

Gender, Culture and Migrant Masculinities: Pakistanis in Europe

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Introduction

Existing theories of migration and the socio-historical narratives they produce have failed to adequately take account of the dynamics of gender, despite the fact that its importance in making sense of migration is increasingly acknowledged to be crucial (Pessar and Mahler, 2003; Phizacklea, 2004; Bauer and Thompson, 2004). If the mono-casual economism in orthodox neo-classical and marxist accounts migration has been corrected in recent years by revisionist work on cultures of migration, social capital and the importance of networks (Massey et al, 1998; Arango, 2004), the fact that gender has not yet been fully incorporated into the framework of migration theory has meant that most empirical accounts of the migration process continue to ignore it in practice. As has been the case more generally in the disciplines of History (Ditz, 2004) and Sociology (Milkman and Townsley, 1994) respectively, the gendered particularity of actors, networks, institutions and cultures of migration is seldom discussed.

Although feminist interventions have brought about a significant redress to the imbalanced sexual distribution of academic literature on migration by the highlighting the experiences of women, the importance of female migration has, for the most part, been treated adjunctively. To study gender, in other words, has meant studying the women in isolation rather than the processes which produce and reflect the social relations of power between men and women (Pessar and Mahler, 2003). The latter can include the very construction of ideas about sexual difference, the implications of which are far reaching; migration is likely to alter and contribute the meaning of gender in profound ways that we have so far largely ignored. The striking absence of work that deals with the construction and performance of masculinity in the migration process, is testament to this

fact, and represents a shortcoming of existing work that this article seeks to address in the context of the Pakistani migration to the West.

Concepts and Categories: Towards an Understanding of Migrant Masculinities

If the study of masculinity remains somewhat neglected within migration studies, a voluminous body of work on men and men's history has accumulated since feminist interventions in mainstream history exposed the fraudulence of most history-writing's claims to universality in the mid 1980s, establishing the study of masculinity as central to the feminist project (Ditz, 2004). Extrapolating from the insights of this work as a basis to study international migration, however, is not without its problems. For one thing, of those masculinities which have received attention, migrants – and above all Third World men of Muslim origin, seldom feature at all (a state of affairs that mirrors the early development of Feminist women's history, which has been extensively critiqued for its Eurocentrism (Brah, 1996; Afshar and Maynard, 2000).

Indeed, any such extrapolation of the concept of masculinity from this body of work must take into account the specific set of problems that position non-Western male migrants as economically and politically marginalised and racialised subjects (MacMaster, 1997; Grosfugel 2003), as well beneficiaries and perpetrators of structural domination over women. It must, in other words, be socially located: informed by the complex geometries of global power that organise human subjects hierarchically along multiple axes of difference (Massey, 1994). This sensitivity to the *situated* nature of masculinity - what Avtar Brah, in another language, has termed the politics of intersectionality (Brah, 1996), is particularly important in thinking about international labour migrants. Whilst the latter often experience systematic exploitation and discrimination in host countries, their frequently elevated status in communities of origin often places them in positions of power over women *and* men who stay put.

A second difficulty in assessing existing studies of masculinity and men's history relates to its 'internalist' tendencies which threaten to turn it into a field that, perversely,

occludes women, and obscures men's dominant relations with and over them (Hearn, 1996; Dierks, 2002; Ditz, 2004). It is crucial, in this context, to understand that gendered identifications and practices are produced and performed *relationally*, in opposition to and interaction with the multiplicity of others that given subjects encounter and define themselves against. Failure to understand this risks reification of the boundaries of their existence by isolating their existence from those of groups most commonly presumed to be furthest ontologically from their experience – above all, women and occidentals. Postcolonial theory, of course, has gone some way toward providing a gender sensitive framework for unpacking the real and imagined historical relationships between the Western male Self and alterity that routinely emerged in and shaped colonial encounters (Sinha, 1999; Stoler, 1995).

The task remains, then, to adapt (and to some extent invert) these key insights for a perspective about contemporary international migration from the developing world. Bearing in mind the criticism that has been heaped upon the postcolonial paradigm for its culturalist tendency to privilege the textual (Ahmad, 1994), I begin this endeavour by engagement with existing theories of migration which, as we noted, have undergone considerable revision in recent years, and for all their limitations, must remain the starting point for any discussion about what makes migration happen. In particular, I consider here how an understanding of gender complicates some of the fundamental premises upon which many studies of migrancy from the Third World are based. These include, firstly, the assumption behind the New Economics of Migration, which stresses the centrality of kinship and the household as motivating forces in a migration process that is at bottom, rational and materially driven (Becker, 1976; Mincer, 1978; Stark and Taylor, 1989; Stark, 1991). And secondly, the significance of networks, social capital and cultures of movement as forces which generate migration that is cumulative and self-perpetuating.

These general problems are approached with a view to answering the following specific questions:

- How far are the contexts and forces which drive migration gendered?
- How does an understanding of gender's dynamics in the migration process effect mainstream theories of migration as they relate to the international migration from the Third World?
- In what ways can we conceptualise masculinity within the field of gender and migration?

Contexts, Concepts and Categories

The abandonment of binaries such as cause and consequence, push and pull, sending and receiving society, in favour of analyses that emphasise their interaction or respective prevalence at specific moments is, these days, something of a given. If new theories of migration fill the previously unanalysed gap between the individual and 'big' socio-economic forces in migration studies (Massey, 1998, Arango, 2004), the preoccupation with networks and mid-level units, however, has limitations of its own: description of the way in which migration happens at an abstract level does not in itself serve to explain in full what motivates it. The role of human agency and experience, for instance, are often marginal to sociological studies of networks which often shed little light on what drives people to think and act in particular ways. The power of oral historical life stories and ethnographic field-work, in this context, lies precisely in its provision of a view point that entails a rather interpretive, thickly descriptive register of the sort that is normally associated with cultural anthropology: 'We want to know', as Geertz puts it, 'not only what caused the agent to perform some act but also the agent's reasons for taking the action' (,).

The objective here, then, is less for general laws than social meaning of the sort that will enrich our understanding of causality. Of particular concern are the *intentions* of individual migrants leading up to the point of migration rather than their subsequent collective practices (apart from where behaviour in the aftermath of migration reveals

something about the former). Taking seriously the ways in which they articulate their own histories and trajectories, it is hoped, will shed light on what it was that actually drove them to actually pack their bags, up and leave. This does not detract from examination of the broader economic and social forces at work: collective histories are themselves composed of the thoughts, experiences, actions and practices of individuals. Rather, it allows clarification of the role of the various actors, intermediaries and institutions involved in the migration process.

