to answer these questions. Refugees are legal residents of the U.S. and they have more rights than undocumented migrants, but there are strong correlations between the experiences of refugees and immigrants because refugees are often treated as illegal when it comes to informal rights of citizenship, like respect and political clout (Chavez 2007; Daniel and Knudsen 1995; DeGenova 2005; Flores and Benmayor 1997; Gomberg-Muñoz 2010). In addition to legal status, the credentials for “worthy” citizenship have to do with race, ethnicity, class, gender, and culture. The criteria for inclusion are ever changing because they adapt to political economic contexts (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992; Brodtkin 1998). Throughout the 1990s, refugee resettlement challenged hegemonic notions of “good” citizenship in Fargo. As a result the criteria for “worthy” citizenship began to change and to become more inclusive. Like Arizona, however, Fargo has a long way to go.

Throughout this dissertation, I have argued that the intersection of race, class, gender, and culture has resulted in a hierarchy of attributes of a “worthy” citizen in Fargo that privileges economically self-sufficient, white, civically-engaged Christian citizens. Fargo’s cultural values, which are heavily influenced by Christianity and the Protestant work ethic, place additional emphasis on modesty, hard work, and niceness. Volunteers and welfare workers preferred to work with refugees who displayed or worked toward these cultural attributes. With the exception of noteworthy refugee advocates, many became frustrated and indignant with those refugee clients who were ungrateful, immodest if not belligerent, and who did not openly tout the benefits of education and

economic self-sufficiency. Most refugees touted the benefits of hard work and self-sufficiency, but these concepts meant different things to different groups of refugees.

In this concluding chapter, I explain the attributes of a “worthy” citizen in Fargo by revisiting the categories of race, class, gender, and culture from the perspectives of the key actors in this project: white volunteers and welfare workers, Bosniaks, Roma, and Southern Sudanese. I explain that those individuals who diverged the most from the above attributes (e.g. Roma) paid a hefty price in terms of their access to the rights and resources of “worthy” citizenship. Those individuals who believed in, conformed to, or strategized as “worthy” citizens and/or docile “recipients of aid” were rewarded (e.g. Sudanese). I argue that race, gender, and class remain critical determinants of equal access to social citizenship, but culture must also be considered as an important aspect of intersectionality. Everyday actions between people from different cultures or worldviews can serve to mitigate or impair racism, classism, sexism, and xenophobia, which influence access to social citizenship. I conclude this chapter by providing a list of recommendations and explain my future directions for research.

Race and Culture in Anthropology

In Fargo, race remains one of the most important factors for judging an individual’s worthiness of citizenship rights. In the U.S., race remains closely affiliated with perceived phenotypic traits, especially skin color, but it remains a social construction, always in flux. Conceptions about race change over time and have also to do with class, gender, sexuality, and organization of society around capitalism (Brodin 1998; De Genova 2005; Gomberg-Muñoz 2010; Wade 1993; Yuval-Davis 2006).

Refugees and immigrants in Fargo were racialized through a variety of perceived characteristics, from skin color to accent, clothing (e.g. head scarves) to behavior (e.g. ungrateful, belligerent). Despite the cultural nature of the racialization process, scholars of race and ethnicity have cautioned against subsuming race under culture because, as Zinn and Dill (1996:323) argue,

Even cultural and group differences among women are produced through interaction within a racially stratified social order. Therefore, although we do not discount the importance of culture, we caution that cultural analytic frameworks that ignore race tend to view women's differences as the product of group-specific values and practices that often result in the marginalization of cultural groups which are then perceived as exotic expressions of a normative center (1996:323).

Part of the problem with the intersection of race and culture stems from social scientists like anthropologist Oscar Lewis (1966), who described a "culture of poverty," among African-American families that contributed to anti-welfare legislation that blamed welfare recipients for their dependence on the state. Lewis used "culture" to demonize poor people by linking behavior and poverty. While he acknowledged capitalism as a structural and historical factor contributing to poverty, he argued that poverty in the U.S. was the result of degenerate intergenerational values and beliefs, a "culture" that could be influenced by social work that promoted hard work and anti-poverty measures.