A set of general laws regarding the causes of migration cannot be easily extrapolated from this project, as any comparative sociologist would be quick to point out. The study of a single-shot case such as this, in which one is dealing with a solitary cross-sectional constellation of empirical phenomena, does not afford the possibility of universal hypotheses-testing, since what one is dealing with is a fixed pattern of relationships in a given situation; eliminating variables or even establishing their importance beyond our data necessarily involves speculation and appeals to other knowledge. It does, however, allow us to paint a detailed picture of how existing assumptions about general laws work in a given setting: how variables relate to one another, for instance. This, in turn, may provide clues as to how these general laws and theories might be refined, or qualified with caveats. Above all, in the event that one uncovers causes that appear not to be covered by general laws and theories, it can uncover fresh hypotheses for testing in future studies which may one day become general laws.

That is not to say that tentative suggestions- speculations, on the applicability of the data here to other situations cannot be made. Indeed the fact that my analysis features various sorts of internally measurable variation- above all a sustained and rigorous cross-temporal comparison, which allows some level of control. It is, rather, to be frank about the unverifiable nature of the wider assertions one naturally makes, when reflecting on the implications of the empirical findings. I uncover little new information beyond my chosen case study.

Fieldwork of this sort, of course, is by no means unproblematic. The post-structuralist gender historian is him/herself constructing knowledge about sexual difference (Scott, 1988), and must be alive to the ways in which the way in which data is gathered is likely to produce certain sorts of results. In my case, the difficulty of access to women was so acute that I often had even limited access to the views of my interviews about women. That is to say, not only was it out of the question to meet and interview women in the communities I researched, but furthermore, to broach the subject of a given interviewee's relations with women in his household, for instance, could have been problematic (One does not talk freely to Pakistani men about their sisters and mothers - certainly not, if one is oneself, a Pakistani man). A sample such as mine, then, is so heavily biased in favour of men and their discourse that it runs the risk of internalism: abstracting men from their relations with women.

I deal with this problem primarily through counter-reading their testimonies: weaving the importance of gender relations into and around the subtext of and silences within their discourse. The many hours of participant observation I have spent in the field with Pakistani men in their places of work, moreover, allowed me to observe inconsistencies - the gap between their discourse and practice. Indeed I found that a major methodological danger in doing qualitative research on gender in socially conservative contexts is taking migrants' discourse at face value. This discourse is produced in scenarios where migrants are highly unlikely, for cultural reasons, to discuss matters of sexuality and desire openly. The true importance of gender and sexuality often emerges with time, through observations of the contradictory behaviour of migrants, which frequently stands in opposition to the sexual and religious purity they profess.

Finally, in a study such as this, in which the interviews were of differing formats and lengths (some semi-structured, some unstructured), it is difficult to make exhaustive or categorical pronouncements, and often impossible to speak with any quantitative precision. The material presented here, it should be stressed, is a qualitative study conducted by a single researcher over a period of months. Its objectives are modest: to

make tentative conclusions, pose new hypotheses and raise questions that might be explored on a grander scale in larger scale projects.

In its defence, the material presented here has been systematised (using ATLAS, a computer program designed for rigorous analysis of qualitative data), and triangulated - compared with and tested against the findings of parallel studies which are referred to in the body of the text along with the bibliography. The fact that some respondents were met and interviewed on several occasions allowed for extended probing, which gave greater scope for verifying the reliability of testimonies, and analysis of changes in their circumstances over time.

The Respondents

See table

Historical Background and Structural Context

Mass primary Pakistani migration to the West can be divided into two broadly identifiable historical phases that may be understood loosely (but by no means rigidly) as 'old' fordist male migrants who arrived in Britain before the mid-1980's (along with their 'dependents') on the one hand, and 'new' post-fordist migrants who came (and have continued to come) thereafter.

The structural roots of fordist migration from Pakistan, which was stimulated almost exclusively from those regions which had existing traditions of movement and transnational connections, can be traced before partition in colonial policies. The diversity in their geography underlines this: Mirpur in Kashmir, where the rocky terrain and low agricultural output produced economic stagnation, and nearby areas of Northern Punjab such as Gujrat and Gujuranwala where irrigation is difficult and the population pressure on land severe had little in common with relatively prosperous Canal colonies such as Faislabad and Sargodah in the heartlands of Punjab, where high agricultural

yields and levels of infrastructural development in the nineteenth century had made for a more ambitious, expansive sort of restlessness whose end was social advancement (Shaw, 2000, 24-5).

Though numerous studies have shown that the context of emigration has important consequences for the socio-economic trajectories of migrants (Ballard, 1986), the point here is that context ought not to be confused with causality: emigration in the former instance, took place from a context of poverty; in the latter, it was encouraged by economic dynamism. What these regions shared were cultures of internal movement fostered in the colonial period, and powerful traditions of employment as lascars along British shipping lines, or in the British army, which famously preferred recruits from the Northern, 'martial' races of the subcontinent.

In the postwar years of reconstruction, when Europe turned to 'guest-workers' as a temporary solution to Europe's need for low skilled labour, although of course, thousands migrated along the paths set by these pioneers from the newly established independent states that replaced British India. A distinct geo-spatial Pakistan-UK migration system (within the wider South Asia-Europe migration system) was born. No sooner as mass migration from Pakistan and other NC countries gathered cumulative momentum, however, the 1962 Act and subsequent installation of a voucher system in Britain, which represented an historically unprecedented and unusually early attempt to curb unskilled migration from the global economic peripheries in Europe, inaugurated decades of restrictionist policy by European states, which become an increasingly common trend within the postwar European continental system, into which Britain became increasingly integrated as 1970's progressed. All this spelt the gradual erosion or at least transformation of 'old' patterns of people movement that tied Britain to its former colonies.

A series of parallel and intertwined changes, meanwhile, saw the development of 'new' migratory patterns and configurations: the infusion of the petro-dollar, which transformed the Gulf into a capital-rich, labour-short immigrant-receiving region following 1973 oil

crisis and subsequent emergence of the Middle-East as the primary destination of international migration from South Asia, especially Pakistan. The catastrophic collapse of neighboring Afghanistan, the world's biggest sender of refugees in recent years, has also had direct and far reaching consequences for the Pakistani migration system, which has for years been a passage to the West for many Afghans. At the receiving end, key changes in Europe and the West have also been important: increasing mobility within the EU coupled with the opening up of overland routes to the West through Eastern Europe in the 1990's has led to a significant increase in human smuggling and movement connecting the nodal settlements which constitute what is now a truly global diaspora. If migration from Pakistan to the West once meant exclusively going to the UK, it can now mean going to Canada, Italy or Australia.

In the context of tightening British restrictionism since the 1960s, then, Pakistanis have been diverted towards Scandinavia, continental Europe and North America. The content of flows too has been ostensibly altered by developments such as marriage migration, asylum flows, student migration and a growing number of tourists and visitors, though my research confirms that realities on the ground suggest that legal classifications are to a large extent, misleading. Some five decades since mass migration got underway, the lumpen migratory proletariat is in many ways similar to yesterday's fordist 'guest-workers': largely uneducated, lower-middle class and semi-rural young labour migrants who occupy the lower tiers of Western labour markets. The means of migration have diversified with the growth of red tape and restrictionism, as have destinations, but the key sites of emigration remain remarkably close to the pathways that connected Kashmir and the Punjab to *villayat*. And if once they were absorbed by declining manufacturing industries, generally, they now enter the service sector.

If little is known exactly about why the colonial migrants left for the UK, still is known about the motivations which lie behind the migration of new migrants or *freshies*, as I refer to them (the epithet is derived from jargon used by some British Asian natives to refer to those who are 'fresh off the boat'). The historical cross-temporal comparison that follows compares and contrasts the protagonists of these different waves of migration in a

bid to shed light on the ways in their motivations were gendered. Borrowing Virinder Kalra's terminology, I begin with an analysis of what drove the *Babas* (Kalra, 2000). A good deal has been written about the settlement, employment and social experiences of these pioneering old timers- the '*first generation*', as they are (often mistakenly) understood in the aftermath of migration, often in the context of 'community' and ethnicity studies (Dhaya, 1974; Khan, 1979; Jefferies, 1976; Shaw, 2000 (1988); Werbner, 1990). The question of what motivated them to migrate at the individual level, however, remains curiously neglected.

Autonomy and the Masculine Self: the limits of the Household and Kinship in Decision-Making

If poverty was often acute in the local emigration context, my respondents confirmed, in line with existing studies, that the capacity to migrate internationally is conditioned by power relations and access to resources in the form of social and material capital. Though uneducated, Malik Saab himself was of a powerful family within his Mirpuri village (his grandfather was effectively a judge or village elder who would be called upon when arbitration is needed to solve a land dispute). Sarwar Saab, who migrated a year after he did, suggested that those who did migrate would often be the most educated within given families, in addition to being the eldest ('At that time, those educated, doing metric, were going- they were looking for relatives they might have here'). In short, however many would have wanted to emigrate, differential access to social and economic capital- *class*, meant that migration abroad was an option for some, but by no means all, and certainly not the poorest members of the village. Throughout my research, it was only very rarely that I encountered men who felt genuinely *majboor* (helpless), or obliged to migrate.

The testimonies of individuals with even low levels of social capital and relatively modest visions of self-improvement at the time of migration are illuminating. Baba Sarwar's claims he 'didn't have much ambition', yet he retained, in his own eyes, an undeniable sense of control over his own destiny, which he articulates through a sense of

agency and individuality, and a clear rejection of the idea that he was somehow to migrate:

AA: Did you want to come, or was it obligation, or did someone send you or..... What was your motivation?

Sort of both ways.... I had cousin here in Sheffield. I was studying, doing metric. In our lot everyone was poor, so I was the head in my family, only I was educated. My cousin said do you want to come here? The choice though, was mine. No one forced me. It was for the betterment of my life.

The unmistakable appearance of an individual 'self' here ('the betterment of *my* life'), suggests that even within the context of an economic or labour migration from a backward and peripheral locality within a former colony, the forces which motivate individuals to leave a remote village in the mountains for the metropolitan centre of global capitalism, or even, exclusively, a sense of obligation to the family or household. Nor are they explicable by some abstract force of cumulative causation powered by the anonymous momentum of networks alone. Sarwar Saab's cousin facilitated his migration, but the choice to go, he says definitively, was his own.

This sense of individual desire was even evident in older men with families: for instance, in the testimony of Rasheed Saab, a former partition refugee from Jullunder who, at the age of 30 had already been married for some 8 years. Despite being better educated than some villagers, Rashid was struggling unsuccessfully to find the sort of employment he wanted (a clerical job):

So we were 5 or 6 brothers and sisters.... I thought, I've done my metric, I can't get work. People were saying there's work outside, [they were leaving] for good jobs, to improve their situations. So I thought I should go to. At that time I was married and had four children.

In addition to underlining the difficult material conditions, unemployment and indeed poverty that would have marked the context of many Babas' decisions to leave, this passage raises the importance kinship in the decision-making process, and at a glance might appear to confirm the saliency of 'the household' as the primary consideration behind emigration, a notion which has, in recent years, become increasingly widely subscribed to by economic and developmental researchers of emigration in Third World societies (Becker, 1976; Mincer, 1978; Stark, 1989, 1991). As the eldest, most educated of his siblings and a father of four, this line of thinking would take these words as evidence of Rasheed's sense of responsibility to provide for and ensure the household's future security. The latter would likely be seen as primarily behind the decision to migrate: a rational, collective survival strategy pursued by the household as an income and resource pooling unit in times of poverty.

Close examination of the text, however, reveals a more complex, less economically rational, and less selfless picture. Rasheed refers to his family as being central to the backdrop against which the decision was made, but there is no casual link between his feelings of responsibility for their well-being and the decision to up and leave. Upon being probed as to where the decision really stemmed from, an ambivalent, less harmonious set of circumstances emerges.

AA: So what did your father feel and think about this?

He didn't say anything to me. In fact, he didn't like the idea of his son leaving, but he knew that this man is trying to make a living for his children who are growing older, and if he wants a good job, it's okay....

His wife too, was unhappy at the prospect of his leaving, though as he states, she was fairly powerless to exert her will over his individual will to improve his own and the family's fortunes by migrating:

.... There is a lot of feeling amongst the family, the wife. (The children were so small they didn't understand- they were just 3 or 4). The wife felt bad but... They do but they have to compromise.