Other anthropologists of the U.S. have importantly challenged such racist and classist understandings of culture (e.g. Collins, de Leonardo, and Williams et al 2008; Goode and Maskovsky et al 2001; Stack 1974). However, they do not recruit or redefine the term "culture"; rather, they ignore it and instead privilege class, race, and gender and various processes of capitalism, especially neoliberalism. They aptly argue that policies, which diminish the welfare state but strengthen punitive aspects of the state (e.g.

militarism and prisons) largely contribute to poverty in the U.S. These important studies have served to show how and why some groups of people in the U.S. live in greater poverty than others and why a social safety net is imperative for a just and healthy society, especially for poor women and people of color. However, they collapse culture into a political economic framework that marginalizes everyday aspects of shared behavior; this could contribute the misconception that one studies “culture” in other countries or that culture is not a worthy theoretical lens through which to study the U.S. (but see Visweswaran 1999).

I aim to place culture alongside history, political economy, and identity in a theoretical framework of an anthropology of the United States. Culture – or shared patterns of behavior and beliefs – matters because it intersects with and encompasses the quotidian ways that these other important factors manifest themselves. To demonstrate this, I provide an overview of how actors from different cultural standpoints viewed race, class, and gender and how these intersections result in some refugees having more access to citizenship in the U.S. than others. Understanding how race, and by extension racism, operate in society is fundamental to increasing the citizenship rights of marginalized groups – most of whom are people of color. However, skin color is only one facet of racism. Other characteristics, such as nationality, language (e.g. accent), religion (e.g. Islam), and class-based characteristics (music, dress, food, living quarters) contribute to the racialization of some groups of people more than others.

Wade (1993:21) explains, “the so-called new or cultural racism depends on ideas about deeply engrained cultural difference” (see also Wade 2001, 2002). Culture must be

understood not only in folkloric terms about language and clothing but more broadly in terms of worldviews. For example, to better understand the relationship between the welfare state and refugees, we must understand competing worldviews between workers and clients that have to do with the role of government and religion, relationships between and among men and women, and between parents and children (see also Ong 1996). Racism takes shape in the realm of culture, but it is also in the realm of culture where the libratory potential to decrease racism – and classism, sexism, and xenophobia – might also be found.

In chapter VII, I highlighted the work of Jok Madut Jok (2001:7-8), who argues that, like racism in the U.S., racism in Sudan has to do with evoking political, economic, and emotional powers of superiority of one group over another. However, the history of race relations between Arab Muslims and black Africans and Christians in Sudan is different than racism between whites and people of color in the U.S. Sudanese refugees alluded to racism against them in the U.S., but preferred the U.S. version of racism to that of Northern Sudan, or even other African countries. Many Sudanese in Fargo wanted to discuss what they described as a mutual dislike between African-Americans and Sudanese. Sudanese did not like the way African-Americans dressed, for example, and told me that African-Americans blamed Africans for selling them into slavery. When Sudanese did complain about racism, it was most often about the perceived racial profiling of them by police, but also about some storeowners or co-workers. In other words, Sudanese viewed and strategized for themselves on the basis of overlapping racial hierarchies on local and transnational levels.

While many Sudanese in Fargo were wary of the state's punitive wing, the police, they had a relatively positive relationship with the welfare state. Welfare workers tended to praise Sudanese as more worthy clients than their refugee counterparts, or even other white clients. They lauded Sudanese clients as "nicer" and more grateful than other clients. Building on Mauss' notion of the gift, Harrell-Bond (1998:149) argues that, whether given by the state or individuals, aid defines the status and power relationships that exist between the giver and the one who receives it. She explains that the relationship between aid, welfare, resettlement organizations, and refugees has been established on the basis of refugees as helpless "recipients of aid"; however, she argues, the same organizations often also ask refugees to be leaders and decision-makers. At least among welfare workers, teachers, and church congregations, those refugees who best navigated the difficult terrain between victim and leader, like Sudanese, fared better in Fargo on the hierarchy of "worthy" citizenship. Cultural attributes such as niceness, politeness, a desire for education and civic engagement, and a refusal by most Sudanese to overtly critique U.S. attitudes or policies served them well in Fargo. Although structural and interpersonal forms of racism and xenophobia were prevalent, and negatively affected Sudanese refugees in Fargo, culture mitigated some of these forms of racism in social service agencies, schools, and churches; on a day-to-day level, culture trumped race in terms of many interpersonal interactions.