A.A: *Did you have to convince your wife?* Yes.

A.A: *Did she resist the idea?* No she said it was ok too.

Though they agreed to support him, then, the decision to migrate seems to have been Rasheed's own. Even if it was made in the context of his feelings of responsibility to the household and family, which figured in his considerations, the predominant force, these obligations are separable analytically, at some level, from his own individual desire to leave which surfaced through discussions with other young men with whom he conversed *outside* the household; if anything, the latter facilitated pursuit of his own personal ambition, a fact hinted at in the following extract:

I was not worried because we were a joint family, mother, father, brothers, sisters, and children all lived together. No man would like to leave his children just like that. This was a safety, so I felt I could leave the children.

The tension between pursuit of individual fulfillment on one hand, and one's commitments to the household on the other emerges powerfully from within the testimony of Sahir Saab, a science teacher at a prestigious, private, English medium school in Sialcot. For a number of reasons (discussed below), Sahir Saab developed a personal desire to migrate. The following account of an initial attempt to do so that was aborted due to pressure from his wife underlines the high level of complexity and conflict surrounding the decision making-process. Like Rasheed, conversations with friends outside the family led him to make an application to migrate, though this was some time after the Commonwealth Immigration Act, but here, the discordant nature of interests within the household is more pronounced:

Within 6 months they sent me vouchers.... Then everything [was] gotten ready, ticket and everything.... And she, when I have said 'what do you think?'... she wasn't happy, she just started crying. I said alright 'It doesn't matter, I won't go.' I never came.... She stopped me. Well, she didn't stop me, I felt she is not happy, she will feel lonely... I never came. That seat was cancelled.

Like Rasheed's wife, Sahir's was unhappy at the thought of being left to live with her in-laws and bring up the children with an absent father. If she was able to exert enough emotional leverage to prevent him fulfilling his own individual wish to leave the first time, she was relatively powerless in the face of a subsequent intervention. As with Rasheed's wife (who had to 'compromise'), she was, in the end, compelled to defer to the material interests of her husband's parents: some years later, the decision not to migrate was overturned, again, due to pressure from within the household, this time from Sahir Saab's mother:

My mother, we had seven brothers, at that time I think, there 6. One came after me. So 6 brothers, 4 sisters, 10. So time passed again, a few months. My mother again said in the morning, when I was getting ready, and having my morning breakfast you call it: 'Son, your brother and sisters are very very little, if you go it's a good thing.... perhaps it will help- for [their] education'.

Sahir Saab never asked his mother where her conviction that he should migrate surfaced from, but reckons the fact that her brother's migration to London some years prior would have influenced her to decide her son ought to leave his job for the material betterment of the household's interests as she perceived them:

I don't know. Maybe some money might be coming and she, I had no idea.she would have realised.... her brother's wife would have told her. I'm sure she would ask you, 'Now he's gone there, how much money does he

send?'. She definitely would have asked, and then worked out that what you get here is worth 10, 15 times more.

The implications of this information sharing between households *through* women is of interest here; women appear to have had their own networks, and their own subtle ways of asserting their agency as they have been known to do in contexts where they occupy subordinated positions (Agarwal, 1997). Yet women, as is invariably the case, did not speak with a single voice, or even express a shared interest against those of the men: the young wife's position at the bottom of the patriarchal hierarchy, which meant that her agency was restricted to expressing unhappiness, underlines the absence of female solidarity, and confirms what we know to be the case in many contexts: maintenance of any gendered order that favours men requires mediation through some women, with whom men forge alliances in pursuit of their objectives (Ditz, 2004, 19).

Turning to the testimonies of new migrants, the picture is in many ways similar. The place of place of kin and family in their narratives is at times positively muted. Numerous conversations I had whilst on my research trip to Pakistan pointed to this sense of inequality, and *not* poverty as the driving force of emigration. Shahid, a social worker in Punjab, for instance, told me that 'the tendency to go west is amongst people who are competitive'. Dr Akram, the 'travel agent' I interviewed in Lahore, who described his clientele as the sort of young, poorly educated men who dream of riches as they covet the large houses and fancy cars of neighbours with families in the West. The inequality that drives such men to migrate in droves, it appears, is not universally experienced by all Pakistanis but is a local feature of certain nodal locations that have been deeply drawn into international migration through the chain effect. The transformative impact upon parts of Kashmir, Punjab and NWFP of remittances from the UK since the 1950's, the Gulf since the 1970's, and North America and Europe since the 1980's has been considerable, and in conjunction with the impact of mass internal migration within Pakistan, established clearly identifiable regional cultures of emigration.

Several of the men I interviewed are young Pathans from relatively small, semi-rural towns (which they often refer to as 'villages') in Pakistan's North West Frontier province. Like the other migrants from that region I met, they belong to families that benefited from the vast, continuing migration to the Middle East that has sucked in and transformed the lives of millions across South Asia since the 1970's. They each grew up with fathers leading transnational existences between home and the Gulf, and in some cases, themselves spent some of their most important formative years abroad. Twenty-four year old Khan Saab, from a town called Kohat, explains the gendered, international geography of power by which households in his area are spatially connected to foreign destinations through a single male migrant:

The life style there is different- joint families.... We live together with four of my father's brothers. One has two wives. I'm one of seven siblings- we're forty people.... Every family has someone outside. A guy who leaves feeds forty people.... My father and three chachas are in Qatar- they have been there since before I was born. I was born in Qatar [and lived there] until the age of 10 when I went to Pakistan. Dad and his brothers drove trailers there.

Comparisons between the experience of men and women, according to Ditz, are important in studies of masculinity, to prevent the occlusion of women (Ditz, 2004, 17). Khan Saab's silence on women, who barely feature in his life-story, was broken only when I explicitly asked him explicitly on how the migration process affects them. He said something to the effect that where he is from, a woman's worth is measurable as no higher than the foot of a man, and that a man is obliged to shoot his own sister if she dares even suggest a preference for a marriage partner to her male relatives. He expressed opposition to education for women, yet sees it as entirely natural for him that men should want to improve themselves over generations: 'My dad said 'I don't want you to do that [drive tractors]'. I decided I'd come here. I liked the idea of coming here rather than Qatar'.

Even for men, however, self-improvement in rural Pakistan is viewed primarily through the prism of honour and status through possession of material wealth acquired in the migration process rather than education, which is a means to an end (Lefebvre, 1990). It is less fear of poverty than the prospect of being rich that motivates migration to London from the most backward zones such as NWFP. When I asked Hamid, a twenty-three year old illiterate rice farmer from a small town near Peshawar when, why and how he came to the conclusion he had to leave for Britain, he told me:

Two or three years ago, people from my village who had been in Manchester and Bradford since 96-97 and had made lots of money sent it back. They had quite an impact. They're families got big houses and moved to Peshawar and Islamabad. I thought "I want more money, Qatar's not good enough".

But when, exactly, are the final decisions to migrate taken, and by whom? Khan Saab recounts:

It was my responsibility to keep things going. In 1999 I decided to come. They didn't say anything – it's better not to put your parents in the position where they have to ask [you to migrate]. I came in 2002.

Interestingly, the so-called 'family decision' appears to have in fact been taken by an individual exercising his agency. Even if it was born of a desire to fulfil unstated obligations to the household, there is an unmistakable sense of personal ambition in the form a desire to prove oneself. This was certainly the case for Twenty-eight year old Aaloo, who is from a village near Peshawar. One of seven siblings, with brothers working in Qatar with his father as drivers, he was left in a comfortable position and had no material need to migrate. Yet he opted to do so, as Nobil explained, because:

.... he's a proud bloke. He didn't want to be a burden... to succeed, to make his father and brothers proud. He wanted to come, so his father gave him money. He went to an agent in Pindi and paid 7 and half or 8 lakhs.

Aaloo too, then, was in many ways himself the agent of his fate, even if travel was financed by his father. Hamid's individualism was even more pronounced:

I decided myself to leave, a long time before I did.... Agents say don't go this way, they warn people against it, they say there are many dangers, but people go to them anyway....My father told me not to go, "It's very dangerous, come to Qatar and look after my business with me" he said. I didn't listen to him. I wanted to come here.

Not only is the decision to migrate illegally here quite clearly an individual one; it is taken *against* the wishes of the household. Indeed the migrant in this instance raised the capital from family friends and paid the agent the 12,000 dollars required to organise travel without the knowledge of his disapproving father (though his father eventually came to accept the idea and financed the debt himself).

A number of important messages emerge in the narratives of these Pathans, the first of which is that smuggling from Pakistan to London is a highly expensive endeavour embarked upon only by families not likely to be reliant on remittances (even though these may be an important consequence of the migration). It is not necessarily triggered by unemployment (all three men appear to have had job or job options in Pakistan), and certainly not by poverty. It is, rather, driven by the fact that there is now an understanding even in such backwaters as NWFP of the enormity in global inequality- that is, of the immensely more rewarding returns involved in working abroad and resembles what some might call an act of the Self acting in pursuit of its own personal satisfaction, sometimes against the wishes of their households.

In a context where one would scarcely predict the saliency of the individual subject, this underlines just how wealthy and privileged the migrants I interviewed are in relation to their own societies, and above all, how much scope for choice and agency they enjoy in relation to the other, and especially the female members of the households that finance their migrations. The internationalised male elites of even the poorest, least urbane of tribal provinces in Pakistan can exercise types of individual agency that are assumed by some development economists to be the preserve of wealthy Western subjects: Hamid was more concerned with how much money young men who had left for Manchester were making than with obeying the wishes of his father. Such is ambition of the Pathans I interviewed, that they actually felt able to upset the established order (or the doxa, in Bourdieusian terms) that prescribes expected behaviour, and take great risks with large amounts of the household's savings, not to mention their own safety. It is by virtue of their powerful desire to migrate, and relatively high levels of agency that such individuals make it to London illegally.

Gender, Culture, Desire: Thinking Beyond the Economic

A second line of argument taken up here concerns the ways in which thinking about gender can complicate our understanding of the forces which drive labour migration from sending contexts such as Pakistan. These forces, if not always explicitly defined as material, are often assumed to relate exclusively to the 'hard' economic or political spheres in analyses that seldom tackle the imaginative, subjective dimensions of the migration process. In this section, I discuss gendered socio-cultural and psychic push factors that, although difficult to identify and quantify with any precision, play an important, hitherto unstudied, role in motivating individual migrants to up and leave. Once again, I begin with an exploration of the Babas' testimonies, before moving onto the Freshies and then hazarding some comparative reflections.

As was pointed out above, though Sahir Saab ultimately migrated at the behest of his mother's economic concerns, he had a set of individual desires of his own to migrate that were quite independent of her wishes. These, his discourse reveals, were decidedly non-economic:

I had very good job, as I tell you. Enough money for those days, I was getting pay over there which was a heck of money, and I had people asking me tuition, but I was happy with my money. I wouldn't do tuition, which I could get, easily, people asking me... I said no, I've got enough money.

Sahir Saab's initial interest in migration, then, was driven not primarily or even remotely by the pursuit of capital. He had, by his own admission, a perfectly good job that paid well, and even brought him elevated social status, prestige and fulfillment. How then, did he first develop an interest in migrating?

I had a colleague working with me. He happened to [go to] a government agency that provided people with jobs, an 'employment exchange'..... So he told me to have a look- he said.... The employment exchange has received information that they want teachers, they want nurses, they want doctors, so go. I said "What do I want to go there for, I just got married recently." He said 'Go on.... If you don't like it come back after 6 months or a year'. I said alright,

let's find out about this. He said you have to go yourself. I went to the employment exchange.... and I confirmed [with them] 'you have a demand'. So, [they said] 'take this, fill it up'. I did that and took it back after a week. So this man got me to go.... And I think within 6 months....I started preparing [to leave].....

.... There was a secretary of a school. In the process of this enquiring and filling in an application form, I learnt that he is gone. Then I realised 'many people are going now'. I'm not saying this Mr Bashir Ahmad is the only one. I think there are others who must be going. And that was it really. No motivation at all, I would say.

In recounting the events leading up to his migration, Sahir Saabhimself appeared to have difficulty explaining what it really was that made him want to leave in the first place. He kept shrugging his shoulders, scratching his head and frowning as he thought it through, perhaps for the first time in his life:

AA *What do you think motivated you?* Nothing really motivated, just that man telling me. **AA** *It just happened?* That's what it is.