In sharp contrast to Southern Sudanese refugees, Bosnian Roma had few claims to "worthy" citizenship status. Like Sudanese, Roma had poor relationships with police but they also had poor relationships with schools, welfare and child protection officers, and

with the wider community. State workers told me that Roma had little respect for U.S. laws and customs. Roma did not act as docile recipients of aid; instead, many state workers perceived Roma as belligerent and ungrateful. In the former Yugoslavia, such strategies sometimes worked for Roma in gaining access to more services, but in Fargo, these cultural coping mechanisms – in addition to (but not solely because of) their darker skin color – served to further marginalize them. The case of Mevludin Hidanović's deportation (chapter VI) points to the extreme consequences for belonging to a marginalized group: deportation, or forced migration.

Perhaps more than any other group of refugees in Fargo, the case of Roma points to the importance of culture in addition to that of race, class, and gender. In order to increase Roma's access to the rights and benefits of social citizenship in the U.S., state workers will have to better understand structural and historic causes of racism against Roma, including the poor treatment of Roma by Bosniaks, but also the ways in which Roma conceive of the state, self-sufficiency, and family. Roma are wary of state policies and dominant cultural values because nation-states have never included Roma as full members; thus, Roma interact problematically with state institutions; they culturally challenge these institutions.

Gender, Race, Culture, and Class

In addition to cultural stereotypes and survival strategies involving the intersection of race, culture, and class, relationships between refugee men and women and the state shaped the definition of a "worthy" citizen in Fargo. Bosniaks, who lived in nuclear or extended families in the former Yugoslavia, faced the least amount of change

or challenge to their kinship structure in Fargo. Because they were white and relatively economically self-sufficient, Bosniaks had fewer problematic relationships with the state or private sector (chapter VI). However, both Sudanese and Bosnian Roma faced stigma based on gender stereotypes of men and women of color (chapters IV and V).

Bosnian Romani men acted, and perhaps strategized, as hypersexual men in hopes of gaining favors with female state workers. This strategy backfired as state workers viewed Romani men as particularly abusive to their wives. The perspective of Romani men as dangerous and abusive made it all the more difficult for Roma to organize arranged marriages for their teenage sons and daughters, an important practice in maintaining their cultural identity. Countless meetings in Fargo revolved around the need to decrease violence and underage, arranged marriages in Romani communities, and to increase Romani students' school attendance. At the root of these debates and discussions was the perceived problematic relationship between Romani men and women. As state workers and private sector actors attempted to control Roma, Roma remained increasingly wary of, if not hostile to, such intervention.

Although Sudanese generally had a better reputation among state institutions than Roma or some other refugee groups, Sudanese women faced discrimination on the basis of gender within their own communities and by the state. More Sudanese women relied on welfare than Sudanese men and Sudanese women had less access to or confidence in their abilities to obtain economic citizenship. They also had a muted voice in cultural forms of citizenship in the Sudanese community. While Sudanese men were adept at increasing Sudanese voices in the wider community, their influence over politics

extended to Sudan, not to Fargo or the larger U.S. If advocacy groups could support Sudanese men's cultural citizenship while also working to improve the status and confidence of Sudanese women, Sudanese would have a larger voice in the wider community and a better chance of combating other forms of classism, sexism, racism, and xenophobia.

Another measure of citizenship is political participation and representation. As I explained in chapter VII, Sudanese men (and some women) were heavily involved in local, regional, national, and transnational political networks among Sudanese but few were involved in U.S. politics. Many Sudanese viewed formal politics as necessary for their cultural and literal survival whereas Bosniaks and Roma in Fargo preferred to stay away from politics. Bosnians in Fargo avoided politics in large part because they did not get along with one another, but also because they viewed politics as negative, if not dangerous. Most of them told me they wanted to be left alone to focus on their families and jobs. If the results of this research are any indication, the chances of electing a New American to office in Fargo are slim. However, this does not mean that refugees in Fargo were not challenging hegemonic forms of citizenship.

Roma overtly and sometimes belligerently challenged attempts to make them into hegemonic Fargo citizens by maintaining cultural practices that were against U.S. laws, such as dropping out of school and marrying at young ages. Many also ran successful scrap metal businesses but some also relied on welfare, which challenged the prototype of refugees as poor recipients of aid and the emphasis on economic self-sufficiency from the state. Roma paid a hefty price for this in becoming the symbol for "unworthy" refugees in

Fargo. They had no political clout, earned less respect than other groups in Fargo, and had problems with the police, schools, welfare agencies, and courts.