The lengthy ramble that follows provides clearer clues as to what was really at stake, and what precisely it was in his friends' discourse that appealed to him:

It was his suggestion, just nothing else: we will roam around and have a good look at England. His I knew that- when I did my degree at that time, in English, I remember we used to cram some things, a few things which you find fancy, something interesting.... There was one quotation.... on going around, seeing the world.... Curiosity. Travelling. Journey[ing]... They have no idea of what England is, because they only learn the word England. They've not actually seen it. So that quotation definitely was in my mind when he said 'if nothing happens, we will go, look around, travel around. If we don't travel around, go to London and have a look at London and then you come back.... I think that one point stuck into my head, go and see what England is. Not just, 'you have *heard* of England': go and *see* what it is!

Migration here is plainly seen as a means of traveling the world, motivated by curiosity about far away places that are imagined as exotic and different. The desire to enter the ranks of those who have *seen* and not merely *heard* what it is reflects a particularly masculine rejection of dependency upon others for knowledge of the world; a rejection of relegation to the lowly status, within one's community, of one who relies upon the testimonies of an emergent international class of global travelers for his understanding of the Occident. To remain dependent in this way, of course, is to share the status of women, for whom traveling is out of the question: it is, in this sense, a typically masculine, symbolic repudiation of femininity (Ditz, 2004, 18).

Contrary to the implicit assumptions of post-colonial literature, such sentiments were not, it seems, the preserve of the Western Orientalists. Indeed, many thousands of middle-class, elite Pakistanis who migrated to London in this period from big cities, largely along age old colonial pathways of movement that existed long before mass labour migration from the villages got underway. The forces that drove them too tended not to be economic in a narrow sense; a high proportion were of families involved in economic and low-level administrative activities of the British Empire; many came as students, but ended up staying on for longer than they had intended (Ahmad, 2006).

Of course, the context of decisions made by these men were, it could be argued, sufficiently different to those in which the lumpen Pakistani proletariat made theirs for them to be considered irrelevant and even distortive in that they universalise the experience of a privileged few: Mirpuris and men of humble backgrounds from small towns like Rasheed, who had found it impossible to get a job that met his most basic ambitions. Yet, I would argue that there are more parallels between the motivations of more middle-class individuals and the rural masses than one might assume. First of all, the differences between the two social groupings are often unclear. Class appears to be less important than the institutionalised, historical ties between Britain and Pakistan. The army, for instance, diffused ideologies of assimilation and the myth of white superiority established London as *the* imperial metropolis to be seen entire constellations of rural, working-class and lower middle-class men beyond the elites. Bari Saab, based in Rawalpindi, who spent most of his working-career in East London running a grocery

store told me, in an interview that took place in his small council flat, that his desire to emigrate sprang from when he

came here in 1953, when I was in the Pakistan airforce... to attend the Queen's coronation. We stayed here about 2 months. We participated in the parade which started in Kensington Gardens, through Marble Arch and around the Thames to Buckingham Palace. We were honoured to be in the Buckingham Palace Gardens, where her Majesty Queen Elizabeth came and expected the soldiers- about 75,000 soldiers, from different commonwealth countries. We were awarded different medals.... I was very much impressed by the attitude, the behaviour of, especially the police, they were very helpful, because I forgot my way, I said I wanted to go to Kensington Gardens, he said, I'll help you, he started walking with me. I said it's alright but he brought me to the Kensington Gardens, in front of camp! I said 'That's very good, thank you very much'. Then I thought, 'When I complete my airforce contract, I think I would like to come and live in this country'. And that's how it happened. When I finished my Contract in 1959, December, in January I came over here.

The fact that he knew only one individual in England (an ex-airforce friend), and that he initially lived in a hotel, before contacting the embassy which sent him the address of a students hostel in central London SW1 where he stayed for some time before finding his way to East London suggests that his migration had little to do with the household. If

networks are important, they are noticeably gendered: information spreads, virtually without exception, from experiences and interactions with other men, encouragement and exchanges of information in non-domestic, public spaces outside the domain of feminine. It is, without exception associated with a certain worldliness, or mastery of the globe that we associate with occidental colonialism; an accumulation of cultural and experiential capital that raised one's status, within that community of men:

I tell you while I was even studying, in our area, from our area, the village, the whole- on the road, there was 9 or 10 villages. From one of them, a businessman's son or brother, came to England to study, and he went back while I was still studying, in the early 50's, in the college. And it was a big thing for the pupils and for us, who were in the college at that time: 'This bloke has gone to England! He's an England returned!'. It was a big thing, for Jumra bicycle company's brother or son, son I think- they sent his son to that place. Used to be a big gun. The family itself, and the person who went there, the England returned. It was a really big thing.

Returnees, then, would enjoy their elevated status over men like Sahir, and swagger around town, making the most of it. The role of such sentiments seldom figures in explanations of what makes migration happen, yet the myths they would spread would have spread far and wide, inspiring men of all sorts of ages and social backgrounds to find a way 'to see' for themselves what all the fuss was about.

There was another way in which attraction to the UK and occidental culture was fostered in the 1960's in particular. Though it is something of a taboo for obvious reasons, it should be remembered that Babas were young men, many of whom were unmarried and living a society in which access to women and female company was restricted and controlled. The fact that travel, by its nature implies transgression, exploration and adventure of various kinds is generally assumed in discussions of what motivates European migration (including sexual tourism which represents an extreme manifestation of this type of travel). I would argue, that the possibility it might mean the same thing for non-Europeans has been suppressed by curious complicity between a combination of two factors: firstly, the economism of existing migration literature, which makes it unusual to think of migration from poor countries as driven by anything other than material concerns (a tendency that no doubt reflects broader racial and social stereotyping about immigrants whom we unthinkingly deny the full array of emotions and desires which drive human beings in general); and secondly, the fact that some desires are difficult to admit to, or even articulate in societies where sex is a taboo, particularly for elders within the community.

The testimony of Nadir, whose village of origin lies in Gujrat, the district from emigration rates to West is probably the highest in the whole of Pakistan, reveals a hitherto neglected aspect of the history of contemporary migratory flows:

I remember European people would go by road through Iran, Afghanistan and the Khyber Pass through Pindi and Lahore, from the UK. We would see them on the GT road- the motorway starting from Peshawar, Pindi, Jehlum, Gujrat, Gujuranwallah and Lahore. From there they would go to Delhi. These were small vans. [We saw] their *free style of life*, their capacity to spend money and enjoy life. They were hippies, tourists. Hundreds would pass through daily, Americans, English, French. They would stop in Kharia, Jehlum, Gujrat and stay there, wherever night fell. They would stay in hotels and use tents. We had a fascination to meet them. You would go and talk to them in bars, cafes, tea places on the GT road side. *The facination with the white colour, the women.* 'What sort of people are they?' [we wondered]. This was the early 60's. They were individual tourists. Also we'd see them on the trains, up to the 1970's. For youth, this aspired one to leave.

Whiteness then, and the sight of white women, along with the 'free style of life' that western travelers were clearly living as they passed through the subcontinent at the height of the sexual revolution, making journeys that no doubt fulfilled their own desires to travel and discover what they thought of as 'India', had quite an impact on at least some of the young men whose view they came into. Nadir, whose words above I quote, is a family friend, which perhaps helped in facilitating the relative openness with which he spoke. Three of the other five elite Pakistanis I interviewed for my MA married white women, it might be also pointed out. Of the other two, one admitted to having white girlfriends (the other, my father, was not asked). The fact remains clear, that at least for

some men, travel and the allure of white femininity was a motivating factor, one that shaped desire, often consciously.

The issue of class might compel us once again, to qualify our generalisation with the caveat that none of the East London Babas I spoke to spoke in such terms explicitly. The difficulty in assessing what role sexuality played in drawing working-class young Pakistani men to Europe, however, is acute. I did explicitly not ask them, as it may have offended their sensibilities and be perceived as highly inappropriate. Abdullah Hussein's historical novel suggests that encounters between white men and working-class Pakistanis were by no means uncommon before the arrival of wives en mass, as do other anecdotal fragments of evidence. Nadir's recollection of white travelers passing along the GT road, a historical gateway of cultural and economic exchange between East and West before and after colonialism, may well be more widely applicable. And my discussions with younger men and participant observation would reveal that it is certainly a factor in what motivates new working-class Pakistani migrants, a discussion which will developed in the next chapter.

The point perhaps ought not to be pushed too far: there may well men for whom *sexual* attraction and desire was not a push factor, and it ought to be stressed again, that the majority of British Pakistanis are of Mirpuri origin. Perhaps for Babas who were not exposed at all to flesh and blood Europeans, European culture; those who had lived in difficult conditions, suffered unemployment and would have had little time to think anything else but material concerns; those whose social contexts were highly religious

(and arguably particularly deeply conservative and sexually repressed); perhaps for these men, it is best not to place excessive emphasis on the non-economic motivations. It may well be that that men who worked for decades in factories, dedicating their earnings to the security and accumulation of honour of their kin would be offended at the suggestion that they came to Europe to meet white women or experience 'free living'.

Perhaps for these men, it could be said that there was at least an element of mystique surrounding the West; an element of curiosity and wonder at what lay behind the *purdah*. If this is not something explicitly articulated, it is subtly hinted it, I would argue, in the subjective memories recollected by some of the working-class men I interviewed. From a place like Mirpur, where there was much poverty, backwardness unemployment (to use Malik Saab's own words), the closest contact men would have to the metropolitan Europe would be through returnees who had been there. The representation of these men, who appeared to possess unusual powers upon their return to communities of origin by the late 1940's in the following vivid portrait of the emigration context, suggests that their having been to the UK, coupled with their new found affluence and exposure to metropolitan urbanity effectively whitened them in the imaginations of the young and immobile, and added to the appeal of travelling to villayat:

Their colour and clothes were different. It was nylon. At that time- nylon was a very bright cloth: *white* nylon and yellow shalwars. *And the men's colour was white*. Basically, those people were the seamen who, in the Mirpur area- they are the founders of [the Pakistani community in] England.

Once again, much of what the Babas recounted is present in the testimonies of newer migrants. If anything, the curiosity 'to see' the West has intensified with the increase in restrictionism. A grocer from Jehlum, one of nine boys in his class of eleven who migrated (four went to the Middle-East, the rest headed West) in the 1980s, insisted that migration is by no means a strictly rational calculation. Of the two men who stayed put, he told me, one is now a solicitor, and the other is a head teacher. Their standard of living, he went, scratching his blood-shot sleep deprived eyes, is higher than his own: whilst he works twelve hour days, they 'don't even get up to get themselves a glass of water'.

AA. *So why did you come?* Young blood. There's a *purdah*. You always want to know what's behind that; to see it for yourself. The next man will tell you there's nothing there but you will want to see for yourself.

He spoke of his own migration, then, as a kind of irrational, hot headed and spontaneous endeavour - one which, with hindsight, could by his admission be regarded as ill advised. Another man from Jehlum I spoke with, thirty-two year old market vendor, explained his (illegal) migration from there in the late 1990s as part of a 'craze' amongst young men that was raging at the time. His life now, he added, in terms of personal hopes and aspirations, 'is finished'. Interviews with *freshies*, in other words, suggest that myths of a rosy and even decadent life-style in the West continue to proliferate, enticing young men

to spend vast sums of household money and risk their lives to migrate illegally. Recollecting his sobering early weeks of job-hunting in dreary East London, Khan Saab remembers:

I thought, 'London's not what I thought it would be'. I'd heard that in London, no one get's ill- that there's no tension, no worries. I heard there's snow but everyone has money and jobs. I heard everyone's happy, and that there are beautiful women. When I wasn't getting a job I felt bad- that my impression had been wrong.

The reference to 'beautiful women' here is of noteworthy, particularly in the context of remarks made by Shahid, a social worker I spoke with whilst doing fieldwork in Lahore. When I asked him about what it is that motivates migrants who head West in particular, instead of listing all the usual structural problems that characterise life in Pakistan, he explained that what appears to be a purely materially driven phenomenon is in fact linked in complex ways to the structure of gender relations and sexuality, especially for those young men of lower middle-class backgrounds that make up the bulk of Pakistan's international migration to the West. Whilst the pleasures of sex remain tauntingly visible in the lives of the country's elites and on television through advertising and the global media, they are firmly out of their grasp in what remains a conservative society. Nor can their frustrations be easily alleviated through marriage whilst they remain unemployed, unless they accept a match which involves downward social mobility. In

short, as is often the case, competition within and among men, particularly in relation to access to women, is central to workings of the gender order (Ditz, 2004):

Another reason is that they have no access to women, to sex. No access to upper-class women. They just play cricket and video games. Marriage is the only way for them to have sex. Because upward mobility for them is blocked, they feel a terrible frustration, especially those who want to see more of the world, experience what they see plastered on TV's.