Bosniaks perpetuated some forms of hegemonic forms of citizenship such as working in factories, buying homes, and individualism, but they challenged other aspects of social citizenship that relied on the Protestant work ethic and modesty. Although “Bosnians” had a poor reputation in Fargo, many Bosniaks managed to work for reputable agencies and achieved a modicum of economic citizenship although it did not always measure up to the expectations they had upon coming to the U.S., especially for those who had a higher standard of living in pre-war Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Sudanese generally accommodated and promoted aspects of hegemonic citizenship and, for the most part, were overtly appreciative to the U.S. government and citizens for accepting them as refugees. They strategized as grateful “recipients of aid” with a degree of success. Sudanese praised education, became civically and politically engaged in their own communities, and strongly believed in Christian ideals, including the Protestant work ethic. Although Sudanese faced racial discrimination from the police and wider public, they chose to downplay U.S. forms of discrimination and instead focused their organizing efforts on decreasing violence and discrimination in Sudan, which helped their social citizenship status in Fargo.

In order to fit the prototype of “recipients of aid,” refugees must be considered poor, in need of aid, but they must also be hard working and grateful for the opportunity to achieve the American Dream. Citizens of Fargo, including refugees and long-standing, white Americans, view home and business ownership and consumerism as markers of

class achievement. Sudanese, Bosniaks, Roma, and other New Americans in Fargo have started their own businesses and bought homes, but they remain a small percentage of the total number of Fargo proprietors. As successful home and/or business owners, New Americans begin to lose their status as poor recipients of aid and instead become exceptions, tokens, and/or role models instead of successful individuals with all of the joys, challenges, and life complications of other families.

In conclusion, refugees were not merely victims of war or poor recipients of aid; they were victims and actors in local, national, and transnational fields of oppression and discrimination, but also in survival networks and citizenship processes. New Americans in Fargo were complicated people who actively and creatively worked to make their lives better; they cultivated identities in line with their values; they overtly and sometimes inadvertently challenged the stigma associated with being a refugee or person of color; and, in some cases, they perpetuated systems of oppression (for example, some Bosniaks' treatment of Roma and some Sudanese men's treatment of Sudanese women).

Recommendations

Refugee resettlement, state workers, and volunteers in Fargo not only carried out formal policies, they also perpetuated informal cultural rules that had to do with their own race, ethnicity, class, gender, and culture (e.g. Janteloven, see chapter I). Social hierarchies were shaped by adherence to cultural narratives like the Protestant work ethic, friendliness, Christianity, and the weather. It would be useful to question these cultural narratives' efficacy in fostering a multicultural community. For example, all of the Fargoans I spoke with lauded hardworking citizens as one of the biggest benefits and

virtues of living in the Midwest. However, the same people complained about working too much and not having enough time for family or relaxing. Making individuals aware of these cultural patterns can help make Fargo a more inclusive, healthy community.

Refugees need to be acknowledged for their abilities and decision-making powers, and not only as victims and survivors of war. It is important to address forms of persecution against refugees and marginalized groups in other countries and the causes for war. However, it is also important to acknowledge oppression against refugees and other marginalized groups *in* and *by* the United States.

Finally, the state must reflect the same kinds of diversity as the community it serves, from the local level to the national and international level. More diversity among state workers will lead to more inclusive forms of citizenship. The state must take conscious measures to hire more people of color and people from diverse backgrounds, not only as interpreters but also as caseworkers, supervisors, directors, police officers, and policy makers (see also Morgen, Acker, Weigt 2010:178-203). Some of the state institutions in Fargo have been recruiting New American staff, but they must be more aggressive and accommodating. The staff of nonprofit organizations, for example LSS, was usually more diverse than the state, but they needed a lot more training and accountability. For this reason, I have volunteered to help write a manual for volunteers, state workers, and resettlement workers.

Future Directions

In addition to the research that I conducted with refugee resettlement, welfare, and volunteer agencies, I also conducted some participant observation and interviews with

English language learning (ELL) teachers in Fargo. At my presentation in Fargo, in April 2010, the director of ELL programs expressed disappointment that I had not addressed the role of schools in my presentation or my dissertation. Following Marshall's 1950 understanding of social citizenship and his calls for a strong educational system and welfare state in capitalist states, I will extend my analysis of social citizenship among refugees and social service agencies in Fargo to the realm of education.

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