Waiting in the office of a professional smuggler in Lahore to interview him, I heard a young candidate for illegal migration being sold the journey West with the proposition that 'you can get drink there freely, and Russian women for two dollars' (I arrived too late to catch the destination they were discussing, but later learned that this particular smuggler specialises in overland transit through Eastern and Central Europe). Migrants I interviewed in London, such as Khan Saab, Hamid and Wasim, had made these sorts of journeys over periods of a few months, and confirmed having stayed in several cities along the way. If old migrants, the West beyond Britain was a little known entity ('the general public', according to Sahir, 'believed the streets of Paris are made of glass' in the 1960s), for a whole generation of freshies who move within the new Pakistani migration system, first hand experience of East, central, South and West European cities is not uncommon.

By no means all freshies migrate illegally, of course. Nabil, a twenty-five year old MA educated Pathan from a small village in FATA (the federally administered tribal areas in between Pakistan and Afghanistan) came to the West having worked in Qatar as a company manager for several years. Though he too migrated for ostensibly rational reasons (to obtain a Western education and look, ultimately, for a way to stay on and work), he had clearly been attracted by the desire 'to see' and 'experience' new things, much as young western middle-class students head East for exotic sojourns in 'different' sounding places in their 'gap year' travels. Adnaan too, a visitor from Peshawar, came 'to have a look' and research a way to stay on. 'We didn't need money', he insists. 'I'm from a good family... not from a village. Dad went to Dubai, he made his money there'. A member of the emergent middle-class, Adnaan is now set on returning to the UK but plans to do so legally, by returning as a student.

Not all Pakistani migrants, of course, are attracted to what is exotic and different. For every individual I met who communicated some sense of conscious or unconscious desire for the West and its freedoms, I would meet men who declared revulsion for what they regard as its decadently sexual freedom. I encountered these sorts of sentiments, curiously, most powerfully, amongst more urbanised students, members of a religious, socially conservative middle-class that stressed the purely instrumental nature of their presence in the West. 'I don't like clubs', Omar told me. These sorts of men complained even of British Pakistanis:

The families that are rotten (biggreveh), their so rotten, God forgive them, it's dangerous just to look at them.... You ask the next boys, we just want to make our status, and we want to go back. Ask everyone, none of us is able to adjust here. Because we opened our eyes there, everything, our way of living, our culture there, everything, it's completely different.

One needs to exercise caution in analysing such discourse, however. The gap between enunciated opinions and practice suggests men are not always explicit about what their motivations are, or were at the time of their migration. Extended observation at close quarters suggests that a significant proportion of men are not as pious in practice as they would like to appear. Khan Saab, for instance, spoke with great pride about his conservative, religious beliefs and commitments. As I got to know him and his flat-mates over time, however, it became clear that they do their profit to from the openness of contact between men and women in the West. Nabil enjoys a surreptitious drink, as do several other I have known. However tiny their spending budget is, they both seemed to manage to have small doses of fun doing things they might not have been able to at home. Whatever difficulties they faced, they were at a stage in their lives when being away from the supervision of their elders could not but be an adventure of sorts.

The fact, moreover, that my respondents did not send all their money home was initially something of a surprise given the assumption that migrant workers as a uniformly

homeland-oriented army of straight-faced accumulators sent by eagerly expectant families for the sole purpose of alleviating their poverty. I found that in reality, migrants did not necessarily send all of their disposable income home, and where they did, it was not necessarily done in order to help their families. Nor were the remittances they sent even vaguely fixed in quantity or regularity. The extent of their family orientation varied, as did their reasons for sending them, the needs of their households, their plans to return and their ability to send remittances. Whilst none of this tells us in any definitive way their reasons for migrating, it points to the fact that their motivations are unlikely to have been so straightforwardly selfless as is often assumed.

Conclusions and Cross-temporal Comparisons

Counter to those schools of development studies which treat migration in the Third World through the prism of collective and kinship and household strategies, migrants, old and new have important aspirations of their own that are personal and often distinct from what their parents, wives and siblings wanted for them. Nor indeed can their households be treated as coherent income pooling units, given the antagonisms that appear to have existed within them between their individual members.

Objective, material progress for one's family is often less important than a sort of gendered wish to attain the status and worldliness that returnees displayed to local audiences. Colonial ideologies of assimilation and attraction to English culture and travel were powerful in drawing middle-class men to migrate; sexual desire and curiosity too

may have been a factor, reinforced by European tourism and the visibility of western lifestyles and free-living in what were comparably sexually conservative societies. Of course, the significance of such non-economic factors is uneven, and likely to be less of an obvious driving force in the areas such as Mirpur, where people migrated from a context of poverty. Yet even the discourse of Mirpuris suggests that the power of the West lay partly in its subjective appeal, which enticed young men to migrate as a way of fulfilling their personal ambitions in search of upward social mobility. If encounters with white people were absent in such rural dwellings, whiteness itself appears in the language of difference and distinction used to describe returnees, who embodied and reinforced this imaginative pull.

Amongst freshies, we see a powerful emergent materialism which, in conjunction with chain migration, is sweeping across rural and semi-rural towns in Punjab and increasingly, NWFP on the border with Afghanistan, especially amongst socially conservative, less educated groups with access to large amounts of capital (often newly acquired through a previous migration to the Gulf by themselves or their fathers). These constellations of individuals are motivated by the prospect of being rich and powerful, and are highly ambitious and competitive. The drive for honour and status that ensues is compounded by an even more clearly visible individualism and personal ambition than that which was displayed in the testimonies of the Babas, and reflected in the fact that they compose a generation of young men whose interests and desires take a ever more priority in the household, which is seldom represented as the driving force of their departure. The pursuit of glamour, desire for sex and exotification of the West has grown

and transformed in that it has little of its cultural or colonial trappings, and the UK is no longer at its centre, though it remains its apex: the magnet now, is a more generally directed towards the West. One important conclusion to draw from this, is that the rigid distinction between the material and cultural spheres often assumed in studies of migration from the Third World is unhelpful. This point has been made with respect to understanding the position of women through calls for a 'WCD' or 'Women, Culture and Development' paradigm that might serve as a corrective to overly structural perspectives (Chua et al, 2000). I would support this, but suggest that an approach which stresses 'GCD' or Gender, Culture and Development, would be even more useful than one which looks at women's experiences in isolation from men's.

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